

CENTER FOR PUBLIC ISSUES EDUCATION

IN AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

IMPACT REPORT

WINTER 2017

Partnering with the UF/ IFAS
Center for Landscape Conservation
and Ecology has impacted the
public's water conservation
practices and perceptions.



PIE CENTER PARTNERS WITH CENTER FOR LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION & ECOLOGY

TO PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

In order to increase public awareness of water conservation techniques, the UF/ IFAS Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources and the UF/ IFAS Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology are working collaboratively to bridge the divide between research related to water quality and quantity and public understanding of these issues.

The mission of the Center for Public Issues Education in Agriculture and Natural Resources (PIE Center) is to promote understanding of agriculture and natural resource issues like water, which helps develop an informed public and leads to educated decision-making. The Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology (CLCE) promotes the protection and preservation of Florida's natural resources and quality of life through responsible landscape management, focusing on finding solutions using an interdisciplinary approach.

"The relationship between CLCE and the PIE Center is a natural one," said CLCE director Michael Dukes.

PIE Center associate director Alexa Lamm and assistant professor of agricultural education and communication Laura Warner, who researches with CLCE, have worked collaboratively to study public water conservation practices and perceptions.

"While the CLCE focuses on landscape practices and the PIE Center is more broad, the ability to work collaboratively on one of the most pressing

issues of our time only strengthens the reach of both centers," Lamm said. "Expertise in the context area of landscape practices that comes from the CLCE and the broader perspective and communication focus that the PIE Center contributes are nice compliments of one another."

"I see CLCE depending on the individuals in the PIE Center to help us investigate key issues and to communicate science to our stakeholders more effectively."

MICHAEL DUKES | CLCE DIRECTOR

Lamm, an assistant professor of agricultural education and communication, has been involved in three projects with CLCE, which have built on one another and examined how high water user audiences can be segmented for extension programming and water conservation campaigns.

These projects have included research about homeowners' and renters' irrigation habits, perceptions of tap water quality and quantity and residents' willingness to conserve water. Communication trainings have been conducted based on the research, focusing on translating research into the most usable form of information so that people can apply the research.

Warner, the CLCE researcher on these projects, knows that collaborative work in academic research encourages opportunities that would not previously be available.

"Our collaborative team shares an incredible passion for conducting research that helps us to inform our stakeholders and make a real impact for communities and the environment," Warner said.

Thanks to the partnership the PIE Center and CLCE share, a few research priorities that began

several years ago have successfully grown and evolved into a thriving initiative. The centers have maintained close relationships with extension programs, enabling new research to be quickly disseminated to the public.

“I see CLCE depending on the individuals in the PIE Center to help us investigate key issues and to help us communicate science to our stakeholders more effectively,” Dukes said.

“Both centers bring together many talented faculty, staff and students, which allows for a high level of productivity,” Warner said. “The CLCE and PIE Center have formed a partnership that allows faculty with a wide range of disciplines to study the human dimensions and science behind specific issues, which is crucial to developing practices that ensure lasting change.”

While it is not possible to specify the number of gallons of water that have been directly saved as a result of this collaborative work, at least 9,000 homes between two large homeowners associations in the Orlando area have altered their water using and landscaping policies after learning of Lamm and Warner’s research findings. Lamm said there has also been informal feedback from extension agents, who have reported that this

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LAURA WARNER | AEC FACULTY WITH CLCE

research has been helpful in their ability to serve and educate their communities more effectively, while ensuring their needs are met.

“We are also applying innovative methodologies that are underutilized by our profession, which not only advances the field, but helps us to demonstrate the value of our work,” Warner said. 

Right photo: Laura Warner and Alexa Lamm work together to learn more about growing issues surrounding water quality and quantity.



Left photo: The research partnership between the PIE Center and CLCE focuses on responsible landscape management and water conservation habits of homeowners.

PIE CENTER MAKES AN IMPACT

Over 50 academic publications, final reports and Electronic Data Information Source (EDIS) documents based on PIE Center research were developed by faculty, staff and students since spring 2016. A few of these publications are outlined below, including articles that resulted from the partnership between the PIE Center and CLCE.



Huang, P., & Lamm, A. J. (2016). Identifying invasive species educational needs in Florida: Opportunities for extension. *Journal of Extension*, 54(5). Retrieved from <https://joe.org/joe/2016october/rb7.php>

Huang, P., Lamm, A. J., & Rumble, J. N. (2016). Public opinions of farmer-oriented environmentally friendly extension programs: A case of best management practices. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, 4(3), 75-92.

Lamm, A. J., Lundy, L., Warner, L. & Lamm, K. W. (2016). Associating importance with behavior: Providing direction for water conservation communication. *Journal of Applied Communication*, 100(3). Retrieved from <http://journalofappliedcommunications.org/current-issue/66-associating-importance-with-behavior-providing-direction-for-water-conservation-communication.html>

Lamm, A. J., Taylor, M. R., & Lamm, K. W. (2016). Using perceived differences in views of agricultural water use to inform practice. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 57(3), 180-191. doi: 10.5032/jae.2016.03180

Ruth, T. K., Rumble, J. N., & Settle, Q. (2016). Narrowing the gap: Preference and awareness of Florida strawberries. *Journal of Food Distribution Research*, 47(2), 109-126. Retrieved from <https://www.fdrsinc.org/journal/>

Warner, L. A., Lamm, A. J., Martin, E., Rumble, J. N., & Momol, E. (2016). Encouraging landscape water-conservation behaviors: Segmenting the audience based on HOA status. *Florida Cooperative Extension Service Electronic Data Information Source AEC584*. Available at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/wc246>

Warner, L. A., Lamm, A. J., Rumble, J. N., Martin, E., & Cantrell, R. A. (2016). Classifying residents who use landscape irrigation: Implications for encouraging water conservation behavior. *Environmental Management*, 58(3), 238-253. Doi: 10.1007/s00267-016-0706-2

For a full listing of publications and reports from the PIE Center, visit piecenter.com.

