

Preserving Cultures and Open Spaces: CIVIC Addresses Land Use Planning in Historically Black Communities

Local citizens feel increasingly removed from land-use decisions in their communities. In addition, members of some groups are historically underserved by local government and may not feel invited to engage with local government. Community Voices, Informed Choices (CIVIC), a partnership between University of Florida and Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University, recognizes the importance of having a diversity of perspectives in land-use decisions and aims to build community capacity to work toward inclusive decision making.

The program adapted the Kettering Foundation's National Issues Forum process for deliberative discussions to engage local citizens around land-use issues in their communities. In 2021 and 2022 CIVIC created, piloted and evaluated a land use deliberative discussion guide in three historically black communities of Florida. The land-use guide reflects economic, environmental, and individual needs around land use in local communities. In our pilot of historically black communities, we learned that partnerships with community organizations and leaders are key to successful forums, cultural and historical realities are unique and of vital importance to the discussions of land use and land use changes in these communities, organizations and agencies working in these communities must remain aware of how their work or research may burden community members with redundant questioning or extractive research that is not shared back. Forum participants left the events feeling empowered to make changes and results from the forums include the formation of new partnerships and connections to new grants and projects.

Joy Hazell

Joy Hazell is a UF/IFAS/FFGS Extension faculty member and is currently the State Specialized Agent in Facilitation and Conflict Management. Joy plans, develops, facilitates and evaluates comprehensive needs based collaborative decision making processes around natural resources in the state of Florida and beyond.



Joy is a Natural Resources Leadership Institute project team member and participates in the CIVIC leadership team. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Marine and Freshwater Biology from the University of New Hampshire and a Master of Arts in Marine Affairs and Policy from the University of Miami. Joy started her career as a Peace Corps Volunteer in the Central African Republic teaching high school biology.

Joy is currently pursuing her PhD in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences where she received a Fulbright Student Scholarship to conduct her research on the Caribbean island nation of Dominica.

Dreamal Worthen, Ph.D.

Worthen, Dreamal, Ph.D is currently employed as a Cooperative Extension Family, Youth and Community specialist at Florida A&M University. She also served as a full time professor in the College of Agriculture and Food Sciences. Agricultural Research is an interdisciplinary area that focuses in multiple aspects of agriculture and rural research. Her research has centered around asset

building, environmental justice, poverty, the elderly and health issues in rural communities of color. Her latest article on elderly health related issues is published in a book chapter titled “critical Issues in Rural Health”. She previously served as a member of several boards (AgrAbility as well as Sustainable Florida).

Dr. Worthen is the former chair of the FAMU Faculty Senate and was a member of FAMU Board of Trustees. She is an Emeritus member of the Board of Directors for Elder Care Services. Along with serving on multiple boards, she has conducted research looking at how social decisions and responses impact the environment. Her current research focuses on asset building and childhood obesity. She has also worked in South Africa with the U.S. A.I.D. Farmer to Farmer Programs. Dr. Dreamal Worthen is responsible for the following programs:

1. supervises program assistants with the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP),
2. Coordinates the 4-H Youth and the Law Program
3. Planning Across Generations Grant with Cornell University
4. Opioid Grant with Florida State University
5. Covid- 19/ Vaccines Grant with Florida State University
6. Directs general programs for family, youth and communities.

Worthen received her undergraduate degree Florida A&M University in 1973, her masters in Urban and Regional Planning in 1980 and Ph.D. in Adult Education in 1990 from Florida State University.

Kimberly Davis

Ms. Kimberly Davis is an Extension Agent/Emergency Management Specialist with the Florida A&M University (FAMU) Cooperative Extension Family, Youth and Community programs/4-H Youth Development. Her areas of specialization include natural resources, environmental education, disaster preparedness and safety. She has over 25 years experience in coordinating STEM and environmental education outreach programs including the Kids Involved in Math and Sciences (KIMS) Program, and the Forestry and Conservation Education (FACE) Summer Program. She also worked over 10 years with the Florida Division of Emergency Management as an Environmental Scientist and Planning Manager. She holds a M.S. degree in Agricultural Sciences with a major in Environmental Sciences from FAMU.

Martha Monroe

Martha Monroe is responsible for extension activities, research, and teaching courses related to environmental education, conservation behavior, and human dimensions of environmental issues. Her work includes the development and evaluation of curriculum resources for educators that help students develop understanding, systems thinking skills, and efficacy for solving environmental problems. She works to understand how people perceive issues such as climate change, wildfire, or woody biomass in the South, and designs program to build capacity to discuss issues, acknowledging varying perspectives.

Her extension programs include youth (4-H) and teacher programs (PLT) as well as the deliberative dialogue program, CIVIC. These programs help Extension agents deliver resources to enhance youth development (Nature Poetry Contest and Community Action Projects for the Environment) and to build community capacity for addressing challenging issues.

Additional presenters

Mandy Baily