

The Evolution of an Idea and an Institution:

The Progress of the Army Corps of Engineers
on Everglades Ecosystem Restoration
and Cultural Change



Outline

Project overview

Methods and data

Results

Discussion/Conclusion

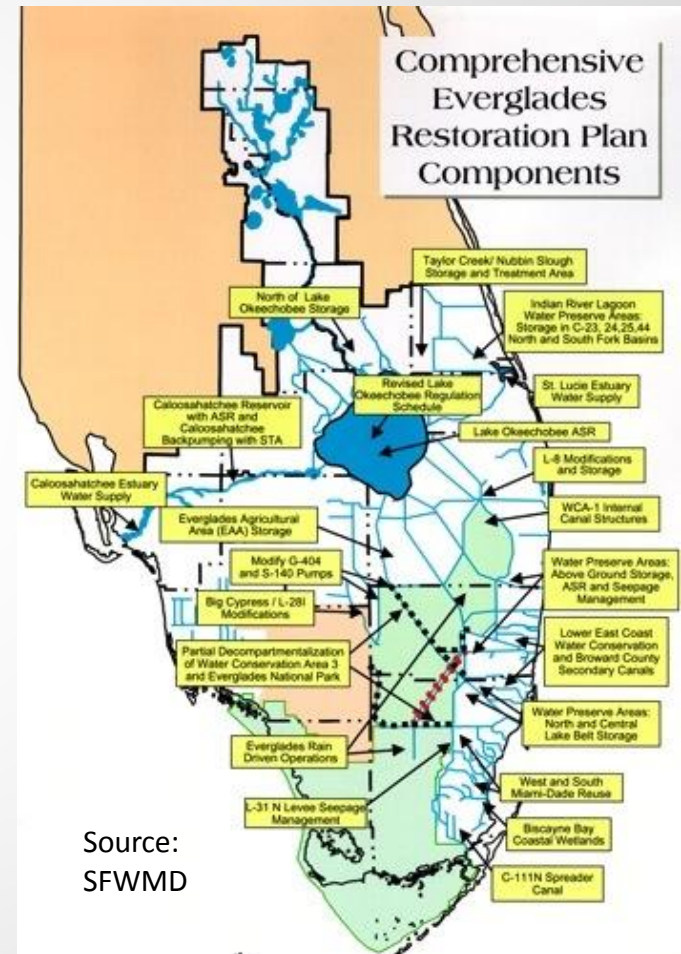


Research Area

- Question: is the Army Corps changing its culture to address environmental challenges as it incorporates ecosystem restoration as a mission?
- Case Study: Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) & Jacksonville District
- Policy Goal: Better environmental outcomes in restoration & water resource decision-making

The Corps & CERP

- Some observers consider the Corps “schizophrenic” (Houck 2006) or “reform-proof” (Grunwald, various)
- Corps: at heart is a structural engineering agency
- Everglades: a large, damaged, complex, politicized ecosystem



Defining Institutional Culture

- “The deeply embedded patterns of organizational behavior and the **shared values, assumptions, beliefs, or ideologies** that members have about their organization or its work” (Peterson & Spencer 1990)
- 6-part framework of organizational culture: **external environment, mission, socialization, information, strategy, and leadership** (Tierney 1988)
- Advocacy Coalition Framework—actors are primarily motivated by **core values** (Sabatier 1988, etc.)

Outline

Project overview

Methods and data

Results

Discussion/Conclusion



Measuring Culture



- Methods
 - Document research
 - 50 hour-long interviews
 - Data: Interviews (transcripts)

Interview Questions

Q1 What is **your vision** of success in Everglades restoration?

Q2 What is the **Corps' vision** of success in restoration?

Q3 How do you **measure progress** towards success personally and/or professionally?

Q5 What are some **successes** the Corps has achieved in restoration so far, either procedurally or on-the-ground?

Q6 ...**challenges or failures**?

Q7 What is the relationship of **restoration** to the **404 permitting process**?



Quantifying qualitative data

+ culture transition
during last bit of Clinton
very accelerated
In 1999 sent to H
CERP as described in
2000: election - Mr. Bush
govt philosophy char
in Sep 2001 - 9/11 changed
in 2003 - Iraq. Morass.
"I don't think wire
ecosystem restorat
ama has changed the at.
Many projects are in the
A lot of what takes th
cutbacks in SEWMD.

- Interviews: more complex than a survey, but richer
- Hybrid of analysis methods
 1. Manual coding
 2. Topic modeling: automated textual analysis

Outline

Project overview

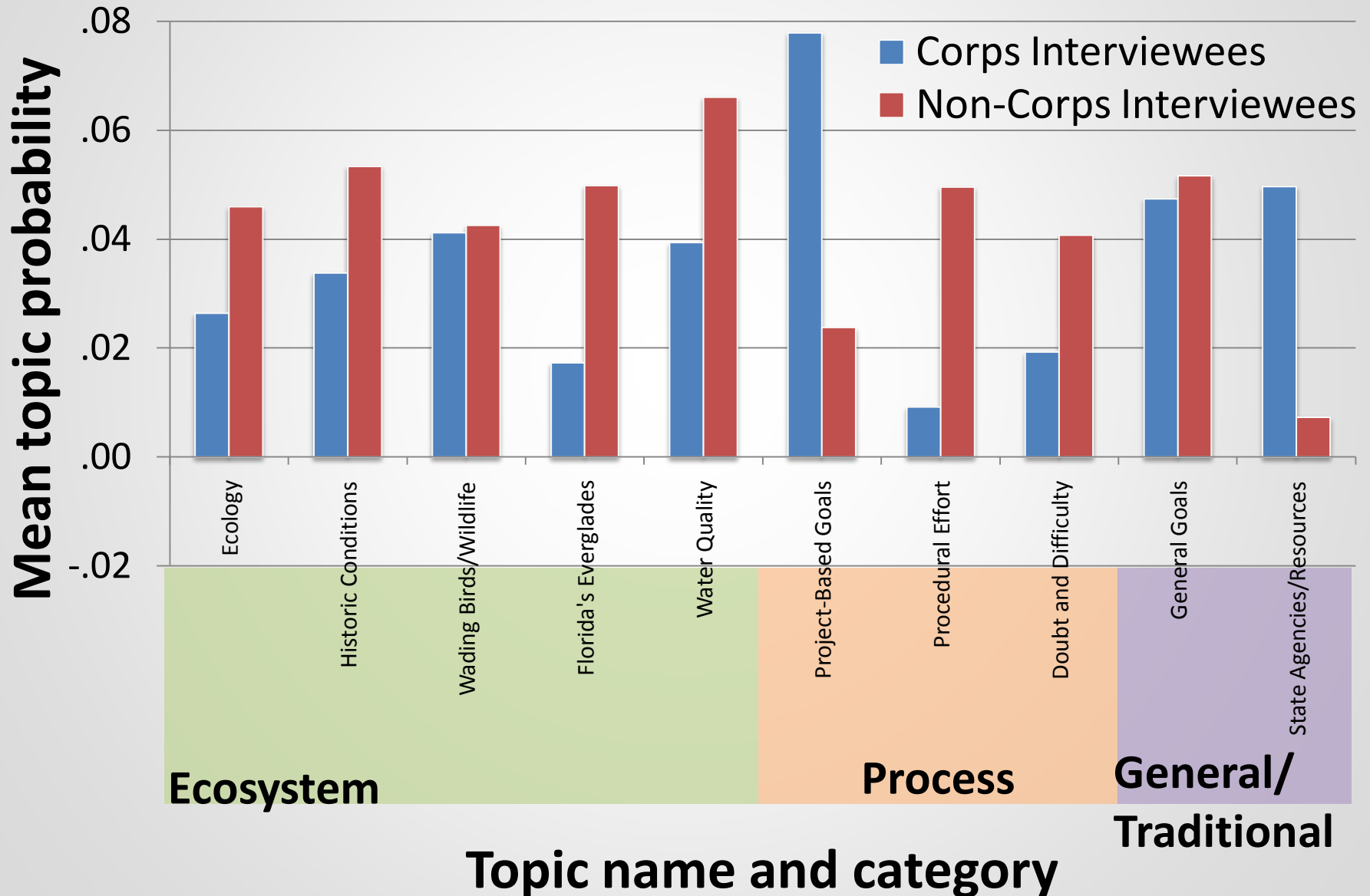
Methods and data

Results

Discussion/Conclusion



Q1: What is your vision of restoration?



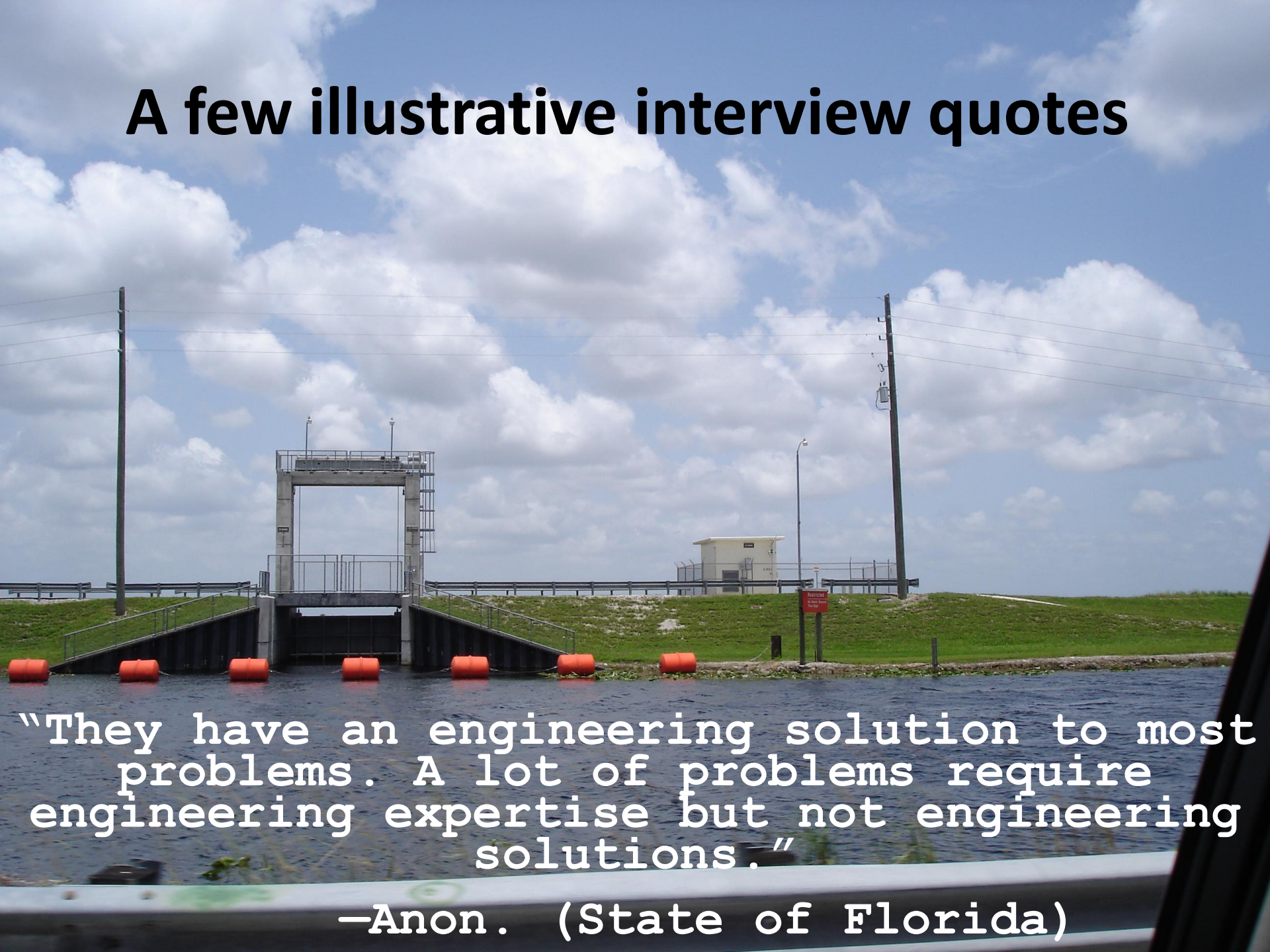
A few illustrative interview quotes



"I think success in the immediate future is starting to build projects, to start seeing what restoration projects will do in this changed environment."

—Anon. (Corps)


A few illustrative interview quotes



"They have an engineering solution to most problems. A lot of problems require engineering expertise but not engineering solutions."

—Anon. (State of Florida)

A few illustrative interview quotes



“When you talk to managers about their issues they see biology as the problem, the obstacle in their way. For example, in a beach renourishment project there might be a ‘turtle problem’...If the Corps had environmental mission as a mature part of their agency, embedded in their soul, that’s not how they would perceive environmental issues—as the counterweight to what they want to do.”

—Anon. (Environmental Org.)

Outline

Project overview

Methods and data

Results

Discussion/Conclusion



Phil Schermeister, National Geographic

Cultural lessons of Everglades restoration are not filtering out

- **Regionally:** Restoration Branch is doing yeoman's work, but separated from other mission areas
- **Nationally:** Constrained by hierarchy, limited \$, parochialism
- Expertise in ecosystem restoration ≠ capable of ecosystem management.

Using Culture as a Lever to Influence Outcomes

Option 1: Adapt the Corps and find ways to commit the whole agency to restoration

Option 2: Separate comprehensive adaptive *ecosystem* governance into a sub-agency or multi-agency effort with independent director (similar to CERP development process)



Thank you.

Questions?

eliza.cava@aya.yale.edu

www.elizacava.com