

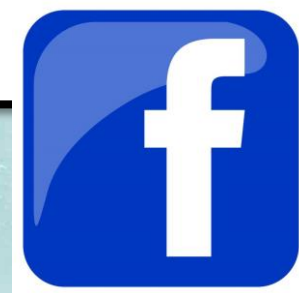
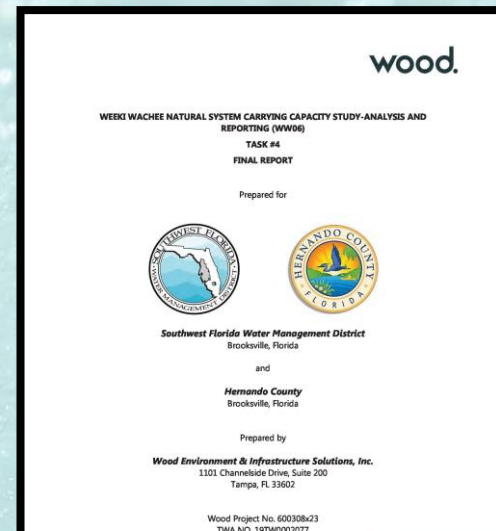
Weeki Wachee River Education Campaign

A photograph of three people kayaking on the Weeki Wachee River. The water is exceptionally clear, revealing a vibrant green and blue underwater landscape with rocks and aquatic plants. The kayakers are in red kayaks, and the river is bordered by dense, lush green trees and vegetation. The scene is bright and sunny, with clear blue skies visible through the canopy.

**Michele Sager
Lead Communications Coordinator
Southwest Florida Water Management District**

Research

- Carrying Capacity Study
- Informal Survey
- Public Comment
- Content Analysis
- Formal Survey



Public Perception of Challenges

- **53%** Too many people recreating on the river
- **39%** Worn down and eroded shorelines
- **37%** Trampled vegetation
- **33%** Climbing and rope swinging



Campaign Goal

Educate targeted audiences about the recreational best management practices that will help protect the Weeki Wachee River and reduce ecological impacts.



Long-Term Effort

- Requires multiple tactics and channels to reach audience
- Community effort
- Behavior and perception changes require time and consistent messaging
- Education campaign just *one* tool used to help protect the Weeki Wachee River



Audience

- Reminders for locals
- Many visitors from outside the county
- Have little information about the river
- Information sources likely unofficial
- Vacation or “get away” mindset



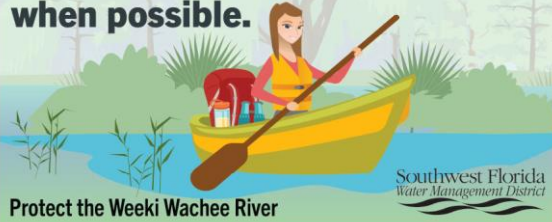
7 Best Management Practices

1. Stay in vessel when possible
2. If you must leave the vessel, tie off in shallow waters
3. Avoid docking on riverbanks
4. Don't trample vegetation or kick up silt
5. Avoid climbing on banks and walking on sand point bars
6. Don't climb trees or use rope swings
7. Don't throw out litter or leave anything behind



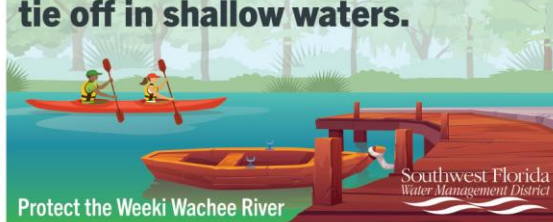
7 River Tips

**Stay in the vessel
when possible.**



Protect the Weeki Wachee River

**If you have to leave the vessel,
tie off in shallow waters.**



Protect the Weeki Wachee River

Avoid docking on riverbanks.



Protect the Weeki Wachee River

**Don't throw out litter or leave
anything behind.**



Protect the Weeki Wachee River

**Don't trample
vegetation or
kick up silt.**



Protect the Weeki Wachee River

**Avoid climbing on banks and
walking on sand point bars.**



Protect the Weeki Wachee River

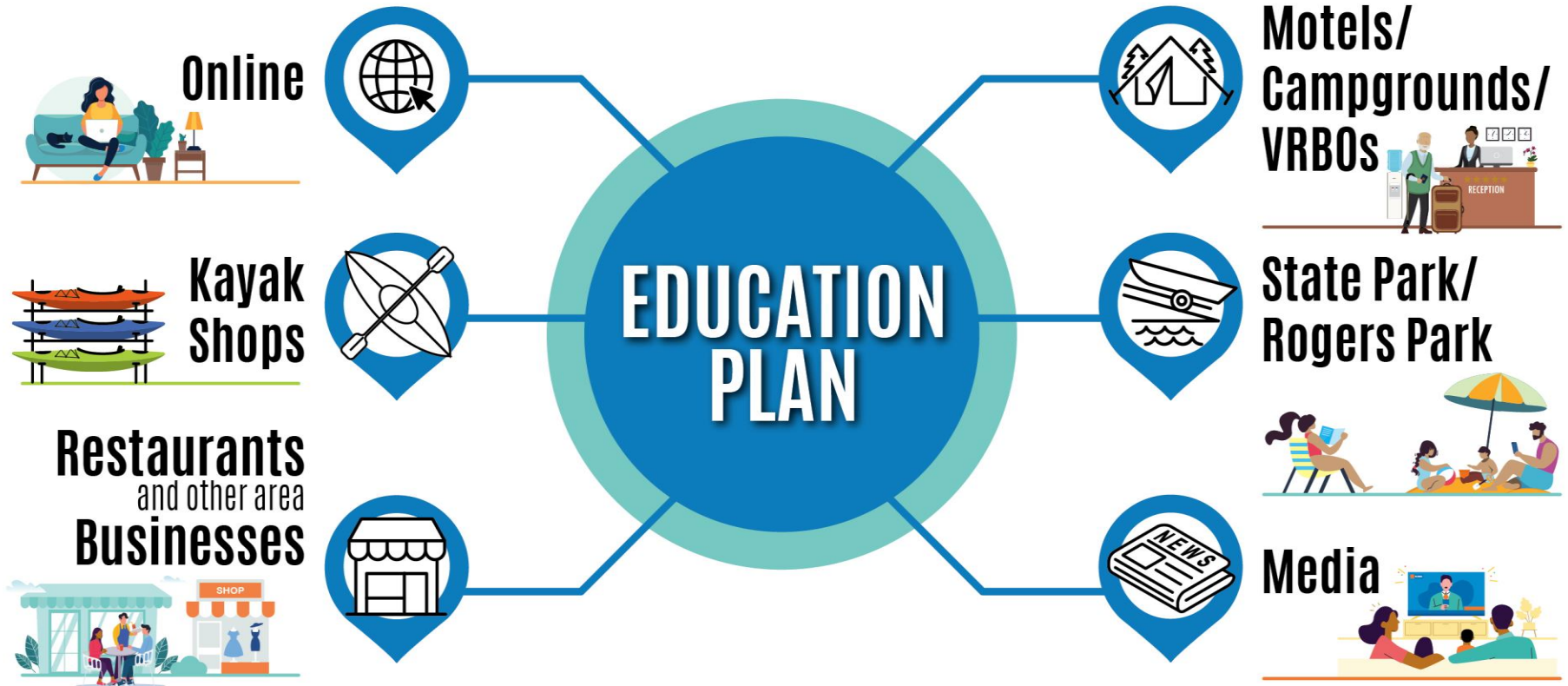
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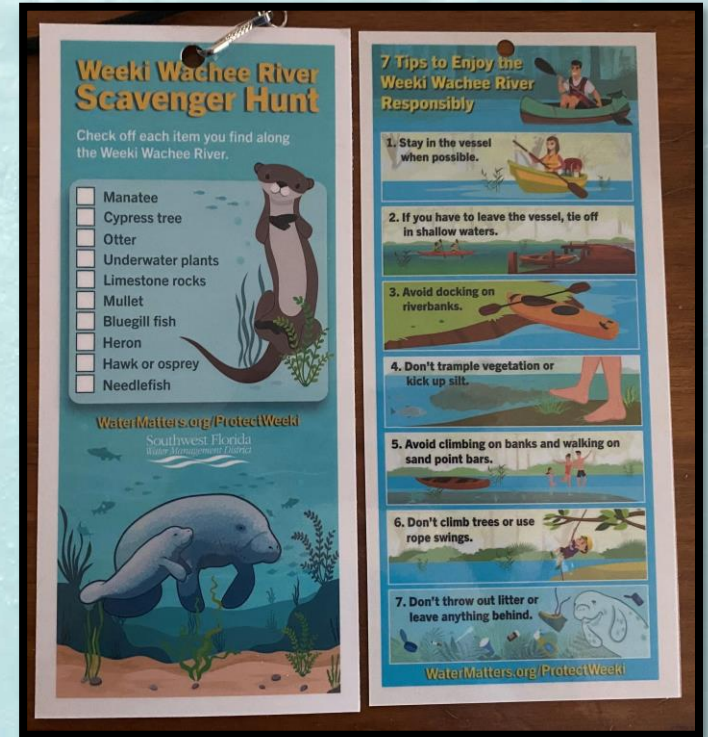
Protect the Weeki Wachee River



Channels to Reach Public



Materials



Materials



Materials



Next Steps

- Formal Campaign Runs through Labor Day
- Measurement
- Continued emphasis on messaging
- Adapting with policy changes



Questions



WaterMatters.org/ProtectWeeki

