

Tagline Testing for the 2017
Springs Campaign



December 31, 2016

taproot

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INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Florida Water Management District partnered with The Taproot Agency to test a variety of taglines and messaging approaches for the 2017 District Springs campaign in Citrus, Hernando and Marion counties.

The District held a brainstorming session on November 3, 2016 to tease out approaches to test as possible themes for the upcoming campaign. From that session, the District sent four messages to Taproot to test:

- Springs Life.
- My Backyard. My Springs.
- #My Springs (No tagline, just the hashtag)
- My Home. My Springs.

In addition to these, Taproot included a concept focusing on “springs animals” since the previous campaign approaches featured a manatee. We specifically wanted to garner feedback on how the inclusion of animals in the campaign would impact the overall campaign objective.

This report presents the reactions to each approach along with Taproot’s suggestion on the strongest tactic to meet the District’s spring campaign goal. Throughout the report, quotes from the research participants will be shown verbatim and in italics.

This research was not intended to be a pass or fail test for each of the concepts. Instead, the insights uncovered from these interviews should be used to tweak messaging and inform targeting efforts.

CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVE

When asked about the main objective of the springs campaign, the District provided the following:

To position the District as an organization that cares about the springs and is working to protect them.

While this objective is solid in setting the District as the “go-to” organization for the springs, an initial concern is the absence of “personal connection” with the people in the area. The remainder of the report will discuss how to inject “personal stories” in the springs effort while highlighting the District’s expertise in protecting the springs.

RESEARCH METHOD

Taproot conducted 18 in-depth interviews with participants living in the District boundaries in Citrus, Hernando and Marion counties. The participants were equally split between men and women and ages ranged between 25 to 65 years of age. Each respondent was screened by the county they lived in and a self-report that they visited the springs within the last year.

The interviews were conducted using Taproot’s proprietary digital platform which allowed the interviewer to see the participant react to words and phrases that were presented on the screen. When messages were presented, the interviewer asked the participant to explain their reactions to the phrase and answer follow-up questions. Since this was simply a message test, Taproot did not test graphics during the interviews. We did, however, ask some respondents to suggest appropriate graphics they believed would align with each message.

UNDERSTANDING THE SAMPLE

What They Value

Just as with any research endeavor, Taproot began by trying to understand the points of view of the interview participants. At the onset of the interview, each respondent rated the importance of various life qualities. Like the ages and genders of the respondents, the answers to the question “which of the following qualities is most important to you in your life right now” were varied.

Below are some qualities that people tend to look for in life. Give each quality a rating from 1 to 10 on how important it is in your daily life, with 1 meaning “Not Very Important to Me” to 10 meaning “Extremely Important to Me.”	Mean
Self-fulfillment (making the best use of your life)	8.67
Self-respect (feeling confident and proud of yourself)	8.56
Warm relationships with others (closeness, intimacy)	8.44
Fun and enjoyment (entertainment, happiness)	8.22
Sense of accomplishment (achieving my goals)	8.22
Self-expression (ability to express your own thoughts and opinions)	8.11
Sense of belonging (feeling accepted and needed by your family, friends and community)	7.89
Security (feeling protected)	7.44
Excitement (thrilling experiences; taking risks)	6.72
Being well-respected (receiving admiration, recognition)	6.28

The higher the mean/average, the more important the quality was to the sample. Based on the 18 respondents, “self” qualities rated the most important by these participants. As mentioned earlier, the District needs to be aware that the springs messages should include a focus that includes the county resident rather than focusing on the District’s expertise alone.

Last Visit to the Springs

Several respondents mentioned visiting more than one spring recently. Just as we discussed after the 2016 Springs Posttest results, the District cannot assume that residents only visit the springs in their own county. Their reasons for visiting a particular spring varied from an opportunity to swim with manatees to see an art show. Most often, the respondents said they chose the location based on its natural beauty, proximity, and because they had not been there before. Going to a spring based on the activities available there was also mentioned several times.

I think the last one we went to was Weeki Wachee springs down in Spring Hill. We go kayaking a lot so we were kayaking through there...We had already kayaked Rainbow river and Rainbow springs a lot. We'd heard that Weeki Wachee was just as pretty if not prettier. We wanted to try something different. The water is super, super clear. It's just a really pretty place to kayak.

I go locally once a month or so to Hunters Springs. I like to kayak early in the morning, like seven am and I like snorkeling and stuff in the springs when nobody else is there.

I went to the Weeki Wachee springs back in early summer, I want to say May or June...I go to different ones. We've gone to Hunter Springs in Crystal river. I used to go to Three Sisters springs a lot also in Crystal river but the city decided that they were going to take and make a free natural resource a money maker.

I'm trying to remember, which one was the last one we went to. We tend to go to Salt Springs a lot. Salt Springs was probably the last time I was out at the springs. My boyfriend's family, they have a cabin at Salt Springs and we boat there a lot and go fishing and hang out for the weekend.

Well I live right near the Weeki Wachee river, the springs, so I actually went by myself. I try to make it a point to go there two three times a week easily. I kayak it. It's just relaxing to me. It's my way of getting away from any stress...Well convenience of course to me. It's beautiful. I mean from where I live and where I put in my kayak and head north on the river, it's just relaxing, you're away from everything. It's peaceful, you feel one with nature.

Okay so the last one was Rainbow springs. Sometimes I go to swim there but the last time I took an out of town visitor and we walked around and looked at the beautiful clear swimming area and I showed her you can see the water bubbling up from the springs which is pretty cool. Something that most people from out of state haven't ever seen before. We walked through that area with the waterfalls and it's very pretty there...I also take people to Silver Springs or sometimes to Manatee Springs. Sometimes we just go by ourselves. We like Three Sisters to see the manatees. We spend a lot of time at different springs.

Some respondents mentioned concerns over their perceived decline in the quality of the springs or of over-commercialization.

Well, it's actually the quality has gone down significantly over the years especially since they made it accessible to the public with the boardwalk but for the locals, Three Sisters used to be as the closest spot to heaven on earth that we had in our area of Florida. It was secret, it was like when you kayaked into the entrance and you opened up into the springs, it was just absolutely mind boggling how beautiful it was. Since they've constructed the boardwalk around it they've destroyed every bit of that. The people that haven't been there it's still a great experience. I mean to me it means nothing any more. I have no desire to even go in there, but for new people that have never been there, even with the boardwalk around it, it's still pretty intense for them.

This quote echoes some of the concerns that the District had in wanting to shift the messaging from "visiting the springs" to "seeing the District as the protector of the springs."

When asked about specific activities they do at the springs, the following were the most often cited: socializing, relaxing and kayaking. Several respondents also mentioned swimming at the springs. Two of the respondents reported volunteering at a spring. Two mentioned attending art shows or concerts at a spring as well. Respondents who went to Weeki Wachee mentioned seeing the mermaid show.

The participants reported visiting the springs with significant others the most. Younger respondents also mentioned going with friends. Two respondents reported going by themselves.

One of the common threads from each interview was the pride that each respondent takes in the springs. Interviewees mentioned taking visitors to them, visiting them on the weekends and picking up trash when they go. To the respondents, the springs in their areas are a source of relaxation, tranquility and entertainment.

THEME 1: SPRINGS ANIMALS

Since the previous campaign collateral featured a manatee and respondents recalled that campaign element most often, we wanted to better understand what people thought of including animals in the 2017 campaign.

To introduce this test message, we simply presented the words, "Springs Animals" on the screen and explained, "We are considering an approach that shows how the springs are important to both animals and the people who live nearby."

Responses to this concept were generally positive, but care would need to be taken with this approach to ensure that its creative messages would not get lost in the dearth of manatee and animal-specific messages already being used in the District.

What animals do you associate with the springs:

Unsurprisingly, manatees were the most popular response for this question. Residents, particularly those from Citrus County reported seeing the manatees as an inextricable part of their community's fabric. Other animals mentioned include the following: monkeys, alligators, otters, turtles, birds (heron, pelicans, cormorants, anhinga) and fish.

The monkeys are playful, they're excitable. The birds are inquisitive. They're pretty. The gators are aloof, they're kind of the loners, but they're omnipresent. They're everywhere.

That's really, I would say that if you polled a thousand people, 999 would immediately, the word manatee would come right to their head. That's what they're known for. They're really not known for anything else as far as people don't go to the springs to watch the birds or look at the birds or to see raccoons. They're going strictly to interact with the manatees.

Who would "Springs Animals" be targeting:

Respondents thought a concept like "Springs Animals" would most likely be targeting tourists, families, children and environmentalists.

I think, probably, it would be targeting someone who's more environmentally conscious who's trying to find some reason to justify a protection of the springs. Someone who's already got it in their mind but who doesn't have a real good reasoning for it.

It would try to, I think, generate donations from maybe international tourists. We have lots of people who come from Europe and places like that to see these manatees. Especially they like, they really get attached to these manatees and they love the idea to come back to visit Florida to see these manatees. The idea these manatees depend on these springs, it might generate some, even international donations to help protect them.

Probably people who don't know that much about the springs, because people who live around the springs, they all know the types of animals that live there. So it might be a way to bring awareness to people who don't live there. It's like, "Hey, we need to protect this because animals live here and they're important and they're cute," or whatever.

Yeah, no that would be trying to reach both young and more mature it would seem like. I would tend less to pay attention the animals, but I would be listening to another adult talking to me, but the kids would probably be listening to the manatee talking to them or something.

I would guess probably the younger kids and teenage aged, 20 and under. I think those are the ones that you can have the most impact with. I don't know about adults. I've been fighting this housing development. It's in the Rainbow Springs protection area and it's just been this nonstop battle with this housing developer so I'm a little more cynical about adults at the moment.

Either seniors or younger people, like younger people maybe under 18, under 16...Yeah. It just seems like something that's a little bit less of a ... It's just a little bit more kiddie, like maybe a little bit more mascot-y to use an animal and compare it to human. That may resonate with ... It's a lot lighter. It's a lighter mood. Yeah.

Overall, we suggest moving away from using animals in the 2017 Springs campaign.

THEME 2: MY BACKYARD, MY SPRINGS.

With the questions related to this concept, we caught some of our first glimpses of how much pride residents take in their springs and how much the springs impact their individuals lives.

I've had lots of emotional connections there with people. I take a sense of pride in them because it's one of the unique geographical things we have and it's something you can't really replicate.

On what comes to mind when they think of their own backyard:

From a place to relax to a place to enjoy time with family and friends to a spot for Florida wildlife to a pasture, our respondent's definition of a backyard varied. To some respondents, a backyard immediately made them think of a sense of pride and ownership, of a backyard as being a part of their home.

I think I open the door and that's what's there. It's right there. It's behind my house. It's where I can go. It doesn't take long to get there. It's relaxing. It's exciting. It's my backyard.

Fun...Peaceful, beautiful, useful.

Openness, trees, grass plains, cows, horses, farm animals.

Good times in the summer. Barbecues. Playtime.

Something that's close, something that is part of my home.

Some respondents made the connection of the springs to their backyards right away.

One of the things I would say is pride. People in Citrus county are very proud of our springs and that people want to come from all over the world to swim in them and interact with the manatees. I almost like, it almost like people take ownership. Like even though of course we don't own the springs, the locals, we protect them like we actually own them...It's very important. We're so careful with the trash and because we know we love the manatees and we also know how economically important the springs are to Citrus County's future.

Well figuratively all of nature is everyone's backyard right? The closer we can get to it for the most part the happier we are. In my case I also live on the Withlacoochee river so even though there's not a spring there per se, our river is fed by Rainbow springs as well as by the source of the Withlacoochee and so it's literally our backyard. I resonate more with that than animals and people sharing interests.

On whether or not they consider the springs a part of their backyard:

The responses to this question revealed what could be a potential flaw of this campaign angle: some people may just be too literal. While many respondents understood that this concept relies on the feelings of ownership and other emotional connections that area residents may have with the springs in their area, several respondents said that they simply live too far away from the springs to consider them a part of their backyards.

No. Not for me, I don't live close enough to them but I guess for some people they would consider anything in their general area to be their back yard. [Respondent lives 15 minutes away from a spring]

The springs in my area is probably about 40 to 30 minutes away from me so, it's close but not close and there's no spring like stuff real close to me so, I don't consider it part of my backyard.

Given the strong reactions that some respondents had to this concept, we do see some potential to use it as a secondary concept under a more all-encompassing campaign, specifically targeting people within a certain geographic area within the District's jurisdiction.

Yeah. Yeah this is my backyard. My community here is my backyard.

I do definitely. I mean that's where I spend most of my free time is in either my backyard or the springs. That's definitely association together.

Definitely, definitely, and I personally feel a sense of ownership and responsibility. I definitely, I'd self identify, I identify the springs as part of my kind of upbringing. I spent a lot of time on the river when I was a kid.

On what they would do in their backyard that they would also do at the springs:

Relaxing, enjoying time with family and friends, and watching some nature were a few of the activities that respondents reported that they could do in their backyard and at the springs.

I guess relax would be the other thing that I would compare, just to kick back and look around. That's why I love it at seven o'clock in the morning when nobody's there.

Really it's just a rest and relaxation place.

Just sit outside and enjoy nature. We have some bee hives so we like to sit out there and watch the bees and watch the fox that comes to the yard all the time. It's just very nice and quiet and that's kind of what I like about the springs too is it's just quiet and relaxing.

You can hang out with your family and your friends, and play, I guess. We have two kids now here. Betsy's kids. Run around, I guess, and just enjoy the sun, the outside.

Who would "My Backyard" be targeting:

When asked whom this concept might be targeting, respondents said that they thought it would be targeting locals in the area; specifically people living near the springs.

I think it would be the people who live pretty close to the springs, who view it as their backyard, as something where it's saying, "You wouldn't do this in your backyard? Why would you do it here?" People who are contributing to the problems, I think this would be targeting more towards.

That would definitely focus on Citrus County and the immediate surrounding counties or any place that has a spring. I'm not sure if it would be as effective for everyone because it may also give a sense of, "It's my backyard, I can do whatever I want in it." Whenever there's state regulations like we have to protect these springs, they feel like, "Oh they're telling us what to do with our property."

Probably the people that live there already, because since they've either grown up with it or they've lived there for a while, it's probably ... they've become desensitized to the fact that it is their back yard. So if there's a campaign for, "Oh, this is your back yard," they'd be like, "Oh yeah. I should probably be better about it."

I think it would be focusing more people locally in our area to inform them about the springs. In other words I don't believe that it would be focusing on people that are out of towners. It's more reminding people that we have the springs close to where they live.

Tourists vs. Locals

When discussing the idea of the springs being a part of their backyards, the topic of tourists and how they treat the springs came up during some of the sessions. Among the following respondents, there was a sense that tourists do not respect the springs and treat them as well as the locals do.

[On how you can tell the difference between locals and visitors] The fact that [the tourists] don't seem to have as much pride, take as much responsibility in the atmosphere, in the area around them. They seem to be more casual and maybe dropping trash. They don't take pride in it like it's their backyard.

While the “My Backyard. My Springs.” concept does have merit as a secondary message, we believe a more inclusive message is needed.

THEME 3: MY HOME, MY SPRINGS.

“My Home. My Springs.” received some of the strongest reactions of any of the concepts tested during the interview sessions. The concept seems to be broad enough that residents can envision what home is for them and then fit the springs into that definition. Additionally, this concept takes advantage of the senses of ownership and “pride of place” expressed by respondents.

What they think of when they hear the concept:

As noted throughout this report, ample evidence that people feel a sense of pride about the springs was observed throughout the interview sessions. But, while other concepts like “My Backyard” and “Springs Animals” didn’t quite hit the mark, “My Home. My Springs.” seemed to put into words what many respondents had been trying to explain.

I think of the springs as, it's a place to unwind and to finally enjoy that home time. I think the springs is spending time with family because anytime anyone comes down to visit the first thing we do is bring them to the springs.

I think more community, and think of as Florida being my home and the springs therefore being a part of it.

Exactly what I just said, viewing the springs as a second home. Whereas, it helps to you provide for your home. It's also a home away from home. It's where you go to get away. It's everything. It's your home.

Because nature and the springs and wildlife is the best of what we have in Florida and that's the real Florida. I think a lot of the population shares that view as evidenced from the fact that 75% of the people voted for amendment one. I think it's a very common view among Floridians and it's a great frustration that government isn't coming through in most aspects of what would go with that thought, My Home, My Springs. This one really resonates.

That all these places are connected. That your home is also part of the springs and the springs are also your home. You can't really divorce your backyard from the wider environment that it's in.

Oh it just makes me feel like the springs are part of my life, part of my world. It brings my world and the springs into one statement so definitely makes it seem like it's mine.

That I actually have part ownership of what our Florida springs are...I feel responsible for it, yes.

What home means to them:

From where they unpack a suitcase to a safe place and a sanctuary to their community at-large, “home” meant many different things to the interview respondents. Many of these definitions and associated feelings could also be applied to the springs.

To me, home is a safe space, a place where you can go to feel comfortable, relax, recharge and prepare for the next time back out in the away from home, back out in the world.

For me it's whenever I'm exhausted I'm at class or I've been out all day and it's where I want to go back at the end of the day.

So I tend to identify with wherever I am. This is ... there's family, there's comfort, there's pride. That sort of stuff.

A place that I feel safe and can do whatever I want without anyone saying anything to me or bothering me.

I think of home as security, a sense of belonging, the area where you feel most comfortable.

Okay. Home, for me, would be just where my pets are and where I feel most comfortable and where all my stuff is, as materialistic as that sounds, and just where I would be like ... if I'd had a long day or whatever, where I would go to relax.

Well, I'm going to say home is, it's not just my house, it's this area where I live in. It's the people and the community and the springs and the rivers and everything.

We have the Withlacoochee Forest around us which is five minutes to the water or five minutes to the woods. The woods to me are very important. Keep the woods natural. Keep the animals out there.

That's a tough one. I've been fairly nomadic for the last 15 years so this is like the sixth state I've lived in. Just that sense of belonging. Finding that place where you feel like you make a difference and you're involved and having a community that you're involved in and feeling like you belong.

Home to me is the place that you feel most comfortable at I believe. You're safe, you don't have anything to worry about. It's security I believe. [Prompt: do you associate this feeling with the springs?] Yeah. I mean I want to say it is especially when I go alone. Yeah you're not worried about any of the outside world when you're there. You are definitely in tune or in key with just that riverside you're not thinking about all the stress and other things that are happening in the world.

It's where I unpack my suitcase. It's just where I am most of the time. I work from home as well. It's just where I am most of the time.

It means my sanctuary. Security. The place that I like to spend time at.

It's definitely a place where the people that I love are. It's not so much just a building, but that's what it is physically. Where I feel comfortable, and where I have people that matter to me.

On referencing the springs when talking about where they live:

Another strong indicator of how closely respondents identify with the springs was their responses to the question of whether or not they mention the springs when they talk about where they live. The following responses provide depth and color to the question asked on the last SWFWMD survey completed by Taproot.

I always love to tell [people who live outside of the area] "we can go kayaking together, I'll show you the springs." They're always super excited about the idea.

When I talk about my home I'm not going to talk about the springs to people who live here, but when I'm talking about it from people who are out of town or friends who are visiting, I talk about it, "We have the springs right there."

Yeah. When I'm talking to people that don't live in town. Like our cousins, visitors. I encourage them to come and visit us and the springs.

Yeah, definitely. Springs, Disney World. Normally when I'm talking to someone about my home, obviously they don't live here so I talk about basically the stuff close to me in Florida, not just where I live. Yeah, the springs are definitely one thing and then Busch Gardens, Disney because they don't have that in other states.

Yeah. We talk a lot about the part of Florida that we live in, that this is the nature coast. We talk about kayaking and the beautiful waters and stuff here.

I do. Mainly when I'm talking to people who like outdoors stuff like hiking, kayaking, and fishing, stuff like that. I'll bring up springs and how fun it is to be there.

Oh, god, all the time. I invite people to come over here you know, to go snorkeling with me. I've taken them out and shown them scuba diving and Hunter springs is only like 17 feet deep, King's Springs is like 55 deep, but you know, I've let them play with my scuba gear in the shallow water and I've brought them out here during manatee season and stuff, but this last time, you know when we found out they were charging fifteen bucks a head and he's got three kids, so there was five of them plus me. It was going to be over a hundred dollars just for us to go walk and see the manatees. That was ludicrous.

No usually I usually say I live in Homosassa. Because most people round here they already know what's around here. When it comes to snow birds we try to avoid them.

Yeah, that came up a lot when we were fighting at housing development. We were constantly going reverse the county commissioners, reminding them that this is the wetland protection area and that we need to think about things before we just start building on them because we're also on a farmland preservation area so to me, four houses per acre was not really compatible with a farmland preservation area. We do talk about the springs in our neighborhood.

I mean I think the biggest thing I tell them is the beauty, the cleanliness in the water. How clear it is. It's like no place that I've ever seen before and I've traveled through all the national parks throughout the United States and stuff. It's one of the cleanest looking water supplies that I've ever seen. It's just, it's almost like you're floating on air when you're floating down it. It's just crystal clear.

Yeah we do. We usually when we're talking about the springs, we're saying the river because it's a spring fed river so we may access the river at multiple points besides the head springs but usually if I'm talking to my parents, there's always events going on in the river. It's a semi regular ... Like I said, when I was there we went to the head springs and then there was also a music event that was down river from the head springs that was on the river. It's a big part of the community there.

I think that people like having pride in where they live, and finding new things to do there. I think it would be good because I mean it's just finding new adventures in your town, I guess is what I'm trying to say. Things like that.

On what is being done to protect the springs:

Spring clean-ups and animal protection, particularly for manatees, were popular responses to this question. Some savvy interviewees also mentioned water extraction control, fertilizer run-off reduction and cutting down on economic activity and tourism around the springs.

I know there's movements to reduce litter. I know there's movements to reduce waste that is entering the springs. Movements to protect the animals, to put more controls on boats that go through the springs. Limits on speed and on emissions.

I don't take the newspaper; I don't get local news so I'm a little bit insulated. I know they've done, people do clean ups, I've seen them do efforts where they go in and clean up, get tons of garbage from the springs, and also the quality, some stuff with the quality of the water. I can't remember exactly what that was but I remember hearing about that as well.

Number one is, fertilizer runoff and overuse. Number two is, water extraction. Of course, number three, is habitat loss. They're constructing up to the edge of the springs' property and then expecting the springs to survive in a natural system.

Honestly, nothing. I didn't know they were in danger. Are they in danger? What's happening with the springs?...The last time I saw anything on the news about the springs, they were just doing a story about the mermaid girls and their shows that they put on. That's literally the only thing I've really seen about the springs.

Most everything that people talk about protecting really involves the animals more than anything, in particular the manatees which are always a concern down here. But they also talk about pollution, and they talk about the intrusion and letting everything stay natural and stay beautiful and not become overrun.

Some people I know will go and just pick up trash to help clean up our springs and I haven't really heard a whole lot about people taking care of the springs. I don't have the news. That's not something I really care about if they do talk about it, but I just know, in general, when I go down to the springs and I see trash I just try to pick it up and that way we help keep it clean and that way animals don't get stuck in it or it hurts them.

The only thing I know specifically is, there is some controversy about the boardwalk being built at ... was it Rainbow Springs? Three Sisters. At Three Sisters. Because I had never gone before, and I've always been told how clear the water is, and that's why it's ... a spring, clear, and ... Citrus County and the Crystal River and everything, but when I went, it was really hard for me to see through the water and everything. I was like, "You lied." I guess from all the construction of the boardwalk, that just a bunch of dust got kicked up and into the water, so it's not as clear. So I know that's made some people upset, and rightfully so. I also know that the state bought [a spring]. They obviously wanted to make some money off of it, and I think you have to pay to get into the boardwalk, and then you can't get in the water. Yeah, so that's one thing I know about.

No, like I've been out to the annual cleanup twice in the last 15 years. Usually, I'm unfortunately at work a lot so ... the cleanups a big thing but I know you know, when they were ... I donated money when they were fighting for Three Sisters Springs to be able to get that bought so that it was off of the private owners hands that wanted to develop it...I was ... I stayed pretty aware of what was going on there with that.

Well I know they just finished, they were doing some work around Three Sisters Springs to I think, stop some of the erosion and the run off around the banks of the springs itself. I think that might be what some of the water quality, you know I think that's still suffering the effects of that. Like some of the rules they're proposing is like when the temperature drops below a certain level, then the springs will be completely to humans because that's the manatees pile up in there. I'm totally fine with that. There has to be give and take on each side. Like I said, when they put that boardwalk around it, they ruined it. They really, if you could picture the most beautiful spot on earth and then picture you go in there the next time and there's a boardwalk surrounding the entire

thing and there's 2 to 3 hundred people now looking down at you. It just destroyed it. I mean I understand there's this law in Florida where the shoreline has to be accessible to people that don't own boats, but in my opinion that was a bad, bad mistake.

I think people are trying to cut down on economic activity in the hopes that they can protect the springs through advocating for reducing recreational activity. I think there's also an initiative to cause the homeowners to be more responsible with how they fertilize and how they install septic tanks and maintain septic tanks.

I don't really watch the news. I'm sure they're just trying to protect whatever animals have been affected by us, but I don't know any particular things about it.

I mean, I haven't really heard a whole lot. Just on a basic level I know in general, and people are trying not to litter. That's a pretty simple thing that has been happening for most outdoor spaces. I really haven't heard a whole lot beyond that.

Who would “My Home. My Springs.” be targeting:

Respondents thought a concept like “My Home. My Springs.” would most likely be targeting people who live in the area and community leaders.

Adults, possibly community leaders. With a greater biome ... People tend to want to protect their homes. Homeland Security was a great marketing name.

All the locals that go to the springs...Because they wouldn't want anyone coming in and ruining a place that they like to go to with their friends and family.

I think when people think of home they immediately associate families and spending quality time with families. The springs are the type of place where you would do that, where people are swinging from ropes and jumping in the water, and hanging out in the water, it's all stuff you tend to associate as doing with family. That's home to me.

Probably people who live there. I don't think anybody who doesn't understand what the springs are ... I don't think they would really grasp what the springs means to the people that live there. They'd be like, "My home my springs. It's like, okay, well, my home my forest or whatever." Whatever their state's known for. So I think it would just reach the people who live there.

Probably anybody. Kids would get this too as well as homeowners. I would be good for them to get that message.

People that live in the springs area... I would think, because it's talking about my home, my springs. It could be Florida, but I'm thinking more in the springs area, so Ocala, or even smaller. Marion County.

“My Home. My Springs.” elicited positive responses from the locals while bridging the respondents’ definitions of home and their local environment. There are also opportunities for the District to incorporate their “springs expertise” into this approach. A discussion of how to accomplish this will be presented later in the report.

THEME 4: SPRINGS LIFE

While the connotations of 'living a springs life' were positive, like the "My Backyard" concept, this concept proved too exclusionary to some respondents. When asked whether or not they personally live a springs life, responses were mixed, indicating that this idea would be better used as a hyper-targeted campaign under a broader campaign.

On what comes to mind when they hear the concept:

Proximity to the springs, the purity of the water, a nature-focused life and a relaxing way to spend time were the most popular ideas and images that were associated with this concept. Overall, the ideas associated with this concept seemed to lean more tourist than protective.

Maybe living more of a natural life, living off the grid, living away from technology, away from the internet and the Netflix and the Facebook.

That feels more like people who go to the springs every weekend. Almost like the Salt Life stickers you see on trucks sometimes. Some people live going on the kayaks every week. There's the environmental science academy on Crystal river as a high school for aspiring biologists. They go out in kayaks for class every week. There's people who live on the coast in Crystal river who really, that ocean, those rivers are their entire life. That's their recreations or exercise, it's their happiness. It's the first thing they see when they look out the window and the first thing they see when they go to bed. Everyday.

People who live on the river who have a pontoon boat and who are able to regularly spend recreation time on the river. Swimming, snorkeling, fishing. Makes me think of kids catching minnows in nets growing up. Yeah stuff like that.

This is me going out the door, grabbing my kayak, throwing it in the bed of the truck and getting in the water nine minutes later.

Basically, the way people live the salt life in the beach but instead they go to the springs for fun. When I go there honestly, for the most part, I do see people I see there all the time so I know people do go there a lot, which I can understand because I think the springs are way cooler than the beach.

Kind of like living like a natural, healthy kind of life, of being outside, exercising.

It should also be noted that many respondents equated living a springs life with literally living on the water.

I guess it makes me think of living really close or really on the water.

Someone ... I think of someone who lives right on the spring, living the spring's life where they can wake up, go outside their back door and see it every day and the nature of the birds and all that.

I definitely think of the houses that were on the water because it's just part of how you grow up and everything. You just walk out your back door and jump in the water, see some manatees. It's definitely very peaceful. There's not very much road noise at all. It's very secluded, and it kind of feels like a little secret because there's so much wildlife and forestry and everything that it's very secluded, but by choice.

On defining what it means to "live a springs life"

Spending time on or living near the water were the most common responses to this question.

Centering my recreation and family time around the springs.

Lazy, not in a bad way. Just laid back. [When asked about what they imagine] Someone in an inner tube floating down a river with a beer in their hand.

Probably just, if you're a kid, going to the springs on the weekend and just that's what you do instead of hanging out at the mall or whatever. Probably just ... It feels ... It's a very relaxed feeling in Citrus County. Everybody's pretty much nice to each other. It's a community feeling ... the entire county really. Because everybody is connected by the springs. If all else fails, everybody still has the springs in common. It's just like the center of the community.

Definitely, definitely the older crowd on the water. I can see that as being the springs life. They retired they're down like river haven enjoying their martinis on the dock. That would be, that's what I shoot for.

I don't know. It's the habitat, the water quality, the animals that live there, people that visit the springs. It's a whole connected web. I don't know if I could define a springs life.

Peace, tranquility, wonder and you know it's like no matter how many times you do it, every time I do it I'm just as in awe as the first time I did it. That feeling just doesn't go away. When you see turtles and you see the fish swimming, when you see the manatees playing. Whether there's raccoons on the shoreline, it's just to me, it doesn't get old.

Like a healthy kind of life where you're outside a lot. I guess I spend a lot of time either in a truck or inside, so I mean, I miss being outside. Yeah, just being outside, taking care of that, exercising while you're there.

On whether living a “springs life” describes their life

The responses to this question indicate that, again, ‘living a springs life’ is an ideal that, while pleasant to think about, is too far removed from the daily lives of many residents in the counties surveyed, particularly for individuals who do not live directly on a river or near the springs.

Yes and no. It definitely describes my free time, the type of things I love to do. I enjoy anything in nature but it's not specifically the springs, I'm just as happy on the top of a mountain. It just reminds me of anything nature wise and being outdoors and being part of the world around you.

I work a very busy job. It's basically home, work, home, sleep. Home, work, home, sleep. Then I get one day off a week and that's to do everything I have to get done during the week. The spring's life, to me, seems much more laid back, much more relaxed. There's no hectic pace of the work world. There's none of that.

When you work full time it's really hard to live a springs life if you're not ... I get home from work at five or six or so, when we use the springs it's usually on the weekends or days off.

Our life isn't centered around the spring.

I don't know because like I said, I'm not living on the shore of the spring in which case, definitely but I am a pro-environment and protecting them so I try to do my part to help save them.

In a sense, yes. Some days. That's my goal is to live the spring's life. Swimming in water. Snorkeling. I think of being able to see through the water and, when you're done swimming, eating picnic lunch and then getting in kayaks and checking out all the animals.

On whether this concept describes their community:

To further explore whether or not living a springs life is relatable, some respondents were asked whether they thought members of their communities would identify with the concept. Responses were mostly negative. Interviewees mentioned their distance from the springs or the other interests in their lives as disqualifying them from the concept of "living a springs life."

I think it would hit for the people who directly on the river. I don't know that it resonates with people that are on the other side of town or something. Because I don't know that they, they'd be like, "What's a springs life?" It seems like there might be more description needed to explain what it is. It seems like it's lacking something. It's not a good description.

Not my area, like not my neighbors or anything like that. Just mainly like people who kind of live around an actual river or spring.

Probably not where we are. We're far enough away where you have to drive a significant distance. I think our closest spring is Rainbow Springs and it takes about 20 minutes to get there so we're right on that edge of the outermost protective area. So, we're not in the crucial area for a protecting.

We in our county have a sense of duty about protecting them. We yell at our kids to clean up after themselves at the springs. We know not to pour your drink in the river and things like that. I think getting that out for Living a Springs Life and in national advertising would help give a sense to the people who visit, this is a place we have to respect while we are here. This isn't Disney World.

Probably not. I don't think people go outside a lot here either. In Tallahassee, I think people would go outside and walk, and bike around. People sort of do that, but not really.

Who would "Springs Life" be targeting?

Respondents thought a concept like "Springs Life" would most likely be targeting younger residents and tourists.

I think probably more like my generation, the younger twenties, teens to thirties. Where, they have become so obsessed with their technology, a way to get out, put the idea of, "Instead of living your internet, try living the springs. Try relaxing for a day and going out and being away from everything."

I think most of my friends would think this is the idea of being out, being present in the moment, being present in the world and being part of the world rather than being part of the internet or being part of your computer or part of your TV.

I think that would help bring in tourists who would want to experience that unique experience. Bringing people into the springs for the first time. I think it opens up a whole new look at the nature, it's not just going to a zoo or even just going on a hike.

I think it should target everybody. I think those beautiful resources are underutilized, under publicized, under marketed. I've only been here for about three years now and I don't see any billboards, I don't see anything. It was just by me searching out what do you people do, where do you go, and doing a lot of internet and books, looking at things, trying to figure out what we could do. It's not really out there.

When I heard living the springs life, it sounds more like a tourism campaign than a protection campaign, but you know, that's me.

Out of town people and people that live in Florida. People who live around an actual river or it may encourage someone to go out and visit a river or spring.

I would expect that you would be targeting probably somebody outside of the area to attract a certain amount of development. We're trying to entice either the maybe retirees, maybe more mature people to moving to our area that involves the spring's life.

This one to me seems a little more towards the younger kids, talking about habitats and ecosystems...Like K through 12.

Based on the responses to the “Springs Life” concept, we feel it should only be used as a targeted approach within the campaign and not as the overall theme.

THEME 5: #MYSPRINGS

The #MySprings concept seemed to elicit some confusion with the respondents. While some understood the connection and similarity to the “My Home. My Springs.” approach, others reported not understanding what it meant when the hashtag was presented alone.

I think it would depend what it was tied to. If I saw it with a picture of a river or Jenny Springs I'd know exactly what it was talking about. To me, if I saw it with that it would be taking ownership and taking responsibility of the springs. That's what I was looking for.

This would maybe, if I was just driving up the highway, give the impression that maybe it was more anti-government. Maybe more small government. It's kind of that, these are our springs, we'll run it. Because at first I think the county wanted to buy Three Sisters springs. I think that lots of people in Citrus County feel like the state government doesn't know how to run the spring because they're all Tallahassee, they don't have as many springs.

Springs are part of our life. They belong ... Yeah, because they're protected and belong to everybody, they're mine as well as yours.

Supporting local springs? The way anyone else on Twitter supports anything. Just posting it to show their support but not really doing anything.

I think it's just trying to draw your attention to the springs in general...Being aware of them, bringing tourism to them, encouraging people to feel a, almost an ownership of them.

I'm still trying to get used to these hashtags. If I saw that I would be like, "And your point?" Because like, like I said I'm just getting used to these hashtags and trying to figure out what they all mean so I don't know that I would know what that meant at first...If you said, my Three Sisters springs or my Homosassa springs or something like that then it would probably make more sense to me.

I would, my guess would be that if they clicked on the link #mysprings, it would educate them about the natural springs, the freshwater springs. I'm not sure if this is strictly for Citrus County or for the state of Florida but there would be something on this hashtag that if you brought it up would educate you or give you information on the freshwater springs in Florida.

I guess first of all, I imagine people posting pictures, like when they actually go and visit a spring like that. I guess they would be ... I just imagine people trying to post fun pictures of them enjoying the area. Kind of just owning the activity that they're doing for the day involving a spring.

On associated imagery/messages

Respondents mentioned using the hashtag with images of people kayaking, swimming, relaxing and observing animals at the springs.

I think a picture of lots of people maybe at Rainbow Springs just like huge crowd of people enjoying these springs together especially a diverse crowd. I almost feel like maybe #OurSprings might be more effective because #MySprings sounds possessive. #OurSprings sounds like it's a community thing we have to protect together.

People swimming around in crystal clear water with manatees. Basically, maybe stories about local springs. The way I would think is here with the mermaid girls. They do stories about that a lot and specials. I'm honestly not sure. Whatever the person who's posting wants to post about the springs.

I would say, I would assume pictures of the springs but in particular with families playing in the springs. It could be a couple kayaking in the springs, it could be children swimming with their families.

Animals like birds, fish, any type of wildlife, monkeys and then maybe photos of them doing stuff, like them kayaking or fishing, something like that.

I would probably think that there's pictures of groups of people or a lot of selfies. I don't use Twitter so I'm not sure how this works but to me, this is something that you would tag your selfie with if you're on a boat in a spring. Like, we do this I'm on the board of the Discovery Science Center and so we have a hashtag of #ILoveMyDiscoveryCenter so when people are at the Discovery Center, if you take pictures of your kids with the little lizards or something, they want you to tag them and put them online.

Just crystal clear water, manatees, I would, maybe fish in crystal clear water.

I would probably associate names of springs whether it be in state of Florida wherever so I can actually click to say these are the ones I've been to...Right exactly. I mean I do that with national parks throughout the United States. Yeah I mean I wouldn't say do it with all my friends but I have a few friends that would do something like that. Yeah we make it a point to go round and see all the different springs.

Different pictures of the water areas in the springs, like pictures you see when you Google the springs or you look at the state parks. Just the different beautiful bodies of water.

Our major concern with using the #MySprings tag alone is that most of the respondents reported not using hashtags on a regular basis. Although they were familiar with the concept of hashtags, we feel the hashtag should be introduced as a part of a larger campaign.

SUGGESTED MESSAGING APPROACH

At the end of each interview, the respondents were asked which concept best represented the idea of protecting the springs. Interestingly, many respondents answered with a hybrid of the “My Home. My Springs.” and “My Backyard” concepts.

As noted previously, “My Home. My Springs.” was one of the concepts that seemed to resonate with the most respondents. While “My Backyard” could be a strong secondary campaign, using “My Home. My Springs.” allows residents to define what home is to them and quickly tie the springs to that concept of ownership and sense of place.

*I really liked my home, my springs. I think that one really ties it into this is part of where we live.
This is part of our home. I think that was probably the strongest one.*

We also believe this is the strongest of the campaign concepts. Not only does it allow citizens to envision their own ideas of home, it also allows the District to communicate that the area is their home too.

Bridging “My Home. My Springs.” to the 2017 Springs Campaign Objective:

As stated earlier in the report, the 2017 campaign objective is: “To position the District as an organization that cares about the springs and is working to protect them.” While this objective may be important to the District and its personnel, it fails to tell the average citizen why they should care. To remedy this, let’s look at combining the two concepts through a story that resonates with the citizens of Citrus, Hernando and Marion counties.

We suggest building the “My Home. My Springs.” story by doing the following:

1. Define real citizens in the three counties who have a connection with the springs. The District can build a bank of social media posts to use throughout the campaign. The key is to reiterate in every post HOW people associate their local springs as part of their home.
 - End each post with, “My Home. My Springs.”
 - Each post should include a person and a view of the springs.
 - Refrain from being preachy or overtly scientific – focus on real people trying to connect with other real people.
2. Introduce the District as the “springs expert and protector” subtly. Rather than simply using a “regular” citizen, now focus on finding that District springs team member to tell their story. The message now would be something like, “I work for the Southwest Florida Water Management District. Hernando county is my home. My job is protecting these springs.”
 - Again, end each post with, “My Home. My Springs.”
 - Since you have introduced the campaign highlighting average citizens, you can now include longer narratives about the District and how they protect the springs. The key here is to continue to highlight the person more than the District.
3. Invite the public to connect on springs’ matters. Yes, the District offers many resources for springs information, but the average citizen may not see the usefulness in them or feel the need to visit an event. We suggest using the District employees in step two as a conduit to the information. This tactic changes the relationships from “a government agency telling me to read something” to “a person I relate to, who happens to work for a government entity, wants me to read something.”

We believe the success of the 2017 Springs Campaign will be driven by real people telling the how the springs matter to them personally. Some of those people just so happen to work for the District.