

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION  
DIVISION OF RECREATION AND PARKS  
OFFICE OF PARK PLANNING**



**GILCHRIST  
BLUE SPRINGS**

**NOVEMBER 28, 2017**

**PRELIMINARY PUBLIC WORKSHOP  
PUBLIC INTERACTION COMPONENT**

# Public Survey

Use Your Stickers

What would you like to do at the park?

Camping

Cabins

Swimming

Hiking

Picnicking

Paddling

Tubing

Wildlife Viewing/  
Nature Study

Other

**SNORKELING**

*to appreciate the underwater beauty + magnificent plant and animal life!!!*

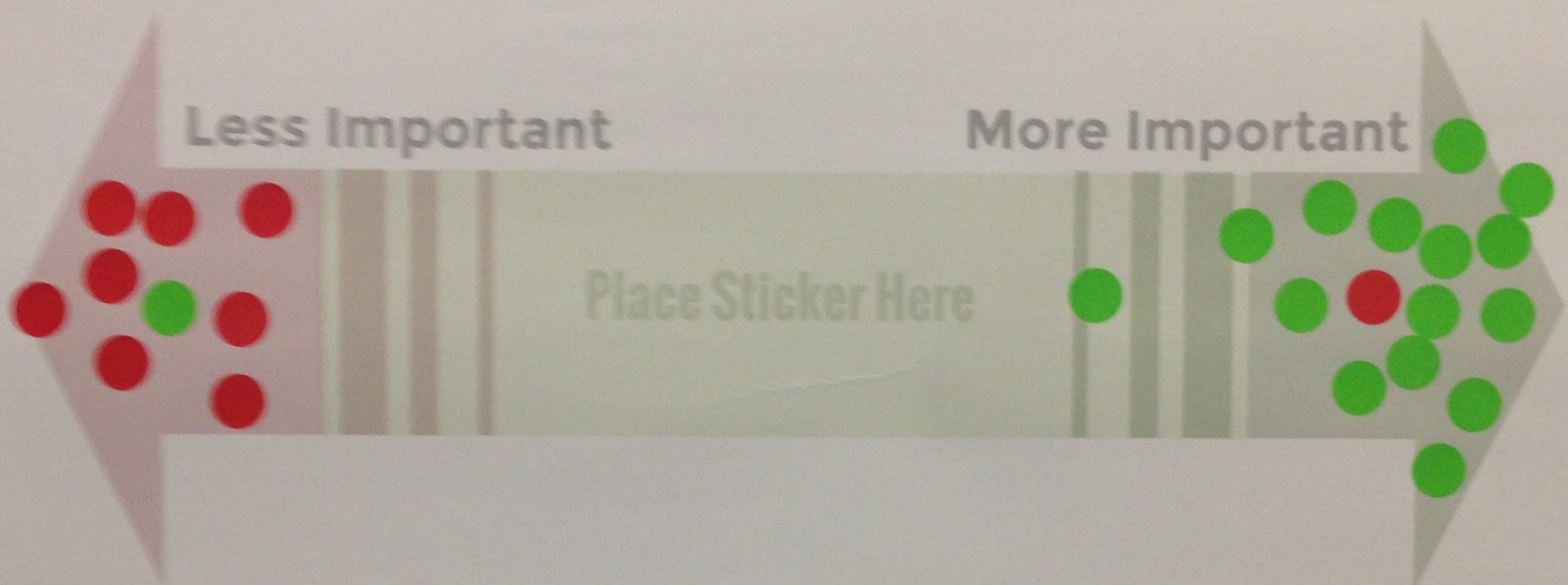
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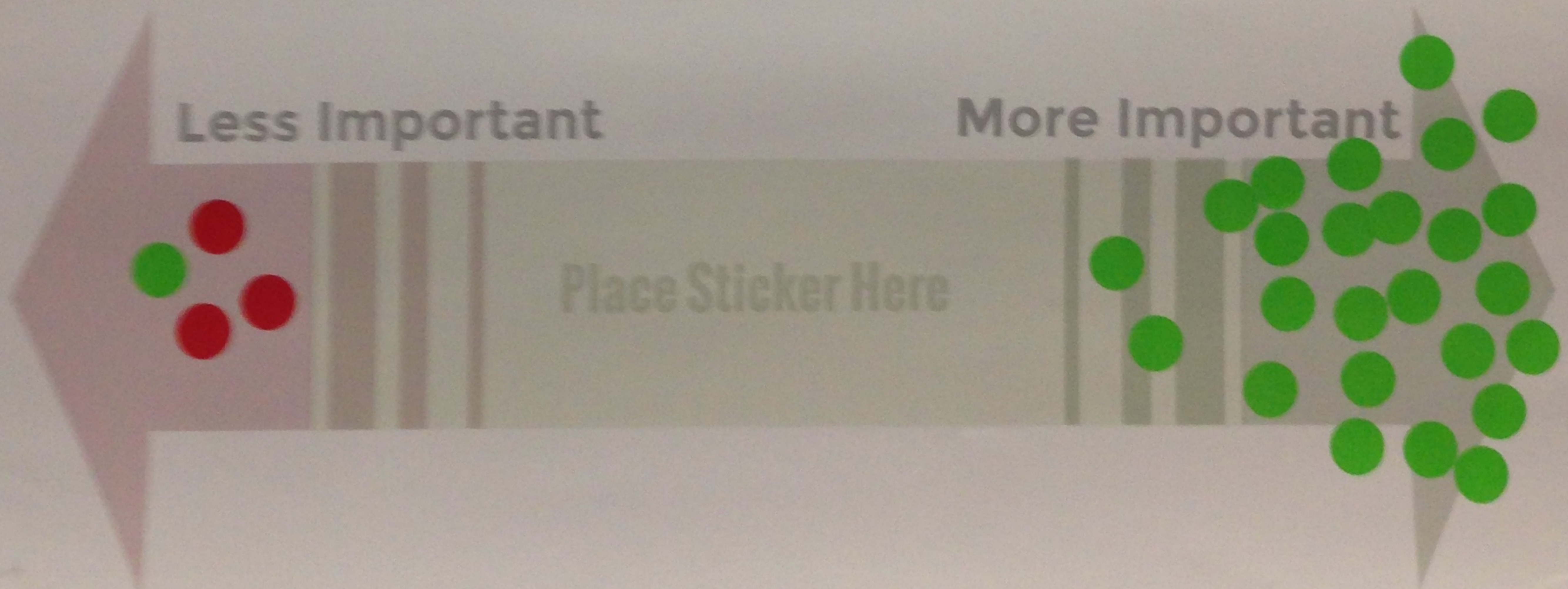
Rate the issue in importance

(One Per  
Question)

Improving or redesigning the  
campground



Improving or expanding signage,  
boardwalks, trails and overlooks  
throughout the park



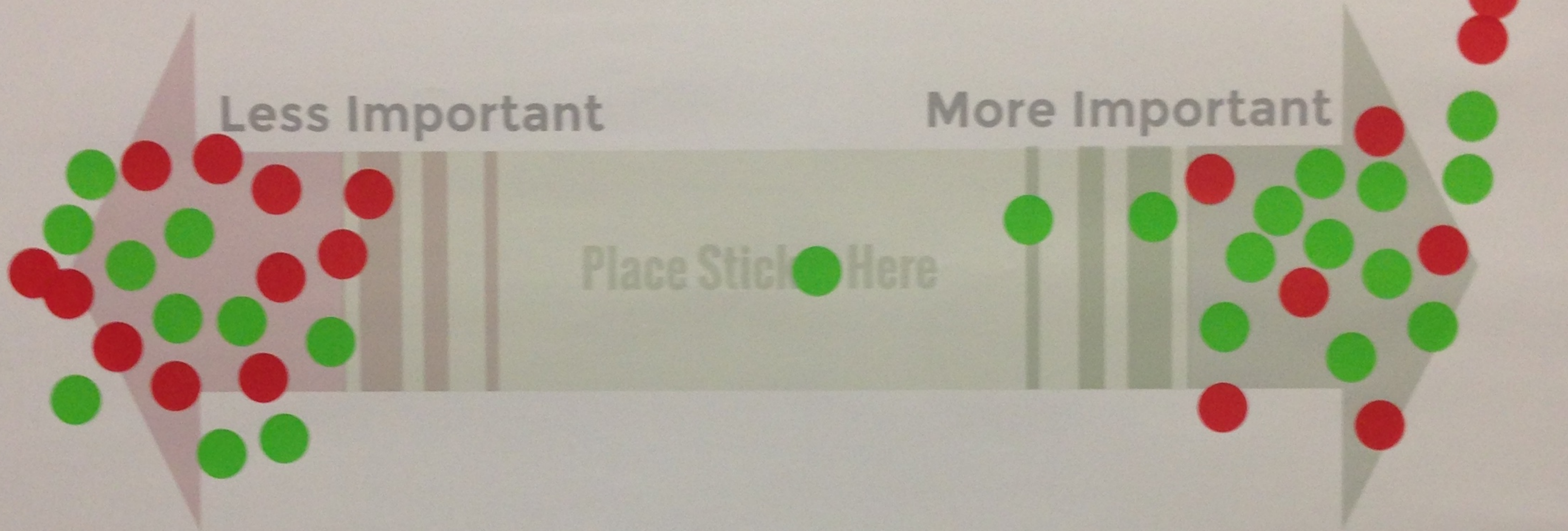
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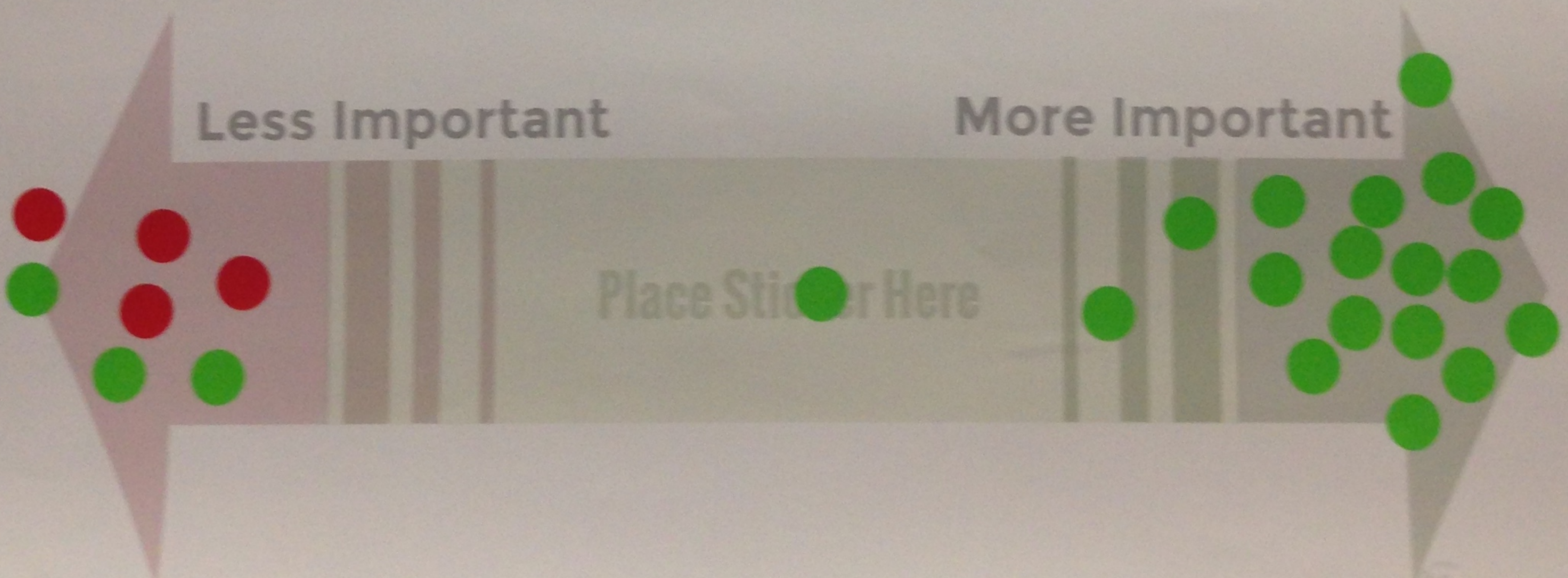
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Rate the issue in importance

Increase the current level of public access  
and the number of recreational activities



Improve the facilities in the park's  
main picnic and swimming area



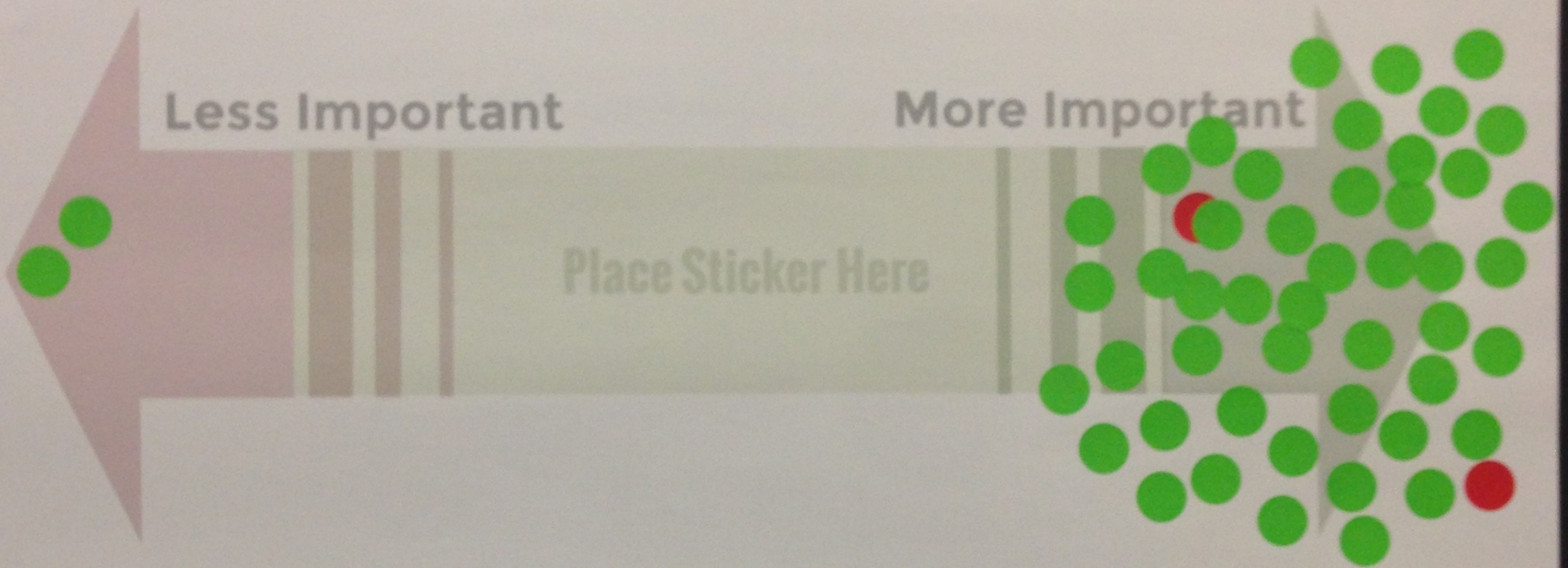
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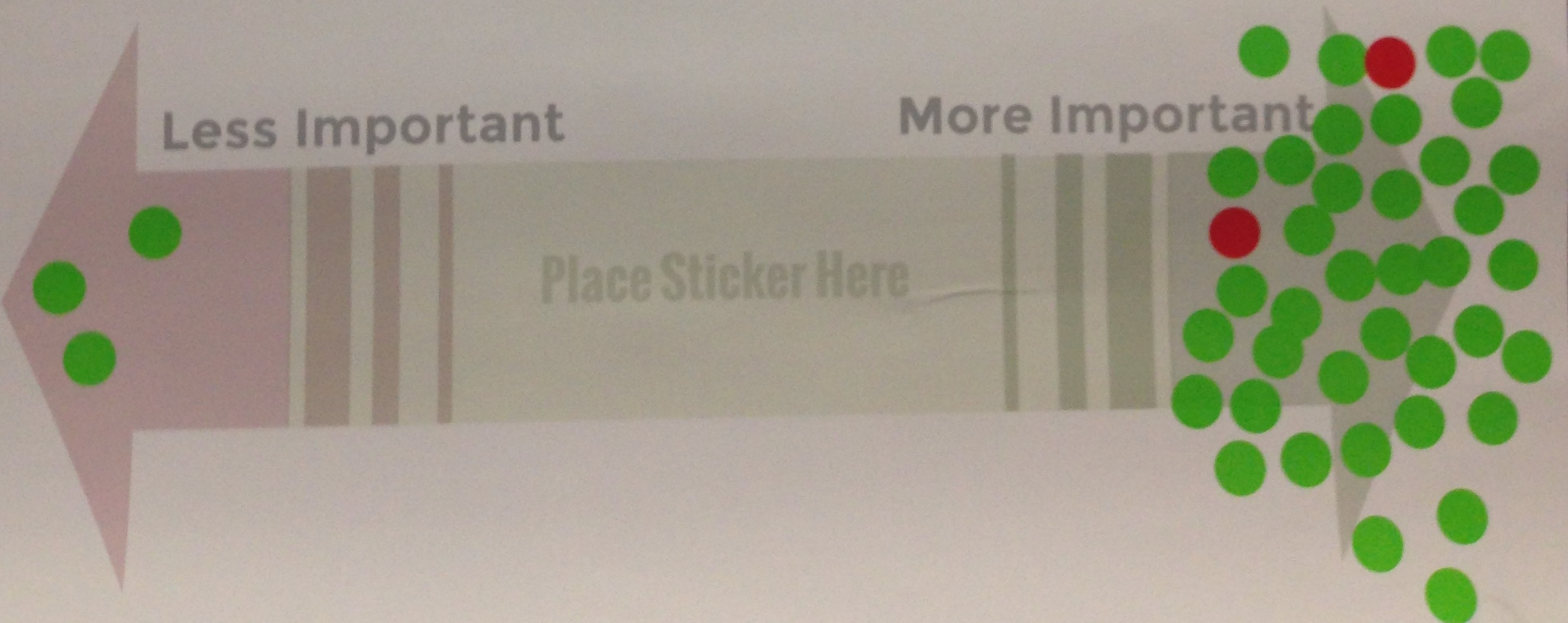
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Rate the issue in importance

Increase protection of the park's springs and spring run ecosystems



Restoration and maintenance of the park's wildlife and native plant communities



# SWOT Analysis

# Weaknesses

Write what you believe to be a weakness of Gilchrist Blue Springs below

Eg. "the restrooms are too small" DON'T ALLOW ALCOHOL

The structures are too old and need to be replaced.

BOARDWALK WAS UNSAFE BEFORE IRMA HIT

Put a re-access TO BOARDWALK FROM WATER at SF RIVER x2

(I think you should rebuild the boardwalk - Many structures are OK P.N.s Please do not make this a concrete jungle x2

Lack of infrastructure investment

Rebuild boardwalk x2 x3

Cars backup all the way back to the entrance and sometimes they have closed the park after an hour wait (during summer weekends)

LIMITED/NO DIVING TO QUALIFIED DIVERS - x2

★ Use of spring run requires wading/walking back. Access to walkway to save underwater vegetation would help.

Roadway / Parking area

Parking areas, walkways, entrance road, boardwalk

Danger of Diving Platform - need to regulate # jumping at once.

TOO MUCH WADING PERMITTED - UNDERWATER GARDENS TRAMPLED

LOW KEY NATURAL HARDSCAPE - is IDEAL and direction for future springs parks

Too narrow a run to support snorkeling + tubing + paddling

I AGREE ↓

no decent water access/dock for kayaks  
people trampling the vegetation -  
these runs are priceless -  
no more wading in  
the runs!

THIS!  
\*

Next SFR spring to stop  
flowing during next major  
drought

poor access via Poe Springs Road

# SWOT Analysis

# Opportunities

Write what you believe to be an opportunity for Gilchrist Blue Springs below

g. "hiking trails could showcase the the Santa Fe River floodplain"

THIS \*

This spring is the Crown Jewel of Florida's springs - make it an educational center - a poster child for what the Florida springs could look like again.

## \* Education

KEEP AS NATURAL AS POSSIBLE

Education !!! - Park Ranger Walks - Leave as Natural as possible x2 + 1 + 1  
Great place to start on the Gilchrist Blue way Trail

## Natural Classroom

Keep natural - do not over develop. use as natural classroom

Please keep it natural, Less Development

Add playground for kids.

ADD EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES LIKE RANGER WALKS & INTERPRETIVE TRAILS (LIKE PROTECTOR SPRINGS) FOR NATURE & SPRINGS - I AGREE - X2 - #1 PRIORITY

Education, community events encouraging pride in springs, ranger/education presence. - x2

## Camping

Great opportunity to be an all natural experience for families etc. Visitors

START AN "ART IN THE PARK" PROGRAM INVOLVING LOCAL ARTISTS + WRITERS + MUSICIANS x2

CONTROLLED BURNING w/ PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

- KEEP IT NATURAL

Destination for local school education trips. Sci/Env. Education

Education, VOLUNTEERISM, Support Local NGO's That support the River

x1. keep it as is - NO paved parking lots, NO concrete, protect the ~~the~~ vegetation + the entire springhead.

\* Springs Environmental center location + 2 \* SOON!

Education programs for students + visitors

MAXIMIZE RECREATION

# SWOT Analysis

# Threats

Write what you believe to be a threat for the Gilchrist Blue Springs below

Eg. "poor water quality could harm the user experience"

Agriculture + lawn irrigation

~~Better~~ Bathhouse not adequate  
People and the trash they leave

Agriculture kills Springs

Limit Ag. uses in recharge area X2+1  
yes! right on!! X1

Ag!

Declining flows due to excessive  
GW pumping - esp. irrigation

Public does not understand how to protect springs.

AG

OVER USE

DO NOT TURN INTO AN AMUSEMENT PARK

Over development around spring pool  
Keep area natural  
Do not put in concrete basin. Use plants to prevent erosion

Don't take down jumping dock  
to much surrounding development

Don't take down jumping dock!  
save jumping dock!!

irrigation, land use - agriculture - fertilizer - pesticides, herbicides

people trampling vegetation; wading -  
NO more!!

Elected people who refuse to lead springs restoration.  
Agricultural fertilizers & chemicals

- PEOPLE TRAMPLING SAV IN THE SPRINGS RUNS - X2+1  
- over use, pollution, Bureaucracy in making positive changes

\* Pollution  
- Crowds too large - NEED TO HAVE CAPACITY THRESHOLD DURING SUMMER  
- Crowds & Trampling Vegetation

- Ag in area decreasing water quality (increasing algae)  
- TRAMPLING VEGETATION / SAV  
- Too many people on jumping platform could be dangerous  
- IGNORANCE ABOUT IMPORTANCE OF NATURE AND HOW FRAGILE IT IS

- Pollution  
- poor Supervision by Dept.  
- OVER USE OF MAIN SPRING

Erosion around main spring  
Pollution, agriculture, over consumption of water  
- RETAIN Jumping Dock

My Biggest concern is the STATE sees \$  
Please Protect the Spring & not exploit it for \$tates \$



# SWOT Analysis

# Strengths

Write what you believe to be a strength of Gilchrist Blue Springs below

"the clear water of Gilchrist Blue Spring is inviting"

Perfect site for strong springs education program!

Beautiful example of 1st magnitude Springs  
Please do not over develop!

Diversity of plants & wildlife  
Jumping Dock  
Clear Blue Water

Dock & Walkway x 2

Good healthy grass

Access to Rum Island

limit novelty rentals

No Access from Rum Island

★ Best SAV in Florida - protect it!

USE BLUE SPRINGS as an example of a beautiful spring - IT'S A WORLD TREASURE  
USE IT as a BASIS FOR UNDERWATER TOURS FOR EDUCATION

CLEAN WATER

Park should NOT be over-developed

DO NOT COMPETE WITH LOCAL RENTAL + DIVE SHOP BUSINESSES

Clean Water Walkway - Leave Wild Area in BACK Not touched I enjoy seeing Wildlife - Saw water there today

Best spring on Santa Fe to show benefits & eco of area.

Clean water + natural beauty - do not over develop

SWIMMING BLUE RUN AND NAKED. (NO WADING, NO WALKING IN RUNS) SWIM ONLY YES

THE SPRINGS AND RIVER RUNS x 2

DIVING PLATFORM

Limit the Number of People  
Don't compete with LOCAL RENTAL.

\* hot water in showers lol, it's true

BOARDWALK W. OVERLOOKS like

One of THE most beautiful examples of a spring, now more affordable.

VOZUSIA RIVER WITH EDUCATIONAL SIGNS  
AT RIVER, STEPS FOR SWIMMERS + Kayakers  
Turtles

Underdeveloped land with potential for hiking trails.

Swimming area

Wild natural resources Scenic landscape  
BEST CAR CAMPING ANYWHERE!

DIVING PLATFORM / BOARDWALK / HOT SPA  
OPEN SPRING RUN

Rum Island County Park  
(Columbia County)

Santa Fe River

Rum Island

PROTECT  
SPRINGS  
FROM  
WASTING

NATURAL  
HARDSCAPE  
IF POSSIBLE

SANDHILL  
RESTORATION

NW 60th St.

CR 340





Rum Island County Park  
(Columbia County)

Santa Fe River

Rum Island

Tree House

FIRE MGMT  
RESTORATION  
AREA  
(Camp, Picnic,  
Festivals)

BURN  
(Pasture)

Zip  
Line  
!!!

NW 60th St.

CR 340

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**NOVEMBER 30, 2017**

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PUBLIC INTERACTION COMPONENT**

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Camping ●●●●●●●

Cabins ●●●●●●●●●●

Swimming ●●●●●●●●●●

Hiking ●●●●●●

Picnicking ●●●

Paddling ●

Tubing ●

Wildlife Viewing/  
Nature Study ●●●●●●●●

Other *snorkling* ●●●●●●●●

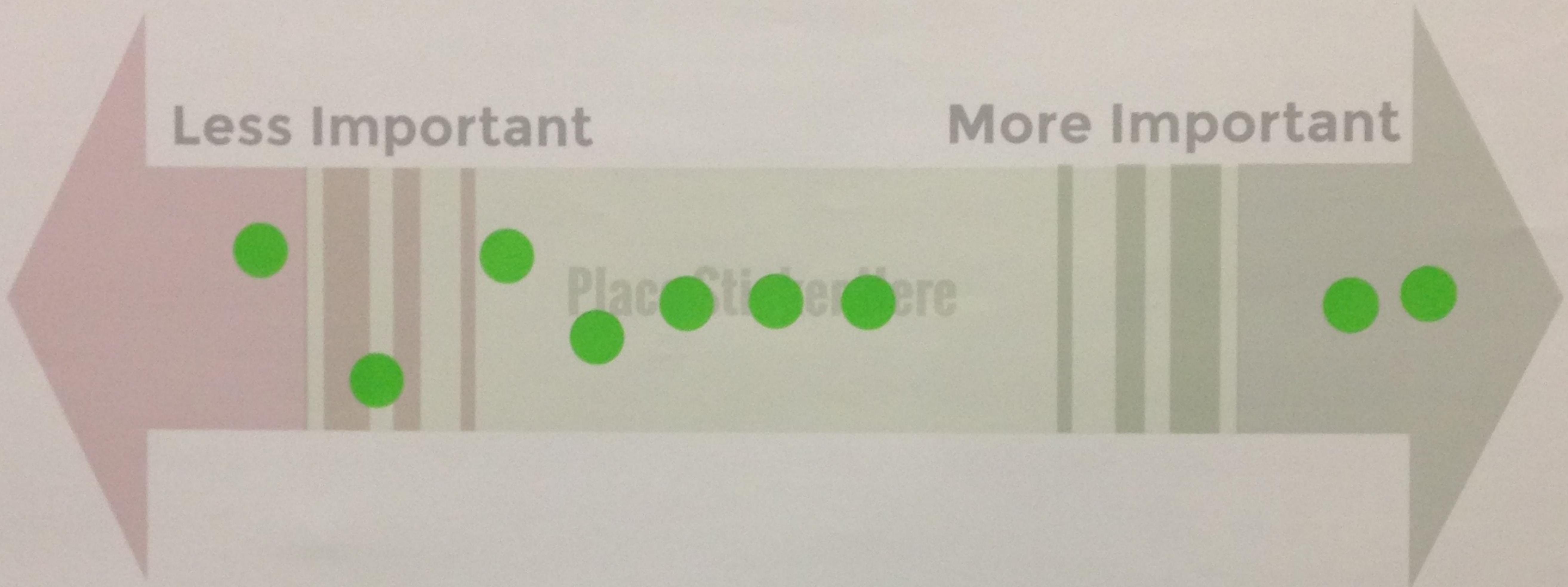
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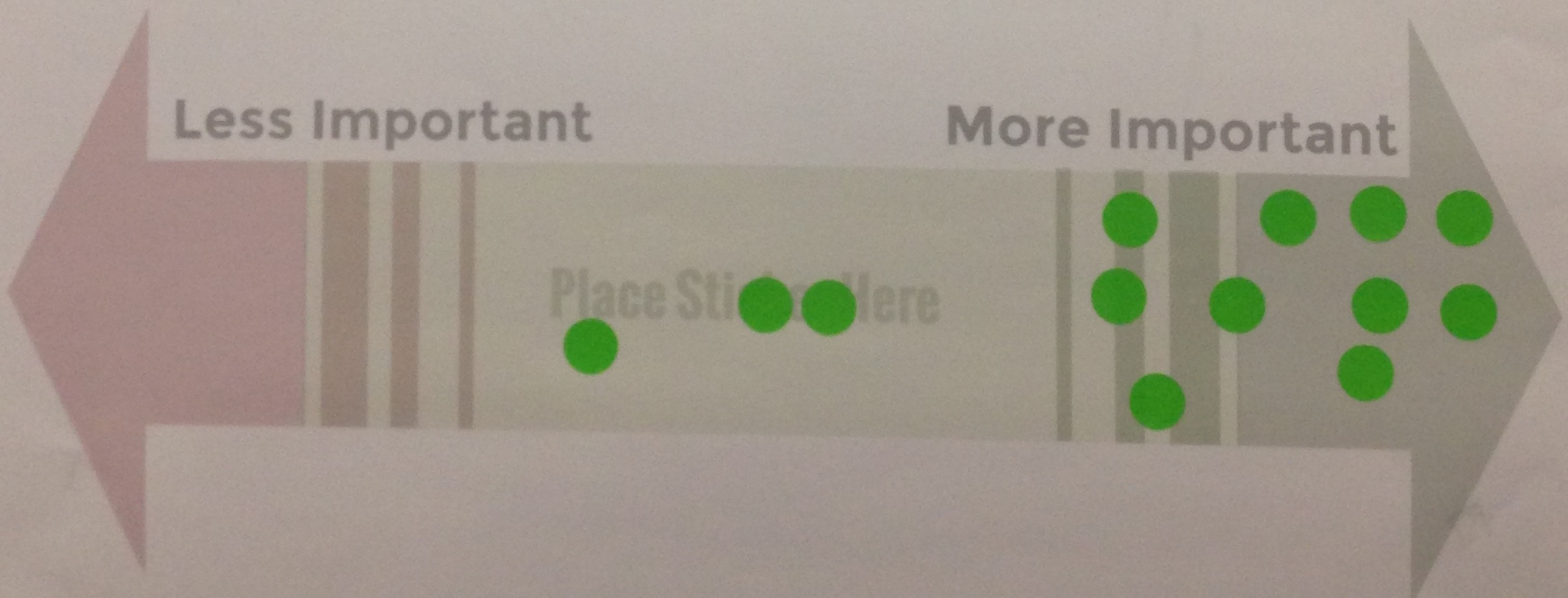
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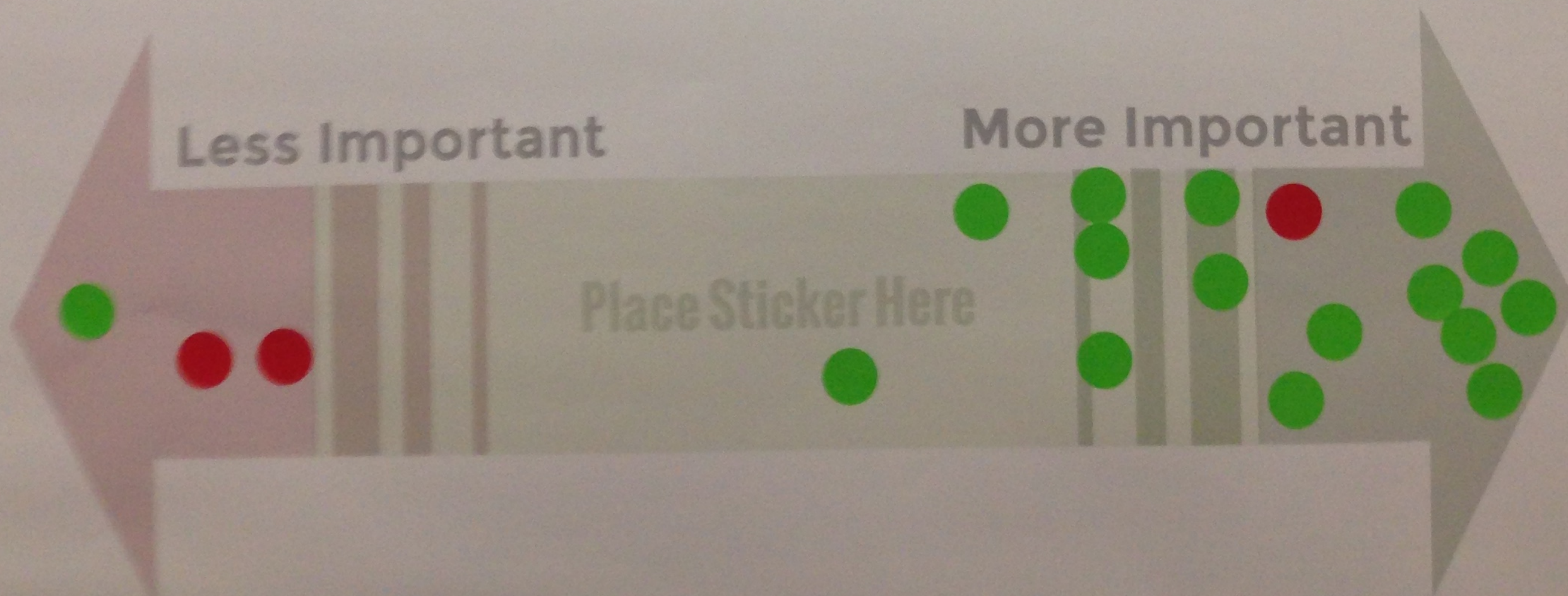
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**Increase protection of the park's springs  
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**Restoration and maintenance of the  
park's wildlife and native plant  
communities**



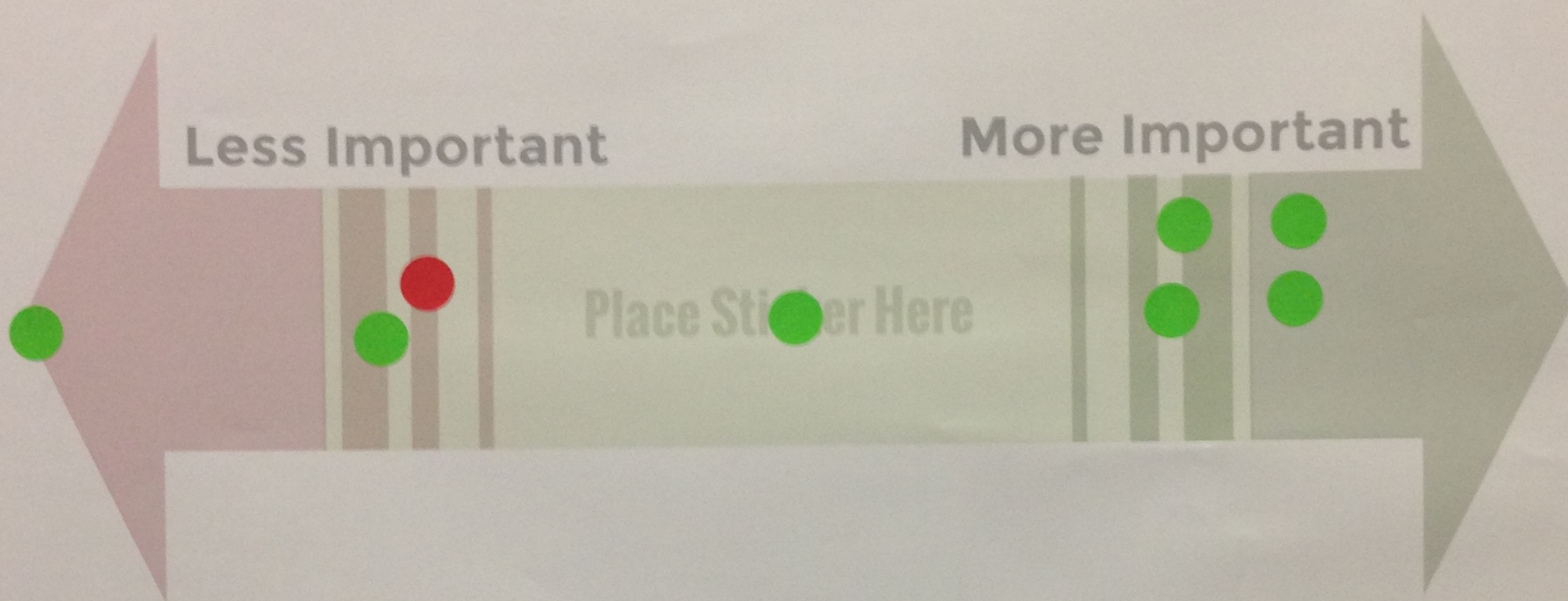
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and the number of recreational activities



Improve the facilities in the park's  
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# SWOT Analysis

# Weaknesses

Write what you believe to be a weakness of Gilchrist Blue Springs below

Eg. "the restrooms are too small"

Nitrate pollution

Loss of rooted aquatics

Lack of access to swim area that won't harm edge & bottom vegetation

Nitrate pollution → slime algae

political pressure

AGRICULTURE = NITRATES

# SWOT Analysis

# Opportunities

Write what you believe to be an opportunity for Gilchrist Blue Springs below

Eg. "hiking trails could showcase the the Santa Fe River floodplain"

Run it like Manatee + Fanning Springs. Balance natural conservation with recreational use

Create hiking trails & interpret the natural resources

Educational opportunity about springs, aquifer + land use

interpret the resource, trails + views that respect the resource

PROVIDE HISTORICAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY OF THIS SPRING AND HOW TO MEASURE IT AGAINST USE OF SURROUNDINGS... EXPLAIN EFFECTS TO THIS SPRING

maintain jump off dock  
MORE HIKING TRAILS  
Rebuild the boardwalk

Adding camping + cabins (showcase out don't hide it) ← AGREE

LANDSCAPE BETWEEN PAVILIONS AND MAIN SPRING WITH NATIVE PLANTS AND NO FERTILIZER TO PROVIDE HABITAT TO NATIVE POLLINATORS, BIRDS, & OTHER WILDLIFE

# SWOT Analysis

# Threats

Write what you believe to be a threat for the Gilchrist Blue Springs below

Eg. "poor water quality could harm the user experience"

## AGRICULTURE

Over pumping of Aquifer ●●

Pollution - nitrates ●●\*

- Plastic w/oy used in the spring + run
- too many signs, rules
- Camping not first come first serve
- Boardwalk construction workers trampling plants
- Cement (not wood)
- Not putting in as beautiful - a boardwalk that already there

over use!

Protection of the submerged aquatic veg.

OVER PUMPING, FERTILIZER, SEPTIC TANK LEAKS  
PHOSPHATE MINING

Greater planting of row crops in springhed

More dairy farms

Increased residential development

Wanting to limit public use is a real threat!

TWO MANY WATER USE PERMITS

# SWOT Analysis

# Strengths

Write what you believe to be a strength of Gilchrist Blue Springs below

Eg. "the clear water of Gilchrist Blue Spring is inviting" ●

Flow Volume ●

Spectacular Spring basin & run

One of the last true blue springs! ●

Family friendly - 3 generations of great memories

Hidden gem of all Gilchrist residents + visitors

- Beautiful crystal clear water  
all wood for boardwalk
- Swimming and snorkeling in the run
- Beautiful iconic Boardwalk  
up high



Rum Island County Park  
(Columbia County)

Rum Island

Docks

Dock

Storage

Residence

Storage

Residence

Toll Booth

Recreation Hall

Pavilion

Docks

Picnic Pavilions

Bathhouse

Pumphouse

Residence

Storage

Native Plant  
restoration

Bathrooms  
in some  
upland areas

Recreational  
Use Area  
Ball Park, etc.  
Fitness Golf

NW 60th St.

CR 340

Rum Island County Park  
(Columbia County)

Santa Fe River

Rum Island

Burn

NW 60th St

CR 340