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Building citizen science rigor, efficiency and policy applications: examples from Island County marine resources committee

Elsa Schwartz  
*Island County Marine Resources Committee, United States*, eschwartz@estuaries.org

Barbara Bennett  
*Island County Marine Resources Committee, United States*, bennbluw@gmail.com

Anna Toledo  
*Island County Marine Resources Committee, United States*, a.toledo@co.island.wa.us

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Building Citizen Science Rigor, Efficiency, and Policy Applications: Examples from Island County Marine Resources Committee

Elsa Schwartz, Island County MRC Chair
Barbara Bennett, Island County MRC Vice-Chair
Marine Resources Committees History

- 1980s-1990s National Marine Sanctuary Proposal
- Murrray-Metcalf Commission
  - Northwest Straits Marine Conservation Initiative 1998
Northwest Straits Initiative

Northwest Straits Commission
Provides funding, training, and support to MRCs

Northwest Straits Foundation
Nonprofit that leverages additional financial resources

Marine Resources Committees
Volunteers guided by sound science to identify priorities, advise local authorities, conduct projects, and build local awareness, support, and engagement.
Northwest Straits Initiative

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5/25/2018 Presentation for Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 2018
Local MRC Stakeholders

- Local Elected Officials
- County Department Directors & Staff
- Marine Resources Committees
- Tribes
- Scientific Community
- General Public

5/25/2018 Presentation for Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 2018
Local MRC Dialogue with Stakeholders

County Commissioners

County Department Directors & Staff

Tribes

Scientific Community

General Public

5/25/2018 Presentation for Salish Sea Ecosystem Conference 2018
Project Planning Cycle

1. Assess Needs & Context
2. Consider Project Life Cycle
3. Explore Science Partnerships
4. Prioritize and Select Projects
5. Implement, Report & Publicize Project Outcomes
Project Planning – Needs Assessment

- Current and emerging trends
- Relationships between trends and marine components
- Issues to be researched, remedied, communicated to staff or public
- Best ways to communicate with decision makers
- Thoughts on past and future MRC work
- Others to interview
- Goals, plans for reporting and thanks
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>4 (Highest)</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1 (lowest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Impact on Puget Sound protection or recovery</td>
<td>Has a large measureable impact</td>
<td>Some impact, could be better with minor adjustments (better funding/more partnerships etc./better metrics)</td>
<td>Has a minor impact/not easily measured</td>
<td>Has no impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fills a niche</td>
<td>We’re the only ones doing it</td>
<td>A couple of other organizations are involved</td>
<td>A lot of other groups involved, but we play a noticeable role</td>
<td>Everyone is involved, we’re a needle in a haystack</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition with other organizations</td>
<td>No competition</td>
<td>Some competition, but doesn’t/ won’t prohibit us</td>
<td>Highly competitive, we’re getting crowded by others</td>
<td>We can’t/won’t be able to make a meaningful contribution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding availability</td>
<td>We always get funding (every year) and will continue to get it</td>
<td>We usually get funding but not always, the future looks the same</td>
<td>Funding comes and goes and is expected to continue this way.</td>
<td>Funding has or is drying up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of MRC engagement</td>
<td>MRC members are directly involved. Wouldn’t happen without them.</td>
<td>MRC members provide some organization/planning but do not “get their hands dirty”</td>
<td>MRC members show interest, but they’re not directly involved</td>
<td>MRC members have no interest</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Engage Scientific Community

Secure Data Analysis

Seek Opportunities to Publish

Make Data Available and Visible

Juvenile Salmon Survey
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
Skagit River Systems Cooperative

Eelgrass
WA Department of Natural Resources

Forage Fish
WA Department of Fish and Wildlife

Pigeon Guillemot Survey
Washington and Whidbey Audobon Societies

Cornet Bay Restoration
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation
US Fish and Wildlife Service
Consider Project Life Cycle

- Launch
- Sustain & Refine
- Retire or Suspend
Key Questions
in Annual Citizen Science Project Review

• What have we learned to date?
• What are next research questions?
Outreach to Decision Makers, Staff and Public

- Develop awareness and accurate knowledge
- Hear questions, understand concerns
- Dialogue re: emerging policy opportunities
- Overall, cultivate stakeholder relationships
Resources

Island County Marine Resources Committee website
http://www.islandcountymrc.org/

Northwest Straits Initiative
http://www.nwstraits.org/about-us/overview/

Juvenile Salmon Survey Summary

Eelgrass Summary
http://www.islandcountymrc.org/media/1051/2013-eelgrass.pdf

Anna Toledo, Island County MRC Coordinator: A.toledo@co.island.wa.us