

## Confluence 2020 Open Space Session Notes

### Evaluation of Collaborative Conservation efforts

#### Some Evaluation Tools that Currently Exist:

- National Science Foundation Evaluation Standards
- Partnership Impact Model (US Fish and Wildlife Service)
- General grant evaluation instructions (from foundations)
- National Fish and Wildlife Foundation evaluation process
- National Forest Foundation (basic process evaluation tool)
- Cambridge Conservation Collaborative Tool
- Adaptive Capacity Wheel (identify process to build capacity)
- Literature searches in peer reviewed journals like *Science and Natural Resources*

#### Potential Methods and Metrics for Evaluating Collaborative Projects

- Participatory observation
- Participatory learning
- Knowledge co-production
- Listening
- Storytelling
- Collective action
- Surveys and Interviews
- Metrics (things you can measure)
- Records of Engagement (records social dynamics, not just meeting minutes)
- Logic models
- Relationship health
- Trust
- Inclusiveness
- Readiness to engage
- In-depth stakeholder analysis
- Theory of Change (objectives that can be evaluated)
- Social networking
- Indicators from communities (what do they want to know?)
- Sustainable return on investment
- Payment for ecosystem services
- Wealth accounting

## Potential Challenges

- Lack of evaluation training
- Funding for implementation but not for evaluating the process
- Expensive to do
- Time consuming
- Tend to report on outputs instead of *outcomes*
- Linking process to outcomes is very difficult as the outcomes may happen in the future
- Need longitudinal assessments of projects to document outcomes (yearly)
- How do we prove that best practices are linked to outcomes?
- External changes (policy changes, personnel changes, etc.) can change the outcomes
- How do we show collaboratives have lasting impacts? Can we measure this?
- Do collaboratives re-inforce power dynamics? (In small communities, the same people are involved in all the collaboratives).

## Key Points

- Pick 1-3 variables to measure, then go from there in a systematic process
- Get evaluation training
- Have all stakeholders agree on what they want evaluated and how... this directly affects your project objectives
- Do not add evaluation onto a project ad hoc – build it into the planning process from the beginning!
- Know your cultural context – different cultures will need different evaluation methods

## Next Steps

- How does the WCCN help share learning between participants? (CRAFT?)
- Provide best practices fact sheets on evaluation (how-to, frameworks). Fact sheets should contain key resources and training opportunities as well as where to find more information.
- Share case studies that are doing a good job in evaluation.
- Synthesize templates to use for evaluation that have:
  - Key steps on how to do it
  - Key questions that should be answered through evaluation
  - The sequencing of steps to do in an evaluation process
  - Commonalities/differences across frameworks and/or guides.

