



Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR) Team Seminar

12:00PM – 1:00PM September 29th, 2014

Joe Macknis Memorial Conference Room (Fish Shack)
Chesapeake Bay Program Office
410 Severn Ave Annapolis, MD

Action Item

- STAR will work with the GITs and Nick Salafsky to choose one outcome (particularly one that isn't a total "slam dunk") and think through the theory of change, indicators, create a framework, determine what type of deliverables would be useful to the managers, and the full range of methods and metrics needed.

Meeting Participation

Leadership: Bill Dennison (UMCES), Mark Bennett (USGS), Scott Phillips (USGS), Peter Tango (USGS/CBPO), Lea Rubin (CRC/CBPO), Amanda Pruzinsky (CRC/CBPO)

Participants: Greg Allen (EPA/CBPO), Samantha Watterson (CRC/CBPO), Lauren Taneyhill (CRC/CBPO), Hannah Martin (CRC/CBPO), Tuana Phillips (CRC/CBPO), Gary Shenk (EPA/CBPO), Mike Foreman (VA DCR), Matt Ellis (CRC), Natalie Gardner (CRC), Jeff Sweeny (EPA/CBPO), Mary Ellen Ley (USGS/CBPO), Howard Weinberg (UMCES/CBPO), Jennifer Greiner (USFWS/CBPO)

Presenter: Nick Salafsky (CMP/FOS)

Welcome and Introduction – William Dennison (Co-Chair) and Greg Allen (Leadership GIT Coordinator)

William Dennison and Greg Allen will give an introduction of the STAR IAN Seminar Series and the speaker Nick Salafsky, Co-Director, Foundations of Success & Co-Chair, Conservation Measures Partnership.

Presenter Biography:

Nick Salafsky is Co-Director of [Foundations of Success](#), a non-profit organization that seeks to improve the practice of conservation. Foundations of Success has worked for over a decade with conservation practitioners around the world to define clear and practical measures of conservation success, determine sound guiding principles for using conservation strategies, and develop the knowledge and skills of individuals and organizations to do good adaptive management. Nick is also product manager of the [Miradi Adaptive Management Software](#) program and Co-Chair of the [Conservation Measures Partnership](#), a community of practice composed of many of the world's leading conservation organizations and agencies.

Seminar Presentation

Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation and Miradi Software: A Framework and Toolkit for "Real-World" Adaptive Management of Conservation Projects and Programs

Nick Salafsky (Co-Director, Foundations of Success and Co-Chair, Conservation Measures Partnership)

Presentation Description:

"Adaptive management" is one of those buzzwords that sounds great in theory, but has proven to be exceedingly difficult to implement in practice. The [Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation](#) provide a common framework for designing, managing, monitoring, and learning from conservation projects and programs that has been developed and adopted by some of the world's leading conservation organizations and agencies. [Miradi Software](#) provides an integrated toolkit that helps practitioners both implement the *Open Standards* and systematically collect and share data about their work. In this presentation, I provide a brief introduction to this framework and toolkit and illustrate how they are being used in the "real-world" to adaptively and collaboratively manage large complex conservation and natural resource programs such as those in the Chesapeake Bay and ultimately, to improve the practice of conservation.

The Presentation can be viewed at:

http://ian.umces.edu/seminarseries/seminar/102/open_standards_for_the_practice_of_conservation_and_miradi_software_2014-10-07/

Discussion

- The Chesapeake Bay Program collects data on BMP implementation and also has an extensive monitoring program to track the status of the Bay. The data sets are on different scales (temporal and spatial). Is there a way to use Miradi Software to track and engage the data layers to produce answers about effectiveness?
 - The open standard helps bring the data into one conceptual framework, visualize the data, and turn into operational research questions.
 - After the targets are decided upon, status measures can be collected one time (or at particular intervals) by the community. Those data for status must then be interpreted based on an agreed upon rating. This can be done through the viability analysis in the open standard. The effectiveness measures take more effort, but are important to track. The open standard helps cut through the details and see the overall patterns.
- When setting up a report card like the UMCES Bay Report Card, what is your process for setting up indicators and timeline?
 - There is variation based on location, complexity, and how far along a program is in the process. The open standard helps cut through the details that people often dwell on and focus on the overall patterns.
- A large part of the adaptive management process is to use the information to continually improve. The CBP is going to quickly reach the "end of the loop" and will need to refresh management strategies.
 - Major barriers to good adaptive management tend to be social pressures or higher level pressures, not technical or scientific. These higher level pressures include lack of

funding, lack of board pressure, lack of donor pressure, lack of time, and lack of culture of accountability.

- Ask your managers: What is the report or analyses that you would like on your desk in 2 years that will help you make your management decisions? Start there and work your way back to what data you need and DONT need.
 - What decision needs to be made → What information is needed at all levels in order to inform that decision → What data do you need
- Core hypothesis: In regards to conservation projects, some fraction of the time and funding given to these projects will lead to success and some will lead to failure, but including adaptive management will improve the success ratio.
- How do organizations continue to improve and be funded when the results that they want are still not being achieved?
 - Cystic Fibrosis and crowd source data example: New York Times article
 - Even though all hospitals were improving, the best hospitals were improving faster. These hospitals had a capacity to learn and adapt and were not afraid to ask uncomfortable or risky questions about their own work. They took a lot of risk, but it was necessary and lead to improvement and faster improvement than hospitals that didn't.
- The CBP produced a New Insights Report, which was a very useful, but the effort was high. There are requests for other similar reports, but on a quicker timescale, how would you approach this?
 - There are many ways to approach this, but this brings up issues that workers in the middle of academics and managers often have to face:
 - The “Burden of proof”: practitioners don't have time and need to continue implementing practices; on the other side the academics have seemingly unlimited needs, always want more data with less uncertainty.
 - “In science, it's better to have approximate answers to exact questions, than exact answers to questions that don't matter.”
 - Generally invest in more adaptive management when: stakes are high (high cost of error or inaction), potential to leverage learning, and costs of measures are low relative to actions.
- Political expedience to spreading support vs. targeting/consolidating resources to track over time to learn effects of specific actions. The targeted efforts become an icon for conservation effectiveness. Is there a correct balance?
 - If a common framework is being used, spreading of efforts creates a portfolio of interventions that could be analyzed and the variation in those systems is part of the natural experiment. There is a need for both spreading support and targeting/consolidating, but the balance depends on the system and resources.
- “Free Trial” – What does that mean to us?
 - The CBP could download a free copy of Miradi share. Currently, the number one competition is Microsoft Office because it is what people know and currently use to manage their data. But Miradi is a structured and standardized software database that will support or improve underlying business processes (particularly conservation

programs that work with many different organizations). In the future, the conceptual diagrams and data will be linked to GIS and visual diagrams.

- Conservation measures partnership is a community of practice that is interested in sharing and learning from each other. Not a high commitment partnership, but the more an organization puts into it, the more useful it is. The organizations can also be a part of a specific action team.
- How many people need to create diagrams for this software to be useful?
 - There is a scale. One person or small project team that wants to manage their data with Miradi could download it and it would be useful. Some teams will have one person dedicated to be the Miradi expert, but this is not recommended because then it is used less and therefore less useful. Miradi Share is recommended to be used for adaptive management because software should not be the barrier.
- There are two strategies for increasing the number of conservation programs that use adaptive management: (1) focus on the universities in order to improve the understanding in the next generation and (2) training the current community.
- **ACTION:** STAR will work with the GITs and Nick Salafsky to choose one outcome (particularly one that isn't a total "slam dunk") and think through the theory of change, indicators, create a framework, determine what type of deliverables would be useful to the managers, and the full range of methods and metrics needed.