

# 2009 Environmental Evaluators Networking Forum

## *"The Value of Environmental Evaluation"*

Co-sponsored by:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency & The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation

Hosted by:

The George Washington University  
Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration  
The Cloyd Heck Marvin Center (3<sup>rd</sup> Floor), 800 21<sup>st</sup> Street, NW Washington, DC 20052

### Monday, June 8, 2009

7:45 am **Sign-in: Registration; Continental Breakfast; Meet and Greet**

8:30 am **Welcome: Overview of 2009 Forum, Outline of Day's Schedule and Goals  
(Continental Ballroom)**

George Grob

*Center for Public Program Evaluation*

Katherine Dawes

*EPA*

Kathryn Newcomer

*The George Washington University*

9:00 am **Keynote Speakers (Continental Ballroom)**

Marcia Mulkey

*US EPA Acting Associate Administrator, Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation*

Rowan Gould

*Acting Director, Fish and Wildlife Service*

Mark Shaffer

*Program Director for the Environment, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation*

10:00 am **Featured Speaker (Continental Ballroom)**

Debra Rog

*President, American Evaluation Association*

10:45 am **Break**

11:00 am **Networking Session: Speedy Presentations and a Stroll About  
(Continental Ballroom)**

David Widawsky (Facilitator)

*EPA*

A moderator will lead this session where 10-15 Forum participants will have 2 minutes to introduce themselves, the type of evaluation they do in their work, and demonstrate the value of evaluation in their organization or work in general. In the second half of this session, the audience will be encouraged to choose one of the presenters to join at a designated area in the Ballroom to continue the discussion and networking into lunch.

11:45 am Lunch (Catered)

1:00 pm **Concurrent Sessions: Using Evaluation in the Early Stages of Environmental Programs and Policies**

Session 1: Evaluation and Conservation Planning (Room #308) Facilitated by: Kim Penn, *NOAA*

Andrew Knight  
*Stellenbosch University, South Africa*

Devra Kleiman  
*Zoo-Logic, LCC*

David Callihan  
*MSI-Inc.*

Conservation planning for species, habitats, regions and even the entire planet is commonly employed in various ways across administrative regions of varying scales. The effectiveness of these activities is often assumed, despite disciplinary reviews which question their effectiveness (e.g., Tear et al. 1995; Foin et al. 1998; Prendergast et al. 1998; Knight et al. 2008). Unfortunately, evaluations of the effectiveness of individual projects and programs are rarely undertaken (Kleiman et al. 2000). If we are serious about ensuring our conservation planning activities are effective, then we must evaluate these activities. Three brief case studies are presented, followed by a facilitated group discussion. The case studies serve to highlight the challenges of undertaking the range of conservation planning activities, and will be used to share knowledge, examine the gap between “knowing” and “doing” effective conservation planning, and to focus group discussion towards identifying avenues for improving the effectiveness of evaluation for conservation planning initiatives. Case-study one (David Callihan) will explore program evaluations as aids to the development and use of an overall results-based management system for the Habitat Conservation Program under the Endangered Species Act. It will provide an overview of the strategic frameworks and methodologies applied, the importance of on-going data collection and analysis, and explore some of the limitations and benefits of evaluation for understanding and improving program performance. Case-study two (Devra Kleiman) examines the difficulties of conducting evaluations of endangered species conservation programs, and emphasizes the benefits where evaluations have been conducted. Specifically, it reviews the conservation and reintroduction program for the golden lion tamarin, along with several other conservation programs for at-risk species in North America. Examples are provided where evaluations led to significant shifts in practices that improved the prospects of species survival. Case-study three (Andrew Knight) examines systematic conservation planning and its wide-spread, and apparently successful, adoption in South Africa. Despite substantial international funding, world-leading expertise, and strong agency and legislative support, the assumed effectiveness of many regional-scale conservation plans is now being questioned. This case-study gets behind the smoke-and-mirrors to examine the ways in which the myth of “success” is perpetuated in systematic conservation planning.

Session 2: Integrating Evaluation into a Program’s Design (Room #307) Facilitated by: Carrie Hall, *NOAA*

*Case Study of NFWF Keystone Initiatives*

Timothy Male  
*NFWF*

Tony Chatwin  
*NFWF*

Christina Kakoyannis  
*NFWF*

To better demonstrate the environmental or social impacts of the organization's grantmaking investments, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation provided additional evaluation staff and leadership support to embed a more comprehensive system of monitoring and evaluation into the entire lifecycle of the Foundation's new long-term initiatives. Now two years into the process, we reflect back on our effort to translate principles from evaluation theory into practice within a conservation foundation. NFWF's evaluation officers will describe the foundation's shifting model of conservation grantmaking and discuss what has worked and what has not in establishing an evaluation system to continuously learn from our investments. We note key lessons from our experience, such as striking a balance between funder and grantee responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation. Two of NFWF's conservation initiative directors provide perspectives as users of evaluation, specifically describing the effects that have resulted to date from incorporating evaluation processes into the scientific planning in the early life cycle of the foundation's new initiatives.

### *Case Study of Moore Foundation's Amazon Conservation Initiative*

Luis Solórzano  
*Moore Foundation*

Jared Hardner  
*Hardner & Gullison*

The Andes Amazon Initiative (AAI) of the Gordon & Betty Moore Foundation is undergoing a periodic refresh of its strategic plan. The foundation has always placed great emphasis on performance measurement and evaluation, and is using this opportunity to advance those efforts in AAI's new strategic plan. Luis Solórzano, the Lead of AAI, will present an overview of the initiative's planned conservation outcomes for the Andes Amazon Basin, and how it expects to achieve them. Jared Hardner, a consultant to the foundation for evaluation and strategic planning, will explain how the new proposed structure of the AAI plan will enable easier internal and external evaluation and will attempt to overcome two of the greater evaluation challenges that face conservation programs—counterfactuals and attribution.

### Session 3: Some Examples and Lessons Learned from Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Evaluation Methods (Room #309) Facilitated by: Linda Manning, *Council Oak*

#### *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Evaluation Designs: Perspectives From Academia*

Paul Ferraro  
*Georgia State University*

Three cases will be presented: (1) a randomized experiment, in partnership with a water utility, to estimate the effect of information on residential water consumption during a drought; (2) a retrospective quasi-experimental design, independent of any practitioner request, to estimate the effect of land use regulations on land cover change and poverty; and (3) a retrospective, quasi-experimental case study design, as a terminal project evaluation, of a forest owner incentive program. These cases will be used as vehicles to emphasize that experimental and quasi-experimental designs are feasible, useful and comprehensible to a wide audience. The way in which the results are being used by the intended audiences will be discussed.

#### *Complex Evaluation Methods - The Evaluator as Objective Analyst and Salesperson (and Occasional Punching Bag)*

Lou Nadeau  
*Eastern Research Group*

As evaluators we are often called upon to develop a method for estimating impacts. When good data are available, we can rely on more sophisticated methods such as propensity score matching or regression analyses. Correctly applied, these methods will result in a valid estimate of a program's impact. These methods are usually hard for most program managers (and stakeholders) to understand fully, leaving the consumers of the evaluation looking at a black box. How then, do we get program managers to buy in to using more complex (and hopefully more valid) designs. What happens when the use of more sophisticated method shows that a program is ineffective? This presentation will look at the roles of the evaluator that uses sophisticated methods.

### Session 4: The Vexing Problem of Scaling in Building Evaluation & Monitoring Initiatives (Room #310) Facilitated by: Kate Barba, *NOAA*

#### *Application of Criteria and Indicators for Forest Sustainability at the Local Government Level*

Don Outen  
*Baltimore County*

This presentation explains how Baltimore County is applying the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators for forest sustainability. Working through a multi-party Steering Committee and several special stakeholder Forums, the County used the MPCCI to structure management programs following the premise that better data leads to better dialogue and better decisions. Our efforts are designed to not only meet the County's needs for managing natural resources and meeting mandates but also potentially to integrate local data with State and Federal level forest assessment programs. As well, the MPCCI serve to communicate the multiple benefits of forest sustainability with other local governments. Program frameworks, forest assessments, and implementation projects following adoption of the MPCCI at the county scale are highlighted.

*Scale and scope in the application of criteria and indicators for forest sustainability at the national level*

Guy Robertson  
*USDA Forestry Service*

The Forest Service recently released its Draft 2010 National Report on Sustainable Forests for public comment. The Report relies on the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators for Forest Sustainability for its fundamental structure, but, at the same time, it is guided by a broad public collaboration process involving multiple stakeholders including local and regional interests. As a result, the Report balances perspectives from multiple spatial scales, ranging from the international to the local level, and it encompasses divergent ideas about sustainability and its constituent parts, which in turn expand the scope of data called for in the Criteria and Indicator set. We give specific examples of how this balancing act has led to compromises in terms of both the scale and the scope of data presented in the report, discuss how this data is pertinent to forest sustainability at the national level, and suggest how these issues may change as we shift to smaller spatial scales or more specific objectives.

*Environmental Evaluation Practices and the Issue of Scale*

Hans Bruyninckx  
*Catholic University, Belgium*

Social scientists, natural scientists, and evaluators have not properly defined the concept of scale for environmental problems. Environmental scale generally differs from social scale, which confounds the challenge of evaluating policies and governance arrangements in addressing environmental issues. Instead, social scales are generally based on traditional jurisdictional boundaries, and this confounds effective decision-making. Conversely, evaluators must be able to assess innovative governance arrangements as well as the outcomes of environmental problems because the two are interconnected. This is particularly true in looking at cross-scale, social-ecological interactions. This has profound implications for policy evaluation; evaluators have to develop frameworks for connecting across various scales and levels in overcoming mismatches. Natural scientists probably need to be humbler in their ambitions, and evaluators will have to engage in interdisciplinary teams that blend the expertise of the social sciences with that from the natural sciences to assess outcomes to social and environmental scales.

Session 5: Using Evaluations to Improve Programs (Continental Ballroom)

Facilitated by: Monique McDonald-Harris, *BLM*

*An Early Evaluation of NOAA's Habitat Matrix Program*

Bruce McDowell  
*NAPA*

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) was formed as an agency within the Department of Commerce by a reorganization in 1970. It brought together a wide array of scientific and non-scientific agencies that are now organized into six line offices. Many of NOAA's programs have overlapping goals, but have had their share of challenges in working together. In 2002, NOAA adopted program budgeting and matrix management techniques in an effort to bring its overlapping programs into closer relationships with each other. The Habitat Matrix Program is one of these "virtual" programs. It draws on programs administratively located within three of NOAA's line agencies, and its Matrix is still under construction. NAPA was asked in early 2007 to perform the first outside independent evaluation of this matrix program in preparation for an upcoming OMB PART review. The resulting evaluation found that the program's responsibilities for protecting and restoring the nation's vast coastal and marine habitats are a hodgepodge of separate laws passed at various different times, they rely for success on the actions of many other federal agencies and other partners, the responsibilities imposed far outstrip the resources available to address them, and no outcome oriented goals and performance measures are available yet for prioritizing the program's limited resources across the component programs within the matrix. The NAPA report makes recommendations for establishing an overarching statutory framework to unify these programs around outcome oriented goals, strengthening the performance goals and measures being developed and the related annual targets, increasing scientific support for habitat assessments and progress reporting, and working more closely with the program's numerous partners and stakeholders.

*The Value of Process Evaluation: Risk Reduction Measures for Pesticide Products Could Be Implemented up to Four Years Sooner*

Debra Kemp  
Abt Associates

Peter Caulkins  
EPA

The EPA Office of Pesticide Programs (OPP) conducts a comprehensive review of pesticides initially registered before November 1, 1984, to ensure that they meet contemporary health and safety standards and labeling requirements. EPA sponsored an external review of the program to identify potential opportunities for innovation and streamlining of the product reregistration process. The evaluation team found numerous sources of delay and inefficiencies in the product reregistration process. The evaluation team provided EPA with 25 recommendations that covered all phases of the process, as well as communication, performance management, information management, resources, and staffing. The evaluation led OPP to make significant changes in its program. The results of this process evaluation were instrumental in helping OPP achieve its desired outcomes of implementing risk reduction measures in a timely fashion.

**2:15 pm Concurrent Sessions: Using Evaluation to Improve Mature Environmental Programs and Policies**

Session 1: Case Studies of the Use of Evaluation in Mid-Cycle of a Program (Room #308)

Facilitated by: Carrie Hall, NOAA

*The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program*

Amanda Bassow  
NFWF

Laura Carrier  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Andy Rowe  
Independent Evaluator

The Chesapeake Bay Small Watershed Grants Program is a partnership among EPA, USFS, NOAA, the Chesapeake Bay Program and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). The Program has been awarding grants for local watershed stewardship and restoration projects since 1999. In 2007, GHK Int'l completed a third-party evaluation of the program under a contract with NFWF, which manages and administers the grant program. This session will examine the changes that have been undertaken or are underway that have resulted from the evaluation, and how those changes have been received by grantees. The session also will discuss the factors during the course of the evaluation that were key to ensuring such a high level of use. Amanda Bassow will represent NFWF's perspective. Andy Rowe will represent the evaluator's perspective, and Laura Carrier of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation will represent the perspective of an applicant and grantee.

*A Case Study in How Evaluation Brought Change to the Environmental Enforcement Training Program at US EPA*

Zena Aldridge  
EPA, National Enforcement Training Institute

Yvonne Watson  
EPA, Evaluation Support Division

Change for individuals can be challenging; change within organizations is no different. Even when there is sound reasoning behind recommended improvements, there can be resistance. When the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Enforcement Training Institute (NETI) suggested several changes to improve the environmental enforcement training program in May 2006, senior managers could not come to consensus. Using information gained from a program evaluation project completed one year later, however, NETI recommended similar changes once again and senior managers came to a different conclusion: substantial changes in the program were approved and implemented. This presentation will highlight key components to this turnaround including how: 1) NETI staff accessed evaluation expertise at our Agency, 2) the evaluation was tailored to be the best value to the organization, and 3) NETI's implementation of key evaluation recommendations resulted in significant changes to our program.

Session 2: Evaluations and Environmental Education: Challenges and Successes (Continental Ballroom) Facilitated by: Shelley Borys, *Environment Canada*

*EE Evaluation: EED's Perspective*

Kathleen MacKinnon  
*EPA, Environmental Education Division*

Kathleen will discuss how and why her office integrates evaluation into their major programs -- the EE Grant Program and National Educator Training Program. She will highlight how these evaluations have evolved over the past 15 years. Kathleen will also talk about the challenges of doing evaluations given the limited resources to support evaluation and to analyze their results.

*Environmental Education Evaluation: Lessons Learned From Project Learning Tree (PLT)*

Kathy McGlaufflin  
*American Forest Foundation*

Kathy will discuss the different ways PLT has been evaluated, lessons learned from the evaluations, and how it's informed their program and the decision makers they work with at the state and national level. She will also discuss the challenges with evaluating EE programs.

*Evaluating the Connection Between Education and Conservation*

Judy Braus  
*National Audubon Society*

Judy will focus on how Audubon has incorporated evaluation into their \$20 million "TogetherGreen" program to measure both conservation results and "behavior change" that ultimately leads to conservation results. She will also discuss the challenges in evaluating EE programs and how evaluations from multiple programs are helping to shape their "Conservation Toolkit" to add a "behavioral change" emphasis to conservation planning.

*Program Evaluation in Education and the Environment: Why It Matters to NSF*

Connie Kubo Della-Piana                      Leslie Goodyear  
*National Science Foundation*                      *National Science Foundation*

Connie and Leslie will briefly describe NSF's evaluation of their FY 09 and FY 10 Global Change Education Program. They will also discuss the broader mechanism in place to evaluate programs across NSF and additional efforts to evaluate education-oriented programs in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Technology. NSF's evaluation of programs is guided by the research/evaluation questions in relation to the purpose(s) of the evaluation. This process acknowledges that evaluation can be influenced by political context.

Session 3: Human Dimensions in Environmental Program Evaluation (Room #307)  
Facilitated by: Kate Barba, *NOAA*

*Recognizing the Value of Evaluation: Fostering positive stakeholder interactions for environmental management*

Ken Genskow                                      Tom Koontz                                      Suzi Ruhl  
*University of Wisconsin-Madison*                      *Ohio State University*                      *EPA*

Environmental evaluation is important for building community and for improving policy decisions. While many evaluation efforts come from evaluation professionals, it is important to consider the role that stakeholders can play in evaluation. This panel provides diverse perspectives about how to foster positive stakeholder interactions. Three short presentations will be followed by discussion among presenters and audience members.

## Session 4: Data and Information: Access, Use and Finding Meaning (Room #310)

Facilitated by: Robert Tkaczyk, *Environment Canada*

Ed Washburn

*GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems)*

When you're making a good faith effort to demonstrate outcomes and beneficial impacts that are attributed to your environmental program -- and your program budget keeps shrinking -- and the 'transparency lamp' shining on your program keeps getting brighter, where do you turn for evaluation data? The GEOSS (Global Earth Observation System of Systems) might be a faint ray of hope. The Earth is an integrated system; all the processes that influence conditions on Earth, whether ecological, biological, climatological, or geological, are linked, and influence one another. Likewise, Earth observations are strengthened when data collection and analysis are achieved in an integrated manner. The current state of largely stand-alone Earth observation systems is non optimal, yet the technology exists to enable 'system of systems' (witness ATMs decades ago and bank data on money), so what's the problem? GEOSS aspires to enable a healthy public, economy, and planet through an integrated, comprehensive, and sustained Earth observation system. I will describe GEOSS with words and props, argue the merits of GEOSS for environmental evaluation data, and listen for any alternatives that are better (and legal, of course).

### *Data and Information: Lesson Learned through the State of the Nation's Ecosystems Project*

Anne Marsh

*Heinz Center*

Between 1997 and 2008, The Heinz Center led The State of the Nation's Ecosystems Project, a project designed to provide national scale indicators of the condition and use of ecosystems in the US and lay the foundation for periodic, non-partisan reporting on ecosystems. The two State of the Nation's Ecosystems reports (2002 and 2008) acquired data from multiple federal agencies as well as non-federal organizations to populate stakeholder-designed indicators on coasts and oceans, farmlands, forests, fresh waters, grasslands and shrublands, urban and suburban systems and the nation as a whole. Over the course of the project, the Center focused on providing information that was relevant to and informed by policy issues but avoided political bias. The project's multi-stakeholder consultative process, helped balance value-driven choices about what features should be reported with scientific rigor. The two reports as well as a 2006 report, Filling the Gaps, emphasized that there are still many gaps in our ability to report on ecosystems at a national scale. A more effective environmental information system will require greater resources and coordination in our monitoring and reporting programs to ensure that the most important environmental features and trends are tracked and that inconsistencies in methods to analyze and collect data are resolved.

### *Using Evaluation Methods as Decision-Support for Strategy Development*

Richard Gelb

*King County, Washington*

As environmental threats and challenges become more complex/distributed and the performance management systems of environmental agencies mature, evaluation tools and methods are increasingly important - not just for post-project or periodic program review, but to help guide strategy development, resource deployment optimization, and cross-agency/cross-sector collaboration. Richard will describe how tools and methods historically used in the environmental evaluation realm can be applied throughout the performance and adaptive management cycle as decision-support to a variety of actors, with a particular focus on the role of intermediate outcomes and geospatial analysis. Richard will reference current work in King County, Washington, addressing sustainability, environmental justice/equity, and climate change response.

Session 5: Building a Network's Capacity for Evaluation (Room #309) Facilitated by: Kim Penn, NOAA

Jennifer Splansky  
*FSG Social Impact Advisors*

FSG Social Impact Advisors is a nonprofit consulting firm whose mission is to accelerate the pace of social change by providing strategic consulting and evaluation services to nonprofits, philanthropic funders, and other socially-focused organizations. FSG is working with the David and Lucile Packard Foundation's Marine Fisheries Program and a network of 17 of its NGO grantees to co-design, pilot, and institutionalize a strategic learning and evaluation system for the network. The focus of the evaluation is on generating timely insights for continuous improvement of a highly-collaborative strategy. This effort has consisted of drafting a network-wide theory of change, mapping indicators against each step in the theory, and developing surveys and other data collection tools to track progress. This work has also involved using data to facilitate learning and increased communication among the NGOs in the network. Evaluation findings and resulting strategic implications are shared with the NGO network and with the Packard Foundation.

Leslie Goodyear  
*National Science Foundation*

The Innovative Technologies for Students and Teachers (ITEST) program at NSF has been in existence since 2003, funding over 130 projects that target middle and high school students and teachers with cutting-edge, hands-on STEM experiences that focus on developing students' interest in STEM careers. The ITEST Learning Resource Center was funded to provide technical assistance to the funded projects, and as a part of the technical assistance menu, evaluation TA was offered. Dr. Goodyear will describe the framework for evaluation capacity building that guided the ITEST LRC's evaluation technical assistance and discuss the contribution of building a community of practice among evaluators and project staff to evaluation capacity building across the network of grantees.

Elizabeth O'Neill  
*World Wildlife Fund International*

**3:30 pm Break**

**3:45 pm Plenary: Economic Recovery and Environmental Goals: Opportunities for Evaluation**

With global economic crisis, new leadership and renewed commitments to achieving environmental outcomes in the United States and abroad, what is the role and value of evaluation and how can we improve its value? Evaluators and evaluation consumers will give their perspective on the value of evaluation in addressing new priorities and achieving new goals.

Patricia Dalton  
*Government Accountability Office*

Dominic Mancini  
*Office of Management and Budget*

Mark Humpert  
*Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies*

Kathryn Newcomer  
*The George Washington University*

George Grob (Moderator)  
*Center for Public Program Evaluation*

**4:45 pm Day Two Preview**

**5:00 pm Adjourn**

**5:15 pm Catered Reception on The Terrace, The Marvin Center, The George Washington University**



**Tuesday, June 9, 2009**

**7:45 am Sign-in: Registration; Continental Breakfast; Meet and Greet**

**8:45 am Day Two Introduction**

Matt Birnbaum  
*National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*

**9:00 am Featured Presentation: Exceptionalism in Environmental Evaluation: Are We Really That Different? (Grand Ballroom)**

Mikael Hildén (Leader)  
*Finnish Environment Institute*

George Grob (Discussant)  
*Center for Public Program Evaluation*

There is no doubt that there are features in environmental matters that need special attention in evaluations. Frequently cited characteristics include complexity, which also arises because research is needed to identify and verify the problems, long time frames and geographically remote areas contributing to huge uncertainties, and the uneven distribution of consequences and causes, which bring stakeholders with different belief systems and conflicting goals to demand evaluations. A closer look at the characteristics and the context in which they appear reveals that they can be placed in a policy cycle, which illustrates the recursive processes of issue identification, policy formulation and implementation, and reconsideration of policies. In such a context there is a need for adaptive evaluations that can respond to changing conditions and reflect on the full policy cycle. The task is also to bring the substance issues into the discussion with a diverse group of stakeholders. This puts demands on the policy development, not only the evaluation. The need for adaptive evaluations has grown along with the development and redefinition of the environmental issues, but analogous developments can be observed in other policy areas as well. Thus the answer to the question of the heading is: we are special, but not unique. Realising this can help us from reinventing the wheel too many times.

**9:45 am Plenary: Creating Common Standards in the Environmental Community: Learning from Nonprofits (Grand Ballroom)**

Richard Margoluis  
*Foundations of Success*

Tess Present  
*National Audubon Society*

Tim Reed  
*The Nature Conservancy*

Stephanie Shipman (Discussant)  
*U.S. Government Accountability Office*

The Conservation Measures Partnership (CMP) was founded in 2002 to improve the conservation community's ability to gauge the impacts of its actions. From the beginning, CMP's membership included some of the largest international conservation organizations based in the US. These organizations had all been struggling with measuring results and improving implementation and they decided that, working together, they could more easily figure out how best to conduct effective monitoring and evaluation of conservation projects. Soon after CMP's inception, consortium members drafted the Open Standards for the Practice of Conservation – a series of steps, principles, and outputs required to ensure high-quality conservation projects. All CMP members ascribe to these standards and commit to improving them through application in the field. In the first part of this session, we provide an update on the Open Standards and discuss current opportunities and challenges associated with their adoption and implementation.

**10:45 am Break**

**11:00 am Concurrent Sessions: Building the Capacity and a Culture for Evaluation**

Session 1: Repositories of Projects and Evaluations: A Foundation for Evidence-Based Decisions  
(Room #308) Facilitated by: Linda Manning, *Council Oak*

*Repositories of Projects and Evaluations: A Foundation for Evidence-Based Decisions*

Andrew Pullin  
*Collaboration for Environmental Evidence*

The talk will consider the value and necessary characteristics of a repository of evidence to support decision making in environmental management. As an example, the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence is legally constituted as a not-for-profit organisation. A central library of systematic reviews has been established and submission rates are rising. Funders are recognising the value of systematic reviews as an evaluation tool and the funding base is now diverse and global. Publishers also recognise the value of these reviews and are creating opportunities for publication. Despite this progress access to data for collation and synthesis of evidence remains poor and lacks the necessary structures and cultural practices. A single repository of evidence is unlikely to emerge but a network of complementary repositories with common standards could greatly facilitate evidence-based decision making.

*The Conservation Registry: Promoting Strategic Conservation and Sharing Knowledge*

Gina LaRocco  
*Defenders of Wildlife, Conservation Registry*

The transformative effect of Internet technologies is reshaping how conservation happens across all scales, and at every stage of the process, from identifying priorities and projects to measuring success and applying lessons learned. Defenders of Wildlife and many partners have developed an online tool, the Conservation Registry, that allows all types of users, including agencies, organizations, private landowners, and policy makers, to record, track and map conservation projects occurring across the landscape, ranging from restoration projects and management plans to land acquisitions. It features a friendly, easy-to-use format for data entry and retrieval and uses Google maps technology, making it a comfortable environment for users who do not have special GIS or database management knowledge. Other databases often track projects in isolation of one another and fail to capture projects that other groups are doing in the same area, resulting in inefficiencies and lost opportunities for collaboration. The registry, however, is a synthesis tool that can bring in multiple types of project information from multiple types of sources, as well as act as a project management tool for those agencies and organizations that do not currently have the capacity to electronically track projects. In addition, the registry can help users determine the degree to which projects are taking place within priority conservation areas; aid policy-makers and investors in understanding where public and private money is being spent; help conservationists find partners, funding, and advice for projects; help everyone learn from the successes and challenges experienced by others doing similar projects; and demonstrate that it is possible and useful to integrate information across jurisdictions and ownerships.

Session 2: Effective Communication of Evaluation Results and Learning (Room #310)  
Facilitated by: Monique McDonald-Harris, *BLM*

*Effective Communication of Evaluation Results and Learning*

Per Mickwitz  
*Finnish Environment Institute*

Shelley Robertson  
*Robertson Consulting Group*

The session will start by a presentation by Per Mickwitz where he discusses dissemination and production based strategies for communication of evaluation results. As a starting point for this discussion he will elaborate on what evaluation results should be communicated and for what kind of learning. The presentation will use experiences from the development of eco-efficiency indicators in the Kymenlaakso region of Finland. In the second half of the session, Shelley Robertson will continue the theme of identifying practical ways to communicate results and encourage learning. She will share eleven communication formats to use throughout the evaluation process and a discussion guide to promote internal learning. The session will end with discussion of how to communicate results as a way to increase evaluation value.

### Session 3: Theory, Practice & Application of the Utilization-Focused Evaluation Approach: Case Studies from Environmental Education (Room #302) Facilitated by: Laura Pyzik

This session will help participants understand the fundamentals of utilization-focused program evaluation: evaluations designed to provide data that is useful for program managers and other interested stakeholders. Following a brief overview of the utilization-focused evaluation approach, the session will feature two case studies of recent evaluations of environmental education programs.

#### *Case Study #1*

Lisa Flowers  
*Boone & Crockett Club*

In 2005, a state fish and wildlife agency wanted to examine how one of its conservation education programs was providing science-based understanding and outdoor experiences by evaluating students' knowledge, skills, attitudes and intended behavioral outcomes related to fish, fishing and aquatic habitats. A key factor in this study was the acceptance by program stakeholders to conduct the evaluation using a Utilization-Focused Evaluation approach to promote usability and accuracy of evaluation results. A major lesson learned was further development of evaluation pathways are needed to effectively produce desired participant outcomes.

#### *Case Study #2*

Annelise Carleton-Hug  
*Trillium Associates*

Annelise Carleton-Hug, Trillium Associations, reports on an evaluation of an online environmental education program for Yellowstone National Park. Designed by park staff, Windows into Wonderland offers electronic field trips to help viewers learn about the biological, geological and social history of Yellowstone. The presentation will provide an overview of the application of the utilization-focused approach, as well as lessons learned from this mixed-method evaluation.

### Session 4: Competency, Capacity, and Culture: Toolboxes for Evaluators (Grand Ballroom)

Facilitated by: Jared Raynor, *TCC Group*

Micheala Zint  
*University of Michigan*

Many individuals, including environmental professionals like environmental educators, are interested in increasing their evaluation competency (i.e., the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to conduct program evaluation) and yet, little is known about the extent to which various experiences may help them achieve this outcome. This is also the case with regard to the numerous self-directed learning resources that have, and continue to be, developed for this purpose. To help address this gap, this study investigated to what extent an online tool entitled "My EE Evaluation Resource Assistant" or "MEERA" ([www.meera.snre.umich.edu](http://www.meera.snre.umich.edu)) can increase users' evaluation competency. Results were obtained through case studies of environmental educators (with limited evaluation experience) who used MEERA to conduct an evaluation of one of their programs. To date, six of the eight study participants completed their first evaluation using MEERA and planned program improvements as a result. In addition, all six reported substantial increases in their evaluation competency. At the same time, participants' also experienced challenges such as feeling overwhelmed, a desire for personal, tailored expert assistance, and difficulties with select evaluation tasks. Overall, results support that self-directed learning resources such as MEERA can increase individuals' evaluation competency. In addition, results also identify aspects with which novice evaluators are likely to struggle with the most (e.g., identifying and prioritizing evaluation questions, designing data collection instruments, interpreting results) and thus, tasks with which they could benefit from obtaining expert assistance. MEERA and this study were supported by the US Environmental Protection Agency and the US Forest Service.

#### *The Handbook of Environmental Policy Evaluation*

Ann Crabbé  
*University of Antwerp*

The Handbook of Environmental Policy Evaluation (Crabbé & Leroy 2008) is a guide to environmental policy evaluation in practice. Beginning with an introduction to the general principles of evaluation, it explains the particular complexities native to the environmental sphere and provides a comprehensive toolkit of evaluation methods and

techniques which the practitioner can employ and refer to. The authors also consider design issues which may face the policy evaluator, including involvement of stakeholders, the sensitivities between them, the a priori assessment of the evaluability of a field, and much more. Throughout, the theory is illustrated with practical examples from around the world, making this a good companion guide for anyone tasked with ensuring that environmental policy fulfils its aims and achieves its potential.

*A Tool-Kit for Agricultural Research Impact Evaluators: Report on a Work in Progress*

Doug Horton  
*Independent Evaluator*

Most evaluations of impacts of agricultural research have employed economic methods to estimate returns to investments in relatively easy-to-assess research areas, such as genetic improvement of major food crops. However, many practicing evaluators now need a wider array of methods to evaluate impacts of more complex interventions that address complex problems of poverty and environmental sustainability. The ILAC Initiative ([www.cgiar-ilac.org](http://www.cgiar-ilac.org)) of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research ([www.cgiar.org](http://www.cgiar.org)) is developing a Tool-Kit for Impact Evaluation that will assist evaluators select and apply appropriate tools for particular situations. Patricia Rogers, of the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (Australia) is leading this work, which is also supported by the Research Into Use Programme ([www.researchintouse.com](http://www.researchintouse.com)) of the UK Department of International Development. The Tool-Kit under development will provide an overview of impact evaluation, the different tasks involved, and the different tools and approaches that can be used for each task. Information on each tool or approaches is provided, with a hyperlink from the overview. For each tool there is a brief description, an analysis of its possible uses, advantages and disadvantages, an example of its use, a link to further reading and other examples, and space for comments from users. Tools are presented for seven main tasks involved in impact evaluation: (1) focus the evaluation; (2) conceptualize the intervention; (3) identify what is valued; (4) measure and describe; (5) analyze causal contributions; (6) report on results; (7) support use of results. Issues in development of the Tool-Kit will be discussed.

Session 5: Program and Policy Evaluation in State, Local and Tribal Governments (Room #309)

Facilitated by: Andrew T. Knight, *Stellenbosch University, South Africa*

Mary Beth Brown  
*Puget Sound Partnership*

Warren Kimball  
*State of Massachusetts*

Jennifer Falck  
*Oneida Nation*

In this session, the presenters will discuss the value of evaluation to decision makers and citizens in a state, local or tribal environment. Through short presentations and an interactive exercise with the audience, the presenters will pose the question, "When does data become information?" We will discuss the critical step of taking complex technical information and distilling it to a form where non-technical decision makers and the public can interpret it to make judgments about environmental decisions. Our contention is that the translation of the results of evaluations into intuitive, easy to read formats is the key to using evaluation to improve environmental decision making and to build credibility, trust and constructive engagement with the public.

**12:00 pm Lunch (Catered)**

**1:15 pm Networking and Capacity Building Session: Evaluators' Café in the Grand Ballroom**

Facilitated by: David Widawsky

In a sort of "evaluation speed dating," Forum participants will have three 30-minute sessions to visit three different 'stations,' to network and collaborate and learn from colleagues about a variety of topics from the perspective of different organizations and disciplines. While the topics at many 'stations' will be geared toward capacity building for environmental evaluators, some stations may focus on the design, development and distribution of EEN products and services.

## 1. The Evaluators' Institute: Building and Supporting Quality in Evaluation Practice

Kathryn Newcomer  
*The George Washington University*

Ann Doucette  
*The Evaluators' Institute, The George Washington University*

The Evaluators' Institute (TEI), at The George Washington University provides training and concentrated professional development for practicing evaluators and new evaluation professionals. TEI harnesses the thought leadership of renowned evaluation professionals, as a training faculty that offers instruction in theory, design, methods and reporting strategies, as well as supports the development of innovative and effective evaluation applications. TEI offers course throughout the year (San Francisco, Chicago, Washington, DC, and Canada, as well as agency-specific evaluation institutes) that lead to three course-based certificates (Evaluation Practice (CEP), Advance Evaluation Practices (CAEP), and Quantitative Evaluation Methods (CQEM). The Master Evaluator Certificate follows the completion of the CEP and CAEP, and is portfolio-based and committee reviewed. Come talk to us to see how TEI can support your evaluation needs.

## 2. Miradi Adaptive Management Software and TNC's ConPro Database

Richard Margoluis  
*Foundations of Success*

Marcia B. Brown  
*Foundations of Success*

Foundations of Success (FOS) will be hosting a 'Café Table' on *Miradi Adaptive Management Software* – an innovative and user-friendly program that helps practitioners design, manage, monitor, evaluate, and learn from their projects to more effectively meet their conservation goals. FOS staff will introduce *Miradi* and its information exchange capabilities with *ConPro*, The Nature Conservancy's online network of over 100 publically accessible conservation projects and contacts (over 900 projects accessible for TNC staff). Afterwards, participants will have a hands-on opportunity to work directly with *Miradi* using example conservation projects. Free trials of *Miradi* will be available for those who may be interested in testing this exciting new software further.

## 3. My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant (MEERA): A toolkit for improving evaluation competency

Michaela Zint  
*University of Michigan*

Are you interested in developing, implementing, or evaluating an evaluation "toolkit" - or - in using such a toolkit to enhance yours' or others' evaluation competencies? If so, come to learn about related experiences with "My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant" or "MEERA" ([www.meera.snre.umich.edu](http://www.meera.snre.umich.edu)). MEERA was developed to support evaluations of environmental education programs but the site can also serve as a model for how to build evaluation competency in other contexts.

## 4. Meet the Authors: New Directions for Evaluation

Per Mickwitz  
*Finnish Environment Institute*

Matthew Birnbaum  
*NFWF*

The New Directions in Evaluation table will be dedicated to publicizing the release of the new volume of this journal dedicated to methodological challenges in program and policy evaluation. Authors from three of the four sections will be available to discuss their articles in three 30-minute sections. The schedule is as follows:

1. Issues of Scaling, 1:15-1:45 --Hans Bruyninckx (Catholic University, Belgium) and Elizabeth Kennedy (Conservation International)
2. Issues of Attribution and Research Design, 1:45-2:15, Richard Margoluis (FOS) and Paul Ferraro (Georgia State University)
3. Issues of Time Horizons, 2:15-2:45, Jared Hardner (Hardner & Gullison) and Mikael Hildén (Finnish Environmental Institute)

Note: Registrants are eligible for a special discount to purchase this special journal volume. Details appear in the conference packets.

## 5. A Structured Conceptualization Approach to Designing Surveys in Groups

David Filiberto  
*Cornell University*

Concept mapping is a structured conceptualization method where a set of diverse stakeholders may develop a conceptual model or map that can be used for a variety of evaluation purposes. The concept mapping provides a structured and efficient process to form a set of statements from a diverse group of participants which become the raw material for survey questions. The group process develops a survey instrument that improves participant collaboration, questionnaire wording and order as opposed to traditional best practices of survey design. The method provides evaluators an efficient procedure to create an instrument while managing the nuances of group dynamics.

## 6. EPA Partnership Program Evaluation Guidelines

Terell P. Lasane  
*EPA, Evaluation Support Division`*

In this session, the facilitator will present a recently completed document, *Guidelines for Evaluating An EPA Partnership Program*, and moderate a discussion on this document's potential for building evaluation capacity with a diversity of complex environmental programs. The challenges in composing these guidelines, initial feedback on its use, and the multiple presentation platforms (a print document and a wiki-based web site) used to promote its application will be discussed and evaluated.

## 7. American Evaluation Association & The Environmental Topical Interest Group

Katherine Dawes  
*EPA*

Lisa Flowers  
*Boone & Crockett Club in Montana*

Annelise Carlton-Hug  
*Trillium Associates*

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) is an international professional association of evaluators devoted to the application and exploration of program evaluation, with approximately 5500 members representing all 50 states in the US as well as over 60 foreign countries. AEA sponsors an annual evaluation conference, and supports an Environmental Program Evaluation Topical Interest Group. This session is an opportunity to share information about AEA, how the Environmental Evaluators Network can leverage AEA events, and build on the resources and connections of the Environmental Program Evaluation Topical Interest Group.

## 8. Assessing Capacity Building Initiatives

Jared Raynor  
*TCC Group*

Leslie Foster  
*TCC Group*

This soup du jour is a framework for measuring organizational capacity, with a base of organizational best practices and a hint of policy/advocacy. Your palette will savor tested tools and new ideas in the pleasant company of your colleagues' experiences and ideas around measuring capacity.

## 9. Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators

Guy Robertson  
*USDA Forest Service*

Donald C. Outen  
*Baltimore County*

This table will focus on two efforts applying the Montreal Process Criteria and Indicators for Forest Sustainability (MPC&I) at the national and local levels, respectively. The MPC&I covers a comprehensive scope of forest characteristics, spanning ecological, social and economic dimensions, and provides data rich content for specialists as well as a broad overview of forest conditions for generalists. Because the reporting efforts involve concerted data gathering, one practical benefit for table participants will be to identify available data sets and streams relevant to forest conditions and sustainability. On a more theoretical level, We will also discuss issues related to applying data to the concept of sustainability and the challenges entailed in reporting and understanding data at multiple spatial scales.

## 10. GEOSS: Performance Monitoring and Evaluation

Edward Washburn  
*EPA*

Unfounded Environmental Evaluation Claims Encountered, e.g., Costs of Environmental Evaluation Aren't Really Worth the Benefits, Independent Evaluation Experts Won't Really Understand my Program, Too Premature for my Program, Too Technical for my Senior Management, My Program is so Unique, Too Costly, Not Feasible, We'll Never will be Able to Attribute 'Lives Saved', so Why Waste My Precious Time and Resources, Too Risky - What if the Independent Evaluation Results 'Slam' my Program, Not What Potential Investors in my Program are Looking for, etc.

Sharing Stories - Compiling Similar Themes - Condensing into a Handful of Lessons Learned - Founding the Evidence Basis - Be Prepared!

## 11. Enhancing the Quality of an Evaluation Practice

Shelley Borys  
*Environment Canada*

Robert Tkaczyk  
*Environment Canada*

Within the Evaluation Division at Environment Canada, quality is an important value embedded in the work we do, in order to ensure that we provide departmental senior management with credible information on the effectiveness of departmental programs. To contribute to the highest level of quality possible, an important aspect that we focus on is the continuous improvement of our practice to increase the overall effectiveness of the evaluation function. We will be ready to discuss the various tools and procedures (e.g., time reporting system; recommendations follow-up process; evaluation process templates; peer review of deliverables) we have implemented within our function with the overall goal of improving the quality and thus utility of our evaluation practice. This will provide the opportunity to learn about and take away some of these tools and procedures that we have incorporated into our practice.

## 12. Environmental Evaluation in a Land and Resource Management Agency

Sue Richardson  
*Bureau of Land Management*

In this session, the facilitators representing the Bureau of Land Management will describe how evaluations are used as part of an integrated Internal Control program. A variety of levels and types of evaluations currently being used to meet different objectives will be described, and new objectives for which we do not yet have evaluation schemes will be presented. Ideas and suggestions will be solicited from participants to address the new objectives, and feedback on the current approaches will be solicited.

## 13. Environmental Evaluations at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Kate Barba  
*NOAA*

Ginger Hinchcliff  
*NOAA*

Cafe hosts will discuss the importance of front end evaluation and basic principles in audience assessment.

## 14. Developing EEN Products: Repository, Toolbox, Communications

EEN members

## 15. Open Table - Evaluation Conundrums

## 16. Open Table - Evaluation Successes...and Failures

### **Special Working Group Session** (Room #310)

Facilitated by: Matt Keene

- EEN Products and Services
  - In a facilitated session, participants will identify and discuss potential EEN products.
  - Session objectives – Identify products, audiences, and workgroups

2:45 pm Break

3:00 pm **Plenary: Forum Synthesis and Next Steps for the EEN (Grand Ballroom)**

Throughout the two days EEN support staff will document ideas and suggestions concerning the value of environmental evaluation. A summary of their notes will be provided to the audience and session presenters. During this final session, a panel of 3 experienced evaluators will reflect on the forum from their personal perspectives, with a focus on the future value and role of environmental evaluation. In no more than 7 minutes, each will identify key themes or points made during the conference, remaining gaps in evaluation methods or practice, and opportunities for environmental evaluators to make a difference through their work. After the initial round of presentations, each panel member may briefly comment on the remarks of the other two panelists.

We will follow these reflections by asking our panelists for their views on “What next for the EEN”? How can the EEN best support and advance environmental evaluation? We will then pose similar questions to the audience, asking for their ideas and recommendations regarding strategy and actions for strengthening the EEN, and ultimately for advancing the field of environmental evaluation.

In closing, we will present some products EEN members have recently completed, provide the audience with updates on services, tools and developing workgroups to support the Environmental Evaluators Network, and end by again encouraging participants to share their ideas with one another and with the conference organizers.

Douglas Horton (Perspective:  
International)  
*Independent Consultant*

Debra Rog (Perspective: Growth of evaluation  
profession)  
*President, American Evaluation Association*

George Grob (Perspective: Public Policy)  
*Center for Public Program Evaluation*

4:30 pm **Adjourn and Celebrate!**