Environmental Evaluators Network Forum Summary, Day 1
Wednesday, July 18, 2012
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The sessions offered Day 1, along with recorders' summary statements when available, were:

- Social marketing / Communications eval / Measurement: *Evaluating methodologies and results*.
- Evaluating internal collaboration: *Global, <u>voluntary</u>, partnership are the key components of effective international collaboration*.
- Return On Investment: Sin? Savior? Both? Neither? *A: Neither! But it's not that simple! It depends! It's here and real (has influence), so let's make it stonger/smarter/better. Provide additional information – complementary, clarify value judgments, etc.*
- Developmental evaluation (MQP 2010): *Aspects of environmental evaluation both promote and hinder the use of developmental evaluation. Promote: Already have need for intermediate measures, adaptive management a familiar concept. Hinder: Measures of impact are expected, Fixed theories of change/programs in some cases.*
- Environmental education programs: What are we measuring? *Developing the K-12 Curriculum*.
- Evaluating landscape projects for lots of landowners: *Engaging private landowners to participate in forest management practices.*
- Inspiring interest and dedication to "the work":
- Reinvigorate community well-being through evaluation: *Measuring outcomes of community focused projects and identifying barriers (e.g. lag time) in reaching outcomes*.
- Engage audiences with data visualization: *Tools can be used to present data for various audiences.*
- Fuzzy logic models: *What is the purpose of the logic model you are trying to create?*
- Evaluators new to the evaluation field: What do we need to know? *What skills are most important to develop – systems thinking?*
- Use of evidence and evaluation in budget proposals:
- Measuring compliance and enforcement
- Future of evaluation
- What is AEA's role to support environmental consciousness and responsibility?
- Increasing evaluation adoption
- Evaluating public engagement online

Dr. Beverly Parsons walked conference attendees through a wrap-up session. She noted:

- Sessions covered the 'social psychology' range, wish discussions focused on individuals, self-organized groups, communities (e.g. geographic, evaluation), and society (regulations, policies, social norms).
- Sessions for both days could be organized into two major categories: those addressing targeted program or policy areas (climate change, fisheries etc. – mostly scheduled for Day 2) and those covering approaches to evaluation – theory, tools, and frameworks. Today's sessions focused on these theories, generalities. Tomorrow we hope to come to some actionable items.

Participants broke into small groups to consider various questions, reporting out the following ideas:

Messages that need to be communicated
- Lag time in environmental evaluation
- Data visualization can be tailored to environmental evaluation
- Partnerships and evaluation needed in the environmental community
- Importance of crafting regulations
- The role evaluation plays in influencing broad social norms

Possible topics for tomorrow and items to push forward
- Ability to communicate importance of evaluation
- Are we ahead or behind in promoting evaluation
- Presenting evaluation as learning, not judgment
- Evaluating during election season
- Building logic models based on evidence
- Distinctions between environmental evaluation and other evaluation
- Theories of evaluation – which are most applicable, useful to environmental evaluation

What inspired you today?
- Willingness of participants to share expertise and contributed to conversations
- Data topic books
- Level of thoughtful discussion
- Strength we have to create something new and bring that to broader evaluation field. This conference has not been about staking claims or bragging.
- We are not alone; valid expertise of colleagues
- Deep questioning of assumptions in the field
- Intergenerational participants, with young people willing to contribute, take risks, work in pulling things together

What are you thankful for?
- People who contributed during sessions, as well as those who led sessions
- Opportunity to talk through questions – the unconference a surprisingly good format for that
- Volunteers who took thoughtful, legible, usable notes
- Colleagues who are here. We're not really in the silos that everyone talks about.
- Unconference format allows more tailored discussions.
- Wide mix of evaluators – internal/external, public/private, interesting to learn from one another
- Don't have to be rigid about evaluations. Lots of questions in understanding evaluation world.
- Camaraderie, soaking and connecting, questioning together the assumptions of evaluation.