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**Best Practices for Creating and Sustaining Engagement with Urban Communities:
Recommendations for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

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Executive Summary

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service launched its Urban Wildlife Conservation Program in 2012 in order to increase the relevancy of the service to urban communities, as well as to connect urban communities with nature and environmental conservation. As part of this initiative, the USFWS has designated certain urban centers as Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership Areas. The main goal of the Urban Wildlife Refuges is to engage urban communities in wildlife conservation, often with the help of community partners. There are eight “Standards of Excellence” that serve as a framework to support this goal. While these Standards of Excellence are in place, there is still work to be done in taking these rather broad standards and operationalizing them, so there is guidance and an understanding of best practices related to the standards at the individual refuge level. For our project, we were tasked by our client at the USFWS with operationalizing the standards related to the broad goal of creating community connection and engagement. In order to assess these best practices, USFWS asked us to examine the practices of other federal land-management agencies and conservation-oriented non-profits that have urban programs, in addition to well-established and effective Urban Refuge Partnerships within the agency.

We conducted a literature review of research on urban and minority population views of nature and wildlife, as well as their use of natural areas, and barriers to this use. We also interviewed staff from land-management agencies and conservation organizations about their urban programs. From our research we found that there are socio-economic and socio-demographic factors that influence urban and minority participation in conservation activities, and there are also consistent barriers that have prevented them from participating in conservation activities. From our interviews we found that it is essential for refuges to build strong relationships with urban community members in order to gain their trust and to solicit their participation in programs and activities. In doing so, refuge staff must initiate contact by coming off the refuge and into the community, and reach out to community organizations and leaders as potential partners and allies. Refuges must also address and work to overcome barriers urban and minority communities have historically encountered in participating in conservation activities, and pursue activities that increase their relevancy in the urban environment. Soliciting community input in designing refuge programs and activities, and then acting on this input, is also critical to increasing relevancy. Doing these things may require a paradigm shift for refuge staff who traditionally have focused on conservation activities only on the refuges, and waited for the public to come to them, rather than reaching out to communities. However, this shift is necessary in order for the USFWS to create a broader conservation constituency and to truly engage the 80% of the U.S. population that lives in urban areas.

Introduction

The United States is becoming increasingly urbanized. The 2010 census found that eight out of every 10 Americans live in cities or towns with populations of 50,000 or more (U.S. Census Bureau, 2011, p. 4). Accompanying this urbanization is the increasing diversity of the population at-large. The 66% of the population living within the top 100 largest metropolitan areas is made up of 77% of the countries non-white peoples (Berube et al, 2010, p. 52). These demographic and population changes have led to efforts by government agencies across all levels to better connect and engage with urban and diverse populations who have varied experiences with, and orientations toward, environmental conservation.

How does the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) best create engagement with urban audiences who may not be used to green spaces, wildlife, and environmental conservation? To address this challenge, the USFWS created the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program in 2012. The purpose of this program is to “engage and inspire people who live in urban areas to become a part of the conservation constituency,” and to ensure that “people who are engaged in wildlife conservation reflect the demographics of America.” (USFWS, 2015) A key part of the Urban Wildlife Conservation Program is the Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership Program, in which FWS refuges partner with community and environmental organizations in order to better achieve their urban conservation goals. The USFWS (2014) created these following 8 “Standards of Excellence” for urban wildlife refuge partnerships:

1. Know and Relate to the Community
2. Connect Urban People with Nature via Stepping Stones of Engagement
3. Build Partnerships
4. Be a Community Asset
5. Ensure Adequate Long-Term Resources
6. Provide Equitable Access
7. Ensure Visitors Feel Safe and Welcome
8. Model Sustainability

While the FWS has these standards in place for urban refuges to follow, there is nonetheless a need to operationalize these standards, and give concrete suggestions on how best to put them into practice. The goal of this paper is to suggest best practices, based on our research, which new urban programs can follow to operationalize these standards.

This paper focuses primarily on the first four standards, although it touches on the others as well. We first examine the academic literature on the attitudes and orientations toward wildlife and outdoor recreation by urban audiences, the use of national parks and other natural areas by urban audiences, as well as barriers faced by urban audiences to engaging in activities on wildlife refuges and in environmental conservation in general. We then draw findings from interview data conducted with individuals from urban partnership programs both within and outside of the USFWS: The Trust for Public Land, the Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area, John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum and the Wallkill-River National Wildlife Refuge. We conclude with recommendations for the best practices newer urban partnerships can utilize to establish relationships and a deep engagement with urban audiences.

The FWS classifies “urban refuges” as refuges that are located within 25 miles of a population of 250,000 people or more. There are currently six officially recognized partnerships in cities within Region 5, which stretches from Maine to Virginia: Baltimore, New Haven, Providence, Springfield, Philadelphia, and Yonkers (the most recent partnership designation is in Springfield, Massachusetts, with the Silvio O. Conte Refuge, in 2015). These designations were awarded beginning in 2013, oftentimes reflecting years of work prior to the official designation. Recently, the Service has begun efforts to codify business plans for each of the refuges and develop evaluation tools to gauge partnership success in achieving the standards of excellence. These

efforts are designed to both inform the operation of current partnerships as well as guide the expansion of the program.

Literature Review

Differences in Wildlife Attitudes and Behaviors

The first part of this literature review explores the possible differences in wildlife attitudes and values between urban populations and non-urban populations, as well as between different ethnic groups. What are the predictors of different behaviors and attitudes and what might these different behaviors and attitudes be? These questions are extremely important for understanding and connecting with the target audience. Research has shown there are significant differences between ethnic groups and between rural and urbanized citizens in regards to participation in “wildlife-dependent activities.” In a survey conducted by USFWS and the Census Bureau, metropolitan residents participated in both hunting and fishing and wildlife observation at a much lower rate than did non-metropolitan residents (15% to 30% and 29% to 40% respectively) (USFWS and U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, p. 62). There were also significantly different participation rates between different ethnicities. Non-Hispanic Whites participated in hunting and fishing at an 18% clip compared to only 10% for African-Americans, Asian-Americans at 6%, and Hispanics at 6% (USFWS and U.S. Census Bureau, 2012, p. 62). Furthermore, a survey given at various National Wildlife Refuges found that only 4% of visitors to the refuges in 2010 and 2011 were non-white (Sexton et al., 2012, p. 12).

Prior research has also found differences between urbanized audiences and between different ethnic groups in terms of outdoors behavior and attitudes towards nature and wildlife. One such study by John Dwyer and Susan Barro on outdoor recreation behaviors of urban residents in Chicago, found that while members of all groups said that outdoor recreation was important to

them, African-Americans and Hispanics actually indicated that outdoor recreation was more important to them than White residents (Dwyer and Barro, 2001, p.161). However, there were distinct differences between ethnic categories regarding the level of “naturalness” or development at sites, with African-Americans and Hispanic-Americans identifying a greater preferences for highly developed outdoor facilities than White Chicagoans (66%, 55%, and 33% of respondents respectively) (Dwyer and Barro, 2001, p. 162). Thus, white respondents were more likely to participate in unstructured outdoor activities such as camping than African-American and Latino populations. This echoes similar findings by Myron Floyd who found that consistent differences in participation in wildland and wildlife-based activities between different ethnic groups “has appeared regularly in research, spanning nearly four decades” (Floyd, 1999, p. 11) Hispanics and African-Americans are less likely to travel outside of their immediate environment to pursue outdoor recreation activities and are also more likely to participate in such activities in larger groups (Dwyer and Barro, 2001, p. 161). However, they caution to “avoid stereotyping particular groups or using simple explanations of their outdoor recreation behavior” (Dwyer and Barro, 2001, p. 163).

For example, Myron Floyd also points out that while many studies have revealed differences between participation in wildlife-based activities between White and Non-White populations, there often has not been an analysis of socioeconomic variables, and thus the effects of those variables may be attributed to race/ethnicity erroneously (Floyd, 1999, p. 11). Dwyer and Barro suggest that taken together, race and ethnicity, as well as variables such as education and income, can explain participation in outdoor and wildlife related activities (Dwyer and Barro, 2001, p. 163).

Vinor Sasidharan and Brijesh Thapa argue that there has been a lack of research that demonstrates a significant link between valuing the environment and wildlife, and sociodemographic variables such as race and ethnicity (Sasidharan and Thapa, 1999, p. 307). They contend that while ethnicity could be an influence, a more robust explanatory model should be used that includes social demographic characteristics, social psychological characteristics, attitude towards urban forestry and wildlife, urban park use and related outdoor recreation characteristics (levels of satisfaction, levels of participation in certain activities, etc.), and behavioral intentions (willingness of involvement through political action, tax payment, volunteerism, fund-raising, etc.) (Sasidharan and Thapa, 1999, p. 308). This model could help to guide research and better understand the behavioral intentions of ethnic minorities toward involvement with urban forestry, parks, and wildlife, and to thus aid in developing outreach environmental education frameworks geared toward ethnic minorities (Sasidharan and Thapa, 1999, p. 308).

Caitlin McCoy has performed research using what she terms “wildlife value orientations” to predict attitudes towards wildlife-related issues and wildlife-recreation behaviors. Her research has shown that recent changes resulting from modernization (rising income, education, urbanization) have resulted in a rise in the view of mutualism (belief that humans and animals can coexist) in the United States (McCoy 2010, p. 11-12). This implies a possible shift in attitudes towards more wildlife-first activities such as nature observation and away from activities like hunting. There has also been some dispute in the literature regarding whether urbanization itself will lead to a direct impact on outdoor recreation participation in regards to the types of activities participated in or frequency of participation. Chieh-Lu Li et. al found that rural upbringing was not associated with any of the outdoor recreation activities they were trying to explain (C. Lu-Li et al., 2003, p. 11). It seems much more likely that rather than simply influencing behavior,

urbanization is likely to create barriers that constrain recreation and environmental conservation participation due to a variety of factors such as distance to wild areas, transportation, and other structural barriers.

While there does appear to be differences between ethnic groups and between urbanized and non-urbanized audiences, it is not distinctly clear that any one factor will determine a population's wildlife-attitude and the barriers that they face. Attitudes and behaviors are often shaped by a variety of social forces, resisting an easy answer regarding how best to predict behavior. The solution seems to be to use a multi-faceted model that takes into account: 1) the racial/ethnic makeup of the population; 2) sociodemographic variables such as household size, income, education, and gender; and 3) the difference in wildlife values held by rural and urban residents that may influence the activities in which they participate. While understanding the audience along these dimensions is important, creating engagement with urban audiences will likely entail moving a step beyond these descriptive characteristics towards understanding how socio-economic and socio-demographic factors relate to the actual and perceived barriers that urban audiences face in engaging in conservation activities.

Barriers to Participation for Urban Audiences

Research on the barriers that affect certain portions of the population has become a vital part of information campaigns designed to increase public engagement and participation. Many of the studies conducted regarding barriers to minority participation in environmental conservation and recreation activities have pointed repeatedly to factors that create difficult or insurmountable obstacles for urban or minority participation in conservation activities. For instance, Michael Floyd found that factors impeding minority use of National Parks included lack of access to

transportation and discrimination (Floyd, 1999). In a series of focus groups in South Carolina, researchers found several barriers to visiting Congaree National Park (20 miles from Columbia) for African-American residents of the Columbia metropolitan area. These include inadequate information about the park, perceptions of the park as unsafe, uncomfortable or inadequate facilities, unwelcoming (related to lack of diversity and possible racism), a fear of the unknown in nature, and economic issues (transportation, lack of free time, assumption of an entrance fee) (Le and Holmes 2012, p. 26-30). The authors note that many of these problems can actually be traced back to the lack of information problem, as this lack of information likely leads to some of the misconceptions (safety issues surrounding wildlife, whether or not there is an entrance fee, etc.) (Le and Holmes 2012, p. 30). A mixed-methods review of ethnic-minority use of Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado discovered similar problems but also added lack of socialization to wildlife from childhood, lack of education about the outdoors and nature, and a lack of marketing to minority groups (Roberts and Rodriguez, 2008). Similarly, researchers who held focus groups in a series of different cities in Oregon to ascertain the barriers to outdoor recreation perceived by Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and African-Americans found many of the same barriers, including information about recreational opportunities, discrimination, distance to travel and transportation issues, safety concerns, and differing cultures and languages (Burns, Covelli, Graefe 2008, p. 135-136).

While not the only barrier identified, information and awareness were consistently identified across urban contexts and diverse ethnic groups. The solutions proposed to overcome these barriers is to partner with community organizations or players that have ties to specific populations in the urban context (Hispanic heritage centers, Asian-American organizations, etc.). Other solutions have to do with increasing the amount of information available on refuge websites

and using children (especially children in school) who can transfer information back to their parents (Burns, Covelli, Graefe 2008, p. 128) (USFWS, 2014, p. 12). Another concern regarding outreach efforts is that current efforts are not often linked together, an oversight that has important consequences for managers of public lands considering that many urban residents do not travel far outside of their immediate surroundings to partake in outdoor recreation (Dwyer and Barrio, 2001, p. 162). This implies that creating linkages between sites (and between organizations) can help increase awareness of opportunities.

Research on urban engagement conducted by the NPS and USFWS

Beginning in the 2000's, the National Park Service (NPS) became increasingly aware of the lack of racial and ethnic diversity among visitors to the national parks, as well as among NPS staff. The Visitor Services Project, a research project of the NPS, has been conducting in-depth studies at 140 different NPS units for over 25 years, gathering both qualitative and quantitative data about visitors and visitor use of parks. This data, as well as data from studies done by Myron Floyd has shown that visitors to National Parks have historically been overwhelmingly White, and that NPS staff is less diverse than the national civilian workforce (Floyd, 1999, and Floyd et al, 2008, McCown, et. al. p. 5). As a result, the NPS has made it a priority within the last ten years to engage more diverse communities, and to enhance its relevance to all Americans, particularly those living in urban areas. To further understand best practices for engaging diverse and urban communities, the NPS Conservation Study Institute conducted a research project in collaboration with the University of Vermont, the NPS Northeast Regional Office of Interpretation and Education, and the Santa Monica Mountains and Boston Harbor Islands national recreation areas.

This study consisted of interviews with roughly 100 NPS employees, staff at partner organizations, and program participants and their families.

Through this research, the NPS developed the concept of “deep engagement,” which is defined as “the ongoing engagement of community members that builds strong connections with NPS programs and parks and provides a continuing pathway for deepening park-community relationships” (McCown et al, 2012, p. 2). To this end, parks have developed partnerships that build connections with communities, and involve citizens (primarily youth) in in-depth and long-term activities and learning experiences. The research also identified six processes of deep engagement that were common to success in the programs studied: 1) Develop awareness and knowledge of local culture and diversity, 2) Build a skilled staff, 3) Create a supportive leadership environment, 4) Work closely with schools and community groups, 5) Provide benefits to communities through community service, and 6) Recruit park and community stewards (McCown, et al, 2012, p. 9-12). Examples of some of the programs that exemplified these processes of deep engagement at the parks studies included year-long school programs that involved both NPS staff going into schools, and schools visiting the parks, service learning programs for middle and high school students focused on habitat restoration, and both summer and year-round employment opportunities for high school students that introduce them to careers in public interpretation, education, and natural resource conservation. Through utilizing the six deep engagement processes listed above, park programs were able to achieve the following impacts and outcomes, resulting in successful NPS diversity initiatives: Staff involvement with local communities, inclusive interpretation (i.e. making historical and cultural interpretation relevant to urban audiences), effective communication and use of media, a welcoming and non-intimidating climate,

a diverse workforce, and meaningful, sustainable relationships with community members (McCown et al, 2012, p. 17-23).

The successful processes and outcomes that McCown identified with deep engagement have significant parallels with the USFWS “standards of excellence” for the urban wildlife conservation program. They also seek to address the barriers and constraints to participation in outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation found in studies by Le and Holmes and Burns, Covelli, and Graefe, such as lack of information about parks, and perceptions of natural areas as unsafe, or as unwelcoming due to lack of diversity and cultural differences.

Richard Makopondo, investigating the partnership strategy for the Boston Harbor Islands National Park Area, found that partnership was a viable strategy for inclusion of different groups but required a large degree of effort and dedication on the part of the NPS. He puts forward five propositions on how managers can create sustainable partnerships: recognize minorities as legitimate stakeholders and invite relevant groups to contribute to problem-definition and planning efforts from the beginning, recognize that minority-based organizations and groups may have different values and missions from you (flexibility), demonstrate that programming will be relevant to these populations, recognize that support from these groups is important and necessary, and finally the need for authenticity and genuine relationships between partners (Makopondo 2006).

The USFWS has also conducted research into minority visitation to National Wildlife Refuges. In attempting to research the target communities in the John Heinz NWR, the Service conducted interviews with community members about the barriers their communities faced in participating in outdoor recreation. They were then asked for recommendations about how public engagement with the refuge could be encouraged (USFWS 2014). Barriers that were identified

included a lack of awareness of the refuge, misconceptions about the refuge including whether people were allowed to visit, whether admission fees were charged, and regarding the actual activities a person can participate in. (USFWS 2014, p. 6-8) Other barriers identified included fear or safety concerns, lack of connection to nature (culture), and transportation (USFWS 2014, p. 6-8).

It is clear that understanding and overcoming the barriers that urban audiences face is an important step towards creating a building relationships and connections with urban communities. When refuge staff can understand the socio-demographic and subcultural makeup of the target community, and understand the cultural and institutional barriers that may affect that community, they can help to overcome those barriers. The literature provides a clear understanding about what the different types of barriers are likely to be and a somewhat clear, if also complex, idea about what underlies those barriers. Our interviews also contributed to an understanding of how land-management agencies and environmental organizations have sought to change management practices and attitudes to overcome these barriers.

Methodology

We interviewed seven individuals, representing four agencies and organizations, including two National Wildlife Refuges. The interviews were semi-structured and the length ranged from about thirty minutes to an hour. We asked questions about the background and formation of the partnerships, the roles of the different partners, the history of engagement with urban audiences, the types of programs and outreach activities conducted, evaluations of program effectiveness, and best practices and recommendations for newer urban partnership programs. Three interviews were conducted on an individual basis while two interviews were conducted with a pair of interview

subjects. Interviews were conducted over the phone in all cases. The individuals interviewed were as follows:

- Darci Schofield, Urban Program Director in the Boston Office of the Trust for Public Lands, March 11, 2016
- David Santucci, Education Technician at Boston Harbor Islands National and State Park, March 15, 2016
- Marilyn Kitchell, Wildlife Biologist at the Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge, March 4, 2016
- Lamar Gore, Refuge Director at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, March 18, 2016
- Mariana Bergeson, Deputy Refuge Manager at John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge, March 18, 2016
- Rick Magder, Executive Director of Groundwork-Hudson Valley, March 2, 2016
- Curt Collier, Deputy Director of Groundwork-Hudson Valley, March 4, 2016

We chose the organizations and the individuals based on several different factors. We wanted to get data from programs that were well-established, having been in place for at least two years, and that were based on a strong partnership model. In addition, our client specifically requested that we interview individuals at organizations and agencies other than FWS, and mentioned that the National Park Service and the Trust for Public Land had strong urban programs. Both the Wallkill/Groundwork and Heinz urban partnerships were well-established programs that had significant community involvement, and could thus serve as models for newer urban partnerships.

Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge is located about 66 miles and 90 minutes from Yonkers in Sussex, New Jersey. Groundwork is a national organization that was created jointly by the Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency to work on brownfield and urban restoration, and the Groundwork Hudson Valley chapter was established by executive director Rick Magder in 2000. Groundwork first formed a relationship with Wallkill River in 2011 to conduct Appalachian Trail restoration projects that were funded by the NPS. The partnership was strengthened in 2012, when Wallkill River hosted the Groundwork National Youth Summit, and deepened in 2014 when the official designation of an Urban Wildlife Refuge Partnership

provided funding that would help support refuge activities in Yonkers. The two organizations have worked together on educational and community programs such as a floating science barge in the Hudson River, habitat restoration, greening of vacant lots, and their largest project, the daylighting and restoration of the Sawmill River in downtown Yonkers.

John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge at Tinicum was established in 1972, and was America's first designated urban refuge. It was established for the purpose of preserving and restoring the Tinicum Marsh, which is the largest remaining freshwater tidal marsh in Pennsylvania. The refuge is located in southwest Philadelphia, adjacent to the Philadelphia International Airport. The Heinz staff began their outreach with the community by conducting school programs at the refuge, but then expanded their outreach to include working on green infrastructure projects and urban "pocket parks" in neighborhoods in southwest Philadelphia. Partnerships with City Lights (a community advocacy group for southwest Philadelphia) and Audubon Philadelphia aid in these projects. The refuge also works with the Student Conservation Corps to provide summer youth employment in conservation projects at the refuge and throughout the city.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL), whose mission is to create parks and protect land for people, helps communities fundraise, conduct research and planning, acquire and protect land, and design and rehabilitate parks, playground, trails, and gardens. The TPL's "Parks for People" program is specifically targeted at people living in cities. The goal of the program is to ensure that all people in the U.S. live within a 10-minute walk of a park, natural area, or garden. An initiative within that program, called "Creative Placemaking," is a cooperative, community-based process that creates parks and open spaces which reflect local identity through arts and culture.

The Boston Harbor Islands National Recreation Area (BOHA) is comprised of 34 islands, eight of which are accessible to the public by ferry. The islands are owned and managed by a number of entities, including the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Outward Bound, and the City of Boston. The NPS, partnering with these entities, as well as the Boston Public Schools, the YMCA, the Boys and Girls clubs, Student Conservation Corps and others, runs educational programs and discovery camps on the islands, as well as summer employment programs for high school students. The official Boston Harbor Islands Partnership is made up of federal, state, city, and nonprofit agencies, and coordinates the development and implementation of a management plan for all of the islands and the national park as a whole. The Boston Harbor Islands Advisory Council advises the partnership on park operations.

Key Findings

The findings from our research are organized by topic. The interviews confirmed much of what was previously discussed in the literature, as well as many of the tenets of the FWS standards of excellence. We attempted to go deeper with the interview data, however, in order to discover how these groups and individuals put these standards into practice on an ongoing basis.

1. Building Strong Relationships with Communities

It is clear from both the literature and from the interview data that it is imperative for a refuge to build a relationship with members of the urban community that it is working with. It is the foundation upon which all of the work of partnering and engaging their participation depends. The study that McCown et al conducted of two NPS programs found that the ability to develop “meaningful, sustainable relationships with community members” was a key factor in overcoming barriers that urban youth may have had toward environmental conservation activities and the NPS

itself, and that it deepened the level of trust and the engagement of community members with the programs. All of the seven people interviewed for this study stated that building a relationship with community members, through efforts to get to know them and to gain their trust, was critical in moving forward with soliciting their participation in programs and activities. Part of the mission of the urban partnership program is to promote a connection with nature close to home, within urban areas. Thus part of establishing relationships and building trust is finding out what community members' views are on conservation, and what type of green spaces or nature programs they would like in their communities. However, community members may not believe that environmental conservation is relevant to their lives, or they may not trust the FWS as a government agency. As Lamar Gore from the Heinz Refuge put it, "Part of it is trying to get to know the community so they understand and....trust you because you're a government employee. There is a little bit of a barrier there. So to me it's 90% about getting the trust of the community you're working with."

The staff at both the Heinz and Wallkill refuges found that in order to really get to know the community, they had to make the effort to come into the community to form the connections. In making that point, Rick Magder, the executive director of Groundwork Hudson Valley, stated, "You can't just stay in your little park somewhere if you want to engage the community. You have to come into those communities to build a relationship where people live, and with local government and businesses." How can refuge staff that may not have many connections with the local urban community go about building relationships and learning about community needs? According to those we interviewed, it is important to connect with community and neighborhood organizations and to attend their meetings, to reach out to community leaders, schools, faith-based organizations, youth groups, and similar organizations that are part of the fabric of the community.

As Lamar Gore put it, “In the beginning, it was finding out where folks were gathering who were concerned citizens or community leaders [in Southwest Philadelphia]. Find out who community leaders are, find out where and when the meetings are...go to the meetings and introduce yourself...say that you want to get to know your community.” This process of reaching out to the community and building relationships can take time. According to Darci Schofield of TPL, “starting new programs in new cities can take a long time. It requires a lot of networking, and a lot of meeting with city officials and community organizations.” When Rick Magder first established Groundwork Hudson Valley, it took two years of involving the community through forums such as monthly meetings with key stakeholders, field tours, and brown bag lunches to get initial projects off the ground. However, all of the interviewees clearly stated that it was worth the time and effort invested in the beginning to have sustainable and meaningful engagement for the long term.

2. Forming Meaningful and Beneficial Partnerships

A major component of the FWS Urban Wildlife Partnership Programs is establishing partnerships with other organizations and agencies within the community. Six out of the seven interviewees stated that partnerships were key to their success in engaging and maintaining involvement with urban audiences. This is the case for a number of reasons. Partnerships allow the agencies and organizations to better reach their target audience, and to leverage already existing community connections and resources. They allow for a pooling of knowledge, talents, and resources, as well as a level of specialization, with the understanding that no group can be all things to all people. The staff from Wallkill and Groundwork that we interviewed repeatedly emphasized the value of their partnership. According to Marilyn Kitchell, the Wallkill refuge has tried to “take advantage of all the local connections that Groundwork has within their community. Being trusted,

being respected, knowing the community, knowing what their needs are, asking what their needs are, all of that is what Groundwork is able to do for us. So we rely very heavily on that and we trust implicitly that they know what's best in their community.” Curt Collier from Groundwork emphasized, “You have to have an amazing FWS partner. The fact that they come off the refuge, and are interested in coming off the refuge...they really see this as their mission as well.” He also explained that Groundwork staff “rely on them [Wallkill staff] for help in... our restoration projects here locally because they have expertise on that.”

BOHA is a unique national park because it was formed from a partnership model. The Boston Harbor Islands Partnership is made up of federal, state, city, and nonprofit agencies, which all work together to manage the use and maintenance of the islands as well as to implement programming. The programs that the park service runs specifically for urban youth are done in partnership with Thompson Island Outward Bound Educational Center (TIOBEC), the Boston Public Schools (BPS), the YMCA, and the Boston Boys and Girls Clubs. According to David Santucci from BOHA, initially, the partnerships were formed to share resources: DCR owned many of the islands, TIOBEC had facilities and a boat, BPS had the teachers and students, and BOHA had the staff. From there, it evolved into a more formal partnership, and the groups involved developed joint programs together. “Our partnerships have enabled the program to be very successful. DCR has helped to design some of our programs, especially the summer camp and spring break programs. The YMCA and Boys and Girls Clubs have been important partners because they serve urban youth audiences who we are trying to reach.”

For the Heinz refuge, what initially began as refuge staff attending meetings of the City Lights Network, a community group in Southwest Philadelphia, evolved into a partnership, along with the Philadelphia Audubon, to develop green spaces and “pocket parks” in a number of

neighborhoods. For the FWS and NPS programs, it has been important to form partnerships with both conservation oriented partners who can help to achieve conservation goals, as well as community-oriented partners who can help to establish connections with urban audiences. Groundwork, as a community development and conservation organization, was able to provide both of these, but in many cases, different partners will be needed to achieve the goals of both conservation and community engagement.

3. Overcoming barriers to participation at refuges and in conservation activities

The findings from the literature clearly show that there have been significant barriers to urban populations participating in conservation activities and outdoor recreation, specifically at national parks and national wildlife refuges. The barriers include a lack of knowledge about the conservation areas and activities, possible feelings of fear or intimidation of natural areas, real or perceived costs of participation, and along with this, a lack of time or resources, including transportation, and a lack of diversity at conservation areas. Many of these barriers were also mentioned in our interviews, as well as a discussion of some of the ways that these groups are trying to overcome these barriers.

Staff at both Heinz and Wallkill stated that there was a lack of knowledge about their refuges among urban audiences. A focus group held at the Heinz Refuge in 2013 asked participants about barriers to participation in activities at the refuge, and according to one participant, “People are truly unaware of the refuge and don’t know that it exists. I have lots of friends in South Philly that don’t know about the refuge.” (USFWS 2014) As Curt Collier of Groundwork put it, “Many people don’t quite know what a wildlife refuge is. This is an urban population that with a few exceptions has probably never really ventured onto public lands before.” Refuges have to make an effort to get the word out about programs and activities they are

conducting both in the community and on the refuge. Mariana Bergerson from the Heinz refuge stated that they reach out “in a very strategic way” by focusing not only on their target communities in southwest Philadelphia but also on iconic, popular spots like Independence Hall. According to Bergerson, “going to [highly visited areas such as] Independence Hall will have a bigger impact” in terms of visibility and ability to reach a large audience. However, the commitment is still in the targeted communities.

Proximity and the ability of urban populations to access the refuges also came up in the interviews. Wallkill River is 66 miles from Yonkers, and not readily accessible by public transportation. Groundwork and Wallkill staff bring students and groups out to the refuge by bus or van, but people from the community cannot feasibly visit on their own without a car. Even the Heinz refuge, which is within the city limits of Philadelphia, is difficult to reach by public transportation. According to a participant from the focus group, “If you take the bus you have to walk from 80th street and that’s not a safe place to walk.” (USFWS, 2014) Both Lamar Gore and Mariana Bergerson from Heinz felt that proximity to the city was a critical factor in engaging urban audiences. Referring to the FWS criteria that urban refuges be within 25 miles of a city, Gore stated, “If it’s not 10 or 15 minutes away, you’re not going to get them here because they’ve got other issues going on. I think you should be looking at something like 10 miles or less to call it an urban refuge.” Distance from the city center also pointed to the importance of refuge staff coming into the community, and engaging in urban greening and conservation projects within the city. As Gore put it, “When you’re talking about 5 miles out or more, you have to go into the city. We’re doing both because we think it’s important. Going into the city is a steppingstone to introducing people who might have a...challenge, whether it’s cultural, ethnic, or connections based, and help

people to see it's introduced a little bit here, and then you offer an opportunity or means to get to the refuge.”

Visiting the Boston Harbor Islands requires taking a ferry, which is cost-prohibitive at \$17 for adults and \$10 for children, or \$43 for a family of four. In order to overcome that barrier, the Boston Harbor Islands Partnership does provide free passes to low-income groups, although it is necessary to go through an application process, which can also be a barrier. NPS has used the partnership with TIOBEC to provide boat rides free of cost for the educational programs, as well as providing free transportation for junior ranger days to students who participate in programs, so that they can come with their families on the weekend.

Overcoming possible fear or intimidation of natural areas came up in the interview with David Santucci of BOHA. The program works with urban youth who may never have been on a boat, been to an island, or been in a natural area, so they provide a scaffolded experience that always begin with a pre-visit at the school or the clubhouse. During this visit they show photos, answer questions, and address any concerns that students may have. When they first arrive at the island they meet in a built structure, then transition to a grassy area, and then finally to a more open and natural area. As Santucci puts it, “The scaffolded experience is meant to introduce them gradually [to nature and wildlife] and to increase their comfort level....we don't push them too hard but we encourage them.”

Our interviewees from Groundwork/Wallkill and BOHA both spoke to the issue of lack of staff diversity that can act as a barrier to urban audience participation. Both organizations have made an effort to diversify their staff in order to overcome that barrier. BOHA has done this in part by hiring interns through the Student Conservation Association, and also by hiring high school students for the summer through their Green Ambassadors program. Some of these students had

previously participated in the Connections program, so they are familiar with the programs and invested in their success. According to Marilyn Kitchell of Wallkill, “we are trying to make sure that our employees really do represent the diversity of the population that we have in this country...and historically conservationists are white...it’s very important that we are not bringing these cultural biases to the table.” Groundwork has also made an effort to hire staff from the community who had formerly been program participants.

4. Making Refuge Work Relevant: Creating Lasting Engagement through Participatory Design

Creating Relevancy: A Flexible Idea of Public Land Management

The key question for the FWS is how to make conservation work relevant to people who may view such activities as being completely foreign to their lives. This is one of the largest problems that currently face public land management agencies and arguably the underlying reason for starting an urban program designed to make connections with urban communities. One of the major findings from our interviews is the fact that simply inviting urban residents to make use of refuges will not be enough to create engagement. Making connections with an urban community and making public lands relevant to them requires understanding that activities that urban residents want may not be directly related to the refuges at all.

This represents a necessary shift in the paradigm for all of the interview participants. “I feel very strongly that the service should do urban (work) by doing the refuge (work) from the community out. We’re used to doing it from the refuge out, but we have to do it from the community out,” said Lamar Gore. In the case of the Wallkill River-Groundwork Partnership, doing work within the community was “a fairly natural transition and based on the fact that... this work is irrelevant if you are only doing it on the refuge.” Marilyn Kitchell further elaborated that, “You can bring a small number of urban kids onto the refuge and say “Hey isn’t this great!” but if

it's not easy to get there, if it's not easy to make a connection about how that relates to your daily experience, there is only so much that you can teach or provide an opportunity to the youth on isolated visits. We can't demonstrate that we care about their community if all we are doing is inviting them out to our land." David Santucci of the National Park Service further urged new urban partnership programs to "Go to where the people are. Leave the refuge and find parkland close to their communities."

Interviewees also provided information on what types of programs are particularly successful in regards to making public lands organizations relevant in urban communities. One of the most frequently mentioned was the importance of providing employment for local youth doing conservation activities (mentioned by 4 out of the 5 organizations interviewed). Rick Magder of Groundwork emphasized that employment programs helps demonstrate that your organization can bring money into the city and add value. Groundwork Hudson Valley has worked to develop youth employment programs that "pay decent wages." The interviewees at John Heinz noted that they have also begun to shift towards providing youth employment as a means of connecting the community with the refuge. "People want to see their kids working. We see them respond to us keeping their kids off the street, their eyes light up," says Gore. At Boston Harbor Islands, students in grades 9-12 are hired and paid as part of their Green Ambassadors program. This program helps to retain students they have worked with in the past.

A finding that was common across all interviews was that relevancy could not be achieved without meeting communities "on their level". This means having a more flexible idea of public land management and oftentimes a wider interpretation of organizational mission than has been traditional. Darci Schofield of the Trust for Public Lands noted that when working with urban communities in planning parks and green spaces, there is "a conservation and preservation

component that might not always be what community residents want. They might want a basketball court or a playground for example, or an urban farm.” This value disconnect could prevent true participation from urban audiences, lead to a lack of trust, and ultimately prevent community connection if it is not addressed. This value disconnect is something that the Yonkers and Heinz partnerships are mindful of. “My idea is just to inspire confidence...I’m kind of the cheerleader in a way, in terms of getting people pumped up and excited about things, but not to the point where I’ve really overwhelmed [them] and said ‘This is my vision and not theirs,’” said Curt Collier of Groundwork. Gore added that he believed this type of thinking is not currently endemic to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a whole, “Many people I’ve met at FWS, it’s not in them to go into the city because our idea of conservation is to be on a hill somewhere, hiking. So who wants to brave the traffic at 5 pm in Philly to go to a meeting for 2 hours, but you have to do it. So that’s getting past your own barriers.”

Another facet of having a more flexible idea of public land management and organizational mission that emerged in the interviews was related to funding. Marilyn Kitchell stated that with a new initiative such as the urban partnership program, there might be a tendency to wait for more funding to come through to start going into and doing programming with urban communities. However, Kitchell emphasized that waiting for additional funding isn’t always necessary: “You don’t need to wait for a grant to come through to have a group come out to the refuge, you don’t need to wait for funding to come through to go into the community and just visit. If you let go of the idea that you need to be funded then all sorts of opportunities will begin presenting themselves.” She also emphasized that building relationships first can help with funding: “Once you’ve established the relationship...then if you start putting in grant proposals that will be more

successful because you'll have more background information and demonstrated success to show that you can really make things happen.”

Participatory Design of Programs and Projects

This change in attitude toward conservation is exemplified by the focus on participatory design that has made its way into the ethos of all of the organizations that we talked to. The Trust for Public Lands Creative Placemaking program helps to “define what the space is, including...integrating arts and culture.” Furthermore, Trust for Public Lands actively seeks out “neighborhood leaders that work with TPL on visioning, participatory design, and construction.” Both the interviewees from John Heinz and Wallkill River talked quite a bit about integrating community feedback into design of green spaces and in gaining an understanding about what types of things that community members want to see happening in their neighborhoods. However, the two organizations that had the most extensive experience with eliciting community participation were probably Boston Harbor Islands and Groundwork Hudson Valley. The reason for this stems from the fact that they were both created with a high amount of community participation.

The ability of Groundwork to integrate so seamlessly into the Yonkers community in part stems from its founding. Executive Director Rick Magder notes that before the organization's incorporation, “We (went) through a 2-year planning process before creating the non-profit. During that time, there are huge amounts of community engagement from the get-go.” This involved the creation of a steering committee that involved faith-based organizations, local residents, civic associations, and small business owners. These meetings involved setting the organization mission and looking at what possible projects might be. However, like all Groundwork chapters, ultimate approval must come from the Mayor. This peculiarity in the Groundwork model vis-à-vis similar community-based organizations is represented by its

triangular logo: each of the points represents a different aspect of the “community.” This means a more holistic view of community engagement through bringing business and government into the fold, expanding the conception of the community that needs to be engaged. “(We) focus on institutional barriers that keep things from happening. If people are screaming at the mayor or the mayor is ignoring the community, or businesses aren’t involved, we look at environmental restoration from that perspective. In that respect, we are an outlier in the movement to restore communities.”

Groundwork uses various methods to elicit community participation “The idea is to meet with the community members, we use steering committees, we use advisory councils, we try to get as many people as possible involved in the decision making,” says Collier. A concrete example of the commitment of the Yonkers partnership to community involvement comes from a recent park project wherein Groundwork and Wallkill solicited community participation by going door-to-door and holding meetings to get community input about what the final design of the project would look like. “It can take us quite a bit longer to get anything done but it’s also where, if something happens, it’s what the community members wanted and it’s with full support of the City of Yonkers and with the local business people as well.” Other strategies used include holding meetings with community and neighborhood organizations, having brown bag lunches to discuss plans, and many more.

The partnership with Groundwork helps save Refuge staff a great deal of time in terms of finding community connections, identifying potential projects, and understanding community needs. This allows the refuge to be efficient with its activities in Yonkers. “It doesn’t make sense for Fish and Wildlife to establish some sort of land base in these areas. Nor does it really make sense... to suddenly focus only on those urban areas. What we’ve tried to do with our approach is

to take advantage of all the local connections that Groundwork has within the community...Being trusted, being respected, knowing the community, knowing what their needs are, all of that is what Groundwork is able to do for us.” Thus, through partnering with Groundwork, Wallkill was able to expand its capability to conduct participatory design in Yonkers.

A larger conclusion that one could draw from this discussion is that public land agencies have recognized that forming connections with urban audiences is not a one-time process. Rather, the view seems to be that taking actions that are relevant to the community is a necessity for keeping urban communities engaged. “And if the service is trying to get (urban communities) out, they better have the resources to actually implement something or you’re going to lose them, and not four years down the road. You have to be able to make the changes people ask for in a timely manner,” said Gore. All organizations emphasized that community connections can be sustained only so long as programming and projects maintain their relevance to the lives of urban residents. Demonstrable achievements and success in a timely fashion is extremely important for building the trust necessary to create long lasting relationships between public land agencies and urban communities. Rick Magder summarizes this point quite succinctly, “Showing people that together we’re making a difference, and not just talking about it.”

Policy Recommendations

Both the literature review and the interviews we conducted led to some clear and consistent findings about best practices of agencies and organizations that have established successful conservation programs with urban communities. In this final section, we use these findings to suggest policy recommendations and best practices for USFWS urban partnership programs. They are organized around the same themes that were used to discuss the key findings.

1. Build strong relationships with the community, in the community

A consistent key finding was that all of the groups that we interviewed made significant efforts to establish connections and relationships by reaching out to community members and organizations **in** their own neighborhoods and communities. This means that refuge staff need to leave the refuge and come into the city to truly engage with community members. Once the refuge staff have identified their target audience and community, they need to start reaching out. Strategies for making contact and establishing connections include:

- Contact local community organizations, neighborhood organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, and youth groups. Set up meetings with organization leaders and staff, and also attend their scheduled meetings. Examples of youth groups are YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs. Neighborhood organizations include block groups, neighborhood associations, and community development groups.
- Reach out to community leaders and city officials who represent the targeted communities, to explore how they can be allies and partners in conservation and community engagement efforts.
- In all of these meetings, refuge staff should introduce themselves and the refuge, and explain how they can be a community asset. They should emphasize that the goal is to meet community conservation needs in their communities as well as to bring people to the refuge for programming. Ask community members what their needs are, and what conservation programs and activities would be most relevant to them (More specific strategies are given for this in section 4).

2. Identify barriers to participation in conservation activities both on and off the refuge, and ways to address and overcome these barriers.

A key finding from both the literature and the interviews was that barriers exist which have prevented urban communities from fully participating in conservation activities, and that these barriers must be addressed by in order to elicit full participation and engagement. The distance of the refuge from the city, a lack of public transportation, a lack of information about the refuge, discomfort with engaging with nature, and a lack of diversity of program staff emerged as the main barriers to be addressed. Based on the key findings, the following are suggested best practices to overcome these barriers with the target community:

- If the refuge is outside of the city, or difficult to access via public transportation, it is especially important to conduct conservation activities within the target community. This could be at local parks or green spaces, or even on school grounds.
- Ensure that there is transportation available for accessing the refuge, even if it is vans or buses for school groups, and work to ensure access via public transportation where feasible.
- Use highly visited areas, public forums, and public events to communicate information about the refuge and what the refuge can offer to the community.
- Make every effort to ensure that refuge staff reflects the population it is serving. Hire interns and students from the community through the Student Conservation Service or other programs in order to increase diversity and provide youth employment.
- Scaffold programs in order to address discomfort or inexperience with nature and wildlife. Begin in the city with familiar surroundings, buildings and parks, before conducting activities in more natural settings or the refuge.

3. Establish meaningful and beneficial partnerships

Our findings clearly showed that partnerships were essential to successfully engaging with urban communities, and they are also the cornerstone of the FWS Urban Wildlife Conservation Partnership program. The following best practices for establishing partnerships emerged out of our key findings:

- Two types of partnership are essential: Partnerships with other conservation organizations that can help achieve conservation goals, and partnerships with community organizations already connected with the community, who can help build relationships and engage the target audience.
- Use the strategies mentioned above for building relationships with the community to also establish partnerships: Set up meetings, attend meetings, hold community events. Reach out to leaders of community groups who can join forces to accomplish goals.
- It may be easiest to focus initially on partnering with schools and youth groups, and to run conservation programs with them. They are often willing partners, and connections with families can be formed through relationships with students.
- Partnering first with another conservation group to share resources and connections may make it easier to then partner with a community organization, because there will be more resources to offer and more connections for relationship-building.

4. Create lasting engagement through participatory design.

A key finding was that successful urban programs created lasting and deep engagement with urban audiences. This lasting engagement was achieved through developing meaningful relationships, working in the community and serving their needs, involving the community in

decision-making, and showing follow through and achieving common goals. The best practices that emerged from these findings include the following:

- Maintain the attitude that the refuge works from the community out, not the refuge out. Always consider how the refuge can be relevant and of service to the community, taking into account their needs and their views on conservation.
- Identify specific programs that can meet community needs, such as youth employment and development of urban green spaces.
- Build relationships and begin working in the community even without additional funding. Having already established relationships can increase the likelihood of grant proposal being successful.
- Use a variety of mechanisms to elicit community participation and involvement in program design. This can include focus groups, regular community meetings, task forces or working groups, charrettes, and advisory councils. It may also require efforts such as going door to door with information, and leading tours or hosting brown-bag lunches to show conservation sites.
- Ensure follow-through. Once goals have been identified, make sure that resources are committed and efforts made to achieve some of the goals in a timely manner. This leads to the community trusting and respecting your organization, and also maintains a level of enthusiasm, positivity, and support.

Conclusion

While research on the outdoor recreation and wildlife conservation attitudes and behaviors of urban audiences has shown some consistent differences between urban and rural audiences as well as between different ethnic groups, it seems far more productive that refuge managers take

into account a more multi-faceted view of urban audiences. This model may consider social demographic characteristics but also take into account social psychological characteristics, attitudes towards environmental conservation and outdoor recreation, and patterns of current outdoor park use, environmental conservation activity, and outdoor recreation in general. These factors are informed by various structural barriers that prevent participation in refuge activities both on and off the refuges. These barriers to participation in conservation activities must be acknowledged, and methods to overcome those barriers must be utilized.

Having analyzed the best practices that conservation groups have employed in order to engage urban communities, it is clear from the research and the data that there are certain common elements. It is imperative to build relationships and connections with community members, and to take the initiative to reach out and come into the community. Coming into the community can be a steppingstone to involvement with the refuge and it is also a way that the refuge can work in the city, closer to the target audience. Partnerships with community organizations are essential for building bridges with the community and for sharing resources. Engagement with urban communities must be meaningful and lasting for it to be effective, and trust must be built through listening, soliciting ideas, and then following through on those ideas with action. Our research showed that when these strategies are used that there can successful, long-lasting, and impactful urban partnerships and programs that truly change lives and urban areas for the better.

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Appendix A

Sample Interview Schedule (Wallkill River-Groundworks Interview)

1. Background of Partnership
 - a. (Groundwork) What were the community projects you were involved with in Yonkers prior to the formation of the partnership with Walkill River?
 - b. (Wallkill) What were the community projects you were involved with in Yonkers prior to the formation of the partnership if at all?
 - i. If not, what brought you guys into Yonkers?
 - c. How did the partnership form?
 - i. Did you have a prior relationship with each other? What was the process for finding partners?
 - ii. What about (Groundwork/Wallkill River) made it an attractive partner?
 1. What are the strengths of the other organization?
 2. How did you feel the other organization would be able to help?
 - d. What are the different roles within the partnership?
 - i. How often are meetings held?
 - ii. How closely do the various actors work together?
2. Description of Outreach Activities
 - a. (Groundwork) What are the various ways in which you reached out to the community?
 - i. History of outreach activities from Groundwork. How did you first build a relationship with the community?
 - ii. What were the outreach activities that were already being conducted prior to the partnership?
 - iii. What are your views on the importance of connecting with the community?
 - iv. How did you solicit community involvement?
 1. How participatory was the formation of project ideas?
 - b. (Wallkill) What are the various ways in which you reached out the community?
 - i. History of outreach activities in Yonkers
 1. If you were new to Yonkers, how much did you know about the community beforehand?
 2. What the initial reception from the community?
 - ii. What are your views on the importance of connecting with the community?
 - iii. What practices were already in place for community outreach?
 1. Was anything changed once the partnership was formed?
 - c. (Both) What are the current outreach activities being conducted?
 - d. (Both) What are activities that might be conducted in the future or that you wish could be undertaken to increase community engagement?

- e. Has the issue of racial diversity been a factor in partnership efforts at community outreach?
 - i. If so, how has it been a factor?
- 3. Evaluation Questions
 - a. How have you evaluated your program effectiveness?
 - i. If not, are their plans to begin a formal evaluation?
 - 1. What would say is an indication of outreach success?
 - ii. If so, how have you measured increased community involvement?
 - 1. Increased participation in programming?
 - 2. Increased community awareness of the refuge?
 - 3. Increased refuge visitation?
 - 4. What else might be important to measure?
 - iii. What tools do you use to measure increased community engagement?
 - 1. Surveys?
 - 2. Focus groups?
 - b. Where do you think the partnership has succeeded?
 - c. Where do you think the partnership could improve?
- 4. Best Practices and Recommendations
 - a. What are some suggestions you would have for other, newer partnerships that are just beginning or are having difficulty?
 - i. Creating partnerships with other organizations for the purpose of community outreach
 - ii. Creating community engagement
 - iii. Conducting outreach activities
- 5. Conclusion
 - a. Any last thoughts?

Additional Questions for John Heinz Regarding Community Workshop

- 1. Warmup and Introductions
 - a. Introduce Ourselves
 - b. Interviewees introduce themselves
- 2. Could you please talk a little bit about the history behind the conducting of the Community Workshop at Heinz?
 - a. Funding?
 - b. Selection process?
 - c. Recruitment of community participants?
- 3. How effective was the community workshop process?
 - a. Would you recommend doing it again? Is it worth replicating?
 - b. What were the some of the ways that you were able to use the findings of the study?
 - i. How has participation in refuge activities changed as a result of the findings?
 - ii. Were there any changes in terms of refuge activities as a result?

- c. Did the findings of the community workshop inform any decisions you made as refuge manager?
- 4. Brief talk about community outreach activities and partnerships
 - a. What are the various ways in which you reached out the community?
 - b. What are your views on the importance of connecting with the community?
 - c. What practices were already in place for community outreach?
 - i. Changes due to workshop
 - d. What are activities that might be conducted in the future or that you wish could be undertaken to increase community engagement?
 - e. How much have partners played into outreach activities?