

Delta Social Science Task Force Summary



Dr. Jim Sanchirico (Chair)
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DELTA STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL



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Task Force Members



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Task Force Report

- Executive Summary (charge, methods, summary of findings and Recommendations)
 - Why do we need social science in the Delta?
- Introduction (genesis of task force and design of process, why social science, what is social science)
 - Process as important as the final report, as it was designed to start the internal and external conversations on how to move towards implementation
- Findings and Recommendations
- Appendices (management and science workshop summaries, relevant fields of social science)
- Report also uses 8 case studies to put more texture on the Findings and Recommendations

Case Study 3

What has social science found about effective stakeholder engagement?

One of the purposes of governments is to implement the will of the people, but how does a government identify the people's will in a large population that often disagrees about the means and ends? A large body of research in public administration, public policy and sociology has produced insights for how to engage stakeholders in collaborative processes that involve sharing values and establishing goals, co-producing knowledge about the seriousness and importance of problems, and developing strategies for implementation. Some of this research is based on relatively small-scale management of natural resources, as might be found in governing fisheries, endangered species, estuaries, and watersheds (Sabatier et al., 2005; Lubell, 2004; Emerson and Nabatchi, 2012). Factors associated with successful stakeholder engagement have included representative participation, leadership, taking time to develop joint understanding of problems, often through integrating science and local knowledge, designing rules that foster trust, taking time to build trust, and fair rules of negotiations. For example, Heikkila and Gerlak (2005) in their study of four large collaborative resource management situations emphasized the importance of science, leadership, and prior experience. These findings highlight tested structures and processes that can facilitate effective engagement of stakeholders to help identify and define problems that need to be addressed through social science and interpreting how to respond to social science findings.

What is social science?

“...social science disciplines seek to understand social processes, social phenomena, or individual human attributes that are critical to the effectiveness of management decisions, including those on environmental restoration...”

Psychology: What values, attitudes, and prior experiences influence a farmers' adoption of a riparian buffer strategy?

Economics: What are the benefits and costs of alternative environmental restoration strategies?

Human Geography: How are people in the Delta affected by and adapting to climate change?



Recommendations

- Invest in a broad array of social science studies
- Invest in building an external network of social scientists
- Invest in internal social science capacity

Finding 1

There is a lack of social science capacity and investment



Recommendations

- Collaboratively develop conceptual framework that includes social science
- Secure funding for monitoring and reporting on social indicators
- Integrate social and biophysical science to improve decision making

Finding 2

Research activities are ongoing, but there is no long-term vision for social science integration



Recommendations

- Continuously evaluate institutional, cultural, and individual barriers to learning
- Reduce barriers to integrating new knowledge in future management decisions

Finding 3

The adaptive management process is not informed by the social sciences

Questions?

- Report and other materials available at: <https://deltacouncil.ca.gov/social-science>
- Thank you

