

AEA 2012 October 24- 27

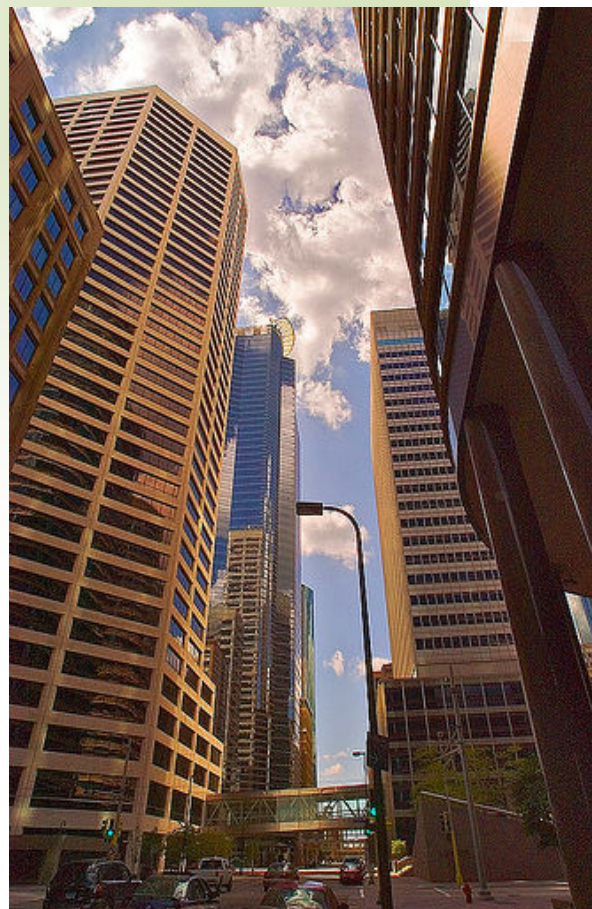
Minneapolis, MN

Dear Colleagues,

We invite you join us at the 26th annual AEA conference which will be held from October 24th to 27th in Minneapolis, a city known for its commitment to progress and its vibrant arts culture. Over 2,000 evaluators from all across the globe are expected to attend this year's conference which makes it an ideal platform for evaluators to shares their ideas with others who are passionate about evaluation. Apart from providing good-natured camaraderie and networking opportunities, the conference also provides a plethora of opportunities for professional development. You can find a list of interactive, hands-on workshops at this year's conference by clicking on <http://www.eval.org/eval2012/12pdw.desc.htm>.

The theme for this year's conference is "Evaluation in Complex Ecologies: Relationships, Responsibilities, Relevance." Evaluation does not take place in a vacuum. As evaluators, we have to work in complex local and global ecologies comprising of various relationships, responsibilities, and relevance. Given the complex and delicate nature of ecologies we work in, how do we address the key issues of relationships, responsibilities, and relevance? We will spend our time in Minneapolis discussing the key issues, challenges, concerns and questions regarding the conference theme. Through our intellectually stimulating discourse, we hope to come up with some strategies that will help us strengthen our practices and benefit the communities that we serve.

See you in Minneapolis!
The EPE TIG Leadership Team



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EPE TIG Conference Program

The conference program for the Environmental Program Evaluation Topical Interest Group (EPE TIG) is included as a quick reference guide for our members. Please refer to the final conference program for any changes.

Session Title	Session Number	Date	Time	Room
Building Capacity for Climate Change Adaptation: How Can Evaluation Help?	153	Thursday, October 25	8:00 AM to 9:30 AM	102 B
Finding and Assessing New Tools & Approaches for Environmental Program Evaluation	162	Thursday, October 25	8:00 AM to 9:30 AM	103 F
Relationships vs Responsibilities: Reconciling Research Findings of Lutheran World Relief's US Constituents' Attitudes on Climate Change, With its International Programs' Passion for Climate Change Work	208	Thursday, October 25	11:00 AM to 11:45 AM	102 B
Complex Ecology in Action: Field Trip to the Outdoor StreamLab and Mississippi River Stone Arch Bridge	263	Thursday, October 25	1:00 PM to 2:30 PM	Off Site
Environmental Evaluation in the Public Good: Continuing the Conversation	318	Thursday, October 25	2:40 PM to 4:10 PM	102 B
As Complex as it Gets: Evaluation of a Strategic Global Philanthropy Working to Prevent Climate Change	340	Thursday, October 25	2:40 PM to 4:10 PM	202 A
Whose Values Count? Evaluation Ethics, Principles and Habits From an Ecosystem Perspective	373	Thursday, October 25	4:30 PM to 6:00 PM	102 B
Environmental Program Evaluation Topical Interest Group Business Meeting and Ignite Presentation: Environmental Evaluation in the Public Good: Report From the Environmental Evaluation Network 2012 Unconference	424	Thursday, October 25	6:10 PM to 7:00 PM	102 B
Tri-agency Efforts Toward a Common Evaluation Framework for Climate Change Education Projects: Discussion in the Context of 2012 Recommendations for the Evaluation of Federally Funded Stem (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Education Initiatives	463	Friday, October 26	8:00 AM to 9:30 AM	102 B
Exploring the Complexity of Ecology, Collective Action and Community and their Influence on Environmental Evaluation in the International Arena	513	Friday, October 26	11:00 AM to 11:45 AM	102 B
Continuing the Dialog: Evaluating Climate Change Education Projects	596	Friday, October 26	1:45 PM to 2:30 PM	209 B
Building Evaluation Capacity in Environmental Education Programs: A Discussion of Process, Successes, and Limitations From Capacity-Building Initiatives	613	Friday, October 26	2:40 PM to 4:10 PM	102 B

EPE TIG Conference Program – continued from page 2

Session Title	Session Number	Date	Time	Room
Evaluating Environmental Education in Informal Settings: Strategies and Tools	663	Friday, October 26	4:30 PM to 6:00 PM	102 B
Rapid Impact Evaluation	720	Saturday, October 27	8:00 AM to 9:30 AM	102 B
More and Fuzzier Logic Models: Research and Online User Tools	765	Saturday, October 27	9:50 AM to 10:35 AM	102 B
Restructuring a Federal Environmental Research Portfolio and its Programs to Respond to Government-wide Science and Technology Priorities	810	Saturday, October 27	10:45 AM to 11:30 AM	102 B
Optimize Effectiveness and Outcomes for Environment Programs	900	Saturday, October 27	1:00 PM to 2:30 PM	102 B
A Common Evaluation Framework for Climate Change Education: Reflections and Lessons Learned From Evaluators on Climate Change Education Initiatives Funded by a Collaboration of Federal Agencies	945	Saturday, October 27	2:40 PM to 4:10 PM	102 B
SESSION CANCELLED	SESSION CANCELLED	SESSION CANCELLED	SESSION CANCELLED	SESSION CANCELLED

EPE TIG Business Meeting:

Thursday, October 25, 2012 6:10 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Mark your calendars! The EPE TIG business meeting is scheduled on Thursday, October 25, from 6:10 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. in Room 102 B. The purpose of the EPE TIG is to provide a voice for environmental evaluators who participate in AEA.

The first portion of the meeting will be an IGNITE presentation by Nancy Carrillo. Nancy's presentation will cover the EEN and AEA Unconference highlights and invite attendees to join the conversation on "public good." Then, we will elect the communications lead/newsletter editor for the TIG. After the election, we will seek suggestions/feedback from our members. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts on the direction of the EPE TIG and communicate how we can best meet your needs. Then, join us as we celebrate the recent accomplishments of our EPE TIG members. We're looking forward to seeing you Thursday night!

Business Meeting Agenda

- IGNITE presentation on EEN by Nancy Carrillo
- Election of Communications Lead/Newsletter Editor
- Suggestions/feedback from Members
- Networking Event & Celebrating our EPE TIG Members Beverly Parsons and Katherine Dawes!!!

“Un” is the new “In” Environmental Evaluators Network Unconference



By: Yvonne M. Watson

More than 160 environmental evaluators representing federal and state governments, consulting firms, academia and non-profit organizations descended on Washington, D.C. braving record heat (temps ranging between 95F-105F), humidity, and traffic on July 18-19 with one common purpose - to attend the Environmental Evaluators Network (EEN) Forum. The purpose of the EEN is to advance the field of environmental program and policy evaluation through more systematic and collective learning among evaluators and evaluation users. While the EEN is an independent organization, many of its members participate in AEA and share a common interest in environmental evaluation.

This year, EEN partnered with AEA to host its 7th Annual Forum: *Environmental Evaluation in the Public Good*. Other cosponsors included the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Industrial Economics, EMI Consulting,

American University and George Washington University. New this year, EEN decided to forgo the traditional conference to embrace an open space meeting Unconference format. Unlike the traditional meeting format, the Unconference is participant-driven with the agenda being formed in real-time on the day of conference.

On July 17, attendees opted-in to register for one of three independently sponsored pre-forum workshops: Rapid Impact Evaluation, Systems Thinking and Evaluation, and Adaptive Management: Tools for Planning and Monitoring Conservation Projects. During the two day event, a total of 29 sessions occurred - some resulting from an exchange of ideas facilitated through an EEN moderated website (to gauge audience interest), while others emerged organically the day of the conference. Example sessions included: AEA's Role in Supporting Environmental Evaluators; Climate Change Evaluation; Designing Regulations with Evaluation Built-in, and Evaluators New to the Environmental Field. Some themes that emerged across the 29 sessions included: the appropriateness of particular methods, common challenges in environmental programs and their evaluation (unclear program theory, unintended consequences, different values among stakeholders - even hostility among partners in some cases, time lag, time scales, feedback loops that are not well understood), evaluator competence and environmental capacity building.

Shelley Metzenbaum, Associate Director for Performance and Personnel Management at Office of Management and Budget (OMB), delivered the keynote address on the second day. Her remarks focused on a recently released memo - OMB M-12-14, *'Use of Evidence and Evaluation in the 2014 Budget'*, an initiative to deliver 'Government that Works' by requiring agencies to report their programs' effectiveness. She challenged evaluation practitioners to find evidence, use it, and strengthen evaluation capacity. Before closing on Thursday afternoon, Forum attendees created eight teams that would continue discussions and product development for issues of critical importance to environmental evaluation ([join a team!](#)).



EPE TIG Field Trip: Complex Ecology In Action

A Field Trip to Outdoor Stream Lab and Mississippi River

Hosts: Mary McEathron and Karlyn Eckman, University of Minnesota & Aimee Witteman, McKnight Foundation

Minnesota is the Land of 10,000 Lakes and “Sky-blue Waters”, and in Minnesota, water quality/ water resource projects account for millions of dollars. However, many in the field question the science or decision models that are used in planning river management projects and report that restoration and water quality projects are not well evaluated, if at all. This session’s field trip to the Mississippi River will give participants a chance to learn more about these issues and what environmental program evaluators may be able to contribute.

The field trip will begin with a visit to the Outdoor StreamLab, a large-scale experimental facility on the banks of the Mississippi River dedicated to stream restoration research. Scientists will describe how they use the StreamLab in their research and how their work is used in restoration projects. A short walk takes the group to the Stone Arch Bridge where they will see and hear from project staff and funder about the successes and challenges water quality projects have had on Mississippi River. Session concludes with discussion on the state of evaluation for water quality projects and strategies for improvements. Questions considered: how can we include the human element in the evaluation along with more common biophysical indicators? What could stream restoration projects learn from program evaluators? Is mandating evaluations a good idea?

We will board a big yellow school bus at 11:45 am in front of the Minneapolis Convention Center. We will travel to St. Anthony Falls Laboratory on the Mississippi River. For those intrepid bicyclers among us, we will offer a chance to use the Nice Ride bicycle rentals for a trip back to the Convention Center (or you can hop on the bus again). If you are interested in the Nice Ride option, please indicate that when you send your name to Mary. We will get back to the Convention Center by 2:30 pm. **** We will have snacks to share, but please feel free to bring your own lunch to eat on the bus.****



Space for the trip is limited!

TO SIGN UP, CONTACT
Mary McEathron
mceat001@umn.edu

**by 12 Noon, Wednesday,
October 19, 2012**

Please include the following
information in your email:

- Your name
- Your email
- Your phone number
- Nice Ride option (if interested)

EPE TIG Profiles:

Elizabeth Silverstein



Geographic Location: Milwaukee, WI
Employer: Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin (Work/Study Position)
Education: University of Wisconsin-Madison, MA in Public Affairs (expected graduation May 2013). Carleton College, BA Political Science/International Relations.
Area of Specialization: No area of specialization yet. I am quite content to learn about the field of environmental policy as a whole.
Years of Experience in the Field: I am a new comer to the evaluation field. I had an internship this summer that focused on evaluation with the EPA and have taken classes as a student on this subject.
Professional/Personal Interests: I am interested in bringing urban citizens in contact with nature and the environment so they can get excited enough to help protect it.
Methodologies Used: The methodologies I have used for my classes have been varied. Generally they have focused on concrete quantitative methods.
Description of Current Work: Currently, I am a student. My evaluation work stems from classes I am taking on the subject. My most recent project is looking at a small grants program run by an NGO in Madison, Wisconsin.
How did the evaluator come to be interested in environmental evaluation?: My internship this summer with the EPA introduced me to the evaluation world. I love to talk to people and solve problems, but I also enjoy working with numbers and analyzing data. It seems to me that evaluation is the perfect marriage of these two disparate skills.
Advice for other evaluators: Being so new to the field I have very little advice for other evaluators. In my limited experience I have realized how important it is for evaluators to have a strong network of other evaluators so the field can continue to grow and mature. There is so much great information and so many techniques being used by your colleagues, be sure to take advantage!

Britta Johnson



Geographic Location: Washington, DC
Employer: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Education: BA: University of Minnesota—Twin Cities
 Master of International Public Affairs: University of Wisconsin--Madison
Area of Specialization: Climate Change Adaptation Evaluation
Years of Experience in the Field: 5
Professional/Personal Interests: I'm a data geek and enjoy crunching numbers at any opportunity. I've been known to download random datasets to get my fix. I love travelling and all sorts of outdoor activities (backpacking, whitewater canoeing, rock climbing, skiing...). I'm also a bit of an adrenaline junkie.
Methodologies Used: I use a mixture of methodologies depending on what's needed for the evaluation.
Description of Current Work: I'm currently advising on two evaluations including one looking at an alternative risk-based inspection strategy and another of the Office of Water's climate change adaptation plan and help various EPA offices with planning and measures development. I also manage EPA's evaluation website and am always looking for ways to make it a more useful tool.
How did the evaluator come to be interested in environmental evaluation?: I knew I wanted to work in the environmental field in some capacity and decided on the policy side of things and fell into evaluation from there.
Advice for other evaluators: Don't feel like you're alone if you feel like you don't know what you're doing. I find evaluation to be a field that learns as it goes and there are plenty of friendly people out there who are tackling the same issues as you.
 As a bonus, I'm a native of Minnesota and am happy to offer tips on enjoying Minneapolis outside the conference! (hint: you'll be able to find me "evaluating" the performance of the Gopher hockey team on Friday night).

EPE TIG Profile:

Daniel Kaufman

Geographic Location (City/State): Cambridge, MA

Employer: Senior Associate at Industrial Economics, Inc. (www.indecon.com)

Education: B.A. in Economics and Politics; M.A. in International Economics and Finance, Brandeis University

Area of Specialization: energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate change, sustainable development, voluntary partnership programs, and clean energy financing

Years of Experience in the Field: 7

Professional/Personal Interests: I am committed to helping government agencies and non-profits achieve their goals and allocate their resources effectively through strategic planning, performance measurement, and program evaluation. I am especially interested in programs that use market-based mechanisms and incentives to achieve social and environmental benefits.

Personal Interests: I enjoy running, Taekwondo, traveling, museums, and reading.

Methodologies Used: I use a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods; the specific methods used depend on the questions posed by my clients. My current projects incorporate surveys, interviews, logic modeling, case study research, and database management.

How did the evaluator come to be interested in environmental evaluation?: My consulting projects have always involved a considerable amount of program evaluation work. When I conducted a large impact evaluation for a statewide renewable energy program several years ago, I realized that I was especially interested in environmental program evaluation. Environmental evaluation lets me engage with complex and exciting issues that will have a lasting impact on our economy and our planet.

Description of Current Work: I am currently working on two evaluations for the U.S. EPA, regarding environmentally preferable purchasing, and risk-based strategies for inspection targeting. I am also working with the U.S. EPA on methods for attributing benefits to voluntary partnership programs. In addition, I am conducting an evaluation of an advanced energy metering program for publicly-owned buildings in Massachusetts.

Advice for other evaluators: Don't pretend to have all the answers. Instead, use evaluation as a tool to facilitate strategic thinking and open dialogue among program managers, implementers, and beneficiaries. It is helpful to engage evaluation stakeholders early and often throughout the evaluation process; this approach facilitates learning, and usually increases buy-in for your findings and recommendations.



Perspectives: by Shari Grossarth

What makes something program evaluation versus something else (e.g., research, analysis, a study)? How do you know you're doing program evaluation versus something else? Can doing something else get you to the same end as doing program evaluation? Or does it even matter what you're doing (or what it's called) if you're getting to the same end or, at least, to the desired end?

As a fairly new evaluator, I've asked myself these questions about the different efforts I've been involved in that may or may not meet the rigor I typically associate with "program evaluation" but are meeting the information needs of stakeholders and decision makers. I wonder about when something can be called program evaluation, when it might not pass muster, or if it even matters. If it matters, I wonder what components are critical for the something to be considered "program evaluation."

As an individual in an organization, I've asked myself similar questions in the context of how to be relevant and useful when resources are limited and in an organizational culture that does not completely embrace evaluation. I've wondered how expansive evaluative thinking and approaches can be to provide the information needed to learn and make decisions while still maintaining the integrity of "program evaluation."

If you are interested in sharing your perspectives with me or starting a conversation on this topic, please send me an email at grossarth.shari@epa.gov.

(Shari Grossarth works in the Evaluation Support Division at US EPA).

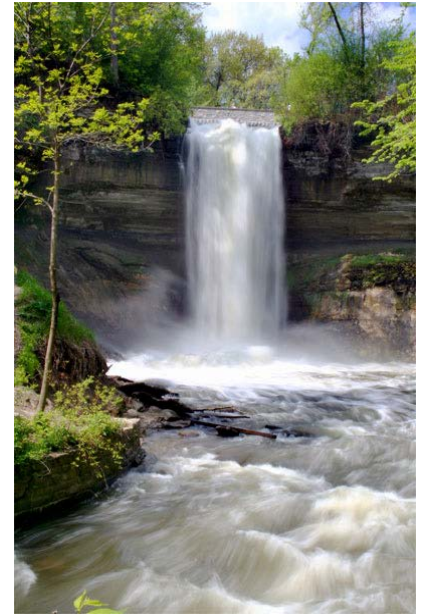
Evaluation Resources

Picturing Your Program: An Introduction to Logic Modeling Web-based Online Training Course

We've often heard it said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Many organizations, programs and projects often run into trouble because they lack a clear understanding of how their programs are supposed to operate and find it challenging to communicate the results of their programs and projects. A logic model is a picture that uses diagrams and text to illustrate the relationships/connection between a program resources, outputs, customers, outcomes, goals and objectives. A logic model can help managers and staff in government, and grantees understand whether their program or project is operating as intended and achieving the expected outcomes, goals and objectives. The U.S. EPA's Evaluation Support Division has developed an on-line logic model course to introduce users to this valuable performance management tool. Complete with imbedded quizzes, this self-paced, web-based, interactive on-line course will provide users with practical instruction and the basic steps needed to develop a logic model. Imbedded quizzes, will help users remain engaged and will help ensure users grasp key concepts such as the core logic model elements, the difference between an output and an outcome, and how to apply these concepts to create a logic model of their program, project or organization. To get started click on the link provided. <http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/lm-training/index.htm>

Picturing your Data: Using Word Clouds

Word cloud, also known as tag cloud, is a visual representation for qualitative data that uses keywords from the text to generate a graphic representation of the important themes in the text. The importance of each keyword is shown with font size and/or color. Users can find many free web-based cloud generators. Some of the popular ones are as follows:
Wordle (<http://www.wordle.net/>): Wordle is very simple to use. It lets you change the orientation of the text and the color scheme easily. If there are any themes that you want to delete from the word cloud as they might not add to the understanding of the data, you simply have to put your cursor on the word, right click, and then delete the themes.
Tagxedo (<http://www.tagxedo.com/>): Tagxedo is a very useful resource people who want to customizable word clouds. Tagxedo has many cool features that allow users to upload image and wrap images around it, to save the cloud in multiple format, to create your own color scheme, and to enable word stemming so that similar words are treated as one.



The EPE TIG is seeking your input and help. If you are interested in contributing to the next issue of the EPE TIG Newsletter or would like to lead our TIG Communications Team, please contact Yvonne M. Watson at watson.yvonne@epa.gov

Visit the EPE TIG on the Web @

<http://comm.eval.org/EVAL/environmental/Home/Default.aspx>

Member Profile

Volunteer to share more information about yourself with other members of the EPE TIG for inclusion in the next Newsletter.

Newsletter Topics

Share your ideas for topics that should be highlighted in future issues of the Newsletter.

Article

Write and submit an article highlighting an evaluation topic of interest, projects you're working on, recommend a cool resource or respond to the discussion topic/question.