Environmental Program Evaluation
Newsletter, March 2016

Get Involved!

Review Conference Proposals
The commitment: review a small number of proposals (in the past, about 3 to 5) over ~ two weeks in mid-April.

The reward: Help develop the strongest environmental program evaluation roster of sessions and papers yet.

Everyone is invited to review, regardless if you are new to the TIG or have submitted several proposals yourself.

Blog for AEA 365—Earth Week
EPE TIG will host the AEA365 blog for the week leading up to Earth Day, April 22nd. The blog provides a wealth of topical information and useful resources. We post tips and information particularly relevant to environmental evaluation, but with broader AEA appeal. Ideas include how evaluation addresses current and emerging environmental issues, useful tools for the environmental evaluation field, and resources to help readers think more environmentally.

Interested in either? Contact Christina Kakoyannis <Christina.Kakoyannis@NFWF.ORG>

Conference Call for Proposals – March 15, 2016

Conference Theme: Evaluation + Design

This year’s annual conference will be in Atlanta, GA from October 24-29. We encourage you to consider submitting a proposal on any of a wide range of environmental evaluation topics, including (but not limited to):

Evaluations of Conservation Biology, including:
Ecological monitoring and assessment, e.g. habitat or species restoration
Human dimensions of resource management.

Evaluations of Environmental Policy, Programs and Management, including:
Policy and practice change initiatives
Program and policy effectiveness and environmental outcomes
Program and policy implementation across local, regional and national levels

Evaluations of Environmental & Conservation Education, including:
Environmental & Conservation Education in public and private school settings, and/or non-formal settings
Educational impacts of environmental and conservation education on learning

Evaluations of Energy Programs, including:
Improvement of energy efficiency & conservation program management
Measurement of demand-side management programs
Impact of social marketing and incentive programs on consumer behavior

Evaluations of International/Global Issues, including:
Education and will-building in support of environmental issues
Climate change practices, policies
International treaties, consortiums

Discussions of scale:
Spatial scale: evaluations of local, regional, national or international projects and programs
Temporal scale: addressing the challenges of delivering evaluation results in a time frame at odds with the pace of natural processes

Please integrate the conference theme Evaluation + Design—specifically, program design, evaluation design, and information design into your proposal. Submit via AEA’s website by 11:59 (Eastern Time Zone) on March 15th.
This year, AEA’s Sustainability Working Group (ASWG) is starting to implement recommendations from the Green Audit commissioned in 2015. ASWG is addressing both how AEA can practically address sustainability challenges as an organization, and how members can act as catalysts for sustainable action in their own organizations and in their work as evaluators. For example, AEA might offer the option at registration of carbon offsets. ASWG meets the first Monday of every month from 12 to 1PM eastern by teleconference. If you are interested in joining, or have ideas or input, please feel free to contact EPE TIG Program Co-chair and ASWG member, Heather Dantzker at heather@dantzker.com for more information.

Members of the EPE TIG had the opportunity to visit conservation staff and scientists at the Chicago Field Museum’s Keller Science Action Center during the 2015 Annual Meeting. The purpose of the visit was to exchange ideas about evaluation in the real-world context of conservation science programming and foster mutual learning between AEA and the broader community. EPE TIG participants focused on the Roots and Routes initiative and its key evaluation question ‘How to assess the degree to which our programs and community engagement work are deepening connections residents have with the Burnham Wildlife Corridor?’ Breakout discussions helped the group tackle the question more intimately, each then reporting back their ideas to the main group. All agreed that the exchange was helpful. We look forward to doing another field trip as part of the 2016 annual meeting. More details to come.

For example, the IUCN World Congress in 2012 passed a number of resolutions incorporating evaluation, including the resolution for “The Development of an Evaluation and Certification System for World Environmental Hubs.” (WCC-2012-RES-126-EN: https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/resrecfiles/WCC_2012_RES_126_EN.pdf)

Evaluation will be embedded within the 2016 IUCN World Congress, and environmental evaluators can bring useful expertise to the conversation. Here’s a link to the 2016 IUCN World Conservation Congress site: http://www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org/

If you plan to attend, please notify Arlene Hopkins (Arlene.Hopkins@gmail.com) who is interested in forming a small “delegation” of evaluators to advance environmental evaluation at the Congress. On the fence? It’s in Honolulu.
Meet Our Members Profile: Arlene Hopkins

Geographic Location: Santa Monica, CA


Area of Specialization: Community-based resilience and adaptation—helping communities proactively prepare for and adapt to climate change, land system change and similar challenges.


Professional/Personal Interests: Program planning and design that incorporates formative evaluation with adaptive management. Skill in conducting complex analyses across multiple disciplines.

I am a resilience strategist, educator and architect working to develop community-based climate change mitigation and adaptation policies, programs and projects. Integrating across multiple disciplines, I am translating science into pragmatic strategies that can be adopted and adaptively managed at both individual and institutional levels. I am currently developing a replicable program framed by the planetary boundaries as proposed by the Stockholm Resilience Center and anchored within community with Ostrom’s “commons” as a transformative model for community social ecological systems.

Methodologies Used: My strength is in working with systems. Integrative, conceptual design, formative, process and outcome evaluation methods all come into play.

How did you come to be interested in environmental evaluation? An avid outdoor enthusiast and conservationist, I gravitated to environmental evaluation as a means of understanding how to protect and enhance our environment. In studying educational evaluation, I learned about development and behavioral changes. In studying architecture, I learned about environmental psychology. Later contract, technical and compliance evaluation. Over recent years, I have been working with evaluator colleagues to integrate around social ecological systems.

Description of Current Work: Presently a colleague and I are conducting an evaluation of 18 sustainable community-planning projects across California for a California state agency. In this work we find that we are somewhat advancing the practice of environmental evaluation. We are always looking for more interesting projects or opportunities to advance the integration of frameworks and metrics around social ecological systems.

Advice for other evaluators: Discover and pursue your interests. Continue to develop your understanding and practice of evaluation.