

Diversity and Challenges/Opportunities to Salt Pond Restoration

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Organization

- How does diversity affect the restoration of the salt ponds?
 - Population diversity
 - Sector diversity
 - Diversity changes over time
- How can challenges due to diversity be addressed?

How does diversity affect the salt pond restoration project?

- Population diversity (income, race/ethnicity, immigrant status) => varying interests, perspectives, attitudes
- Sector diversity (residents, businesses, advocacy organizations, government agencies) => potential conflicts or overlapping agendas/goals
- Diversity changes over time => conflict and/or cooperation now may change over the lifespan of the project, but proximity is always important

Population diversity

- Impoverished groups may be more concerned with environmental challenges related to urban development and industrial pollution (“environmental justice”)
- Immigrants may appreciate environment (nature, wilderness) in similar ways to native-born residents, but may not be engaged with environmental organizations
 - Lack of engagement may not mean lack of interest
 - Mobilization may be sparked by cultural changes, population shifts, or threats to quality of life

Sector diversity

- Different groups are concerned with distinct issues, but proximity always matters (the closer the site, the more intense the perception):
 - Residents: fairness (concentrated costs and regional benefits) and negative impacts on quality of life (increased traffic, pollution)
 - Businesses: adverse impacts on consumer/client behavior and added costs
 - Advocacy organizations: initial implementation but also sustainability
 - Government agencies: interjurisdictional issues, mitigating negative environmental conditions, complying with legal mandates and regulations

Diversity changes over time

- Conditions today (political, social, economic) will likely change in substantial ways over the lifespan of the project
- Population and sector diversity today will be different over the lifespan of the project => different goals, different allies, different conflicts
- What is acceptable today may be controversial tomorrow

How can challenges be addressed?

- Monitor changes in population and sector diversity over time
 - New allies/supporters may emerge or be cultivated
 - Old allies/supporters may leave/change
- Understand how diversity can enhance support for the project over the short and longer term
 - Engage diverse populations and sectors, especially those proximate or adjacent to sites
 - Identify concerns (fairness, negative impacts, sustainability, interjurisdictional issues)
 - Enhance overlaps in agenda between diverse groups and salt pond restoration project

Building overlapping agendas

- Process
 - Bridging salt pond restoration to issues of interest to diverse groups (residents, businesses, advocacy organizations, government agencies)
 - Joint fact finding and/or definition of potential risks
 - Consensus building about shorter term objectives and identifying possible positive/negative impacts
- Addressing negative impacts (perceived or material) and/or conflict
 - Compensation
 - Negotiation and/or mediation