

# Using Environmental Program Evaluation in a Non-Profit Organization

Presented by:

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# **Presentation Outline**

**Why perform a program evaluation for a non-profit environmental organization?**

Role and Value of Evaluation

Wilburforce Foundation

Oregon Natural Resources Council (ONRC)

**What can a non-profit environmental organization learn from an outcome-based self-evaluation?**



# **What is Evaluation?**

## **Evaluation is about:**

Identifying goals and desired objectives

Describing what activities have taken place to accomplish goals/objectives

Describing what changes have taken place and whether the goals and objectives have been accomplished

**Evaluation should help to inform and improve programs as they develop**



# **What is Evaluation designed to do?**

**Verify** – to assure that the apparent results are what they appear to be

**Document** – to provide evidence of what you did and the results

**Quantify** – to assess and describe the extent of change or impact on the problem or population



# **What is Outcome-Based Evaluation?**

The main question addressed in outcome-based evaluation is:

What has changed in the community/environment as a result of this program/organization?



# **What is the Value of Outcome-Based Self-Evaluation?**

To provide a logical, focused framework for guiding staff activities

To generate useful information for program decisions

To document successes so that funding and thus the long-term survival of the program can be secured

To create a working document that is dynamic and allows programs to modify over time and to understand what they are doing and why



# **ONRC Outcome-Based Self-Evaluation Background**

## **Wilburforce Foundation**

- \* Agreed to underwrite an evaluation project to assist three grantees in design and implementation of an outcome-based program self-evaluation plan.
  
- \* Wilburforce's goal is to leave a legacy of healthy organizations that can effectively and efficiently respond to conservation challenges and opportunities.



# **ONRC Self-Evaluation**


## **ONRC goals and mission**

To aggressively protect and restore Oregon's wild lands, wildlife, and waters as an enduring legacy.



# Measuring ONRC's success

Outcome-based self-evaluation is a way to demonstrate success and/or define criteria for success, including, but not limited to, the impact on the community/environment.



# **What can a non-profit organization such as ONRC learn from an outcome-based self-evaluation?**

## **Outcome-Based Evaluation helps:**

Provide accountability

Improve program quality

Allocate resources

Market successful programs or strategies



# **ONRC's relationship with NPC**

## **ONRC staff**

- \* Provided NPC with documents about the organization's strategic plan, goals, vision, and other data appropriate for this project
- \* Assisted in the design of the evaluation plan and the development of logic models

## **NPC staff**

- \* Conducted stakeholder interviews
- \* Conducted an inventory of existing data and technology
- \* Theory of change exercises with board
- \* Created logic models and a working evaluation plan with the assistance of ONRC staff



# Summary of Experiences in the field:

- **What was the best part of the project?**
  - \* Group making subtle changes in their processes and protocols
  - \* Using evaluation practice in decision-making
- **What, if anything, did the organizations learn?**
  - \* How to ask questions of themselves and others.
  - \* How to evaluate outcomes and successes as well as address challenges and understand why they are challenges.



## Summary of Experiences in the field (continued):

- **If there were improvements, what were they?**
  - \* Deciding whether to keep programs running
  - \* Decisions on what events/actions to continue
  - \* Paper work and database streamlining
- **If there were improvements, how long-lasting do you expect them to be?**
  - \* Extremely Long-Lasting
  - \* Creating in organization an understanding of the importance of evaluation in terms of benefits to the program and staff.



If you have any questions or comments please feel free to contact me.

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