



# ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, SOCIOECONOMICS, AND STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

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Highland Economics

# CENTRALITY OF STAKEHOLDERS & THEIR VALUES

- Ecosystem Services Assessment:  
*Identifies Contribution of Natural Resources to **Human Welfare***
- Socioeconomic Impact Assessment:  
*Identifies Impact of a Policy/Project/etc. on **Human Welfare***
- **Whose Welfare? Stakeholders!**  
*Including vocal, non-vocal, local and non-local stakeholders*



**Note:** Socioeconomic assessment is broader than ecosystem services assessment because socioeconomic impacts can stem from non-environmental sources, but the common element is stakeholder welfare

# WHY FOCUS ON STAKEHOLDERS?



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Understanding Stakeholder Concerns, Values, and Interests helps to:

- **Streamline (SAVE COSTS!)**  
*Focus on What People Really Care About*
- **Integrate (RELEVANCY!)**  
*Relate the Environment to People's Interests & Activities*
- **Improve Accuracy (CREDIBILITY!)**  
*Accurately Reflect People's Dependence & Interaction with their Environment*
- **Make Results Meaningful (COMMUNICATE!)**  
*Speak People's Language by Focusing on Outcomes They Relate to and Understand*



# EXAMPLE 1: STREAMLINE & INTEGRATE



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NEPA Analysis: Water Management in Deschutes Basin, Oregon

- **Relate Changes in All Aspects of Water Management to People**  
*The local economy, people's leisure activities, cultural values and traditions, and environmental health.*
- **Streamlining & Coordination Across Disciplines**  
*Output of All Resource Analyses – Input to Socioeconomic Analysis*  
*Intense Cross-Referencing and Focusing of Sections*



## EXAMPLE 2: ACCURACY/CREDIBILITY AND COST



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### Flood Attenuation Benefits of Riparian Areas in Sonoma County, CA

- **Many Studies: Very Costly or High Error Margin/Low Relevancy**  
*Site specific hydrologic and economic modeling is very costly, and applying range of flood control values from other studies has high margin of error.*
- **Instead, Focus on Actual Stakeholder Interests**  
*What infrastructure and activities are at risk in the floodplain? What losses have been suffered in past flood events?*
- **Results People Understand: Tied Directly to What People Know and Care About**  
*Connect local value at risk with how riparian areas reduce flood magnitude (% reductions) elsewhere*



# EXAMPLE 3: ACCURACY

## Economic Development in Southwest

- **Initial Project Scope Did not Include Ecosystem Services**  
*Initial focus was on industries to attract/grow & built infrastructure*
- **Stakeholder Interviews Highlighted Importance of Natural Amenities/Environment**  
*Key economic driver for the area is its natural amenities and environment*
- **Result: Expansion and Improvement of Analysis**  
*Stewardship and promotion of natural resources connected as an economic development element*



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# EXAMPLE 4: STREAMLINE & MAKE RESULTS MEANINGFUL



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Benefits of Mitigating Environmental Impacts of Transportation Projects in North Central Texas

- **Narrowed Focus Based on Stakeholder Interviews**

*Moved from a list of 20+ services to focus on 8 services (4 core ones)*



- **Identified the Meaningful Outcomes and Metrics for Stakeholders**

*Financial benefits were what mattered to stakeholders:*

- *Reduced stormwater management costs*
- *Reduced vehicular collisions with wildlife*
- *Reduced road maintenance costs*
- *Increased property values*





# THANK YOU!

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