ECOSYSTEM SERVICES, SOCIOECONOMICS, AND STAKEHOLDER CONCERNS

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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?

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

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

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*
EXAMPLE 4: STREAMLINE & MAKE RESULTS MEANINGFUL

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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