

Friday, July 20, 2018

1-hour discussion –via GoToMeeting

Meeting began – 10:00 am Pacific/AZ

Discussion Topic: Overview of the LPP/NCO Group Evaluation Program

Present on the call: LoriAnne Barnett (NCO); Craig Johnson (Devil's Pool – Fairmont Park); Paul Sitzmann (Wildlife Biologist, Agua Fria National Monument, BLM); Lane Butler (Agua Fria, BLM); Georgia Murray (Appalachian Mountain Club)

Take-aways from today's discussion: Overview of the LPP/NCO Group Evaluation Program

- The NCO's LPP/Group evaluation is designed to help us better understand what LPP's are achieving by using Nature's Notebook. The NCO also seeks to ensure the best quality dataset, and the LPP is designed to provide resources to Leaders in the field to better train observers and collect consistent high-quality data for 2 years or more.
- We can evaluate the number of leaders, trained observers, and participation in the LPP. Harder to evaluate is the efficacy of the "network" of leaders. That's one reason why we've established this community of practice to better share information and best practices with each other.
- In the works is an online LPP collaboration platform. This will live on our website and hopefully better serve the CoP – LPLs can read and learn about other programs and their impacts and reach out to them directly. Such a platform will enhance communications via our existing listserv, monthly call, and Facebook page.
- Check out the [Local Phenology Program Guide](#) for more details on writing your own program evaluation plan.

Intros and Celebrate a Success- Well done! Success is however you define it!

- Georgia – ATC/AMC (Oldest conservation agency in the country) – "Uber" volunteer Jim Greeney is foundational to their existing volunteer network. The AMC has facilities with long term volunteers. He has returned for the third year and is doing a lot of the monitoring in the early season when there is minimal seasonal staff. Lesson learned: focus in on some **core volunteers** who can put a lot of effort in, very successful since doing that. Their LPP is really clear about defining what the volunteers are doing and giving them the resources to be successful. They are strategically scheduled to observe around transitional phenology to be sure to capture important phase changes.
- Craig – Philadelphia – Work with schools – school district in Philly has 220 schools. New mayor has as one of his core objectives to develop a small cohort of "community schools" (which are in under-resourced communities - the school becomes the epicenter of education, health, legal, nutrition care, integrated into the school program). A grant awarded to them a few years ago is helping to re-imagine school grounds. They planted native plants which will increase wildlife habitat. His organization is working to develop these habitats along with the students and faculty. They now have approval from director of community school program to put together an integrated educational program based up. Nature's Notebook will be the cornerstone.
- Paul – BLM – just getting started. Getting Lane (their new intern!) on board with a public lands internship! Lane – the reality of people coming together is awesome!

Discussion Topic: Overview of LPP/NCO Group Evaluation Program

- Review attached logic model and action plan for specific details. It is a living document, so this is as it appears today. This evaluation and LPP is designed to be in service to the quality of our dataset. I continuously revisit it and update it monthly based upon work.
- You should design a similar program plan for your local project, whatever that may be. Can use the same methodology. When designing logic models and program plans for evaluation, make sure you start with the end in

mind. Where do you want to be in 5 or 10 years? Develop your outcomes walking backwards from that point. Outcomes should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Ambitious, Realistic, Timebound). See the [NPN Program Outcome Guidance](#) document for more details.

- Georgia – also good practice if you are applying for funding. Often you are asked to have outlined your program plan and outcomes for the RFP.
- The first thing to do is to read through our [Local Phenology Program Guide](#), linked from the [Start a Local Program Page](#) under the **FOR GROUPS** menu on all Nature’s Notebook pages.
- Many of the outcomes listed on the LPP Logic Model are quantitative. How can we measure the success of actual on the ground participation? This is harder to do and quantify. The Community of Practice is designed to capture some of this information and connect people to each other. This community of practice model can be replicated at the local level.
- Paul – it’s hard when you have to justify what you are doing, especially when you work for the feds. Part of the justification can be documenting this process and using it to determine what other outcomes NN can help you with at your organization. We’ve developed lots of training and resources for you to use in the field, so you’ll find almost anything short of us coming to work with your volunteers available. We can help however we can! Capitalize on other local groups who have volunteers trained to use Nature’s Notebook as well.
- The NCO is also creating an online Program Profile platform designed for Local Phenology Leaders to interact with each other and learn from each other. You’ll be able to see what kind of program folks have, read their annual impact statements, perhaps understand what resources and challenges they have and, if they are close to you, you can connect. Other networks that are working to evaluate the efficacy of their networks include the [Children and Nature Network](#) and the [North American Association for Environmental Education](#).
- Paul – what about integrating phenology datasets? Georgia – they are experimenting with using iNaturalist data in conjunction with NN dataset. Those photos often have good pictures of the phenophases, can be viewed retroactively, and might capture some holes in observations. There is bias, though, because people tend to only take pictures of showy things like the flowers, leaving the other phases in the protocol out. She is testing it and will report back on how she’s used the two together soon.

Next time

- NO CALL IN AUGUST
- Next Call September 21 at 10 am Pacific time. Topic: REVIEW: The Local Phenology Program Guide

Ideas for upcoming calls

- Pod/program type sharing discussion. Virtually connecting researchers to Local Phenology Leaders, how do we do that?
- 2018 Campaign results
- Another education materials discussion

Thanks everyone!

Meeting Adjourned – 11:09 am Pacific/AZ time