

# Assessment of program effectiveness:



## NH's natural Resources outreach Coalition

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### Background:

New Hampshire's Natural Resource Outreach Coalition (NROC) is a collaborative organized to provide natural resource based planning assistance to communities in New Hampshire's coastal watersheds. The program works with board members, citizen groups and individuals to develop locally identified conservation and growth-related goals, design implementation strategies and provides the technical, financial, and educational assistance to accomplish them. NROC works with 3 communities per year and commits at least one year of service to each. NROC is a charter member of the National NEMO Network.

### Research Purpose:

Ascertain NROC's efficacy in fulfilling its designed functions  
Make recommendations about how NROC can be improved

### Research Questions:

- How effective is NROC in recruiting, retaining and mobilizing community involvement?
- Have NROC's conservation and growth management programs been successful in protecting natural environs?
- How effective has the program been following the formal period of NROC engagement with communities?
- Does the NROC program effectively utilize the financial and technical resources of its constituent agencies? Is the program the most cost-effective option for applying a similar amount of money to conservation and growth management problems?

### Literature Review:

The authors compared elements of NROC's program to key factors identified as being related to successful community based natural resource management based on 2 primary works, Kellert et. al. 2000 and Daniels and Cheng 2004.

Kellert et. al.'s examined five case studies from around the world in *Community Natural Resource Management: Promise, Rhetoric and Reality* and identified the following key features.

- Equity
- Empowerment
- Knowledge and Awareness
- Biodiversity protection

Daniels and Cheng (2004) conducted a meta-analysis of studies of key factors related to the success of discourse-based approaches to natural resource based management. Key elements identified and compared included:

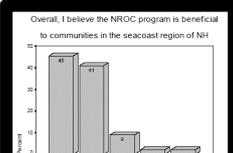
- Strive for an open and inclusive process
- Encourage broad participation rather than formal representation
- Develop multiple approaches for interactive communication among all parties
- Work at a scale appropriate to the community or place
- Start with a level playing field
- Use third-party neutral facilitators
- Emphasis on mutual learning before arriving at judgments

### Methods:

Authors used 3 primary methods to collect evaluation data.

1. Content analysis of available NROC documents including internal communications, public presentations, annual reports, and regional media coverage.
2. In-depth, semi-structured interviews with 12 NROC partners.
3. A self-administered questionnaire sent to community members who participated in the program. Used modified tailored design method (Dillman 2000). Response rate = 47.8%

Survey results were analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, bivariate analyses, and multivariate procedures were used to examine results and to identify important findings.



### Observations, Conclusions and Recommendations:

Responses to research questions (summarized from report):

1. Encouraging community involvement?
  - Very high level of satisfaction with NROC sessions.
  - Program attracts "the usual suspects" - nationwide trend.
  - Has energized people to address conservation and growth.
  - Has created an open and inclusive process.
  - Participants felt their input was integral to ultimate action.
2. Protecting natural resources?
  - Vast majority felt program developed knowledge.
  - Overwhelming sense of enhanced ability to identify community resources and analyze issues using scientific knowledge.
  - Strong sense that program enabled community to address issues more effectively than possible without NROC.
  - Program considered very beneficial to regional environment.
3. Appropriate time period?
  - Most program participants perceive no need to change the present duration of the program.
4. Effective use of financial and technical resources?
  - Program represents the most cost effective option for utilizing available technical and fiscal resources.

Recommendations included retaining working with 3 communities per year; adding a formal exit session at the end of a year; engaging in more effective marketing; standardizing success markers throughout team; and possibly serving as a bridge-build among people of disparate social backgrounds and political