



Resilience Dialogues: Strategies for Conflict Management in Collaborative Science

Overview

Project Location

Wells Reserve, Maine, with coordinating input from 12 project partner reserves

Project Duration

October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2019

Project Lead

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Project Type

Science Transfer – promoting the use of science

Project Collaborators

- Grand Bay Reserve, Mississippi
- Great Bay Reserve, New Hampshire
- Guana Tolomato Matanzas Reserve, Florida
- Hudson River Reserve, New York
- Lake Superior Reserve, Wisconsin
- Mission-Aransas Reserve, Texas
- Narragansett Bay Reserve, Rhode Island
- NOAA Office for Coastal Management
- North Carolina Reserve
- Old Woman Creek Reserve, Ohio
- Rookery Bay Reserve, Florida
- San Francisco Bay Reserve, California
- Waquoit Bay Reserve, Massachusetts
- Wells Reserve and Laudholm Trust, Maine

National Estuarine Research Reserves have been designing and implementing a new approach to collaborative science since 2009. This approach emphasizes the integration of scientific knowledge with local management and place-based knowledge. Collaborative processes facilitate the co-creation of knowledge to integrate diverse perspectives, identify common interests, and use resources effectively so that scientific findings are management ready, and can be applied to address the most pressing coastal management issues.

Conflict is a natural component of these complex projects, with people interacting in new ways over issues for which the science can be uncertain and stakeholder values may differ. This project brings together the shared experiences of reserves in managing conflict during collaborative research projects. The project aims to synthesize lessons learned about managing conflict in collaborative science to create a curriculum, resources, and peer-to-peer training to share this knowledge and best practices. The project outcomes will increase understanding and awareness about the kinds of conflict that arise during collaborative science projects, the causes and consequences of conflict, and the timing or phases of a project when conflict is most likely.

Using the resources generated by this project, reserve staff, state agency partners, and external partners who engage in collaborative science with the National Estuarine Research Reserve System will develop skills to manage conflict and improve the outcomes of collaborative science projects.

Anticipated Benefits

- Increased awareness across the reserve system and among its partners about the types, timing, causes, and consequences of conflict that arise during collaborative science projects.
- Increased capacity for reserve staff and partners to apply conflict management strategies in National Estuarine Research Reserve System collaborative science projects.

Project Approach

The project team will share examples of conflict and conflict management strategies from reserve system collaborative science projects. A needs assessment will identify specific requirements for conflict management knowledge and skills based on individual reserve experiences. Reserve conflict management case studies will become part of the curriculum and resources.

The “Resilience Dialogues: Conflict Management for Collaborative Science” training will be piloted in 2018 at the National Estuarine Research Reserve System’s annual meeting. Team members will evaluate the pilot trainings to develop the final curriculum and resources for use with collaborative science projects within the reserve system.

Targeted End Users and Anticipated Products

- Reserve staff, with a special focus on the Coastal Training Program Coordinators as facilitators, will be trained using the “Resilience Dialogues: Conflict Management in Collaborative Science” curriculum.
- Reserve staff and others engaged in collaborative science will have access to the “Resilience Dialogues” curriculum and conflict management resources through the Wells reserve website and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System intranet.

About the Science Collaborative

The National Estuarine Research Reserve System’s Science Collaborative supports collaborative research that addresses coastal management problems important to the reserves. The Science Collaborative is managed by the University of Michigan’s Water Center through a cooperative agreement with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Funding for the research reserves and this program comes from NOAA. Learn more at coast.noaa.gov/nerrs or graham.umich.edu/water/nerrs.