

Learning Exchanges for Conservation: An Examination of Lessons Learned (LExCELL)

Award Year:

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Principal Investigator:

Lekelia (Kiki) Jenkins, University of Washington

S. Hoyt Peckham, SmartFish and Center for Ocean Solutions

Associated Program:

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Overfishing, the leading social-ecological problem in the marine realm, has modified ecosystem functioning and is jeopardizing the well-being of the billion people that depend on seafood as their primary source of protein. Over the past decade, fisher learning exchanges, in which representatives from different fisher communities are brought together to share knowledge, have become key tools in improving fisheries management. Fisher exchanges are regarded as effective by both organizers and participants for a) sharing fisheries challenges and solutions (both between and within fleets); b) empowering fisher leaders; c) creating communities of practice and building social capital; and d) in developing conservation solutions. To date however, no comparative analysis of the effectiveness of fisher learning exchanges has been made, despite the large investments in them by NGOs and federal agencies, including NOAA Fisheries, The Nature Conservancy, and Environmental Defense Fund. Given the urgency of fishery management challenges plus ever scarcer conservation and fisheries management resources, this team of fisheries scientists will conduct an interdisciplinary workshop to begin to objectively assess the effectiveness of fisher exchanges and to identify key attributes that can enhance their success of using methods, including focus groups, interviews, and reflexive discourses. We will synthesize these attributes into an actionable research plan to guide a subsequent two phase field research program on fisher learning exchanges.

**Participants:**

Dennis Abrahams, BREDS Treasure Beach Foundation
Luis Fernando Bourillon Moreno, COBI
Fernando Bretos, The Ocean Foundation
Noe Bustamante Flores
Nancy Daves, NMFS IA
Wes Erikson, Pacific Halibut Mgmt Association
Rod Fujita, Environmental Defense Fund
Lindsay Garbutt
Alasdair Harris, Blue Ventures
Will Heyman, Texas A&M
Amy Hudson Weaver, Niparaja
Noah Idechong, Palau National Congress
Mitchell Lay, Caribbean Network of Fisher Organisations
Jesus Lucero, GTC
William Anthony Maheia, Toledo Exposure Documentary Films
John Mitchell, NOAA Fisheries
Shawn Peabody, Blue Ventures
Nick Pilcher, Marine Research Foundation
Joseph Quinata, Humatak Community Foundation
Cathlyn Stylinski, UMCES - Appalachian Laboratory
Kathleen (Katie) Thompson, University of Washington
Chua Yau Tsen, Hai Leng Enterprise
Steven Victor, The Nature Conservancy
Johnny Wong Sin Fatt, Fook Soon Seafood Products
Nathalie Zenny, The Nature Conservancy

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