Case study: Responding to end user-driven change

A team from the South Slough reserve modified their collaborative approach as a result of end user preferences in their project, *Bringing the "Oly" Oyster Back to Oregon's Coast*.

BRINGING THE "OLY" OYSTER BACK TO OREGON'S COAST

Originally, the team had planned to use a structured decision-making process to collaborate with end users. However, the majority of end users indicated that they were reluctant to engage in a group learning process and that structured group meetings were not their preferred method of interacting with the team. They were more interested in the specific outcomes of the project's research, rather than in the learning process to arrive at those outcomes.

Project team's approach

Consequently, the team modified their approach to meet end users' preferences. The team received input throughout the project via one-on-one meetings and small group discussions. Graduate students conducting research for the project delivered periodic updates on research progress in the form of fact sheets and follow-up discussions if desired. At the completion of the project, the team delivered a final presentation on the project results, outcomes, and products.

Key advice

Understanding end users' preferences and capacity to engage is critical to a successful collaboration. Consider using tools such as end user mapping to better understand your users' preferences for interaction.

To learn more about this project that was initiated in 2010, visit their Project Page.

To access other case studies and resources for conducting collaborative science projects, visit: A Guide to Collaborative Science.

This case study was developed in 2015 by the NERRS Science Collaborative team when the program was hosted by the University of New Hampshire. This case study was originally featured as part of the Collaborative Project Toolkit.