

Engaging with Cultural Ecosystem Services Across the National Estuarine Research Reserve System

Part 2: Community Volunteer Activities



Please join us on mentimeter!
menti.com
use code 3664 5985



Outline

1. Introduction to CES and environmental volunteerism
2. Case studies from four NERRS
3. Closing poll
4. Q&A/panel discussion

Cultural Ecosystem Services encompass the many ways the environment contributes to human well-being through:

- Activity: Recreation, Sport, Leisure
- Aesthetics
- Bequest
- Cultural Heritage
- Education/Scientific Knowledge
- Identity
- Inspiration
- Indigenous/Local Knowledge
- Physical, Emotional, and Mental Health
- Religion, Spirituality, Mindfulness
- Sense of Place
- Social Relations



Other concepts that may overlap with CES

- Human Dimensions
- Nature's Contributions to People
- Reciprocal Relationships with Nature
- Biocultural Relationships
- One Health
- Multidimensional wellbeing



Within the NERRS, engaging with CES could help to:

- Inform future visioning/planning
- Monitor ongoing efforts
- Evaluate project/program success
- Broadly understand relationships between humans and estuaries
- Build or strengthen relationships with local communities



Reciprocal Relationships in Reserves: Establishing a Community of Practitioners for Identifying and Using Cultural Ecosystem Services Approaches

A 2022-2024 NERRS Science Collaborative Science Transfer Project

PC: Rachel Dacks



**National Estuarine
Research Reserve System**



He'eia National Estuarine Research Reserve
Ko'olaupoko, O'ahu, Hawai'i



Why Community Volunteer Activities?

- They are already occurring in most Reserves
- Oftentimes, in our Reserves, the motivations and benefits of volunteers are CES-related
- They are a great opportunity to identify, assess, or more deeply understand the CES of the Reserves



Benefits of environmental volunteerism

- Builds/strengthens connection to nature
- Provides stress reduction, relaxation, and exercise
- Improves mood
- Fosters a sense of community
- Increases knowledge (learning)

Dacks et al. 2021; Coventry et al. 2019; Pillemer et al. 2010; Guiney & Oberhauser 2009

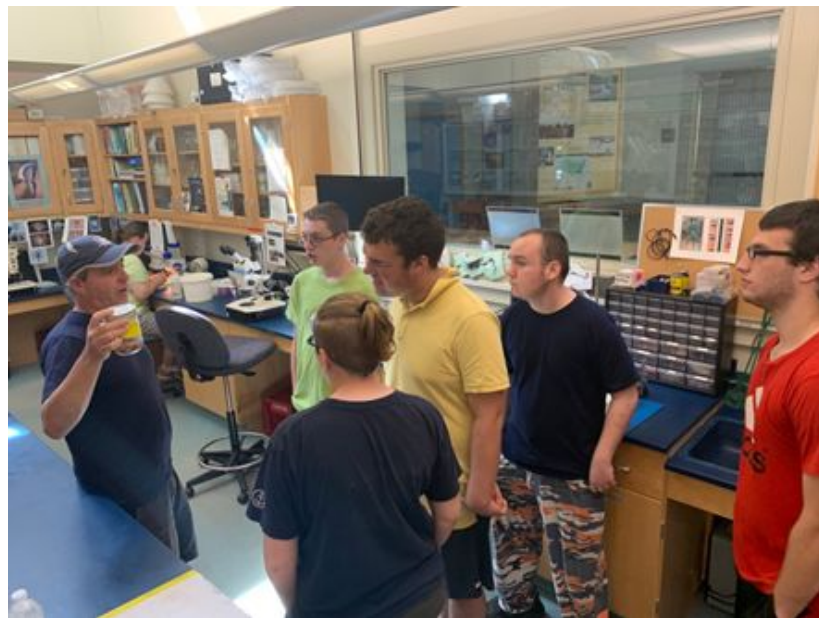




How do people who volunteer at Wells Reserve
experience a sense of well-being
from cultural ecosystem services?



Deep Conversations Over Time



Person on the street “ambush”

Cultural Ecosystem Services encompass the many ways the environment contributes to human well-being through:

1. Indigenous/Local Knowledge
2. Physical, Emotional, and Mental Health
3. Religion, Spirituality, Mindfulness
4. Sense of Place
5. Social Relations
6. Activity: Recreation, Sport, Leisure
7. Aesthetics
8. Bequest
9. Cultural Heritage
10. Education/Scientific Knowledge
11. Identity
12. Inspiration/sense of wonder



Bruce Bjork puts a modest spin on his volunteer service. “It keeps me out of trouble,” he says. In the six years that Bruce has been a volunteer at the Reserve, he has filled as many as 8 volunteer roles. “I’m motivated,” he says, “Because I’m retired and have the time to give back.” Bruce’s volunteer service is wide ranging, combining professional skills and lifelong passions, fueled by a desire for social connections and new experiences.

<https://www.wellsreserve.org/blog/doing-what-i-can-to-help>



The research team thinks we are doing them a favor by helping out with the picking and keying. The truth is we are the beneficiaries! Not only do we feel useful, we get to keep contributing to the important work of the Wells Reserve. We'll get through this bizarre period with a project on track and our sanity intact!

Lee and Sylvia Pollack 2020

<https://www.wellsreserve.org/blog/ordering-take-out-volunteers-shift-studies-from-the-lab-to-their-kitchen>

Volunesia

(noun)

that moment when you forget you're
volunteering to help change lives,
because it's changing yours...

How do the actions of volunteers contribute to the mission of the National Estuarine Research Reserve System?

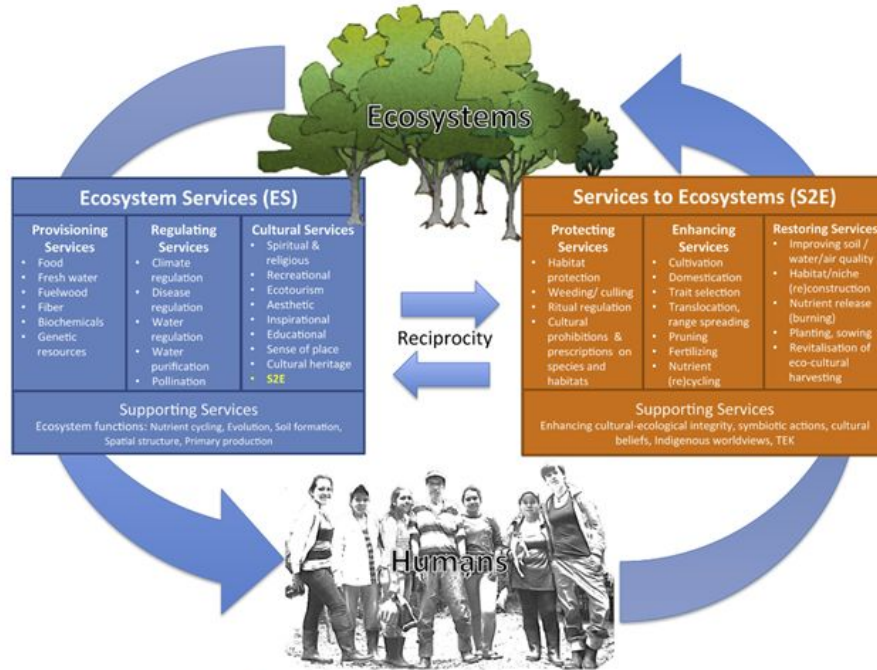


Fig. 1. A revised framework showing the ES-S2E loop of reciprocity.



Create and enhance volunteer programs that contribute to reserve goals, facilitate outreach, and inspire connection to estuaries in their communities.
NERRS Strategic Plan



Tijuana River NERR: Volunteers

- Sector approach
- Assess each volunteer's skills/interests
- CES & Volunteering
- Example: Tijuana River Action Month

Sector Approach



Habitat restoration

Minnow trapping

Fishing seining

Vegetation monitoring



Ron | Nature Walk Docent

Leads weekend guided titled 'An Eye-Opening Experience Without Sight' on how to appreciate TRNERR by using senses other than sight such as hearing, smell, and touch. [Learn more here.](#)



Arys | 16 | Bird Walk Docent

The reserve supports 370 species of birds including several endangered species. The largest population of the endangered light-footed Ridgway's rail occurs in the reserve and birders come from all over the world to see it. [Learn more here.](#)



CES and Volunteering

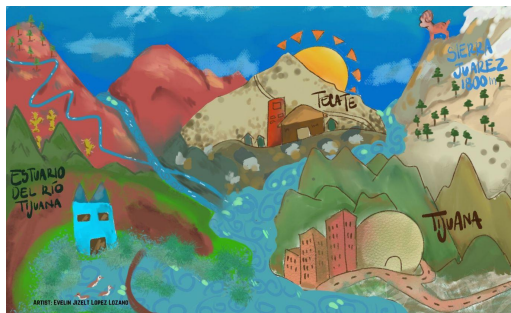
- Stay engaged
- Make friends
- Be part of their community
- To learn a new skill
- To share and continue using a skill that they have
- To explore career paths and to get job experience



“It is similar to creating art...an artist only has an idea but mixed with a medium like clay that has its own will...together the unexpected magic can happen.”
- Robin Echols-Booth, TRNERR Volunteer Coordinator



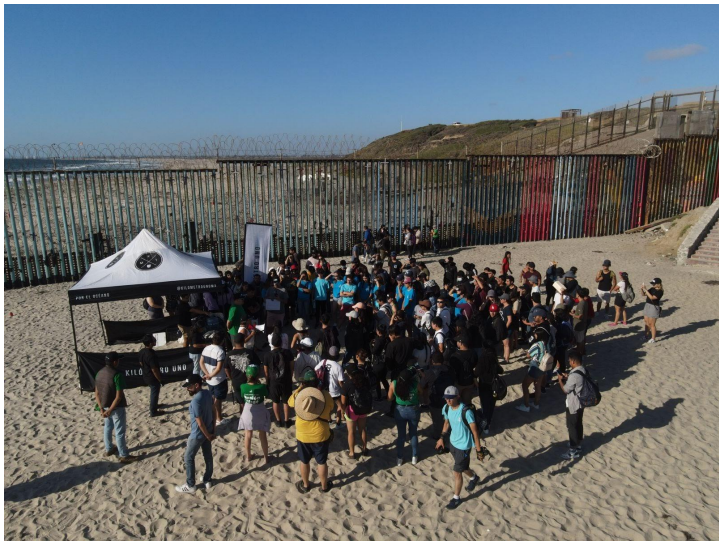
Tijuana River Action Month (TRAM)



TRAM is an annual month-long event held before rain season that kicks off with Coastal Cleanup Day (this year on September 23rd). TRAM events are organized on both the U.S. and Mexico portion of the Tijuana River Watershed through the Tijuana River Action Network (TRAN). This year will be the 14th installment of TRAM.

2022 Reporting:

- 17 in person & hybrid events
- 22 collaborative partners
- 864 participants
- 70,644.5 lbs of debris removed





Channeling our cause

2023
**TIJUANA RIVER
ACTION MONTH**

SEPTEMBER 16 - OCTOBER 14

IN-PERSON EVENTS
WORKSHOPS CLEAN-UPS TOURS
Get involved in a month-long series of education and stewardship events to benefit the Tijuana River Watershed.

VIRTUAL EVENTS
WORKSHOPS
No need to sit in the border crossing; join in on a workshop from your computer.

For More Information:
<https://trnerr.org/tram/>

SCAN
FOR EVENTS!

Image: Evelin Jizelt Lopez Lozano

Thank you for listening!

Questions?

Contact:

mspitzer@trnerr.org

Robin.Echols-Booth@parks.ca.gov



Volunteering with Kachemak Bay NERR



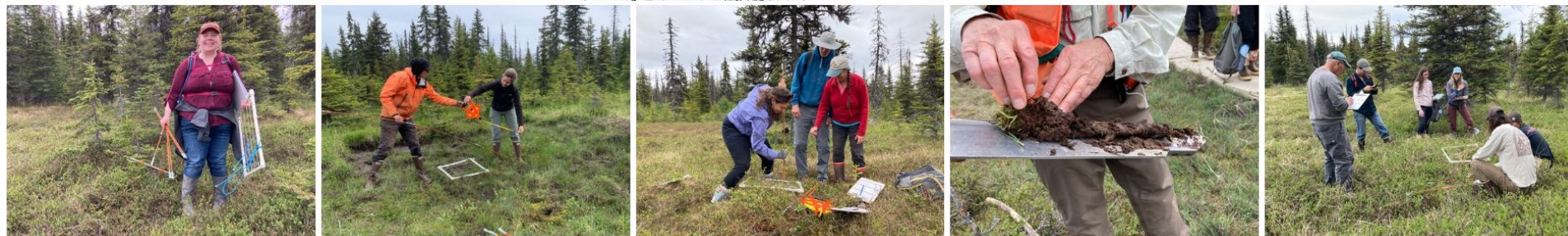
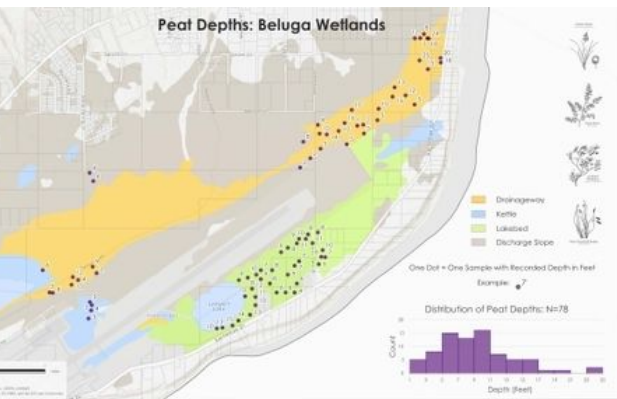
Collecting data for early detection of harmful species



Real time benefit for livelihood and sustenance, and contributions and access to collective knowledge ~ **Community Monitoring**

PC: S. Bentz

Sharing wetland observations and interpretations



Fostering behavior change and positive experiences of peatlands for our community ~ **Peat Wetland Survey**

PC: S. Bentz, K. McNett and Homer Drawdown

Volunteering time to educate and advise



Pays off now, near term, and for next generations ~ **Public Education**

PC: I. Harrauld

He'eia NERR - Laulima Days

- Researchers and students
- Building pilina
- Learning more about the place
- Informal networking
- Encourage codevelopment and reciprocal research



“My relationship with the He‘eia community has largely been developed through work days and through education programs. These relationships have grown significantly over the past year, and I look forward to continuing to cultivate these relationships.”

“The daily interaction with non-academic people, talking about research in away that is relevant to everyone and on many different levels - for example, cultural significance of birds as well as their specific role in an ecosystem. Also being able to contribute to some of the restoration activities that are directly benefiting the species I am studying. Being able to stick around the farm and work in the lo‘i after collecting data, allowed me to learn about the birds and the relationship farmers have with them, in a first hand experience that allowed me to have a deeper relationship to my research.”

“Engaging with community partners has been my favorite aspect of the Fellowship and has helped shape my research motivations and career goals.”

Take homes

- Volunteer activities exist across all sectors
- The benefits that volunteers experience in Reserves may be CES
- Volunteers of different demographics (e.g., age) may experience different benefits
- Many Reserves are already assessing their volunteer programs

Please join us on mentimeter!

menti.com
use code 59 10 45



UPCOMING EVENTS

CES Brainstorming Session Tomorrow! (same time)

Please e-mail me for the zoom link
rdacks@hawaii.edu

Annual Meeting

Professional Sharing Session

*Are We Doing it Already? Celebrating
Cultural Ecosystem Services In Existing
NERR Activities & Building our
Community of Practice*

Tuesday, November 14, 2023



Q & A

THANKS!

Questions?

rdacks@hawaii.edu

Spectrum of familiarity & engagement with CES

Unfamiliar, but may be
informally engaging with CES

Familiar, working on integrating
into existing efforts or using to
build relationships

Familiar and interested, but
not really sure where to start

Using these methods
with communities for
CES assessment

