NSGIC WESTERN STATES CAUCUS

2024 Roundtable Summary

The Second Annual Western States Caucus Roundtable proved to be a very insightful exploration into how academic researchers can leverage ideas and best practices regarding a Common Operating Picture (COP) to share and promote their research. The common threads among the presenters reinforced the power of data visualization and location intelligence. We are pleased to provide this summary to commemorate the ideas discussed and promote future collaborations and exchange of ideas. You can find the recording of the session here.

Communication is Key

This is by far the biggest takeaway, and a reminder that communication is the key to how we solve problems. The future should be about solutions and exploring options for solutions, which is much better served by using a multi-disciplinary approach. Problems should be seen as opportunities for a wide variety of groups to come together to address the issue of the moment. To effect change in our rapidly changing world, digestible science communication is the future. More helpful insights about effective communication are:

- COP can help people get together to discuss, and just getting the discussion going is valuable.
- Communication of 'project wins'. Makes the project more successful (more exposure = more ideas = improved project) and leads to further possibilities.
- Digestible science communication is the future.
    - It is important to showcase your work with a variety of groups. And that takes quite a bit of effort. It helps people to understand different perspectives and learn from each other.
    - Experiential learning - how to overcome 'why do I care?'
        - Use real-life stories, places we know and how they are changing.
        - It's very valuable to use stories and narratives to simplify the messaging.
    - Communicate in multiple ways to multiple audiences with varying skill levels.
    - Focus on one theme at a time (like water) and tie into other themes one piece at a time.
    - Incorporate layering of threats and threat scales.
    - Include media outlets.
    - Provide media offerings.
    - Map it! Use visuals.
    - Be wary of tech bias
        - Technology can be a barrier, so include partners who can help shape the message and delivery format that can get the point across to a wide audience

        - Consider other experience levels, knowledge limitations, tech savviness. There seems to be a lack of self awareness for our tech bias.
    - Graphic designers are worth their weight in gold.
    - For threats to galleries, libraries, and art museums (GLAMs as presented by Dr. Trepanier), maybe a hierarchy of sites by importance (e.g. impact to safety for humans and beyond).
    - Use grades to represent threats as they are easily digestible/translatable.
    - How do you tailor the message to politicians/decision makers?
    - Include all age levels.
    - Understand and include history.

<u>Stakeholder Involvement</u>

The need for inclusive stakeholder involvement was also a key takeaway. It was also agreed that successful projects have to be built on collaborations, and they have to have a driver, a champion, and, as noted above, effective communication. A significant benefit of stakeholder involvement is to help with their self-advocacy by giving them tools to help articulate their problems or threats. More insights related to stakeholder involvement include:

- Self-advocacy
    - Helping citizens advocate for themselves, speak to their threats and find resources and solutions.
- On political pushback
    - Acknowledge their experience, acceptance and validation.
    - Lead with options.
    - Don't get defensive about it.
    - As opposed to being defensive, work to understand and validate their perspective.
    - Look for examples that will affect them personally.
    - Show how solutions may help them.
    - Don't exclude them because of their viewpoints.
- Curriculum opportunities
    - Educate the youths and get them involved in projects
- Arizona State University employed a somewhat different approach, connecting with people first and then getting into the data.
    - Building networks for collaboration and information exchange.
- Cultural sensitivity
    - One participant from the Navajo Nation pointed out that one barrier can be cultural issues. StoryMaps uses a lot of visuals and that can help people understand things, particularly for cultures with strong oral traditions. This allows people to start to learn about different views and communicate their knowledge.

<u>Data</u>

Of course, everything we do in GIS is built on data. The value of a multi-disciplinary approach when it comes to data was emphasized, as well as the need to make data interoperable. Other insights regarding data include:

- Co-production of knowledge
  - Should be multidisciplinary.
  - Move the needle on trust in science and models (via inclusivity).
- Bridging the gap between complex data and actionable insights.
- Remove barriers by creating a tiered system for simplified data release.
- Value of crowd-sourced data.