

Practitioner Profiles: A tool for learning from and with “active ecologists” & community partners

What are practitioner profiles?

Practitioner profiles are detailed narratives, told by practitioners – engaged scholars, community organizers, planners, and in our case, “active ecologists” -- **of how they navigated memorable and challenging community projects.** They are constructed from transcripts of tape-recorded, narrative interviews in which the interviewer invites the practitioner to tell the story of a particular effort (focusing on what she or he did throughout the project) and reflect on the lessons learned.

How do engaged scholars and community organizers use practitioner profiles?

Practitioner profiles can be used for inspiration and guidance in one’s own community-engaged work, as well as research, teaching and professional and organizational development. While general guidelines for working with communities are helpful, the real challenge that we face as engaged scholars is HOW to put these principles into practice in real-world situations where we’re balancing multiple goals and responsibilities, and working with communities that are diverse in their histories, interests, goals, and ways of working. While profiles cannot provide answers for the particular challenges we will face as active ecologists, they offer detailed examples of the creative ways that successful scholar-educator-organizers negotiate such tensions in particular situations, thus opening up new ideas and possibilities for our own work.

Where can I learn more about practitioner profiles?

- **Profiles of Practitioners: Practice Stories from the Field** (<http://courses2.cit.cornell.edu/fit117/>): This website provides detailed information about practitioner profiles and how to construct and use them.
- **Democracy and Higher Education: Traditions and Stories of Civic Engagement**, by Scott J. Peters (2010, Michigan State University Press: East Lansing, MI) features profiles of 12 scholars -- in disciplines ranging from plant breeding to rural sociology -- who engage with communities in mutually beneficial ways.

Creating practitioner profiles for the Ecologists’ Guide to Working with Communities

Over the next year, we would like to interview several “active ecologists” and community partners to construct narratives of how they navigated challenging projects that engaged communities in defining goals and research questions; collecting and interpreting data; and applying new knowledge to enhance community well-being and environmental sustainability. These should be ready to be reviewed at the next ESA meeting for inclusion in the Ecologists’ Guide to Working with Communities.

You can help by:

- Volunteering to be interviewed about a community project you worked on as an ecologist
- Recommending other ecologists and/or community partners who have stories of community-ecologist collaborations to share
- Volunteering to assist with transcription and/or editing of the interviews into profiles for the Guide

**If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Megan Gregory
and let her know how you’d like to be involved!**

meganmgregory1@gmail.com • 847-287-7794

Yes! I want to help with: The Ecologist's' Guide to Working with Communities "Practitioner Profile Project"

Name: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Please indicate how you can help:

I can assist with transcription and editing the interviews into profiles.

I am willing to be interviewed about a community project I worked on as an ecologist.

Please briefly describe the project (time frame, community you worked with, goal(s), major activities):

I would like to recommend the following ecologists and/or community partners to be interviewed (include name & contact info if possible):

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