

EPA ICR # 2205.17, OMB # 2090-0028 Generic Coastal New England Focus Group

Evaluating the Economic and Social Benefits of Nutrient Reductions in Coastal New England Waters

FOCUS GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE A: Recreational Survey Instrument Development

The purpose of this set of focus groups is to develop a survey questionnaire to generate data for recreational use values for water quality improvements in coastal New England waterbodies. One purpose of these focus groups is to identify prevalent themes and common language when people discuss surface water quality. The intent is to converge on a design for the survey instrument. Some prototype questions are included below but these are subject to change according to information gleaned from the first focus group. We have worded these questions using Cape Cod as our initial location. As the specific geographic range of this project is determined, the questions would also be adjusted accordingly.

Several elements of the survey design, including but not limited to visual aids and information text, will be tested. In addition, we plan to test various response formats (e.g., reporting for the last trip vs. for a longer time period), selecting that which will provide more reliable responses.

Introduction

1. Thank you for participating...moderator and observer(s) introduce themselves.
2. The session should last 90 minutes to two hours.
3. Strictly confidential, no follow-up contacts after this discussion.
4. Introduce focus group participants.
 - a. State your first name and town where you live and how long you've lived in the area/where you live.
 - b. Briefly tell us who lives in your household.
5. Purpose of focus group is to listen to your ideas and experiences related to bodies of water on Cape Cod (or relevant location), including the ponds, estuaries, and open ocean.

Ground rules

1. We want to follow basic guidelines for polite conversation.
2. We want to hear from everyone, so please participate.
3. Take turns speaking.
4. We love to hear different opinions but please be polite if you disagree with someone.
5. We will be recording the session so we have an accurate record of what you say, but you will not be personally identified.

Conversation Prompts

1. What are the main reasons that you live on Cape Cod/choose to visit Cape Cod?
2. Will you try to live on Cape Cod/visit Cape Cod for as long as you can?

3. I'd like to hear about your last experience visiting some type of water body for recreation. This could be a pond, bay, or open ocean area on Cape Cod. Talk about where you went, what you did during that visit, and how the presence of the waterbody contributed to your experience.
4. What types of water recreation do you enjoy? (examples include: walking along the shoreline, kayaking, swimming, birdwatching, fishing or shellfishing)
5. How often do you do these different activities?
6. Do you usually enjoy these activities alone or with other people? With whom?
7. Now consider all your visits to waterbodies (ponds, bays, beaches) on Cape Cod. Where do you go most often for recreation? Where else do you go?
8. How often do you visit waterbodies on Cape Cod for recreation?
9. How far do you usually travel to get to your favorite recreation spot(s)? How do you usually get there (car, walk, bike, other)?
10. If you couldn't go to your favorite spot, where would you go? Is it farther away? How far?
11. If you didn't go to a water body on Cape Cod for recreation, where would you go?
12. Now consider all your visits to waterbodies on Cape Cod. How does the quality of the water at these places affect your experiences?
13. What other things about the places you go make them more or less attractive to you? (prompt with: crowding, noise, facilities, overall cleanliness, water temperature, waves,)
14. What factors do you notice about the water quality at places where you recreate? Have you noticed changes over time? Are some places better or worse than others? What is it about them that makes them better or worse?
15. (For residents) What is your impression of the water quality of the ponds, bays, and open water beaches near your home?
16. What aspects of water quality (if any) are important to you and why?
17. How might your recreational uses change if water quality gets worse or improves? Would you go to different locations? Do different activities?

18. What changes in your favorite spots would make you want to go to a different location or even give up a certain activity?
19. If you've noticed or are aware of water quality issues, what do you understand about the causes?
20. Are you aware of how nutrients affect waters of Cape Cod? Do you feel like you're affected by this? What do you think are the main sources of nutrients in the waters of Cape Cod?
21. Do you think it should be a priority to improve water quality on Cape Cod? Why or why not? What areas do you think need the most attention?
22. What uses of Cape Cod's waterbodies, besides recreation, are important to you? Why?
23. How does water quality affect those?
24. What other factors are important to the quality of those uses?

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE B: Recreational Value and Sense of Place

The purpose of these focus groups is to develop questions in the recreational valuation survey questionnaire to relate recreational uses and values to people's sense of place for Cape Cod and its waterbodies, and to evaluate this across four groups of people – year-round residents, seasonal residents, second homeowners who do not live in the home, and tourists. Some examples of questions are included below but the wording of these is subject to change according to information gleaned from the first focus group. Clarifying questions may also be added to facilitate discussion among participants based upon the first focus group. This information will provide important qualitative support for the survey that will be conducted afterwards.

Introduction

1. Thank you for participating...moderator and observer(s) introduce themselves.
2. The session should last about 90 minutes to two hours.
3. Strictly confidential, no follow-up contacts after this discussion.
4. Introduce focus group participants.
 - a. State your first name and town where you live and how long you've lived in the area/where you live.
 - b. Briefly tell us who lives in your household.
5. The purpose of this focus group is to listen to your ideas and experiences related to bodies of water on Cape Cod, including the ponds, estuaries, and open ocean.

Ground rules

1. We want to follow basic guidelines for polite conversation.
2. We want to hear from everyone, so please participate.

3. Take turns speaking.
4. We love to hear different opinions but please be polite if you disagree with someone.
5. We will be recording the session so we have an accurate record of what you say.

Conversation Prompts

1. What are the main reasons that you live on Cape Cod/choose to visit Cape Cod?
2. Why did you choose Cape Cod rather than other areas to live or visit?
3. Is there another place that you would rather live or visit than Cape Cod? Where? Why?
4. What do you like about the community of people on Cape Cod?
5. What do you like about the physical landscape of Cape Cod?
6. Do you feel like you belong on Cape Cod?
7. Do you feel the happiest when you are on Cape Cod? If yes, what are the specific places that make you the happiest? If not on Cape Cod, where do you feel the happiest?
8. Do you see a connection between yourself, personally, and Cape Cod?
9. How important is recreation to your reasons for living on or visiting the Cape?
10. What types of outdoor recreation do you enjoy most?

Follow with some of the recreation questions listed under Focus Group Guide A above, as time permits.

FOCUS GROUP GUIDE C: Barriers and Opportunities for Alternative Wastewater Technologies

The primary purpose of these focus groups is to identify prevalent themes and common language when people discuss questions related to their perceived barriers and opportunities for the adoption of alternative wastewater technologies (including: rain gardens, living shorelines, permeable reactive barriers, and salt marsh restoration). These focus groups would split into two types: focus groups with practitioners and focus groups with the general public (Cape Cod year-round or seasonal residents). Some examples of specific questions are included below, but wording of these is subject to change according to information gleaned from the first focus group. Clarifying questions may also be added to facilitate discussion among participants based upon the first focus group.

Introduction

1. Thank you for participating...moderator and observer(s) introduce themselves.
2. The session should last 90 minutes to two hours.
3. Strictly confidential, no follow-up contacts after this discussion.
4. Introduce focus group participants.
 - a. State your first name and town where you live and how long you've lived in the area/where you live.
 - b. Briefly tell us who lives in your household.
5. The purpose of this focus group is to listen to your ideas and experiences related to different types of alternative technologies related to water quality.

Conversation Prompts (residents)

1. What is the main reason that you live on Cape Cod?
2. Are you aware of how nutrients affect waters of Cape Cod? Do you feel like you're affected by this? What do you think are the main sources of nutrients in the waters of Cape Cod?
3. What do you think about water quality of the waters of Cape Cod? Do you think there are differences between the ponds, estuaries, and open waters?

We will be asking about and describing a number of different types of technology that you may or may not have experience with. Please feel free to say that you do not have any knowledge or thoughts about a particular technology. We have information that we can provide to you after the focus group about any of the technologies.

4. Have you ever heard of or seen rain gardens? If no, provide description. If yes, provide short description and ask if that's what they had meant.
 - a. What do you understand about what they are used for?
 - b. Would you be willing to live near a rain garden (For example, have one at a playground in your neighborhood)?
 - c. Do you think that rain gardens would be beneficial for your community? Why or why not?
 - d. Would you be willing to install one on your property? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever heard of living shorelines? If no, provide description. If yes, provide short description and ask if that's what they had meant.
 - a. What do you understand about what they are used for?
 - b. Would you be willing to live near a living shoreline (For example, have one at your local beach or salt marsh edge)?
 - c. Do you think that living shorelines would be beneficial for your community? Why or why not?
 - d. If you live on the water, would you be willing to have one adjacent to your property? Why or why not?

6. Have you ever heard of salt marsh restoration? If no, provide description. If yes, provide short description and ask if that's what they had meant.
 - a. What do you think are the main reasons for restoring salt marshes?
 - b. Would you be willing to live near a restored salt marsh (For example, have one near your local beach)? Why or why not?
 - c. Do you think that salt marsh restoration would be beneficial for your community? Why or why not?
 - d. If you live on the water, would you be willing to have one adjacent to your property? Why or why not?

7. Have you ever heard of permeable reactive barriers? If no, provide description. If yes, provide short description and ask if that's what they had meant.
 - a. What do understand about what they are used for?
 - b. Would you be willing to live near a permeable reactive barrier (For example, have one in your neighborhood)? Why or why not?
 - c. Do you think that permeable reactive barriers would be beneficial for your community? Why or why not?
 - d. Would you be willing to install one on your property? Why or why not?

Conversation Prompts (practitioners)

1. What communities do you work in on Cape Cod?
2. What do your communities believe to be the water quality related to nutrients of the waters of Cape Cod? Do you think they believe there are differences between the ponds, estuaries, and open waters?
3. What types of alternative technologies do you work with in those communities?

We will be asking about and describing a number of different types of technology that you may or may not have experience with at the neighborhood or community scale. Please feel free to say that you do not have any knowledge or thoughts about a particular technology. We have information that we can provide to you after the focus group about any of the technologies.

4. In general, what do you see as opportunities for the adoption of alternative technologies such as living shorelines, rain gardens, and permeable reactive barriers for nutrient abatement?

5. In general, what do you see as barriers for the adoption of alternative technologies such as living shorelines, rain gardens, and permeable reactive barriers for nutrient abatement?

6. Do you have experience with rain gardens? Please describe.
 - a. Do you know of any areas where they are being used?
 - b. Why do you think communities are willing to install rain gardens? Why not?
 - c. What are some of the logistical barriers for installation?

- d. What opportunities do you see for rain gardens?
7. Do you have experience with living shorelines (oyster reefs or marsh sill)? Please describe.
 - a. Do you know of any areas where they are being used?
 - b. Why do you think communities are willing to install living shorelines? Why not?
 - c. What are some of the logistical barriers for installation?
 - d. What opportunities do you see for living shorelines?
 8. Do you have experience with salt marsh restoration for nutrient abatement? Please describe.
 - a. Do you know of any areas where they are being used?
 - b. Why do you think communities are willing to restore salt marshes? Why not?
 - c. What are some of the logistical barriers for restoration?
 - d. What opportunities do you see for salt marsh restoration for nutrient abatement?
 9. Do you have experience with permeable reactive barriers? Please describe.
 - a. Do you know of any areas where they are being used?
 - b. Why do you think communities are willing to install permeable reactive barriers? Why not?
 - c. What are some of the logistical barriers for installation?
 - d. What opportunities do you see for permeable reactive barriers?
 10. Are there other technologies for nutrient abatement that we haven't mentioned that you have experience with? Please describe.
 - a. Do you know of any areas where they are being used?
 - b. Why do you think communities are willing to install these other technologies? Why not?
 - c. What are some of the logistical barriers for installation?
 - d. What opportunities do you see for these other technologies?

INTERVIEWS

The interviews will provide more in-depth information from experts and engaged community members from various viewpoints. The interviews will be focused on 1) understanding barriers and opportunities for the adoption of alternative technologies for wastewater treatment on Cape Cod, 2) understanding the critical components of imbuing a sense of place in the coastal communities, and 3) why specific waterbodies are chosen for recreational use. These interviews will provide valuable qualitative information to support the findings from the focus groups and surveys.

DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE A: Recreational Value and Sense of Place

The purpose of the interviews is to gain more in-depth information about the recreational use of Cape Cod's coastal and freshwater areas and the relation to water quality. Additionally, these interviews will identify important components imbuing a sense of place in the coastal communities. Some interview participants will be identified through the focus groups. Possible interview participants included representatives from different user groups, town officials, residents, and representatives from non-governmental organizations who are working in the area.

1. What communities do you work in on Cape Cod?
2. How long have you worked in the area?
3. What makes Cape Cod special for residents? What about for visitors?
4. What makes [particular water body] special?
5. What types of water recreation are most important to this area?
6. Where is the best place for water recreation [type] on the Cape?
7. Where else do people go for water recreation on the Cape? What about off-Cape?
8. How does water quality affect different recreational uses? How does this vary by location and activity?
9. What other factors affect recreational quality on the Cape?

DRAFT INTERVIEW GUIDE B: Barriers and Opportunities for Alternative Wastewater Technologies

The purpose of the interviews is to gain more in-depth information about the perceived barriers and opportunities for the adoption of alternative wastewater technologies. Some interview participants will be identified through the focus groups. Possible interview participants include those responsible for the installation of the alternation technologies, town officials and other practitioners responsible for facilitating implementation, residents in areas where the technologies have been installed, and representatives from non-governmental organizations who are working on the technologies.

1. What communities do you work in on Cape Cod?
2. Which technologies do you work with?
3. For each one: How was that technology chosen?
4. Why or why not is [technology] beneficial for your community?
5. What are the perceived negative impacts of the technology for your community?
6. What were some of the barriers for identifying the appropriate technology/installing/monitoring the technology?
7. What are some of the opportunities that you identify in your community for using other alternative technologies such as [technology]?
8. What are some of the barriers that you identify in your community for using alternative technologies such as [technology]?