Effective engagements at the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area

Internship for Science-Practice Integration

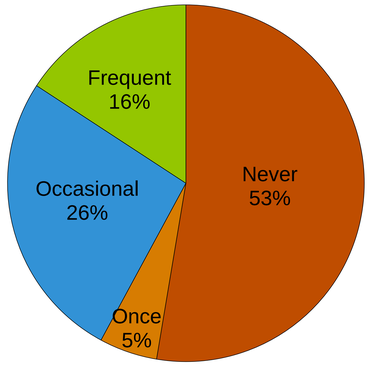
Martin Montes de Oca | Summer Waters | Monica Elser

Why have public events?:
Funds and other resources are precious to the city and their use must show results. My research *examines the impact* of the "Dragonfly Day" event in regards to subsequent *visitations* to the Rio Salado Habitat Restoration Area as well as the general ecological and hydrological *education* it provided to the community.

Do events get results?:
Are the funds allocated to holding public events at the Rio Salado Ecological Area effective in increasing environmental knowledge and future visitation?

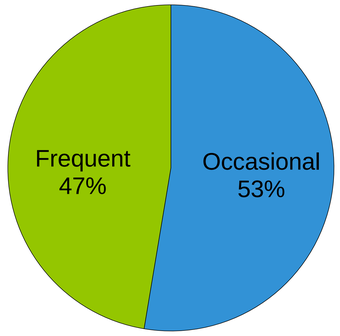
Asking the attendees:
A survey was created to gauge people's knowledge, opinions, and past and future visitation frequency in order to assess the impact of the event on the community.

Pre-event frequency of visitation to area



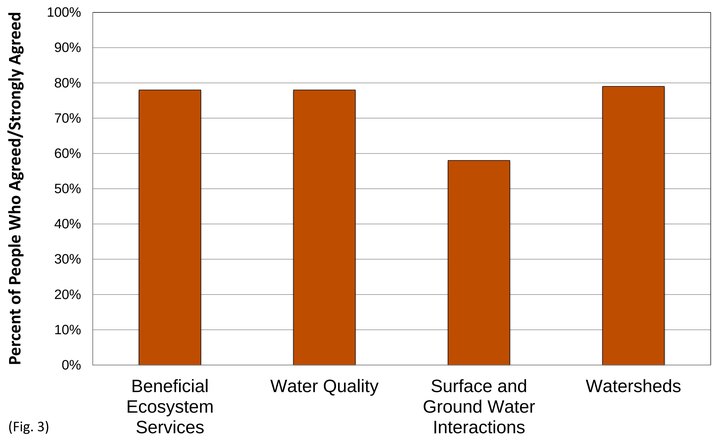
(Fig.1)

Post-event perceived frequency of return:



(Fig.2)

Improvement in Knowledge Due to Event



(Fig. 3)

The outcomes:
After collecting surveys from 19 groups (each having about 4 people), a trend began to appear which indicated a huge unawareness of the area in general.

Closing thoughts:
Results from the event indicate that *"Dragonfly Day" not only greatly increased* attendants *knowledge* about their local hydrological system (see fig.3) *but also increased the visibility and likeliness of returning* to the Rio Salado Ecological Area. In fact, a comparison between (fig.1) and (fig. 2) shows an increase of more than 50% in perceived future visitation. Thus, engagements prove to be effective in their goals to increase education and visibility.

Where to go from here:
Future research could delve further into the actual monetary impacts of public engagement events as well as conducting quizzes instead of relying on self-evaluation.

Acknowledgments:
This material is based upon work supported by the National Science Foundation under Grant No. SES-0951366 Decision Center for a Desert City II: Urban Climate Adaptation (DCDC). Any opinions, findings and conclusions or recommendation expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the National Science Foundation (NSF).Special thanks to Summer Waters (University of Arizona's Cooperative Extension) and Monica Elser (Education Manager for the Global Institute of Sustainability) whose guidance was invaluable and enhanced my research.