Reporting Florida Sea Grant Applied Research and Outreach

Charles Sidman
Associate Director for Research

Rhett Register
Communications Coordinator
Presentation Topics

1. Reporting Process & Metrics
2. Reporting Standards
3. OARS System
4. Reporting Objectives
5. Reporting Outcomes
6. Impact Critique
1. Reporting Process & Metrics

Activities & Audiences

Students Supported

Communications Publications

Impacts & Accomplishments

Leveraged Funds

Products & Tools

Economic Benefits

PIER

OARS

Principal Investigators

Students Supported

Communications Publications

Impacts & Accomplishments

Leveraged Funds

Products & Tools

Economic Benefits

PIER

OARS

Principal Investigators
2. NSGO Reporting Standards

- Justify progress towards attaining project objectives:
  - Description for lay audience

- Quantify economic benefits:
  - Businesses, jobs, estimated wages

- Greater Detail Justifying & Quantifying Research Objectives and Outcomes

- Describe how end-users are engaged and participating
  - Their role in achieving technical objectives and applying results

- Quantify environmental, management, social benefits:
  - Acres enhanced, policy outcomes, changed behaviors
3. OARS System Overview

Seven Reporting Modules

- Project Status
- Objectives
- Students Supported
- Leveraged Funding
- Outreach Activities
- Communications Products
- Accomplishments & Impacts

Researchers → Agents

Agents
3. OARS System Overview

Home/Login Page

Welcome to the Florida Sea Grant Online Activity Reporting System!

Florida Sea Grant-funded researchers use this system to file interim and final project report summaries.

Florida Sea Grant extension specialists and agents use this system to enter and summarize their extension and education events (EEE's).

Note: If you need to reference your research projects dated prior to 2014, please click here.

Please Log In:

Username: csidman
Password: ************
I am logging in:

- as an extension agent or specialist for reporting year: 2020
- as a researcher; select year the project began: 2020

Log In

• Password protected
• Login options for extension agents and researchers
3. OARS System Overview

Main Reporting Page

Welcome to the Florida Sea Grant Online Activity Reporting System (O.A.R.S.)

- Help
- Change my password
- Create module reports
- Archive my modules

OARS consists of seven reporting modules (project status, objectives, students supported, leveraged funding, outreach activities, communications products, accomplishments and impacts) accessed as menu options in the banner at the top of this "Home Page." These modules allow researchers, extension specialists, and marine agents affiliated with the FSG to summarize and characterize research-related and/or outreach-related activities, communications products, and accomplishments and impacts.

Please complete ALL data entry options provided (as applicable) under each module. This will ensure that all of your activities and accomplishments are accounted for and included in the FSG annual report to the NSGO.

You may log in and out of the OARS data entry modules as many times as you like. Just click the 'SAVE' button to save your progress prior to leaving a reporting module.

Most importantly, Florida Sea Grant will review the information submitted by researchers and reserves the right to withhold funding until reporting is satisfactory. OARS project summaries satisfy technical reporting requirements.
3. OARS System Overview

Project Status Module

Interim vs Final Report

Set Reporting Period
3. OARS System Overview

Objectives Module

Information icon provides examples of how to report progress towards meeting proposed research objectives.
3. OARS System Overview
Students Supported Module

Adding Students
View and Edit Student Information

Tip: Save each entry prior to navigating to another reporting module.
3. OARS System Overview

Leveraged Funding Module

- **Add Leveraged Fund**
- **View & Edit Leveraged Funds**

**Tip:** New funding related to FSG supported research
3. OARS System Overview

Outreach Activities Module

Add Entries and Describe Activities

View and Edit Entries
3. OARS System Overview

Communications Module

Add Entries

Tip: Use ‘View’ option to edit/update the status of publications (e.g., in preparation to published).

View and Edit Entries
3. OARS System Overview

Accomplishments and Impacts Module

**Relevance**

The Indian River Lagoon (IRL) has undergone many changes in the past couple of years with increases in amount and length in time of algae blooms; dieoffs of manatees, dolphins, and pelicans; and seagrass loss due to the algae blooms. There has been a large coalition of groups, businesses, and citizens in Brevard County all wanting to help and restore the IRL and researchers wanting to determine what went wrong.

**Response**

The Brevard Zoo, Brevard County Natural Resources Management Department, and UF/IFAS Extension Brevard County partnered to create and launch the Brevard County Oyster Gardening program in order to address concerns of decreasing water quality, increases in algae blooms, and decreases in seagrass density in the IRL. Oysters were once abundant in the IRL and, because of their importance in estuarine ecosystems, this program seeks to restore oysters to the IRL while engaging the citizens of Brevard.

**Results**

Twenty-five workshops were conducted between January and December 2014. Over 1000 residents have been trained, and approximately 540 gardening sites established. Participants in workshops increased their knowledge of the (1) importance, threats and biology of oysters; (2) various other projects throughout the county helping to clean up the IRL; and (3) how to be an oyster gardener and expectations of a gardener.

Gardeners returned their oysters on Nov 5-10, 2014 at three reef restoration sites in Brevard County. It was

**Partners**

- Brevard County Natural Resources Management Department
- Brevard Zoo
- University of Central Florida
3. OARS System Overview

Accomplishments and Impacts Module

**TIP:** for maximum impact it may be advantageous to combine outputs from a set of coordinated activities into a single accomplishment or impact statement.
4. Tips for Reporting Progress Towards Attaining Technical Objectives for Research Projects

• Describe the extent of project progress made towards meeting each objective (e.g., Objective 1 is 50% completed).

• Describe the rationale, methods and challenges related to the implementation of each project objective.

• Descriptions should be concise yet provide sufficient detail to allow Florida Sea Grant to evaluate progress made relative to the two-year project time-frame and requested invoicing / reimbursement. Reimbursement will now be contingent on proper reporting and adequate accounting of the required cost share.

• Descriptions should be written in terms that a lay audience can understand and allow us to easily follow the progress of the project towards attainment of each objective and assess the degree to which challenges are being addressed/overcome.
4. Tips for Reporting Project Outcomes

• Should be developed in the context of proposed research or outreach objectives and related to metrics defined by the National Sea Grant Office.

• Outcomes can describe either an accomplishment or an impact, also defined as a “success story.”
  • **Accomplishment:** Attainment of specific project objectives.
  • **Impact:** How the end-user is applying the products, tools or information in decision-making.
4. Types of Research and Outreach Program Outcomes

NSGO Metrics

- Jobs created/sustained
- Businesses created/sustained
- Economic benefit
- Management tool/policy developed
- Management decision made
- Habitats enhanced (e.g., Acres)
- Behavior change
- Workforce development training

**TIP:** Not a paper, a conference presentation, a student supported, an award received.

**TIP:** It may be necessary to confer with project partners and end-users while developing accomplishment and/or impact statements.

**Definitions**

**Accomplishment:** Specific action, activity or product resulting from a research project or extension programming.

**Impact:** Verifiable societal, environmental and/or economic benefit that results from a significant activity or group of related activities.

Please do not report awards and prizes as accomplishments or impacts.
5. Impact Critique

Relevance: Describe and quantify the issue.

Expansive Florida Bay, like many coastal environments around the world, has been degraded by harmful algal blooms, emerging diseases and over-harvesting of resources. The bay’s native sponges that are keystone species for improving water quality and providing habitat for commercially valuable fish and shellfish have been especially hard hit. Restoration of hard-bottom sponge community is an essential component of a plan being developed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission for bringing back the bay’s ecological function, but measuring restoration effectiveness has been elusive.

Observation

- Relevance statement oriented towards addressing an important management need in Florida Bay.
5. Impact Critique

Response: Describe what you did you do to address the issue and with what partners.

Researchers used a grid of 10 acres of sponge communities they had grown in previous research, laid out over five study sites in the Middle Florida Keys. Each site consisted of 20 restoration plots measuring 25 x 25 meters. Twice yearly at each of the five sites, divers used techniques including time-lapse video and stable isotope analysis to survey the abundance and diversity of the community’s inhabitants, and to better understand the developing food web. The monitoring was done in partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which provided equipment and laboratory resources to support the diving operations and data analysis.

Observation
- Description of how research was conducted and the role of a key partner.
5. Impact Critique

Results: Describe and quantify the results.
Plots show a statistically significant increase in many organisms associated with hard-bottom coastal habitats, but missing from non-restored sites. Concentrations of nitrogen-based nutrients in the water column have also decreased, especially for sites restored with the highest quantity and diversity of sponge species. In all, approximately 10 acres of hard-bottom community have been enhanced, highlighting the value of restoring sponge community diversity and abundance. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation is using this information as part of a plan to improve water quality and species diversification in Florida Bay.

Observation
- Results quantified in terms of habitat enhancement and role in developing a management plan for the bay.
5. Impact Critique: Elements of a Strong Impact Statement

**Relevance**
- Orient statement towards an end-user issue
- Quantify the issue or magnitude of the issue in social, environmental or economic terms.

**Response**
- Describe project activities
- Identify target audiences
- Identify metrics for measuring success
- Identify partners and describe their role

**Results**
- Quantify social, environmental or economic benefits according to NSGO success metrics.
- Include testimonials from end-users to support outcomes.
Thank You!