

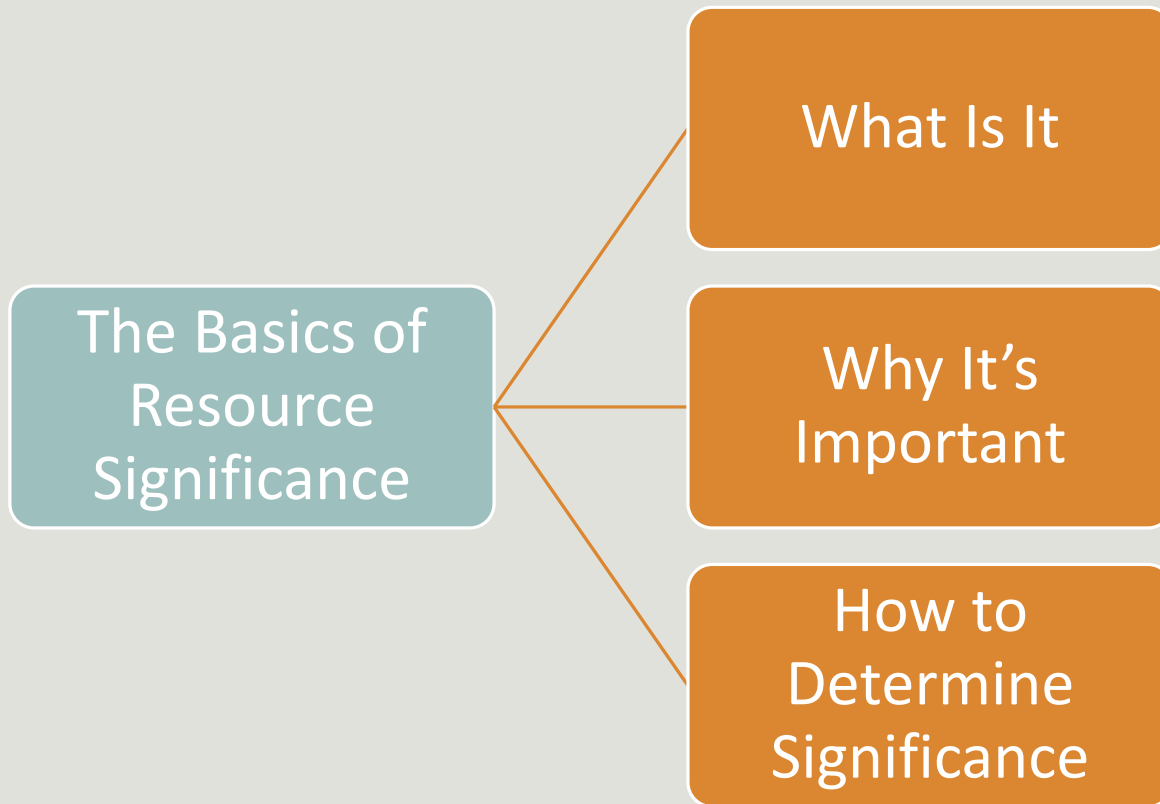
Resource Significance

CAMIE KNOLLENBERG

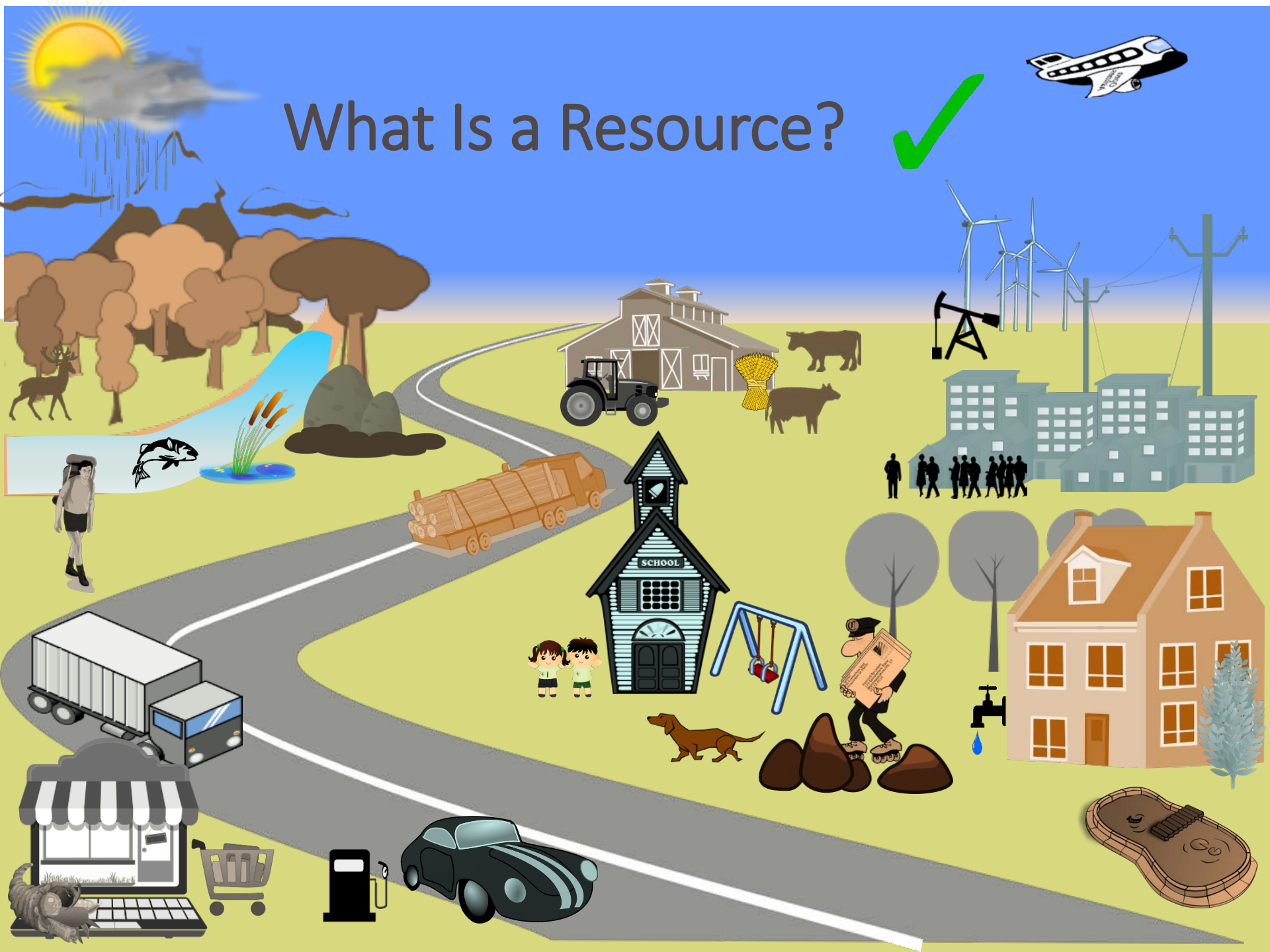
02 FEB 2017

PCOP WEBINAR

Purpose & Objectives



What Is a Resource?



What Is a Resource?



How do YOU define
the term **RESOURCE**?

What Is a Resource?

- ❖ Something available that has a capacity to satisfy human wants/needs
- ❖ Can be “used” through the appropriate means/technologies
- ❖ Provides goods and services
- ❖ Component of our physical environment, either biotic (living) or abiotic (non-living)
- ❖ Include land, air, water, sunshine, minerals, soil, fish, cattle, etc.

What Makes a Resource Significant?

If it has a material bearing on the decision making process

- ❖ Covered by a law?
- ❖ The Public cares about it?
- ❖ Experts have scientific reasons to think its important?
- ❖ Plays an important role in the ecosystem?

Resource Significance Guidance

ER 1105-2-100 Appendix C
Environmental Evaluation &
Compliance

C-3 Ecological Resources

- Para b(16) Resource Categorization
- Used to describe/assign values & significance to resources
- ER opportunities
- If losses warrant mitigation
- Trade-offs

Resource Significance Guidance

ER 1105-2-100 Appendix C
Environmental Evaluation &
Compliance

C-3 Ecological Resources

- Para d(4) Significance Determination
- Shall be determined on NED and EQ values
- Shall include scarcity, uniqueness from National, Regional, State and Local Perspective
- Non-monetary values are subjective
- Include rationale

Resource Significance Guidance

ER 1105-2-100 Appendix E
Civil Works Mission and
Evaluation Procedures

V. Ecosystem Restoration

- Para E-37 Significance of Outputs
- Plays an important role in ER eval
- Helps determine if “it’s worth it”
- Significance statement provide qualitative information

Why Are Significant Resources Important?

NED Projects

- Significant resources are often constraints to NED projects and if adversely impacted, require mitigation.
- They can also prove to be positive factors to drive NED alternative selection.

NER Projects

- These are the resources that are important to people
- They drive Federal Interest Decisions!
- Without significant resources, you don't have problems and opportunities or objectives and constraints for ecosystem restoration

Why Are Significant Resources Important?

What is often the first thing our agency wants to know about an ER Study?

 The Significance of the Resource(s)

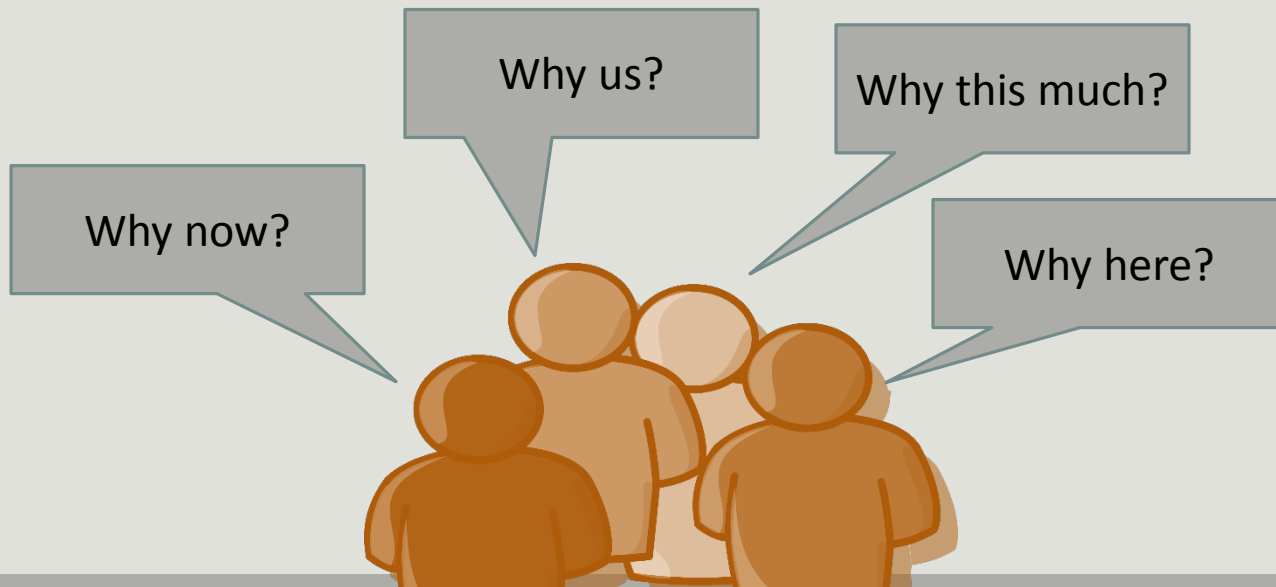


Be Ready to Answer These Questions!

Why Are Significant Resources Important?



Have you been asked these questions?



Be Ready to Answer These Questions!

Resource Significance Is:

A protocol that provides...

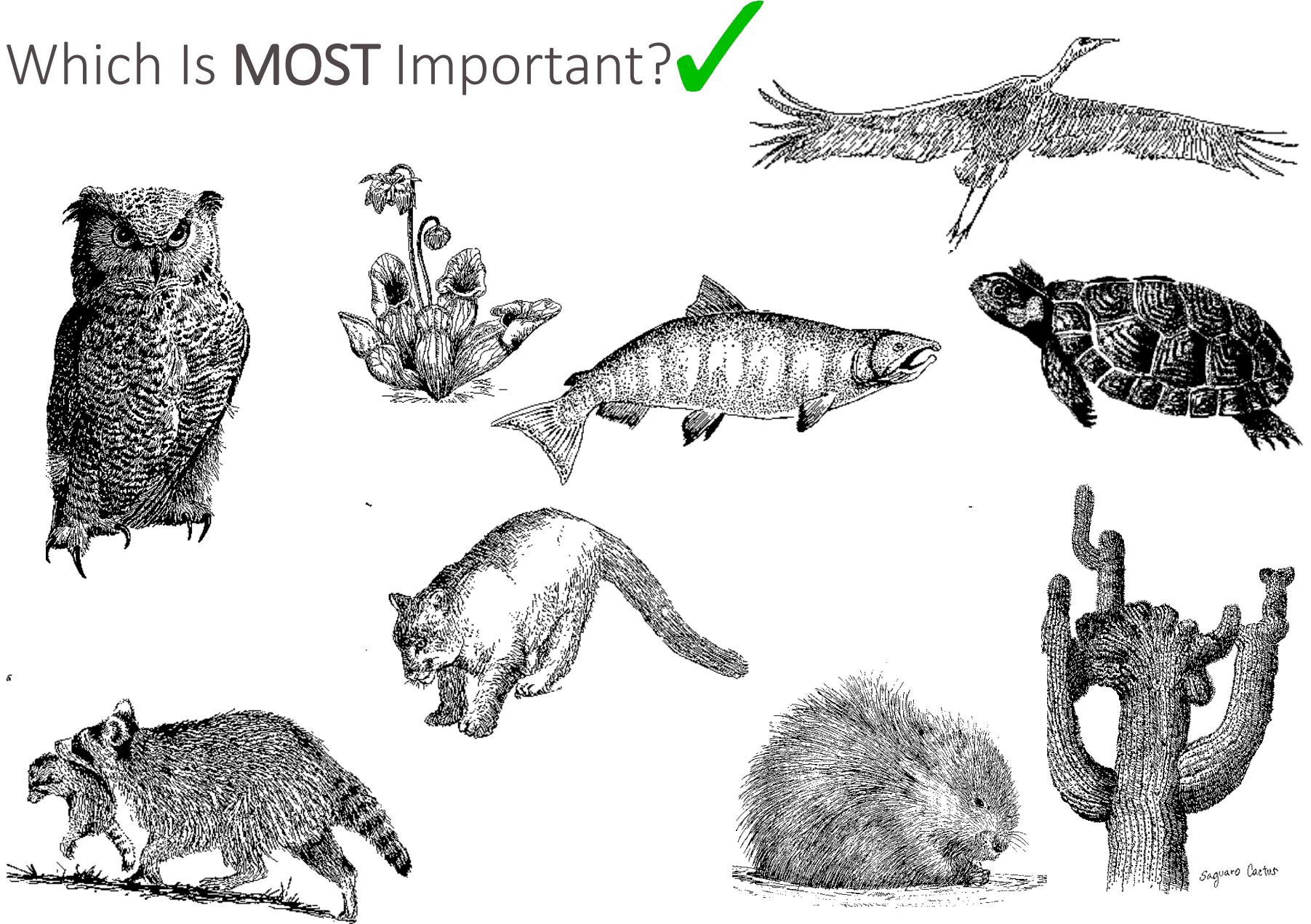
- ❖ Criteria for evaluating and justifying ER projects
- ❖ A way to communicate information to decision makers
- ❖ A way to prioritize efforts

Federal Interest!



The ER barometer

Which Is **MOST** Important? ✓



How We Prioritize Nationally



Presidential Priorities

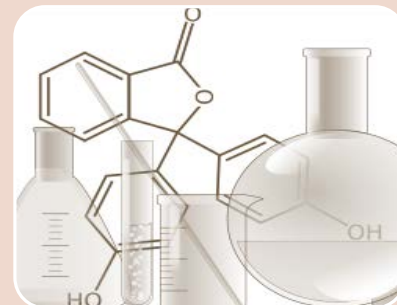
- California Bay Delta
- Chesapeake Bay
- Gulf Coast
- Great Lakes
- Everglades



CW Budget Priorities

- Missouri River
- Columbia-Snake System
- Upper Mississippi River
- Puget Sound
- Hudson-Raritan

Determining Resource Significance



SOURCES OF SIGNIFICANCE

Institutional Recognition

Significance is
acknowledged in
laws, plans, or
policy

Public Recognition

Some segment
of the public
recognizes its
importance

Technical Recognition

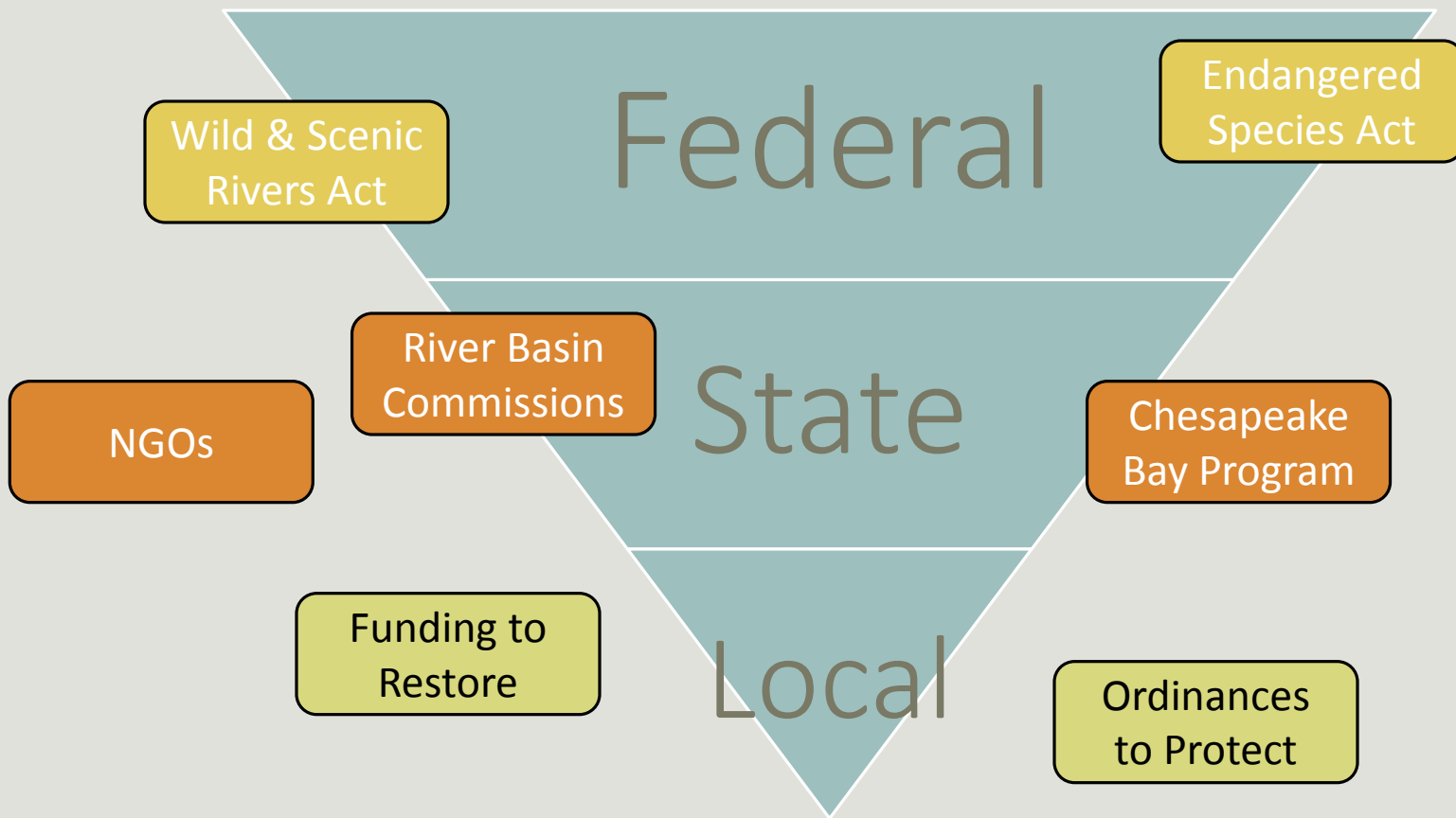
Significance is
based on
scientific or
technical
knowledge of its
characteristics

Institutional Recognition

The importance of an environmental resource is acknowledged in law, adopted plans, or other policy statements of public agencies, tribes or private groups

- ❖ Migratory Bird Treaty Act
- ❖ WRDA 86's Bottomland Hardwoods
- ❖ Principles & Guidance (P&G)
- ❖ Others?

Institutional Recognition



Public Recognition

Some segment of the general public recognizes the importance of an environmental resource

- ❖ Grass Roots Support Groups/Volunteer groups working to identify and restore the resource
- ❖ Controversy over use of the resource
- ❖ Opposition to destruction of the resources
- ❖ National/Regional/Local Expressions of Public value judgments
- ❖ Others?

Technical Recognition

The importance of an environmental resource is based on scientific or technical knowledge or judgement of the critical resource characteristics

- ❖ Contributions of submerged vegetation to crab habitat
- ❖ Role of vernal pools in amphibian life cycles
- ❖ Use of migratory corridors
- ❖ Critical habitats for listed species
- ❖ Others?

Technical Recognition Concepts

Scarcity: relative abundance, rareness

Biodiversity: species richness, genetic variability

Status & Trends: occurrence and extent over time, how and why changed

Connectivity: habitat corridors, fragmentation, barriers

Limiting habitat: essential to species survival

Representativeness: exemplifies natural, undisturbed habitat

Combination Recognition

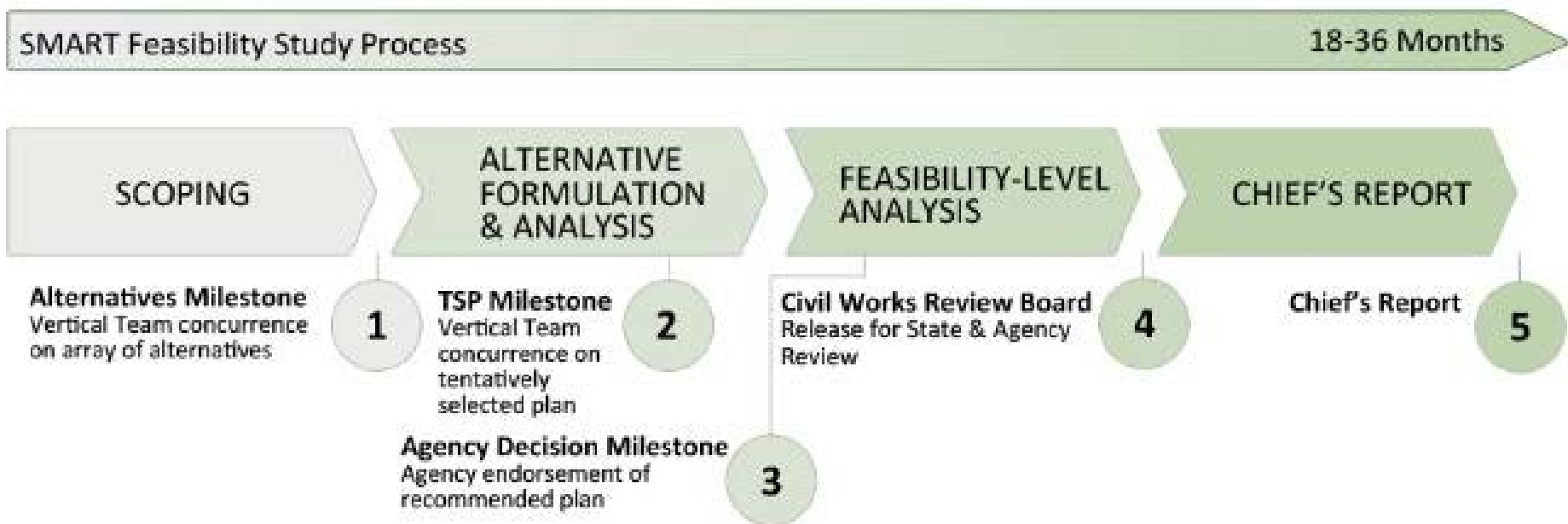
For resources that aren't documented as having Institutional, Public or Technical Significance, significance may become a combination of:

- ❖ Science
- ❖ Fact
- ❖ Opinion
- ❖ Value Judgments

Recognition Summary

- ❖ Any reasonable method of determining significance is acceptable if it is transparent and open to revision and change in the face of compelling arguments.
- ❖ Our interest is the role significance plays in helping planners define the problems and opportunities that a planning study is going to address

When to Discuss Resource Significance



When to Discuss Resource Significance

BUDGET DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



Resource Significance

- ❖ Determines problems, opportunities, objectives and constraints and most importantly **FEDERAL INTEREST**
- ❖ Is determined by **institutional, public, and technical** recognition
- ❖ Reflects an effort to measure the value of ecological functions to the **NATION**
- ❖ Constitutes a **budget decision** factor for non-monetary outputs
- ❖ It's a story to tell rather than a box to check

Resource Significance Tools

Review and Evaluation of Programs for Determining Significance and Prioritization of Environmental Resources, IWR Report 94-R-7

Resource Significance: A New Perspective for Environmental Project Planning, IWR Report 95-R-10

Resource Significance Protocol for Environmental Project Planning, IWR Report 97-R-4



What tools have you used?

Resource Significance Experts



Let's Hear from YOU!

Discussion

- ❖ What are some challenges you have faced in telling the Resource Significance story on an ER Study?
- ❖ What lessons learned can you share?
- ❖ What examples are there to help teams benchmark?
- ❖ How does resource significance impact mitigation planning?

