

COASTAL ECOSYSTEM LEARNING CENTERS

Educators Workshop



October 11-12, 2017
John G. Shedd Aquarium, Chicago, IL

Summary Report

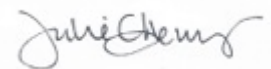
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Coastal Ecosystem Learning Center (CELC) network has been working diligently over the last 18 months to more fully leverage their shared wisdom and collective impact. With this in mind, a second Educators Workshop specifically designed to bring together Education leadership was convened to further the goals and impact of the network.

The members of the CELC provided valuable input and direction as to the goals and outcomes desired at the workshop. NOAA leadership incorporated these ideas into the design of the workshop to ensure a co-created, results-oriented experience.

The John G. Shedd Aquarium graciously hosted the workshop in October, 2017. Over the course of 2 ½ days, the Education leaders and the NOAA team engaged in collaborative, focused discussions about the next steps for the CELC. Participants were fully committed to productive dialogue and making actionable decisions. They enjoyed getting to know each other and their organizations better with regards to the strengths each bring to the table and the possible collective impact of the network. Participants also had the invaluable opportunity to see behind-the-scenes elements of Shedd Aquarium and how they design and deliver stellar education experiences.

The key is now in the follow-up from this successful workshop. The momentum of the group combined with support from NOAA creates a solid foundation from which to accomplish shared initiatives and goals identified. Guided by the strategic plan and the concept of “1+1=3,” the network is poised to leverage their inherent potential. I look forward to seeing the impact as the group takes action over the next 18 months. Onward!



Julie Henry, Founder and President
Finish Line Leadership

AGENDA

Guiding Questions:

1. We've been working together for just over a year...now what?
2. How can we effectively leverage out collective efforts for maximum impact?
3. What can we choose as our CELC 'Signature Event'?
4. How can we best support NOAA key priorities?

Tuesday, October 10

6:30 pm Kick-off reception

DAY 1 (Wednesday, October 11): What will we do together next?

8:30 am	Morning social time and breakfast
9:00 am	Welcome / Icebreaker
9:30 am	CELC State of the Union + Strategic Plan update
10:00 am	Rapid-Fire Brainstorming and Discussion: <i>What has worked well? What has not?</i>
10:30 am	NOAA Priorities and Strategic Direction
11:00 am	Rapid-Fire Brainstorming and Discussion: <i>How can CELC uniquely support these initiatives?</i>
11:30 am	Break-out groups: Complementary Networks and Opportunities
12:00 pm	Lunch and Aquarium tour
1:00 pm	Focus on the Future: Establishing Priorities for Maximum Impact
2:30 pm	Behind-the-Scenes: Education and Marine Mammal Department
4:00 pm	Focus on the Future: Consensus
5:00 pm	Adjourn
6:30 pm	Dinner

DAY 2 (Thursday, October 12): How will we do it?

8:30 am	Morning social time and breakfast
9:00 am	Welcome / Icebreaker
9:30 am	Collaborative Discussion: <i>Are these the right priorities? What are the next steps?</i>
10:00 am	Strategic Plan revisited
10:30 am	Task Force Groups break-out
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Collaborative Discussion: <i>How can we best accomplish our goals during the next year?</i>
2:00 pm	Summary of decisions made and next steps
2:15 pm	Reflections
2:45 pm	Meeting wrap-up (Christos and Maggie)
3:00 pm	Behind-the-Scenes: Marine Mammals
4:00 pm	Aquarium on your own
6:30 pm	Dinner



WHAT HAS WORKED WELL? WHAT HAS NOT?

In order to set the stage for productive discussions, participants first shared input into what has worked well, and what needs to change, with regards to the network since they last met in February, 2016.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to NOAA • Talent in the room • You get out of it what you put into it • Sam and Lisa reaching out • No art contest • No student summit • Increased Federal collaboration • Teen program sharing / awareness / resources • Solidified relationships between Education leaders • Increased connections among staff members • CELC brand helps in grant applications (increased credibility) • Support of NOAA Office of Education • Involvement at the Director level • Share resources within Aquariums for programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use monthly meeting differently • Robustness of criteria of membership • Collaborate more re: funding and benefits to CELC • Optics vs. substance • Ground-truthing if the brand is really helping • CELC brand within NOAA (raise awareness) • Organizational structure of CELC (should there be regions?) • National or international? • Specific involvement needs to increase • Identify more specific goals / metrics from the strategic plan

HOW CAN CELC UNIQUELY SUPPORT NOAA INITIATIVES?

After NOAA leadership reviewed the agency's current priorities, the group brainstormed how they could uniquely support these as a network.

- Intentional about focus on diversity
- Reaching diverse youth
- Workforce development (diversity and inclusion)
- Volunteers – STEAM field, diversity and inclusion, beyond zoos, aquariums and museums
- Collaborative funding opportunities
- Leveraging corporations with their workforce to bridge to career development
- Career awareness to include soft skills, beyond conservation education
- CELC-sponsored internship / Fellowship
- Inclusion opportunities in CELC / zoos / aquariums / museums
- Americorps model?
- Regional collaboration of NOAA mirrored in CELC
- Outreach arm of NOAA (maybe citizen science?)
- “Greasy hands science” approach

WHAT ARE THE COMPLEMENTARY NETWORKS AND OPPORTUNITIES THAT CELC SHOULD BE AWARE OF CURRENTLY?

The participants broke into groups to identify current networks and opportunities that should be on CELC's radar screen moving forward – either to support complementary efforts or to avoid duplication of efforts.

- IUCN
- UNEP
- NOAA
- NNOCCI
- NMEA – audience to activate
- How can the coast care about middle America? Watersheds, EPA, USDA, Farm Bill
- Criteria should include:
 - Major thought leader
 - Ocean literacy
 - Big – international
 - Leadership
 - Scale
 - Time, talent, treasure
- Let's leverage and provide some sustainability for the long term
- Define the work? Who are we, before we bring in more partners?
- Find partnerships that are not so aquarium-specific (such as AZA)
- Find new / non-traditional partnerships who deal with youth
 - Boys and Girls Club
 - YMCA
 - Search Institute
 - 4H
 - FFA
 - Scouts
- If we're interested in diversity, are any potential partners doing likewise?
- Reciprocal partnering
- Citizen science-based with emphasis on youth
 - King Tides
 - NOAA Marine Debris Program
 - M.A.T.E.

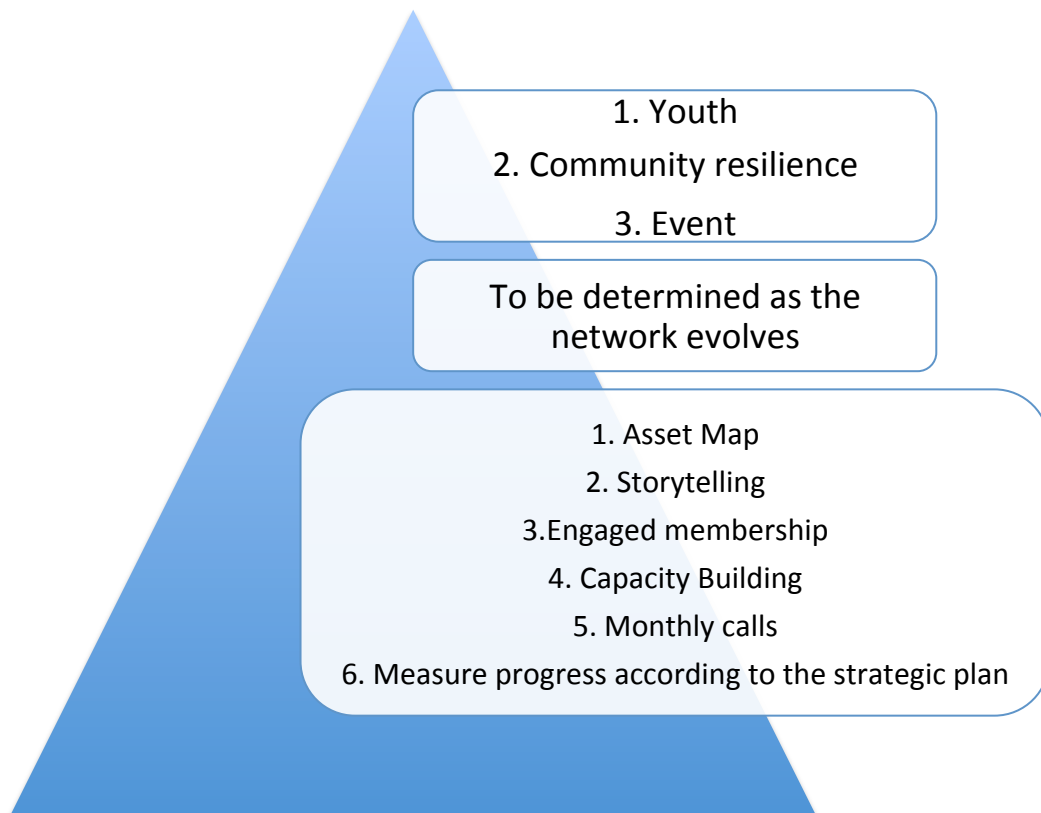
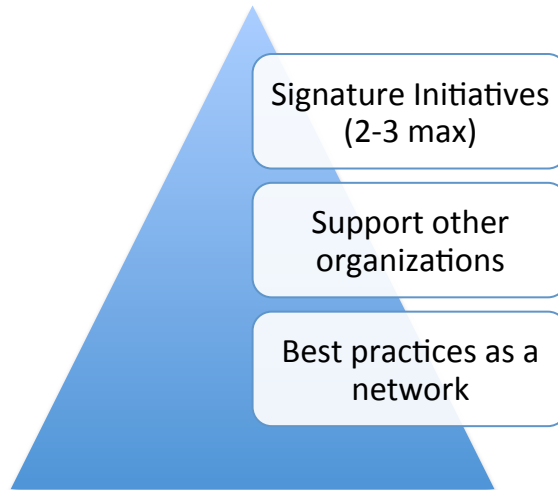


Designing a Strategic Pyramid

The participants engaged in a collaborative exercise beginning in small teams, then combining ideas in larger teams and eventually encompassing the entire group. The result is a visual reflection of the network's chosen efforts to guide decision-making and achieve progress on the strategic plan in the next 18 months.

Guiding ideas (North Star):

1. Strategic Plan
2. NOAA
3. 1+1=3



SIGNATURE INITIATIVES

These initiatives are the signature work and impact of the network. Participants broke into groups to identify tangible action items and metrics over the next 18 months and to which strategic plan goals / objectives they aligned. Participants additionally chose which initiative they would like to specifically continuing working on.

Youth

- Sam Norton (Lead)
- Joe Harber
- Jack Carr
- Kim Swan
- Marsh Myers
- Jared McGovern
- John Anderson
- Jennifer Metzler-Fiorino

Community Resilience

- Dave Bader (Lead)
- Jeff Dillon
- Sean den Bok
- John Anderson
- Brian Thill
- Leslie Peart
- Jared McGovern

Public Events

- Kelly Matis (Lead?)
- Debbi Stone (Lead?)
- Lisa Ostrego
- Brenda Walkenhorst
- Windy Arey-Kent
- Megan Janke



SIGNATURE INITIATIVE: YOUTH

- Middle school, high school, teen emphasis
- Strategic Plan objective
 - #2:** Increase participation in coastal and ocean conservation and stewardship activities
- Details
 - Stewardship vs. service learning
 - Use existing youth programs
 - NOAA data to help craft a stewardship project but youth decide
 - Youth document – 3 minute video
 - Group reflection (Skype)
 - Social media built-in
 - Youth empowering youth
 - Measureable results

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE: COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

- Strategic Plan objectives
 - #1:** Improve ocean and climate literacy among our audiences
 - #3:** Foster our audiences' relationship with the coastal environment and increase community resilience
 - #4:** Establish and support a community of practice with emphasis on cross-institution communication, coordination, and professional development
- Timeline
 - 6 months: connect / streamline information and content
Logic Model – strategize resilience storytelling
 - 1 year: focus on one resilience program/effort
 - 18 months: measure and report

SIGNATURE INITIATIVE: PUBLIC EVENTS

- Coastal and Ocean Conservation: Engaging for Healthy Communities
- Strategic Plan objectives
 - #1.1 or 1.2:** intentionally included in effort (uniqueness of CELC network)
 - #2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1:** variety of efforts could include these strategies
- Timeline
 - Effort implementation: September, 2018 (youth, families, general public, stewardship, on floor)

- Three of the monthly Ed Directors calls between January – August, 2018 to include:
 - 30 minute discussion/presentation from NOAA rep based on relevant topics with specific objectives defined by group; offering PD for educators (#4.1); capacity building; 1+1 = 3
 - use round robin time to coordinate like/complementary efforts; 1+1=3
- Define themes of efforts to inform the coordinated efforts (January 2018)
- Need to define:
 - PR / social media strategy leading up to and during “effort” month; storytelling
 - Specific objectives for call speakers / resource exploration
 - Define topics to be addressed / utilizing NOAA assets
 - Analytics / evaluation – to report in same language showcase impact of effort (#4.4)
- Offline coordination / best practices about audience or dissemination methods (for staff creating multiple levels of contact); network collaboration and sharing (#4.2); capacity building; 1+1=3

BEST PRACTICES

These best practices are how the network will build their collective capacity and leverage their collective impact to accomplish their signature initiatives. Participants broke into groups to brainstorm and/or identify tangible action items and metrics over the next 18 months and to which strategic plan goals / objectives they aligned. Participants additionally chose which best practice they would like to specifically continuing working on.

Asset Map

- Maggie Allen (Lead)
- Jeff Dillon
- James Bartram

Storytelling

- Tina Miller-Way (Lead)
- Jennifer Metzler-Fiorino
- Sean den Bok
- Megan Janke
- Brenda Walkenhorst

Engaged Membership

- Jeff Dillon (Lead)
- Christos Michalopoulos
- Tina Miller-Way
- Joe Harber

BEST PRACTICE: ASSET MAP

- We need to map our individual strengths to better understand what each organization brings to the network
- Then we can more effectively build collective capacity

BEST PRACTICE: STORYTELLING

- We need to report on all Strategic Plan objectives
- Now – resilience
- Need strategic framing of our message
- In 18 months:
 - Capacity building – NOAA training / webinars
 - % of CELC partners involved (all regions participate)
 - # of stories told
 - % per region (4 or 5 regions)
 - End result – NOAA shares
- Two stories to tell:
 - To public that visits
 - To CELC, AZA, NOAA

BEST PRACTICE: ENGAGED MEMBERSHIP

- What does ‘coast’ mean (when considering new members)?
- Revisit original requirements
- Participate in at least one of the signature initiatives (or aquaculture)
- Communicate / share CELC activities outside the network
- Reciprocal introductions / relationship-building
- Share data – Asset Map / report out



APPENDIX 1: PARTICIPANT INPUT PRIOR TO WORKSHOP

This input was gathered anonymously through Survey Monkey prior to the workshop, to guide the development of the agenda, specific discussion questions, and activities engaged in during their time together.

1. I think the CELC network is important because:

- It brings together aquariums from around North America. These organizations have an incredible outreach potential. Also, the link to NOAA and the current data, science and programs.
- Organizations with overlapping missions and audiences allow for collaboration
- It allows similar institutions to support and learn from each other.
- CELC offers unique opportunities for partnership and support to reach shared goals - strength in numbers!
- It is an opportunity to share and network education programs to improve knowledge about our coasts
- it is a network. This network allows us to learn from one another (resources, efforts, focus areas, etc.), allows opportunities for collaboration and builds strength thru our collective voice. It is an especially important avenue of exchange for non-AZA aquariums and learning centers.
- The "Network" Part
- Interconnecting organizations with similar goals increases opportunities to be successful.
- 1) It's the only way I know to consistently share information with NOAA's Office of Education, 2) to stay abreast of happenings in the Office of Ed and with other NOAA resources, 3) to learn more about what NOAA is trying to accomplish
- organizations had to meet certain criteria to be a CELC, so it validates our standards and best practices.
- It allows me to connect with like-minded professionals who share similar visions and goals as myself and my organization.
- We learn from each other and open channels of communication.
- So many reasons! Most importantly it keeps the conversations and relationships going - we all need each other!
- Give the opportunity to be as bridge to connect families with science through the educational programs that we have developed.
- It's a great way to elevate public awareness around the value of ocean literacy, and the contribution of Aquariums to urban nature connection.
- First, it is a network that allows us to share and discuss ideas as well as challenges. It also helps us to coordinate themes on a national level.
- Common Missions, Mid-level practitioners with common practice and shared values, but also with shared constraints. Both provide fertile ground for networking
- It is a working community, focused on positively impacting the conservation of our planet.
- There is power in collaboration. We COULD accomplish a lot if we worked together more.

2. In 2018, the CELC should:

- Choose a common theme and message that could be spread network wide for the greatest impact.
- Begin the planning process to hold Local teen summits in the fall of 2018 followed by a culmative event in 2019 hosted by NOAA to highlight and celebrate student successes
- Re-evaluate our main focus topics and make sure they are still what we want to focus on.
- work to meet or exceed the benchmarks outlined in our strategic plan
- I am not really sure. I think we need some really tangible goals that we all can collaborate with to accomplish at our facilities.
- implement targeted activities to raise the CELC network profile, identify areas where collaborative efforts can make an impact and provide opportunities for potential collaboration.
- Continue to grow momentum. The energy of the group feels good, seems like the Education Directors have some buy-in and want to get together to focus and network without the busyness of a conference setting.
- Consider creating a program/event/goal that all CELCs can contribute to.
- Review NOAA's Office of Education Strategic Plan and see where/how the aquariums can help move that plan forward.
- ...consider re-accreditation and/or the rigorous standards that allow an organization to be a CELC.
- Help facilitate more regional cooperation between member organizations.
- Build stronger social ties among core contacts and develop greater clarity about the theories that we are applying within our ongoing work. By deepening our understanding of theory, we can help to a) examine whether the theories we are learning are aligned and b) build more clarity about the language we're using to discuss ideas about what's next.
- Come up with at least one program or event that EVERY member can take back to their facility and participate in.
- Developed at least one educational international program, so students from Mexico could interact with students in the U.S. focused on marine topics.
- Its a great way to elevate public awareness around the value of ocean literacy, and the contribution of Aquariums to urban nature connection.
- Prioritize existing and/or new projects for which we can maximize impacts by leveraging the network.
- Define a common task/s that can be accomplished in a tangible way. Document published, workshop held with a "proceedings of" produced. Social Media Campaign with a report on effect. etc etc
- be an active resource for the conservation education community.
- Coordinate events on the same days and publicize them as such. Even fundraising efforts/events could occur.

3. I believe the Educators Workshop will be successful if:

- We leave with a clear understanding of how each of our organizations work can contribute to and benefit from the network.
- We have time for collaboration
- Progress can be made on current goals/topics, and we leave with revised or a new goal to work towards.
- participants commit to being fully present and contributing individual experiences/perspectives
- I can bring back ideas that are engaging to our guests.
- momentum for action is sustained post-meeting and opportunities for collaboration develop.
- I can come back with insight , networking, perspective to think about or implement within our organization.
- Connections are made
-) I connect with one or two colleagues to build my professional support network, 2) Reacquaint myself with Office of Ed staff, what they are thinking about, future plans, etc., 3) Come away with one or two ideas for how my institution can help the Office of Ed and CELC Network. 4) Learn about other Federal initiatives that involve oceans, marine resources, climate change, etc.
- ...we could all share what we think the CELC can/should do to leverage our collective power.
- Build successfully on what we started in Long Beach last year.
- Six months later, we have new collaborative work happening among members of the network, stimulated by the workshop and other network communications.
- We leave with a clear understanding of our role within the group and a clear direction for the next 12 months.
- We can have as one of the results, the interaction between CELCs on a new or past program. And to start any international project like the past Summit or Art Contest.
- We identify some shared goals for collective impact in 2018
- We can each find a way to contribute to the work of the network as a whole. I missed the last meeting and never felt like I was integrated into the working teams or projects.
- We establish a set of common tasks to accomplish that show the value of CELC members working together.
- it provides professional development, teaching strategies, and tools that can be applied with in the first 3-6 months
- Everyone enters with a sense of collaboration and understands that we are all there to achieve x,y,z. We need to all be on the same page with what we are trying to accomplish during the 2 days.

4. I would like to add these additional thoughts:

- I hope we continue to work towards collaboration on big ideas.
- Looking forward to it!
- Thanks once again for facilitating.
- I'm grateful for the opportunity to meet with other aquarium educators.
- Excited to be attending!
- Kudos to Lisa and Sam at Shedd for facilitating connections among a small group of us to explore similar types of programs operating at different institutions.
- I know these annual meetings are expensive but if there is any way to keep them going on an annual basis let's figure out how we can do so - even if it means financial support from the members to help NOAA offset costs. I see real value in face-to-face meetings with our colleagues in CELC.
- To keep organizing international activities, projects where several of the CELCs can merge.
- I think CELC is a good vehicle for Gov, Corp and NGO conservation collaboration.
- This year it has been difficult to maintain a positive outlook. I feel like I'm giving a small amount of attention to a large number of issues. What's the single largest or overarching message that all (or the bulk) of our programs can support? Is it simply the empowerment of individuals and groups? Could everyone who leaves our facilities feel empowered to make a difference in some way? Or, is that too simplistic and too small a goal?
- We need to figure out/realize how we are better together than on our own. How do we increase efficiency or effectiveness or exposure because of CECL
- Looking forward to Chicago
- Maybe some ground rules in the beginning...no "we can't" allowed, only presenting solutions such as "while this could be challenging for our organization, ways we can participate include....". Too many excuses for why collaboration "can't" work. We need to change our language and maybe we can change the outcome. Just a thought.

APPENDIX 2: PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK AFTER WORKSHOP

This input was gathered anonymously through Survey Monkey after to the workshop, to provide accurate feedback on the workshop and valuable input in the creation of the next workshop.

1. I think the most successful part of the Educators Workshop was:

- Opportunities for dialogue
- Working in groups to put action plans together and continuing to build relationships with others. The face time we had was invaluable.
- 1) Putting names and faces to a voice on the phone. I think that was good. 2) The group reconfirmed the CELC Strategic Plan. We didn't go off on some new tangent. 3) The group's realization that other colleagues in our institutions should be invited to participate in the monthly calls, even if only to hear the NOAA updates. The highlight of the 2-days for me was seeing the drop-in Teen Center. Awesome idea!
- Actually coming up with a plan to move forward together.
- Coming out of it with a cohesive, tangible plan to move forward.
- Networking with the aquarium community.
- connecting with the other partners
- In addition to building relationships with other educators, the second day of honing in on concepts was successful. Julie did a good job of managing a diverse group.
- Defining and refining our collective vision for the network
- Having the opportunity to network with colleagues. I also think it was a nice balance of meeting, social events and opportunity to see the facility.
- Coming up with a way to move forward with CELC
- Connecting with colleagues. Collaborating to identify some action steps.
- time to collaborate in person

2. As a network, I am most looking forward to implementing this idea/component discussed at the workshop:

- CELC Service Learning project
- I cannot wait to work on the Youth task that aligns to the strategic plan.
- The idea I look forward to the most is greater use of social media to connect the youth in our programs to youth doing similar things in other institutions. I think this is a great idea because it is youth generated content, it uses programming we are already doing – it's not new work, and Management at my institution will see this as greater impact – which it is. Of course, the kids themselves will have fun with this, too. I also look forward to working in the sub-team about the idea of Membership. Should it be a formal membership or an informal membership, or somewhere in between? I look forward to those discussions.
- The storytelling event.

- Group youth citizen science projects
- Asset mapping with the intent of leveraging NOAA's and each others resources
- a shared event
- The youth group's idea of creating teen driven videos about th teen's field conservation experiences is promising. Teens sharing their experiences with other teens doing similar things in different parts of the country adds a sense of unity and being part of a bigger community. This concept is tangible, trackable and doable!
- It's a tie: storytelling and sharing of expertise and resources
- My sense is my organization will benefit most from the teen engagement component

3. If an Educators Workshop is held within the next 18 months, I would like it to:

- Celebrate success of a collaboration, work on going to greater scale
- Continue to build off of the work we made over the year. To revisit the plan and ensure it is still relevant.
- 1) Come to agreement on what the designation 'coastal' means 2) Clearly define a new set of parameters for how Network institutions engage with NOAA (ie: updated MOU's) 3) Adopt clearly defined membership criteria, expectations, benefits, etc. 4) Show tangible results in all 4 priority areas (Youth, Signature Event, Community Resiliency and Storytelling as evaluation). 5) NOT revisit the Strategic Plan as in going back to the beginning again. Done that.
- Continue the progress and push for another collective project.
- Use it to evaluate and refine our citizen science effort.
- Have PD opportunities and tools that can be immediately applied. Along with a working group opportunity to focus on the next effort/project/event.
- address the "story telling" or reporting that NOAA talked about.
- Continue the momentum we had on the second day. I realize that this is a process with a diverse group. I'd like to have more focus on the 1+1=3 concept. The group's goals must be more than the sum of the part's goals.
- Focus on how NOAA resources and/or strategies can support work at our individual sites (storytelling or otherwise)
- Have time to actually work through the details of an initiative and get solid plans in place, prior to departure from the meeting.
- Have progress to share, and work to develop more shared campaigns, and really figure out how to best build each others capacities
- Celebrate programs that our teams facilitate and which we are very proud of, identify challenges/barriers to growth within those programs, trouble-shoot those challenges, connect with other great programs aligned to our mission but facilitated by colleagues outside of our industry.
- report out on the collaborative ventures and perhaps figure out a way to interact effectively with the asset map?

4. I would like to add these additional thoughts:

- I feel very optimistic that we will move our work forward.
- I really appreciate the time and energy that went into planning, hosting and running an event like this. Very dedicated people. Speaking for myself, this CELC meeting was a very different experience for me than the last one. I felt it was hard to engage with the discussions this time. I felt there was too much repetition from the last meeting, and we didn't come up with anything new. The next 12-18 months will be telling.
- Thanks to all involved for organizing, hosting, supporting and facilitating. I am feeling better about the CELC and it's longevity.
- I greatly appreciate the notion of focusing on what we do best, working together internationally and regionally to leverage our resources, and down the road, working to find outside partners that align with our mission.
- This network's value is the ability to accomplish more as a group than we could as individual institutions. I still believe we struggle with how to do that. Our individual programs/agendas must either be more successful (greater impact or increased reach) as a result fo the network or we must be able to accomplish something as a group that we could not do as individual organizations. Can we pick a marine concern that none/few of us are addressing and tackle it together? Can we develop programs that only work as a group or with interconnectivity? For example, we don't need the network to develop programs centered around World's Ocean Day as we are already all doing that. Our reach remains the same, we just get to brag that we did it together. The youth program idea of making videos accomplishes the "together" goal in that NJ teens will have an audience to show their videos and will benefit from watching CA teen videos of similar content. Both sets of teens become part of a bigger group and that's not something any of us can do by ourselves. We need more concrete goals like that.
- BELUGAS! Thank you!
- I think the meeting was great to solidify everyone on the same page for moving forward.
- It's always great to meet and share ideas. We need to make this important and through that importance make this work.
- Please facilitate the asset mapping that we talked about. Mapping both our strengths and the gaps within our collective portfolio of work could help us to articulate needs to be met and strategies to meet them.