Motivation of Public Participation at SRS Citizens Advisory Board Meetings
Objective

• Interview public participants at Savannah River Site Citizens’ Advisory Board (CAB) meetings to:
  • learn their motivation in attending meetings
  • understand the impact they believe their attendance has on the SRS CAB, and
  • learn how their input is utilized by the Savannah River Site (SRS)

• In learning why community members attend meetings, the CAB can utilize that knowledge and encourage continued public participation
Public Participation

• Upward rise in public participation concerning environmental input by government agencies
• Motivated by communities who desire a more direct role in molding future decisions about their health and environment
• Participation builds trust and often yields decisions that take into account unique community needs
Benefits of Public Participation

• Public participation is not simply a nice or necessary thing to do; it actually results in better outcomes and better governance. When done in a meaningful way, public participation will result in two significant benefits:

  • Sponsor agencies will make better and more easily implementable decisions that reflect public interests and values and are better understood by the public

  • Communities develop long-term capacity to solve and manage challenging social issues, often overcoming longstanding differences and misunderstandings

Benefits of Public Participation

- Accountability
- Gauge of what is working and what is not working
- Good Public Participation:
  - Representativeness
  - Inclusivity
  - Process Fairness and Flexibility
  - Transparency
  - Independence and Fairness
How does Public Participation Result Better Decisions?

• Public participation contributes to better decisions because decision-makers have more complete information – in the form of additional facts, values, and perspectives obtained through public input, and incorporate best information and expertise of all stakeholders.

• Decisions more implementable and sustainable as decision considers needs and interests of all stakeholders, who better understand and are more invested in the outcomes.

• Decisions informed by public participation viewed as more legitimate and less subject to challenge. Decision-makers who understand stakeholder interests become better communicators, able to explain decisions in terms stakeholders understand and that relate to stakeholders’ values and concerns.

Public Participation - Challenges

• Public interest grows, deficit remains in how to engage public and utilize public input.
• Funds spent on public participation, but lack of evaluation of participation.
What is Public Participation?

- Rowe and Frewer (2004) – “…the practice of consulting and involving members of the public in the agenda-setting, decision-making, and policy-forming activities of organization or institutions responsible for policy development.”
- Option 1 – “passive recipients of information from the regulators or governing bodies concerned.”
- Option 2 – public’s input is sought out and utilized as direct input into the decision-making process.
Savannah River Site Citizens Advisory Board (CAB)

- DOE (Department of Energy) seeks advice and recommendations on environmental remediation, waste management and related issues
- Bi-Monthly Meetings
- Conduit between the public and the Department of Energy
- Understanding public motivation to attend meetings to continue to grow attendance and participation
Methodology

- 15 Questions (several questions with multiple parts) – open-ended and Likert-scale
- Process Evaluation
- Perceived Usefulness
- Reliability and Validity
SRS CAB Meeting Attendance

![Bar chart showing meeting attendance]

- 1-3 Meetings: 1
- 4-6 Meetings: 2
- 7-10 Meetings: 4
- Over 10 Meetings: 18
Age Demographic

- 18-30 Years Old: 0
- 31-45 Years Old: 4
- 46-60 Years Old: 5
- 60-70 Years Old: 11
- 71 and Over: 4

Legend: Age of Participant Responses
County and State of Residence

- Allendale County, SC, 1
- Aiken County, SC, 8
- No Response, 4
- Beaufort County, SC, 3
- Richmond County, SC, 3
- Lexington County, SC, 2
- Columbia County, GA, 2
- Richland County, SC, 1
- Franklin County, GA, 2

Legend:
- Allendale County, SC
- Aiken County, SC
- No Response
- Beaufort County, SC
- Richmond County, GA
- Richland County, SC
- Lexington County, SC
- Columbia County, GA
Preference of Receiving SRS Information

- SRS CAB Meetings: 13, 54%
- Blank Response: 5, 21%
- Social Media: 2, 9%
- SRS Website: 2, 8%
- Newspaper: 2, 8%
# Rating of Clean-Up Information at SRS and Rating of Savannah River Site Protecting the Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate SRS at cleaning-up legacy waste at the SRS</td>
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<td>4.42</td>
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Input Relationship Information

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<td>4.75</td>
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Explaining Decisions

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<td>How do you rate SRS at explaining decisions</td>
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<table>
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<th>How do you rate at SRS making information easy to understand at CAB meetings:</th>
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<th>How do you rate SRS at being responsive to questions at CAB meetings:</th>
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<td>How do you rate SRS at understanding your concerns during CAB meetings:</td>
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<td>How do you rate SRS at responding to your concerns during CAB meetings:</td>
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<td>How do you rate SRS at treating you courteously during CAB meetings:</td>
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Learning about Savannah River Site & SRS CAB

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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lived Near Site</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Newspaper</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family/Friends</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prior Site Employee</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fyler</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Receiving Information about the Work at the Savannah River Site

- SRS Mailing: 9
- Newspaper Articles: 15
- Radio or TV News: 3
- Facebook or Social Media (SRS): 5
- Facebook or Social Media (other): 9
- SRS Website: 1
- Public meetings or SRS: 7
- SRS CAB Meetings: 21
- Direct Conversation with...: 11
- SRS E-Mails: 12
- CAB E-Mails: 14
- Other: 3
Receiving Information about the work at Savannah River Site

- SRS CAB Meetings, 10, 59%
- SRS Website, 2, 12%
- Newspaper Articles, 2, 11%
- Longer, General Informational Meetings, Held Periodically, 1, 6%
- Short, Very Focused Meeting, Held Frequently, 1, 6%
- Other, 1, 6%

- Newspaper Articles
- SRS CAB Meetings
- Radio or TV News
- Knowledgeable Person in Your Community
- SRS Website
- Short, Very Focused Meeting, Held Frequently
- Longer, General Informational Meetings, Held Periodically
Rating SRS at Cleaning-Up Legacy Waste and Protecting the Environment
Rating of SRS in Reference to Health, Environment, Jobs & Property Values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you rate SRS at protecting my family’s health</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>How do you rate SRS at protecting the environment</td>
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<td>How do you rate SRS at protecting property values near SRS</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>23.5</td>
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<td>How do you rate SRS at providing jobs in the community</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>4.95</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.2328</td>
<td>1</td>
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Conclusion

- Challenges: Sampling, Cost and Voluntary Participation
- Snapshots
- Clean-Up Goals