

FOCUS GROUP SCRIPT
Stated Preference Study
June 17, 2010

I. SESSION INTRODUCTION AND GROUND RULES

A. Introductions, Purpose of Focus Group, and Ground Rules

1. Moderator is a principal investigator on the project (Robert Johnston or Elena Besedin).
2. Review of recruitment process - random selection among households (e.g., using RDD telephone solicitation or similar sampling mechanism); participants are eligible if they are 18 years of age or older; if they are not full-time students; if they do not have occupations related to the environment, including water treatment and sewage, electric or nuclear power companies; and if they have not participated in focus group in the last six months.
3. Introductions of all participants. Please tell us your first name and town of residence, tell us briefly about who lives in your household.
4. Purpose of focus groups is to pretest a survey instrument that asks for public opinions regarding policies that would affect fish and aquatic habitat. Target audience is general population. General topics covered include perception of ecological conditions in surface waters; perception of fish abundance; use of aquatic resources for recreation. Specific emphasis is given to fish losses in cooling water intakes and policies that would reduce these losses.

B. Focus Group Particulars

1. Ground Rules
 - a. Session is being recorded using audiotapes.
 - b. Reassurance that the discussion is strictly confidential, no names will be used in the reporting or included on audiotapes, and no one will contact you regarding anything you say or follow-up with you in any way.
 - c. Expect the session to last up to 90 minutes.
 - d. Want to hear from everyone. Important that everyone contribute; there are no right or wrong answers; simply asking for honest opinion. Everyone's opinion is

important.

- e. Important for people to speak one at a time; may need to interrupt periodically to make sure we can hear the responses; ask that you respect the right of others to be heard and voice opinions which may be different than yours; try not to let the group sway you in your opinion, just say what you think.
 - f. Moderator's job is to keep group on task and to make sure everyone's opinion is heard.
 - g. Participation is voluntary, and respondents are free to leave at any time. Monetary compensation (where provided) will be given at the end of the focus group. A signature is required to verify receipt of compensation.
2. Primary task - getting feedback on survey questionnaire
- a. Treat like survey received in the mail.
 - b. If you have questions please write them in the margin to ask later. Answer the survey to the best of your ability based on the information provided.
 - c. When finish, please wait quietly while others finish.
 - d. Write specific comments or questions in the margin.
 - e. Write your focus group participant number on the survey booklet.
3. Questions
- a. Any general questions or concerns before we begin?

II. GENERAL QUESTIONS REGARDING SURVEY

1. You have just finished taking the survey. The first thing that I would like to ask is your initial reactions—what did you think of the survey in general?
2. Were the survey and questions clear? (Why or why not?)
3. Was any part the survey particularly difficult? (Why or why not?)

4. Did you feel confident about your answers? (Why or why not?)
5. Were there any questions or issues that ran through your mind as you considered the survey?
6. Did you feel like you had enough information to give good answers to the survey? Would more information have been helpful? Was there any information that we could have provided that might have helped you answer the questions more easily?
7. Was the introductory material in the survey itself useful? Did you read it? Was there anything missing from this section that you would have liked to see?
8. Let's look at Question 2. How did you answer Question 2? Could you tell me why you chose to answer that way? Did the order in which issues are listed in Question 2 influence your answer? If "yes", how did it affect your answer?
9. Could you tell me about the pictures and graphics in the survey? Did you feel that they were useful or helpful?
10. Could you explain how you used the pictures and graphics as you read the survey, if at all?
11. Were there any pictures or graphics that had a particularly strong influence on the way you interpreted or answered the survey? (If yes, ask respondent to explain.)
12. Were there any particular pictures or graphics in the survey that you found particularly helpful?
13. Could you please turn to the cover of the survey? How did you interpret the picture on the cover? Could you explain what the picture meant or communicated to you, if anything?
14. Did this picture (the cover picture) influence the way you approached or answered the survey? (If yes, ask respondent to explain.)
15. Assume that you received a survey with the following cover image instead (show alternative cover page). Would that make any difference to you?
16. Let's look at page 2. Could you explain how you interpreted this picture? Did you find the diagram useful? Did this diagram influence your answers in any way?

III. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

A. Uncertainty

1. Based on information in the survey, do you think that scientists can predict with certainty what will happen to fish populations or the environment?
2. Did the lack of scientific certainty—not being able to predict perfectly what might happen—affect the way you thought about the issues described in the survey? If so, could you explain?
3. When you were answering survey questions, were you thinking about this uncertainty? How did it affect your answers, if at all?

B. Commercial Fish Sustainability Score

1. Could you tell me how you interpreted the Commercial Fish Sustainability Score that was described on page 8? What did this scale mean to you?
2. The survey indicated that current Commercial Fish Sustainability Score was 65%. Could you tell me what that meant to you?
3. What do you think causes the score to be at this level (that is, 65%)?

C. Condition of Aquatic Ecosystems Index

1. Could you tell me how you interpreted the Condition of Aquatic Ecosystems Score that was described on page 10? What did this score mean to you?
2. In simple terms, how would you describe the difference between an area with a high Ecological Condition Score and a low score? Would this make a difference to you?
3. The survey indicated that current ecological condition score was at 48%. Could you tell me what that meant to you?

D. Fish Population Score

1. Could you tell me how you interpreted the Fish Population Score that was described on page 8? What did this score mean to you?
2. The survey indicated a Fish Population score of 37%. Could you tell me what that meant to you?

E. Geographic location

1. Does location of cooling water intakes matter to you? Why or why not?
2. Does it matter if the effects of cooling water use on fish happen close to where you live? How close does it have to be before it makes a difference?
3. Do you think about effects on fish and aquatic life differently if they happen in your local area compared to effects in other areas of the country? Could you explain why or why not?
4. Does health of the fishery resources in other parts of the country (i.e., West coast) matter to you? Why or why not?

F. Comparing Ecological Scores

1. Could you explain to me how you understood the difference between the Fish Saved Score, the Commercial Fish Sustainability Score, and the Fish Population Score?
2. Did you have difficulty distinguishing among these three scores? Which was most important to you? Could you explain why?

IV. QUESTIONS REGARDING CHOICE SCENARIOS

1. Let's look at Question 4. How did you answer Question 4? Could you tell me why you chose to answer that way?
2. How did you decide which options to choose?
3. What did you see as the benefit of voting for Option A? What would be gained?
4. When you were answering this question, what types of effects did you think that each program would have?
5. When you were answering this question, were you thinking about any specific types of fish?
6. When you look at the different scores in question 4 relative to each other, were some easier to understand than others?
 - a. How did you interpret the score for [attribute name]?
 - b. Did you find the "Fish Saved" score clear? How did you interpret this attribute?

Could you explain?

- c. If we were to use “Fewer Fish Lost” instead of “Fish Saved”, how would you interpret the score? What attribute name “Fewer Fish Lost” or “Fish Saved” is easier to understand and why? Did the attribute name influence your response? If yes, please explain.
 - d. If you saw a score of 50 in [attribute name], would you think that it meant exactly the same thing as a score of 50 in [other attribute name]? Could you explain?
 - e. How did you interpret the [attribute name] score of "XX%" in the question?
7. As you were answering Question 4, how did you use information on [attribute Y], if at all? Did [attribute Y] affect your answer at all? (Ask how each of the attributes was considered and how it influenced answers.)
- a. If you did not use this information, why not? Did you understand the information? How could the information be presented to make it easier to understand?
8. Did this seem like a realistic choice to you? Did you think of this as if you were choosing between real policies?
9. In Question #4, the number of fish saved is larger in Option B (25% vs. 50%), but the effect on Fish Population does not change (40% in both). Could you explain to me how you interpreted this? What did it mean to you?
10. Did you have any questions going through your mind as you answered Question 4?
11. Did the money cost of the programs matter? How did you think about this cost when answering the survey?
12. Could you explain what the money cost attribute meant to you when you were answering these questions. How did you think about this amount?
13. When you answered the questions, did you think about what you would be giving up if you were to spend more money protecting fish?
14. Did you feel that the cost of the programs was realistic?
15. These are hypothetical questions—in that no money is at stake right now. In some cases, people are more willing to vote for programs in surveys than they would be in real life. What

do you think about this? Were you thinking about these like real programs that would cost you real money? If you knew that you really would have to pay the described amounts, would you have voted the same way?

V. DEBRIEFING QUESTIONS

1. If you voted for any of the program in Questions 4 to 6, could you explain the reason? Why are you willing to pay money for these programs?
2. Are you voting for the programs because you feel it is important to protect fish from cooling water intake structures or for other reasons (i.e., feeling good)?
3. Let's look at Question 8. How did you answer this question and why did you answer that way? How do you feel about the geographic area covered by the proposed programs? Does it matter to you whether you are contributing to a regional program to protect fish or to a national program? Why or why not?
4. Let's look at Question 10. How did you answer question 10? Could you explain this in more detail? Did the order in which issues are listed in Question 2 influence your answer? If "yes", how did it affect your answer?
5. When you were answering the questions 4, 5, and 6, did you think at all about the current condition of fish in your area? Did it affect your answer?
6. Does the current pollution level in the water bodies considered in this survey affect your response? If yes, how did it affect your response?
7. When answering the survey questions, did you think about any other environmental changes that might occur, or were you thinking only about fish?
8. Were you thinking of these questions as purely hypothetical questions and answers, or answers that might really affect government policies and costs to your household?
9. When answering the survey, did you consider that the results might actually be used by the government? Did that affect how you answered?
10. Do you feel that the survey will have an impact on policy, and are you voting the same way that you might in an actual referendum?

11. When you thought about the programs in the survey, were the details of the programs important—for example the specific type of resources effected?
12. To what extent did your answers reflect a desire to protect fish and the ecological functions that depend on those fish, versus a more general desire to do what you thought to be the right thing?

VI. OTHER GENERAL QUESTIONS ON SURVEY, PERCEPTIONS, AND TRADEOFFS

1. When you were thinking about the survey, did it matter to you why the fish were lost in the first place? Would it be different if the fish were lost due to natural causes instead?
2. The survey talked about saving “small fish and fish eggs”. How did you imagine that this would affect the populations of adult fish?
3. Could you please turn to page 5 in the survey, that discusses “how many fish are affected.” Could you explain what this information meant to you?
4. Please look at the first bullet on that page, starting with “Sometimes the number of young fish lost is relatively small...” Could you explain how you interpreted this statement? (ask the same question for the second bulleted statement on page 5 as well).
5. When you were answering the questions, were you thinking at all about how much money you already spend on environmental protection?
6. How important are the issues addressed in the survey, compared to other environmental issues that you care about?
7. On page 6 the survey states, “While these policies would reduce fish losses, they would also increase the costs of producing many goods and services—some of these costs would be passed on to consumers like you.” Could you tell me how you interpreted this sentence, and what it meant to you?
8. Moving on to question 11, did you answer ‘yes’ for any of these questions? If you answered yes to any part of question 11, do you think that you would engage in these activities any more of the proposed types of programs were enacted so that there were more fish in the water?

9. When you looked at the numbers in questions 4 through 6, did you imagine that scientists could predict these outcomes with 100% certainty? Did this affect your answers? If so, how?
10. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the survey or the way that you answered any of the questions?
11. Do you have any other questions you would like to ask about the survey?