



Key focus areas for

Growing Organizations

Episode 5:

Community Assessment

ABOUT RIVER NETWORK

River Network grows and strengthens a transformational national network of water, justice, and river advocates.

We envision a powerful and inclusive movement that ensures abundant clean water for all people and nature to thrive. We believe that joy and hope for our planet flows through our rivers.

Meet the network and search our Water Protectors Map on our website!
rivernetwork.org ←



IN PARTNERSHIP

This work is produced by River Network with collaborative support from the Hudson River Watershed Alliance.

The production of these resources has been funded in part by a grant from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund through the Hudson River Estuary Program of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation.



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Hudson River
Estuary Program

ORG GROWTH CHECKLIST

For established / growing groups



COMMUNICATIONS / MARKETING

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FINANCIAL & LEGAL INFRASTRUCTURE

When an organization starts receiving more funding and/or engaging more community members, there are additional financial and legal risks. Thinking through how to manage additional resources and risk is a statutory task for an organization's leadership team.

- *Does the organization carry insurance, or is it listed as additionally insured on another group's insurance policy?*
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LEADERSHIP: POLICIES & PLANNING

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EVALUATION SYSTEMS

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COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT

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TOPICS TODAY:

- Defining “community”
- Understanding your place in community
- Intentional engagement & reciprocity
- What we do with data once we have it



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DEFINE “COMMUNITY”



YOUR PLACE IN IT

GOOD WORK INSTITUTE

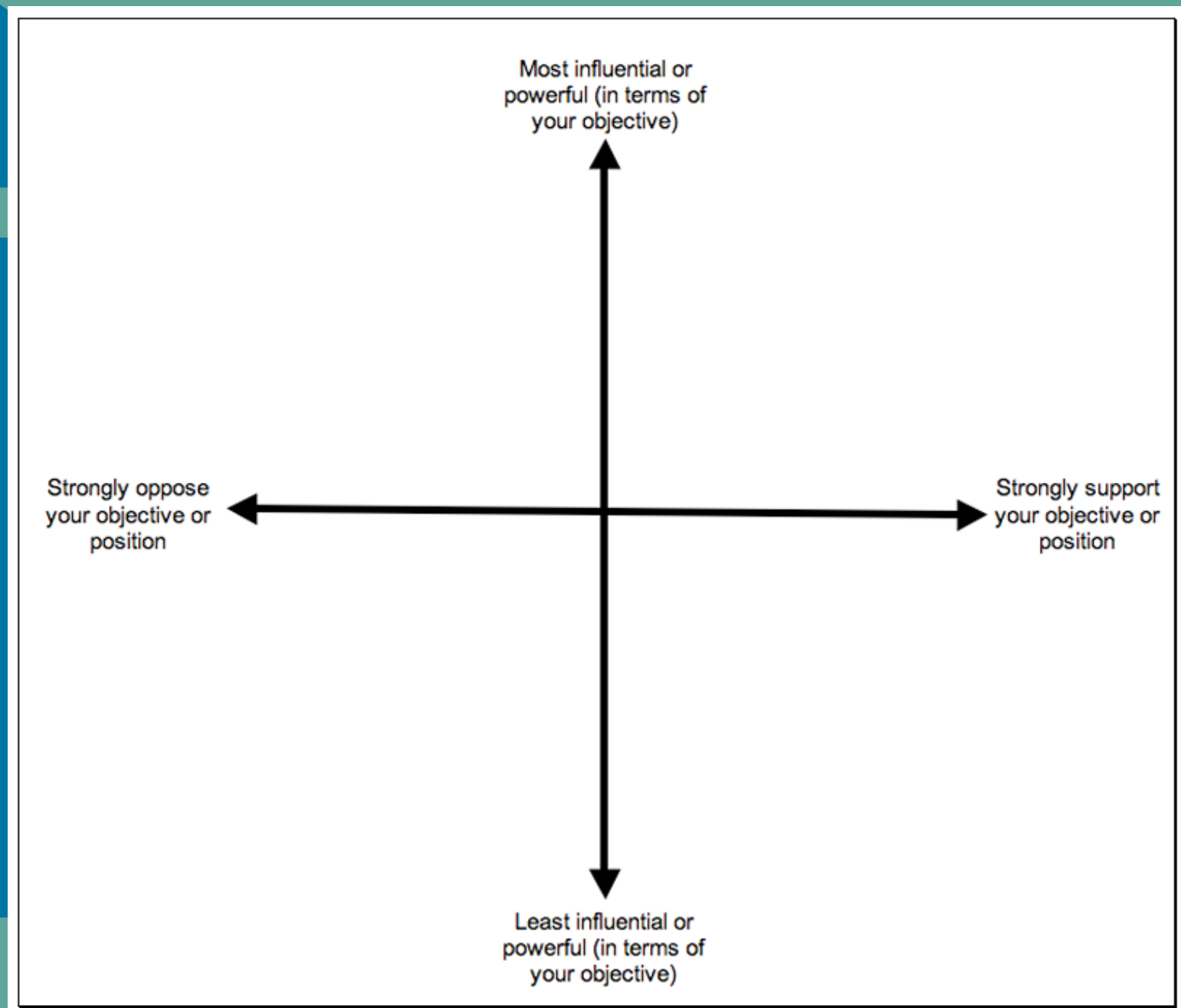
THE COMMONS
Social Change Library

Landscape Analysis

Other similar groups/orgs
Overlap with service area
Who is visible/successful
Common supporters
Public agencies
Etc.

Power Map

Partners
Allies
Influence
Opposition



RESEARCH FIRST!

Map · May 4, 2026

Yale Climate Opinion

By Jennifer Marlon, Emily Goddard, Peter Howe, Matto Milder Richards and Anthony Leiserowitz

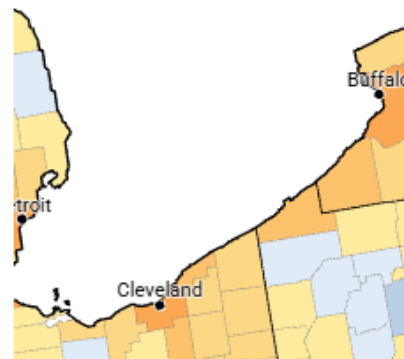
Filed under: Behaviors & Actions, Policy & Politics and Beliefs

Opinion Maps About Methodology

For more insights about American climate change

Estimated % of adults
warming (nat'l avg. 63%)

Select Question: Worried about global warmin
Click map or: New York
Select:
Absolute Value



UCSB
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
SANTA BARBARA

YALE PROGRAM ON
Climate Change
Communication

Utah State
University

This Watershed
watershed g
reflecting b
information
work of imp

Watershed g
of improving
Watersheds
is different f
complex, an
Nevertheless
watersheds.

Key findings
willing volun
engage com
implementa
barriers, and
effectiveness

Watershed g
variety of iss
consistently mentioned needing, pollution, development, climate change, and emerging
contaminants as major watershed issues they are tackling.

The State of the Netw

GROUPS IN THE NATIONAL NETWORK
WATER, JUSTICE, AND RIVER A

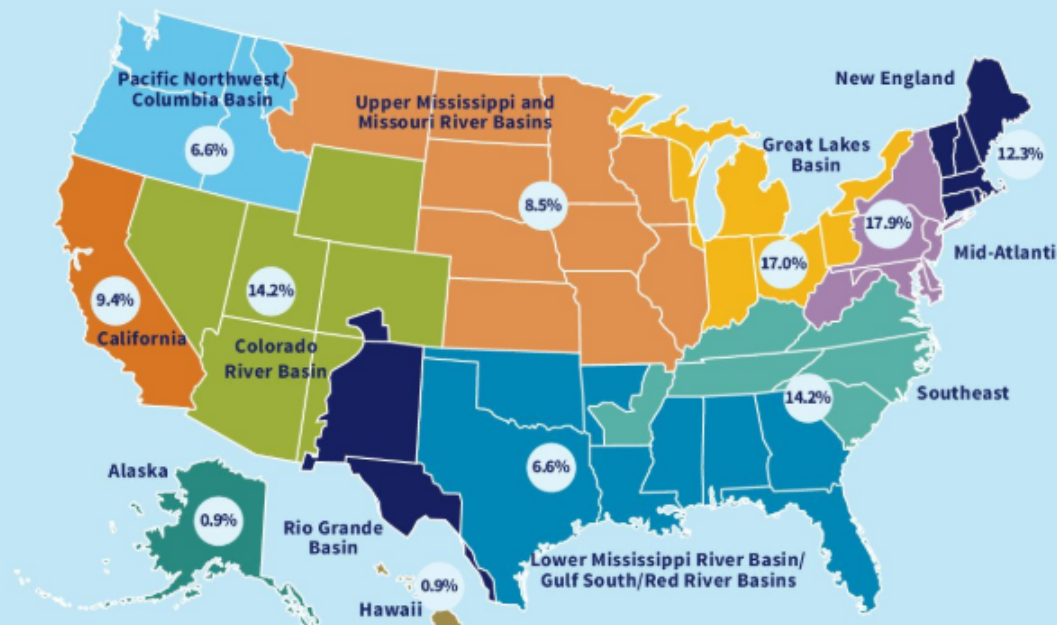
SPAN THE COUNTRY

752 organizations, including nonprofits, tribes,
government agencies, and business make up the
network, including 148 respondents to this survey

ARE SMALL BUT MIGHTY

45% of respondents
have 1-5 staff

14% are
vol



WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION

Voices of Gen Z Study

Gen Z Wants to Do Good: How Helping
Others Supports Meaning and Wellbeing



GALLUP

WALTON FAMILY
FOUNDATION

HARVARD
UNIVERSITY

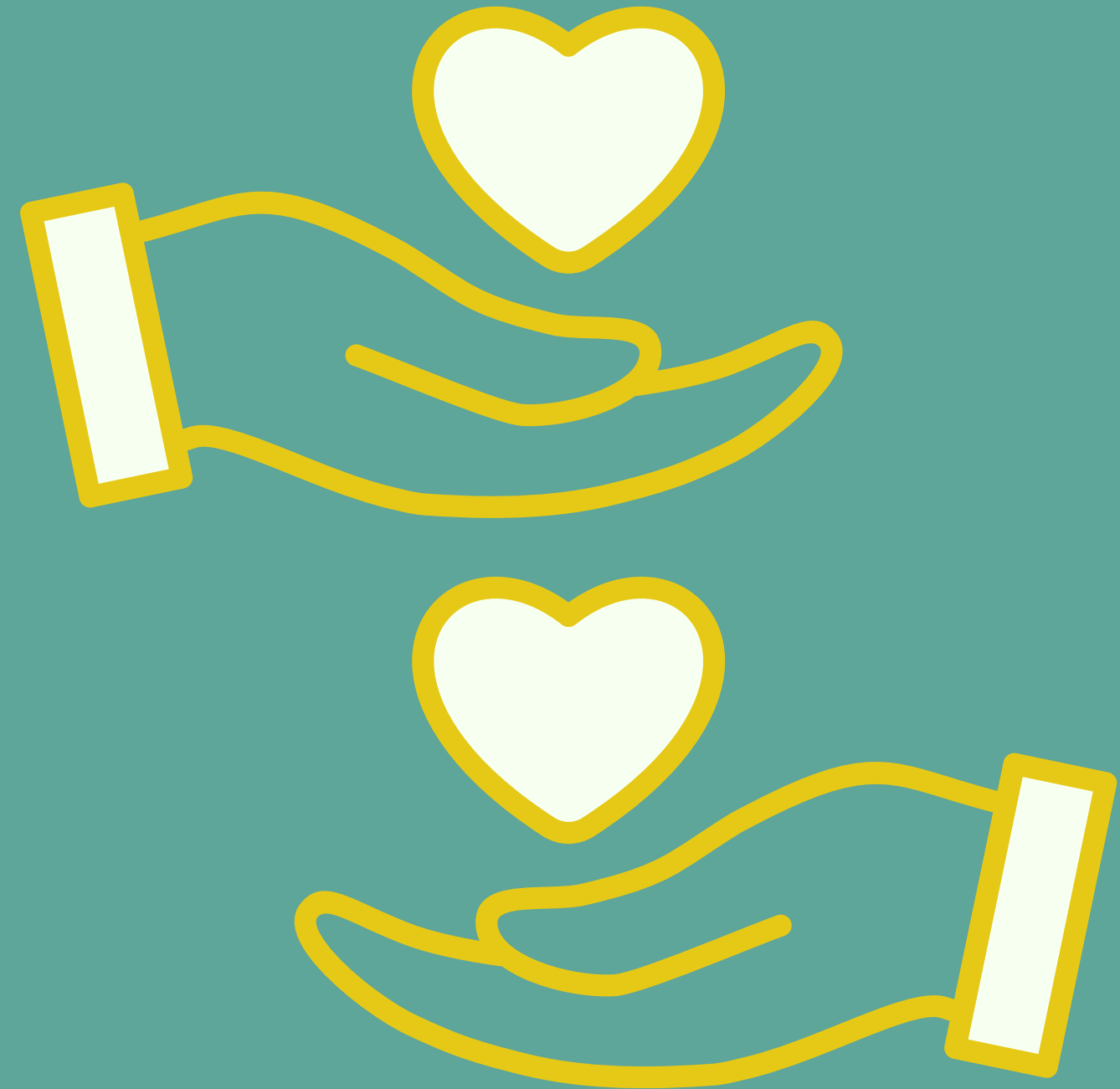
MAKING
CARING
COMMON
PROJECT

ASK SECOND!

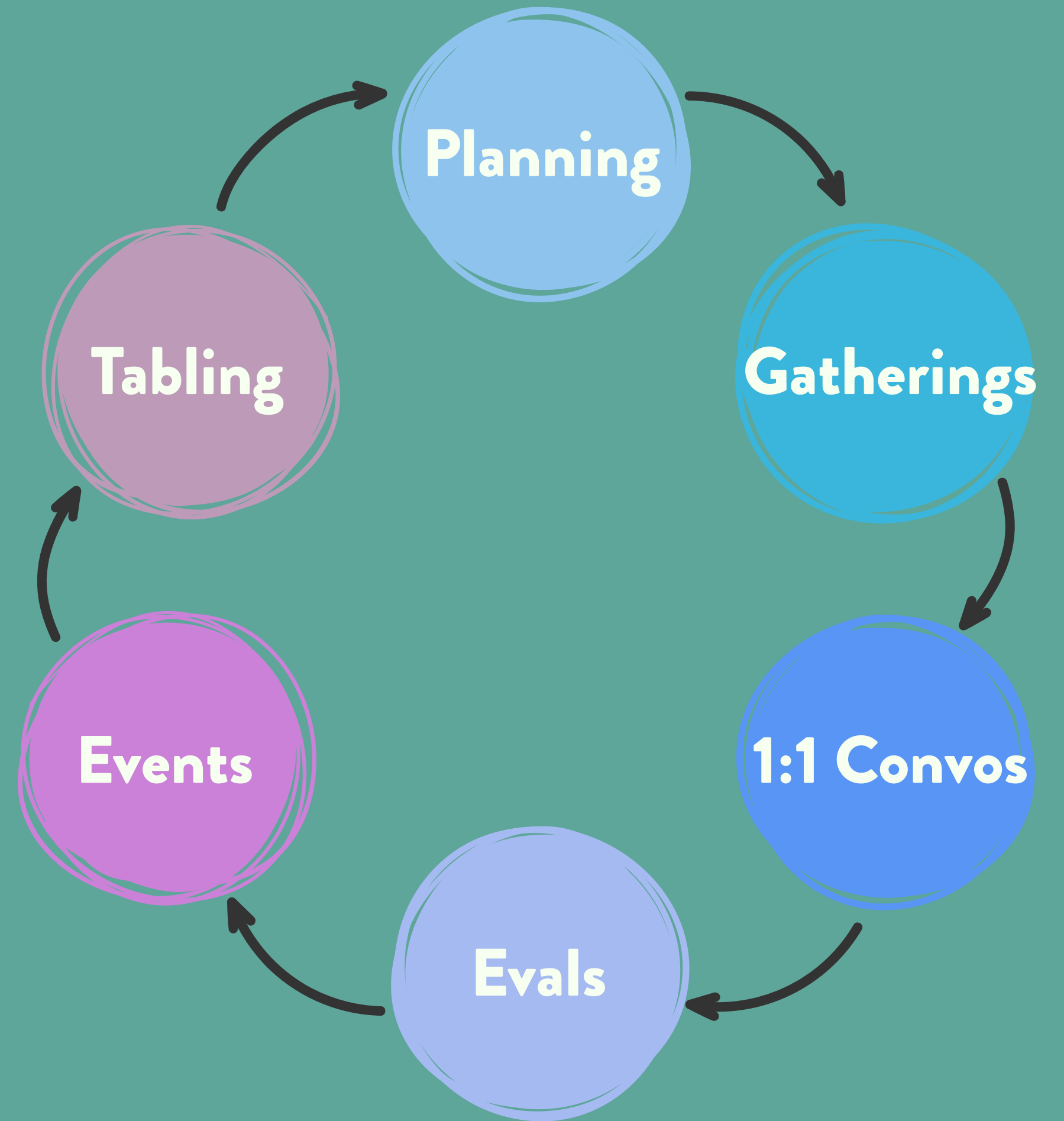
Reciprocity:

a social rule where individuals or groups return favors, kindness, or goods/gifts when they receive from others

Extractive → Reciprocal



ASK SECOND!



SURVEY IF YOU MUST

How well does the mission of Watershed Group ABC reflect your goals for our watershed? *

Very poorly 1 2 3 4 5 Very Well

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

VERSUS

How well does the mission of Watershed Group ABC reflect your goals for our watershed? *

- ☐ Very well: the mission captures all of my goals.
- ☐ Somewhat well: the mission captures most of my goals.
- ☐ Somewhat poorly: the mission is missing many of my goals.
- ☐ Very poorly: the mission doesn't include any of my goals.
- ☐ Other: _____

SURVEY IF YOU MUST

Which programs did you find most valuable this year? *

Your answer _____

VERSUS

Which programs did you find most valuable this year? *

- ☐ Stream monitoring training
- ☐ Rain garden workshop
- ☐ Rain garden maintenance workday
- ☐ Community clean up
- ☐ Community Leader panel discussion
- ☐ Other: _____

SURVEY IF YOU MUST

Consider Watershed Group ABC's programs: which of the following do you think we should pause, stop, expand, or keep the same based on the community's needs? *

	PAUSE FOR NOW	STOP ENTIRELY	KEEP THE SAME	EXPAND
Stream Monitoring	☐	☐	☐	☐
Student Mentorship	☐	☐	☐	☐
Curb Cut Rain Gardens	☐	☐	☐	☐
Annual Tree Giveaway	☐	☐	☐	☐
Kayak Clean Up	☐	☐	☐	☐
Greenway Planning	☐	☐	☐	☐

Ask about...

- Mission
- Programs
- Projects
- Reputation

SURVEY IF YOU MUST

Watershed Group ABC Community Assessment

Thank you for taking the time to respond to Watershed Group ABC's Community Assessment survey.

We are collecting this information to inform the goals and strategies we use to keep our watershed healthy, as your local water protection organization. It's important to us that our work reflects the needs and interests of residents who live, work, and play in the ABC Watershed. Information collected in this form will be reviewed by a subcommittee of our Board of Directors, and we will share our annual workplan publicly on our website at ABCWatershed.org.

If you have questions or comments about this survey, please reach out to info@ABCWatershed.org

AND
TEST
TEST
TEST!

PUTTING IT TOGETHER



Is our mission still relevant?

Are programs aligned with our mission and the community?

Do we have the right partners?

Are we inclusive of valuable voices?

What would advance our mission with more ease?

STRATEGIC PLANNING



Strategic Planning in 15 Minutes or Less

 by RiverNetwork

Playlist • 4 videos • 100 views

 Play all



Strategic Planning in 15 Minutes or Less: What & Why?

RiverNetwork

281 views • 4 years ago



Strategic Planning: Hiring Help... and Making the Most of It

RiverNetwork

83 views • 4 years ago



Strategic Planning in 15 Minutes or Less: For Networks & Collaboratives

RiverNetwork

46 views • 4 years ago



Strategic Planning in 15 Minutes or Less: Keeping It Relevant

RiverNetwork

110 views • 4 years ago

RECAP

- Defining community
- Research & power mapping
- Community feedback
- Putting it together



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THANK YOU!

Find more
information at
www.rivernetnetwork.org

*Explore membership, resources, and join
our newsletter & online community!*

