



PROJECT SUMMARY

Community and citizen science data can provide information that would otherwise not be available due to time, geographic, or resource constraints. For that reason, these data may be used to supplement environmental data collected by EPA, states, and tribes. Community and citizen science has applications in most environmental areas. Regulators are beginning to use community and citizen science data to inform environmental protection.

PROJECT LEADS

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RESOURCES

Community and citizen science session at the EE2020 virtual webinar in October 2020: [Improving the Management and Use of Community Science Data: What Can We Learn From State and Tribal Programs?](#)

[Tribal Science White Paper](#)

Community and Citizen Science Initiative

Improving how community and citizen science data is collected and used

Challenge

Community and citizen science data can provide useful information to both the public and environmental regulators alike; however, there do exist challenges with regard to consistent data application, processes, methods, and data quality. Overcoming such challenges will take the collective power of EPA, states, and tribes collaborating with community and citizen science groups.

Benefits

- **Improve data infrastructure and tools** – Increase capacity to collect, share, analyze, and integrate community and citizen science data
- **Elevate data standards and collection methods** – Improve upon existing standards in place for citizen scientists to collect data to move toward streamlined data and processes, and
- **Promote data accessibility and transparency** – Collaborate with partners to share data effectively and efficiently.

Accomplishments

- **Held a data management workshop in November 2021** – a facilitated discussion with community and citizen science data experts, users, and regulatory staff to define a common roadmap to improve data management approaches.
- **Developed 12 technical case studies and a set of discussion papers** that seeded the agenda and discussion at the November 2021 data management workshop (coming soon to the EPA community and citizen science website).
- **Continued coordination to finalize the EPA vision and principles for community and citizen science and the assessment/action plan for data management** – two recommendations from the EPA Inspector General's 2018 audit. The assessment focuses on data management requirements for EPA use of community and citizen science data, and an implementation plan will identify projects and activities to improve sharing and use of data, data formats, standards, and data testing/validation.
- **In coordination with EELC tribal members, developed a [Tribal Science White Paper](#)** detailing tribal case studies to showcase and better understand how tribes use community and citizen science in environmental protection and management. [The white paper](#) shares best practices for tribal community and citizen science and identifies ways that EPA, states, and other organizations can improve support for future tribal community and citizen science activities.
- **Compiled 15 case studies and best practices** that describe how community and citizen science is used as a tool in both regulatory and non-regulatory environmental programs by states, tribes, and local governments.
- **Conducted extensive outreach at various conferences, including:**
 - Community and citizen science session at the EE2020 virtual webinar in October 2020: [Improving the Management and Use of Community Science Data: What Can We Learn from State and Tribal Programs?](#)
 - Update on ongoing community and citizen science activities at the ECOS Fall 2020 Meeting

Upcoming Milestones

- Develop the Roadmap and Theory of Change – workshop participants and other key stakeholders reviewed the Roadmap and Theory of Change developed as a workshop product.
- EPA Strategic Plan Outline – EPA is working on drafting an outline for an internal Community and Citizen Science Data Management Strategic Plan.