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Sierra Watershed and Land-use Enterprise (SWALE) Inc. would like to share two tools:

Tool #1: Use of stories in facilitation

Tool #2: Action Planning Worksheet

Tool #1: Use of stories in facilitation.

Here at SWALE we use stories as a facilitation tool in our work with communities to help them remember their connection to key values and to help them relate to the surrounding ecological system. As an ecologist it is important to me that forest managers and their stakeholders understand a key ecological principle regarding entropy, namely that change is a constant. Understanding and adapting to our changing ecological systems and our scientific understanding of those systems is important for wise decision-making. The following story illustrates the importance of understanding scientific reality and how a community can adjust to accommodate that reality.

It's not what's happening...it's how you respond

Story of Monkey Golf as told by Tara Brach at:
<http://blog.tarabrach.com/2011/08/its-not-whats-happening-its-how-we.html>

One of my favorite stories took place a number of decades ago when the English had colonized India and they wanted to set up a golf course in Calcutta. Besides the fact that the English shouldn't have been there in the first place, the golf course was not a particularly good idea. The biggest challenge was that the area was populated with monkeys.



The monkeys apparently were interested in golf too, and their way of joining the game was to go onto the course and take the balls that the golfers were hitting and toss them around in all directions. Of course the golfers didn't like this at all, so they tried to control the monkeys. First they built high fences around the fairway; they went to a lot of trouble to do this. Now, monkeys climb...so, they would climb over the fences and onto the course . . . that solution just didn't work at all. The next thing they tried was to lure them away from the course. I don't know how they tried to lure them—maybe waving bananas or something—but for every monkey that would go for the bananas, all their relatives would come into the golf course to join the fun. In desperation, the golfers started trapping them and relocating them, but that didn't work, either. The monkeys just had too many relatives who liked to play with golf balls! Finally, they established a novel rule for this particular golf course: *the golfers in Calcutta had to play the ball wherever the monkey dropped it.*

Those golfers were onto something! As you can imagine, playing this unique way could be maddening. A beautiful drive down the center of the fairway might be picked up by a monkey and then dropped in the rough. Or the opposite could happen. A hook



or slice that had produced a miserable lie might be flung onto the fairway. It did not take long before the golfers realized that golf on this particular course was very similar to our experience of life. There are good breaks, and there are bad breaks. We cannot entirely control the outcome of the game.

We all want life to be a certain way. We want the conditions to be just so, and life doesn't always cooperate. Maybe it

does for awhile, which makes us want to hold on tight to how things are, but then things change. So sometimes it's like the monkeys are dropping the balls where we don't want them, and what can we do?

At SWALE we use this story as part of our strategic planning process, where we invite stakeholders to understand the existing conditions of the natural resources and the community's socio-economic situation. To understand our current reality we say: *"Okay. This is where the monkeys dropped the ball. We will play it from here, as well as we are able."*

So how do we do that? Our facilitation techniques include time for quiet reflection among stakeholders. Stakeholders are invited to think about the following: How did Calcutta's golfing community improve their understanding of their local reality and how did their community adjust to accommodate that reality? We consider the unfortunate places the monkeys have dropped a ball in our local situation and ask: What would it mean to "play the ball" from here?

Life has thrown us a few curve balls in the form of barriers, problems, and constraints. What matters is how we respond. How we respond is what determines our outcomes and the future success of our planning effort. So, how might you respond, when you find the monkeys have dropped the ball in a difficult spot?

Tool #2: Action Planning Worksheet

Goal/Strategy:		Action & Accomplishment Title (what):		
Intent (why):		Start date: End date:		
Implementation Steps (how)		Who is responsible?	When	Where/Resources Needed
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.				
Coordinator:	Collaborators or partners:	Evaluation Measures	Estimated Budget Needed	Next Meeting Date
Team Members:				Other Timeline:

This action planning worksheet is based on the ToP methods used by the Institute of Cultural Affairs. This worksheet was modified and adapted by SWALE Inc., Kateri Harrison.

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- National: <http://www.ica-usa.org/>
- Sacramento: Contact Heidi Kolbe at <http://www.topspf.org/about-us/>
- Find other licensed ToP trainers: www.ica-usa.org/
- Technology of Participation (ToP) methods were developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs.

SWALE Inc. uses ToP methods, World Café, and Appreciative Inquiry to help government agencies engage stakeholders so they can understand the science and be productively involved in the decision-making process.