

**REPORT ON THE
2015 GRASSROOTS GRANTEE CONVENING**

**OF THE
NORTHERN CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL GRASSROOTS FUND
AND CALIFORNIA WILDLANDS GRASSROOTS FUND**

Held on October 15, 2015
At the UC Davis Alumni Center
Davis, CA

**Telling Powerful Stories,
Engaging Your Community, and Measuring Success**

The 10th annual convening of grantees of the California Wildlands Grassroots Fund and the Northern California Environmental Grassroots Fund was held at the UC Davis Alumni Center in Davis. Altogether 94 people attended the convening, including 80 grantees from 57 different grassroots environmental organizations. Nineteen Cal Wildlands grantees attended, representing 16 different groups (as compared to 11 groups in 2014).

This year we made a concerted effort to increase attendance, as our attendance had waned the last couple of years -- total attendance was 71 in 2013, and 73 in 2014. Our efforts to increase attendance included mailing a hard-copy invitation by US Postal Service, allowing people to register either online or with a paper registration form (none were received), and calling grantees and personally inviting them to attend. We asked people to tell us all the ways they heard about the convening, and 48 people said they heard about the convening from a Rose staff member, 48 said that they learned about it from an email, 40 said that someone in their organization told them about it, and 14 said they received a written invitation. This year, we also stressed the fact that the convening is a free event – making sure that we clearly stated that on all our communications about the event.

The training was led by nonprofit educator and professor John Kenyon and was devoted to exploring the following questions:

- How do you improve your storytelling in order to attract people who are interested in your mission?
- Once you attract folks, how do you use storytelling and engagement strategies to keep them engaged?
- How can you improve your storytelling in order to engage supporters, raise money, inspire action, and create public policy?

Jointly, we outlined the following **Learning Outcomes** for the gathering:

- Spark the imagination of participants about what is possible through stories and examples.
- Participants are able to incorporate storytelling and engagement concepts into actionable plans and create the beginnings of a plan.
- Participants increase their knowledge of storytelling-based strategies to engage constituents.
- Participants increase their understanding of how to use data to steer engagement strategies.
- Participants are rejuvenated and ready to institute what they've learned.

Evaluations

For the fifth year, we collected convening evaluations online. In total, we receive 42 evaluations or approximately 53% of the grantees in attendance. On a percentage basis, this is an improvement on the overall response rates we received in 2013 and 2014 (45%).

Of those who completed an evaluation, a significant percentage (88%) said the convening was “Extremely” or “Very” useful. (78% in 2014)

Additionally:

93% said it was a “great” or “good” **opportunity to learn** (84% in 2014);

93% said it was a “great” or “good” **chance to be inspired and energized** (88% in 2014);

84% said it was a “great” or “good” **opportunity to network** (84% in 2014);

79% said it was a “great” or “good” **opportunity to reflect** (90% in 2014).

Quotes from the evaluations:

The storytelling presenter was excellent. I've been to other workshops and he was really specific, practical, showed how to make improvements, and really understood small under-resourced organizations.

John is a wonderful facilitator. He knows how to take audience comment/questions and draw out bigger picture themes that the entire audience can absorb.

I met with allies I don't often see and checked in about their work as well as updated them about mine. I met new allies and shared best practices with them. It was very well facilitated throughout.

It put our outreach efforts into a new perspective, and has really encouraged us to increase the personalization and accessibility of our website and social media outreach.

The convening was inspirational. ... I left with fresh ideas and tools to improve the impact and reach of my nonprofit.

It put our outreach efforts into a new perspective, and has really encouraged us to increase the personalization and accessibility of our website and social media outreach.

I learned a lot about shaping stories in a way that captivates audiences.

(T)he idea of folding story into all aspects of communication is a key takeaway. Thank you

Information presented was pertinent -- and just the right amount. Presenters and facilitators were great, and the day was well-organized!

Engaging, well-thought-out, very useful!

Seriously fantastic.

What People Liked Most

- *The presenter did a fantastic job with his messaging: clear, concise, applicable, inspiring. John was a great presenter with expert knowledge that can translate to real change for our org. (multiple comments about John Kenyon)*
- *Opportunity to up my skills sets each year (sometime on topics I didn't know I needed to learn!)*
- *Networking. Meeting so many wonderful people and learning about their projects. (several responses)*
- *The concept of storytelling for creating a positive image for your organization.*
- *The morning session: it provided a very clear plan for telling stories and evaluating success. (several responses)*
- *It was a good to meet other people dealing with similar issues and challenges and to feel like we're not working in a vacuum.*
- *It's one of the few times of year that I'm in a roomful of people that I have so much in common with.*
- *The clear presentations in the morning and good use of examples.*
- *People & interactions, formal and informal. Better social diversity than in the past! Learned a lot!*
- *Working on objectives with others in our organization after getting solid ideas and direction. It's wonderful to allocate a good bit of the time to working on our specific plans rather than theoreticals.*
- *Delicious food by Magpie Café.*
- *The atmosphere was friendly and positive, and I felt privileged to be there.*

What People Liked Least

- *Afternoon breakout sessions.* (Some didn't feel the small group facilitators were of equal effectiveness. Others wished there had been a few clear discussion topics rather than trying to answer everyone's questions.)
- *Too many small group meetings with peers.*
- *Some of the most important parts felt rushed.* (We think this refers to the morning PowerPoint Presentation and discussion led by John Kenyon.)
- *Would have liked a more focus on story craft rather than dissemination methods*
- *Difficulty finding meeting room once arrived at UC Davis campus*
- *Meeting location: Davis is too far away. Davis is a bit hard to get to with limited hotel choice for us out of towners*

Changes Grantees Plan to Take As a Result of Attending the Convening

We asked grantees, "What is one thing you hope to accomplish, change or do as a result of attending this convening?" Many said they were going to prepare better stories and incorporate more storytelling into their organization's communications and fundraising. Others said they were going to update their organizational website and social media channels with more personal stories.

Here are some highlights:

- *Improve the reach and effectiveness of my nonprofit by engaging our community through stories and providing opportunities to take action (and donate!)*
- *Set a deadline and work towards building and implementing a communications/outreach strategy.*
- *Create a marketing communication plan and calendar with more storytelling and more regular scheduling. Then creating a plan to capture and measure the results of the plans, and learn from the experience.*
- *We planned in detail our fall fundraising efforts and how to measure their success.*
- *Regularly measure the success of our communications work (use analytics on website, emails and social media) and develop a strategy based on those measurements.*
- *To get the staff more involved!*

Several groups shared their stories with us after the convening. The River Otter Ecology Project learned about the importance of making personal connections at the convening, which inspired them to add a webpage of personal stories about why people support the River Otter Ecology Project, even asking Rose staff member Karla James to submit a photo and story. (<http://www.riverotterecology.org/donate-and-shop.html>)

Re-volv also wrote a blog post about the convening entitled "Learning to better tell our story with the Rose Foundation." (<http://re-volv.org/content/learning-better-tell-our-story-rose-foundation>)

Comments on Specific Sessions

Morning Sessions: Telling Powerful Stories, Improving Storytelling and Engaging Your Community, Improving Engagement and Measuring Success

The training began with a presentation about storytelling, pulling examples from grantee organizations represented in the room to highlight best practices and gaps. John Kenyon discussed the impact of storytelling, as contrasted to data points or facts, in capturing the attention of readers and motivating people to act. He also discussed how to use data to help adjust storytelling and engagement by providing specific examples and recommendations from existing grantee websites.

Over 95% rated the **content of the presentation** as ‘great’ or ‘good’

93% rated the **quality of the presentation** as ‘great’ or ‘good’

95% rated the **relevance of the topic to their organization** as ‘great’ or ‘good’

The following input was received:

- *I so appreciated that the presenter was practical, had really specific suggestions for improvements, and understood small organizations and our constraints.*
- *John Kenyon was a great choice for presenter. It was especially helpful that he showed actual pages from websites and commented on them.*
- *Lots of good info in a short time.*

A couple of people noted the size of the text on the presentation and both text and images on the printed handouts were too small to read. Another commented that the acoustics of the room was challenging with a spotty microphone.

Afternoon Break Out Groups: first by burning question then by issue area

The afternoon offered participants an opportunity to explore more deeply topics of particular interest with their peers in a facilitated, small group discussion. The first half of the afternoon participants were asked to select a room where they could explore burning issues, including how to identify and effectively target key audiences, how to improve messaging and storytelling, and ways to increase online engagement. Participants self-selected the group they joined.

Then, following a brief break, participants were asked to break up based on their self-identified issues areas: 1) Agriculture, Gardens, Food Security, and Environmental Education; 2) Habitat Wilderness Preservation, Sustainable Forestry, Water Resources, and Watershed Protection; 3) Land Management, Urban Sprawl, Open Space, Sustainable Energy, Lifestyles, Climate Change, and Transit; and 4) Toxics, Health, and Environmental Justice. The intention was to allow participants to generate ideas for stories and engagement and create action plans with other members of their team.

John Kenyon introduced three colleagues who assisted with small group facilitation for the afternoon. Overall, 76% of participants rated the **afternoon gatherings** as ‘great’ or ‘good’. The comments from the evaluations indicated that these facilitated conversations with peers were helpful to some, but not others.

The following input was provided:

- *The exercise around helping identify the target audiences and the circles of influencers and which stories would resonate and influence which audiences was helpful.*
- *This part of the convening felt rushed and I think we would've benefited from either taking out one of the exercises and slowing things down. That said, I appreciated the time to check-in with my colleague and start to debrief about what we'd learned and how we can start to apply it to our work.*
- *Hearing other groups' issues and planning process was helpful to my process of focusing in on and forming a plan to address my own organization's needs. Sharing ideas and stories with my peers: what an amazing group of people!*
- *The group work was helpful insofar as it forced me to articulate ideas and info to complete strangers, However, I would've liked more examples of good and effective communication presented by professionals.*
- *I really appreciated getting the time to fill out my Action Plan and talk it through with others. (as contrasted with this comment: *The second one to work on the action plans was pretty useless.*)*

Opinions about the small group facilitators were mixed:

- *I did not think the facilitator was very good. Her comments were simplistic, she seemed ill at ease and did not make a good use of time. She did not seem very organized.*
- *Facilitators did a good job making the topic relevant to everyone, even when the discussion was more specific to a particular organization.*
- *For some reason, the facilitator was more interested in following her lesson-plan than engaging in the topics brought up by the participants. While her ideas were ok, they were of course abstract.*

Topics for Next Convening

Survey respondents suggested a myriad of possible topics for next year's convening. The ones receiving multiple comments from grantees including (6 responses) *messaging and communications* (including technology tools, specific, detailed examples of how things work, story-based advocacy); (5 responses) *fundraising* (establishing sustainable funding, individual donors, crowdsourcing, events, other ideas for generating revenue); (5 responses) *nonprofit organizational structure* (leadership development, boards, volunteers); (4 responses) *building organizational resiliency* (recruiting and keeping volunteers in the age of the Internet; structures for flexibility, transitioning priorities); (4 responses) *community/neighborhood organizing*

(getting people involved and excited); and (3 responses) promoting cooperation rather than competition among nonprofits (finding ways to work together instead of competing).

Here are some additional suggestions for future convenings:

- *Dealing with polarizing issues in your community (e.g. forestry practices, climate change adaptation) and strategies for overcoming powerful opposing interests (2)*
- *More attention to African-American culture and problems in California, especially with resources*
- *Diversity training*

Locations for Future Convenings

The majority of people didn't express a strong opinion about the meeting location, with nearly half of the respondents (9) citing Davis as convenient while others expressed a wish to meet closer to the Bay Area. Other locations mentioned included Sacramento, Monterey, Modesto, Oakland, Marin County and Lake County. Two people suggested a college campus as a great meeting spot.

Suggestions for Future Convenings

Overall, the majority of survey respondents enjoyed the format for this year's convening, with some sharing ideas for how to tweak the format to make it even better. These suggestions include: more time with the main presenter (John Kenyon) and less time spent in breakout groups and provide more time for networking during the day (around lunch) followed by more learning in the afternoon. Of course others expressed a desire for more time for the small group discussions. One respondent suggested creating space for people of color groups to meet and discuss their issues.

Other suggestions included:

- *I think two days with an overnight stay would allow more time for relationship building, probably that is more expensive. But one full day and one half would be perfect.*
- *Role playing. More feed back. More professional one-on-one guidance*
- *A more creative exercise early on to help people get out of the box, loosened up, and alert.*
- *I liked leaving the day with an "action plan."*

Travel Stipends

To make the conference affordable for those traveling from far away, we offered travel and hotel stipends for those traveling from afar. We provided 49 stipend checks, including 13 hotel stipends. Grantee travel and hotel stipends totaled \$5,710. This total was double the stipends provided for last year's convening.

Accessibility

We had only one monolingual Spanish-speaker participating who required interpretation services. She arranged for an interpreter and we provided a \$600 stipend for that individual. We did not have a hearing impaired participant this year.

UC Davis Alumni Center

The venue worked well this year, with a number of respondents suggesting we return to UC Davis for future convenings. When we did break up into smaller groups, there were opportunities to use several breakout rooms plus enjoy lunch outdoors and in the lounge area.

Generally speaking, grantees liked meeting at UC Davis Alumni Center (88% rated it as “great” or “good”), possibly because those who felt it was too far to travel ultimately did not attend. There were a couple of comments in the survey about the distance required for travel and limited local hotel options. As a matter of practice, we tend to alternate the convening location between the Bay Area and Sacramento Valley every other year.

People also commented that it was hard to find the Alumni Center after parking. While there were numerous signs directing drivers to the parking lot, once parked, it was difficult to find the Alumni Center and hard to figure out how and where to pay for parking.

There was a problem with sound, as the lapel microphone didn’t consistently work in the morning, and some people expressed difficulty hearing over the lively conversations that were happening in the larger breakout room.

The meeting location and venue both received high marks from the survey respondents.

Logistics

All but one of the 42 survey respondents rated the registration process as great or good.

We worked with Magpie Café catering this year and, the food was thoroughly enjoyed with the majority of respondents (95%) rating the food as “great” or “good.” We did hear from one participant who encouraged Rose Foundation to consider providing only vegan or vegetarian options in response to the detrimental impact of animal agriculture on the environment and public health. We were able to celebrate the end of the convening with a reception at the Alumni Center.

Zero Waste

The conference was very close to being zero-waste, as all the food was served with compostable plates, cups, flatware and napkins and the venue had compost receptacles. Again this year, we decided to use compostable instead of reusable plates, cups and silverware in order to keep our food cost lower. Convening participants and Rose Foundation staff were able to take most of the leftover food and reuse for meetings or events the following day.

Carbon Footprint

To offset the carbon footprint of the event, we made a donation to Solar Richmond, which provides job training and solar installations to low-income residents of Richmond, and is a former grantee of the Grassroots Fund.

Overall, the survey respondents expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity to convene and learn about storytelling. *“Thank you so much! I felt very valued by the Rose Foundation, by peers, and by presenters.”* Another echoed the sentiment of many by expressing *“Thanks for a consistently helpful event!”* and *“Rose staff are a terrific, heartfelt and soulful group.”*

FULL LIST OF GRANTEES IN ATTENDANCE

350 Sacramento	Foothill Conservancy
All One Ocean	Foothills Water Network
Black Organizing Project*	Forest Unlimited
California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative	Fort Ord Environmental Justice Network
Campesinas Unidas del Valle de San Joaquin	Friends of Five Creeks
Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation	Friends of Garrity Creek
Center on Race, Poverty and the Environment	Friends of Knowland Park
Central California Environmental Justice Network	Friends of the Napa River
Central Sierra Environmental Resource Center	Green Schools Initiative
City Slicker Farms	Greywater Action
Clover Valley Foundation	KPFZ Radio
Community Action Project	Mount Shasta Bioregional Ecology Center
Community Water Center	MyValleySprings.com
Condor Trail Association	North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council
Conservation Action Fund for Education	Noyo Food Forest
Daily Acts	Parents for a Safer Environment
Ebbetts Pass Forest Watch	Placer Group, Sierra Club
Environmental Center of San Luis Obispo (ECOSLO)	Protect American River Canyons
Environmental Justice Coalition for Water	RE-volv
Eureka Bike Kitchen	Redwood Community Action Agency*
Farms to Grow, Inc.	Reimagine! Movements Making Media, Race, Poverty & the Environment
	River Otter Ecology Project
	Sacramento Food Policy Council
	Salmonid Restoration Federation

Santa Clarita Organization for Planning
and the Environment (SCOPE)

Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway
Campaign

Sebastopol Water Information Group

Sierra National Monument Project

Sonoma County Conservation Council

SPAWNERS

Tolowa Dunes Stewards

Valley Improvement Projects/California

Environmental Justice Coalition

Washoe Meadows Community

The Watershed Project*

Wild Equity Institute

WildPlaces

2015 GRASSROOTS CONVENING
SURVEY RESPONSES
FULL EVALUATION RESULTS

Q1 Please rank the convening as a whole. How useful was the convening to you?

Extremely	28.57% 12
Very	59.52% 25
Moderately	11.90% 5
Somewhat	0.00% 0
Not Useful	0.00% 0

Responses:

- Very important issues discussed for our work. We need to be able to tell our story better.
- We did not have a chance to tell our story
- Mostly for the opportunity to connect with others working towards similar goals. The presentation was also useful.
- The storytelling presenter was excellent. I've been to other workshops and he was really specific, practical, showed how to make improvements, and really understood small under-resourced organizations.
- This is all new to me and I was eager to learn from all the other grantees
- The presentations by John Kenyon were really interesting and useful. The breakout groups were a good opportunity to connect with other people working on grassroots environmental issues.
- I found that I was having very helpful ideas throughout the day
- I met with allies I don't often see and checked in about their work as well as updated them about mine. I met new allies and shared best practices with them. It was very well facilitated throughout.
- John is a wonderful facilitator. He knows how to take audience comment / questions and draw out bigger picture themes that the entire audience can absorb.
- Practical advice on how to improve our website and emails
- It put our outreach efforts into a new perspective, and has really encouraged us to increase the personalization and accessibility of our website and social media outreach.

- I realized that our group was probably not employing the best communication tools for our social media, fundraising and outreach efforts. The networking with other groups is also especially inspiring and encouraging.
- All the information presented was very relevant and helpful. Overall, I found the convening very helpful and I'm glad I went.
- I learned a lot about shaping stories in a way that captivates audiences.
- Too many small group meetings with peers.
- I picked up some very worthwhile tips and suggestions that our nonprofit will try. I'm very grateful for those. When I drove in, it was most gratifying to see a directional sign for the Rose Fdtn. However, after the one directional to the parking lot, there were no others. It took a bit of effort to find the conference room. The room was very nice, but the acoustics were not good--background noise was elevated. During the breakouts (possibly a hearing issue on my part), I couldn't converse with others. It seemed we all had to shout. The breakouts were too tedious for me.
- We feel our organization is on the right track but still in need for new interest and ideas to keep building. I think this Convening provided that!
- It has opened up a whole new and fun way to tell our story. It will be exciting to see how it changes our success rate.
- Information presented was pertinent -- and just the right amount. Presenters and facilitators were great, and the day was well-organized.
- The convening was inspirational. FONR needs to rally our members and make new connections. I left with fresh ideas and tools to improve the impact and reach of my nonprofit.
- The topic was very helpful, since my nonprofit doesn't have an obvious, clear story to tell. I went to the morning subgroup on audiences, which was also good. I came away with a lot of good notes and a better focus on how to tell our group story. We had to leave at the 2:00 break so only attended the first breakout session.
- John Kenyon was great. The other facilitators not so much.
- There were plenty of ideas that I can bring back to the LCCR Board. The ideas could really help our radio station grow.
- I thought sharing experiences was a really effective way to give and take ideas, and learning what's worked for others from the source was great.
- All the tangible communications tips were very helpful. It was also great to have the opportunity to discuss communications tips and strategies with others at the convening. The action planning session was helpful to us, as we are about to embark on a department work planning session and it gives us a head start.
- My group needed to improve our website, but weren't aware of how badly we needed to do it. It helped us understand what we can do to upgrade via Word Press or other assisted website builder, and the importance of our stories.
- It gave me the tangible tools I've been seeking to help our team develop a clear communications and social media strategy.

- I learned some very useful communications tips that our organization can use. I met some new people within the County I live in that work on the same issues.
- Inspired great ideas for better donor/volunteer engagement through storytelling, along with concrete techniques to achieve goals.
- It was very useful for the future of my organization - at the moment - we are not quite there yet. That said, the idea of folding story into all aspects of communication is a key takeaway. Thank you!
- Thx so much!! One thing I would've liked was more feed back from the professionals as opposed to other non-profit grunts like myself 8-). Met great hard working people. Thx again!
- The topics were extremely relevant to our group and, it seems, to every group represented there.
- As someone who works in a tiny non-profit with no background or training in communications, and having this become a part of my job over time, I found this training extremely useful. I got a lot of great tools and tangible actions I could take to do a better job with communicating with our volunteers and supporters.

Q2 How useful was the Convening for you as:

	Great	Good	Okay	Not very good	Terrible
An opportunity to network?	39.02% 16	48.78% 20	12.20% 5	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
An opportunity to learn?	73.81% 31	19.05% 8	7.14% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
An opportunity to reflect?	50.00% 21	28.57% 12	16.67% 7	4.76% 2	0.00% 0
A chance to be inspired and energized?	61.90% 26	30.95% 13	7.14% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Responses:

- The networking was only OK for me because there weren't as many organizations focused on my topic or from my region. But it was fun and energizing nonetheless.
- Meeting other people and bouncing ideas off of everyone
- It was a good to meet other people dealing with similar issues and challenges and to feel like we're not working in a vacuum in the very rural, low population and polarized county where my organization is located.
- I loved meeting the folks who are working on such important issues
- Loved the food! And the venue was beautiful.
- The morning session with the speaker explaining story telling was the most helpful

- The Convening inspired us to look at the social media in new ways that would be helpful to getting our message out and just to communicate better.
- Gave an exercise opportunity to think about and plan a project to begin as soon as i got home.
- It let me get outside my own perspective and look at things with a broader view.
- It's one of the few times of year that I'm in a roomful of people that I have so much in common with.
- It's wonderful to allocate a good bit of the time to working on our specific plans rather than theoreticals.
- It was a place to connect with other members of my group(s) when not having to also focus on other issues or under a distracting deadline
- The food was delicious!
- Good info. Needed update on importance of social media. Maybe a separate room or hour for beginners. 8-)
- It helped inform me of ways to use technology our group hasn't taken advantage of.

Q3 Please rank the morning sessions: Telling Powerful Stories, Engaging Your Community and Measuring Success

	Great	Good	Okay	Not very good	Terrible
Content of presentation	59.52% 25	35.71% 15	4.76% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Quality of presentation	64.29% 27	28.57% 12	7.14% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Relevance of topic to your work	66.67% 28	28.57% 12	2.38% 1	2.38% 1	0.00% 0
Quality of audience participation	41.46% 17	41.46% 17	17.07% 7	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Quality of Handouts (if any)	38.46% 15	48.72% 19	10.26% 4	2.56% 1	0.00% 0
Overall session ranking	57.14% 24	38.10% 16	4.76% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0

Responses:

- Copy on power point too small to read- also too small to read on print copy of handout.
- John Kenyon was a great choice for presenter. It was especially helpful that he showed actual pages from websites and commented on them.
- It was helpful to take the information presented piece by piece, and apply it to my nonprofit.

- I always appreciate having the power points as a handout.
- Images on the handout should have been a bit larger.
- John was a wonderful presenter, and I liked the way he used our websites as references.
- We needed to be walked through the packet more carefully. I wrote on the wrong forms, then didn't have them when I needed them.
- Seriously fantastic.
- Lots of good info in short time. Instead of group work, maybe a role play between experts on how to write/speak to donors. Or volunteers or policy makers. Focus on one thing at a time maybe ??? Loved explanations of show vs tell and some of the more effective communication strategies.
- Engaging, well-thought-out, very useful!

Q4 Please rank the afternoon break out sessions: Sharing ideas and Generating Solutions

	Great	Good	Okay	Not very good	Terrible
Quality of facilitated discussion	21.95% 9	53.66% 22	19.51% 8	4.88% 2	0.00% 0
Relevance of topic to your work	36.59% 15	41.46% 17	17.07% 7	4.88% 2	0.00% 0
Opportunity to work on your organization's action plan	39.02% 16	31.71% 13	24.39% 10	4.88% 2	0.00% 0
Usefulness of feedback from facilitator and/or peers during this session	20.51% 8	46.15% 18	23.08% 9	7.69% 3	2.56% 1
Quality of handouts (if any)	18.52% 5	51.85% 14	29.63% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Overall ranking of afternoon breakout sessions	17.50% 7	60.00% 24	20.00% 8	2.50% 1	0.00% 0

Responses:

- I need to tell stories to influence policy decisions, and it's a bit more complex than telling a story for a donor or a volunteer or to explain our impact. It was a bit harder to conceptualize and also to get specific feedback from peers because (a) they didn't necessarily know that much about my issue, and/or (b) policy is a bit more abstract and it was harder to have time to really sift through and get feedback on the levels of stories and different types of stories needed to influence different audiences. The exercise around helping identify the target audiences and the circles of influencers and which stories would resonate and influence which audiences was helpful.

- This part of the convening felt rushed and I think we would've benefited from either taking out one of the exercises and slowing things down. That said, I appreciated the time to check-in with my colleague and start to debrief about what we'd learned and how we can start to apply it to our work.
- Unfortunately my facilitator (former ACLU employee) seemed unprepared and unsure how to speak broadly while also including specific facts and statistics that I could apply to my work plan. In answering questions, she rambled on about personal anecdotes with no clear direction of what she was trying to explain. The subgroup breakout and feedback from peers was helpful.
- The facilitated discussion were helpful, but in a way a bit redundant and didn't (to me) bring about any new information than what had already been gone over by John (the keynote presenter).
- The small groups were definitely helpful. However, for some reason, the facilitator was more interested in following her lesson-plan than engaging in the topics brought up by the participants. While her ideas were ok, they were of course abstract. I found it more helpful to hear real-life examples from the other participants; theory vs. practice. Also, the "6 word story" exercises were not really helpful. Discussions with other participants were great.
- The afternoon provided even more opportunity to interact and reflect on our organization's past and ongoing performance. This brought about some solid ideas and a concrete action plan that will be measured over the next 6 months. Good stuff!
- I did not think the facilitator was very good. Her comments were simplistic, she seemed ill at ease and did not make a good use of time. She did not seem very organized.
- Facilitators did a good job making the topic relevant to everyone, even when the discussion was more specific to a particular organization.
- Hearing other groups' issues and planning process was helpful to my process of focusing in on and forming a plan to address my own organization's needs. Sharing ideas and stories with my peers: what an amazing group of people!
- Only attended the first of two breakout sessions. It sounded as though the second session would involve working with your own group, but this is more convenient to do at home.
- Images on the handout should have been a bit larger.
- It would have been more useful to spend more time on the action planning and cut out the feed back session. Also, when doing the feedback it would have been better to choose who we got to work with rather than just receive feedback from the people sitting next to us.
- My first breakout session on social media with John was great and answered a lot of questions. The second one to work on the action plans was pretty useless.
- The people who attend these meeting are the very best feature for interaction and feedback!
- There were a lot of very different questions, so it was hard to address everyone's in a short period of time. I found some very relevant to my work and some not so

much. I was also the only representative from my organization so it was hard to develop an action plan on my own -- this is something I'll need to do with my team now that I'm back in the office. I definitely feel that I have the tools to do this, though.

- For me, the group work was helpful insofar as it forced me to articulate ideas and info to complete strangers, however I would've liked more examples of good and effective communication presented by professionals. Mr. Kenyon was great. I am sure he has many case studies he could share.
- I found the Messaging and Audience session to be less useful than I hoped. There didn't seem to be much direction, and we ended up talking through two people's examples that were not very helpful to me. The second session was helpful, I really appreciated getting the time to fill out my Action Plan and talk it through with others. Thanks!

Q5 Please tell us what you like most and least about the convening.

Most:

- The facilitation of John
- Learning about #tags, how to become more visible
- Opportunity to network and exchange ideas about telling our stories.
- examples of storytelling, opportunities for placement of stories on website and in marketing materials
- I appreciate that the Rose Foundation and the presenters/facilitators understood small, grassroots organizations and our constraints. This includes the details of helping cover travel costs. And the food was yummy!
- Learning interactively in groups and as a whole
- Meeting amazing activists
- The clear presentations in the morning and good use of examples.
- The chance to talk with the Rose Foundation staff and other allies in the work.
- Inspired feeling from the power of storytelling.
- Morning sessions and networking
- Meeting other participants
- The morning presentation
- Morning session where more content was given
- Neat ideas to try, with the website, for example, having a few pages in Spanish.
- Working on objectives with others in our organization after getting solid ideas and direction.
- Opportunity to up my skills sets each year (sometime on topics I didn't know I needed to learn!). Meeting so many wonderful people and learning about their projects.
- The atmosphere was friendly and positive, and I felt privileged to be there.

- The presenter did a fantastic job with his messaging: clear, concise, applicable, inspiring. The networking was great. And it shouldn't matter, but the food was amazing!
- The presenter was very good, as always.
- John
- Quality and relevance of presentations
- The concept of storytelling for creating a positive image for your organization.
- Social Media Engagement
- The variety of organizations present
- I liked the morning the session and opportunity to network the most.
- Facilitated give and take among participants, working on our action plans.
- All the useful information on communications!
- Slideshow in the morning/Magpie meal
- People & interactions, formal and informal. Better social diversity than in the past! Learned a lot!
- Audience engagement breakout session - I liked the engagement bit.
- The morning session: it provided a very clear plan for telling stories and evaluating success.
- John was a great presenter with expert knowledge that can translate to real change for our org.
- Format and organization
- Exposure to new social media terms and possibilities
- The lunch! John Kenyon's talk was great too.
- Very relevant to my work!

Worst:

- Break out sessions
- Not really having a chance to tell our story
- Afternoon breakout session with small groups was not very helpful.
- Afternoon was too open - my session was discussion led and that wasn't as helpful as being presenter-led.
- This isn't really something you necessarily have control over. But it would be nice to network with other groups focused on children's health or sustainable schools. And ideally, I would have loved to have had individual feedback time from the presenter, rather than only peers. I think I could have gotten some key questions answered by 1-on-1 consultation. But I also understand that this is beyond the capacity with that many attendees.
- Not enough chocolate call cookies
- The day got a little long -- although all the separate elements were very interesting and helpful
- In the first afternoon breakout session, we only focused on a few people's 'burning questions' so I didn't get much out of it that was relevant to my work.

- The afternoon session felt a little rushed, like the facilitator was trying to shove in every last exercise before it was over.
- Afternoon facilitator.
- Davis is a bit hard to get to with limited hotel choice for us out of towners
- Everything was great. Thank you.
- 1st Breakout session
- Small group sessions without facilitator
- Breakouts--couldn't hear and would much prefer to have open sessions where people ask questions for all to hear.
- Never enough time to network
- It was far away.
- Wish I had a short summary/bullet points to take home with me
- Break-out session was dominated by a couple of people.
- the other presenters
- Nothing really!
- Hmmm? \$9.00 Parking
- Would have liked a more focus on story craft rather than dissemination methods (I realize the importance of dissemination though)
- I didn't find the afternoon planning session helpful.
- The commute from Marin.
- Some of the most important parts felt rushed.
- Afternoon action plan session
- Poor acoustics in this venue, unreliable cordless microphones
- Audience engagement breakout session - I didn't like the facilitation.
- The breakout sessions. They were still super helpful, but it might have been more focused if we had a few clear discussion topics rather than trying to answer everyone's questions.
- Not all the facilitators were of equal effectiveness.
- Too many group break outs.
- Nothing comes to mind.
- The first afternoon breakout session.

Q6 Please rank the following:

	Great	Good	Okay	Not very good	Terrible
How was the registration process?	83.33% 35	14.29% 6	2.38% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0
Was the UC Davis Alumni Center a good meeting space?	73.81% 31	14.29% 6	7.14% 3	4.76% 2	0.00% 0
Is Davis a good/convenient meeting	46.34%	34.15%	17.07%	2.44%	0.00%

location?	19	14	7	1	0
How was the food?	80.95%	14.29%	4.76%	0.00%	0.00%
	34	6	2	0	0

Q7 What is one thing you hope to accomplish, change or do as a result of attending this convening?

- Tell the story of our work and of our collaborators better.
- Parking was too far, attempt to do more on social media, already started. Need more help
- Set a deadline and work towards building and implementing a communications/outreach strategy.
- to incorporate more storytelling in our communications and in fundraising in particular
- I want to prepare better sets of stories to influence: parents, allied partner organizations, and policymakers around why funding for sustainable schools is fundamental to California's future prosperity, health, and security. I have already changed my Donations page to include a link to two sets of stories - some by students and some school profiles of sustainable schools. I have stories on my website, but they are buried. I plan to better highlight them and cross-reference them and post and re-post them. Specifically, I want to increase the number of allied organizations supporting "Sustainable Schools" and new funding from Air Resources Board for greenhouse gas reduction projects at schools. And I want to launch a petition and letter-writing campaign on this topic and generate a significant number of signatures to send to Governor Brown and Head of ARB Mary Nichols.
- Get the website and social media pages up to date so we can reach out to more like minded people
- I'm hoping to begin using short videos to tell stories that will motivate potential donors
- Get more personal stories in our communications by email, website, and Facebook.
- More networking time during the day is always good. A lot of folks left right after the afternoon session and didn't stay for the networking at the end of the day. If it's possible, maybe having networking in the morning, too, for the early birds.
- Add more human stories throughout our website, blog more and engage more people to blog.
- update web page with stories Improve emails to our members
- Update our website with more personal stories, and make the options to sign up for events, lists, and donations much simpler and easier to access.
- Update face book and website more often with "storytelling" content. Try this communication style in our enews.

- Become more aware of how my organization is being presented through stories.
- Telling better stories, that engage more people on social media.
- energize current members and attract new members .
- Become more efficient; connect with more donors,
- As commented in the previous section, we hope to accomplish our 6-month plan using measurement parameters and get some meaningful feedback on what worked to guide us future objectives.
- Convincing the folks in my MarCom group to add stories and personal accounts each and every opportunity we have.
- Interact with donors and partners in a more productive way for all of us.
- Improve the reach and effectiveness of my nonprofit by engaging our community through stories and providing opportunities to take action (and donate!)
- I need to write some story content for my groups website and increase donations. I think the material in this convening will help me a lot.
- Create a marketing communication plan and calendar with more storytelling and more regular scheduling. Then creating a plan to capture and measure the results of the plans, and learn from the experience.
- Making audio recordings of our personal stories that can be played throughout the day.
- Tangible strategies to build and engage with our online community.
- I have since learned to use mail chimp. I now want to develop a story that encapsulates the essence of our non-profit and is able to convey that essence in such a way that it can transform recalcitrant value systems.
- I hope to create a year-end material to send out to supporters that fully engages them with my organization and our work.
- We planned in detail our fall fundraising efforts and how to measure their success.
- Use analytics on website, emails and social media to get the staff more involved!
- I'll be re-evaluating our entire outreach with this information.
- Work on upgrades to the websites, adding photos and stories!
- Doing more effective engagement.
- Regularly measure the success of our communications work and develop a strategy based on those measurements.
- Write powerful stories about our project so people can connect with our work better.
- Organize future stories and fold them into campaigns
- Be more effective at bringing about env'l protection through outreach and then activation of voters, policy makers.
- So many things! Change our website so that it is full of stories. Get a Facebook page. Pursue volunteers
- Work with our high school interns to collect volunteer stories that we can share.

Q8 Please help us envision the 2016 Convening.

Topics to be covered?

- More attention to African/American Culture and problems in California, especially with resources
- fundraising, coalition building, how we can help each other without being competitive
- Navigating fundraising, especially in an era where more foundations do NOT accept unsolicited proposals. How can small organizations better access funds? what strategies - foundations, individuals, crowdsourcing.
- More on story based advocacy? Something about effectively engaging volunteers?
- Dealing with polarizing issues in your community (e.g. forestry practices, climate change adaptation)
- communications, fundraising, leadership development (among staff as well as communities we serve)
- how to create an effective organizational structure for a small budget non-profit
- Neighborhood organizing, or legal tool kit for activism or meet the grant makers
- Diversity Trainings
- actual samples of web sites, showing detail and how they work. Actual samples of news articles and recruitment material
- Legal considerations and procedures, if any, for letting one or more volunteers go (aka "Firing" one or more volunteers).
- Organizational help and efficiency
- Recruiting, vetting and keeping volunteers
- Board organization and development
- Collaboration: finding ways to work together instead of competing for limited funds. Or another workshop on messaging.
- Changes in how people volunteer in the age of the internet
- Community organizing - how to get people involved and excited in person and become our advocates.
- Cooperation rather than competition. Transforming the societal values which are detrimental to the collective success of the environment and society over time.
- Technology tools (i.e. online infographic generators, website tools), what kind of story to tell the public
- Event planning
- Engaging/increasing individual donors
- Messaging is always a concern, also organizational structures for flexibility and resilience
- Transitioning organizations priorities, funding sources, structures.
- Relationship building
- Strategies for overcoming powerful opposing interests and establishing sustainable moderate funding for consistency in staff and community building

- Perhaps follow up with groups on successful implementation of tools and skills learned this year?

Alternative format?

- In a retreat space
- Implementation of Environmental Justice and African/American organization leaders
- Hold the networking reception around lunch--12 to 2:00--followed by an afternoon session of presentation or group discussion.
- I liked the format - expert/content in AM, lunch, afternoon facilitators with action-oriented small groups. I liked leaving the day with an "action plan."
- Maybe break up the afternoon session. It went long and seemed like too much was attempted to be packed in it.
- I liked the format
- Just Q&A after a presentation--no breakouts
- I liked this year's format.
- I'd like only one breakout session and more information from the main presenter.
- A more creative exercise early on to help people get out of the box, loosened up, and alert.
- I like this one; for event planning perhaps we could have a breakout session geared toward getting Board and Volunteers on board for soliciting funding and donations.
- Large group communication is important, but need time for applying examples of what we hear/see
- This years format was good.
- I think two days with an overnight stay would allow more time for relationship building, probably that is more expensive. But one full day and one half would be perfect.
- Role playing. More feed back. More professional one-on-one guidance

Location for next year?

- Monterey County
- Davis is good.
- San Rafael
- Davis was great for me!
- Davis was good for me.
- UC Davis or another college campus
- Sacramento, Oakland
- Davis (2)
- Cal State at Sacramento--I thought that was a great place
- Modesto, Sacramento, San Jose
- More central in the Bay Area
- Davis seemed like a good, central location.

- Berkeley?
- Why, Lake County, of course! We have a great meeting space at the Adventist Church, as well as 2 campuses.
- I loved the location!
- Marin would be nice. :-) The National Park Service might be willing to donate a space. How about Marin Headlands/Fort Cronkhite?
- Loved meeting at UC Davis- but it would have been great to spend time outside (the building was so cold).
- Whatever works.
- Somewhere closer to the Bay Area.
- If it were 1.5 days - then it doesn't matter - since the commute hour could be avoided.

How can we make it better next year?

- Apply Regional change to troubled counties and cities
- More networking opportunities, if possible
- Its always great
- Invite more people
- More content- tips etc
- Use before and after program time to meet new people with organized mix up exercise so Teams break up as soon as they get there.
- Tough to beat. You guys did great!
- Make sure you have a translator there all day to help with Spanish speaking attendees.
- Create space for people of color groups to discuss and meet.
- Lots more coffee, including decaf!
- More time for breakout sessions.
- A basic intro to social media.....

Any other comments?

- It was a great meeting and we will change the way we tell our story as a result of this.
- Thanks for allowing us to participate
- Well organized. Kudos to the staff.
- Thank you for a very informative event. John Kenyon was great to learn from!
- Thank you so much! I felt very valued by the Rose Foundation, by peers, and by presenters.
- It was great overall, thank you for hosting us and supporting travel/accommodation for those of us who came from far away.
- thank you for supporting work of small non-profit groups!
- Thank you for the great Rose Foundation and other Foundation members for all of your work in putting on the seminars
- Nope--thanks for all you do to help us, especially when we're in new territory.

- You had a great interactive workshop that seemed to produce results would be hard to improve upon.
- Thank you so much for offering this learning opportunity to us each year.
- Thank you! This convening was exactly what I needed! Also, kudos to Rose Foundation for supporting so many wonderful groups in their efforts to make change.
- Thank you for your wonderful convening. It really was great, not least because the Rose staff are a terrific, heartfelt and soulful group.
- Thank you so much for organizing and inviting us to this very useful conference!
- Thanks for a consistently helpful event!
- Thank you for having us at the convening, I really had a great time mingling with other folks.
- Really nice people. Great to see the earnestness of so many.
- RF is so unique and we are fortunate to have it as a resource! Thxs!!
- Thank you so much for providing this wonderful learning opportunity.