

ABSTRACT

Title of dissertation: UNDERSTANDING VALUES IN
ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXTS: THE CASE
OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

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Biodiversity loss poses an existential threat to human life, and human activities both intentionally and unintentionally affect other species. Values provide an important tool for explaining such human behavior. While we have evidence of the causes and consequences of wildlife values at the individual level, much human activity that influences wildlife occurs in organizational settings. This project seeks to uncover the roles and negotiation of values in conservation organizations, filling an important research gap.

The project uses a case study approach to illuminate the role and negotiation of values in case studies of three wildlife conservation contexts: national wildlife conservation, red wolf conservation, and horseshoe crab conservation in the mid-Atlantic. Through strategic selection of two organizations in each case, I explore how values function in these varied conservation contexts using interviews with staff and volunteers and content analysis of websites and social media.

I argue that a broader typology of value frames exists within wildlife conservation organizations than is traditionally discussed in wildlife value literature. I find that frames include moral conservationist, community-steward, and complex utilitarian values, adding nuance to the previously understood value spectrum of humans versus nature.

While findings indicated that values were behavior motivators for volunteers, volunteers were more likely to perceive and attempt to construct value alignment than to actively seeking organizations that were compatible with their values. While organizations proclaimed their values and described using values in determining tactics and approaches, they also did not report consciously attempting to align values in processes of volunteer recruitment.

Findings indicated differences in value processes in local versus national organizations, and a complex value framing in organizational settings. Despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic is an extremely disruptive social event that was directly tied to wildlife and biodiversity issues, this connection was not highlighted equally by volunteers or organizations, nor did organizations equally or significantly respond to a nationwide call to reckon with racial injustice. I argue that the organizations and volunteers who framed their values and approaches more broadly and included moral value of the wellbeing of both humans and other species were more responsive to changing social contexts.

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CASE OF BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Biodiversity loss and the extinction crisis threaten human health and survival by altering the ecosystems in which we all live and threatening ecosystem services that provide water, air, food, and other resources for humans. In a stark example of the influence of ecosystems and human interactions with wildlife, a zoonotic novel coronavirus began sweeping the globe in 2019. The pandemic has influenced all aspects of society and human life and has taken millions of lives around the world. There is perhaps no greater reminder of the importance of considering the relationship between humans, the natural environment, and wildlife. The cost of unsustainable social-environmental systems has never been more clear.

Values provide a valuable tool for understanding human behavior and social systems, including related to the biodiversity crisis. Values have been shown within social psychology to be broadly applicable to many areas of social life and to influence group dynamics and individual behavior choices. Although a great deal of wildlife-related behavior occurs in groups, value-dynamics within conservation organizations have been understudied. Sociologists have also established the importance of understanding environmental issues for the sake of human survival and justice. Climate change has rightfully received significant attention within sociology because of its catastrophic expected impacts. However, the planet is currently experiencing a wave of human-caused extinction and biodiversity decline that poses an equal threat to human survival because of environmental collapse. I argue that values play a critical role in understanding the social underpinnings of biodiversity loss.

This project synthesizes data on value processes and performance in the context of conservation organizations. I begin this introductory chapter by discussing sociological literatures on values and their utility for explaining behavior, highlighting the importance of researching values in the organizational context. I then introduce the context of the biodiversity crisis, providing a justification for increased focus on species extinction in social science research. This includes a discussion of human behavior related to wildlife and the factors that have been identified in literature as important for understanding human and wildlife relationships. I also connect value concepts to the extant biodiversity and wildlife literature to explain the utility of a value frame in connecting social science to the extinction crisis. This chapter concludes with a summary of the dissertation sections.

Values

Outside of the context of biodiversity, research in social psychology has looked broadly at the concept of values, which are related to attitudes. While values are fairly stable and abstract in content, attitudes are more transitory and focused on a particular object (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). Values are broadly conceptualized as evaluative criteria that influence decision-making and behavior (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987). The defining feature of values is the extent to which they contain expectations and desires for particular outcomes that motivate behavior. In other words: values relate to what is ideal or desired. More specifically, scholars define values as pertaining to desired situations, transcending specific settings and choices, and influencing behaviors, evaluation, and decision-making (Hitlin 2003; Schwartz 1992). Perceived values are both influenced by

reference to other groups, as individuals compare themselves to others and make meaning through interaction, and influence relationships to other groups (Hitlin and Piliavin 2004). Because values relate to what is desired, they are motivational and influence behavior directly.

According to Hitlin: “Values develop in social contexts, draw on culturally significant symbolic material, and are experienced as a necessary and fundamental, but noncoerced, aspect of self. Understood as conceptions of the desirable, values are not experienced as externally binding but rather as ideals worth striving for” (2003:121). Values become incorporated into an individual’s sense of self and influence behavior, which then influences social structure. Morality, definitions of right and wrong, relates closely to values and can be incorporated into an individual’s sense of self as they develop moral self-concepts through interaction. People are driven by self-consistency motives to behave in ways that are consistent with their identities. They generally attempt to act in alignment with their definitions of what their identities hold and alter behavior according to evaluations of others about the performance of their identities (Cook 2000, Stets and Biga 2003). This connection between values, identity, and behavior makes values an important area of research for understanding environmental behavior.

Several scholars have successfully used values to predict environmental behavior. For example, Guagnano and colleagues find that certain sets of values, specifically self-transcendence and altruism, are positively related to both individuals’ beliefs about environmental problems and their willingness to take pro-environmental action, using phone-assisted surveys of Virginia residents (1995). In similar work, self-transcendence, openness to change, and biospheric values are found to have positive relationships with

pro-environmental behavior, while self-enhancement and conservation values have negative relationships with pro-environmental behavior in survey data collected from a sample of undergraduate students (Karp 1996). Within support for similar policy outcomes or solutions, scholars have also found that differing value frames can lead to support for the same policy, emphasizing the importance of understanding the value frames in understanding how to find common ground or advance policies or behaviors (Horne and Huddart Kennedy 2019).

Values can also be incorporated into identities as people develop self-definitions in relation to value characteristics. A person can value compassion, for example, and incorporate that understanding into their sense of self as a person who is compassionate. Values can also serve to inform choices of roles and identities as people choose roles that they view as compatible with their values. Value-identities motivate behavior like other identities, and lead individuals to make choices that align with their definitions of particular values. In fact, Hitlin argues that values form the basis of the self-concept (2003). Identity standards are shaped over the life course as individuals have experiences that shape their understandings of what is normal, moral and important, including environmental identities (Dewey 2020). People can also incorporate environmentally-relevant behavior into a variety of identity framings, as they undergo active processes of aligning their behaviors with how they understand themselves (Dewey 2020). Values are particularly likely to influence behavior when they become part of the self-concept, making connections between values and the self-concept particularly interesting for future research.

Biodiversity

We are facing a global extinction crisis, with scientists estimating that up to 150 species become extinct each day (Djoghla 2007). While climate change rightfully receives significant attention within sociological research due to its threats to society, particularly to vulnerable and marginalized populations, biodiversity loss is equally concerning for the same reasons. Early in the modern conservation movement, environmental advocacy was primarily seen as focused on the preservation of natural places (Mertig 2002). Later discourse shifted this idea to a focus on human consequences of conservation and biodiversity loss, and increasing research has emphasized the relationship between conservation and human survival (Jansson 2013; Jansson and Polasky 2010; Mertig 2002; Peterson, Allen, and Holling 1998).

As defined by the Convention on Biological Diversity, biological diversity refers to the “variability among living organisms from all sources including terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, among species, and of ecosystems” (Thompson et al. 2009:4). Biodiversity is critical for human life in many ways. Scholars have also recently pointed out that discourse separating human-centered and nature-centered conservation forces a false dichotomy that is more accurately reflected in a continuum of perspectives of value of nature for intrinsic value and human value that should be embraced in discussion of conservation (Matulis and Moyer 2017). One particular facet of the importance of biodiversity for humans is ecosystem resilience.

Thompson and colleagues (2009), specifically focusing on forests, find that biodiversity is critically linked to resilience of an ecosystem. While all species may not

play an equal functional role, humans do not currently possess enough knowledge to anticipate the consequences of the loss of a particular species. In another example, Hooper and colleagues find that species diversity decreases the risk of harm caused by invasive species (2005). Biodiversity loss and species loss may lead to loss of resilience, which can lead to an irreversible shift in an ecosystem to an undesired state, threatening human survival through threats to systems that provide food, clean water, clean air, and other human needs. (Peterson et al. 1998). Because the presence of more species leads to functional diversity, with multiple species filling ecological roles, ecological resilience is increased by presence of functionally redundant species operating at different scales.

Research has also attempted to demonstrate the value of biodiversity such as in Fearnside's (1999) case study detailing the value and benefits of Amazonian forests in Brazil. Similar research has focused on perceived ecosystem services to humans of species filling similar ecological roles, such as pollination of food sources and provision of clean water (Morales-Reyes et al. 2018). While the specific effects of the loss of a particular species may be unclear and difficult to predict, it is clear that the loss of species presents a significant threat to human life through decreased resilience to change as well as loss of necessary ecosystem services that sustain human life.

A social-ecological systems framework provides a useful tool for understanding interconnecting parts of the biodiversity issue. This framework conceptualizes the relationship between governance systems, actors, resource systems, and resource units that interact to inform "Focal Action Situations" (figure 1, (McGinnis and Ostrom 2014). Additionally, similar work complicates assumptions about policy as the only mechanism for sustainability change and accounts for actors organizing independently to affect

ecosystems (Ostrom 2009). Using this framework, this project informs the relationship between and among governance systems and actors.

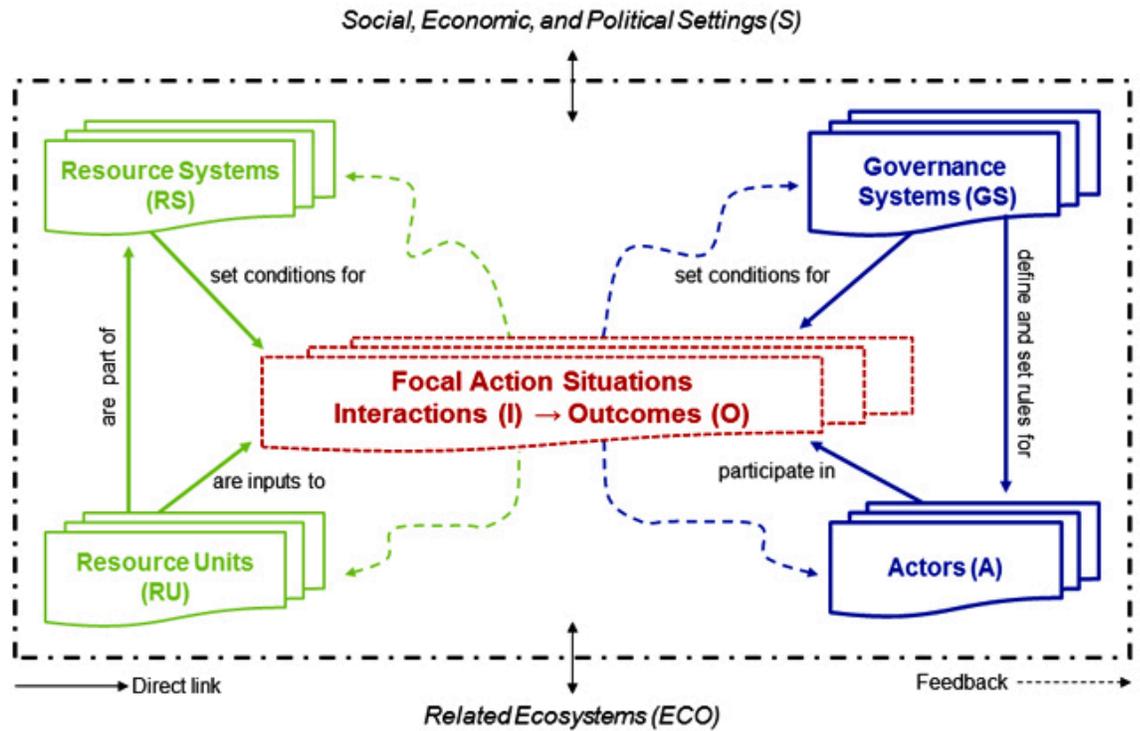


Figure 1-1: Social ecological systems (McGinnis and Ostrom 2014)

As with all aspects of the natural environment, humans influence wildlife and biodiversity. The world is facing a global crisis of biodiversity loss, and the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in its recent Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services estimates that a million species are threatened with extinction (Anon 2020b). This is important because, in addition to concerns about degradation of nature and loss of other species for their intrinsic value, researchers are increasingly demonstrating that other species provide ecosystem services that sustain human life. Because biodiversity is essential for human life it is essential to understand

human activity that affects other species both intentionally and unintentionally, such as through development of habitat and decisions about land use (Colding et al. 2013). Humans also directly make decisions, such as through culling programs, hunting policies, or pesticide use that protect, exterminate, or otherwise influence other species. Many animal species, including wolves and deer among many others, are targets of specific decisions to manage species populations. Managers and leaders at various levels make decisions about legalized protection of certain species, authorize individuals to kill certain species, and engage in population control and reduction efforts. Policies such as the Endangered Species Act protect species deemed to be at risk of extinction. These policies are then applied to particular conservation decisions and debated inside and outside of institutional settings.

Given the threat posed by species loss, social scientists have attempted to understand human behavior related to conservation as they seek to uncover the human antecedents for biodiversity decline that threatens humans and other species alike. For example, scholars have attempted to understand factors influencing human participation in wildlife trade activities that threaten biodiversity such as incentives, livelihoods, and information (Cooney et al. 2017; Moorhouse et al. 2017). At a macro level, Shandra and colleagues address human and nature relationships by finding connections between global exchange and species decline around the world (2009).

There has been a focus on economic and ecological approaches to wildlife problems, but scholars have argued that cultural and social factors need also to be addressed in conservation approaches (Cork 2020). Accordingly, researchers have highlighted the influence of social factors separate from material factors in influencing

human and wildlife relationships, with some addressing the influence of perceptions on behavior choices (Kross et al. 2018; Olmedo, Sharif, and Milner-Gulland 2018). Some work has highlighted the influence of symbols and definitions in framing perceptions of other species that influence human behavior (Hill and Webber 2010). Religion has also been specifically linked to human wildlife relationships, with religious factors being correlated with ecosystem management and decisions (Negi 2005). Effective solutions to human-wildlife problems need also to account for potentially inaccurate public perceptions, such as over or under-estimation of potential damage or costs caused by a wildlife population (Gillingham and Lee 2003). For example, Dickman and colleagues find that perceptions of wildlife conflict do not entirely align with wildlife impacts in Tanzania (Dickman et al. 2014). Other work specifically demonstrates the ways that intentional campaigns related to environmental issues can cause behavioral shifts, as respondents report attitudes influenced by state-sponsored campaigns and initiatives (Harrison and Burgess 2008). Individuals do not make choices based solely on facts, but instead engage with experiences, rules, and social context.

In related work, Teel and colleagues (Teel et al. 2010) explore domination and mutualism as frameworks that individuals develop related to wildlife, focusing on the cognitive and value aspects of the ways that individuals understand their relationships to other species. While domination relates to a value of nature as under the dominion of and for the benefit of humans, mutualism focuses on an intrinsic value of nature. They find that these two frameworks produce different attitudes and behaviors toward wildlife, and that there has been a societal shift toward mutualism as a result of modernization. Brulle and Benford (Brulle and Benford 2012) examine the shifts from “game protection” to

“wildlife management” as discursive frames used in wildlife-related social movements. They find that these frames alter field practices, demonstrating that cultural dynamics matter for movement and organizational formation.

A significant amount of research focuses specifically on perceptions of predator species. In one example, Simon (2013) finds that changing attitudes broadly in favor of wildlife protection has then led to more antagonistic relationships between trophy hunters, wolf advocates, and wolves themselves. Their findings indicate that changing attitudes have led trophy hunters to feel defensive, threatened, and nostalgic for days before wolf reintroduction, which then leads them to blame wolves and wolf advocates for perceived negative changes. In earlier work addressing the formation of values at the individual level, Heberlein and Ericsson’s work looks at the ways that upbringing and experience influence values toward wildlife and wolves specifically (2005). They suggest that access to and experience with rural areas is important for forming values that positively incorporate wolves and wildlife in general.

In another line of research, scholars have argued for the aforementioned importance of including local communities effectively in conservation decision-making to account for the importance of perceptions and attitudes in influencing behavior (Udaya Sekhar 2003). Additionally, scholars have addressed inclusion of communities in data collection both for the sake of effective conservation and in pursuit of justice (Chase and Levine 2018; Metcalfe et al. 2017). These factors take on additional significance when considering the fundamental racial structures present in environmental degradation, whereas marginalized communities are most at risk from, least able to respond to, and least responsible for, large-scale environmental problems. Following decades of

exclusion in the environmental movement, many organizations are tasked with understanding and responding to their relationship with racial injustice. Some scholars have viewed the environmental justice movement as forming in response to both environmental problems and exclusion within the environmental movement which is seen as slow to respond to threats faced by marginalized communities and people of color (Mertig 2002).

Values in the wildlife context

Values have increasingly been applied as a tool to understanding behavior and human dynamics related to wildlife issues specifically, in line with the questions above. For example, Manfredo's work has identified value-orientations as related to wildlife, specifying domination and mutualism orientations as two ends of a spectrum of orientations to wildlife (Manfredo 2008; Manfredo, Teel, and Henry 2009). Other scholars have focused on public perception of species as they relate specifically to support for policy measures (Pepin-Neff and Wynter 2018). Social psychological components of human perceptions and values influence behavior broadly including policy support. In research examining dam construction perceptions in Brazil, researchers find that economic and ecological values influence preferences for solutions and policies (Schulz, Martin-Ortega, and Glenk 2019).

Research suggests that material conditions, reliance on wildlife, conflict with wildlife, and education influence the formation of wildlife value orientations (Rickenbach et al. 2017). For example, Zinn and Pierce find that individuals who expressed utilitarian wildlife value orientations were more likely to accept killing a mountain lion in a

residential area (2002). Similarly, Manfredi and colleagues have discussed domination and mutualism as key value orientations that guide choices, finding that their value orientations are related to hunting behavior and support for hunting policies (Manfredi et al. 2009). In yet another example, Hart and colleagues find that environmental values influence risk assessment, concern, and engagement in wildlife decision-making processes (Hart, Nisbet, and Shanahan 2011). Values function in multiple dimensions. For example, an opinion on a particular environmental issue can be influenced by perceived value of economic aspects, scientific aspects, and moral or spiritual aspects. Understanding these values can inform efforts to design community-engagement strategies by specifying values proclaimed by stakeholders (Jones et al. 2016).

Research has shown that discursive frames and values toward wildlife have shifted over the past few centuries in the United States. Some have hypothesized that shifts in wildlife values can occur in response to broader cultural changes or events. Manfredi and colleagues (2003) find that wildlife values are influenced by urbanization, income, education, and residential stability. They argue that these societal changes are linked to the decline in materialist, utilitarian framings of wildlife. Changing public values influence wildlife-related decisions, policies, and behaviors.

However, despite the utility of values for understanding human behaviors, there is a remaining need to understand values within environmental organizations. Some research has addressed the use of value differences to draw boundaries between groups (Lamont 2009). However, this research does not focus on formal organizations or groups formed around a particular social issue. It remains to be seen how values affect organizational processes, collaborations, and outcomes and how environmental

organizational values affect or are affected by individual members. Because organizations and groups are a significant site of human interaction around biodiversity and wildlife issues, as in all areas of social life, it is important to understand how values matter in these organizational contexts. Conservation and biodiversity advocacy provide a case through which to understand this question within the context of a pressing social problem.

A great deal of human activity related to wildlife occurs in organizational settings, as non-profit organizations, citizens' groups, and agencies work to protect wildlife and engage in activities that affect wildlife both positively and negatively. A network of conflict and activity exists within and between groups specifically working on conservation and wildlife advocacy. A focus on individual values without attention to how values matter within organizations obscures a factor influencing human activity related to this social problem. This project applies literature on values to organizations, thereby filling this gap through a mixed-methods project collecting data on values and organizational outcomes from leaders and members of conservation organizations in diverse issue settings. A case study approach evaluating value processes within three conservation arenas will illuminate the role of values in organizational settings as values both affect and are shaped by institutional and individual processes. This research uncovers how values are related to collaborations and outcomes for organizations working on biodiversity issues. Using the framework of social-ecological systems, conservation organizations operate in governance systems of biodiversity and broader environmental conservation, including governing bodies and institutions. These define

the rules of engagement for conservation organizations and their volunteers as actors in the system (McGinnis and Ostrom 2014).

Environmental and wildlife organizations frame and approach their work in different ways. For example, some could approach their work through the lens of environmental justice, others from a focus on the intrinsic value of nature, animal welfare, economics, morality, human welfare, or some combination of these frames. Organizations can assign differing levels of value to these and other dimensions that may affect their collaborations, tactical choices, and processes of engaging volunteers.

This work provides a contribution to our knowledge of organizations, environmental sociology, and social movements. It adds to existing literature in environmental sociology and human dimensions of wildlife by interrogating previous conceptions of environmental values. While literature typically proclaims environmental values as existing in a binary framework of humans versus nature, my work interrogates and adds nuance to this previous conception. A focus at the organizational level of a social movement also adds a meso-level approach to existing social movement literature, where organizations are an influential aspect of social movement structure. Finally, understanding how values function in organizations that are framed around a particular social issue extends existing research on organizations. While organizational scholars have used values to understand outcomes, missing is an understanding of processes in organizations formed around a particular social issue. My work fills this gap by focusing on organizations that are formed around a social issue. This dissertation brings together literature on environmental sociology, organizations, and social movements that are not typically in conversation.

Summary of the dissertation

This project will uncover how values are functioning within organizational settings and how they influence organizational conservation activities. Through a qualitative case study approach and examination of both public statements and in-depth interviews the processes through which organizations navigate and perform value processes will be understood. Although some scholars have provided insight as to the importance of values for individual behaviors and policy support, this project will study the influence of values for organizational outcomes. While contributing to knowledge of how values function in social movement organizational contexts generally, this research will also provide sociological insights into the pressing social problem of biodiversity loss. This research is guided by the following questions:

1. How do volunteers negotiate their values related to their organizational participation?
2. How do organizations proclaim and use their values?
3. How do value processes occur during times of extreme social disruption and social change?

In chapter 2, I provide information on literature justifying my research questions and provide information on the three cases of wildlife conservation used in this project. I provide a review of the research methods and a discussion of the research setting and context. In chapter 3, I use interview data to uncover processes of value negotiation in volunteers. I discuss patterns of individual participation, individual accounts of values and participation motivators, and volunteer perceptions of organizational values. I also explore a value typology in volunteers that goes beyond common conceptions of human

and nature-centered environmental approaches to incorporate a more nuanced framing of values that guide environmental participation and goals. In chapter 4, I use staff interviews and social media and website content analysis to examine the relationship between values and conservation approaches in organizations, as well as processes of value performance. I highlight the approaches of the organizations and their proclaimed values using public statements, discussing value typologies used by organizations in relation to those proclaimed by individual volunteers. I then discuss value signaling and values as performance, as well as organizational statements of values as boundaries between groups or identity statements.

In chapter 5, I analyze the use and negotiation of organizational and volunteer values during the COVID-19 pandemic and racial injustice uprising context of 2020. Using interviews and content analysis, I discuss how individuals frame their environmental values around COVID-19. I then discuss organizational values framed around COVID-19, pandemic impacts on conservation approaches. I also discuss the interplay and shifts in proclaiming nature and human-focused values during the twin pandemics. I conclude by reviewing the findings on how organizations and individual volunteers working on wildlife conservation in both national and local contexts negotiate value processes and discussing their relevance for sociology, environmental sociology, and conservation research.

Chapter 2: Exploring Values in Conservation Contexts

As stated above, the defining feature of values is the extent to which they contain expectations and desires for particular outcomes that motivate behavior. Values are explicitly linked to support for social movements and have been identified as a component of predisposition for movement support (Stern et al. 1999).

Because a significant amount of research in environmental sociology focuses on concern and support for environmental issues and the environmental movement, values can provide a way to understand and predict these variables. Environmental sociology, particularly research on the environmental movement, could both be strengthened by the inclusion of literature on values and make contributions to research on values and morality in social psychology.

Discursive frames related to the environmental movement are centered on statements of value. For example, Brulle and colleagues (2007) identify major discursive frames of the environmental movement including themes like conservation, focusing on technical management of resources to realize the greatest good for the greatest number of people; preservation, focusing on the existence of undisturbed wilderness and wildlife; and several others. Each frame provides different statements of value, such as valuing managed natural resources for human consumption or intrinsic value of undisturbed nature. This echoes the domination and mutualism wildlife value frames that incorporate environmental values based on human domination versus intrinsic values of nature. Value frames can be related to self-concepts of potential supporters and participants (Hitlin 2003). Individuals ultimately develop and participate in organizations. Incorporating the ways that individuals develop values could provide context for the process through which

frames are shared, adopted, and become part of the environmental movement through the individuals that subscribe to them. A particular frame, like conservation for example, could be more compatible with some proclaimed values than others. Understanding how individuals relate movement participation, or lack of participation, to their values, moral norms, and value-identities can strengthen knowledge of how social movement organizations function and negotiate processes with individual supporters and volunteers.

As stated above, values have increasingly been applied to understanding behavior and human dynamics related to wildlife issues specifically (Manfredo 2008; Manfredo et al. 2009; Teel et al. 2010). Despite a significant amount of scholarly research on individual values, including some work specifically related to human-wildlife behavior, scholars do not have a sufficient understanding of wildlife values in the organizational context. Bringing attention to how values matter within organizations helps to uncover a factor influencing human activity related to this social problem. My project applies literature on values to organizations in three cases, thereby filling this gap through a mixed-methods project collecting data on values and organizational outcomes from leaders and members of conservation organizations in diverse issue settings.

This dissertation research will uncover how values function in organizations working on biodiversity issues. Examining three cases that allow for an examination at national and local levels and include conservation cases that include differing combinations of stakeholders and conservation challenges allows for a view of how value processes differ or function similarly across these dimensions.

Selected Conservation Cases

Defending wildlife and endangered species nationally

A community of social movement organizations has been involved in conservation of wildlife at the national level for many years filling different niches and using tactics including litigation, lobbying, grassroots organizing, protest, education, to protect wildlife species. As an illustration of wildlife policy, the 1973 Endangered Species Act regulates actions that could adversely affect species that are deemed to be at risk of extinction and listed as threatened or endangered. Political proposals including proposed regulations and legislation have threatened to weaken the Endangered Species Act in recent years, particularly with the 2016 election of Donald Trump to the presidency. Groups are often working in combination with others and engaging in conflict and collaboration around this issue and other approaches to addressing the biodiversity crisis.

While federal organizing around endangered species includes a wide array of stakeholders, some focusing on particular species or ecosystems and others focusing broadly at the national level, two additional cases provide an opportunity to explore the situation at a more localized level. These cases focus on red wolf and horseshoe crab conservation.

Horseshoe crabs in the mid-Atlantic

The horseshoe crab, often called a “living fossil” due to its hundreds of millions of years of evolutionary history, has a unique historical significance in the mid-Atlantic region. Indigenous peoples used horseshoe crabs for food, tools, and to enrich soil.

Horseshoe crabs were harvested in huge quantities and ground up for use as fertilizer for many years starting in the 1800s (Kreamer and Michels 2009). Later, horseshoe crabs began to be caught for use as bait for fisheries. A substance in horseshoe crab blood, LAL, is also used by the pharmaceutical industry to detect certain bacteria, another aspect of crab harvest (Kramer 2017; Kreamer and Michels 2009). Although these crabs are returned to the water after blood is removed, a number do not survive, so this process is assumed by many to contribute to population changes. While this particular use has potentially contributed to population declines, it has also spurred some concern about preservation of horseshoe crab populations due to concerns about sustained availability of LAL (Kreamer and Michels 2009).



Figure 2-1: Horseshoe crab. Photo credit: Greg Breese, USFWS

Conservationists have also been concerned about the decline in horseshoe crabs because of their importance for migratory birds, including red knots. The red knot, a shorebird which has been listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act

since 2014, relies on horseshoe crab eggs during its migratory stopover in the mid-Atlantic and availability of eggs drives behavior and patterns (Karpanty et al. 2006). In addition, migratory birds are drivers of ecotourism in the mid-Atlantic as visitors come to the region to view shorebirds and crab spawning (Kreamer and Michels 2009). Concerns about declining bird populations are additional factors in support for and perceptions of horseshoe crab conservation efforts. Therefore, communities concerned with bird conservation, including communities impacted by tourism, have been major actors in horseshoe crab conservation efforts.

Increased numbers of horseshoe crabs have been spotted in Maryland in recent years. Some have credited two decades of strict protections for the population resurgence (Kobell 2016). While some indicators demonstrate a resurgence of crab populations due to restrictions on fisheries along with some work to protect habitat, concerns remain about the ability of the current population to sustain migratory bird populations (Kreamer and Michels 2009). Conversations around the conservation status have also been controversial. For example, some scientists argue that, despite restrictions on harvest, the horseshoe crab harvest still increased in recent years and no recovery of red knot populations was visible (Niles et al. 2009). It is clear that the conservation situation is complex, particularly due to the diversity of stakeholders including fishers, conservationists, and pharmaceutical interests (Berkson and Shuster Jr 1999).

Some scholars have focused on the community level as critical for successful conservation efforts (Gauvry 2009; Iwaoka and Okayama 2009). Currently, wildlife agencies in the mid-Atlantic conduct educational initiatives and crab counts in coastal bay spawning areas. In addition, a popular educational program, Green Eggs and Sand,

works with teachers and others through workshops to develop educational opportunities and curricula in order to promote understanding of the ecology as well as the complex conservation dynamic (O'Connell et al. 2009).

The complex network of stakeholders involved in the horseshoe crab debate, from fisherman to biomedical companies, to conservationists and those concerned about bird populations create an interesting arena for conflict and collaboration influencing the survival of a species.

Red wolf conservation

Red wolves are an extremely endangered predator species with a total wild population of only approximately 20 individuals (U.S. Fish & Wildlife n.d.). The species historically ranged throughout the eastern United States. Predators like the red wolf play a central role in ecosystems by balancing prey populations. Coyotes are the other predator species present in the area. However, they have varied diets and do not eat deer at all times of the year. Wolves, on the other hand, eat deer year-round and therefore play an important role in maintaining a functioning and healthy ecosystem with managed deer populations. Decisions and actions regarding this species, including the fate of the current endangered species management program and killing of red wolves by hunters, will have an immediate and stark influence on this near-extinct species.



Figure 2-2: Red wolf. Photo credit: Steve Hillebrand, USFWS.

Red wolves were listed as endangered at the time of the enactment of the Endangered Species Act in 1973. A population was bred in captivity and released into North Carolina in the 1990s, and the effort to reintroduce the population was largely successful with the population reaching approximately 150 in 2006 (Hinton 2018). In approximately the past 7 years, there has been increasing and widespread controversy regarding the wolf program, with substantial conflict between hunters and conservation proponents of the program. The primary cause of death of red wolves between 1987 and 2014 was gunshots, and 68% died before four years of age, presenting a major problem for the conservation of the species (Hinton et al. 2017). Therefore, human caused mortality is a major threat to red wolf conservation. However, some hunters believe that the wolves threaten deer populations and do not want the wolves on their property. This presents a particular problem because red wolves range in an area consisting of many

private land areas in contrast to the large spaces of protected wildlands found in the western United States. Many stakeholders hold complex attitudes and values related to the red wolves, holding different opinions about how, and even if, they should be protected.

A United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) proposal proposed to cut the managed population size down to 15 animals and reduce the managed recovery area for the species by about 90% (Hinton 2018). This proposal led to an increasingly visible public discussion as people in support of the program alleged that the Fish and Wildlife Service was preparing to stop the recovery efforts of the species in response to political pressure, while others supported the reduction in population size and management areas. A recent court decision ordered the USFWS to resume its release of red wolves into the recovery area after litigation brought by environmental organizations (Southern Environmental Law Center 2021).

For each of these three cases, I selected two organizations and collected data on value processes through 1) volunteer interviews, 2) staff interviews, and 3) social media and website content analysis. Organizations and individuals are identified by pseudonyms throughout the dissertation.

Methods

Population construction and sampling

A population of wildlife and conservation actors was constructed from multiple sources for each of the three cases in order to provide a starting point with which to select the organizations. One challenge of research based on organizations is population

identification, because databases and other sources tend to be unreliable and biased toward larger organizations. Therefore, I followed the lead of Andrews and Edwards in using multiple sources to construct a population of organizations (Andrews and Edwards 2005). These sources differ for each of the three identified cases.

The Endangered Species Act sample was constructed through a variety of sources. First, organizations were added to the population if they were a member group of the Endangered Species Coalition, a coalition of wildlife groups. This group hosts regular conference calls, and groups on the agendas of those calls from January to May 2019 were added to the population. Lists from the Charity Navigator database in the wildlife category were added.

Construction of the horseshoe crab population began primarily with mentions from news sources in Nexis from 2017 to May 7th, 2019, including any organization mentioned in the mid-Atlantic context that appeared in a search for “horseshoe crabs”. I also included organizations mentioned in a preliminary interview on the Green Eggs and Sand horseshoe crab education program.

The red wolf population was similarly developed using several sources. First, I have access to a wolf issue email list. I added organizations contributing to red wolf discussions on this email list to the population. Second, media mentions were identified by searching Nexis for mention of red wolves from 2017 to January 2019, excluding articles determined not to be relevant to red wolves. I also identified records of public comments regarding red wolves. This was done through searching Fish and Wildlife Service dockets for the phrase “red wolf”, and sorting all comments that listed a contributing organization. Any organization listed in a public comment on a red wolf

docket was added to the population. Wildsides.org has constructed a series of detailed videos documenting the red wolf conflict. I also included organizations identified in this video.

The use of multiple sources to create each population helped to mitigate the risk of focusing only on the most visible organizations from one source. Including organizations that may not be equally visible and that engage in different ways will allow for a complete and nuanced view of the population of organizational actors active around each issue.

| Issue Case | Data Sources |
|--|--|
| <i>Federal endangered species organizing</i> | Coalition organization member group lists Coalition conference participation Charity Navigator database list |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab</i> | Media mentions Preliminary interview mentions |
| <i>Red Wolf</i> | National wolf email list Media mentions Public comment records Wildsides.org video |

Table 0-1: Organization population data sources by issue case

After identifying the national conservation population, I selected 2 organizations that differ in each of the three cases. In the national case, I identified all organizations that were represented in at least two of the three population sources – organization database, conference participation, or coalition membership. Of these, I removed organizations that were primarily international in focus or that did not include a volunteer structure, in addition to organizations primarily focusing on areas not related to wildlife

conservation. Of the remaining organizations, National Public Lands Advocates and National Wildlife Group were selected because they met the criteria of focusing nationally while having a structure that used volunteers or members.

National Public Lands Advocates is an organization that specifically works on protecting a system of federal public lands as their strategy for wildlife conservation. They work primarily in Washington, D.C. advocating for legislation and funding to support the public lands system. They also engage with specific volunteer groups based in protected areas around the country, as well as engage in efforts with other organizations on specific wildlife measures. The organization has a board of 20 directors and a separate advisory council.

National Wildlife Group is a large, national organization focused on biodiversity conservation. They are a large organization that works on a variety of issues related to biodiversity conservation, and other environmental issues such as climate change. They engage in advocacy, litigation, and grassroots organizing, and have a board made up of 10 directors.

In the case of horseshoe crabs, from the population of organizations constructed from media and interview mentions, organizations were examined for clear horseshoe crab work and a structure that included volunteers. Horseshoe Crab Advocates and State Nature Association were selected because they met both of these criteria.

Horseshoe Crab Advocates is an organization specifically focused on horseshoe crab conservation. They are a small organization that engages in a variety of educational, research, policy, and stewardship projects all related to horseshoe crabs. They have one staff member and volunteer board members, and strategically engage staff and volunteers

in their wide-ranging efforts. Their board of nine directors includes a variety of backgrounds related to horseshoe crabs and is often engaged in on-the-ground volunteering. This organization is the only organization existing that focuses specifically on horseshoe crabs.

State Nature Association is a state-wide nature society that manages and runs educational facilities and programs for children and adults. They engage in some regional and local policy advocacy, but education is a main focus. They include horseshoe crabs in their work as a local species and conduct horseshoe crab counts while including horseshoe crabs in their other educational efforts. The organization also has a board of directors consisting of almost 20 members.

In the case of red wolves, from a list of organizations present in three of the four population sources, I selected 2 organizations that reported significant work on red wolves and used volunteers as part of their organizational structure, Ecosystem Connection Council and Red Wolf Advocates.

Red Wolf Advocates works specifically on red wolf conservation. They are based in North Carolina and engage in primarily educational activities. They also work in the local area where red wolves live, communicating with and educating landowners while engaging in advocacy to support red wolf recovery and survival. Like Horseshoe Crab Advocates, the organization has a single paid staff member and a small board of directors who are directly active in the organization's work. Ecosystem Connection Council is a national organization that has one main focus on creating corridors to allow for wildlife movement as a central conservation strategy. However, they have an office in the southeast at which their staff focuses on local issues including red wolf conservation. The

organization has a board consisting of eleven directors. The below table includes a summary of the attributes of each organization. Table 2-2 contains a summary of organizational attributes, and Chapter 4 includes more detailed descriptions of each organization's work.

| | Staff size | Founded | Budget | Primary Activities | Volunteer group size | Volunteer Activities |
|--|-------------------|----------------|------------------|--|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>Red Wolf - Ecosystem Connection Council</i> | 24 | 1991 | 1.9 million | Policy advocacy, research | 4 | Engage on the ground in programs such as camera trap program |
| <i>Red Wolf - Red Wolf Advocates</i> | 1 | 1997 | 100,000 | Curriculum and teacher partnerships, landowner and community engagement, advocates for species survival plan and captive breeding program | 10 | Educational initiatives, heavily involved in programs including engagement and education |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab - Horseshoe Crab Advocates</i> | 1 | 1995 | Less than 50,000 | Educational programs, community outreach, scientific advocacy | 10 | Heavily involved in programs including stakeholder engagement, education |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab - State Nature Association</i> | 181 | 1964 | 4.5 million | Camps, educational programs, trips, nature centers, plant sales, events, farm, citizen science, some policy advocacy | 285 | Contribute to educational programs, staff events, and participate in citizen science such as horseshoe crab counts |
| <i>National Conservation - National Wildlife Group</i> | 188 | 1989 | 20.7 million | Litigation, policy advocacy, grassroots engagement in public comment and petitions, election engagement | 1285 | Calling and texting to get participation in campaigns, petition-gathering |
| <i>National Conservation - National Public Lands Advocates</i> | 11 | 1975 | 2.1 million | Advocating for funding for public lands system, advocate and lobby around specific issues facing protected lands, collaborate with specific local groups | 20 | Volunteers at individual protected areas participate in national campaigns and advocacy |

Table 0-2: Summary of organization characteristics

Interview methodology

For each organization, I aimed to interview 2 staff members, the most senior leader of the organization possible and the person who works most closely with individual members, such as a membership director, grassroots organizer, or volunteer director. For four organizations, I was able to interview 2 staff members as planned. For one organization, I was only given access to one staff member. For one other, staff members were not willing to participate. I then worked with staff to connect me to volunteers, however they defined them, and share my study information. Three organizations were willing to do this, and I conducted interviews with 5 volunteers from each of these organizations, leading to a convenience sample of conservation volunteers.

Interviews with staff focused on recruitment strategies and goals and interaction with individuals, the enactment of values in those processes, and the negotiation of tension between individual and SMO values, and individual understandings of values. Individual volunteer interviews focused on participation patterns, motivations, values, and perceptions of value processes. A question about emotions and experiences with wildlife based on literature in qualitative measurement of wildlife values was also added to the individual interview protocol.

In order to measure process and change over time, I repeated all interviews after a six-month period. I expected that these changes would allow me to see the results of negotiation processes between individuals and organizations. This project aimed to reveal what factors are common in decisions to stay or leave organizations, any changes in values proclaimed by members, ways that members frame their participation and value

alignment, and other components. However, this provided the unexpected benefit of allowing for the collection of data during the COVID-19 context.

Because the first interviews were held in fall 2019, the 6-month period occurred almost exactly as the COVID-19 pandemic hit the United States. This complicated data collection, preventing in-person interviews, and also caused some participants to decline to participate in a second round due to conflicting demands, stress, and other factors. I allowed participants to choose to participate in a written response and was able to complete second interviews in some format with all volunteers. Staff members from 2 organizations were unwilling to participate in a second round. However, this context allowed me to collect data on the negotiation and experiences with the pandemic and movement for racial justice that are now used in this project.

I transcribed all interviews then coded the transcripts by hand using pen and paper and imported the codes and transcripts into NVivo. A coding scheme was used and developed focusing on value processes (Table 1).

| Code | Criteria |
|--|--|
| <i>Values overall</i> | Used to capture any discussion of values, defined as “conceptions of the desirable”. Includes things labeled as values and other concepts fitting that definition. Statements that discuss a value that the person does not hold will be labeled as “anti” |
| <i>Values of science/fact/objectivity</i> | Used to capture statements that discuss a value in science, facts, or objectivity |
| <i>Values of animal rights</i> | Used to capture statements that discuss a value in animal rights, suffering, individual animals’ experiences and lives. |
| <i>Moral values</i> | Used to capture statements that demonstrate a value in moral concepts such as kindness, caring, etc. |
| <i>Intrinsic nature values</i> | Used to capture statements that demonstrate a value in protecting nature, conservation, etc. because of their intrinsic values |
| <i>Human-centered values</i> | Used to capture statements that demonstrate a value in caring for people, equality, human welfare. |
| <i>Other values not captured in above</i> | Other values not captured in above |
| <i>Values differences between people and organizations</i> | Used to capture statements distinguishing people on the basis of values |
| <i>Issues facing wildlife</i> | Used to capture discussion of the problems facing wildlife or of wildlife decline. |
| <i>Causes of wildlife issues</i> | Used to capture discussion of the causes of wildlife decline or other wildlife issues |
| <i>Approaches</i> | Used to capture discussion of the strategies and approaches that individuals and/or organizations should take for conservation. |
| <i>Success</i> | Used to capture discussions of how organizational success is defined. |
| <i>Participation/engagement</i> | Used to capture discussion of strategies for recruiting and engaging people in conservation, as well as factors influencing participation decisions. |

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Identity statements in general</i> | Used to capture statements of how people view themselves |
| <i>Value-based identities</i> | Within identity statements, captures identities based on values (defined as conceptions of the desirable) |
| <i>Boundaries</i> | Used to capture discussions of differences and distinctions between organizations. |
| <i>Organizational interaction</i> | Used to capture discussions of organizations interacting with each other, either disagreeing, collaborating, or otherwise. |
| <i>Environmental behavior</i> | Used to capture discussions of behaviors that people report engaging in related to conservation, including with the organization discussed as well as outside activities. |
| <i>Use or significance of values</i> | Used to capture discussions of how values matter, such as how individuals view their values as mattering or how organizational values influence activities. |
| <i>Negotiation</i> | Used to capture discussion related to differences between organizations and individuals and processes related to and consequences of those differences. |

Table 0-3: Project coding scheme

Content analysis methodology

This project also uses content analysis of websites and social media of the organization, providing a view of how organizations perform these value concepts publicly. This allows me to supplement interview data, and to also look at similarities and differences between public statements made by organizations and more nuanced interview responses. This provides a view of the outcomes of value processes through public performance, alongside the interview data on the processes that organizations undertake.

Content analysis data were collected from the period of August 6th, 2019, marking the date of the first project interview, through mid-summer 2020. I collected all pages and information on organization websites. I also collected all posts and tweets by the

organizations on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook. Social media posts did not include replies or comments, but only primary posts or tweets. After initially collecting data in spring 2020, I revisited all organization websites and social media pages every 2-3 weeks to collect any new posts or additions to organization websites.

Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook were used for all organizations that had accounts. Of the three social media accounts, Horseshoe Crab Advocates only used Facebook and Red Wolf Advocates only used Facebook and Twitter, so these served as the sources of data for those organizations. State Nature Association had not used Twitter during the period of the project, so Twitter data were not included.

All website and social media data were then coded using the same coding scheme used to code interview data (Table 1). This primarily focused on types of proclaimed values, discussions about organizational collaboration and approaches, and value distinctions. This content analysis provided additional data to explore how values are proclaimed publicly and how organizations perform their identities.

A summary of the data analyzed for each organization is included in Table 2-4 below.

| Organization | Interview Data | Content Analysis |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Ecosystem Connection Council</i> | N/A | Website, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook |
| <i>Red Wolf Advocates</i> | 2 staff interviews | Website, Twitter, Facebook |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab Advocates</i> | 3 staff interviews 10 volunteer interviews | Website, Facebook |
| <i>State Nature Association</i> | 2 staff interviews 10 volunteer interviews | Website, Instagram, Facebook |
| <i>National Wildlife Group</i> | 2 staff interviews 10 volunteer interviews | Website, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook |
| <i>National Public Lands Advocates</i> | 3 staff interviews | Website, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook |

Table 0-4: Summary of project data sources

Chapter 3: Processes of Volunteer Value Negotiation

Many conservation organizations engage individual volunteer participants in their work, which in turn makes up a critical component of the organization's tactics.

Organizations function as actors in social-ecological systems, while also defining and setting rules and settings for their volunteers (McGinnis and Ostrom 2014). In this chapter, I use interview data to uncover processes of value negotiation in volunteers participating in wildlife conservation. I discuss patterns of individual participation, individual accounts of value frames and participation motivators, and volunteer perceptions of organizational values.

Values and Environmental Behavior

Because values relate to what is desired, they are motivational and directly influence behavior. In an examination of the link between values and environmental behavior, Stern and colleagues develop a model of support for social movements that conceptualizes shared values with a relevant social movement as an essential component of predisposition for movement support, and find support for this theory through survey data collected from respondents in the United States measuring support for the environmental movement (1999). As stated above, values can also be incorporated into identities.

Importantly, research continues to find across environmental issues that social factors such as culture and values are critical in understanding environmental problems and barriers to solutions, such as related to barriers to energy technologies, rather than technological factors (Sovacool 2009). Similarly, cultural values have been found to

influence environmental mobilization (Özler and Obach 2019). Liu and colleagues use the case of shark conservation and shark “finning” practices to uncover debates focuses on cultural, economic, and animal welfare values that guide conversation and debate (Liu, Gertz, and Newman 2019). Scholars have increasingly applied values to understanding social dynamics related to wildlife issues, as detailed in Chapter 1.

Existing literature on wildlife-related behavior has not addressed or accounted for behavior of volunteering for wildlife-focused efforts with organizations. This project offers an opportunity to understand how values are perceived and negotiated as influencing behavior within organizational contexts, a key site of wildlife-related human behavior. Interview data collected from participants in organizational volunteer efforts with these wildlife conservation cases demonstrate the ways that volunteers understand their values, the relative influence of values on their behaviors, and the ways that ways that values matter in organizational settings.

Findings: Volunteer Activities and Engagement

In each conservation case and organization, volunteers play different roles in organizational tactics and structure. Individuals in each case demonstrated different patterns of participation in organizational activities, including public engagement efforts, online organizing, citizen science, and event attendance.

Volunteering with national wildlife conservation

National conservation organizations engaged volunteers in several ways. While I was not given access to speak to volunteers with the National Public Lands Advocates organization, staff members discussed the ways that volunteers participated in their

organization. They relied primarily on staff, and mostly engaged with volunteers who served on-the-ground at specific local protected areas across the country. The organization collaborates with them to host events and advocate for specific issues related to the local protected areas. However, individuals most commonly engaged with the organization through social media, online actions, and donation.

In contrast, the National Wildlife Group has a large, formalized volunteer program that is coordinated across the organization. All five volunteers who participated in this study are part of National Wildlife Group's online volunteer community, through which they communicate via Slack and engage in online actions. Broadly, the activities are split into categories of online organizing, which often includes operating text banks to reach out to potential supporters (known as the texting team), and in-person activities such as tabling at local events in a volunteer's area or delivering petitions to local elected representatives. Most respondents participate in the texting team, with some serving as leaders or mentors to other volunteers. These online organizing mechanisms are primary programs, but in-person actions and projects are conducted and encouraged on a campaign-by-campaign basis. For example, Pamela from California worked to organize petition delivery in her congressional district during a campaign to defend the Endangered Species Act. She also described her work to collect petition signatures on a campaign against the delisting of the gray wolf removal from the endangered species list:

They started an outreach campaign to educate people and then to gather ... comments to deliver to Fish and Wildlife asking that the delisting not happen, so I did some texting outreach for that and then I began to do outreach for the public comment collection. And boy was that something...it was fabulous. People did it all over the country and...I was making a trip to the east coast so I took all my materials with me. I took an Amtrak trip because I'm trying not to fly anymore

and so I took a trip and brought my materials and talked to people all across the country... Along train stops I'd pop out and I'd collect signatures and I'd talk to people. And I posted a picture of a wolf and some information on the window of my train compartment and I talked to the conductor and I talked to the people on the train.

Another volunteer in North Carolina, Christine, described her work in the online organizing systems of the organization and her role as a mentor to volunteers working digitally: "I also am what's considered a mentor...to help other people get going and give them ideas and support and if somebody didn't get an email they needed to get or they were trying to figure out how to print something off or whatever...to sort of help them."

Volunteering with horseshoe crab conservation

In the case of horseshoe crabs, all five volunteers with State Nature Association participated in horseshoe crab counts. These events were regional efforts organized by multiple organizations, and involved individuals attending trainings to learn about counting methods. During the summer at full and new moons, volunteers go to local beaches where horseshoe crabs spawn and use specified methods to count horseshoe crabs in a specific area. These counts are recorded and reported. Research has examined citizen science efforts in the context of birding and highlighting the boundaries drawn between experts and amateurs and skepticism around data utility (Cherry 2018).

The organization also coordinates nature-based activities such as guided hikes, camps, and educational programs that some volunteers engage in. Some reported leading hikes, attending nature-based programs with their families, working as environmental educators, or volunteering for special events. However, many respondents only

participated in the activity of counting horseshoe crabs with the State Nature Association, and had not been involved in other activities with the organization.

Potentially due to the smaller size in contrast to the large State Nature Association, Horseshoe Crab Advocates volunteers tended to be more closely embedded within the organization and participate in a wider variety of activities organized and led by Horseshoe Crab Advocates. Projects were organized informally and volunteers reported participating in the projects that they viewed as fitting their individual strengths and interests. This ranged from being a local ambassador for horseshoe crab issues, to sponsoring a barrier fence on a particular beach, to collaborating on an education program, to financially supporting the organization. Some volunteers worked in the LAL industry or for other scientific entities doing work directly related to horseshoe crabs. Others had a background in filmmaking or environmental education that they used to participate in Horseshoe Crab Advocates' educational collaborative efforts.

Individuals also perceived different external activities as linked to their participation in the organization. For example, participation in beach and local cleanups were often seen as relevant activities even when not organized by State Nature Association. Three of the volunteers with State Nature Association reported having participated in beach cleanups. Additionally, many reported that they viewed themselves as ambassadors to local environmental issues, viewing themselves as educating and, at times, confronting family members, friends, and strangers about individual behavior standards. For example, Linda, a volunteer with State Nature Association expressed her experience with educating locals:

And now that I'm living here when I see little kids run up and they want to go on the dunes and play where the sea grass is, I'll go over to their parents and I'll say

'You know that's to preserve the homes on the other side... he can't be playing up there.' [And] people who pick up the horseshoe crab by the tail drives me to drink ... [one man] was picking them up and flipping them you know like they were a pancake or something. And I was up on the pier...and I said 'You're hurting them! Pick them up on their side!'

She viewed herself as responsible for passing on knowledge about horseshoe crabs and increasing recognition of their value, but also expressed frustration with what she perceived as a lack of appropriate knowledge in her community.

Because State Nature Association's identity and activities are locally focused, a sense of place is incorporated into the activities and framings of volunteers. A shared identity around stewardship of their local area is seen in their descriptions of their participation, even when not organized by the organization. This aligns with research showing that people with protectionist values are more likely to report conflict with other groups (Philips, Szuster, and Needham 2019). Similarly, engaging in backyard or neighborhood stewardship practices was also viewed as linked to participation with Horseshoe Crab Advocates, as illustrated by George:

When I walk the beach when the horseshoe crabs are in, people are concerned...They've never seen a horseshoe crab before. They don't want to touch it. They don't want to flip it. They don't want anything to do with it. So you talk to them and you explain to them, 'You pick one up and you take your hand and put it right in the horseshoe crab and it's not gonna bite.' And then so hopefully they'll come and they'll know to flip them over.

This volunteer also worked to engage his community in Horseshoe Crab Advocates' backyard stewardship sanctuary program, that enlisted beachside communities and encouraged them to declare themselves as horseshoe crab-friendly.

George took the program to his local town council and organized property owners to sign-on to agree to participate in the program, eventually leading the town to be recognized as a sanctuary town, adopting the horseshoe crab as the official mascot, and installing interpretive materials. He viewed himself as an ambassador for the species in his community and viewed himself as bringing the organization's work to the community itself.

Volunteers in both organizations participated in a range of activities, with Horseshoe Crab Advocates' volunteers largely bringing their individual professional expertise in to a range of organization's projects on horseshoe crabs and the larger State Nature Association coordinating formal programs and recruiting volunteers in a structured way for broader environmental goals.

Volunteering with red wolf conservation

In the case of red wolves, I was not given access to speak with individual volunteers. However, conversations with staff members and social media provided information about the activities that volunteers performed in the organizations. Ecosystem Connection Council engaged volunteers in their local work to install camera traps and educate landowners on red wolf presence in the area. However, the organization is large, formal, and staff-focused. In contrast, the red wolf-focused organization, Red Wolf Advocates, engaged volunteers in a range of tasks. Staff reported that they are frequently contacted by prospective volunteers living outside of the local area, who have participated in educational and fundraising efforts to raise awareness of red wolf issues in their communities, even far away from red wolf habitat. The organization also engages

students and others who lend their professional expertise to particular projects, such as education, research, and communications in ways that are similar to the horseshoe crab Horseshoe Crab Advocates. Volunteers participate in similar ways to the Horseshoe Crab Advocates, coming together to serve as board members or engage in specific projects in a less formal way.

Through a range of tactics and strategies, conservation organizations engage volunteers through a variety of structures and projects. Research has shown a continued focus on the individual level for addressing environmental and conservation issues, and a lack of focus on cultural, policy-based, or systemic approaches (Balsiger 2010). National Wildlife Group volunteers expressed a combination of wanting to address personal responsibility and enact individual morals in their behavior, but they choose to participate in advocacy with an organization focusing most of its work on policy, litigation, and similar approaches. In contrast, State Nature Association volunteers found themselves focusing more on individual issues and responsibility approaches. They wanted to take action in their backyard and in their own region, as opposed to focusing on a broader level.

Individual Values

Volunteers were asked to discuss the values that they held and the degree to which values influence their participation in conservation activities. Across cases, a combination of nature-focused, human-focused, and morally framed values were perceived as influencing their participation decisions.

Values proclaimed by national wildlife volunteers

Volunteer participants in National Wildlife Group described their values using nature framing, but every participant contextualized their values of sustainability and protecting the planet and wildlife as related to human wellbeing and survival. Pamela summed up how she views a value of protecting the natural environment and human wellbeing as fundamentally connected but also misunderstood by others:

Really deep biophilia...includes I think care for humans too... environmentalists are painted as 'Oh you hate people. You hate humans. You just care about nature. You don't care about people.' Well I think that's really not true. I think...the deeper question is if we care for the mental health of people and the physical health of people. Because if you don't have healthy nature, you don't have a healthy environment you don't have health, mental or physical health. It's just part of how we're built as humans.

Overall, the overwhelming value frame articulated by National Wildlife Group volunteers was based on morals and ethics. Volunteers articulated that they valued treating people and other species with compassion, which motivated their volunteer work. Phrases like “common good”, “respect”, “care for the vulnerable” and “interconnection” were used to describe how they articulated their values, as they discussed how their values influenced their environmental and conservation participation.

Another often-articulated framing was the understanding and desire to recognize the interconnectedness of humans and other species, and a rejection of viewing other species as resources. This closely aligned with framings of valuing nature but recognizing human dependence, as Pamela illustrates:

'How can we exploit them? What can I get from them?' Rather than thinking about them as relatives ...who need to be cared for if we're all gonna be

healthy...I mean we can't even do that with other human beings I mean you look at that and this coronavirus situation like it's hard for us to do that with other people, so of course it's gonna be hard to do that with other species.

Each respondent viewed themselves as guided by a moral responsibility to care for others in a broad sense. A perception that there is a moral responsibility and norm of protecting the vulnerable and a value of empathy and fairness was seen as guiding them to do volunteer work that they believed made the world a better place. In this frame, wildlife was seen defined as a vulnerable group and viewed as needing of advocacy in order to level the playing field. As Pamela stated:

I sense that there's a care for the vulnerable, because other species don't have voices that are heard by humans in the same way. So some people say we have to speak for those who can't speak for themselves. So a care for the vulnerable...and maybe a care for fairness. You know fairness and balance. That things are right now unbalanced on behalf of humans and specifically on behalf of rich humans. Corporate humans who have a lot of money and a lot of power.

I term these morally-framed values as the “moral conservationist” value set, in which wildlife conservation was identified as part of a broader set of moral values held by participants. This related to how individuals can frame a range of behaviors are relevant to broader identities around social justice (Dewey 2020).

Participants in National Wildlife Group also often discussed their values in contrast to values held by others, often in the context of behaviors and efforts based on stopping a particular action. For example, Shirley viewed her moral values in contrast to what she sees as the values of opponents: “We are really under attack. Our common good is under attack. And everything is on the line...They're showing that human life doesn't

have much value let alone animal life. That everything is just really a resource for whoever can afford or wants it or whatever...Everything is meant for us to be used.”

Values framed as in contrast to values held by others were often discussed along political lines.

Research in conservation has indicated that community cohesion and identity are important in facilitating communication and trust around wildlife issues (Duong n.d.). Similarly, research on residents of contaminated areas in Ecuador demonstrates that context at a community level influences frameworks of values and culture (Hernandez 2019). Participants who viewed themselves as isolated and in opposition to others may face challenges in using the tools of collective identity to facilitate change. National Wildlife Group’s actions and projects are often defensive in nature, particularly in recent years, working to challenge or stop proposed actions by the Trump administration or others. As such, volunteers are often engaged in activities such as speaking in opposition to proposals, fighting against climate change, and fighting against injustice. This makes sense given the articulated values that they see in contrast to others, as the work of the organization is often in the context of an opponent.

National Wildlife Group volunteers expressed a moral conservationist framing around their values in most cases, and framed their actions as in defense of their own values against those who do not share the same values. As opposed to proclaiming values that closely reflect either the natural environment or human wellbeing nexus, volunteers proclaimed complex ethically-focused values around the interconnected nature of humans and the environment and a framing around care for the vulnerable that included both humans and other species.

Values proclaimed by horseshoe crab volunteers

Volunteers working on horseshoe crab conservation and volunteering with the State Nature Association often discussed conservation and nature values. For example, Elizabeth discussed her perceived value of conservation and stewardship when asked about the values that she holds and how those values are perceived as informing her behavior:

The most obvious I guess would be a conservation value. I strongly believe in that and I strongly believe that you have to take care of the earth if you want the earth to take care of you. ... And then I guess another similar value would be stewardship. We as humans, we're stewards of the earth and you have to actively participate in being a steward. You can't just sit back and complain about things or you know sit back and complain about climate change and you don't actually do anything or you don't educate yourself.

The connection to nature and focus on nature expressed by these volunteers connects to research that emphasizes the role of connection to nature for support for environmental policy (Baur, Ries, and Rosenberger 2020). These could be considered nature-based values, but they were also often discussed in the frame of protecting natural resources for future generations. This represented a hybrid intrinsic-nature value and human-focused value, which also echoes aspects of National Wildlife Group volunteers in the national conservation case. I term this value set “complex utilitarian” because of the combination of reverence for nature with a view that it exists for humans to enjoy on a cultural or spiritual level, as opposed to necessarily for a traditional natural resources frame. For example, Linda stated, “I’m really big on trying to conserve what we have and

figure out ways to better the environment. I'd love it to be around for my grandchildren. Healthy around for my grandchildren.”

Other respondents discussed their concern and work on conservation issues as part of a moral and ethical value, that they used to negotiate and understand their positions on particular conservation issues. Horseshoe Crab Advocates volunteers like Jason did discuss nature-based values; “I love nature and the natural world you know I care about the environment.” However, the volunteers with Horseshoe Crab Advocates tended to frame their values in terms of morals and ethics. For example, Stephen, a Horseshoe Crab Advocates volunteer, demonstrates how he weighs conservation values and values of human health and wellbeing when thinking about the different factors affecting horseshoe crab populations:

You have to weigh the benefits versus the costs. The cost is not monetary, the cost is loss of habitat loss of life. The animals losing their lives. When you look at the benefit every person in the world has been affected by horseshoe crabs because of the LAL test. ...If you look at the actual mortality of the Delaware Bay population due to LAL manufacturing it is 0.019 which rounds up to 0.20 percent...It's a negligible effect, but to that negligible effect you get to see huge benefit to human health. So I would take that offer anytime.

Stephen, who has professional experience in LAL use, expressed similar understandings of moral values:

I believe in ecology and doing the right thing...Doing the right thing even though it might not be popular, it's the right thing to do...so those kind of causes I support. It's very important to me to have understanding of all different aspects of use of a resource. Especially the horseshoe crab and one thing that a lot of people don't understand is that the horseshoe crab has touched every human on earth.

George discussed how he viewed work to protect horseshoe crabs and projects to flip them as based on a value of compassion for living things, including animals and humans, that he perceived as being based on the values of a staff member: “He comes from the compassion aspect of it also. You know you’re helping an animal and I think when people get that part of it then that can carry over to something else. And maybe they’ll start they flip the horseshoe crab... so it takes it to other things maybe it’ll make somebody want to help their neighbor.”

In addition to the complex utilitarian frame, the community-centered framing of State Nature Association and Horseshoe Crab Advocates volunteer activities comprises what I call the “community steward” model, in which the values related to horseshoe crab behavior were associated with the crabs being a part of the local ecosystem and community and their protection being related to care for their area.

The contrast between the value frames most often articulated by horseshoe crab versus national volunteers in some ways aligns with the differences in projects and focus of the organizations. The national volunteers were more likely to express moral conservationist value frames, while Horseshoe Crab Advocates volunteers expressed a combination of moral conservationist, community steward and complex utilitarian values. For example, the differences between organizations working primarily on defensive projects opposing problematic administrative actions as opposed to promoting conservation in a specific regional area is consistent with the framings of participants’ proclaimed values and motivations. Additionally, the fact that horseshoe crabs have a very direct and well-known relationship to human health through the use of LAL might influence the value set expressed. However, the participants articulated common values

across cases. Specifically, participants tended to link their values of nature to human health or wellbeing values, and participants also articulated moral values when discussing their held values. The use of moral values as framing relates to findings on the influence of altruism on decision-making (Dietz and Whitley 2018b). Morals were seen as significant to how individuals constructed their values which included value of both human wellbeing and preservation of other species, which aligns with scientific understanding of environmental issues but not with some remaining common discourse framing environmentalism as “not caring about humans”. Beyond the nature and human framing, three other value frames with more complexity were articulated by participants.

| Value Frame | Description |
|--------------------------------|---|
| <i>Moral conservationist</i> | Desirable outcome as moral care for other creatures, including humans. Conservation as a moral responsibility |
| <i>Community steward</i> | Desirable outcome is preservation of a part of a local community or local ecosystem as part of identity or concern for local area |
| <i>Complex utilitarian</i> | Desirable outcome is preservation of nature for the sake of other humans or future generations to experience and enjoy |
| <i>Nature-based</i> | Desirable outcome is preservation of nature, without explicitly mentioning humans |
| <i>Traditional utilitarian</i> | Desirable outcome is preservation of nature for humane use of resources |

Table 0-1: Value frame typology

| Organization | Primary Value Frame Expressed by Volunteers |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <i>National Wildlife Group</i> | Moral conservationist |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab Advocates</i> | Moral conservationist, Complex utilitarian, Community steward |
| <i>State Nature Association</i> | Complex utilitarian, Community steward |

Table 0-2: Primary volunteer value frames by organization

The Significance of Values for Participation Decisions

Values as motivators for participation

Research has looked at motivation for volunteer engagement in multiple activities, finding evidence of factors such as self-esteem, leadership, perceived reward, and logistical factors as mattering for volunteers (Dwyer et al. 2013; Grimm and Needham 2012; Harrison 2017). Allowing for an examination of the role of values in motivation, volunteers in National Wildlife Group discussed values in addition to other factors that they argued influenced their participation decisions.

Perceived alignment between organizational values or activities and participant values were often highlighted as motivators for National Wildlife Group volunteers. For example, Rebecca highlighted value alignment as a principal motivator for her participation: “The values the same as mine and wanting to protect what I want to protect. I want to protect the land I want to protect the wildlife... So anybody that pretty much wants to protect the environment and wildlife I’ll work with them.” However, Janet discussed that much of the value alignment she believes she has with the organization is assumed:

I have a series of assumptions about environmental organizations. I assume that they want to protect as much biodiversity as possible...like everybody thinks the same way. I recognize that they don't. For instance, there's an organization like Greenpeace which is very activist and may do things that I don't agree with necessarily. But I don't think I think a lot about the values of that particular organization...I'm not considering it very carefully.

In other words, this volunteer had a particular conservation value set, and assumed value alignment with an organization that focused on conservation. Similarly, other volunteers seemed to perceive a general value alignment with the organization which allowed them to assume alignment with projects that the organization pursued. Because individuals are motivated to align their behavior with their identities and values, volunteers would be motivated to frame themselves as in alignment with an organization with which they engage.

In addition to conservation values, values of justice and equity were highlighted as motivational. Volunteers discussed the ways that the approach of the organization and perceived ethics in their work determined their comfort in participating. For example, Rebecca discussed the ways that justice and inclusivity served as a deal breaker for her participation with an organization:

If they don't... have respect for other individuals from different communities. They've gotta have that and if they don't, forget it. It's basically very cut and dry. I'm very concerned about indigenous populations being protected...If I see any kind of anything that even leans towards any kind of prejudice I'm gone. Absolutely gone.

If Rebecca saw statements or behaviors from the organization that she defined as problematic, that served as a signal of value misalignment. Janet discussed similar values

in terms of bipartisan approaches and including volunteers and supporters of multiple political identities. “The values that I look for ...is to make sure that like the organization [is] reaching out in a way that is equitable to lots of people... I like them to be balanced in terms of political balance...so [National Wildlife Group] seems really focused on the issues and non-partisan work.”

Responses to these questions highlighted the relative influence of values as compared to other factors or motivators. For example, Pamela illustrated that value alignment along with effectiveness and openness to respond to new situations are critical factors for her: “That they align with my values, that’s the first thing. That they’re effective. That’s the second thing... And now I would add to that that they’re responsive to different situations and ideas.”

In many ways, volunteers of the State Nature Association expressed similar framings of their participation and the relative salience of their values. For example, Elizabeth viewed perceived value alignment as a bottom-line necessity to allow her to work with an organization. “My values matter in every decision that I make, including on deciding to participate in a program. I won't compromise my values.” A value alignment framed around conservation and traditionally focused on the environment was common with other State Nature Association volunteers, like Thomas:

The values of organizations matter a lot to us. We tend toward supporting and participating in those organizations that are working to promote a connection with the natural environment. If they are making a concerted effort to preserve and protect the resources of the world around us, we are likely to want to participate in programs and activities they promote.

However, it was clear that for many it was less important to have a specific and detailed value alignment as opposed to a more general perceived alignment between the participants' values and the mission of the organization. Volunteers did not report having considered the values of an organization prior to participating, despite feeling that value alignment was an important factor. For example, Elizabeth stated:

I hadn't really researched their values outside of what I know generally about them, that they're a conservation entity... and their core values I believe align with my core values...but just say for example they had certain political leanings...I'm not aware of that and unless it was something that was a major influence upon what they did, I would take the horseshoe crab survey as something that I believe in the value of that activity. So I would participate in that unless it was something major that I definitely did not agree in but I didn't go out and research their values in any depth as far as you know those type of things except that I know that they're a conservation type of entity.

This quote illustrates her desire to have a general value alignment based on the specific activity, but less concern about total value alignment with the organization. A sense of shared or compatible identity was not strongly framed around specific value sets, but instead around broader social or environmental issues.

Volunteers holding a community steward value set also expressed values as motivating their participation and desire to work with State Nature Association. Some volunteers expressed that they had a value in preserving their local environment and giving back to the community, over broader environmental preservation and ideological values. State Nature Association has a local and regional focus. For example, it was common for volunteers to express that they wanted to learn about their region and local wildlife, and to meet neighbors and people in their community, like Linda: "It's just the

different ways to be involved. To meet people. For me, that's what the primary thing was. I didn't want to just be confined to the people I was gonna meet in my community.”

Research on participation in community-oriented science has found altruistic motivations for participation with a goal of giving back to one's community, which is echoed in State Nature Association's community focus (Carrera et al. 2018). Stewardship organizations have been found to similarly activate a form of engagement that includes leadership and community connection, and argues that this is a particularly useful form of engagement (Yagatich, Galli Robertson, and Fisher 2018).

Personal experiences with environmental degradation or biodiversity loss were discussed relatively infrequently by National Wildlife Group volunteers. Instead, National Wildlife Group volunteers often talked about national environmental issues and engaged through media coverage. Scholars have found that consumption of partisan media strongly influences climate beliefs , and National Wildlife Group participants appear to express similar approaches to understanding and being exposed to environmental issues more broadly in media (Carmichael and Brulle 2018). They were engaged in situations through which they'd had no direct experience. Previous research has highlighted that direct experience with environmental problems like natural disasters influence identity formation around climate movement participation (Dewey 2020) and policy preferences, but that social and political variables are also important explanatory factors. These respondents highlight that preference and deep engagement is possible even when volunteers haven't experienced an issue directly and don't face direct, personal harm (Shepard et al. 2018; Zanocco et al. 2019), and also may indicate that processes around biodiversity conservation participation differ from those around climate

and other issues, potentially because of their varied cultural relevance and framing. While research has found a general tendency for young people to be more pro-environmental in their views, the volunteers of each of these organizations ranged in age and were not more often young (Johnson and Schwadel 2019).

Non-value participation motivators

In addition to values, main themes of ease of participation and effectiveness were stated as motivating factors for working with organizations. Volunteers often discussed the ways that the organization's opportunities to participate needed to both align with their skills and make participation easy enough to fit their schedules and other life commitments. These volunteers experienced many conflicting priorities and demands on their time, and therefore wanted to work with an organization that they could efficiently join, valuing attributes such as efficiency and effective and clear communication. Christine highlighted this by declaring that she doesn't have time for inefficient systems or programs: "One thing I look for is how well organized are you, because I don't have the time to mess around with that."

They wanted a not stressful environment, including flexibility in pursuing specific tasks that aligned with their comfort level and training. For instance, Janet reflected, "I think about my strengths. I'm detail oriented I'm also good with I'm mostly good with computers...and I'm introverted. It takes a lot of effort for me to do social things, so I generally tend to think how much effort is it gonna take in terms of the social effort." As discussed above, Janet highlighted her assumption of value alignment, and felt that this baseline alignment allowed her to focus more on capacity in her decisions than on values.

Others who participated in texting felt that texting was a useful way for them to engage, because it aligned with their sense of being introverted and preference for activities that didn't include crowds or in-person interaction, as Janet illustrated: "I'm also introverted and so texting has been this really nice thing to do like to feel like you're making a difference."

Similarly, Janet had experience texting with other organizations, so highlighted the importance of the fact that National Wildlife Group's text list tended to be well-cultivated and therefore reduced the number of unpleasant and confrontational exchanges experienced while volunteering: "[National Wildlife Group] has this really nicely curated list of people who are generally polite and generally positive about the environment, so that's been super pleasant." Similarly, it was important that volunteers got support in activities and clarity in instructions and information. For example Christine shared, "I've done some letters to the editor writing for [other organization] and the thing that really stands out to me about the two of them is that they're very easy to communicate with and they're very clear in their directions. What they need from you and how you can go about things."

Finally, National Wildlife Group volunteers highlighted themes of effectiveness of both overall organization work and volunteer programs in particular. For example, volunteers discussed that they choose their activities in a way that they perceived maximized the output for their invested time and resources by working with an effective organization. For example, Shirley framed the organizations work as essential: "Thank god that they're the people that take on big corporations and the government because we without them doing that so much of this stuff would be just unquestioned." Pamela

mentioned effectiveness and value alignment as the main pillars of her participation decisions: “I really think they’re effective and they work in areas that I feel like are really important. Biodiversity is really, really important to me personally and I think it’s really important for human and planetary health. So those two features: their area of focus and whether I think they’re effective at what they do.”

National Wildlife Group volunteers also discussed that they sought a sense of effectiveness or impact in their individual volunteer work. They perceived that other organizations did not meaningfully use their volunteers or allow them to tangibly participate in work that was perceived as helpful. They were motivated by a sense of engagement and being valued in their contributions. A sense of agency was also important in motivating others in actions such as signing petitions, as Shirley stated: “A lot of people would say to me these past months, when I would go and talk to people to have them sign the petition for the Endangered Species Act, the majority of the people that I spoke with said at least this ...was a viable something they could actually do.” Kennedy and colleagues have argued that a sense of efficacy is an important dimension of class differences in participation beyond previous assumptions about concern, with low-status participants feeling that their actions have little effect on environmental issues. These respondents provide evidence for the importance of efficacy for their behavior, which could underscore a dimension of inequality in environmental organization by class (Kennedy and Givens 2019). A sense of effectiveness and ability to influence change was seen as important for volunteers.

In the case of horseshoe crabs, many horseshoe crab survey volunteers expressed a desire to learn more about the horseshoe crab issue specifically and about the ecosystem and history of the animal. For example, Margaret said,

I like the connection they actually were able to connect the count that we do with... some background when we went for our training count. And I found it very interesting that the horseshoe crabs ... they have to watch the numbers now because they have started to decline and they had thrived but it's partly because of how they're being used...And they have some very amazing benefits. I mean they're starting to see some possibilities with curing cancer because of the blood ...right now they use it in pharmaceutical companies use it for testing and...apparently they can hang the horseshoe crabs up get the blood and still return a lot of the horseshoe crabs. I'm sure a lot of them die in the process but they can return them to the wild. Others are used in this fishing industry as bait to catch squid and so forth, so they go through a lot. But anyway...our count is to help them get data so that they can set a number each year and that's gonna be the limit for harvesting the horseshoe crabs. So I can see a direct connection there.

Echoed in this discussion for education was a desire for agency and impact in the volunteer's participation. They were motivated by a sense that they could understand and see a positive effect from their time and connect it to current issues of concern. Another volunteer framed much of her participation around her child's learning and an activity that they could participate in together while developing her conservation ethic.

A sense and desire for efficacy was seen as motivating behavior in a variety of cases, and particularly highlighted by State Nature Association volunteers for horseshoe crab counting like Thomas: "Certainly is a value-added thing, like what's gonna make a difference? And I think something like what we've done with the counting certainly does.

You know they need feet on the ground, so to have people go out and be there and see how many are there, similar to counting birds...so something that adds value.” Similarly, Margaret expressed the framing of efficacy: “I think first thing is that I see some benefit to the environment or to somebody ... And feel that it kind of passes a certain amount of rigor...that people have thought it out well.” The horseshoe crab counts organized by State Nature Association, which all 5 State Nature Association volunteers participated in, are used to collect data on horseshoe crab populations. Margaret connected her desire for efficacy to the specific project and it’s goals: “The horseshoe crab count ...they really were working to keep it consistent. Very specific about the instructions and how many paces before you would put the square down, and don’t count outside the square and everybody had the same instructions so...I liked that. That it had a possibility at least of being good research and good data.”

As with National Wildlife Group, volunteers did express logistical and practical constraints to their participation that they viewed as important. This aligns with previous research, but not as much with the primary framing of the organizations as they work to get recruitment in their programs. Elizabeth discussed how her she looked for activities that were available and fit with her schedule and constraints and amount of commitment:

Well, they are extremely flexible. I think that’s one of the biggest things. There’s a couple different groups that do it and I’ve talked to a couple of the other ones as well before I found the ones that I do with it now, and they weren’t quite as flexible. It was like you had to attend classroom hours and do this and that. and they gave us all the training here with the one that I go with now...The education was there but it was much more laid back.

While volunteers across cases discussed a variety of factors that they negotiated when making participation decisions, values were woven throughout and related to other non-value factors. For some volunteers with Horseshoe Crab Advocates, perceived value alignment was described as the most important factor determining their participation choices. For example, Paul stated:

The value set of any organization is critical in my assessment of whether to be engaged in their effort on any level. In the case of [Horseshoe Crab Advocates], a compassionate approach to [horseshoe crabs] is certainly important, but it is also the non-judgmental approach that [Horseshoe Crab Advocates Staff Member] takes in spreading the message. In my work as a documentarian, I am focused on taking an “honest broker” approach towards any issue, and want to hear all sides...Delaware prefers to educate the public and only regulate if necessary. [Horseshoe Crab Advocates] practices a similar approach, with an underlying value of compassion towards living creatures.

In a different way, Robert framed specifically collaborating with people with different conservation values was important, and participated with Horseshoe Crab Advocates because of a perceived alignment in approaches:

The values of [Horseshoe Crab Advocates] are pristine and so there’s really no challenge there. I believe in everything that they’re doing and the programs and the education that they’re providing but at the same time I have to be amendable to dance with someone who might have contrasting opinions because without that I’m not going to be able to make progress. So it’s hard...I have a core belief that and a code that I live by on the research I do and even in the way that I live my life and the food that I choose to eat, but I do understand that I do have to and in order to necessitate advancement I need to be a little bit more open and less adversarial.

George felt that the approach of the main Horseshoe Crab Advocates staff member in connecting varied stakeholder groups aligned with his value of collaboration across opinions. At Horseshoe Crab Advocates, personal relationships were a component factor explaining participation of volunteers. This largely makes sense given the large role of the primary staff member in Horseshoe Crab Advocates' programs. When describing factors that determine his participation, George shared his personal connection to the staff member:

The person. I like to talk to them and then I've started a conversation and we probably talked for an hour and a half, so I felt comfortable I like what he was doing...and how I could help. This was something that was important to me so I found an organization...he basically was the only one doing this at the time...So it was just one of those things that was a natural fit. It was important to me and I liked what he was doing.

However, George also shared the ways that he viewed efficacy and approaches of various organizations as important:

You know there's some things that there's another group...their home organization is doing a wonderful job but our [state] chapter is not, so it's not something I would support. I wouldn't donate to them. I wouldn't do this I wouldn't do that. I wouldn't for various reasons but there are other organizations I look for... So it's important on the organization what they do. What they're trying to promote.

Similarly, Stephen, who is involved with Horseshoe Crab Advocates through his company reflected on the importance of perceived value alignment:

For me personally even if my company didn't get involved with [Horseshoe Crab Advocates] I believe I still would as a supporter. So I believe in ecology and

doing the right thing. And that's, like I told you, my dad taught me that. Doing the right thing even though it might not be popular it's the right thing to do. And so those kinds of causes I support. It's very important to me to have understanding of all different aspects of use of a resource...and getting the word out the way [staff member] does about the status of the animal and all of the different uses, because there's some people who would shut us down tomorrow if they could because they don't understand. They don't understand how it affects them. They don't understand how it affects human health.

As with the other organizations, a perception of efficacy was viewed as important. Volunteers viewed themselves as wanting and being able to contribute to conservation and used perceptions of efficacy to guide their decision making, such as George, "If I'm gonna spend my time working on something I want it to benefit the most number of people possible." Implicit in the desires and calls for efficacy from multiple organization's volunteers is a value process, as volunteers are evaluating effectiveness at reaching a desired and valued outcome.

In sum, volunteers did view their values as important in determining their participation with an organization or with a particular activity. However, they also described the factors of ease, support, organization, and effectiveness as also being important factors in addition to those values. However, many volunteers reported a general perceived value alignment more than a detailed and careful evaluation of multiple value dimensions. In short, volunteers often shared that if an organization was broadly working on an issue that they viewed as in line with their values, they would then assume a value alignment unless they found evidence otherwise. They relied on general signals of compatibility in approaches and goals.

For example, Shirley, a National Wildlife Group volunteer, talked about how she decides to work with an organization: “Well for me it’s people that don’t want to go back, go backwards to the way that it was. I want to work with organizations that really want to make change major change, but doing it though in a peaceful manner. In a peaceful manner but then yet with strength too.” In this statement and others about values is implied a perception of a shared vision of the future, which can function as a sense of collective identity. This provides evidence for previous findings that shared visions of the future can serve as a collective sense of self (Jonason 2019). Collective identities have been shown to be particularly important in influencing perceptions about conservation actions (Duong n.d.).

In general, participants often reflected on the importance of a perceived alignment between themselves and their volunteer participation. However, for some the perceived value alignment was framed around alignment with the particular activity with which they were volunteering. In these cases, there was not a perceived sense of shared identity and value orientation with the organization itself. If respondents viewed an activity as compatible with how they viewed their values, they were comfortable participating. A strong collective identity framed around the organization itself was not present or proclaimed. In contrast, some volunteers did frame the importance of perceived value alignment as sharing values with the organization. In these cases, there was a sense of shared identity with the organization that was seen as important for the participants.

Paul had a more individualized view of values, sharing his perception of the ways that individual and organization values can align:

There’s always a distinction to be made between individual values and the organization’s values....If you accept the fact that the first order of business of

any organization is to sustain itself...they want to keep themselves going, so consequently their values can move around a little bit ... and when it comes to the environmental issues because these organizations...tend to use the kind of alarmist rhetoric as an effective fundraiser.

Paul viewed organizational values as generally manufactured and strategic, as opposed to the more nuanced, genuine, and complex values held by individuals.

While conservation values and values related to the environment were critical, participants often discussed organizational values with framing of ethics and practices, such as how they use donations or how they engage with volunteers or supporters. Additionally, volunteers often viewed values as related to an organization's internal practices, and equated value alignment with an assumption of ethical practices. If an organization was found to act in a way that they did not believe was ethical, they expressed they would be unwilling to work together, as Margaret stated: "If I found that an organization was ripping people off...I do want to know if I donate money for example to something that they do give that money to be as efficient as possible in doing what they purport to be doing. And so for the organization I don't care that they share necessarily share my political views but if what we're doing meets those needs."

Conclusion: Individual Processes of Identity Negotiation in Organizational Settings

In the case of the species-specific organizations as well as national wildlife groups, volunteers were engaged in several types of behaviors and projects. This includes activities like online organizing and texting and gathering and delivering petition signatures, as well as horseshoe crab counts and other local activities. Volunteers in all

settings tend to reflect values of nature or conservation, through typologies of “community steward”, “complex utilitarian”, and “moral conservationist” value sets.

However, volunteers with National Wildlife Group almost always framed their values as related to human survival and well-being as well as protecting nature for intrinsic values. Values were often framed in terms of values or an ethic of care for others, which did not separate the environment or other species from humans. Moral conservationist conceptions of values were commonly expressed, highlighting recent research that has highlighted morals as cultural and class performance (Huddart Kennedy, Baumann, and Johnston 2019). This contrasts with common conceptions of environmental values that focus on utilitarian values for the benefit of humans versus nature-focused values, and volunteers often viewed humans and other species as linked in a much more complex way (Manfredo 2008; Manfredo et al. 2003). While environmental values research typically frames values as either a desired outcome of preserving existing nature because of intrinsic value, or as around the environment existing for the physical and tangible benefit of humans. In contrast, these respondents demonstrated value typologies that did not fit either of these two frameworks because they linked humans and other species in more complex ways. This could indicate that volunteers engaged in wildlife conservation actively differ from the general population in their conceptions of values related to wildlife or that value groupings previously used don’t adequately capture the complexity of values related to wildlife. Conceptions of local versus global areas of focus and tangible versus spiritual or cultural values were present in these three complex value framings. As such, considering these dimensions in addition to the

humans and nature value dichotomy present in previous literature can provide added nuance to typologies of environmental values.

This was echoed in by volunteers for species specific issues, who tended to frame conservation values and values related to protecting nature and species, but entwined those values with future generations' ability to experience the outdoors in a complex utilitarian and community steward framing. As such, the human-centered and nature-centered values were deeply engrained and connected in volunteers in both cases. However, National Wildlife Group volunteers often discussed their morals in contrast to other groups, which aligns with the projects undertaken by the group that typically focused on defending against problematic and harmful proposals and legislation. Horseshoe Crab Advocates and State Nature Association volunteers tended to participate in projects that were more aligned with stewardship and the proclaimed values of protecting future generations.

Findings indicated that values were important to respondents. This is not surprising, as respondents negotiate identity and value processes and are motivated to both behave in line with how they see themselves and frame their values as compatible with their behavior. Participants tended to view their values as important motivators for the volunteer projects in which they engaged. They viewed their decision to engage in projects as in line with their moral, community-oriented, and conservation values. However, respondents did not necessarily actively consider the values of the organization with which they participated, instead framing their value and behavior alignment around specific projects and efforts of the organization. It's important to note that values are subject to framing and narrative processes of volunteers. While the values respondents

proclaim are largely consistent with the activities that they participate in, processes of forming and clarifying the self-concept through post hoc alignment of values and behaviors is likely present in this alignment. These findings point to how volunteers frame and view their values in their organizational work.

Organizational value alignment was seen as important but was assumed based on the fact that an organization worked on conservation. In other words, an organization was assumed to share the individual's values if they worked on environmental issues. However, the degree to which an organization articulates particular desirable outcomes and focuses their environmental work on a variety of specific values was not considered.

For some, this was because the value alignment was assumed, but for others, organizational alignment was based on an idea of "dealbreaker attributes". Respondents were comfortable working on specific projects that they saw as compatible with their values and assumed sufficient alignment with the organization, but felt that certain dealbreaker behaviors would signal sufficient misalignment that would cause them to reconsider their participation. For example, a volunteer's perception that the organization was excluding members of marginalized communities in an organization's work or misappropriating donor funds and using them for purposes deemed unethical would signal incompatible values.

While values were described as significant determining factors for volunteer participation in behaviors and with organizations, a sense of efficacy and utility of the work as well as practical and logistical factors related to the behavior were also considered to be important in determining what activities participants would engage in and what organizations they would be willing to work with. In sum, volunteers expressed

a complex set of value-framings that they actively worked to align with their own behavior.

Chapter 4: Value Proclamation and Approaches in Conservation Organizations

A case study approach evaluating the influence of values within three conservation arenas illuminates the role of values in organizational settings as values both affect and are shaped by institutional and individual processes. As stated above, a great deal of human activity related to wildlife occurs in organizational settings.

This project contributes to sociological knowledge by uncovering how values are functioning within organizational settings and how they influence organizational conservation activities. Organizations participate as actors in social-ecological systems, and values processes can inform their interactions and outcomes within these systems (McGinnis and Ostrom 2014). Although some scholars have provided insight as to the importance of values for individual behaviors and policy support, this project will study the role of values in organizational outcomes. While demonstrating how values function in organizational contexts generally, this research will also provide sociological insights into a pressing social problem.

Organizational Tactics, Approaches, and Proclaimed Values

In all three wildlife cases organizations use a variety of tactics and approaches to address conservation of the species that they focus on. Interviews with staff members as well as social media and website content analysis provide information about the breakdown of approaches that are used by each organization.

National conservation

National Wildlife Group is known widely for its specialty in environmental litigation and environmental defense lawsuits. The organization began with mostly lawyers on staff, but has expanded in more recent years into community involvement and organizing. The organization has several campaigns and departments. Recent campaigns have focused on protecting the Endangered Species Act, maintaining gray wolf protections, protecting specific conservation areas, and supporting conservation legislation in congress. Social movement organization influence on legislative processes have been found to be mediated by processes of legislative buffering that relates to organizational effectiveness and influence in legislation (Basseches 2019). National Wildlife Group has also worked on some local environmental issues, such as opposing a plastics plant and increasing oil activity, while simultaneously working on a number of national campaigns at any given time. The grassroots organizing teams view campaign structures as happening in phases and they strategically alternate between campaigns as particular issues enter quiet phases, such as waiting on administration decisions or other time lapses.

In all of these campaigns, volunteers are engaged to help solicit public comments or signatures or participate in events related to the campaigns. However, recent scholarship has found that agencies engage in processes of delegitimization about public comments, particularly those gathered in large numbers in a petition style from organizations (De'Arman 2020). De'Arman finds that agency employees engage in processes that deny the worth and value of public comments on agency decisions by using justifications related to science, legality, project scope, bureaucratic processes, and

reiterating information to respond and not utilize comments. This raises questions about the utility of comment gathering as an approach, echoed in comments by Shirley, a volunteer who expressed frustration that the comments were not listened to when she participated in a public hearing with the Bureau of Land Management: “I’ve been to the [Bureau of Land Management] big meetings that they’ve had here locally about fracking. And not just fracking, also the Fish and Wildlife...they are not listening to us at all.” However, soliciting public comments is a significant tactic in which volunteers and supporters are engaged.

Litigation continues to be a major focus with a large number of lawsuits active against the Trump administration. Amy, a staff member shared the way that National Wildlife Group attempts to combine grassroots organizing with their political and legislative campaigns:

I think approaches similar to the one that we are working on is having people power behind the issue. Really trying to move the needle with like pressuring your representative...because a lot of times maybe a representative might not be able to be moved on a subject but maybe there could be legislation that could be proposed....just like the numbers...the amount of people behind you to really try and make a difference.

In addition to wildlife specific initiatives, National Wildlife Group has also worked on campaigns to mobilize voters in advance of elections. Although National Wildlife Group is not permitted to advocate for particular candidates, they educate and mobilize voters around environmental issues in general and provide voter registration and mobilization tools. The organization has utilized both in-person and online engagement techniques and strategies.

As evidenced in interviews, the organization's value of biodiversity also includes humans, demonstrating an interconnection beyond human versus. nature-centered values. Amy reflected on the way that the values influence the organization's approaches and practices:

So I think...we really value biodiversity and we think that we all have to work together in order to protect these this wildlife and these places, but I think part of it is that we are just trying to do the best that we can to recruit as many people from as many walks of life as possible. I think we're doing that a little bit more just so that biodiversity doesn't just reflect animals and plants...as humans are also something that we care about ...so I think it's just one of those things that as an organization we're constantly trying to think of new ways to include people who haven't really been included before...so I think we're just constantly evolving to try and match our mission and values where we haven't before.

While National Wildlife Group does proclaim an interest in transforming culture and systems, it contrasts with organizations such as State Nature Association who tend to focus on education and property changes and other individual efforts. This distinction is echoed by scholars who discuss the limitations of a relative focus on individual change as opposed to culture or systemic shifts (Balsiger, Lorenzini, and Sahakian 2019). Overall, National Wildlife Group's approach most closely reflects a "complex utilitarian" value frame combined with a "moral conservationist" value frame.

National Public Lands Advocates focuses on advocating for a national system of public lands. The work of this organization is largely professionalized and focused on political advocacy for legislation and Congressional budgets. They advocate for appropriations and engage in legislation that work influence the public lands systems. Individual protected areas often have volunteer groups organized locally to support the

area, and National Public Lands Advocates collaborates and supports their efforts while maintaining a primary staff focus at the national level working through institutionalized channels. According to Tracy, a staff member: “We’re all about fostering relationships and collaborating with volunteer friends of refuge system groups all around the country to promote their respective refuges and to ensure that congress provides adequate funding for the refuge system each year.”

Based on public statements and interviews, this group approaches wildlife conservation exclusively from the perspective of preserving particular protecting lands. This includes raising awareness of the system among the general public to engender support for resources and continued protection of the system. Funding the protected land system is a primary goal and focus of the advocacy. Bill, a senior staff member described the organization’s approaches in this way:

We’re big on working for better budgets for operations managements. Dollars for specific issues like the arctic refuge there’s a big battle on that whether it should be open for oil and gas exploration leasing or not. We’re very involved in that. Just kind of specific issues. There’s a mine that’s been proposed up near Okefenokee refuge in Florida that we’re real involved in advocacy for that. So we’re an advocacy organization watching out for [the system] ...We kind of call ourselves the voice of the [public lands] system when other people can’t do it.

The organization has a full-time advocate on Capitol Hill advocating for the system. In conjunction with other organizations, National Public Lands Advocates has also been involved in litigation on wildlife and refuge-related issues.

National Public Lands Advocates frames wildlife-centered values as critical, and that those guide their approaches to engaging constituents and supporters, as Bill stated:

The people that work in the line of work that we're in whether it's a non-profit or whether my previous career where I worked for the fish and wildlife service in many jobs for many years and the reason I did that was because I loved wildlife. I loved the mission. I thought it was important. I think it makes a difference to the world not just locally... it can't help but flavor why you're doing it. How you reach out to people and whether your message truly comes off as devoted and real and important. So I think it does influence us. I think the people in our line of work are sometimes way more dedicated than lots of other lines and work and we're kind of almost fanatics you know in terms of protecting wildlife and health and climate and habitats and I mean it's just all so connected so it does but overall I don't know if any kind of specific way I could tell you how it does that, but I'm sure it does flavor everything.

This intrinsic value of nature is again coupled with human benefits in a complex way, leading to a complex utilitarian value frame. National Public Lands Advocates views the goal of protecting a particular system of lands and valuing preservation of undeveloped land as guiding their approaches, as Bill reflects:

It's just the basis of everything we do. So our whole mission is about supporting advocating for watching out for [protected lands] ... for the benefit of the American people but it's really for the benefit of the world. So every time we're reaching out to somebody the reason we're doing that, whether it's going out for dollars whether it's recruiting board members, whether it's working with friends groups. whether it's communicating and educating people about the [public lands] system. I mean everything is based upon that need, that requirement...to be the voice of, to advocate for, to watch out for the [protected lands] and again the reason we do that is there's no other system of lands like that anywhere in the world. It's just it's superlative it's amazing it's unknown and so I think just every communication we do is just grounded in why we exist and the [public lands] system why it's so important.

Horseshoe crabs

Horseshoe Crab Advocates was founded in the 1990s specifically to address horseshoe crab conservation issues. While the organization primarily works in the mid-Atlantic, it also addresses horseshoe crab conservation globally with the inclusion of the species found in Asia. The organization is primarily run by a single staff member, Mark, with an active voluntary board of directors and a network of volunteers who participate in a range of projects. The organization has engaged in several different tactics to promote horseshoe crab conservation. While the organization's mission specifically focuses on horseshoe crabs, horseshoe crabs are largely framed by staff as a vehicle to reach a broader goal, as Mark states:

Even though the mission is all about horseshoe crab conservation, in essence it's really about changing people... Our mission is it's the intolerance, indifference, and ignorance overcoming that condition opens up a pathway for people to care about this particular critter and if you can make that connection then this connection might continue to survive and in the meantime you've changed that person... You've made one step and that seed could grow to other things... If I can get somebody to care about that, it might be more they might be more likely to care about their next-door neighbor who has certain issues that make them a little bit unattractive as well. So our mission is to protect the world's four horseshoe crab species so that they can continue their journey whatever that may be. And to do that we have to change people's perception of them and in the process of that we're hoping that we change people for the better.

Horseshoe Crab Advocates has engaged in many programs related to stewardship of horseshoe crab habitat, including programs designed to encourage individuals to help stranded horseshoe crabs on beaches and communities to designate themselves as protected habitats and publicly identify themselves as horseshoe crab sanctuaries. They

have also engaged in some individual projects to protect horseshoe crabs, such as installing fencing to prevent horseshoe crabs from entering an area where they are typically stranded. Children are engaged through an art program that allows children to express their views around horseshoe crab conservation through art that is then amplified, as well as through school trips that the organization hosts. Horseshoe Crab Advocates provides numerous educational resources for teachers to encourage them to incorporate horseshoe crab material into their lesson planning.

Horseshoe Crab Advocates also engages with pharmaceutical companies on educational and technological initiatives. Staff from companies that manufacture LAL, the substance removed from horseshoe crabs and used in endotoxin testing, are engaged in educational programming, and the organization collaborates with those companies who are working to develop and popularize the use of the synthetic LAL alternative to replace the use of horseshoe crab blood. Similarly, Horseshoe Crab Advocates has worked with companies to support development of alternative synthetic baits to replace horseshoe crabs in the fishing industry. In each of these cases, Horseshoe Crab Advocates serves as a connector and advocate between the stakeholder groups. The organization is engaged in international bodies and efforts to develop horseshoe crab science and advance conservation. Horseshoe Crab Advocates intentionally develops diverse programs to engage potential supporters with a variety of identities: “I think that you engage people on a lot of different levels and it has to be on a lot of different levels because everybody’s different. So we have a lot of different programs.”

Horseshoe Crab Advocates views its primary goals and values as related to a broader goal of compassion and morals, as opposed to related to conservation. Instead,

wildlife and environmental issues are viewed as a means to reaching broader goals of raising morals and compassion in individuals. Mark reflected on the values of the organization:

Horseshoe crab conservation is a metaphor or a vehicle. It's a vehicle to take people to that place, because by and large they don't give a shit about this animal. It would be much harder to take people to that place if we were working on red knots. Because they would be so attached to how beautiful the damn red knot is, I'd never get them off the damn beauty of the red knot to go someplace deeper with their mind. But because this animal is so uncharismatic to most people you have to keep giving them reasons why they should care. So you get to take them further and further and further into the topic. So it's a curse in terms of financing but it's a blessing in terms of mission.

The goal is to move individuals broadly to compassion, so Mark views a focus only on horseshoe crabs as not appropriate: “It’s meeting people where they are and then helping them form a bridge between where that is and where you’re trying to get them to. And I think that the mistake that a lot of people make is that I want them to love horseshoe crabs, care about horseshoe crabs, protect horseshoe crabs.” This statement of mission and goals is a statement of values. The value that guides Mark and the organization’s mission is not perceived as relating necessarily to a conservation value or a value in preserving a species, but instead in a broader moral value set. This aligns with the “moral conservationist” value frame outlined in Chapter 3, in which conservation is framed as a moral endeavor.

State Nature Association works regionally in a mid-Atlantic state on a range of local issues. The organization is largely autonomous despite being an official chapter of a national organization, a structure which has found to often contain challenges and

opportunities for organizations (Rodgers 2019). While they engage in some advocacy, educational efforts are the main focus of their work. They are well known for summer camps and classes, and host trips, hiking expeditions and presentations. The mission is to address environmental issues through “education, conservation, and advocacy”. They have engaged in watershed protection projects engaging people in education and backyard stewardship around watershed problems. When they focus on creating and protecting wildlife habitat, they invite private landowners and individual homeowners to alter their backyard practices to protect wildlife, including selling native plants and educating individuals about backyard practices. Education is a key tenant of SWA’s work and approaches according to Jennifer, who works on development: “Quite frankly in the environmental movement how we currently engage or gain supporters generally I’d say the most common way is through pathways through education. So we have a plethora of public programs. We have a really robust early education program. We see about 33 to 35 thousand school kids a year.” They operate several visitor areas open to the public offering trails and exhibits in different parts of the state. They also host festivals and special events at various facilities focused on environmental issues.

State Nature Association has also acquired land in which they have started a farm used to demonstrate and educate the public about responsible agriculture practices. They sell vegetables and meat and engage with educational institutions. Citizen science efforts also use volunteers and staff to collect data on wildlife and water issues, such as soil monitoring efforts at the farm, water quality monitoring, and bird counts. Horseshoe crab count participation is another example of a focus on citizen science and education in organizational approaches, in which trained volunteers collect population data that inform

conservation decisions. A staff advocate does advocate for state policy and engage in policy issues, but direct, on-the-ground engagement and education is a primary focus. The organization will collaborate with others on local and regional policy questions, such as thinking about approaches and regulations around horseshoe crab issues.

Although they are based primarily in a single state, the work extends beyond state boundaries, as Jennifer stated: “We are statewide but we definitely cross state lines...I do think in some ways [our name] limits us a little bit because we’re definitely working regionally and can have a regional influence due to the nature of our work. The environment does not recognize state boundaries.” The organization is present in collaborative efforts and views itself as a leader in local environmental work and advocacy and as a fixture in environmental education efforts. While they do engage in advocacy, education and engagement in a nature-framed focus does constitute a majority of their public proclamations on their website and social media. Scholars have critiqued approaches that perpetuate existing systems by focusing on individual change as opposed to necessary systemic approaches to solving environmental degradation (Gunderson 2020; Gunderson, Stuart, and Houser 2020; Gunderson, Stuart, and Petersen 2018). While State Nature Association does utilize both policy and educational efforts to reach their goals, both are primarily framed and approached within existing systems.

Based on interviews, the staff primarily views the organization as having nature-based values, and views that value as guiding their approach. Jennifer reflected on the way that they use their values to focus their approaches to best reach their goals: “Values are to improve the environment and creating and more sustainable environment. I mean overarching that’s our mission that we’re setting out to do...just logically we’d have to

engage, like I said, as many people and as diverse as we possibly could to make that...achievable.”

State Nature Association’s organizational value frame can be largely classified as “complex utilitarian”, as they use a great deal of nature-based framing but do so for the benefit of humans and future generations.

Red wolves

Ecosystem Connection Council works in multiple capacities to particularly focus on developing and maintaining wildlife corridors nationwide. Staff works in state and national legislatures to advocate for conservation legislation, particularly in recent years around corridors and pathways. Ecosystem Connection Council also has a distributed model where some staff members are based in varied locations around the country and engage in particular conservation issues in those areas. Through social media and website information, Ecosystem Connection Council shares their red wolf focused projects which include a strong focus on camera trap programs in partnership with local landowners to identify and provide information around red wolves and other animals in North Carolina. Education and engagement with local landowners is a primary focus, as many approaches to red wolf conservation focus on landowner conflict. The organization also engages in research around wildlife issues that they use to pursue conservation goals. Framing of the organization’s mission frequently connects a seeming intrinsic value for the natural world with a focus on human benefits. For example, the “About Us” section of the organization’s webpage specifically highlights the benefits for humans of a connected ecosystem:

Nature provides us with a complete life support system: fresh air oxygenated by plants, drinking water purified by wetlands, nutrient-rich soils and native pollinators for food production, hospitable climates tempered by the effects of regional ecosystems and natural beauty that lifts our spirits and inspires our souls. Healthy wildlands are the natural heritage that we will pass on to our children. To safeguard this heritage, it is our responsibility to halt the human-caused loss of biodiversity occurring in our lifetime. When we do what is right to protect wild nature, we also do what is right for our children and for all future generations. Preserving biodiversity also has economic benefits for humans. For example, it is no coincidence that communities located in regions where nature flourishes tend to have higher rates of job growth than areas lacking such benefits. Communities choosing to invest in protecting nature today will be at the forefront of economic and social development tomorrow, as North Americans increasingly seek clean, safe and healthy places to live.

These statements capture Ecosystem Connection Council’s complex utilitarian value frame.

The red wolf species specific organization, Red Wolf Advocates, focuses exclusively on red wolf conservation. Because red wolves are only found in a single area in North Carolina the organization is based and focuses its work in that area. Dorothy, a very involved board member who works on communications, described the primary approaches of the organization: “it’s education focused...we advocate for the long-term survival of red wolf populations and we teach about the red wolf by fostering public involvement in red wolf conservation”. Because most of the issues around red wolf conservation are related to controversy with landowners and the complications of wolves as a predator species that are perceived as interfering with human lives, dealing with coexistence at a local level is a primary focus of the organization. This includes programs

like hosting community listening sessions. Dorothy discussed the way that the organization's staff collaborates and works with landowners:

We've organized town meetings and got breakfast for people to come to a meeting and talk about ways that perhaps we could induce people to accept having a large carnivore on their property. [Staff member] takes call from landowners all the time 'Oh, I've got a red wolf out here in the backyard' ...And she gets in her car and goes up and then talks to them. 'That's a coyote. You've got a problem and here's how to deal with it'. And she works with people on a one-on-one basis...because they can cause problems for people and that has to be addressed. Coyotes can kill domestic pets like little dogs and cats. They could also kill a small child in a worst-case scenario. It could happen. And when they become habituated to being fed they can be dangerous. And the key is to recognize and to acknowledge that and to teach people how to reduce the chances of losing their chihuahua or worse their two-year old grandkid instead of saying 'Well they've never killed a person'. You don't have to worry about them.

In addition to the community focus of the organization as they focus on tolerance and outreach in red wolf habitat, Red Wolf Advocates has many broader educational initiatives, including school educational programs and curricula for teachers. They conduct learning sessions and distance learning. A state-approved curriculum is used in North Carolina schools. Red Wolf Advocates also advocates for and supports the red wolf species survival program which breeds red wolves in captivity, sharing information about the programs and raising awareness. Red Wolf Advocates also runs a Facebook page that is almost exclusively used for educational content, teaching followers about the red wolves with scientific information. Education is viewed as critical for reaching a potential coexistence between wolves and human residents of their habitats, as Carol, the director of the organization, shared:

It goes back to our wanting to communicate what does it mean to be a wolf? They're a great family unit. People don't even know that. They think they walk around in packs and hunt and kill. No, they don't. And so again it goes back to that educating people about what does it mean to be a wolf. And I think if you can start with the basics with people. And then begin to build I think you have a better chance at people maybe beginning to feel a little comfortable.

The organization bases its work around a nature-based mission to protect red wolves and a value of a healthy and sustainable red wolf population. The value is around the existence of an animal species as opposed to animal rights or the well-being of individual animals. The organization frames its work with an intrinsic nature value with the species having an intrinsic value of existence. For example, the organization has multiple social media posts and website statements indicating an intrinsic species value, such as: "Today is World Wildlife Day, a day for appreciating and considering the many types of flora and fauna of the world and how they can be conserved. From large creatures to small, all wildlife deserves respect, and one of the best ways to show that respect is by being mindful of how we as humans can maintain a peaceful coexistence with animals and plants in nature."

However, Red Wolf Advocates also acknowledges that humans can benefit from red wolf conservation. The organization focuses on working at the community level both as a value of inclusivity and respect for humans as well as of reaching the goal of red wolf conservation. Dorothy reflected:

"We also know how to work with landowners. That's gonna be a tough slog because people everywhere are tribalized. Angry. Withdrawn into their particular camps and they want to fight with each other. And that's true across the spectrum everywhere in this country right now. The atmosphere is not conducive to

consensus building and conflict resolution in fact it's quite the opposite. So we have that going against us again 'Oh if you're for red wolf recovery you must be an f-ing liberal democrat.'

Based on staff interviews, Red Wolf Advocates is mindful of not relying too heavily on values to humans of red wolf survival. For example, they question some of the often-made claims of other organizations that conserving a species will necessarily bring economic benefits to their community. They therefore have an approach in which the species' intrinsic value needs to be sufficient to motivate conservation, as Carol shared:

Yes, it can help the economy. Again, we've seen that in Yellowstone that it does. But at the end of the day the wolves are just living. They're not helping that economy. They just exist. We put them there they took off they exist and there's so much put on the back of the wolf. Whether it's a red wolf a Mexican wolf, or a gray wolf. We want to give the wolves this iconic position. Like 'Look what the wolves have done to Yellowstone. They've helped reduce the elk population which was praying on a lot of the vegetation and now these trees this vegetation has come back...I have to be careful in my statements in what I'm putting on the back of this animal. Because it's just an animal. It doesn't live for me.

Because the organization works to be accurate and careful in their statements about human benefits of red wolf conservation, they necessarily need to demonstrate and perform an intrinsic nature value related to preserving the species. In other words, we are limited in how much we can say that red wolves will directly benefit humans, so we need to proclaim that the wolves have an intrinsic right to exist and have value in their own right. Because of this, Red Wolf Advocates' value frame primarily aligns with a nature-focused framework.

Table 4-1 outlines the primary value frames expressed by each organization.

| Organization | Primary Value Frame |
|--|--|
| <i>Ecosystem Connection Council</i> | Complex utilitarian |
| <i>Red Wolf Advocates</i> | Nature-focused |
| <i>National Public Lands Advocates</i> | Complex utilitarian |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab Advocates</i> | Moral conservationist |
| <i>State Nature Association</i> | Complex utilitarian |
| <i>National Wildlife Group</i> | Complex utilitarian, Moral conservationist |

Table 0-1: Value frame proclaimed by organization

Proclamation of values on websites and in social media

In their social media posts and website pages, organizations proclaimed values in how they frame their approaches, and organizational identities. In discussing their work, organizations typically framed desirable outcomes as either relating to protecting nature or human-centered goals. Other values such as moral, animal rights, and science were less often proclaimed, potentially because they are framed as more complex and difficult to articulate in a brief, public statement. In five out of six organizations, approaches and identities were framed more often relating to nature than human-centered values (Table 4-2, Table 4-3). However, National Wildlife Group’s public statements related to human-centered values outnumbered nature-centered focus. Their work is often framed as being primarily related to human wellbeing.

| | Human-Centered Values | Nature-Focused Values | Moral Values | Animal Rights Values | Science Values | Other |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Ecosystem Connection Council</i> | 116 | 243 | 1 | 0 | 25 | 0 |
| <i>Red Wolf Advocates</i> | 6 | 12 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| <i>National Public Lands Advocates</i> | 17 | 33 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab Advocates</i> | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>State Nature Association</i> | 35 | 38 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| <i>National Wildlife Group</i> | 587 | 352 | 6 | 36 | 19 | 0 |

Table 0-2: Types of proclaimed values on organization websites and social media within discussion of organization approaches

| | Human-Centered Values | Nature-Focused Values | Moral Values | Animal Rights Values | Science Values | Other |
|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| <i>Ecosystem Connection Council</i> | 148 | 180 | 1 | 0 | 27 | 0 |
| <i>Red Wolf Advocates</i> | 8 | 21 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| <i>National Public Lands Advocates</i> | 24 | 38 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 0 |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab Advocates</i> | 2 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| <i>State Nature Association</i> | 45 | 46 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| <i>National Wildlife Group</i> | 886 | 482 | 11 | 48 | 26 | 0 |

Table 0-3: Types of proclaimed values on organization websites and social media

Human-centered values statements centered the organization’s work on a desired outcome of human wellbeing or nature for human benefit. Nature-centered value statements were nature focused and indicated an intrinsic value in nature outside of potential benefits or necessity for humans. The breakdown between organizations indicates that most had a roughly equal split in how they framed environmental work, with the exception of National Wildlife Group. The fact that human and nature centered values made up the bulk of social media and website statements indicates that the complexity of value frames is less-readily found online. However, while these patterns

were found on social media based on previously used wildlife value perspectives, staff described value processes in a complex and overlapping way.

Organizational Values as Identities and Boundaries

In addition to values as related to how organizations view their work and approaches, values were used by organizations as statements of identity. Organizations also used values and other factors to define their relationships and differences and similarities to other organizations in the conservation space.

Organizational boundaries in national conservation

In the case of the national conservation organizations, findings demonstrated differences between the two organizations in how they differentiate themselves from other organizations. However, they shared the feature of not primarily distinguishing themselves and drawing boundaries on the basis of values, but instead viewed themselves as differing in the realm of approaches or tactics for wildlife conservation.

National Public Lands Advocates distinguished itself from others based primarily on the area of focus. It viewed itself as focusing on one particular area with the particular system of public lands. As opposed to drawing boundaries based on values, the National Public Lands Advocates viewed itself as having a particular area of focus but working in conjunction with other organizations filling other useful roles in the area of wildlife conservation. Tracy discussed the way it viewed its approaches in relation to other organizations: “I would say the single biggest thing is that it is the only organization that exists that is solely dedicated to protecting the [public lands]. While there are plenty of

other wildlife conservation organizations out there and they're all doing really wonderful work, we are the only one that has such a laser focus on the...system itself and so I think that's really what sets us apart is we are the voice and champion for the [public lands system].”

This was elaborated in discussions of how a narrow tactical approach to wildlife conservation distinguished National Public Lands Advocates from others, but this was again not framed as a judgment or boundary about other approaches. For example, as Tracy said: “From what I observe it seems like most other wildlife conservation organizations are more umbrella-esque in the sense they want to protect wildlife in a more broad sense. Whereas we see our role as being...we're going to really just focus in on this one set of public lands because it is the single largest set of conservation lands for wildlife conservation on the planet.”

In contrast, staff members at National Wildlife Group viewed their approaches and willingness to tackle topics that other organizations avoided as drawing a boundary between them and others. For example, Amy shared: “I think that [National Wildlife Group] is different because we are not afraid of being like that one organization that touches on certain subjects. For example, as an environmental organization we talk about population as an issue for sustainability. And so a lot of environmental organizations don't really feel like that's linked but as an organization that believes biodiversity is all connected, we highlight things like population. Also promoting being vegan or vegetarian. So those are the kind of things that I think make us a little bit different.”

National Wildlife Group prides itself on a willingness to tackle polarizing issues or approaches that may label them as extreme. Some scholars have argued that an

approach including a clear and defined ask that is seen as more extreme discourages free-riding by those who are able to align themselves with an organization or movement without having to engage in substantial action or change. The argument that compromise ultimately weakens the ability of a movement to engage contrasts with the fact that organizations often frame more flexible and compromising arguments as necessary for engaging a large number of diverse supporters (Wrenn 2018). National Wildlife Group views their identity in not being afraid to tackle polarizing issues or tactics that may not be suitable to all potential supporters or allied organizations as a key tenant of their approach

These boundaries were not framed around values specifically, but instead around a unique niche in approaches. A post on National Wildlife Group's website echoes this framing: "Did you know [National Wildlife Group] is the only major environmental organization that works on population issues? Through creative media, advocacy and public outreach, we raise awareness about runaway human population growth and unsustainable consumption — and how these forces endanger wildlife and wild places."

The valuing of humans as part of biodiversity was perceived as part of the distinction between other groups and linked to the organization's population campaigns by Amy: "I guess kind of related to population is immigration and social justice work. So we tie a lot of that in where a lot of enviro organizations are just sticking to wildlife and wild places, but [National Wildlife Group] really thinks it's more holistic. That humans are part of diversity too so we're really big on tying social justice issues in with that." With values as conceptions of the desirable, National Wildlife Group shared that they

viewed valuing healthy human populations as a key tenant of their organizational identity.

Organizational boundaries in horseshoe crab conservation

In horseshoe crab conservation contexts, State Nature Association and Horseshoe Crab Advocates differently conceptualize their values and their differences and similarities with other organizations. In general, State Nature Association staff and volunteers did not use values to draw boundaries between themselves and other organizations. Instead, areas of focus and tactics were seen as the primary differences between themselves and others. State Nature Association 's website states how they view their tactics and mission as setting them apart from other organizations: "Including advocacy in our mission sets us apart. We are one of the only statewide environmental organizations with full-time staff who advocate for wildlife, land conservation, and protection of our region's natural resources."

Jennifer, a State Nature Association staff member elaborated on this point by sharing how including advocacy in the mission of the organization was viewed as setting them apart: "We're advocating on behalf of the environmental issues. So not only are we doing the work on the ground and engaging people through education, we're also taking that to our policy makers in the state. So we do have a dedicated full-time advocate working on environmental issues representing the voices of [citizens in the state capital]. And where we can affect policy and make policy changes happen is really exciting, so that's an area that we're really different." The perception that advocacy was a key differentiator indicates that State Nature Association views its peers as primarily

education-based organizations. State Nature Association staff also thought of themselves as part of an ecosystem of organizations who may differ in mission and approaches, but viewed those differences as a strength. As opposed to drawing boundaries strictly between organizations, Jennifer viewed a variety of approaches and missions as complementary.

For example, Jennifer discussed differences she viewed between State Nature Association and other environmental organizations:

I think some organizations...might take a stronger stance on something, but they're trying to get a message of urgency out there more so than maybe [State Nature Association] would do. It's great to have them do that. Just because we're not doing it doesn't mean we don't think it's a good idea. It's just another approach. I definitely think it takes all sorts of approaches and you know especially now, especially in the climate that we're in where we're seeing some long-standing regulatory protections being either pulled back or ignored.

Previous research in the context of community development has found that a variety of approaches combining local and grassroots efforts can function in complementary ways that allow for broader and more substantial change, but also shows a growing divide between local responses and more formal and professionalized approaches (Gonzales 2017). This was echoed in the perceptions of horseshoe crab conservation staff members, who viewed approaches as complementary in many ways but also differing in terms of strengths, expertise, and outcomes.

In contrast to State Nature Association, Horseshoe Crab Advocates staff and volunteers clearly drew boundaries on the basis of values between themselves and other organizations. There was broad agreement between all participants on the values that

distinguish Horseshoe Crab Advocates from other organizations. The horseshoe crab conservation setting is made up of several stakeholders, primarily environmental organizations, bird-focused organizations, fishing interests, and pharmaceutical interests. The conservation setting is fraught and challenging, with many perspectives and conflicting narratives. Staff and volunteers of Horseshoe Crab Advocates shared that they viewed the perspectives of many stakeholders involved in horseshoe crab conservation as one-sided, biased, or dishonest. They shared the view that Horseshoe Crab Advocates was unique in its honest and balanced approach that rejects polarization and starts with fact-based information rather than finding facts to support a desired outcome. Jason, a volunteer with a background in education who had collaborated with Horseshoe Crab Advocates on many of their educational approaches stated the way that they viewed their organization as distinct from other environmental organizations: “[Horseshoe Crab Advocates] is very unique in my experience with conservation organizations that they really try to cut across the polarization and division and pointing the finger and all that kind of stuff and really try to look for solutions. And look for bringing people together instead of separating them.”

Research looking specifically at birding organizations has identified that through organizations individuals navigate processes of labeling themselves in relation to other environmentalists, such as through rejecting the label of “environmentalist” because of negative views of definitions of those terms (Cherry 2019). This is echoed at the organizational level in Horseshoe Crab Advocates ’s work, as they frame themselves as distinct from other organizations based on negative understandings of the ways that other

types of organizations and stakeholders involved in conservation behave and approach issues.

In some cases, this focus on truth-telling is seen as alienating and separating Horseshoe Crab Advocates from other organizations. For example, Paul, a volunteer said: [Mark] has just never taken the alarmist approach. Therefore, he's not as successful as he probably could be if he did more of the alarmist approach as some of these other groups have done...And as such because he hasn't taken an alarmist approach he has alienated himself from some of these groups. The ones that are more, as he would say, more strident or outspoken and extreme in their beliefs. So that trade off if you try to be a reasonable human being...or reasonable value set people tend to ignore you or just kind of dismiss you."

Mark discussed their approach to honesty and identifying and valuing credibility as a distinguisher between them and other organizations in the horseshoe crab conservation ecosystem:

We're an honest broker...I'm sure as honest as I think we are somebody could probably find some example where we're not as honest as we think we are. But one of the reasons why we're able to work with the watermen and one of the reasons why we're able to work with the pharmaceutical companies and the biomedical leaders...at the end of the day you don't buy us. And we're not trying to push...We don't villainize the pharmaceutical industry. We don't do it with the birding people. And we don't do it with the waterman and that's why they all work with us. So we can work together because we take this neutral position. Whereas they will not have anything to do with the birding organization. None of them will have anything to do with a birding organization and birding organizations won't have nothing to do with them and both them and the birding organizations will have nothing to do with the watermen. So you've got these

entrenched camps that won't talk to one another that are all trying to show that they're better than one another. And nothing is getting accomplished because all they're doing is talking to their base. We work this thread between them. Sometimes better than other times. But at the end of the day, that ignorance, indifference, and intolerance... can only be bridged and we've got credibility. So our credibility is everything to us and everything disappears without it.

The approach of seeing multiple stakeholder arguments and sides and focusing on accuracy and truth telling provides legitimacy to the organization, and compares to attempts to declare legitimacy as a tactic for combatting particular approaches (Hein and Chaudhri 2019). Because the organization was able to proclaim itself as being uniquely fact-based and neutral as compared to other organizations, this identity served to delegitimize some other entities and tactics. Mark gave an example of how he negotiated and enacted this value of honesty in interactions with a pharmaceutical company:

There were some things on our website in the biomedical section that they didn't feel was fair to them, so they called us. ...And I talked with him and he told me what wasn't fair and I said 'Ok, well let's go down the list of what you think is not fair' and we argued on a number of points. I didn't agree. I don't agree with this and I could tell him why, 'Well that's your way of thinking and mine. Ok, so we're not wrong on that one, ok let's move on to the next.' And we got to a couple of areas where I said to him 'That's a good point. Let us take a look at that and if it holds up to our second look at that we'll change.' Well we did take a look at it and he was right, and it should be changed because it wasn't totally fair in light of some new things that had come out recently, so we worked with him to come up with language that they felt comfortable with... That prompted to them to realize that we were honest brokers and they asked if they could help support some of the stuff that we were doing.

Entangled with discussions about honesty and a fact-based approach was a value of “seeing multiple sides” and cutting across polarization amongst organizations and stakeholders. The approach of collaborating with all interest groups as opposed to participating in polarization and division was valued unanimously by staff and volunteers with Horseshoe Crab Advocates. Paul, a volunteer with a background in filmmaking distinguished between Horseshoe Crab Advocates and other organizations using values of non-judgment and education:

The value set of any organization is critical in my assessment of whether to be engaged in their effort on any level. In the case of [Horseshoe Crab Advocates], a compassionate approach to HSCs is certainly important, but it is also the non-judgmental approach that [Horseshoe Crab Advocates] takes in spreading the message. In my work as a documentarian, I am focused on taking an “honest broker” approach towards any issue, and want to hear all sides. I began my work on the HSC management controversy in [other state], but found that my approach was not “appreciated” by the state natural resource managers. It became more and more difficult to tell my stories in that state because resource managers would not talk to me or were told not to talk to me. In fact, the [other] approach towards addressing the management controversy was one of “control”—regulating public behavior. [Horseshoe Crab Advocates home state] prefers to educate the public and only regulate if necessary. [Horseshoe Crab Advocates] practices a similar approach, with an underlying value of compassion towards living creatures.

State Nature Association and Horseshoe Crab Advocates’ different value processes and levels of value coherence could be partially seen as a function of size and professionalization. While State Nature Association is a large organization with more loosely affiliated volunteers, it had a less defined and coherent organizational value set

and culture shared by participants. In contrast, Horseshoe Crab Advocates is a small organization with few staff members and with volunteers more closely connected to the organization. This provides evidence that strengthening collective identity can relate to the importance of values in determining organizational proclamation and use of values in collaboration with others.

In addition, horseshoe crab conservation in particular is a complex social setting due to the interactions and challenges between a variety of perspectives and stakeholders often in conflict. Because horseshoe crabs are the main focus of Horseshoe Crab Advocates, as opposed to part of the overall work of State Nature Association, it is possible that the relative focus on horseshoe crabs and the particular conservation context explains differences in boundary drawing and value significance.

Organizational boundaries in red wolf conservation

In the case of red wolves, organizations again distinguished themselves based on areas of focus. Red Wolf Advocates, like Horseshoe Crab Advocates, is the only organization that exclusively focuses on conservation of the species with which it's concerned. This is repeatedly shared on the organization's website and social media pages, stating that Red Wolf Advocates "is the only conservation organization whose mission focuses exclusively on saving America's few remaining wild red wolves from extinction." Similarly, Ecosystem Connection Council distinguished itself based on its area of focus in protecting corridors for wildlife movement. According to the organization's website: "[Ecosystem Connection Council] leverages its legal expertise...to shape and inspire national wildlife corridor legislation, administrative

policy, and state-based initiatives. We are the only conservation collaborative in the U.S. with a keen focus on habitat connectivity for wildlife.”

For Red Wolf Advocates, a focus on community-centered approaches is seen as distinguishing them from other organizations. While they recognize the utility of other organizations’ structures and approaches for conservation in general, they view their own approach as making them uniquely effective and relevant in red wolf conservation specifically. Red wolf conservation issues, like those related to horseshoe crabs, are localized and involve conversations and conflict between multiple stakeholders. Because there is currently a single red wolf population in the United States in a single area in North Carolina, red wolf conservation is hyper-localized. However, red wolf conservation is an issue that receives national conservation attention. Therefore, one site of conflict in red wolf conservation is between those living in red wolf habitat and “outsiders”. This distinction is echoed by Red Wolf Advocates staff member Carol, who discuss how they see their work in their local area: “I don’t think it can be overlooked at all that fact that we are here. We get a lot of great organizations that want to come in and help. But they don’t really take the time to understand this community. This is a rural community. This is a farming community...They are very steeped in tradition. They like to do things the same. If I’ve heard it once I’ve heard it a hundred times. ‘...That’s not how we do things’. So you can’t come in from the outside and think that you have all the answers.”

Because many other organizations with broad repertoires have included red wolf issues in their work over the time, Red Wolf Advocates’ singular focus and geographic location is seen at a staff level as legitimizing their perspective and giving them a

particularly accurate and valuable approach to the conservation of the species, as Dorothy shared, “there are some great ones out there. There are some good ones most of them the big ones the big corporate conservation organizations are focused on a multiplicity of species and issues...I don’t say it dilutes their efforts but...none of them are based in red wolf country and they don’t quite have the same perspective that we do.” The work of these organizations were seen as having value, but also being limited without the knowledge of the local area. However, they were viewed as playing a role in conservation efforts that was distinct from Red Wolf Advocates’ own, with staff stating of larger, national organizations with broader focus areas “they have an important role to fill.”

Red Wolf Advocates publicly proclaims the importance of social approaches to conservation, and the ways that collaboration and inclusion are essential for the possibility of success in developing a self-sustaining red wolf population. As stated on their website, they view collaboration as a necessary precondition for the possibility of conservation success:

Unfortunately, the collaborative potential of red wolf conservation efforts has never been realized in North Carolina. The conservation value of red wolf recovery as it relates to biological, economic, social and political elements has not been addressed through a conflict resolution process. Thus, a mutually acceptable agreement has never been achieved. Furthermore, red wolf conservation opportunities have been lost, and will continue to be lost, until a fundamental collaborative framework is established. That is not to imply that wholesale collaboration will ultimately lead to self-sustaining red wolf populations in the wild. But to attempt red wolf restoration and to craft solutions to wolf-human conflicts without such partnerships will certainly prolong, and may indeed hinder, the species’ recovery.

A major approach of the organization is based on interacting with and providing tools and information to local landowners. Because of the controversy related to government control and misinformation about the effects of red wolves, Red Wolf Advocates believes that direct conversation and local approaches are key to making any progress on red wolf conservation. Predators have had a unique conservation history because of cultural and mythological framings, as well as real and perceived human danger as compared to some other species. Ensuring that landowners have tools and information about coexistence is seen as an important strategy that Red Wolf Advocates can provide because of their local base and focus, and distinguishes them from other organizations. This relates closely to their tactical values of community, honesty, and respecting the differing opinions that can be found among stakeholders involved in red wolf conservation.

Carol discussed the fear that locals have of red wolves and the way that directly addressing instead of minimizing that fear is an important strategy for their conservation goals:

You know it's understanding from meetings that I've gone to that locals don't feel like they have the tools. Do they know where the wolves are? Do they know who in Fish and Wildlife to call? Have they ever called them? Do they have that phone number? And so these are things that I'm actually talking with Fish and Wildlife about as this program moves forward. That's information they need to be sure that they are giving to locals and also making sure that those of us on the ground doing education have that and can communicate, because I always feel like the more information you have or the more information I have the better off I'll be. It might not take care of the fear but at least if I see an animal I know who to call. And I think that's a huge help.

Thus, a community-centered approach could be simultaneously defined as a value and a tactic. Community inclusion is proclaimed a value in itself, and also primarily viewed as the most likely tactic for achieving conservation goals. For example, Dorothy discussed the mission and vision of the organization and related it to on-the-ground conservation approaches:

We have a mission statement because it defines specifically what you are about and what you do... So that's you know the vision is what you see out there in the future, which for us is the long term survival of free-ranging, self-sustaining red wolf populations to three reintroduction sites. Now that's pie in the sky, but that's a vision. But the mission is on the ground what people are doing right now next week next month and for the rest of the year and into next year. Which is to foster public involvement in red wolf conservation and to teach about the biology ecology of the red wolf. in order to achieve the long-term survival of wild red wolf populations.

The red wolf coalition distanced itself from approaches that they felt were not relevant or useful for conservation goals in their area. This is again echoed in research finding that a variety of approaches and a local effort create some strengths in terms of outcomes by allowing for a more holistic change (Gonzales 2017). However, there is also a wide gulf between the policies and approaches of local and more professionalized, national organizations.

In contrast, Ecosystem Connection Council has a regional office that also interacts with landowners. They run a camera trap program that requests local residents to allow them to place cameras on their property which collect wildlife data, and this simultaneously provides an opportunity for education and information. However, they are a national organization that is not primarily based in North Carolina or focused

specifically on red wolves. They approach their work through the lens of creating corridors for wildlife as a main avenue for conserving species. On their website, Wildlands elaborates on this focus: “[Ecosystem Connection Council] leverages its legal expertise through its Connectivity Policy Coalition (CPC), formed in 2008, to shape and inspire national wildlife corridor legislation, administrative policy, and state-based initiatives. We are the only conservation collaborative in the U.S. with a keen focus on habitat connectivity for wildlife.” This public boundary drawn based on approach is consistent with other organizations who distinguish themselves based on the specific tactic approach through which they pursue conservation goals.

Conclusion: Values in Organizational Functioning and Contexts

I found that the most localized organizations were more likely to identify themselves in contrast to others in a way that framed their approach as uniquely valuable or moral, whereas larger and more broadly defined organizations were more likely to frame distinctions in approaches as existing in a system of organizations with complementary approaches. Values of morality, honesty, and community-engagement were proclaimed by some local organizations. National Wildlife Group more than other organizations proclaimed human-centered values at a higher rate than nature-centered values. Human and nature-centered values were proclaimed and negotiated in complex ways in interviews, that wasn’t necessarily reflected in the more simplistic statements expressed online.

In both local conservation cases, organizations contrasted between a narrow focus on a particular species or geographic area and those with a wider conservation focus.

However, even organizations with broader areas of focus identified themselves through their own particular approaches, such as protected lands, wildlife corridors, and other tactics. Scholars have found evidence that social movement organizations are more likely to disband if they have a wider focus (Olzak and Johnson 2019). However, this research does not account for how organizations may or may not define their own area of focus as wide or narrow, and an organization's own definitions may matter significantly for outcomes.

Chapter 5: Conservation Values Processes During a Time of Social Disruption: The Context of COVID-19

During data collection for this project, the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the United States and became a focus of global attention, upending life around the world and causing a catastrophic loss of life. All organizations and individuals have been forced to deal with the effects of the pandemic which changed all aspects of daily life.

Additionally, because COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease that originated in wildlife and spread due to human contact with wildlife, the pandemic had additional relevance for wildlife conservation and organizations (Taylor 2021). While each organization had to navigate operations and resources in the pandemic context, they also had to directly consider how to incorporate public health and pandemic challenges into their missions and tactics. Organizations moved many of their programs and outreach online, relying more heavily on digital activism. Some research has argued that digital activism does not pose a significant change for social movements (Schradie 2018a). However, at the same time, research has found that digital engagement has the potential to increase inequality through unequal access to skills, access, empowerment and time to access online tools and resources (Schradie 2018b). This provides additional challenges for organizations as well as additional implications for their operations.

In addition, 2020 included a widespread reckoning with racial injustice and inequality through several highly publicized instances of police brutality and resulting protests. Both of these issues occurred in the face of an upcoming presidential election that directly addressed both racial and COVID-19 issues. Collecting data during this period allowed me to observe how organizations navigated their values, especially the

interplay between human and intrinsic-nature values, with these major historical events occurring. Organizations were forced to navigate discussions about their responsibility and mission-relevance of addressing wildlife trafficking and wildlife causes of the pandemic. Additionally, in the face of human death and suffering, both in terms of the pandemic and racial inequality and police brutality, organizations had to choose how to proclaim and navigate their values in order to establish their own identities and reach supporters in an important historical moment. Similarly, volunteers reckoned with similar questions about their identities and responsibilities. Identity standards and enactment of values were called into focus for individual volunteers (Dewey 2020). These experiences caused both organizations and individuals to reevaluate and perform their identity standards.

Individual Negotiation of Conservation Values During COVID-19

National conservation

National Wildlife Group volunteers indicated holding a longstanding view that wildlife conservation was connected very closely to human health and wellbeing. For example, Shirley expressed a long-held concern about human health impacts of environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity:

That's been my push for a long time before [National Wildlife Group] ...And even before this pandemic occurred that's always been in my mind. That one of these days it's gonna happen. I mean it's just gonna happen because of because of our, especially what's going in to the Tongass and then also the way that the arctic and the Antarctic's melting so fast and there's more exposures there that we don't have a clue...So when the center did this thing to talk about the environmental correlation it helped, because we know the health ramifications.

Therefore, they described COVID-19 as a new example of a longstanding issue and an opportunity to engage and motivate supporters. Shirley felt that human health had a clear relationship to wildlife conservation and viewed the pandemic as an unsurprising outcome that could be used to illustrate the relevance of wildlife issues to humans. As National Wildlife Group volunteers tended to discuss human wellbeing and morals in relationship with conserving biodiversity, in line with the “moral conservationist” framework, this aligned with directly addressing COVID-19 in the organizations work. Pamela discussed educational programs by National Wildlife Group highlighting the link between wildlife issues and human disease:

They've done an awesome job of connecting what's happening with coronavirus and COVID-19 to our relationship with wildlife and our relationship with the earth and climate change. Just fabulous, fabulous, fabulous. ... Maybe three weeks ago now, something like that, they had a webinar. And there were 1300 people on it which was amazing, where they laid out the links. They had experts talk about zoonotic diseases and they had experts talk about the how this disease might have arisen. They had somebody talk about pangolins and talk about our relationship with these creatures and how that has led to the situation that we're in, at least in part.

Volunteers described how they viewed COVID-19 as an opportunity to talk about practices related to wildlife and domesticated animals. While this particular virus originated in China, it was seen by volunteers as linked to the mission and issues that they had long pursued in the United States. It was directly seen as relevant to their mission to address and raise awareness of practices in the U.S., as Shirley shared:

We know that it came from China. We know that it came from a wet market. ...but the bottom line is though just because it originated there we are still doing

practices just like they do in their wet markets. Just like how we raise our animals and slaughter our animals in corporate farmed practices that are just as dangerous, but we don't see it that way...it's really about once we go into those populations into whatever region we live in, when we come in contact with the wild.

While the COVID context was directly connected to the mission of the organization, it also provided logistical challenges and influenced volunteer practices. When discussing how to engage volunteers in more virtual activities, Christine shared how she viewed digital engagement as more difficult:

I've noticed personally that for the people I work with directly, it's a lot harder to get people involved in clicktivism than direct action. I feel like saying 'ok we're gonna meet up at 1 pm at the farmers market and we're gonna table for 3 hours.' That sort of solid thing...then saying here is how to write an LTE and go write one. So I personally like direct, in-person actions and I think the people that are in my group do as well. But I feel like [National Wildlife Group] has done a really good job of finding ways to still stay active while being apart.

Overall, National Wildlife Group volunteers expressed that their participation was in line with their values and framing of the pandemic situation. However, Rebecca did express a conflict when deciding how to spend her time and resources during COVID-19. She discussed how she is driven to contribute financially to National Wildlife Group in general, but that during the times of COVID-19 she feels that she needs to contribute to other organizations and populations:” Of course most of my little extra has been going to like the Navajo nation recently because of all the COVID cases they have.” This volunteer negotiated her time by shifting her focus to explicitly supporting COVID-19 relief as a necessary response.

Horseshoe crab context

In contrast, State Nature Association volunteers did not mention or discuss COVID-19 in the context of their volunteer work. The pandemic was not framed as related to the substance of their issue interest or related to the wildlife conservation that State Nature Association engaged in, and it also wasn't discussed often in the context of changes in operations. The lack of attention to COVID-19 in follow up interviews shows that these volunteers did not view the context as directly relevant to their volunteerism. This differed from national volunteers who viewed the pandemic as directly relevant to their goals and values of conserving wildlife and their intertwined values of wildlife conservation as interconnected with human health and survival.

Horseshoe Crab Advocates volunteers framed the COVID-19 context very similarly. They generally did not frame the pandemic as relevant to the work of the organization or their volunteerism. Some volunteers did mention the pandemic in terms of limitations to their programs, participation, and tactics, but not related to the mission of the organization itself. For example, Stephen discussed a change in typical programming: "Unfortunately, because of the COVID-19 issue our summit is going to be canceled this year, so we won't be able to go and do that. However, a bunch of us will probably just get in the car and go down there and help [staff member] out anyway." Similarly, another volunteer mentioned the cancelation and uncertainty around typical events. However, in general, horseshoe crab volunteers did not frame the pandemic as relevant to their work, nor did they include conversations around racial justice.

For volunteers, national organizations and volunteers for national conservation tended to view the pandemic as directly relevant to their mission, while volunteers working on horseshoe crabs did not construct their values in similar ways. Instead, the pandemic was viewed as a separate issue that affected their daily lives, but not as directly related to their conservation activism. The pandemic situation is relevant to research that links climate inaction to cultural trauma, as acknowledging the severity of the situation would be cultural trauma leading systems and individuals to work to main stability. Brulle and Norgaard find that people can respond to potential cultural trauma by retreating, ignoring the situation, rebelling, or actively reconstructing through agency (Brulle and Norgaard 2019). The pandemic reveals significant concerns about the relationship between humans and wildlife based on current systems, and response in the environmental relationship has the potential to be viewed as similar cultural trauma. National Wildlife Group volunteers who were likely to express a moral conservationist value frame viewed the pandemic as mission-relevant to their volunteerism, while other volunteers for regional issues expressing a combination of value sets did not.

Organizational Values During Social Disruption

The pervasiveness of the pandemic in global life forced organizations to reckon with their values, and to consider how to proclaim their values publicly in the face of current events. The table below shows proportions of human-centered values proclaimed in website and social media within posts related to values.

| | Pre-pandemic | | | Post-pandemic | | | Z values (p) |
|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|------------------------------|-------------------------|--|----------------------|
| | <i>Human-centered values</i> | <i>All other values</i> | <i>Proportion of values human-centered</i> | <i>Human-centered values</i> | <i>All other values</i> | <i>Proportion of values human-centered</i> | |
| <i>Ecosystem Connection Council</i> | 104 | 161 | .392 | 44 | 47 | .484 | -1.5365 (p=.06178) |
| <i>Red Wolf Advocates</i> | 7 | 24 | .226 | 1 | 3 | .25 | 0.1076 (p=.4562) |
| <i>National Public Lands Advocates</i> | 14 | 28 | .333 | 10 | 16 | .385 | -0.4361 (p=.32997) |
| <i>Horseshoe Crab Advocates</i> | 2 | 7 | .222 | 0 | 0 | 0 | N/A |
| <i>State Nature Association</i> | 33 | 44 | .429 | 12 | 4 | .75 | -2.3378 (p=.00964)** |
| <i>National Wildlife Group</i> | 481 | 338 | .587 | 405 | 229 | .639 | -2.0151 (p=.02169)** |

*Table 0-1: Proportion of value statements by type before and after pandemic beginning. ** indicates significance at .05 level.*

Pre and post pandemic organizational value proclamation

While variation in numbers of posts prevents statistical testing of all posts, z tests demonstrate significant differences at the .05 level in human-centered value proclamation for both State Nature Association and National Wildlife Group, while not demonstrating significant differences in Red Wolf Advocates, National Public Lands Advocates, or

Ecosystem Connection Council. Both State Nature Association and National Wildlife Group proclaimed human-centered values at an increased rate. These results provide evidence of an active process of value negotiation in some organizations, while others did not obviously alter value processes.

Looking at social media and website additions starting in late March through early April 2020, the value distribution of the organizations differs. Organizations, in addressing the pandemic and racial injustice, proclaimed a larger proportion of human-centered values in their statements. While the conclusions drawn from these tests are limited for some organizations because of the number of published statements, a z-test showed that both State Nature Association and National Wildlife Group were significantly more likely (at the .05 level) to proclaim human-centered values in statements after March 2020. This provides evidence that some organizations actively work to proclaim and perform their values in order to establish an identity and align themselves strategically. The processes of value proclamation are responsive to social context and significant events and social shifts, as evidenced by changes in most organizations in how they proclaim their values during a period of dramatic societal change. In contrast, other organizations did not demonstrate a significant difference in proclaimed values. Context influences framings, values, and culture (Hernandez 2019). However, not all organizations viewed the pandemic as relevant to their work, which may explain a portion of differences in value proclamation outcomes.

Value proclamation seemed to shift for most organizations, with only one organization being more likely to frame human-centered values before the pandemic and three organizations proclaiming more human-centered values after the pandemic begins.

However, only one national organization seemed to directly connect the pandemic with their work, tactics, and mission, while other organizations both publicly and in interviews were likely to frame the pandemic as relevant to the context of their programs and activities as a limitation to in-person work or fundraising.

Interviews with organization staff members highlighted the ways that these processes occurred within the organization.

Coronavirus approaches in national conservation

In the context of COVID-19, National Wildlife Group has had to navigate ways to engage their volunteers and safely pursue their organizational goals. National Wildlife Group staff talked about challenges of navigating changing tactics. Before the pandemic, they had been actively working to move their volunteers away from online activism and into more in-person activities. The COVID-19 context has required them to reverse this approach in some ways. Amy, a staff member, discussed this dynamic:

We already had a pretty big online presence before and the start of our organizing department, we were trying to get people off of what we call “clicktivism” and into the real world and doing these things, and then we had to switch back...so we’re trying to do things that are different than before. So different than just clicktivism, like share this story or sign this petition, we’re trying to get people more involved in like things like virtual public commenting periods now or virtual lobby visits with their representatives.

On a basic level, COVID-19 required the organization to reimagine their tactics and engagement of their volunteers. In addition, National Wildlife Group worked to

actively incorporate the pandemic into their activities and used the situation to highlight the relevance of wildlife conservation. As Amy shared:

A lot of the things that we've done has kind of been connecting [the pandemic]... We've started what we call our [National Wildlife Group] speakers series and it's where weekly we have different staff scientists or lawyers speak about a specific issue. So two weeks ago it was about wet markets and the wildlife trade and CITES and how basically those regulations could prevent something like this pandemic happening, and how those kind of things attributed to COVID-19. But this past week...it was herpetology-focused so we talked about things like...fungus and how the spread of disease also with wildlife markets is a big thing as well. So we have been tying back to that a lot.

Explicitly incorporating COVID-19 into organizational activities provides an example of a complex interplay between human and animal values in organizational settings, as the prevention and disaster associated with a public health crisis that threatens humans is framed as a reason to protect and preserve the natural environment and wildlife.

In contrast, National Public Lands Advocates did not explicitly incorporate COVID-19 into their organizational activities and frame it as directly consistent with their mission by the end of data collection. Instead, the pandemic most affected their approaches through a broader recognition of social and economic contexts of their volunteers and of other organizations. For example, National Public Lands Advocates was aware that potential and existing supporters were going to be handling a variety of challenges financially and otherwise that would alter their ability to support the organization. Bill shared:

It's gonna be harder for a while especially, again, what we're dealing with. People shutting down and not being able to get out and being worried about whether they're gonna have enough money and what's happened to their IRA. Because a big part of what we do is only made possible by people supporting us, so that's gonna be a big issue for us over the next 6 months. It's a big issue for everybody and it's gonna affect every part of society. In the world, not just the United States.

For National Public Lands Advocates, the relevance of the pandemic was more related to their supporters and a broader context as opposed to direct connections to wildlife and their mission, potentially because of the specific focus of the organization on protected public lands in the United States. However, at the time of data collection National Public Lands Advocates was actively discussing and debating whether or not COVID-19 was directly relevant to their message. Bill shared: "How do we talk to our donors? How do we talk about COVID-19? Is that part of our message? Is it not part of our message? ...So I'm sure every single organization like ours is having the same conversations." At the time of data collection, the pandemic had not been framed by National Public Lands Advocates as mission relevant.

In the meantime, the organization leadership mostly was considering how to navigate interactions with supporters and day-to-day governance and activities in a broader context of COVID-19. Bill stated, "Right now just what's happening with the stock market and what's happening with people being afraid for their lives and their health and their families. Right now that's clearly the biggest thing we're dealing with... It's just pervasive. It's all everywhere." This was reflected on social media, where COVID-19 was only mentioned in terms of cancelation of events or information

concerning opening and closing of public lands, therefore framed as contextual but not mission relevant. Website discussions were similar.

While volunteer value sets appeared to be associated with different responsiveness to social change, this was not the case at the organizational level for national organizations. Both National Wildlife Group and National Public Lands Advocates had expressed a complex utilitarian value frame, but were differently responsive to these threats. I argue that National Public Lands Advocates' more narrow tactical focus in the realm of wildlife conservation prevented them from perceiving a relevance to their work of broad social change, while National Wildlife Group's explicit attention to human welfare and an ethic of care at multiple levels of the organization positioned them to respond to these events.

Horseshoe Crab Advocates

In the horseshoe crab context, Horseshoe Crab Advocates similarly did not express incorporation of COVID-19 into their activities, viewing it as outside of the direct purview of their mission. As with National Public Lands Advocates, consideration of the COVID-19 context was more related to the potential effects on donations and the attention and concern of existing and potential supporters. For example, the organization paused a planned enhancement to a barrier-fence project due to decreased funding support, as Mark shared. "With this whole thing going on it's affecting fundraising too. People are too caught up, as they should be, in keeping themselves and their families safe and their jobs and all that, so the offers to help on that project aren't there. So we're

gonna just repeat what we did last year.” Horseshoe Crab Advocates staff member Mark discussed how they understood the funding environment in relation to the pandemic:

There are a few corporations fortunately... that are not adversely impacted by this at all. As a matter of fact some of them might be actually benefitting from it if not in the short term in the long term...So these corporations have pledged over the years sponsorship money to help us with our conservation work...So I'm not dealing with anybody whose contribution is due past the summer. We'll wait until ... I could see what that looks like before I know what to say. The ones that are due in the next month or two are sorely needed because we're not gonna be getting much of anything else. Grants aren't gonna happen if they haven't been written. It's too late for that. And private donations are just gonna dry up. So people who have more money where this isn't affecting them financially tend in times like this to give their money towards causes they think - although they may like horseshoe crabs, the American Red Cross is struggling right now for blood. So they may be more apt to give their money to the American Red Cross and not to us, or a little bit to us and a lot to them. Ventilators and things like that. So there's a lot of things right now where if you are philanthropic minded and you have those resources you're probably not thinking of [Horseshoe Crab Advocates]. And I understand that. It is what it is...So we're gonna have to basically cobble things together and hobble things along with what we get. So I'm letting the people that I do feel that I should be able to count on know that now more than ever we really need you to do what you've been doing, because even though it might not look like we can get out and do things, we're doing the same things we've always done. We're just doing them with less people.

This statement highlights how Horseshoe Crab Advocates leadership viewed the context of COVID-19 as relevant to how they engage individuals in their work. There was a clear awareness and expectation that health factors and more direct pandemic response would take more attention both in supporters' individual lives and in funding

patterns. This was validated and accepted, while the organization simultaneously worked to strategically engage those who they didn't view as vulnerable and highlight the continued relevance and steady nature of their work. Additionally, Horseshoe Crab Advocates had to creatively adjust their tactics and projects to achieve safety in the COVID setting.

Despite the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic was directly related to wildlife through human-wildlife relationships and wildlife trade influencing the thread of a zoonotic disease, organizations differed in the degree to which they saw the COVID-19 pandemic as directly relevant to their mission and activities or considered it as a contextual factor that they needed to operate within. Because only the national, generalist wildlife conservation organization publicly viewed it as relevant, it could indicate that broadly framed organizations are more able to adapt their activities to current social context and to shift based on new understandings of issues not previously seen as relevant to their mission.

Staff members almost always expressed an expectation that their volunteers and staff members should value human health and safety first during the COVID context, regardless of the extent to which they proclaim values more focused on humans or nature.

Reckoning with racial injustice

At the same time, the United States faced a national reckoning with racial injustice and police brutality beginning with the murder of George Floyd. This is entangled with the pandemic and can be seen as influencing the values proclaimed and performed by organizations. Racialized structures are influential within the

environmental state, as racist systems allow for the existence of existing destructive political and institutional patterns (Carrillo 2020). Significant research over many decades has demonstrated the racial inequality in exposure to environmental problems (Bullard 2008; Jorgenson et al. 2020). Processes of placemaking that default to better the interests of white communities are one example of processes leading to the environmental harms experienced by Black communities (Purifoy and Seamster 2020). Indeed, scholarship has argued that environmental harms are fundamental to the creation of white spaces (Seamster and Purifoy 2020). Environmental organizations differ in the degree to which they directly addressed racial injustice in their work. Underrepresented groups, including communities of color, have been shown to underestimate their own environmental concern, when they actually have more concern than other groups (Dietz and Whitley 2018a). Similarly, other research finds that while there is a perception that non-Whites care less about the environment than Whites, and a real lack of racial representation of non-Whites in environmental organizations, non-Whites do not care less or participate in fewer environmentally responsible behaviors including environmental identity and concern (Hegtvedt, Parris, and Johnson 2019).

Environmental justice also necessitates an intersectional approach by understanding that inequality in exposure to environmental problems is found across race, class, and gender lines. For example, while research finds some positive relationships between economic inequality and inequality in access to biodiversity, they also find that this is shaped by histories of development and histories of inequality in access to resources (Kuras et al. 2020). Despite these connections, the exclusionary history of the traditional environmental movement which was primarily white and nature-framed has

persisted in many ways, contributing to the continued distinction of environmental issues without a common recognition of the human imperative and inseparable connections between human welfare, justice, and a thriving planet. For example, Fisher, Dow and Ray find that protestors at the Women’s March motivated by the environment were less likely to express overlapping concerns with racial justice, in contrast to other groups (Fisher, Dow, and Ray 2017).

Like all organizations, environmental organizations have a racialized history and structure. Many of the structural factors beyond individual discrimination that continue lead to racial disparities in the American workplace and the perceived “race neutrality” of many practices are equally present in environmental organizations (Ray 2019).

Organizations are important actors that affect outcomes, and their meaningful attention or lack thereof to racial justice matters. The ways that organizations and corporations responded to the summer protests as well as after the January 6th , 2021 insurrection despite patterns of inequality and calls for change long pre-dating both events, indicates that organizations respond to social pressure (Ray 2021).

Organizations working on national conservation addressed the racial justice protests publicly. For example, National Wildlife Group posted a statement on their website and social media stating:

The protests and riots that have spread across the country are a cry for justice. They ask us all to acknowledge the terrible, everyday danger of simply being black. They call on political leaders to bring the nation together to better understand the oppression and end it. Yet Trump has fanned the flames of racism by calling protesters "thugs" and threatening to shoot them — and this, too, was predictable. All of us at [National Wildlife Group] hear, and join, the call to end racism. We stand with those demanding an immediate end to police violence and

racial violence of all kinds and a recognition and repudiation of white supremacy. We stand with everyone who cannot breathe.

Interestingly, although they have addressed environmental justice in other work, this statement does not link environmental work and conservation to racial justice. National Wildlife Group has engaged in direct environmental justice work around chemicals at a proposed southeastern plastics plant, the only organization of the six to engage in work with aims of environmental justice. The other national organization, National Public Lands Advocates, also made a statement on racial justice. However, this statement was less targeted and specific:

Everyone is entitled to feel safe in their communities and public lands, to thrive and learn and enjoy life without fear of being harmed because of the color of their skin. We are listening, and we support ensuring justice. But we can do more. Racism, bigotry, and hatred have no place within our organization or culture. We commit ourselves to promoting and centering diverse voices that have been ignored for too long in our communities and institutions, and the [National Public Lands Advocates] encourages all of our friends, partners, and supporters in the conservation movement to join us in working to make a better and more equitable world.

Similarly, State Nature Association publicly posted a statement discussing the connections between racial justice and the environmental movement, while acknowledging the need for work within the movement to address disparities. Ecosystem Connection Council also made a public statement and directed their supporters to racial justice organizations. At the time of data collection, it was unclear the degree to which these statements were translated into concrete action within organizations or in the public sphere. While my data collection does not allow me to directly draw conclusions about a

lack of intentional work going on at staff or board levels, the details of any of this potential work were not made public in the months immediately following George Floyd's murder.

In contrast, Horseshoe Crab Advocates did not address the protests and police killings publicly, nor did Red Wolf Advocates. The fact that not all regional organizations addressed the national reckoning with racial justice may point to the fact that they do not view racial issues as directly aligned with their own work, in contrast to others that viewed biodiversity issues, wildlife conservation, and environmental justice as aligned. Racialized structures are also fundamental to environmental problems, yet organizations were not universally likely to view them as being so. The degree to which some staff and volunteers engaged in processes to separate their work from social events echoes research on the range of processes of decoupling that organizations can engage in as a resistance response to external pressures (Battard, Donnelly, and Mangematin 2017). The fact that these statements on racial justice were made publicly to a greater extent than they were included in interviews, may indicate the degree to which values are used by organizations to make statements of values as a means of identity alignment and proclamation. This relative separation of racial justice approaches in most organizations contrasts with the assertions of both environmental justice activists and research in environmental sociology that view race as fundamentally entangled in environmental degradation. Most organizations seemed to frame race and racial justice movements as fundamentally separate from their own work.

Similar to COVID-19, it appears that National Wildlife Group's broad understanding of biodiversity allowed them to connect their mission to racial justice and

increased their responsiveness to a national conversation on race, while other organizations who addressed the context did so in a way that didn't connect to their work. While value framings did not entirely explain these differences, it's noteworthy that the organization that proclaimed the greatest proportion of human-centered values before the pandemic, National Wildlife Group, seemed to be the organization that viewed the two major social changes as relevant to their work.

Conclusion: Conservation Values During a Time of Social Disruption

During data collection for this project the world faced both a global pandemic that disrupted all life and social structure, as well as a reckoning with racial justice in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and other killings of Black Americans by police. This timing allowed me to collect data on how value processes responded to these social shifts.

All volunteers discussed that the COVID-19 context influenced their tactics and logistical aspects of their volunteer work. However, only volunteers with the National Wildlife Group discussed the pandemic as directly relevant to wildlife conservation. As COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease, it is surprising that it was not viewed as directly relevant to more volunteers. National Wildlife Group volunteers viewed the pandemic as an example of the reasons for their work as well as an opportunity for messaging to potential supporters about the importance of addressing wildlife issues. While one might assume that smaller organizations would be more able to adjust in response to external changes, the fact that the largest organization was the one that most incorporated these major events into their work and activities calls this assumption into question.

At the organizational level, a similar pattern was found with national organizations with National Wildlife Group incorporating COVID-19 into their tactics and mission and National Public Lands Advocates addressing that the pandemic was relevant to their context, such as through donations and attention from potential supporters. Horseshoe crab organizations primarily engaged with COVID-19 in a contextual as opposed to substantive way. All organizations reckoned with organizing their activities and navigating difficulties in both tactics and fundraising related to restrictions on gathering as well as economic considerations.

While interviews with staff focused primarily on COVID-19, social media and website data did show organizations addressing and stating solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. Additionally, organizations were shown to be responsive to cultural context as value proclamations on social media and websites for State Nature Association and National Wildlife Group were significantly more likely to proclaim human-centered values after March in the wake of the protests and pandemic. However, as some organizational leaders and volunteers did not view the pandemic as relevant to their mission and work outside of simple operating and context changes, they did not express undergoing value negotiation processes related to it. It seemed that organizations responded in one of three ways: 1) ignoring social change, 2) expressing solidarity to maintain relevance, 3) connecting the social problems to their mission and tactics. While the COVID-19 pandemic was directly related to wildlife and racial justice is connected to all environmental issues, 2020 presented an important call and opportunity for conservation organizations to demonstrate the urgency and relevance of addressing

biodiversity loss and wildlife issues. Understanding why some organizations did not view these issues as connected can be important for understanding future work.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Biodiversity loss poses an existential threat to human life. While climate change has rightfully received a great deal of scholarly attention, species extinction deserves more sociological focus. Species are lost each day, which is devastating for those concerned about the environment for its intrinsic value but also poses major threats to humans (Djoghlaif 2007). In contrast to the past frames of the conservation and environmental movements that focused on preservation of places and species for their own sake, increasing segments of the environmental movement have now shifted to acknowledge the human consequences of environmental problems and the interconnectedness of humans and the environment. Stated another way, human-centered and nature-centered conservation frames demonstrate a false dichotomy that doesn't accurately reflect this relationship (Matulis and Moyer 2017). Research has demonstrated that conservation is inextricably linked to human survival (Jansson 2013; Jansson and Polasky 2010; Mertig 2002; Peterson et al. 1998). Ecosystem services that are provided to humans such as water, air, food, and cultural needs and resilience provide examples of the ways that biodiversity loss matters (Hooper et al. 2005; Morales-Reyes et al. 2018; Peterson et al. 1998).

Environmental problems are, fundamentally, social problems and the result of human behavior and social organization. Human activities both intentionally and unintentionally affect other species. Development, land use, consumption, as well as government wildlife programs and policies all influence biodiversity. Similarly, legislation related to conservation and protection of biodiversity, such as the Endangered Species Act, affect conservation outcomes. Social scientists in a variety of disciplines

have found evidence of factors influencing human-wildlife behavior and interactions. For example, scholars have explored wildlife trade participation and macro-level global exchange processes (Cooney et al. 2017; Moorhouse et al. 2017; Shandra et al. 2009). Social factors and public perceptions, separate from material impacts of wildlife, influence human behavior and human-wildlife outcomes.

Values in general provide an important tool for explaining such human behavior. Values are defined by their containment of expectations and desires for outcomes, which influence behaviors and decision-making (Hitlin 2003; Schwartz 1992). Scholars have found that values relate to beliefs about environmental problems and participation in environmental behavior (Guagnano et al. 1995; Karp 1996). The explanatory power of values is strengthened when values are incorporated into identities. Values can be incorporated into how people define themselves, and they motivate behavior as people attempt to align their behavior with how they see themselves. Some scholars even argue that values are the fundamental basis of identities (Hitlin 2003).

Value orientations toward wildlife including domination frames, focusing on humans as having dominion over wildlife and a utilitarian perspective, and mutualism frames, focusing on humans and wildlife as interconnected, have formed the primary basis of human-wildlife research (Manfredo 2008; Manfredo et al. 2009). These values are conceived as existing on a spectrum of human-centered and nature-centered views on the environment and other species. Material conditions, wildlife conflict and reliance, and education have been found to influence the formation of wildlife value orientations (Rickenbach et al. 2017), and these have also been found to influence both behavior and support for policies (Manfredo et al. 2009; Zinn and Pierce 2002).

While we have evidence of the causes and consequences of wildlife values for individuals, much human activity that influences wildlife occurs in organizational settings. This occurs also in organizations specifically working on wildlife and conservation issues, such as non-profit organizations who actively seek to influence human activity related to conservation. Because values matter for environmental issues including biodiversity conservation, understanding value processes in the organizational context is an important area of research. This project seeks to uncover the roles and negotiation of values in conservation organizations, filling an important research gap.

The project has used a case study approach to illuminate the role and negotiation of values in case studies of three wildlife conservation contexts, national wildlife conservation, red wolf conservation, and horseshoe crab conservation in the mid-Atlantic. Through strategic selection of two organizations in each case, I explore how values function in these varied conservation contexts. In-depth interviews with staff members and volunteers provide valuable data on the ways that organizations navigate and perform values, as related to their approaches, tactics, volunteer recruitment, and relationships with other organizations. In-depth interviews with volunteers illuminate how volunteers perceive and understand their values in relationship to those of their organizations, and how values function in their participation decisions. Content analysis of public statements in social media and on organizational websites provide additional data on how organizations utilize and proclaim their values as a complement to the in-depth interviews.

As data collection was underway during a time of significant and widespread social disruption through the COVID-19 pandemic, which was also directly related to

wildlife issues, these same data sources provided evidence of how social context influences and is framed as relevant to the same value processes. Therefore, the project contributed to understanding how value processes function in a time of particularly evident social change.

This project fulfills a few primary goals. First, it brings sociological attention to the important environmental social problem of biodiversity loss and species extinction. Second, it extends previous work demonstrating the importance of values at the individual level to understand how values function and are negotiated in an environmental organizational context. Third, it uncovers the ways that volunteers and organizations negotiate their values and the ways that values matter in participation and collaboration. Through a case study approach in three conservation cases and six organizations, processes of values in organizations and volunteers were analyzed.

Volunteer Value Negotiation

I argue that a broader typology of value conceptions existed within wildlife conservation organizations. This includes moral conservationists, community-stewards, complex utilitarian values, adding nuance to the previously understood dichotomy of humans versus nature. As values are conceptions of the desirable, these framings reflect varying desires for outcomes including wellbeing for humans and animals, preservation of community identity, and the continuation of opportunities for exposure to nature for individuals and future generations.

In-depth interviews with organization volunteers focused on perceptions of the role of values in their participation. While volunteers in all organizations expressed a

value of nature and conservation, these were framed and understood in different ways. Volunteers with National Wildlife Group, the national conservation organization, almost always framed their environmental values as related to both human survival and an intrinsic value of nature. These were typically framed through morals and a value of care for others, not drawing a sharp distinction between humans and other species. Such a nuanced view of values extends beyond the traditional conception of human and nature centered frames through complex conceptions of values proclaimed by participants.

In the case of the specific conservation cases of horseshoe crabs and red wolves, volunteers often connected their nature values to concern with future generations' ability to enjoy the outdoors or cultural or spiritual factors, more so than a concern about human survival, reflecting a variation on a utilitarian frame. Although different, these volunteers also expressed a value organization that connected humans and the natural environment in their values. Horseshoe Crab Advocates and State Nature Association volunteers in the horseshoe crab case, which were both locally focused, organized their values in terms of community stewardship and a complex utilitarian frame. Horseshoe Crab Advocates Volunteers also used a moral conservationist frame. In contrast to this, National Wildlife Group volunteers, commonly expressing a moral conservationist frame, were likely to identify their values as conflicting with other groups, echoing the organization's relative focus on defense against problematic actions as compared to other organizations. This indicates that values have a relationship to the tactics and collaboration of organizations, through a cyclical process of alignment.

Volunteers perceived their values as important motivators in their decisions on what projects to participate in and what organizations to engage in, in addition to efficacy

and logistical participation factors. They viewed themselves as engaging in projects that aligned with their values. However, volunteers did not typically report actively considering organizational values. Instead, they perceived a general alignment around specific projects and effort of the organization. Respondents expressed that organizational values mattered, but volunteers assumed that they shared values with the organization because they worked in conservation. In addition to assuming general alignment in values, volunteers often discussed organizational alignment in terms of dealbreakers. While they started assuming value alignment, they felt that certain organizational behaviors would serve as a dealbreaker that would signal incompatible values.

In sum, while these findings indicated that values were behavior motivators for volunteers, volunteers were more likely to perceive and attempt to construct value alignment as opposed to actively seeking organizations that were compatible with their values. Through active processes of attempting to frame behavior as consistent with identity and values, volunteers viewed their behavior as consistent.

Organizational Values Processes

When organizations framed their values as in contrast with those of others working in their issue area, the most local organizations in my sample were more likely to identify themselves as having particular strengths over other organizations whereas larger or more broad organizations were more likely to frame their identities and approaches as existing within a system of multiple niches. National Wildlife Group was more likely to publicly proclaim a value set centered around morals and mutualism,

incorporating human wellbeing and justice, than other organizations. As with the individuals, the human and nature centered values were framed in complex ways that contrast with the traditional dichotomy of humans versus nature. Organizations also proclaimed their identities around specific tactics that they used. While organizations proclaimed their values and described using values in determining tactics and approaches, they did not report consciously attempting to align values in processes of volunteer recruitment. These findings indicated differences in value processes in very local versus broader organizations, and a very complex value framing in organizational settings.

Notably absent from both staff and public statements of organizations as well as volunteer statements were statements aligned primarily with human health or with tangible benefits and resources for humans. It may be the case that volunteers in conservation organizations may not often have direct experience with the environmental degradation that targets marginalized communities and facilitates meaningful recognition of the direct, physical consequences of biodiversity loss and other environmental problems. This aspect of the threats of biodiversity loss not being incorporated into the value frames of organizations and their volunteers could contribute to and maintain existing racial inequality and exclusion in the environmental movement.

Observing Value Processes in a Time of Social Disruption

The worldwide spread of COVID-19 that occurred during data collection for this project alongside social movements reckoning with and calling for racial justice allowed me to observe value processes in a context of social change and disruption. Despite the fact that the pandemic was an extremely significant social event that was directly tied to

wildlife and biodiversity issues, this connection was not highlighted equally by all volunteers or organizations.

On the volunteer level, all participants discussed COVID-19 as influencing their participation in programs due to logistical challenges, safety concerns, and other contextual factors. However, only National Wildlife Group volunteers at the national level framed the pandemic within the context of wildlife conservation and as relevant to their work. For volunteers of this organization, it was seen as an illustration of the critical nature of current environmental problems as well as the inseparable connection between wildlife conservation and human health and survival. It was viewed by these volunteers as an opportunity to increase broader awareness of wildlife issues and engage new supporters. However, other volunteers did not similarly connect the pandemic to their work.

In the realm of organizations, a similar pattern was found. National Wildlife Group staff incorporated the pandemic into their tactics and mission, such as through hosting educational webinars on the wildlife trade and human health. In contrast, National Public Lands Advocates staff discussed the pandemic in terms of its effect on supporters and their donations, and publicly discussed it in terms of closures of public lands and other informational or contextual items. Horseshoe Crab Advocates similarly engaged with COVID-19 during staff interviews, and social media and websites for local conservation cases illustrated that COVID-19 was viewed as relevant to the operational context as opposed to their conservation mission. All organizations had to reckon with this context in terms of programming, fundraising, and similar factors.

While interview data primarily addressed COVID-19, public statements also addressed racial justice. These statements tended to illustrate that organizations framed racial justice, including environmental justice, as both necessary and moral components of reaching environmental goals. For some, this related to internal processes and, for others, direct ties to their work. Overall, findings illustrated that organizations underwent internal processes of negotiating values in the face of social events and changes, and this resulted in public proclamations and demonstrations of values. One illustration of this was an increase of the proportions of their public value statements that focused on human-centered values. I view this as likely responsive to both the pandemic and movement for racial justice. Interestingly, although the pandemic was a worldwide event directly related to wildlife, arguably serving as the most pressing and stark call to action around unsustainable wildlife action, it was not universally framed or understood as mission-relevant for organizations or volunteers in conservation. This occurred similarly in the context of racial justice.

I argue that the organization that framed their values primarily around a broader moral value of the wellbeing of both humans and other species, recognizing the interconnectedness of both, were able to respond to changing social contexts more quickly and mobilize volunteers who viewed themselves as engaging in behaviors that were consistent with their moral values and moral identity. In contrast, organizations proclaiming values centered around community stewardship in a local area or the complex utilitarian view were less able or willing to respond to the broader social context which was viewed as distinct from their work. Value sets contribute to differences in how organizations adapt and change over time and in how they relate themselves to others.

In the midst of a crisis of biodiversity loss, organizations are called to reckon with the complex and critical nature of species conservation. These findings illustrate that values processes may limit the framings of wildlife volunteers and organizations. As volunteers engage in processes of searching for behavior that they view as compatible with their value identities, rather than organizational value alignment, the ability for individuals at all levels of an organization to negotiate and develop shared value framings is limited. I argue that this can have severe consequences prohibiting organizations from engaging a broad constituency or aligning with other social movements. Organization leaders and members should consider the ways that organizational value framings may influence their outcomes and may lead to a lack of attention to biodiversity loss and its consequences.

Future Directions

As individuals proclaimed human and wildlife centered values that were very complex and nuanced, future research should determine whether this is because volunteers differ in their value organizations from the regular population included in previous studies of wildlife value orientations or that there is a need for a more accurate and nuanced conception of wildlife values. Quantitative survey research could help to validate and specify value structures and allow for examinations of correlations between values and behavioral outcome measures. While values were perceived as important motivators for participation in volunteer work with conservation NGOs and data provided important insight into how volunteers understand the significance of values, data were collected from a small number of organizations and a convenience sample of volunteers

within those organizations. Therefore, future research could examine a larger sample of organizations and a representative subset of volunteers from those organizations to further validate these findings. Similarly, scholars should examine values processes in the realms of other stakeholders such as government agencies, businesses, and other entities influencing biodiversity outcomes outside of the NGO setting.

Similarly, quantitative approaches to understanding organizational values could further validate these findings about organizational processes and complement approaches that incorporate a representative sample of organizations. Larger sample sizes could allow for analyses of how organizations proclaim their values and how values correlate with characteristics such as collaboration with other organizations. Value alignment between collaborating organizations and value similarity and differences within issue areas could continue to paint a picture of value processes in organizational settings. Future research could also incorporate geographic dimensions of value processes, to analyze the potential influence of organization and individual location and proximity to particular natural environments.

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues and organizations navigate a changing context, there will be further opportunities to study how organizations proclaim their values publicly as well as how they negotiate them internally. This project uncovered that many wildlife organizations did not view the pandemic as mission relevant despite the fact that the disease was caused by human wildlife relationships. Future research can examine why this finding is the case and see if it continues as policy measures related to the pandemic and wildlife trafficking, such as the Preventing Future Pandemics Act (Anon 2020a), enter the discourse of conservation organizations. Similarly, as increasing

calls for attention to equity include the environmental movement, future research can examine the degree to which racial injustice continues to not be incorporated into organizations' missions.

This research has uncovered processes through which values function in organizational settings. As organizations play a role in environmental problems and human-biodiversity relationships, I argue that understanding how values are navigated in those contexts plays an important role in the system of human-wildlife interaction and contributes to research in organizations by focusing on organizations organized around a social issue. This work also contributes to environmental sociology by interrogating existing environmental value conceptions, and to social movement research by enhancing understandings of how organizations function as a component of social movements. Individuals understood their values to motivate their participation decisions. However, this relationship was limited in terms of relationships to particular organizations. Respondents did not report a significant process of interpreting and aligning personal and organizational values, while they did report perceived alignment in their activities. This indicates that when organizations want to increase participation in their activities, they may be better served by addressing activity-based value alignment over organizational identity-based alignment in their volunteers.

Organizations actively identified themselves based on values as well as other characteristics, and demonstrated differences in how they viewed relationships with other organizations at the national and local levels. They also proclaimed a complex set of human and nature-based values as very connected. As stated above, these processes were responsive in some cases to the social disruption of 2020 in 3 main ways: 1) ignoring

social change, 2) expressing solidarity to maintain relevance, 3) connecting the social problems to their mission and tactics. This project moves the field forward in our understanding of values at the organizational level, exposing complex processes of value proclamation and negotiation of organizations and volunteer participants.

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