Overview

• What is an oral history?
• Background of Voices from the Fisheries
• Voices from the West Coast
• Utility of Oral Histories
• Results and Contributions
• Future Goals
Oral Histories

• **Working definition:** oral history is the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral form
  
  • *it is the* **recorded memoir**
  
  • *it is the* **typewritten manuscript**
  
  • *it is the* **research method that uses in-depth unstructured interviewing**

(Yow 2005, p. 3)
Lab Director Herbert Graham briefs Humbert Humphrey and Ted Kennedy at the Woods Hole Aquarium


• 2003 Local Fisheries Knowledge Pilot Project
  • Student participation
  • Database creation

• VFF
  • Sharing platform for oral histories
  • Central Repository
  • Archive/consolidate/distribute

• Collaborators
  • Working Waterfront Festival
    – New Bedford, MA
  • Rutgers University,
  • MIT Sea Grant
• Collection Update
  • 2016/17 – 191 new interviews
  • 76 collections
  • 1039 interviews
  • 17 multi-media exhibits
    • 102 interviews
• External Collection Links
  • 1300 interviews
VOICES from the WEST COAST

Preserving our Fishing & Coastal History

OSU Oregon State University

In the tradition of Newport Fishermen's Wives

warrenton HIGH FISHERIES INC.
Goals

• To increase participation of West Coast community members in the Voices from the Fisheries database

• Represent diverse community members through unique collections

• Preserve Knowledge

• New data source
Utility of Oral Histories

Why Oral Histories

• Preserve History
  • Fishermen’s Knowledge
  • Scientific Knowledge

• Use existing oral histories as a data source
  • Means to collect data
  • Does not require PRA
  • Fills gaps in other data collection efforts

• Builds Trust
  • Maintains connections
Results and Contributions

- Oregon’s Fishing Communities Adapt in an Evolving Industry: 5/18=23
- The Lives of Fishermen’s Wives, Mothers, and Daughters: 16/3=19
- Voices from POORT (Port Orford Resource Team): 7/15=22
- Behind the Scenes – Voices of Industry Suppliers: 4/2=6
- Voices from the Science Centers: 17
- Total = 87
Results and Contributions

• Acknowledging the Voice of Women: Implications for Management and Policy¹
  • Use of oral histories
  • Changing gender roles
    • Increasing complexity in management
    • Community advocacy
    • Scientific collaborations

¹Calhoun, S, F. Conway, S. Russell 2016
Results and Contributions

• Bi-Coastal Examination of ‘Graying of the Fleet’
  • Use existing oral history interviews
  • Compare Northeast & West Coast perceptions

• Results
  • Recognized as a trend on both coasts

• Why
  • Increases in entry costs
  • Fewer opportunities for mobility
  • Changing regulations
Results and Contributions

• Significance of Findings
  • Provided an increased understanding of the link between ‘graying of the fleet’ and fishery management
  • Confirms ability to identify strong trends in existing oral histories
  • Provides further evidence for the utility of oral history interviews for informing research and policy decisions
Results and Contributions

• Fishermen have contributed information between data collection efforts of the PCGFSS through oral histories
  • Why they participate in different fisheries
  • Their knowledge of shifting ocean conditions and how that may affect their access to fisheries
  • The same species may be bait fish in some communities, but ocean conditions support a more robust growth in other communities which support an international market
  • And much, much more……
Management Context

• Oral histories contribute to…
  • Additional information to ongoing research
  • Provide a means to collect additional data requests from management
  • Provide a means to collect new data for management
  • Clarify issues community members care about
  • Highlight new issues community members are concerned about
  • Provide information for NMFS succession planning, material for education and outreach.
Future Goals

• Continue expanding existing collections
  • Industry service and supply providers

• Develop new collections:
  • Young fishermen’s perspectives
  • New collaboration with processors
  • Northern California perspectives

• Website update
  • Audio snippets, pictures, maps, links to VFF

• Museum displays
Why are oral histories important...

• Not only do they preserve history
• Provides a mechanism to build trust with community members
• Provides an identity to fishing community members
• Changes relationships positively
Questions......

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