



CREATING AND MAINTAINING STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

Feb. 2026



Recreation
Conservation
Education





GALVESTON BAY
FOUNDATION

INSTILL. INSPIRE. EMPOWER.



SPLASH

STOPPING PLASTICS AND
LITTER ALONG SHORELINES

Creating a cleaner
environment in the
Houston-Galveston Region
through...

- Education
- Outreach
- Community Science





“Uniting all Americans to ensure wildlife & people thrive in a rapidly changing world.”

Resilient Schools & Communities (RiSC)



Monarch
Heroes





Tools of Engagement

Research-based Strategies for Community Engagement

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Goals

- FIND & BUILD PARTNERSHIPS
- FOSTER EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- IDENTIFY AREAS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPROVEMENT
- ENHANCE COLLABORATION FOR GBEP PRIORITIES



Who's here?
Do we have anything in
common?

Five Minutes to
Make a Bingo
And A New Connection!



What's in the water?

1. Given: "What's in the Water?"

Program

2. With a partner, illustrate how one additional organization would enhance the impact & meet regional priorities

Galveston Bay Estuary Program Public Participation and Education Priorities

ACTION PLANS AND CORRESPONDING ACTIONS		PLAN PRIORITIES			
		Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use	Protect and Sustain Living Resources	Engage Communities	Inform Science-Based Decision Making
Action Plan: Preserve Galveston Bay Through Stakeholder and Partner Outreach (SPO)					
SPO-1	Stewardship Programs and Volunteer Opportunities	x	x	x	
SPO-2	Workshops and Events	x	x	x	
SPO-3	Support Regional Initiatives	x	x	x	x
SPO-4	Local Government Outreach	x	x	x	x
Action Plan: Support Public Education and Awareness Initiatives (PEA)					
PEA-1	Key Issue Engagement	x	x	x	x
PEA-2	Adult Education	x	x	x	
PEA-3	Kindergarten to 12th Grade (K-12) Education Efforts			x	



Plan Priority One: **Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use**

Galveston Bay is an economic driver for the Houston-Galveston region with frequent and varied use by residents, tourists, and commercial and trade interests. For people who live, work, and play in and around Galveston Bay it is beneficial to take an active role in protecting it. *GBP'18* outlines the steps to be taken to ensure Galveston Bay is kept safe for human and aquatic life use.

To ensure safe human and aquatic life use of Galveston Bay, three Action Plans are identified.

Improve Water Quality Through Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement

Improve Water Quality Through Point Source Pollution Abatement

Promote Public Health and Awareness



Plan Priority Two: **Protect and Sustain Living Resources**

The lower Galveston Bay watershed is composed of habitats that range from open water areas and estuarine wetlands to freshwater wetlands and upland coastal prairie. These habitats support plant, fish, and wildlife species that ensure the health and biological diversity of the estuarine system. *GBP'18* continues the ecosystem approach to living resource protection identified in *GBP'95* to ensure the existence of an optimal variety and distribution of coastal habitats.

To protect and sustain the living resources of Galveston Bay, three Action Plans are identified.

Support Habitat Conservation

Support Species Conservation

Sustain Freshwater Inflows



Plan Priority Three: Engage Communities

Nearly 5.4 million people call the five counties that surround Galveston Bay home (U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, 2016), with millions more visiting the region each year. Residents and visitors affect the health of Galveston Bay through their daily actions, which makes engaging the people of Galveston Bay critical to its long-term successful management, and the sustainability of the bay and its resources.

GBP'18 builds upon the comprehensive public participation and education work identified in *GBP'95*, with a renewed focus on connectivity, personal responsibility, and increasing environmental literacy.

To fully engage the people who live, work, and play in Galveston Bay, two Action Plans are identified.

Preserve Galveston Bay Through Stakeholder and Partner Outreach

Support Public Education and Awareness Initiatives



Plan Priority Four: **Inform Science-Based Decision Making**

The health of the Galveston Bay estuary is dynamic, due to both human interactions and natural processes. These changes can affect the people, habitats, and species of Galveston Bay, making monitoring and research essential for the GBEP and its partners to manage, protect, and sustain Galveston Bay.

GBP'18 continues the coordinated approach identified in *GBP'95* with monitoring and research activities that focus on applied research and coordination to identify knowledge gaps and research needs and collection of data to address emerging issues, such as endocrine disruptors and personal care product contaminants.

To ensure data used by the GBEP and its partners are accurate, defensible, and accessible, two Action Plans are identified.

Collaborate with Research Institutions to Support Focus Area Applied Research and Monitoring

Increase Access to Galveston Bay Ecosystem Information

2018-2020

Public Perception

Social Indicators

PROJECTS

- White Oak Bayou Native Habitat Restoration and Outreach
- Blackhawk Park Coastal Prairie Restoration and Education Project
- Know Your Watershed
- Galveston Seawall Recycling
- Public Perception Assessment and Community-Based Social Marketing Campaigns to Enhance Conservation and Educational Outreach Programs

2021-2023

Under Resourced Communities

K-12 Education

Career Access

PROJECTS

- Texas Estuarine Resource Network Pgm
- Microplastics in Galveston Bay: The Big Impacts of Tiny Pollution
- Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community Through Prairie Education
- Engaging Diverse Communities in Conservation
- Water Quality Outreach Implementation for Vulnerable Rural Populations
- Galveston Bay Report Card Vietnamese Outreach
- Trash Bash

2024-2027

Place-Based Learning

Environmental Literacy

Increasing Capacity

Career Access

PROJECTS

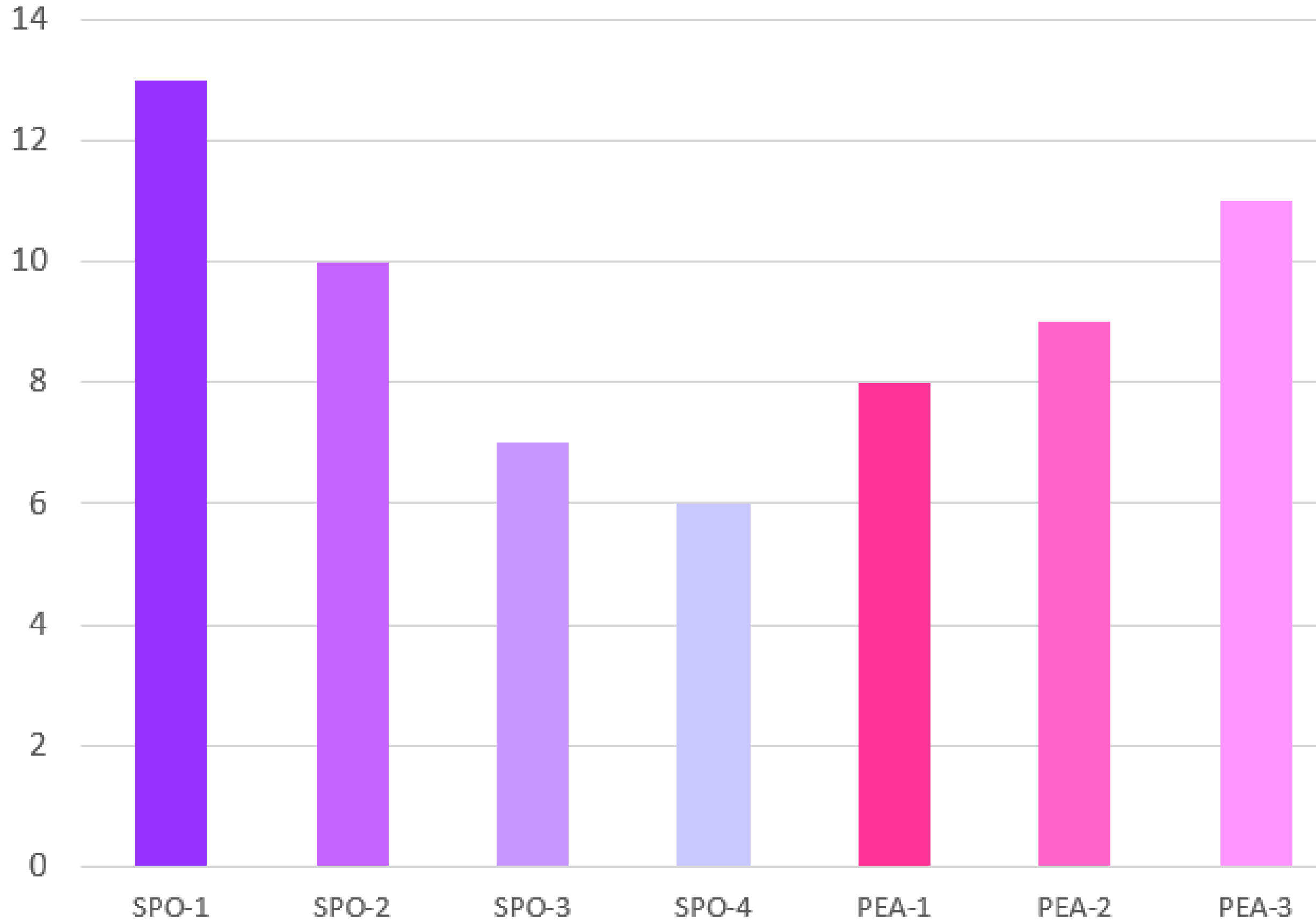
- Bay to Schools
- Drought Conservation Campaign
- SPLASh
- Wetland Connections
- Resiliency in Education and Green Inf.
- Mobilizing the Environmental Education Community Through Prairie Education
- Engaging Under-resourced Communities in Conservation
- UHCL Community Outreach (KPRC)
- Trash Bash
- Nature Trails Master Plan
- Texas Envirothon

The Galveston Bay Plan: Measurable Goals for PPE



Measure	Timeframe and Output
<p>Capture list of existing K-12 programs in the region.</p>	<p>Within 2-5 years, develop a database of existing programs.</p>
<p>Conduct gap analysis to identify K-12 program needs.</p>	<p>Within 2-5 years, conduct an educators summit to identify education gaps and needs.</p>
<p>Convene thought leaders in region to create plan of action to support K-12 programs.</p>	<p>Within 2-5 years, create a plan to support K-12 educators (specific goals to be determined in Educators Summit).</p>
<p>Support and fund existing and new K-12 programs.</p>	<p>Within 5-10 years, see significant progress on plan to support K-12 educators (50% of goals met).</p>
<p>Support existing and build new relationships with Independent School Districts, Professional Educator Groups, Resource Developers, etc.</p>	<p>Within 5-10 years, see significant progress on plan to support K-12 educators (50% of goals met).</p>

Number of Action Plan Priorities for Current PPE Projects



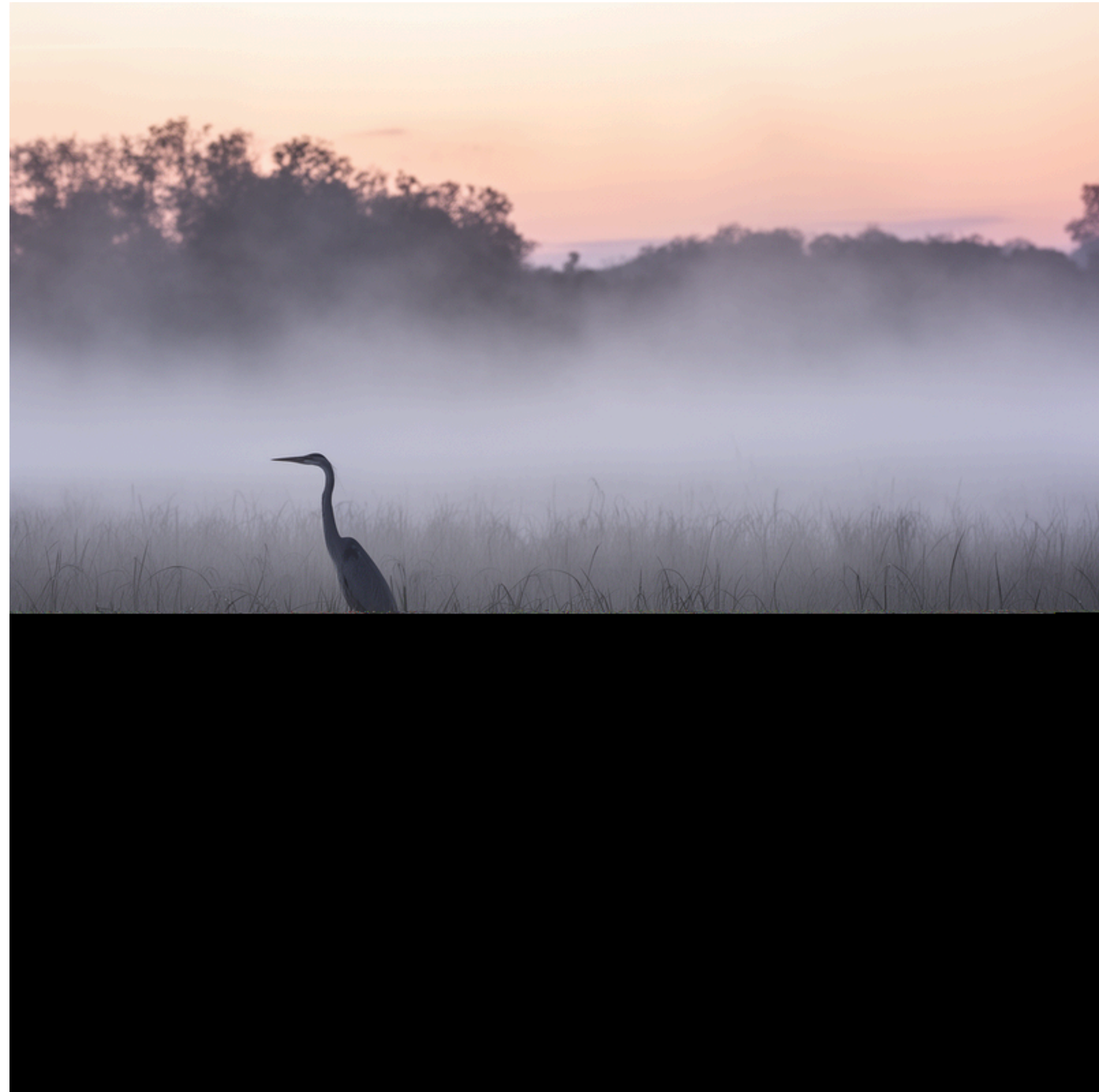
SPO-1	Stewardship Programs and Volunteer Opportunities
SPO-2	Workshops and Events
SPO-3	Support Regional Initiatives
SPO-4	Local Government Outreach
PEA-1	Key Issue Engagement
PEA-2	Adult Education
PEA-3	K-12 Education Efforts

THINK - PAIR - SHARE

What's next?

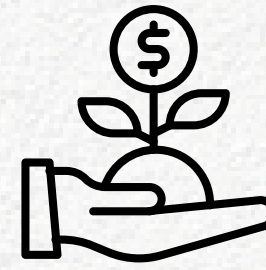
Where to go from here?

Are you, as a provider of EE,
already meeting any of these
goals?



● GBF ● SPLASH ● NWF

Grant Funding



100

80

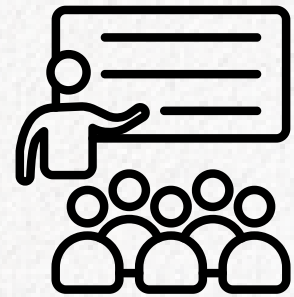
60

40

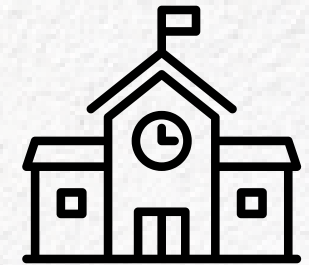
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Onsite Programming



Connections with Schools



Off Site Programming

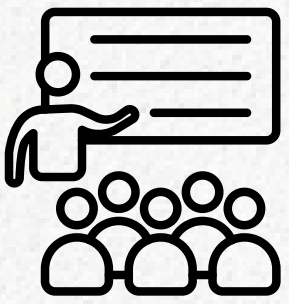
● GBF ● SPLASH ● NWF

Grant Funding

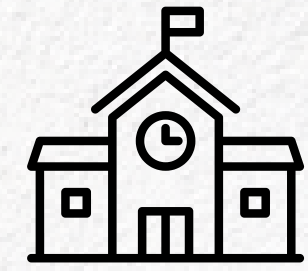


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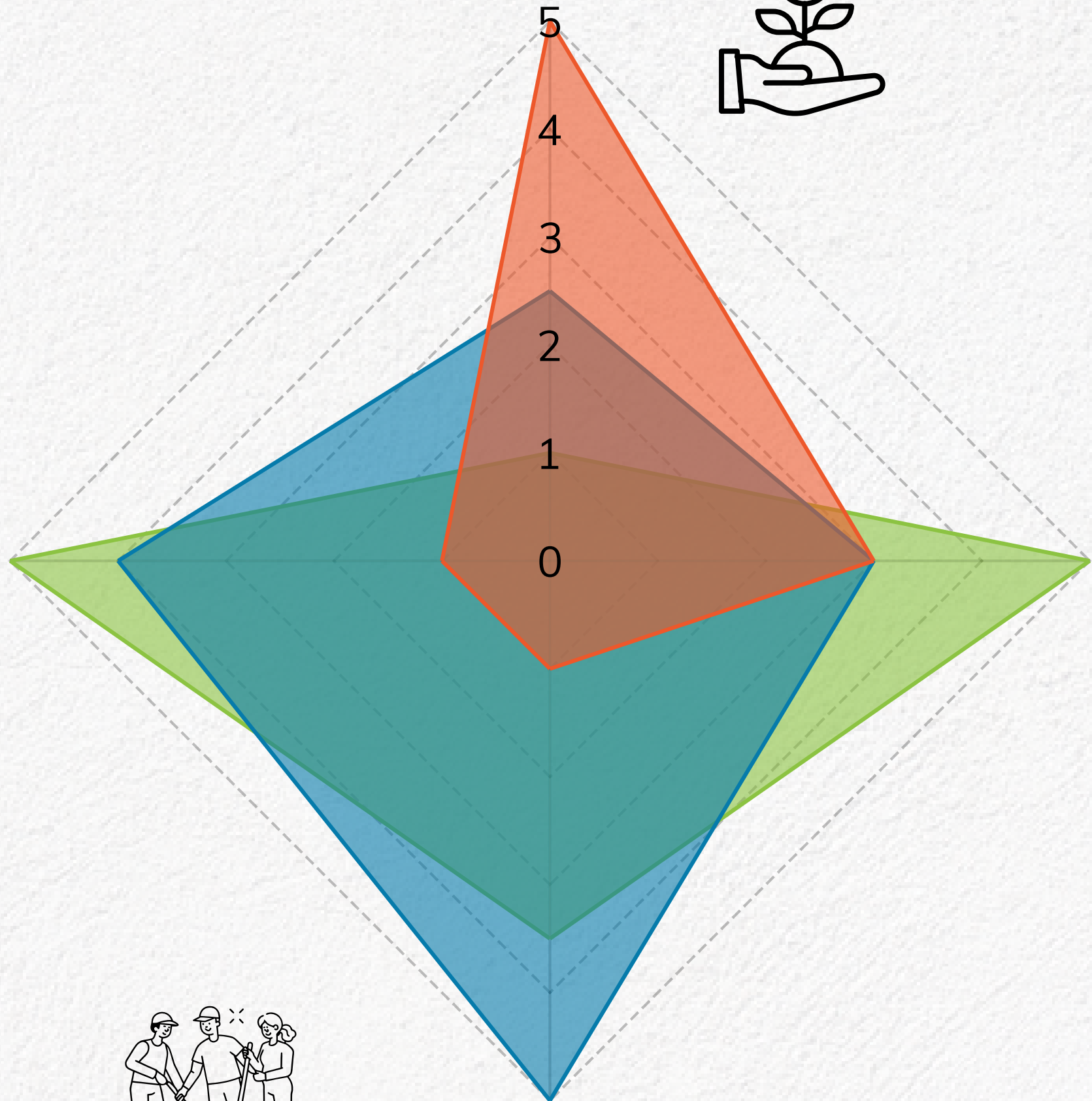
On Site Programming



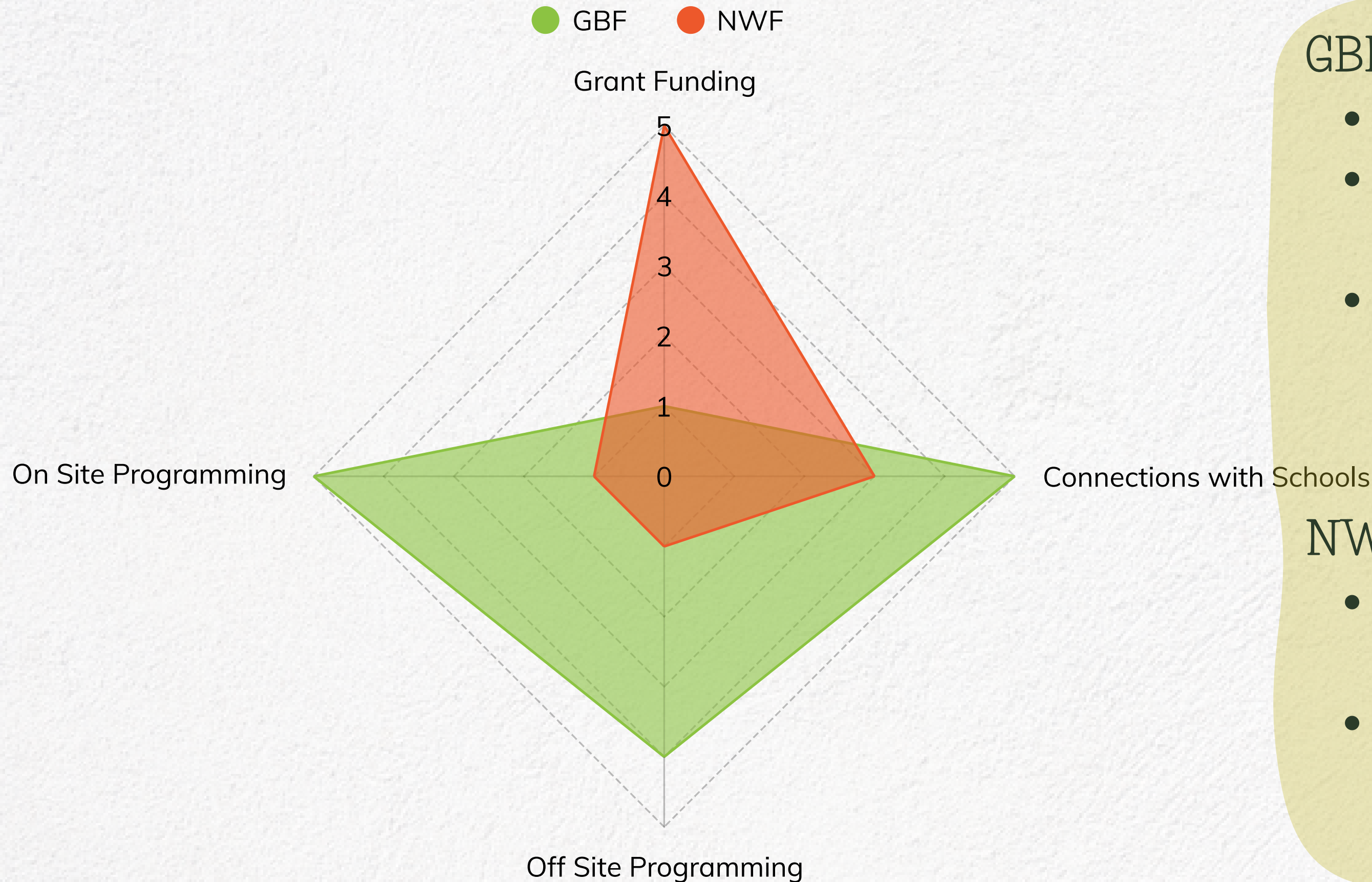
Connections with Schools



Off Site Programming



GBF + NWF



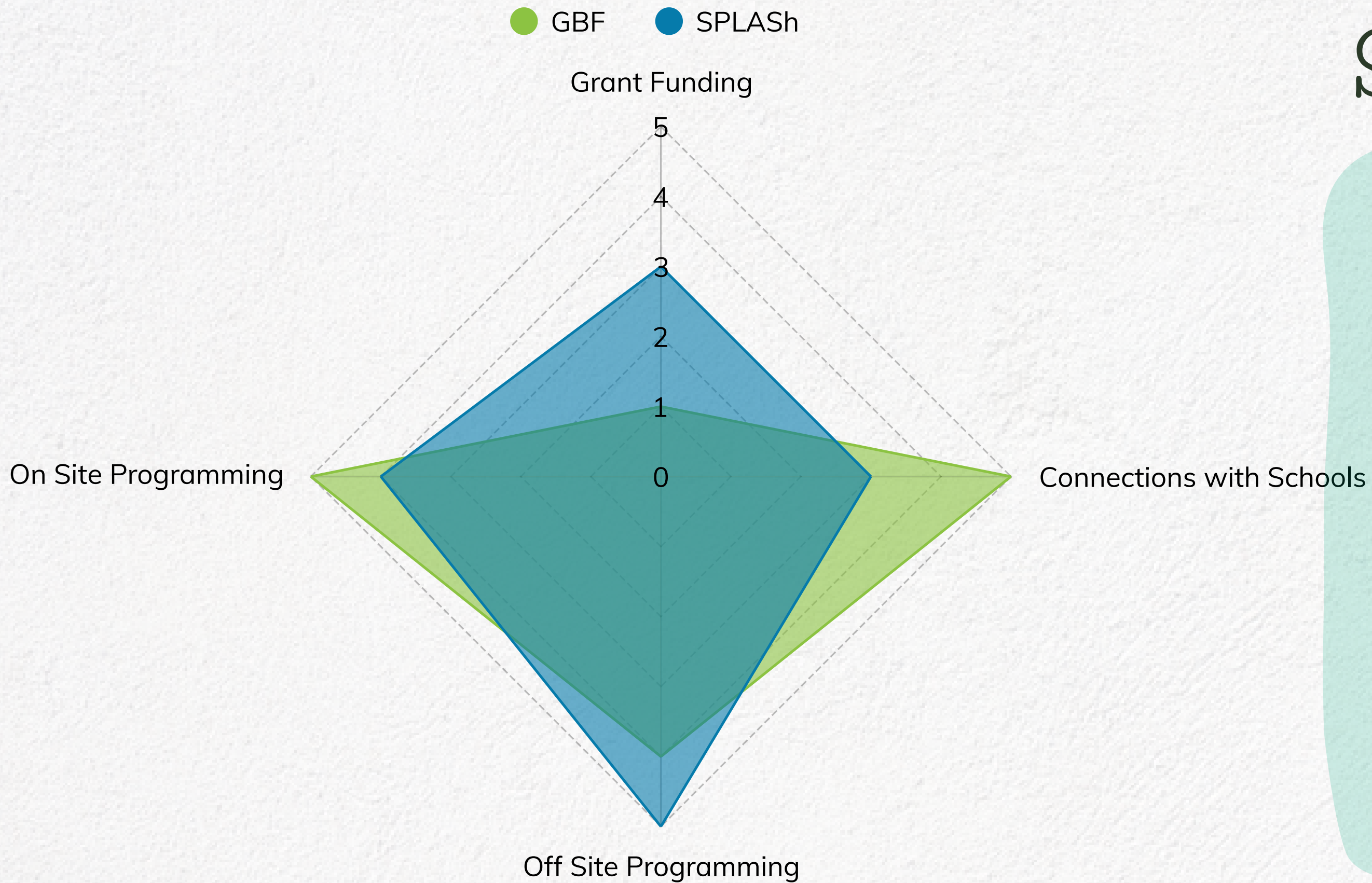
GBF Receives:

- Funding for existing programs
- Additional school participation to increase program numbers
- Option for existing partner schools to engage a broader network (as capacity allows)

NWF Receives:

- Connections to schools in need of project funding
- Off-site field experiences and classroom workshops for current program schools.

SPLASH + GBF



SPLASH Receives:

- Access to schools
- Pilot programming
- Community partner introductions

GBF Receives:

- Host for clean up events
- Event support

NWF+ SPLASH

● SPLASH ● NWF

Grant Funding

5

4

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2

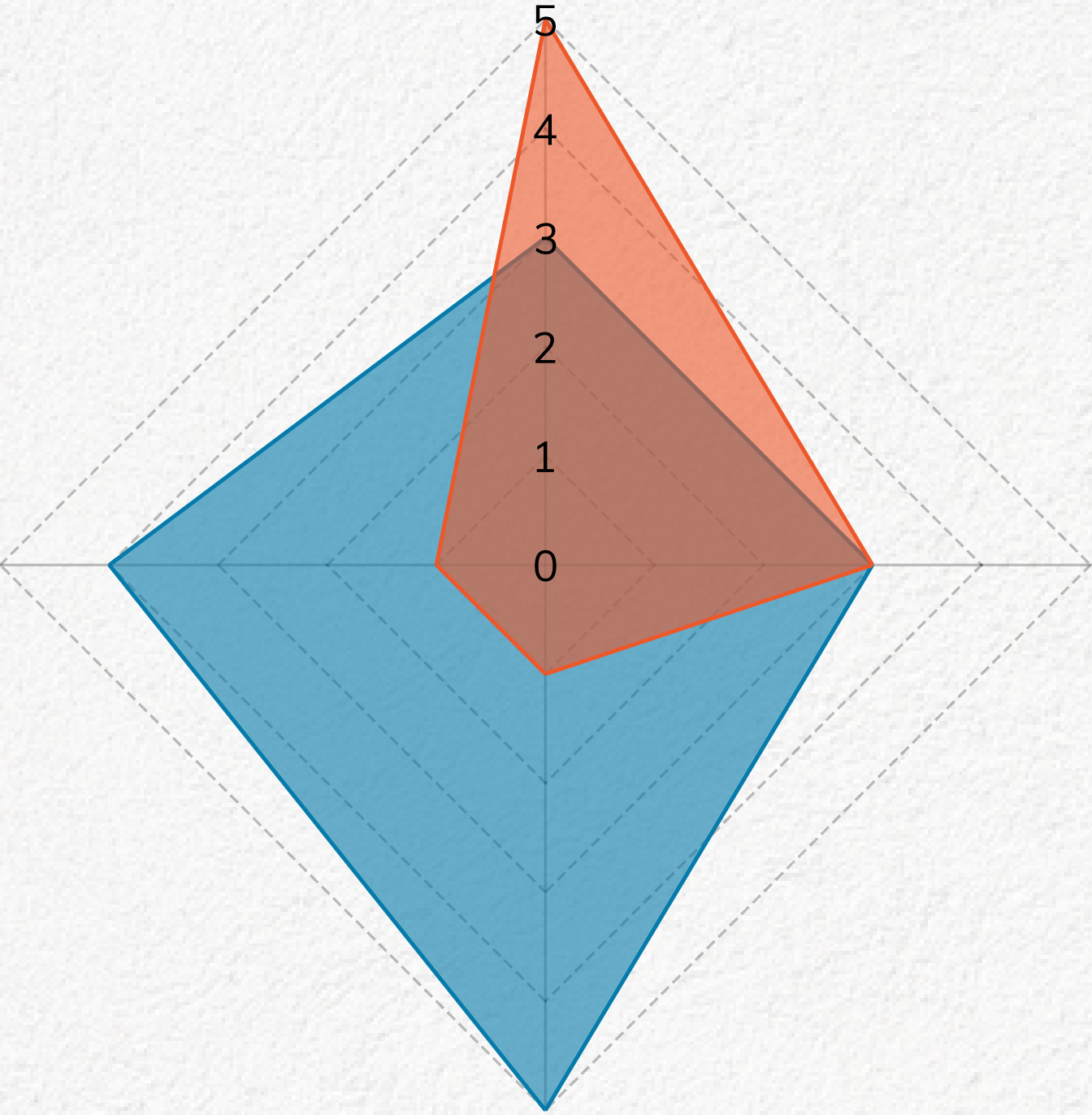
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On Site Programming

Connections with Schools

Off Site Programming



NWF Receives:

- Field trip programming = enhanced student experience
- Additional green career exposure for participants
- Direct wildlife connection

SPLASH Receives:

- Access to schools
- Pilot programming

Importance of Community Partnerships

1. Leveraging Community Strengths

- Partners bring unique expertise, ideas, and perspectives that enhance your project
- Collaboration > Competition
- Funding collaborations & resource sharing



2. Greater Impact

- Increase impact while not straining resources
 - Good Partnerships = Less Work for all
- Build on what has already been accomplished



Importance of Community Partnerships

3. Creating Sustainable Change

- Forward GBEP priority goals on a larger scale than a single entities' capacity
- Resource sharing = Increased impact
- Our community benefits when we work together



What gets in the way?

- Cultural silos
 - Lack of in person discussion opportunities
 - Not knowing where to begin/let go of responsibilities
- Organizational ability to accept funding
 - Do you need a pass through organization?
 - How many levels of approval are needed to partner?
- Timeline of proposals vs implementation
 - Plan months/years in advance
 - Reality can (*will*) look different

A real-life example.

EXPECTATION



REALITY



Best Practices for Collaborative Action

Who are the "right" partners?

- Join a GBEP Subcommittee
- Attend community events, festivals, & outreach events.
- Make an effort to meet people and talk about your needs!
- Build Trust

How to work with partners:

- Clear is kind
- Strategize mutual goals & determine clear roles
- Scale the work to maximize impact. Good partnerships = less work, more impact
- Evaluate & Feedback



How do we know it's working?

By the Numbers...

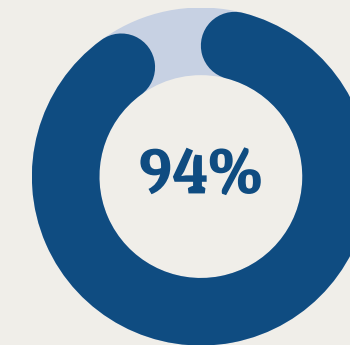
217 → **10**
Total students engaged → Field Experiences

521 → **11**
Students engaged through classes or clubs → Teachers Involved

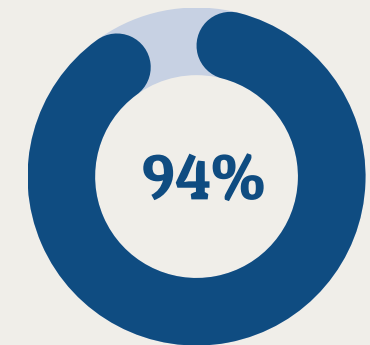
461 → **25**
Total students engaged → Classroom Workshops

168 → **8**
Total participants engaged → Community Sessions

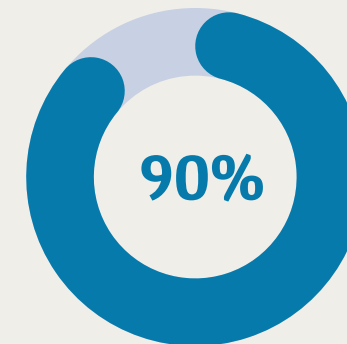
Students in year two of the program agree or strongly agree:



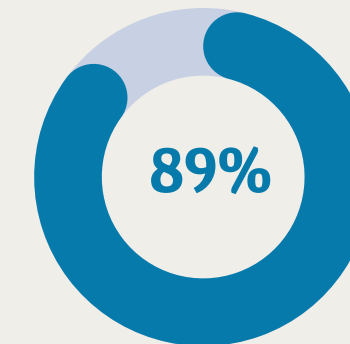
I understand the function of a watershed.



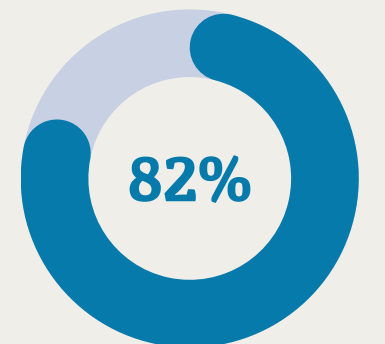
I understand the issue of climate change.



I am concerned about how climate change is affecting my community.



A healthy watershed is important to their local community.



I understand the purpose and function of natural infrastructure.

- Positive feedback from participants
- Audience wants more opportunities to engage
- Exposure to green careers and environmental activities
- Each organization is able to track/evaluate successes.



Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use



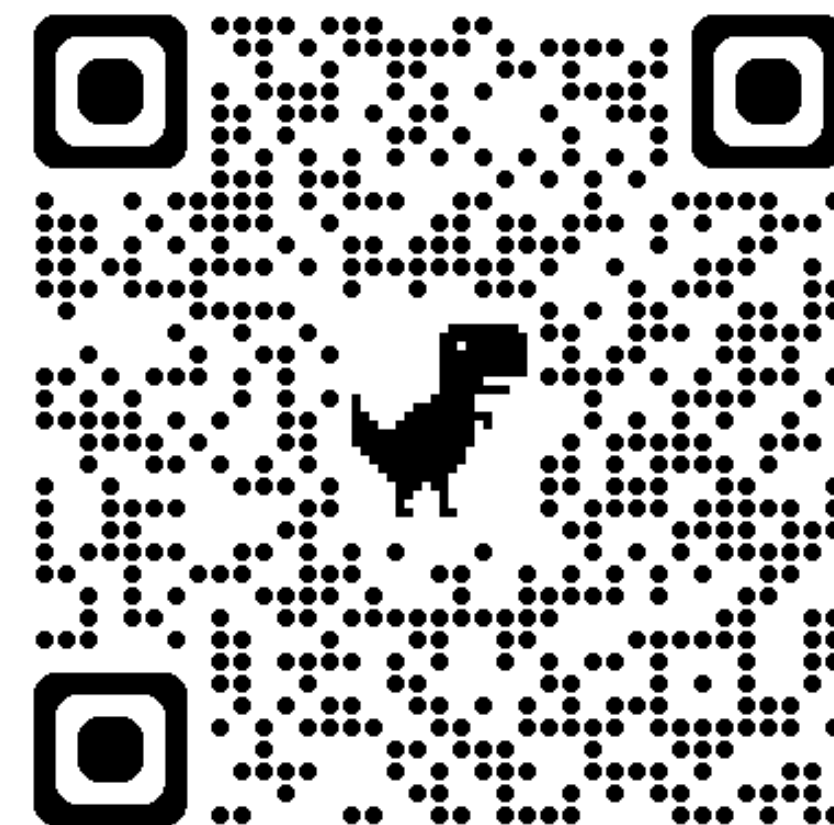
Protect and Sustain Living Resources



Engage Communities



Inform Science-Based Decision Making



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THINK

PAIR

SHARE

The Model



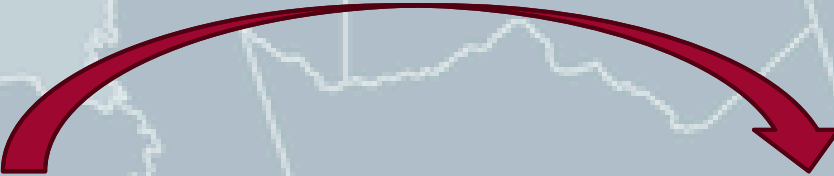
The Challenge

Awareness



Action

Stewardship

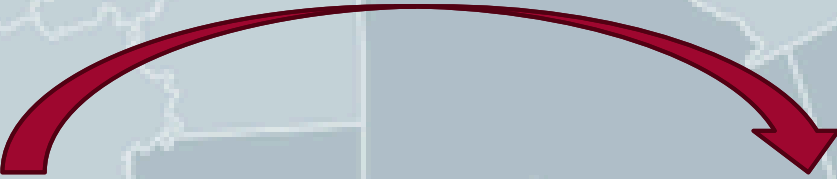


The Challenge

Awareness

Action

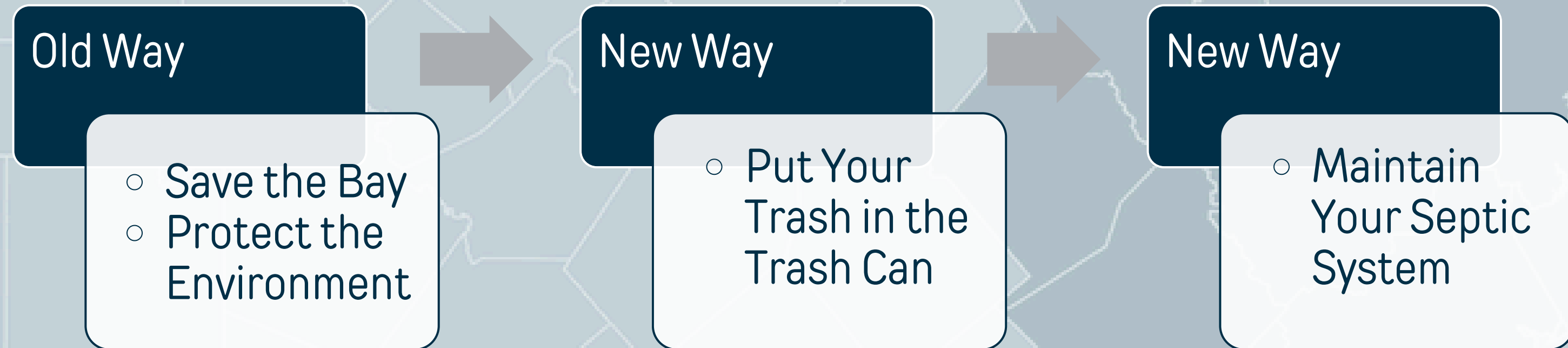
Stewardship



Messaging • Engagement • Outreach

Strategy 1

MESSAGING: SHIFT THE FOCUS



Source: Robert Cialdini Social Proof for Influence and Social Norms principles

MESSAGING: SHIFT THE FOCUS



Strategy 2

ENGAGEMENT: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



Residents



Business Owners



City/County Staff



Elected Officials

Source: Robert Cialdini Reciprocity principle and Texas Parks and Wildlife Equity Presentation at H-GAC (2024)

ENGAGEMENT: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



Residents

After work or weekends
Neighbors
Childcare
Online Option
Interactive Activities



Business Owners

Outside of business hours
Networking
Sponsorship or committee



City/County Staff

During work hours
Clear ask / connection
Agenda / specific follow up



Elected Officials

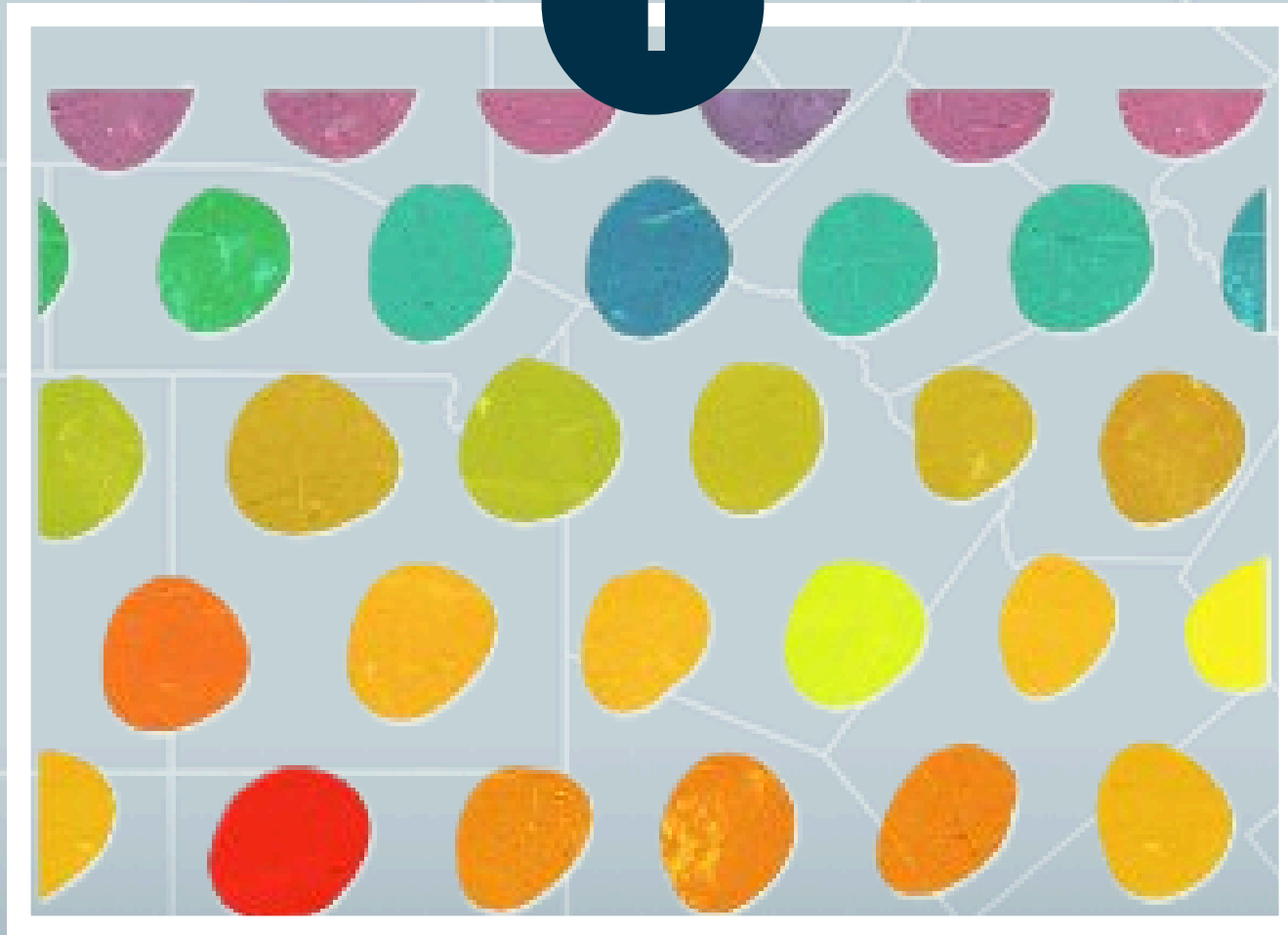
Clear ask
Will constituents be there
Speaking role

How does this impact me? & What do I need to do?

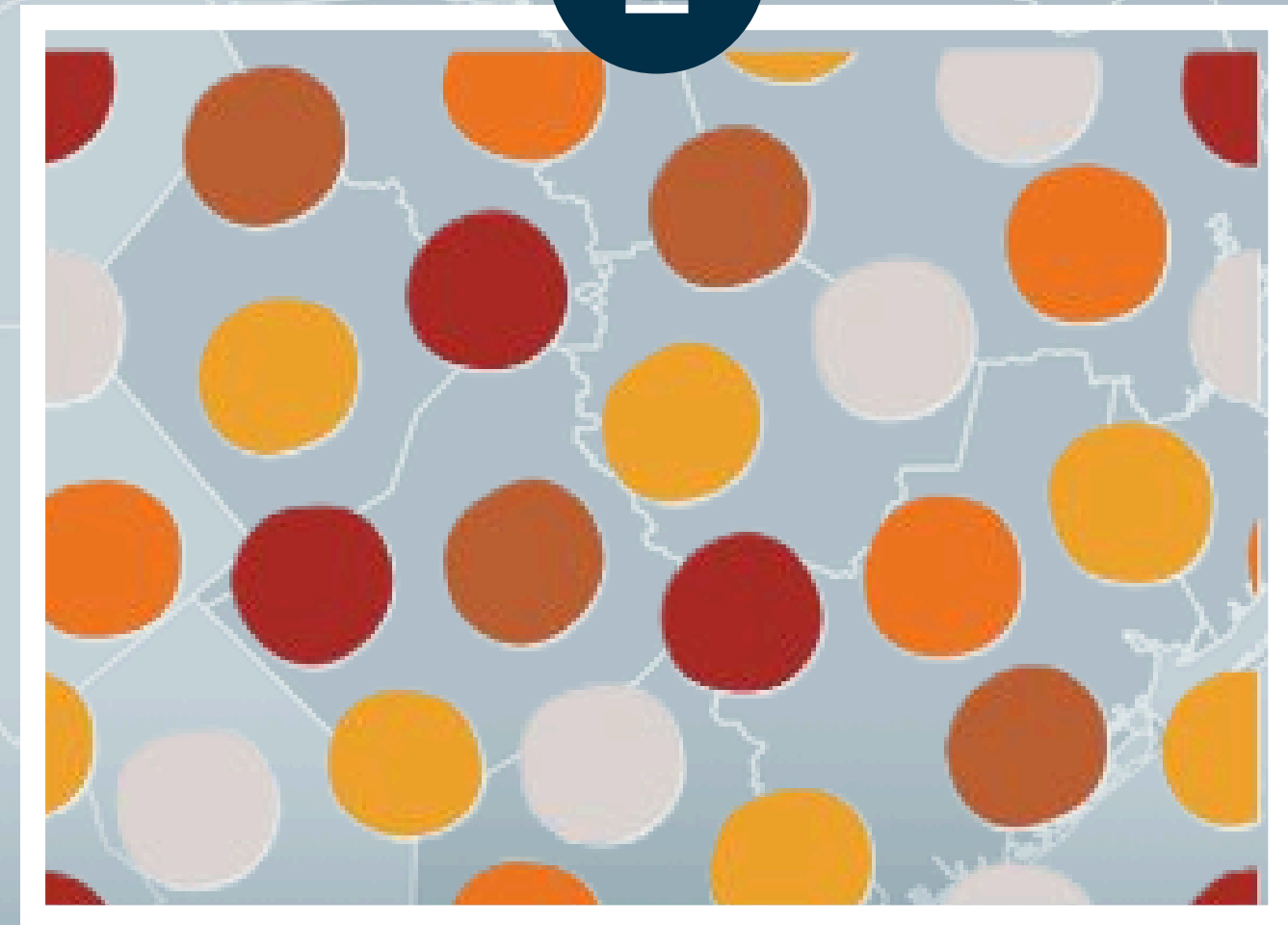
Source: Robert Cialdini Reciprocity principle and Texas Parks and Wildlife Equity Presentation at H-GAC (2024)

ENGAGEMENT: KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

1



2



Source: Robert Cialdini Reciprocity principle and Texas Parks and Wildlife Equity Presentation at H-GAC (2024)

Strategy 3

OUTREACH: TRUST AND ACCESS

- **Go to the Ground/Check for existing work**
- **Address Language/Culture (Beyond just translation)**
- **Build/Align with Trusted Voices**

Source: Robert Cialdini Authority and Liking principles

CONCLUSION

- **Messaging: Clear language, specific ask**
- **Engagement: Meet audience where they are WIIFM**
- **Outreach: Work with partners**

Tools of Engagement

Research-based Strategies for Community Engagement

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THINK

PAIR

SHARE



Ensure Safe Human and Aquatic Life Use



Protect and Sustain Living Resources



Engage Communities



Inform Science-Based Decision Making



● Org A ● Org B ● Org C

Safe Use of Water

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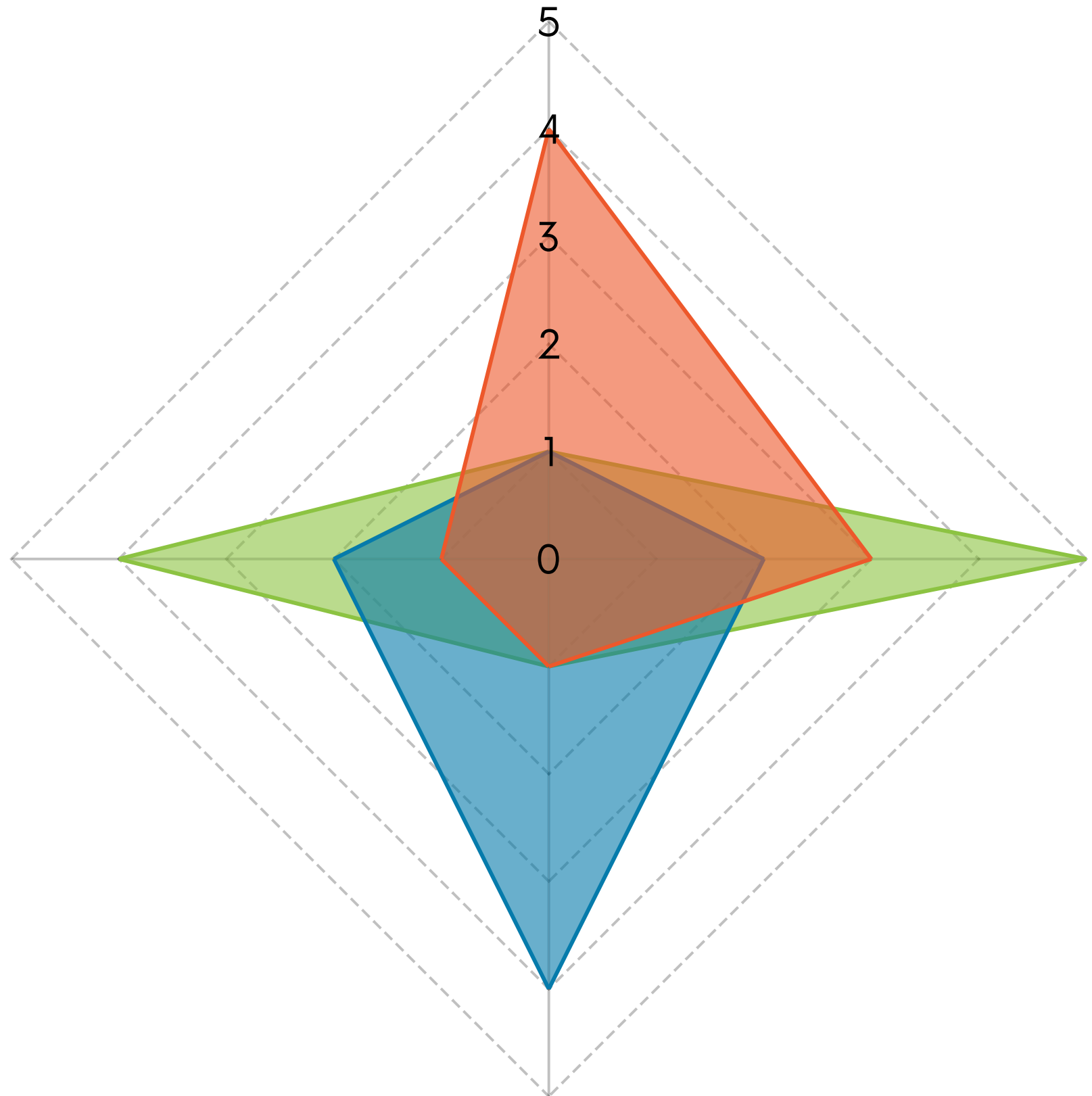
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Inform Science-Based Decision Making

Protect & Sustain Living Resources

Engage Communities



Can It Be Done?

CREATE A PROJECT PROPOSAL THAT FULFILLS
A GOAL FROM ALL FOUR PRIORITY AREAS
USING ALL THE ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED
ON YOUR TEAM



Share the Success

RETURN TO YOUR PRIORITY CORNER

IDEA SWAP

MAKE MEANINGFUL CNX

Goals

- ✓ FIND & BUILD PARTNERSHIPS
- ✓ FOSTER EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION
- ✓ IDENTIFY AREAS FOR COLLECTIVE IMPROVEMENT
- ✓ ENHANCE COLLABORATION FOR GBEP PRIORITIES

Today's Challenge:

Take one of the following actions this week!

- Make a list of your needs for continued effective programming
- Attend a GBEP Subcommittee Meeting!
- Reach out to a partner you've been wanting to work with. Share your needs and collaboration idea!

**Complete the Partnering Strategically form by THURSDAY to match yourself with future partners!
(you'll be emailed on Friday with results!)**

