SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY SCIENCE TAKEAWAYS: A CASE STUDY
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This project looks to bridge the gap between community and science by identifying common key factors that go into making a successful community science (CS) design. Community science is scientific research conducted, in whole or in part, by amateur scientists. The idea of community science (sometimes called citizen science) is to get local communities more involved in the scientific process and making sure that CS programs are successful is essential. The purpose of this study was to identify these key factors of CS designs and analyze the results so recommendations could be provided for the Green Futures Lab (GFL) moving forward. The approach taken was separated into two parts, first: gaining first-hand experience of volunteer work in the monitoring of BioBarges for GFL, and second: deploying a survey to professionals and volunteers that looked to answer the question, “what makes for a successful community science design?” The key findings from the survey showed that the most important aspects of a community science design were efficiency, education, communication, accessibility and inclusivity. Specific recommendations from the survey that were found were things such as acknowledging and honoring Native Lands, creating a communication plan for community scientists and creating a timeline for the project. These key findings serve as a starting place for developing a successful community science design. And with a more successful design that looks to get more volunteers involved, bolster retainment, and improve the transfer of knowledge while building trust, the gap between science and the community can be bridged.