

Boston Harbor & Islands SciComm

A place to share our audiences and purposes.

CATHERINE SCHMITT SEP 27, 2021 07:23PM

Audience?

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 01:04PM

Eric HP

Anyone that reaches us online (lower barriers for access)

Anyone who has a ferry ticket (higher barrier for access)

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:50PM

JML

I feel like there's a big space between the audience I hope for day to day and the audience we work with in fact. While I think we all aspire in many ways to reach the people who haven't felt folded into the park--ppl who have been excluded in economic, social/cultural ways for example-- the audience we work with boils down to the people who have a ferry ticket. And that's a limited group of folk!

So our audience is currently people who have an expendable income, time to spare, and enough social connection in the Boston area to confidently message a volunteer coordinator about work days.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:47PM

Liz

Audiences now: youth engaging in programs, families going out for the day, tourists, adults interested in parks and nature or specific programs.

Goal: People from surrounding Boston neighborhoods that border the harbor feel this place belongs to them.

How different are the now vs. goal audiences? — CATHERINE SCHMITT

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:40PM

Tommy McNamara

- o Tourist-National/International
 - Those interested in the Park
 - For Being A National Park
 - Wanting A stamp
 - Stopping by the WC

- Looking for something to do
- o Looking for the bathroom
- o Families on a day trip
- o Young Adults
 - With peers looking to be outdoors
- o Boaters
- o School Children
 - BPS
 - Summer Camps

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:20PM

Jen S

Our audience ranges from youth ages 5 - 25 years old. We typically hone in on Boston Public School students but we attract youth from all over Massachusetts and those travelling to Boston with families.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 11:59AM

Emily Parnell

Our audience is tourists who are looking for something to do in Boston that is off the beaten path. They are often older couples and individuals who have visited the city before and want to try something new, or families who enjoy visiting national parks. We also get locals who are looking for an escape from the city or a chance to be closer to nature. A lot of people visit the islands for picnics and family gatherings. Locals also include school and summer camp groups that bring large groups of kids to the islands.

Our social media audience is primarily women in their 30s and 40s in the Boston area.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 11:57AM

Marc Albert

Park management partners, especially decision-makers for the land-owning partners, but including all levels of staff from administration to legal to operations to visitor service staff to resource managers and planners.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 11:44AM

Rebecca Shoer

City decision makers re: permitting; developers; residents and businesses in most climate threatened areas of Boston; pre-professional youth; teachers and educators

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 11:21PM

Laura Yates

Audience varies depending on project. During Stewardship Saturdays (volunteer project days), participants vary in age, but trend towards retirement age (also worth noting, I've only worked on the islands in "COVID" times). Many are repeat volunteers, and are more familiar with natural resources and islands than I am. From my limited experience, volunteers tend to have post-high school education. For programming with Save the Harbor/Save the Bay, 'audience' is high school students (ages 13-18) from the surrounding area and their team leads (ages 19-24+). If developing content for social media (Facebook, Instagram, Island Steward Newsletter, .gov website) audience could be anyone.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:14PM

Daniel Kruchten

Audience is volunteers and partners who join the natural resources crew during volunteer events and stewardship days on islands. The age groups are high school-college age and retirement age individuals. They are individuals who have an interest in the natural environment and have personally chosen to assist with invasive species removal and revegetation.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:12PM

Ben Curell

As a Biotech, my audience is most often volunteers out in the field doing invasive plant work. Volunteers tend to be individuals with a pre-existing affinity for nature, and often plants specifically. This opens up the possibility to discuss higher level ecological concepts with the audience, however we must be careful to not create accidental barriers to entry by using scientific jargon etc.. We should always make sure to define every jargon word that we use when talking with volunteers, as a precautionary measure

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:09PM

Digital/Virtual Audiences

- We don't have much demographics for the website, but our most active age demographic has been 25-34 (across all nps.gov).
- Medium: between 60-80% of those accessing the nps.gov website are doing so via smart phone (important consideration when it comes to web content)

Interested in why they are visiting the website -
- CATHERINE SCHMITT

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:07PM

Jen Antocci

youth (8-12 year olds) from Boston Public Schools and YMCA campers. It varies with age but from my observational experience generally this audience is curious and eager for physical activities/games/fun town.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:48PM

Audience

1. My audiences are those who are from Boston who already/don't already have prior knowledge of the NPB
2. My audiences are those who are not from Boston who already/don't have prior knowledge of the NPB
3. My audiences are youth/older volunteers who are interested in the historical history
4. My audiences are youth/older volunteers who are interested in the geological/biological history

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:41PM

Adinah Greene

Visitors to the islands/the welcome center on the Greenway and those we connect with through social media/internet methods.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:41PM

Melissa Vorn

Youth of all ages. Also includes youth who are beginning to learn about earth, earth science etc. Specific BPS grades are 4-6th grade.

Good specificity! - CATHERINE SCHMITT

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:27PM

Rachel Vincent

- o Park volunteers, who have already shown an interest in the park and the resources by choosing to volunteer.
- o Other park staff, including interpreters, educators, and management staff.
- o Students or researchers who are looking for information about the park! i.e. on the park website, individuals who seek out scientific knowledge about the park from our pages.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:26PM

Cathy Radonic

Boston Public School students, Grades 4–6; 5th and 6th graders at O'Donnell Elementary School

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:24PM

Social media users, students of all ages and their families

CELENA ILLUZZI SEP 29, 2021 08:21PM

Youth (15 - 20) residents from the Charlestown neighborhood of Boston

Relevant challenges?

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 01:05PM

Eric HP

The challenge of explaining technical information, or controversial information, to people who are on a recreational visit

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:41PM

Tommy McNamara

- o Some may have premonitions about climate change, doom and gloom, and are turned off by it
- o COVID keeping distance is a challenge, hard of hearing example
- o Political atmosphere can make it tricky navigating word use, Green New Deal for example of political solutions
- o Visitors comments may be left or right leaning, how do we comment
- o As a government figure some may not trust us
- o Some view us as Police

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:32PM

Jen S

Challenges we face to engage with our audiences vary. Covid continues to suppress our visitation and capacity limits repel large groups. I don't think the public has lack of trust in our organization but maybe there is hesitancy or lack of trust that the islands are a convenient place to visit i.e. (bathrooms, access to land, food, etc.)

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:03PM

Emily Parnell

Physical distance and cost are the biggest challenges. Public ferries run on limited schedules, to limited islands, and cost \$25 per person--which can be very inaccessible to families, young people, etc.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 11:56AM

Marc Albert

Psych distancing, negative messaging, lack of trust, jargon. possible issue of not wanting to face in the short term the difficult decisions affecting parks in the long term (head in the sand and/or need to demonstrate short term 'success')

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 11:46AM

Rebecca Shoer

Jargon (research terms, technical climate terms); negative messaging (flooding bad!!!); lack of trust (why try restoration when we could just build a seawall); physical distance (I can't see the ocean, why does it matter?)

Sounds like you have a good sense of audience perceptions and how the challenges relate. – CATHERINE SCHMITT

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 11:30PM

Laura Yates

The Boston Harbor Islands are not largely accessible. Although many great discount/fee free programs exist to bring people to the park, \$25 to access the park is a lot. Many people are consequently excluded from accessing the resources. This distance makes justifying funding more challenging, as people that haven't experienced the islands may care less about protection/preservation.

Communicating with volunteers feels like an echo chamber. I've yet to speak with one that wasn't already an active 'steward' of the park/natural resources in general. The challenge in this case is expanding the audience to include people that aren't included within this group.

Negative messaging also really bums people out. It's so easy to take in everything out there about climate change and how our planet is doomed and just give up. Acknowledging the urgency of the situation while and not downplaying it but also not getting caught up in it is no easy feat.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:22PM

Daniel Kruchten

A large challenge for our volunteer and partner program is access to the islands. Regarding communication, I think negative messaging is a challenge since it can make individuals feel helpless against climate change. Messaging could be more positive and focus on the effect that individuals can have on the unique ecosystems that exist on the islands. The Boston Harbor Islands have been listed as one of the most threatened habitats and

individuals who join the natural resources crew are directly helping to remove invasive plants and help strengthen the native fauna.

I'm curious how many visitors know about that "most threatened" report. And how can we communicate it in a not scary way?? - R Shoer - ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:16PM

Ben Curell

The biggest challenge in my mind is justifying the expenditure of public resources to preserving native biodiversity to the average person, when people are often dealing with more pressing issues in their day-to-day lives (paying bills, healthcare, socio-economic disparities in our society, etc)

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:10PM

Jen Antocci

awareness of the park (islands are "out there", inaccessible), largely comprised of an ed staff not from the communities we engage with, priorities for young people (is it visiting the islands??)

Right, the baseline assumption we all have (slash have to have) is: these islands are important and you should visit them! - R Shoer - ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:50PM

1. A challenge I face is outreach and communication. The volunteer opportunities/the NPB may not feel welcoming to varying communities
2. Many people don't hear/know about the opportunities to work with the park. I need to find ways to reach those who are not being reached.
3. Social media, a community board, a newsletter, flyers

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:48PM

MV

Awareness and creating general interest and curiosity of the topic. Also understanding the many different options, avenues and programs that are available for folxs to be involved or learn about

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:45PM

Adinah Greene

Distancing could be a challenge. If people stop by the visitor's center on the island, they often don't stay long since they want to walk around. It's hard to deliver a message in less than 5 minutes, especially if all you can cover is basic island information. The islands themselves can have an aura of exclusivity to them as well

since the cost to travel out there is too much for many people who have other financial priorities.

Maybe just conveying the fact that islands exist is enough sometimes? - CATHERINE SCHMITT

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:27PM

Rachel Vincent

- o Definitely jargon. When communicating the research that external scientists are doing, there are multiple layers of understanding that must happen. i.e. the scientist needs to communicate to us what the work is, and we then need to communicate it to someone else, who might communicate that further! Being so familiar with the park and resource, it is easy to let jargon get in the way of the purpose of the research and the findings.
- o Negative messaging for sure! When the research is about baseline data for a changing climate for example, it's hard to explain in not terrible terms that we're getting this information to see how messed up the resources will get with warming oceans and rising sea level and more intense storms.
- o The "why." Some of the science happening doesn't seem to have a relevant reason to volunteers, staff, management, visitors, etc. Explaining the "why" is obviously one of our goals, but connecting to something they find important may be hard.

I find it SO difficult to communicate a "why" that I feel very personally. If someone asked me "who cares if eiders can't nest anymore" I wouldn't know how to respond - because they live here, too! - R Shoer, - ANONYMOUS

NATALIA BAYONA SEP 29, 2021 08:31PM

Adopting strategies to make park research and climate science taking place at National Parks of Boston inspiring, relevant for our audiences and their communities

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:27PM

Cathy Radonic

All of them!

- o Psychological and physical distance? - the culture that young people are surrounded by and create for themselves may distance them; is this science engagement with SLL and NPS a priority for them? Realistically and likely not. Physical distance, too. Many young people we work with have never heard of or been to the Boston Harbor Islands.
- o Negative messaging? - Youth can be especially affected by the "doom and gloom" approach as stated earlier
- o Lack of trust - rapport building is something we are always talking about and working on, and this is no different. They

may be more trusting of us as “park rangers,” but, are they willing to engage with us at first as strangers?

- o Jargon/curse of knowledge - need to be thoughtful of student variations in learning style, and other learning considerations such as language learning. We do not want to TEACH AT students, we want to present opportunities to LEARN WITH
- o Exclusive or discriminatory language and framing - considerations as mentioned before; the term “citizen science” can be alienating to some kids that might be undocumented

I'm interested in other terminology or language you may have identified as problematic...we didn't have a lot of time to discuss this unfortunately... - CATHERINE SCHMITT

CELENA ILLUZZI SEP 29, 2021 08:21PM

Awareness of and access to the park

Purpose? What do you want? Why? What is the problem? What do you want to change? Why? What are you asking of others? Why?

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:36PM

Jen S

To encourage and educate people of all ages to be advocates for the islands in their own way. I would like to echo all of the answers already submitted but I will say the problem is not the lack of awareness but the lack of concern. The purpose of our work is to remind focus we should all be concerned because this affects us all. Whether folks live close to the islands or visit once the Boston harbor islands need our help and if we work with our partners and continue to learn more about coastal change we can empower youth and families to seek opportunities to make a difference.

Love this Jen - goes with the idea of "people don't need more information" to get behavior change. - R Shoer - ANONYMOUS

Carl Safina has written about the shift from "we need nature" to "nature needs us" - CATHERINE SCHMITT

I think " the problem is not the lack of awareness but the lack of concern" is so important... - ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:12PM

Emily Parnell

Purpose: to ensure that the park is accessible to everyone. This includes maintaining its use as a recreational space, but also

ensuring that visitors are aware of opportunities to learn about and engage with science and history in a meaningful way.

Why: The park belongs to the public, so they should be able to enjoy it in whatever capacity they want. However, recreation is directly impacted by climate change, invasive species, sea level rise, storm surges, etc. It is important for visitors to be able to understand what is going on around them so that they can form more meaningful connections with the resources and feel empowered to protect them or study them further.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 11:59AM

Marc Albert

PURPOSE: To develop clear messages about predicted areas of impact to coastal areas and making sure key decision makers have access to the information.

This includes integrating information from multiple scientific studies... ideally to approach a consensus.

PROBLEM: What are the key vulnerable ‘hotspots’ in the coming decades where key decisions will need to be made about how to conserve the park lands, resources and facilities while maintaining visitor opportunities.

WHAT WANTED?

I want the various research teams to work in a collective impact framework where they share key baseline assumptions and communicate actively to develop common takeaways from their studies.

I want the park partners also to work together to consider the park as a whole, and to help prioritize conservation/protection measures across properties, and to leverage the partnership for funding and creative solution-making across the system (and in a way that makes a difference beyond Boston Harbor).

I want the whole social – political – regulatory/policy system that frames and permits work in Boston Harbor to adapt so that creative experimentation can be done in time to inform the large scale projects that might be needed to allow park lands and people to live with a changing coast.

WHAT IS PROBLEM?

The problem is coastal change - that mostly occurs intermittently in storm pulses - which threatens park resources and developed areas around Boston Harbor.

WHAT TO CHANGE?

I want to change the way different cohorts of researchers work in relative isolation from each other throughout the life cycle of their projects in Boston Harbor.

I want to change the way regulatory and policy framework stagnates efforts to do big things that could make a transformative difference for living with a changing coast.

WHAT DO I WANT AUDIENCE TO THINK FEEL DO?

I want the park manager audience think about the challenge of living with a changing coast, to feel the power of storms to change the coastal lands and waters, and to act by prioritizing a collaborative planning process leading to decisions about major investments to adapt high priority coastal areas for better resilience and social and ecological co-benefits.

WHAT AM I ASKING?

I am asking the research groups to work together to develop common messages about predicted change to coastal areas in Boston Harbor. I am asking the park managers to work together and to focus on long term collaborative planning.

You want a lot. – CATHERINE SCHMITT

Definitely curious about the idea of a united park - everyone uses each island so differently.... how can we make space a range of experience??? - R Shoer – ANONYMOUS

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 11:48AM

Rebecca Shoer

We want Boston and communities beyond to utilize "nature-based solutions" to adapt to the changing climate, versus grey infrastructure; we want Boston residents to identify themselves as coastal residents and have a more sustainable and just relationship with the coast; we want to fundamentally shift how scientists, engineers, developers, and residents think of "nature"

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 11:42PM

Laura Yates

To connect people intellectually and emotionally to the 'natural world,' whether that be the Boston Harbor Islands or the plants sprouting between sidewalk cracks in front of their homes. I think this connection is vital to developing attitudes of so-called "environmental stewardship", particularly in young people.

Nurturing a sense of place benefits not only the planet, but also people!

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:25PM

Daniel Kruchten

My purpose is to increase public engagement for Boston Harbor Islands through volunteer programs. I want individuals to know that they can directly have an impact on the threatened biodiversity that exist on the islands with their efforts. I want the audience to feel empowered and personally connected to the native plant species on the islands.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:24PM

Ben Curell

I want help the audience discover the richness and complexity of our natural world, and in doing so, inspire them to learn more about whatever facet(s) of the natural world they are most interested in, and to instill hope that humankind can change our relationship with nature and mitigate its further destruction

(making sure to not fall into the "virgin landscape" ideology that was discussed in our Akomawt training)

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 09:11PM

Jen Antocci

To engage in dialogue and discoveries around science/stories happening in their backyard and communities in order to inspire students to seek more knowledge, visit these places, and feel agency to enact change with their trusted circles.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:51PM

My purpose is to increase community involvement through youth volunteerism at the National Parks of Boston.

- What do you want? Why?
 - Members of the community to feel closer to the NPB. The park is in their neighborhood. They live a few miles from the Islands. Their houses are in historic neighborhoods
 - What is the problem? So what?
 - The cost, the time, the disconnect
 - Not all members feel as though the NPB is theirs
 - Not everyone knows of the park!!

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:50PM

Adinah Greene

The purpose is to create a connection between people and the island. People don't take action or pay attention to things they don't care about or love, so creating an initial connection is paramount before more can happen. It has to be relevant to people, and for many people, it's not.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:28PM

Rachel Vincent

- Get people to care about the resource, the research, and the information so they can maybe inform others and help to make positive changes. For example, in communicating research about the changing shoreline, we want people to understand a few things. One thing may be that shorelines change naturally! But more importantly, the shoreline changes we've seen in the last "x" number of years are more extreme than baseline data, that it's linked to stronger storms and sea level rise. This information all needs to be partnered with sharing the message about HOW individual impacts have caused and can help reduce climate change.

Sounds like a good start on messaging! – CATHERINE SCHMITT

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:45PM

MV

So students can learn about their area (Boston), the environment, and influence stewardship. Also how can they take part in creating change and have ALL voices heard as well as create a better world for all.

NATALIA BAYONA SEP 29, 2021 08:37PM

To inspire youth and families to become stewards or continue to learn about science in the park, and ideally, further their knowledge of local science and climate issues as it relates to their community. One goal of our staff is to increase science literacy among youth in Boston.

ANONYMOUS SEP 29, 2021 08:32PM

Cathy Radonic

In my science/stewardship communication with this group of students I'd like to increase awareness of the science thinking that happens around the Boston Harbor and help build confidence that they can participate in that scientific process themselves.

Excellent - not just participate, but be scientists themselves, now.
— CATHERINE SCHMITT

CELENA ILLUZZI SEP 29, 2021 08:21PM

So youth can build relationships, explore options/opportunities/interests, make change and lead their communities

Moment of Joy

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:55PM

Jen A

I used to hike a lot with my parents growing up, and I actually loathed it at first. I didn't understand why people sought out nature and parks and laboring up hills for fun. But my step dad is a middle school science teacher and his curious spirit must have rubbed off on me. As I got older I discovered a deep appreciation for the sounds/sights/smells of nature and how we have a lot to learn from ecosystems. Now I find it important to communicate that nature is not "out there" and that it exists everywhere, in cities, suburbs, as well as the woods and oceans.

I share your communication mission! — CATHERINE SCHMITT

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:53PM

Growing up on the coast, I spent a good deal of time in the ocean. While crabbing and fishing were past times, my spark bird moment came in the form of Humpback Whales. Was off the coast of Cape Cod, a mother was teaching her calf how to breach. Imagine the classic Humpback whale breach followed by an 'attempt' to mimic by a calf.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:51PM

Thea J

My moment of Joy today is that I am going back to Arkansas for a couple of weeks. Also, my next tatte latte is FREEEEEEEE!

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:48PM

Tori

my grandparents used to take us to every free admission day in the city, and I loved hearing them talk about what businesses used to be where, and where their parents used to take them. I loved connecting to their past through our city. Now that I'm on the other side, my joy comes from lightbulb moments. I love watching the moment that everything clicks for a student, and they get so excited! When I look back on my past positions, those are the moments that stand out even through the challenges.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:46PM

Emily Parnell

My hometown in northeast TN has a park and planetarium that we would always visit on field trips. They have birds of prey, a herpetarium, bee hives, wolves, otters, and deer. In college I worked there as a camp counselor. I loved seeing the excitement and connections kids had with nature and history.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:44PM

Cathy

many of my MOJs (and moments of torture, not related to the learning or the communication) around learning new science and being on the receiving end of science communication are from time in Antarctica. I was fortunate enough to learn some really cool geology concepts and science informally from some of the smartest scientists I now know.

Wow! — CATHERINE SCHMITT

CELENA ILLUZZI SEP 30, 2021 12:44PM

The many rhododendron and mountain laurel plants that grew throughout the woods surrounding the house in southern Rhode Island where I lived from age 6 - 18.

NATALIA BAYONA SEP 30, 2021 12:43PM

Growing up in Florida, I spent countless hours exploring beaches and swimming. That led me to becoming an environmentalist in high school. Beach and river clean ups, hiking throughout quiet wetlands, etc inspired me to dedicate my career to coastal science and conservation ;)

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:43PM

MV

My family influenced me to be stewards of the environment through gardening and spending time outside even living in Philly. Also going to the beach with family, seeing horseshoe crab migration and volunteering at Bombay Hook NWR

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:43PM

Spark bird

Maybe common eider. I've been very involved in the long term bird monitoring at the park for a few years now, but when I first started I knew nothing about birds. Counting baby eider chicks on the harbor was an introduction! -rv

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:41PM

Rebecca Shoer

Spark bird: Catbird! Growing up there was always a catbird singing in our yard, and whenever I hear one it feels like meeting an old friend again. <3

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:40PM

My dad and I used to go on bike rides around the neighborhood (starting in one of those baskets you put kids in and pull behind the bike). He would point out birds to me and I would name them. The earliest bird I remember learning how to ID as a kid was a wood thrush that I named Ginger.

ANONYMOUS SEP 30, 2021 12:40PM

My MOJ that got me here

was the very first community volunteer program at Milagra Ridge in Pacifica, CA, part of GOGA, when as an intern I saw the power of connecting with people in nature while doing hands on stewardship and science. The fog was rolling away, people were happy together and working hard, and my experience felt like a perfect fit...

What's GOGA? – CATHERINE SCHMITT

Golden Gate NRA – ANONYMOUS

CATHERINE SCHMITT SEP 30, 2021 12:39PM

My spark bird is a great blue heron. I grew up in the suburbs and the occasional sighting was a big event.
