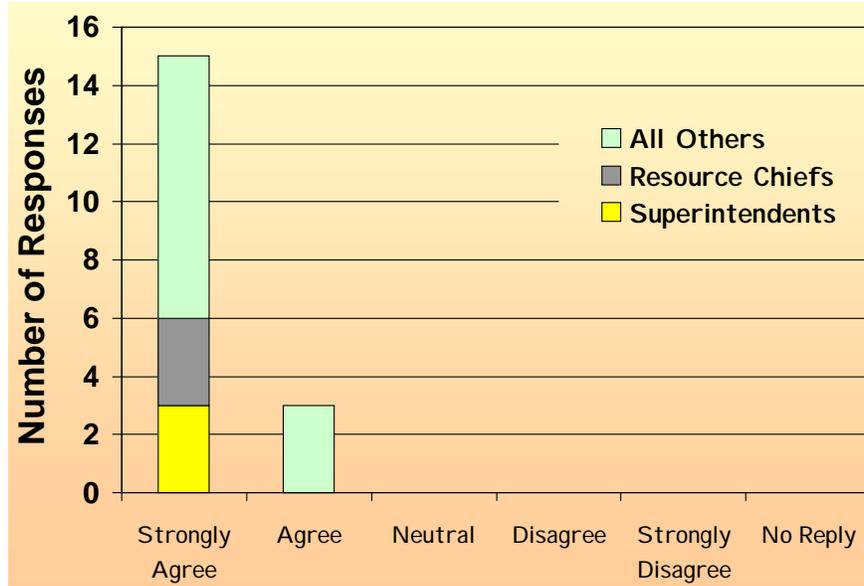


Results of online survey for the Southeast Alaska I&M Network

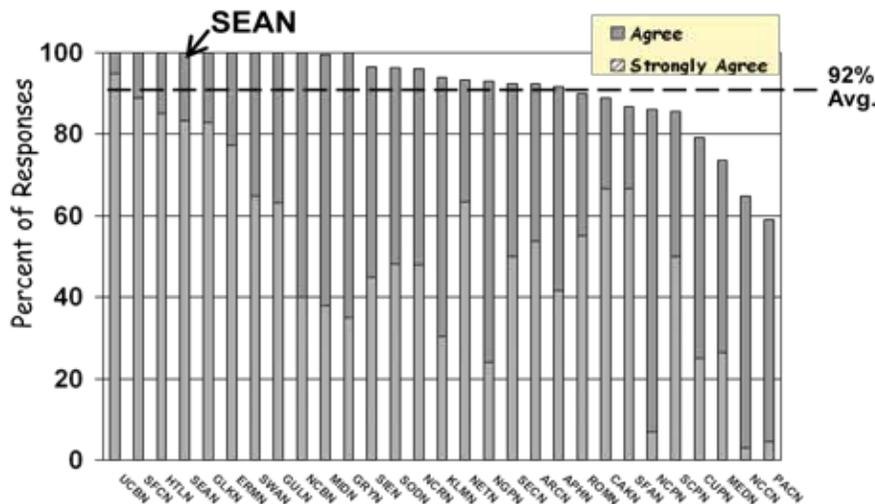
3-year Start-up Review

N = 18 park and network managers, staff, and partners

Taking into consideration the limited funding and staffing available to the network, do you agree with the statement "I think the network is off to a good start, and I'm confident that the network will deliver relevant, useful data and information that will help us understand and manage the natural resources of the parks in our network"?



How this compares to other networks so far:



What has been the single greatest benefit to your park or region since your I&M network began its work?

The network has brought a huge increase in technical rigor - for both science and data management. The network provides high-quality data sets on natural resources investigations that the parks would not otherwise likely be able to undertake or sustain. Network staff are fully engaged with park NR staffs, and demonstrate that a small program can generate a considerable amount of high-quality work. Also, SEAN staff have actively contributed as reviewers of park proposals for a variety of subjects, from wilderness character monitoring to large mammal investigations.

Much more in-depth understanding of our natural resources and their significance in a regional and national context.

The I&M network has provided GLBA with an incredibly organized, cooperative, and methodical approach to monitoring some of the most important vital signs in the Park.

The greatest benefit is data being delivered to the park, thanks to the great facilitation skills of our coordinator.

Conduct credible science and monitoring activities that would not have been possible to accomplish without the I&M program.

A coordinated effort focused on summarizing long-term oceanographic monitoring data from Glacier Bay National Park. Mapping glacial extent in Glacier Bay.

From my perspective this has been WQ and contaminants (FH20 & marine) monitoring.

I think getting the Oceanography database organized, together, online, and continuing as well as their substantial contribution to the science (not just in GLBA but across the range) and advancement of line survey methods and estimation for murrelets. That's two things, sure, but I said it in one single sentence...

I cite implementation of a specific vital sign. An ongoing park physical oceanography monitoring program was about to be abandoned by a cooperating agency, its 16-year dataset apparently headed to an unmarked grave. SEAN picked up the program as a vital sign, developed a modernized protocol, continued data collection with an expanded scope, recovered all historic data and recast it to the form and quality standards of the new specification, made all important results available on the web, and established its presence in NOAA's National Oceanographic Data Center repository. A science-centered marine park now has the ability to evaluate conditions and trends in its arguably most important natural resource.

Increase in scientific capacity. Application of rigorous procedures for monitoring in SEAN.

I think the single greatest benefit, honestly, has been the network serving as a model (for the parks to emulate) of how to do quality, lean-and-mean, relevant science that insists on relevance and sustainability. Associated with these are the excellent I&M model of clear objectives and smart planning for the long term, quality data management, and a strong commitment to timely reporting to managers, researchers, and the public.

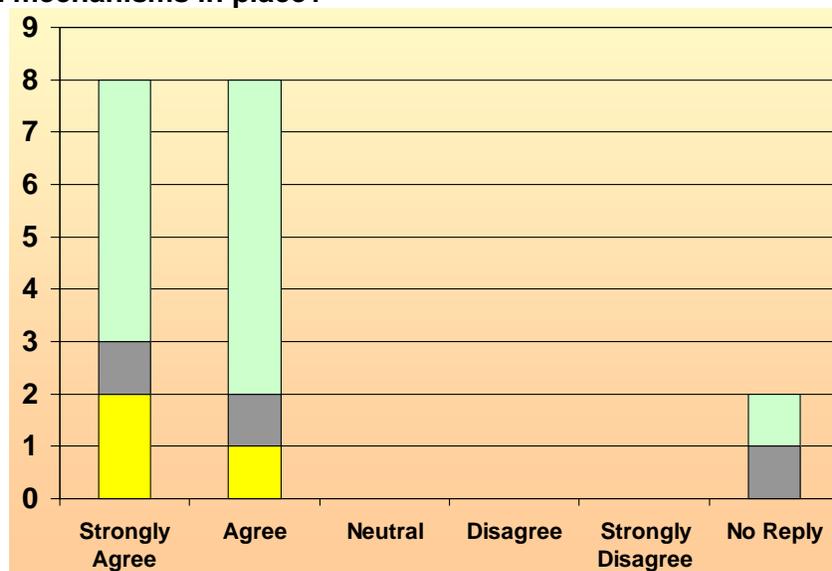
The network has taken on our most important monitoring goals and provided a sustainable, quality controlled approach to ensuring that we will have consistent, reliable information.

KLGO's ability to inventory and monitor natural resources and process would be virtually non-existent without the I&M program. Water quantity and quality, species inventories, lichen diversity, weather and climate monitoring would not be happening without the SEAN I&M program.

The landcover maps.

We hired Brendan.

Are the roles and responsibilities of key groups and individuals such as the Board of Directors, Technical Committee, Principal Investigators, and Network Coordinator adequately defined, and are good communication mechanisms in place?



Please enter any comments you have regarding your answer above regarding roles and responsibilities:

The organizational structure of the SEAN is well designed in terms of the roles and responsibilities of the Board and Technical Committee. Communication is at an appropriate level.

Brendan has a pulse on all the key groups and stakeholders who are involved with the SEAN program. He has developed effective working relationships with professionalism and innovation especially in this world of continue change.

The Charter and associated documents do a very good job of clearly and explicitly defining everyones' roles, areas of responsibility, and expectations. A push to incorporate SEAN responsibilities in the Performance Plans (as Critical Elements) of involved park employees has helped, too.

Brendan has done an excellent job of defining roles and communicating information, needs, and issues. Sara Wesser's overall management is also very effective.

The SEAN network coordinator does an excellent job of communicating the network's priorities and ongoing projects. However, it's not clear to me the role that the steering committee and board of directors play in the SEAN network. Is the steering committee static or does it benefit from different membership (with different backgrounds) over time? Is it possible that the identified vital signs for the network could be a function of steering committee membership and their backgrounds and research interests?

The network has tried several ways of augmenting communication between the network and park staff (scheduled conference calls, for example). These have generally been poorly attended, so SEAN has come to rely heavily on the Tech Committee members to distribute information from network staff to park NR staff. The Board is fully engaged and supportive. Attendance to quarterly calls and annual meetings is very good, and the current Board Chair has been very engaged wiht the Program Manager.

I did not put "Strongly Agree" only because some of the Vital Signs are still in development, and the responsibilities of individuals are sometimes less clear until a defined sampling approach and protocol starts taking shape. For the more mature SEAN Vital Signs (water quality, oceanography, Kittlitz's Murrelets), I believe roles and responsibilities are quite well defined.

I can only speak for my own involvement with SEAN as a principal investigator for one of GLBA's vital signs. The SEAN network has been excellent to work with. They have always clearly defined my role and responsibilities. The SEAN network has been very communicative. Emails and phone calls are always promptly returned.

This is my general sense but frankly I'm not typically involved at that level. Communication regarding relevant projects has been excellent!

Regarding vital signs in operation, roles of PI, program manager, and network staff are defined in detail in the protocols - and they are closely observed. Employee performance evaluation plans grade staff on how well they collaborate with and support NPS groups outside the immediate network office, making staff particularly responsive.

I think Brendan has done a particularly good job at identifying and establishing the roles and responsibilities of his Technical Committee, PIs and network employees. My impression is that the BOD is very involved in the network and Brendan does a great job at communication.

Some highly ranked and funded vital signs get more attention than others, especially in the data management realm. While prioritizing DM attention is essential, the scheduling of this attention is not clearly planned or communicated.

Considering the budget, do you think the network staffing is adequate? Is the network hiring the right types and levels of positions to successfully implement the monitoring plan? Why or why not?

The SEAN program continues to hire the best people who are hard workers and are devoted to the mission. However, the budget continues to be the limiting factor especially comparing other I&M program budgets throughout the agency.

The approach to staffing has been deliberate and measured, and appears to be serving us well given the limited funding. As usual, there are hopes for additional future funding that will add to the capability of the network.

Network staffing appears adequate and the right types and levels of positions have been hired to successfully implement the monitoring plan.

The SEAN operates on a lean budget and staffing model given the breadth of I&M activities. Geography and logistics add complexity to the program. Current staff reflect the professional series and expertise required for SEAN. We hold the entire SEAN staff in high esteem.

Yes, given overall operational constraints service-wide.

Presently, the network staffing seems adequate; however, I'm not completely familiar with the staffing needs. Given the types of monitoring data that are being collected by the SEAN network there seems to be need for a more quantitative or biometric position within the network that actually analyzes monitoring data. The network has an excellent and highly-skilled data manager who seems integral to the program.

I believe we deliver an excellent quality and quantity of work considering our small size. A lot of this can be attributed to our good work ethic and Brendan's ability to effectively integrate park staff into our monitoring program model. A biometrician would probably be the strongest staff addition.

The SEAN network has a very talented staff. I would say they are right on target, but I don't think I am in a position to respond to the necessity of staff in relation to I&M work priorities.

Right now I think it's about right. But this will change as the program matures into mostly implementation as protocols are developed and tested. I think the Network Coordinator has a clear vision of how this will happen and how to adapt available staffing in a smart way in response.

Yes. Adding the SEAN Ecologist position has proven to be an exceptional investment. Program productivity has increased dramatically at just the right time - the key transition from mostly planning and design to operation of a number of VS programs. The model of full integration with park staff, with the full support of the Supts and Chiefs, is critical to the long-term success of the program. Budget precludes adding any additional staff to the network, but a quantitative ecologist would be a particularly valuable and natural addition to the staff.

The recent addition of a third position has made a marked improvement in the quality and timeliness of the implementation. Still, given the vast scope of specialized expertise required to work in so many different fields at a detailed technical level, it can be daunting for even three to cover all the bases.

One of the challenges of this network is the limited budget and how this translates into a limited staff. I think the network has done a good job at leveraging staff from within the parks as well as contracting with outside researchers.

Loaded question. Staffing is adequate for budget but budget doesn't reflect extent of parks and resources, and could use an increase. They have done a very very effective job of hiring the right people and leveraging limited resources.

No. The network does a great job with the funding they have, but it is unfortunate that the OFS request from several years ago was not supported by at least one of the superintendents. Adding staff and mission to address the outer coasts of GLBA and WRST would have greatly benefitted those parks.

No. The SEAN network is underfunded, especially given the challenges of accessing remote areas in KLGO, and GLBA and the travel cost associated with business and operations. However, the Network has been very successful at sharing and leveraging park based resources, partnering with the Tongass NF and the academic community, and selecting staff well suited to accomplishing the work associated with the top vital signs. The big missing piece of important NPS landscape in the AK Region that is not receiving much needed I&M attention is the WRST coast. Although part of another network it makes logistical and thematic sense for the SEAN program to work on the WRST coast.

I think the SEAN needs a biometrician.

In your opinion, has the network effectively leveraged existing funds to accomplish its goals? What specific efficiencies (dollars or otherwise) has the network approach created?

The SEAN program has effectively leveraged existing funds but not without limiting the program needs (administrative workloads; outreach; role in Climate Change scenario planning for SE Alaska).

Absolutely. The entire network staff very clearly understands to importance of leveraging funds (and effort) to its success - especially in the case of SEAN's very lean budget compared to its objectives. Beyond funding, the network has very successfully partnered with park staff to accomplish mutual inventory and VS monitoring objectives.

Yes. Examples include working with local entities and the USGS to accomplish stream gauging,

Yes. Using park based staff and leveraging and enhancing existing and legacy park projects has been a cornerstone of the program.

High confidence with Brendan's management and prioritization of an overall lean budget. Funds are "leveraged" well with numerous agreements with universities and partners.

Yes, and one example is sharing a biotech position with the park to stretch the dollars from both the network and park accounts.

I'm not intimately familiar with detailed aspects of the network budget; however, it seems that the network manager works to leverage existing funds with other sources to accomplish the network goals.

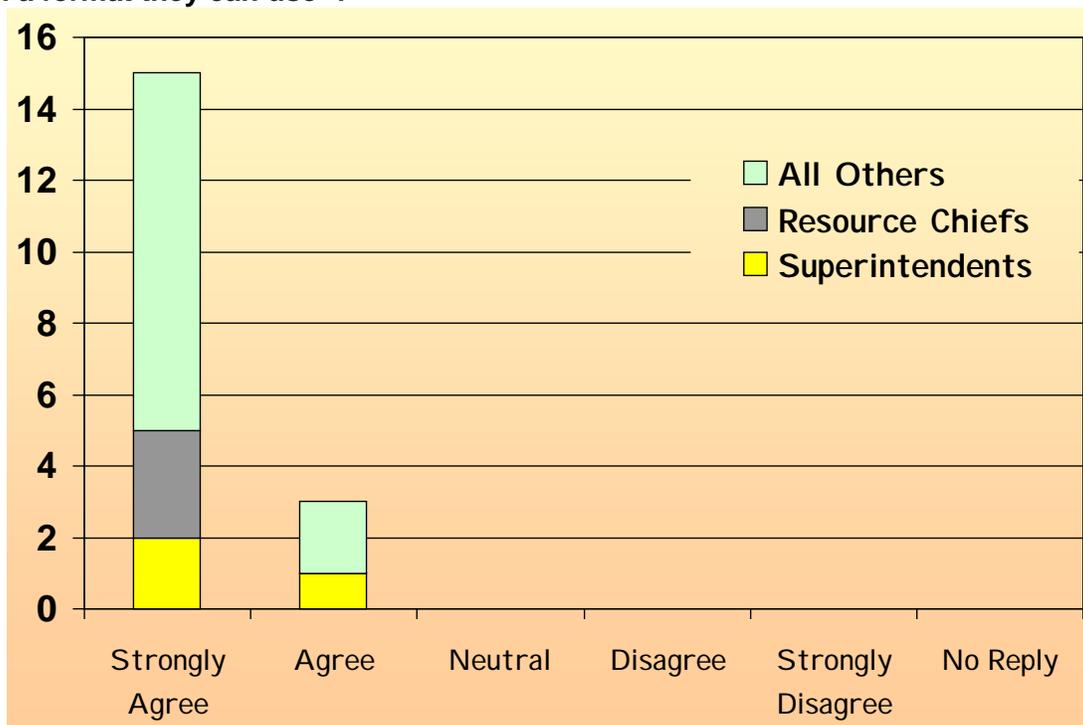
Due to my relative newness (10 months), I don't feel I can answer this question well. Related to my comment above, though, I do believe park staff integration has allowed us to accomplish more work than we would solely using network staff.

The established presence of the USGS in Glacier Bay and the existence of the AK Parks Coastal Cluster program have provided the opportunity for some efficiencies with other programs that the Network has taken good advantage of. The network has also contracted out some important components of monitoring protocol development that have made protocol development much more efficient than doing it in-house.

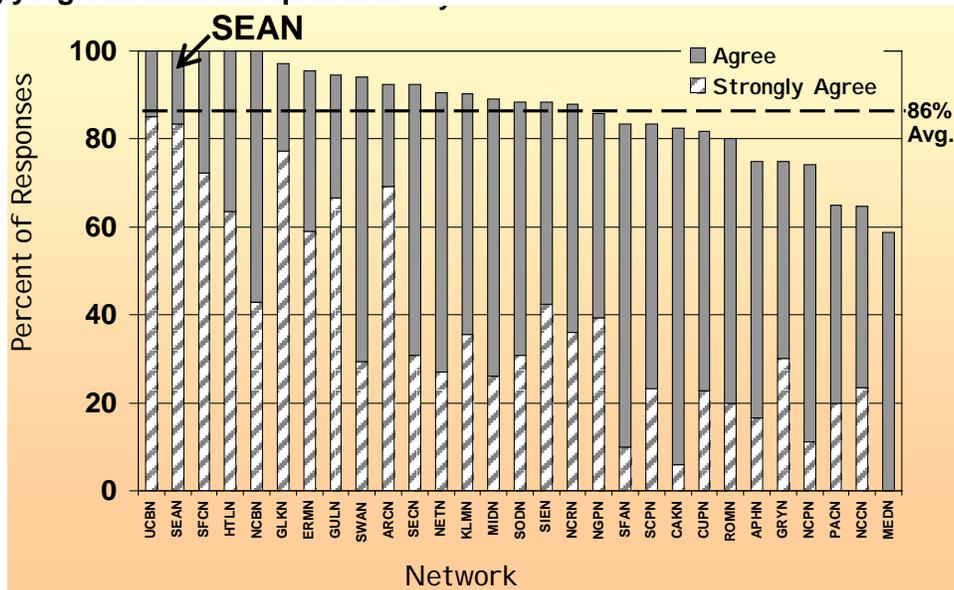
Yes. SEAN has been careful to only take on and design new protocols from scratch where warranted, and to use existing programs, protocols, and designs where ever possible (e.g., marine contaminants, climate, oceanography to some extent). Add-on of particularly important projects (such as ocean acidification) has only be possible because of the SEAN and park commitment to the on-going oceanography program. SEAN has cost-shared the regional science communicator position for FY12, and is discussing the prospect of sharing a Southeast-focus science communication position with the NR and Interp Divisions at GLBA, as well as with KLGO and SITK.

The network appears to be good at cooperating with partners to accomplish goals.

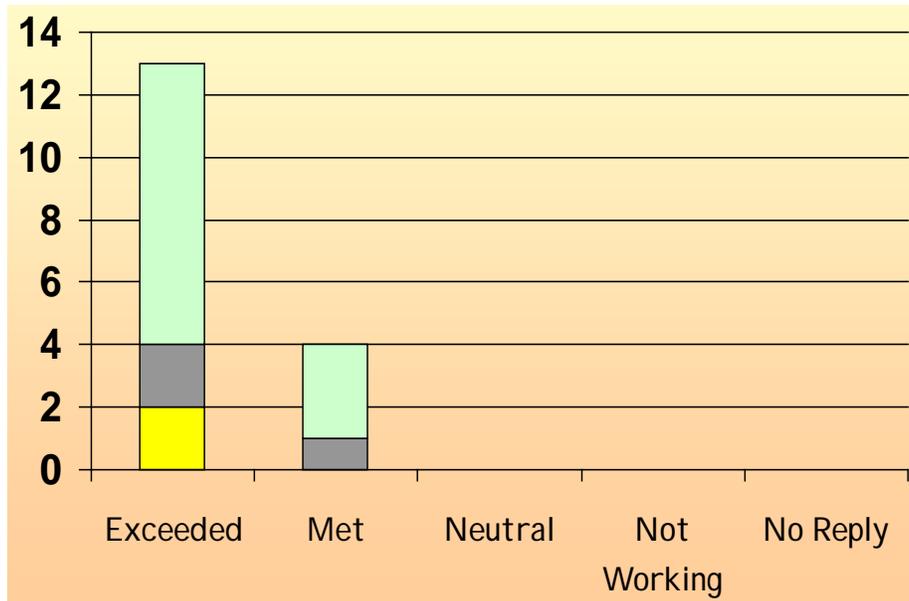
Do you agree with the statement "Good data management, analysis, and reporting procedures seem to be in place, and I am confident that the network will deliver relevant, useful information to key audiences in a format they can use"?



How this compares to other networks so far. Percent of people who responded who said that they Agreed or Strongly Agreed with this question:



To date, has the network met or exceeded your expectations with respect to improved access to data and information?



Please enter any comments you have regarding your answers to Questions #9 and 10 on data management procedures and whether your expectations for improved access to data and information are being met:

Caliber of personnel in terms of experience, education & training seems very strong. Excellent program management appears to be occurring at all levels.

Bill Johnson is a wonder of nature.

I think that the SEAN network has very good data management and reporting procedures in place.

Applaud recent discussion and focus on deliverables for educational outreach efforts. Looking to further advance the concept of Learning Centers. Resource Briefs are very effective and appreciated for their information, concise format, and executive summary layout.

It is extremely easy to identify reports produced and data sets available from this network. They have provided access to the raw data for the long term oceanographic database which was remarkable (verified, standardized, etc). I've reviewed several of the reports and the databases available on the web and they are very well done.

I would also like to see more face to face meetings in park, with an update on the I&M activities. While this information is available, it is great to have it delivered in person in an encapsulated format.

I am very impressed with the data management and access for the oceanographic monitoring project in Glacier Bay. I feel that the SEAN network has done an outstanding job in communicating the results of their work to a variety of audiences, from informal meetings to annual reports, resource briefs, publications, and public outreach events.

The SEAN network seems to be extremely well organized. The data manager is top notch. It is clear that the SEAN network has been very successful at streamlining data flow and making reports timely and accessible.

I think the SEAN somehow managed to land a Data Manager who is nothing less than superb - not only in his technical skills, but also in his vision, his plan for "getting there", and his demonstrated success. The model is all about long-term survivability of the data/information, wide and easy access, timeliness, and data quality.

Data management could not be better. Bill Johnson has brought a full career of experience with him, and helped set key philosophies for the network - such as the customer-centric approach, single authoritative source concept, and the complementary but reverse-order pathways for program operation v. program design. Beyond these conceptual contributions, he's great with database design, work flow, validation, file security, and version control. All formal data products specified in each protocol are explicitly mapped to the Vital Sign web pages - ensuring efficiency, focus, and transparency. Also, Bill has put a lot of work in to automating data validation processes where possible. Systems are now in place that save many person-days of data processing with a few mouse clicks.

The network has done a great job so far, though there are additional Vital Signs yet to be implemented that will be particularly important to this park.

Data management in the SEAN network seem more complex than in other networks that use MS Access rather than SQL Server based data management. I trust that this approach will pay off in the long run with a more viable and robust long term solution, but this is not always apparent in the short term. I am also concerned that the NPS will not be able to afford or attract database personnel well versed in the SQL server based approach in the future. I also hope for more automated data analysis and summaries to be built into the database queries.

What do you see as the greatest challenges or barriers to the network's success?

Funding. Funding. Funding. Even for a small network, SEAN is under-funded. The program has done a good job with keeping the commitments within its means, but there are key challenges. On that is hitting the network hard right now is the transition from COLA to Locality Pay, without any adjustment in funding to cover the increased costs to the budget.

With the quality of the network staff right now, I see few absolute barriers. In that regard, I frankly see staff retention as a critical need. The SEAN currently has an extraordinarily talented, driven, and productive staff at every level. We must keep them!

Sustainability. Concern about staffing model being heavily reliant upon a single program manager particularly with the SEAN having a small org chart. Adequate funding to achieve SEAN I & M goals.

Funding. Costs are rising, information needs are becoming more critical (i.e. ocean acidification and associated effects) yet the budget can only fund a small handful of VSs.

Effectively communicating the information we are obtaining to a broader NPS audience and the public in general.

Keeping the momentum going in the face of declining budgets, and travel ceilings.

Streamflow is one of the most important monitoring programs for Southeast Alaska, but unfortunately it is also the most labor intensive and expensive. Adequately monitoring this important Vital Sign will be challenging. In general, it appears that funding could limit future SEAN Vital Signs work, but I don't feel qualified to say that definitively. To continue to be successful, I believe our network has to carefully nurture the Park Lead/Project Lead/Data Manager/Program Manager model for completing work and strive to stay in good communication with all levels of park staff.

Long-term funding. Long-term consistency and project involvement at the park level. It also seems important to have consistency in SEAN network management staff through the program development period.

Limited funding for WQ program (and overall) needs to increase or will be consumed by increasing program costs.

That the parks will marginalize the contribution of the SEAN which more reflects a very limited budget rather than the ability of the personnel.

I feel that one of the big challenges facing the Network is the shortage of staff time to develop protocols and work with Park staff on compliance steps related to proposed monitoring programs.

Many of the long-term monitoring data sets may require a more focused analysis effort from a quantitative scientist to make the data available for other projects and scientists.

For a group that is counting on a strong web presence to underpin its overall success, a specific technical challenge is the poor network connectivity to the SEAN office.

Assessing appropriate base funding for SEAN.

Shrinking budgets. It is unlikely that this network will ever have a large staff yet they have a number of protocols. To succeed they will need to continue to collaborate with park staff and maintain relationships with outside researchers.

Limited funding and staffing.

What specifically can the network staff do to improve the monitoring program over the next few years?

A lot of park effort went into identifying and prioritizing the vital signs. Continuing to roll those programs out on a timely basis should be job one.

Continue to look for ways to leverage resources from a variety of sources.

Insure to the degree possible that applicable park resource staff are appropriately involved with I&M field activities. Increase connection with park interpretive and education staff to facilitate information exchange with our audiences.

For starters, don't fix what ain't broke. Nevertheless, this network, with its limited resources, must not lose sight of the essential principles of remaining relevant to the parks, maintaining the highest standards of quality in everything they do, and making their findings widely and easily available. These are perhaps not as specific as the question probes for, yet I think so far the network is doing most everything right - they simply must maintain core perspective and priorities while continually searching for creative and innovative approaches to becoming even more efficient and effective. I think partnerships will continue to be their bread and butter.

Make some long term connections with park interpreters and NPS staff who are providing information to the public via electronic media. This may also include Public Information Officers at the park and regional levels.

Continuing to coordinate with the interp/education staff to get the research information out to the public would be great.

Provide more opportunities for input from scientists and managers regarding vital signs (or other covariate data collected by SEAN) and how they may be useful and can be integrated with ongoing studies and data needs. Expand geographic coverage of the outer coast of Glacier Bay, between Glacier Bay and Wrangell St. Elias. The physical and biological forces in this region of the eastern Gulf of Alaska are likely important drivers of conditions observed in both Glacier Bay and Wrangell St. Elias NP; however, there is currently limited monitoring effort in this region.

My personal agenda, aside from efficiently completing our core protocol development and current monitoring duties, is to make SEAN data as relevant as possible inside and outside of NPS. I believe this can be done by frequently updating park and other region-wide staff of our progress, presenting data and environmental stories in public forums, and striving to publish peer-reviewed literature.

Consider longer deployment of WQ monitoring installations in streams (May-Nov 1). Assist GLBA in evaluating potential impact (contaminant & pollutant wise) of hundreds of thousands of processed fish waste discharged approximately 0.3 mi. from NPS boundary in Excursion Inlet.

Formalize some kind of agreement with CAKN and WASO to incorporate outer coast of GLBA and Icy Bay (coastal WRST) into the network. There is 2+ million acres of unmonitored (not included in any monitoring plan) parklands there. A huge hole.

Stay focused on: (1) Protocol completion, (2) Annual report production, (3) Data management. One key area for improvement will be driven by funding/leveraging. SEAN is at the threshold of having a LOT of quality information to get out more broadly than in protocols and annual reports. Having a science communication position would yield benefits disproportional to cost - in that the progress and findings of the network are ready to be packaged and delivered to a much broader audience of park staff and the public. Without adding any technical capacity, such a position would dramatically improve the effectiveness and relevance of the program to parks and visitors. Without added funding, SEAN does not have the capacity in-house to engage in much of this work. Staff time is simply spoken for with the core work of establishing and operating the monitoring program. Also, it would be very valuable for the network to complete the process of working with park NR chiefs to see that I&M duties for Park Leads and Project Leaders are codified into specific positions and related performance plans. Doing so will ensure program stability in the face of staff turnover.

Keep moving ahead with the next set of Vital Signs.

Some vital signs should be conducted at the regional level. In particular weather station data and management and reporting. All the networks are doing something quite similar and there is good communication between the weather station practitioners. The next step is to leverage non-NPS data and report on at on the scale of the State at the eco-regional sub-section level. Water quality and quantity data could be handled and reported at the same scale. Seem like a great opportunity to leverage the LCCs and USGS Climate Centers and create a more robust and comprehensive data management and reporting system. Also, phenology monitoring (birds, amphibians, plants) is pretty high on the I&M program's wish list. A national level protocol would be appropriate for at least some components of this VS considering that could be reported at regional and continental scales. . The NPS's Natural Sounds Program should have a lead role in developing and implementing a bird phenology protocol and then assist networks implement, analyze, and manage the data.

Keep doing what they are doing.

Keep doing what you're doing! The right people are at the helm. I believe the success of this program is centered on keeping the management team consistent, at least through the initial development phase.

Please enter any other comments that you think will be helpful in evaluating the initial start-up of the long-term monitoring program and getting the network off to a good start.

The SEAN I&M team has been doing a great job under the current leadership. The products that I've seen thus far have been high quality, and Brendan has provided clear support to the park's priorities and needs.

I think the network is off to a good start. Some of the high points to me are the rigor being applied to developing methodologies (resulting in good science) and the effective data management program they have established.

The network is off to a great start, particularly given its limited resources.

I feel that there is a great relationship between the Network and Park staff members with a true feeling of collaboration. Further, I greatly appreciate the perspective and expertise that SEAN staff has provided on a variety of Park projects and issues.

Overall, I think that the SEAN I&M network is off to a great start and I am particularly impressed with the data management and communication efforts of the I&M staff. Keep up the great work!!

Brendan absolutely turned around this network from one of imminent failure to one that I'm happy to tout as worthy of highlighting; His work is rock solid and his holistic thinking and agreeable nature allow this to work.

In general, I think the positive relationships between the network and the parks is quite good. I cannot overemphasize (especially for the SEAN) the importance of this - indeed, of even strengthening it at every turn and opportunity. The keys are base capacity (limited) and sustainability (essential). The most obvious vehicle to expand and secure both of these is the network-park relationship.

There remains a huge gap in coverage in the southeast parks: the outer coast of Glacier Bay and the coastal portion of Wrangell-St. Elias. Together, over 300 miles of wild and (thought) pristine coastal and marine resources (~180 at WRST and ~120 at outer GLBA) are essentially completely unmonitored and of unknown status. The natural way to address

these major gaps is to build SEANs capacity to extend its existing monitoring programs to these areas with no new scoping.

In addition to issues/concerns from the park perspective, please feel free to pass along issues and concerns from the WASO and regional perspectives, and to let us know where things appear to be headed over the next 3 years.

Continue creating high impact communication products. Get stories into the local media and engage journalists on an annual basis. Strive for a NY Times article on caliber with the recent story on the Soundscape Program.

Great job!