September 29, 2020 Social Science Working Group Call

Attendees: Jaime Ashander, Kira Sullivan-Wiley, Cindy Hu, Güray Hatipoğlu, Melissa Kenney, Mike Dietze, Whitney Woelmer

Agenda/Notes:
1. Visualization, Decision Support, and User Interfaces Task View Update
   - You can find an overview of the Task Views as well as a link to the Reproducible Forecasting Workflows Task View, which is the first one that has been completed here: https://ecoforecast.org/efi-task-views/.
   - Whitney Woelmer is interested in leading this Task View and is planning to join the call to discuss next steps
   - Want to be clear about what the Task Views goal is.
     - Want to provide an overview of the 3 categories (Visualization, Decision Support, User Interfaces) and then provide tools that are used in those categories
     - Visualization example - there are tons of java libraries for making visualization. Don't want to provide the list to all the tools, instead want to show the 3-5 commonly used tools and the pros and cons of these tools
       - Annotated bibliography for tools
     - Advocating for subheaders Visualization, Decision Support, User Interfaces under the Task Views
       - Static vs interactive visualizations
       - Decision support tools would fall under interactive visualizations
       - Put Dynamic and static visualizations as subheaders
       - Visualization best practice guidance: https://www.umdindicators.org/?page_id=1028
         - Melissa developed a technical report that synthesized literature related to static graphic best practices
         - Melissa also has papers out or in review about this

     - The Education Group is also pulling together educational resources and the decision support materials will be something that group will
     - Are there tools unique to decision support that you wouldn't use for static/dynamic visualizations?
       - Decision support systems include both processes and tools. The tools are developed specifically with users in mind
       - You either have the sense of the decision the tools is being used to make
       - Or building tools off of best practices and testing them with your target user audience
       - There could be a set constituency group that is clearly identifiable so you will know if your tool with be useful in those cases
     - Is there any guidance that could be provided?

- This audience likes getting automated emails, this other group likes getting texts, etc
- If you are a new forecaster and your audience likes to get messages by SMS here are the tools
  - Who is the Task View aimed at?
    - Forecasters who have stakeholder they are developing forecast for?
    - Think of the users of the Task Views as a whole (not just this one) - members informing others in the community about what works well and helping to onboard people new to forecasting to help them find resources that are useful
    - Another example: How do social scientists test things? What survey tools to use - why to use one over another because of X,Y, Z. Why use something then Google forms for everything you do?
    - Think about this more than just visualization. How are social scientists using tools?
    - Also think about where there are gaps. Where are people always needing to homebrew resources/tools. This can provide gaps that will be useful for EFI as a community to think about developing
  - Visualization systems can typically be created in R or Python (although Tableau could be another option). If there are specific packages that are useful those can be included
  - Meant to be a living document so it can/will be updated
  - Is map visualization included? ArcGIS vs QGIS
  - Is there a standard set of pros and cons to include? E.g., is it free, do I need to have access to a server
    - This wasn't a formal requirement in the Workflow TaskView, but there is an implicit favoring of whether a tool is opensource
    - Want to make a clear note of anything that is closed-source
      - Open-source issue to consider - is there support for a tool/resource. Would want to favor tools that are well established/well maintained as open-source materials
  - Whitney will work with Chris Jones and will come back for additional input from this group moving forward

2. Discuss the option to merge Social Science and Partners Calls
   - If we merge both groups will meet on October 22, November 19, December 17 at noon eastern time.
   - There is overlap between members and some of the ideas in the Partners and Social Science groups
   - Both groups fill up the meeting with existing tasks.
   - Increased communication between groups could be good

- Idea from Partners - have quarterly/annual meetings where everyone from both groups is invited with a specific agenda which is seeded from conversations within each individual group
- Cindy likes the idea of having quarterly merged meeting.
- Concern is the size of the groups - if too big it could reduce the ability for people to feel comfortable to speak up
- What happened with the CI/Methods merge? Anything that was detrimental?
  - There was so much overlap that it was an easy decision to merge the two groups
  - Additionally, the forecasting challenge has kept the Methods/CI group together. There is overlap in developing the CI and Methods for the Challenges
  - Another example is the Forecasting Standards group - started in Theory, then joined with Methods and CI and eventually became its own group because it took on a life of its own
- There is the potential to have an advisory group for EFI. Wouldn't want to have overlap/competition between Partners and advisory group
- Quarterly meeting could be productive.
- Synergy between knowledge transfer and social science implications. Even if not working on the same tasks, it will be really helpful to have joint conversations together.
- Do have 2 distinct missions for the two groups. But there are opportunities for collaboration. Want to facilitate those collaborations - not just at the large annual meeting.
- Keep an eye towards what to discuss collaboratively
- Kira has special insight as co-chair and thinking about the opportunities
- Partners question - who is internal to EFI and who is external to EFI
- Quarterly meetings has support in both groups. Send this idea out to both groups with approve/disapprove for quarterly vs annual meeting?

3. External advisory committee idea
   - Think about how we are facilitating our pipeline of users and developing forecasts that are designed to be useful and used
   - Want to pull in high level decision makers from agencies, NGOs, commercial organizations
   - Expect this will be external to the EFI working groups
   - For timeline think it would be something that would get set up next semester with groundwork building on this semester
   - Will want to think about how to get feedback from EFI community. Working group is one way to get feedback.
   - Will be considering a broad range of candidates for the committee. If anyone knows of someone that would be useful to include share their name/url with Melissa in order to start a list of candidates
   - Examples - someone more senior and can provide experience from an organization at a higher level. These are people who wouldn't be available to

meet monthly, but would be available 2-4 times a year. Ask for their input on EFI activities. What sounds doable and promising? What do they see that might not work? How does EFI fit in with the broader world? Also hoping to have a little US bias with the members.

- Partners activities have a N. American bias, but to be truly global need to find where to get that additional perspective
- Chapters can also help with this

4. Discuss the Forecasting Standards Draft - any suggestions for input when considering forecast visualization best practices? Are there any intersections between the Standards and Social Science forecasting output analyses/intermodel comparisons/comparatory visualization
   - Could look at vignettes to see examples as well
     - https://eco4cast.github.io/EFIstandards/articles/flare-metadata-example.html
     - https://eco4cast.github.io/EFIstandards/articles/logistic-metadata-example.html
   - Flip this idea: Could we provide a vignette showing how to grab data/metadata from forecast and provide an effect visualization
   - Most of the vignettes are about getting information into the standards. But want to provide an overview/vignette of how to use/visualize the data from the forecasts

5. Blog Post Updates - we didn't have time to get to this item. We'll discuss on the next call.

6. RCN NEON Forecasting Challenge Updates - we didn't have time to get to this item. We'll discuss on the next call.