

Environmental Justice and Cleanup in Oregon

ASTSWMO Annual Meeting 2022

Arlington, VA

Franziska Landes, Michael Kucinski, Ximena Cruz Cuevas, Stephanie Caldera, Susan Turnblom,
and many others

Oregon Environmental Justice Structure

DEQ EJ positions:

- < 0.2 FTE (since 2008)
- 1 FTE (beginning 2023)
- House Bill 4077 (2022)
 - Supports development of Oregon-specific EJ mapping tool, and positions including:
 - 1 EJ Technical Analyst
 - 1 EJ Council Coordinator



Staff-led Environmental Justice Work Group

*To coordinate the development of DEQ's environmental justice framework that can help inform cross-media/division conversations and projects and work to support the equitable implementation of DEQ's mission of restoring, maintaining, and enhancing environmental quality by **understanding and reducing disproportionate negative air, land and water pollution burdens** and related environmental and public health outcomes for people in Oregon.*

Technical

- Data infrastructure for Oregon-specific EJ mapping tool

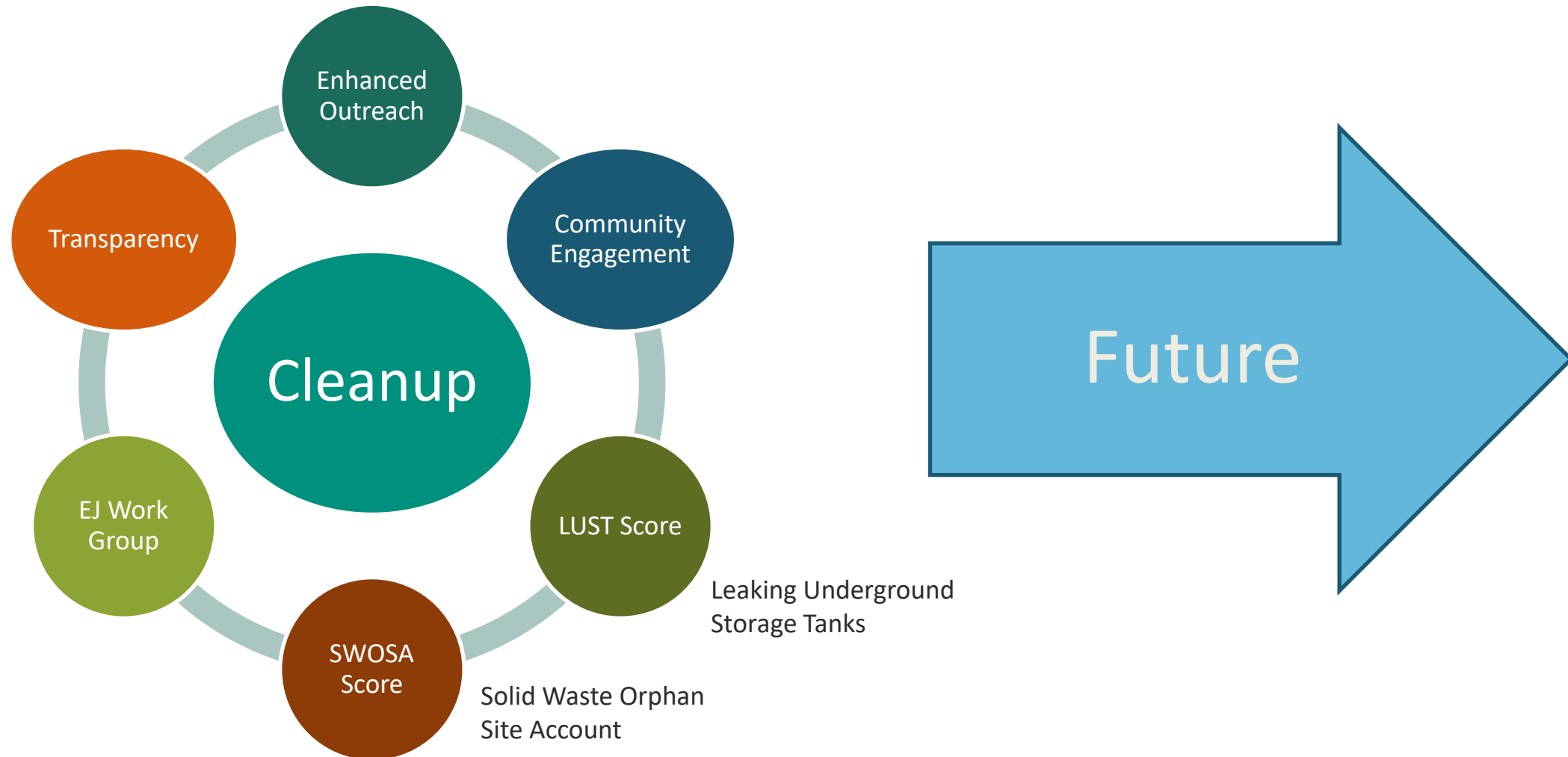
Policy

- EJ policy and implementation across DEQ media / regions / programs

Outreach & Engagement

- Space and resources for consistent best practices on community engagement

Environmental Justice in DEQ Cleanup



Case Study – J.H. Baxter

Eugene, Oregon

- Complicated site in multiple regulatory programs
- Decades of complaints & violations -> community loss of trust in agencies
- Concern about backyard soil -
- DEQ Cleanup doesn't typically sample homes
- Typical communication approach is limited

This neighborhood needed a more inclusive approach



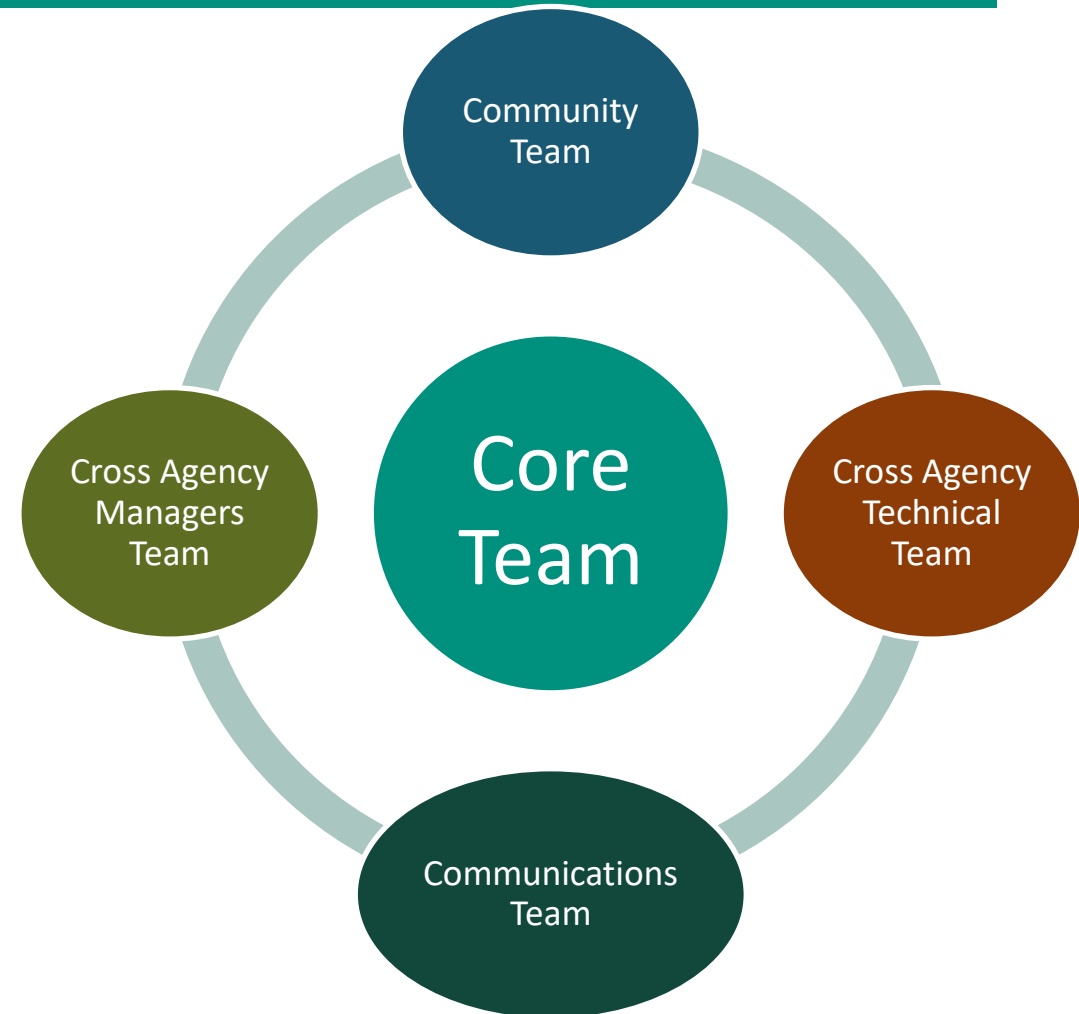
Challenge: Coordinate Communication



Third Party Facilitator/Mediator



- Interviewed Community and Agencies
- Included leaders from local advocacy and affected community groups
- Organized a Balanced “Core Team”
- Act as sounding board and process guide for all core team members



Results of New Approach: Collaboration

- Core Team reviews sampling plans, fact sheets and press releases
- Community members knocked on doors to get access agreements signed
- Agencies use Community Group meetings as public meeting forum
- Worked together and developed a Story Map

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/61e11e3a99a54ff784a68ffacaccfcc>



Final Thoughts - The different approach is working!

- Critical for EJ communities to be and feel included and help direct regulatory efforts and build trust
- Community is urging elected officials to develop new health policies, such as a 'health overlay zone'
- Also, huge benefit for complex facilities with multiple permits and regulatory agency programs involved
 - Enhanced coordination, efficiencies, and resource consolidation

Thank you!

Questions?