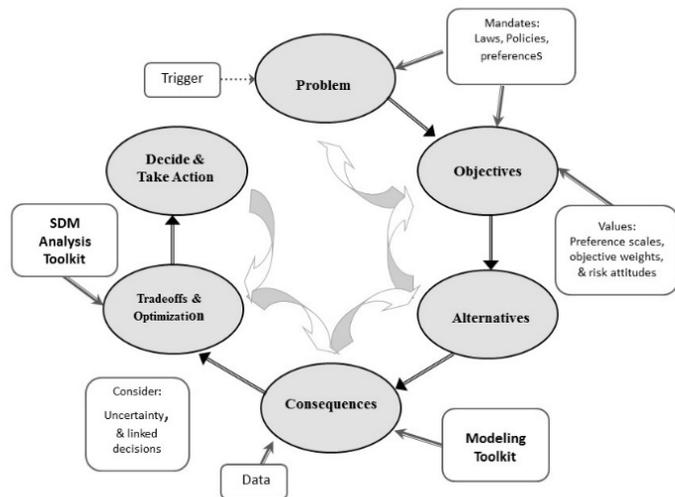


## Structured Decision Making, Wildlife Committee Handout

**Structured Decision Making (SDM)** is a decision-making framework that helps organize and analyze a problem with the goal of making clearer, more transparent, and better informed decisions. SDM integrates the principles of Decision Analysis and Multi-attribute Utility Theory, insights from Behavioral Decision Theory, Psychology, and Economics. SDM allows a decision-maker to transparently evaluate, translate, and communicate

predicted outcomes of actions to key partners or stakeholders. SDM seeks an explicit quantitative assessment of the trade-offs and consequences amongst a bundle of potential actions, allowing for a review of alternatives. SDM can employ a wide range of tools that can assist the facilitation of the SDM-informed decision-making process. It is generally based on a step-by-step process; however, SDM users or decision-makers do not have to follow all of the process steps. **SDM follows**



Source: Jean Fitts Cochrane

**a ProACT process, consisting of the following components: defining the problem; determining the objectives; identifying alternatives; forecasting the consequences; and evaluating the trade-offs** (Runge et al. 2015; see Figure, source: [Structured Decision Making | U.S. Geological Survey \(usgs.gov\)](https://www.usgs.gov/structured-decision-making)). According to Schwartz et al. (2017), SDM can help answer why, what, and how questions associated with conservation, including, “why are these the right actions and why do we think they will achieve the goals?,” “what are the best actions to take?,” and “how do we create pathways for or barriers to success?” (p. 6). SDM can also help with addressing conflict resolution, fact finding efforts, and adaptive management, particularly when there is a high level of uncertainty. **SDM is a commonly used natural resource management decision-making framework and decision support tool.** The National Conservation Training Center offers courses every year on SDM. SDM has been applied hundreds of times by federal and state natural resource agencies in the U.S., Canada, and Australia. Dr. David J. Trimbach has used SDM to help integrate human wellbeing into local watershed group decision-making, help make ecosystem recovery action funding decisions, and adaptively manage local recovery plans.

**For the purpose of this project, we are proposing the flexible application of SDM (“SDM lite”) in collaboration with the Wildlife Committee.** SDM will be applied through a knowledge co-production approach, which necessitates collaborator input and co-leading of the overarching process, meaning there is no prescribed or predetermined decision, but an opportunity to have a guided process to help facilitate decision-making that is collaborator-dependent. This flexible approach allows for a very tailored SDM application, which could lead to a single interactive meeting or a workshop series. **We recommend applying the first two SDM steps (PrO), which includes collaboratively defining the problem and determining the (policy) objectives.**