



Research and Evaluation

The Acorn Group offers evaluation services throughout all phases of program development and implementation. We view evaluation as a critical step in the planning process, helping to identify the needs and interests of prospective audiences through front-end surveys and interviews, refine prototype exhibits and panels based on audience feedback provided through formative evaluation, and assess the impact of programs and materials based on summative evaluation.

Since 1993 the State of California has retained our services to coordinate development and evaluation of the Curriculum and Compendium Project. This effort involves the collection and review of hundreds of topic-specific environmental education materials by teams of educators, followed by development of comprehensive reports distributed throughout California school districts and offices of education, and electronically through WestEd.

The Acorn Group has undertaken educator needs assessments for numerous clients including the California Environmental Protection Agency, San Mateo County Park and Recreation Foundation, Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Stewardship Collaborative, Laguna Canyon Foundation, and California Institute for Biodiversity. In addition, The Acorn Group has also assessed the needs and interests of visitors for such clients as The Huntington Botanical Gardens, Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, Descanso Gardens, Fitzgerald Marine Reserve, and Laguna Coast Wilderness Park. And for the past five years, The Acorn Group has served as program evaluator for Descanso Gardens.