Reading Guide for

Smart Choices: A Practical Guide for Making Better Life Decisions

USFWS/USGS Structured Decision Making curricula

Hardcover edition: This is a loaner book, please bring it with you to class. Please do not highlight or make notes or marks.

Electronic book: This is a loaner copy, the book will expire at the end of class.

This book is an introduction to structured decision making that will introduce you to some key concepts and terms. *Smart Choices* is not a textbook and we won’t follow it literally in the class or workshop, although we will refer to the PrOACT steps and some of the methods introduced here. While we encourage you to read the entire book, this reading guide will help you locate the more important materials to read before you arrive.

**Chapter 1 Making Smart Choices**
- Read all, especially pg 4-9 introduction to PrOACT

**Chapter 2 Problem and Chapter 3 Objectives**
- Read all (pg 15-45); think about public sector applications, and the challenge of determining fundamental objectives in public work

**Chapter 4 Alternatives**
- Read all (pg 47-61); in public sector, when are alternatives mandated or limited; when can we be creative in developing alternatives?

**Chapter 5 Consequences**
- Read pg 65-67
- Skim pg 68-71 Consequence Tables; many of you will work with more rigorous prediction methods to determine consequences, including modeling; Consequence tables are suitable for multiple objective tradeoff decision analysis, but won’t be used for other types of problems

**Chapter 6 Tradeoffs**
- Skim pg 83-88; we substitute “Decision Analysis” for tradeoffs since many methods other than tradeoffs are appropriate for different types of problems
- Skim or skip pg 88-103 Even Swap method;

**Chapter 7 Uncertainty**
- Read pg 109-111; we will also emphasize addressing uncertainty in earlier steps, starting with problem definition (Chpt 2) and choice of decision analysis methods (Chpt 6)
- Skim or skip pg 112-117 Risk Profiles method;
- Skim pg 117-120 Assign Chances; we’ll typically evaluate probabilistic outcomes under Consequences (Chpt 5) (for problems where it matters) & use modeling
- Skim pg 122-125 Decision Trees, a classic alternative to Consequence Tables (Chpt 5) and Tradeoffs (Chpt 6) for problems where uncertainty is critical and one objective is dominant
Chapter 8 Risk Tolerance

- Read pg 135-142; think about public sector applications
- Skim or skip pg 142-154 Desirability Scoring;
- Read pg 154-157 Pitfalls

Chapter 10 Psychological Traps and Chapter 11 Wise Decision Maker

- Read all (pg 189-234)