

Reading Guide for *Smart Choices: A Practical Guide for Making Better Life Decisions*

USFWS/USGS Structured Decision Making curricula

This paperback 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 15-43); think about public sector applications, and the challenge of determining fundamental objectives in public work

Chapter 4 Alternatives

- Read all (pg 45-59); in public sector, when are alternatives mandated or limited; when can we be creative in developing alternatives?

Chapter 5 Consequences

- Read pg 63-65
- Skim pg 66-69 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 79-84; we substitute “**Decision Analysis**” for tradeoffs since many methods other than tradeoffs are appropriate for different types of problems
- Skim or skip pg 84-99 Even Swap method;

Chapter 7 Uncertainty

- Read pg 105-108; 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 108-114 Risk Profiles method;
- Skim pg 114-117 Assign Chances; we'll typically evaluate probabilistic outcomes under Consequences (Chpt 5) (for problems where it matters) & use modeling
- Skim pg 118-122 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 131-138; think about public sector applications
- Skim or skip pg 138-150 Desirability Scoring;
- Read pg 150-153 Pitfalls

Chapter 10 Psychological Traps and Chapter 11 Wise Decision Maker

- Read all (pg 185-232)