Who pays for marine conservation? Processes and narratives that influence marine funding

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ABSTRACT

Marine conservation initiatives are implemented by a variety of programs and projects, and can utilize a suite of tools to offset human impacts on marine environments. Insufficient funding has been identified as a factor hindering their ability to achieve conservation goals. However, there is limited research investigating why and how marine conservation funding is allocated. This study expands scholarship on funding for marine conservation by exploring three aspects of marine funding: (1) the processes of marine funding allocation; (2) the role of perceptions in funding decisions; and (3) strategies for strengthening funding proposals. To do so, we apply the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), a framework that emphasizes decision-making theory and facilitates an empirical analysis of the decision-making processes by focusing researcher attention on internal characteristics, contextual events, how those events are perceived as narratives with characters, and how those narratives influence decision-making. Leveraging qualitative interviews and survey data, we investigate the relationship between these NPF components and marine funding decisions in the state of Oregon. Notable findings suggest that higher funding amounts were allocated to proposals that highlight the initiative's ease of success and ability to create lasting impacts. Additionally, funders that value equity are more likely to fund projects that directly interact with human communities. Finally, results are synthesized into 5 applied recommendations that marine conservation initiatives may find useful in strengthening their funding proposals.

"Conservation investment is an expression of our faith in the future of natural systems that are essential to life on Earth. It is an expression of our faith in the future of deeply loved natural wonders. And it is an expression of faith in the future of our families and communities, whose lives will be immeasurably enriched by the living world that we are striving to sustain". - James A. Levitt

1. Introduction

Marine conservation initiatives implement a variety of management tools to support marine environments facing natural and anthropogenic threats (Ray and McCormick-Ray, 2013). Many of these initiatives are related to the government in some capacity, since any conservation initiative occurring on public land requires governmental support. Governmentally established marine programs receive the majority of their funding from public sources of funding, although exact funding rules and mechanisms differ depending on the specific governance entity. Government funding presents several challenges including

spending restrictions, reallocation due to shifting priorities, and strict funding cycles (Bos et al., 2015; Carrier et al., 2012; Kawaka et al., 2017; Osmond et al., 2010). Marine conservation occurring outside of the government may also face funding challenges such as stagnant marine grant-making and a lack of reliable revenue sources (Bos et al., 2015; California Environmental Associates, 2017). A recent study that explored funding for marine conservation and sustainable fisheries has highlighted three primary challenges related to marine funding (Blasiak et al., 2019):

1. Lack of transparency within funding organizations;
2. Low cohesion and coordination among funding organizations and proposals;
3. Insufficient follow-up with funded proposals to determine their outcomes.

Despite these identified challenges, marine funding has received relatively little attention in academic literature. Existing research

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primarily utilizes economic analyses or defines historical funding sources (Berger et al., 2019; Birz and Lott, 2011; Bos et al., 2015; Elliott et al., 1997; Hargreaves-Allen, 2020; Johansen and Vestvik, 2020; Lerner et al., 2007; McClanahan and Rankin, 2016; Wang, 2011). While these studies successfully identified funding challenges, they did not investigate the factors that drive these challenges.

We approach marine funding challenges through a perspective exploring the decision processes and perceptions that drive funding decisions. To that end, we applied the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF), a framework that emphasizes decision-making theory and enables an empirical analysis of the decision-making process by focusing on internal characteristics, contextual events, how those events are perceived as narratives with characters, and how those narratives influence decision-making (Shanahan et al., 2018). The NPF has been used to investigate perceptions and events surrounding decisions related to environmental policymaking (Blair and McCormack, 2016; Crow et al., 2017; Jones et al., 2014; Lawton and Rudd, 2014), but has yet to enter the niche of marine conservation and management. In this study, we apply the NPF to help illuminate the specific decision-making processes that each funder experiences when deciding whether or not to fund marine conservation. Our findings may provide managers of marine conservation initiatives a unique perspective on some of the causes of funding challenges, enabling thoughtful consideration of new approaches for addressing those challenges.

Our NPF analysis focuses on funding available for marine conservation initiatives in the state of Oregon. Oregon has a history of protecting its marine and coastal environments and supports various marine conservation initiatives, notably the Oregon Marine Reserves Program, Oregon Coastal Management Program, Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition, and the Surfrider Foundation. Many of these organizations operate with limited budgets and minimal staff capacity. For example, a previous assessment of the Marine Reserves Program found significant funding limitations (Blue Earth Consultants, LLC., 2013). A more thorough understanding of marine funders may signal ways to engage more appropriate funders, create stronger grant proposals, and assist decision-makers in writing policies that support funder relationships.

The following article begins with an exploration of common marine conservation funding streams and how they generally operate in governmental and non-governmental contexts. We then introduce our NPF-driven decision-making framework that allows us to propose theoretical drivers of marine funding decisions. Through NPF informed exploratory interviews, we elicited specific organizational characteristics, focusing events, and character roles considered by funding organizations. Processes and perceptions that emerged from interviews were further investigated through an online survey and statistically correlated with each organization's previous marine funding decisions. Statistical results reveal the processes and perceptions that are most prevalent among our sample, and suggest relationships between these themes and real funding decisions. We close by synthesizing key findings and offering five recommendations for marine conservation initiatives pursuing funding.

1.1. Sources of marine funding

In the United States, three streams provide the majority of marine funding opportunities through grant making: governmental funding, private foundations, and public charities (Bos et al., 2015). Governmental funding serves as the backbone for all governmentally mandated marine conservation. Exact funding mechanisms differ based on each state's budget structure. Typically, the mechanism involves a mixture of federally allocated funds, tax revenue, lottery revenue, and license/permit revenue (The National Association of State Budget Officers, 2019). The state legislature distributes government funds through an in-depth yearlong budgeting cycle involving a wide range of stakeholders and interests, both of which can make it difficult for programs to successfully achieve higher rates of funding (The National Association of

State Budget Officers, 2015). The U.S. government also supports marine conservation through grants offered by governmental entities (i.e. U.S. Geological Survey) or independent agencies that support a governmental entity (i.e. National Science Foundation). Both sources of governmental grants receive funds from government revenue and distribute funding to projects that may support a governmental objective.

Both governmental marine conservation initiatives and non-governmental initiatives may explore non-governmental funding from private foundations and public charities (Berger et al., 2019; Levitt and Bergen, 2005). Private foundations and public charities both support a specific cause (Martens, 2002). They mainly differ in how they receive the funds which they later distribute: private foundations are funded by an endowment while public charities rely on charitable contributions (Fernandez and Hager, 2014). Private foundations may be funded by a single endowment or family endowment. They may also be funded through a corporate endowment or corporate revenue, although the foundation itself is legally separate from the corporation. Public charities obtain funds from the general public, government support, or grants from other funding organizations. Grants offered by private foundations and public charities are less consistent than governmental funding in amount, duration, and frequency. However, they tend to offer more frequent funding opportunities and increased flexibility (Wang, 2011).

In the state of Oregon, marine conservation initiatives are primarily supported by state or local government. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife oversees the Marine Resources Program which houses the Marine Reserves Program. The Department of Land Conservation and Development houses the federally-supported Oregon Coastal Management Program which, among other efforts, manages conservation by coordinating with partners, stewarding coastal shorelines, and managing ocean resources. Both of these programs receive multiple streams of state government funding, coming from four main sources: general funds, lottery funds, other funds, and federal funds (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, 2018).

The Oregon Shores Conservation Coalition and Surfrider Foundation are both non-governmental organizations that support governmental conservation efforts and implement their own conservation initiatives. As non-governmental organizations, they both rely on charitable donations, fundraising, and governmental support. They have received the majority of their regular funding from a variety of non-governmental sources, with smaller contributions from government grants.

Records of previous marine funding in Oregon indicate a wide range of funding organizations that may support the marine conservation initiatives in Oregon (Table 1). Both governmental and non-governmental marine conservation initiatives may benefit from accessing these sources of funding. Marine conservation initiatives across the U.S. have access to unique mixtures of these three streams, so each must be individually analyzed to assess its similarities to Oregon's funding structure. Regions outside of the U.S. are more likely to significantly differ from the funding opportunities considered in this study.

2. Theoretical lens: The Narrative Policy Framework

Existing marine funding studies tend to focus on general trends in

Table 1
The number of grant opportunities available to marine conservation initiatives in Oregon and the total amount funded through those grant opportunities between 2002 and 2018. Data reported from The Foundation Center (2018). Source: authors.

Stream	Grant Opportunities	Amount Funded
Government Grants	254	$111,841,052
Private Foundations	2326	$203,000,814
Public Charities	515	$5,086,732
Total	3095	$319,928,598

funding or relationships to macro-level economics (Birz and Lott, 2011; Blasiak et al., 2019; Bos et al., 2015). While these analyses serve as a strong foundation for understanding general funding behaviors, they fail to identify the motivations and perspectives that underlie these trends. In pursuit of a better understanding of said motivations and perspectives, we apply the NPF, a framework widely applied to understand public policy at multiple levels of analysis (see Shanahan et al., 2018), but appropriate here primarily due to the framework's emphasis on the role of narrative in shaping individual and collective decision-making processes.

The NPF emphasizes the causal link between subjective perceptions of contextual events and decision-making outcomes (Shanahan et al., 2018), with a unique focus on the narration of those events. The NPF provides a framework for articulating specific narrative concepts and empirically testing how individuals may interact with those concepts. Here we leverage four core NPF concepts to quantify and analyze funding decisions: actors, focusing events, character roles, and outcomes (Fig. 1) (Shanahan et al., 2018).

NPF analyses focus on actors, whose perspectives are the central concern of this analysis. Actors function as homo narrans or 'storytelling' individuals who rely on narratives for processing information, communicating, and making decisions (Shanahan et al., 2018). Homo narrans individuals derive meaning from externally created narratives, and also create their own internal narratives for organizing their own memories, thoughts, and cognitions (Shanahan et al., 2018). In this study, we define actors as organizations that fund or have previously funded marine programs. To our knowledge, funding organizations have never been investigated as homo narrans actors, though organizational literature suggests that they do create understanding through narratives (Leigh and Melwani, 2019; Morgeson et al., 2015). We propose that funding organizations operate as homo narrans actors whose identity-defining internal characteristics influence narration and eventual funding outcomes.

Internal characteristics applicable to funding organizations were identified within organizational literature. Scholars of organizational studies propose multiple internal characteristics that define the way an organization functions: structure, decision-making process, and culture (Dalton et al., 1980; Fredrickson, 1986; Ivancevich et al., 2013). Structure provides the most basic anatomical design of an organization and drives the day-to-day functions of the organization (Ivancevich et al., 2013; Ranson et al., 1980). Decision-making processes exist within the organization's structural framework and delineate a distinct work-flow aimed at making critical decisions (Ivancevich et al., 2013). Funding organizations undergo distinct decision-making processes aimed at determining allocation of funding, hereafter called an allocation process. Employees' individual values and informal practices contribute to an organizational culture, which fosters the organizational goals that motivate decision-making (Ranson et al., 1980). Each of these organizational characteristics was further investigated through exploratory interviews to investigate how they contributed to previous funding decisions.

According to the NPF, actors (and their internal characteristics) exist within a setting: the general context in which decisions are made. The setting includes cultural norms, socio-political contexts, economics, and other system-wide events occurring in a particular system. Actors, then, consider critical aspects of the setting and create narratives around those aspects. One such critical aspect of a setting is termed a focusing event: an event that the actor perceives as being highly relevant or important to their interests (Birkland, 1998; Kingdon, 2010). Focusing events, thus, emerge from within the setting and are theorized to play an important role in funder decision-making processes.

Actors subconsciously assess focusing events through a narrative process that includes a consideration of the people involved in, or left out of, the narrative. NPF studies identify four main character roles within a narrative structure: the hero, villain, victim, and beneficiary. The hero and villain represent the "good" side and the "bad" side,

respectively, composing the two primary forces that propel a story. These two characters are often directly at odds, and outcomes of their struggles impact victims and beneficiaries. Victims experience negative outcomes whereas beneficiaries receive positive outcomes. Critically, the attribution of each of these roles is subjective and differs with each actor's point of view. Whom one actor may perceive as a villain may play a hero to another. Characters within a narrative may very well experience this reversal of roles in the narratives of others, i.e. "… every villain is the hero of his or her own story" (Vogler, 2007).

The consideration of character roles and how they drive perceptions of focusing events has never been applied to understand the challenge of funding marine conservation. Based on broad discourse surrounding marine environmental problems, however, we can develop some general conjectures about which groups are likely to fulfill some of these character roles. For example, extractive industries (i.e. energy mining, fisheries, etc.) are often perceived as the villain due to the potential harm that they may afflict on marine environments (Arthington et al., 2016). The hero, often marine conservation initiatives or funding agencies themselves, then attempts to combat these challenges to alleviate the hardships placed on the victim. Based on prior research on marine environmental problems, we speculate that the victims could include coastal communities or the environment itself (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005; Pitcher and Cheung, 2013). These character roles are further investigated through exploratory interviews in subsequent sections.

Thus, theorizing from the NPF, organizational characteristics, focusing events, and character roles likely contribute to funding outcomes or decisions. We define funding outcomes as both the amount of funding (how much money is being allocated to marine conservation overall) and types of funding recipients (what types of marine conservation initiatives are receiving the funding). Funding recipients are key for effective funding, as they are the actual entities that utilize funds to support marine conservation. Available funding data delineates two general types of recipients: human-based or environmental-based. Human-based recipients are those that serve some aspect of human society (vulnerable populations, students, sustainable development), while environmental-based recipients solely address natural system concerns (biodiversity, single species, ecosystems). Based on our conjectures above, we are particularly interested in the relationship between perceived victims and funding recipients to explore if funders allocate money in ways that benefit these perceived victims.

3. Methods

A multiphase research design (Fig. 2) was employed to explore the central research question: within the context of marine conservation, how are different characteristics of the decision-making process, as theorized by the NPF, related to funding outcomes? Each phase built upon results from the previous phase(s), but utilized distinct methodology to create unique results. The entire research process was guided by an NPF-driven theoretical lens and structured by NPF concepts that were deductively operationalized within the context of marine conservation (Fig. 1). This structure was further refined through semi-structured interviews with a small sample of funding organizations. This phase confirmed framework validity and reliability, which supported further exploration across a larger sample. Results from interviews informed the development and distribution of a survey instrument to assess decision-making processes and funding outcomes across a larger sample of the funding community.

3.1. Interview methods

Deductively operationalized NPF concepts (organizational characteristics, focusing events, and character roles) were validated through interviews with funding organizations that have previously funded marine programs in Oregon. Interview respondents were
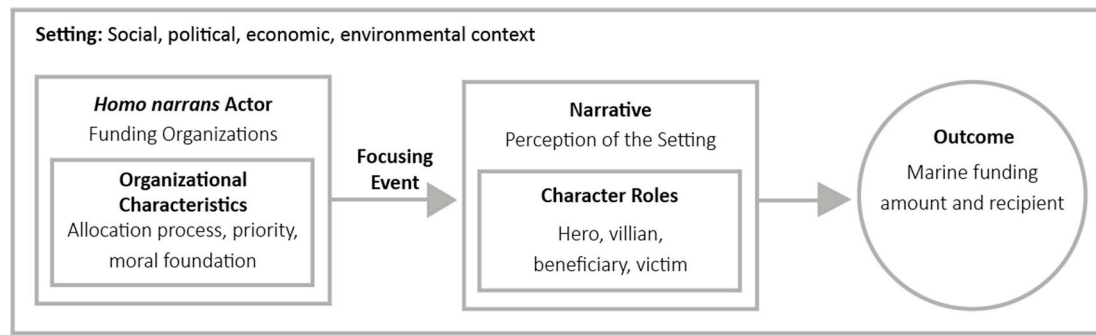
Fig. 1. Core concepts from the Narrative Policy Framework and how each was operationalized in the context of this study. Generic NPF elements are in bold; context-specific elements for the study of marine funding organizations are in plain text.
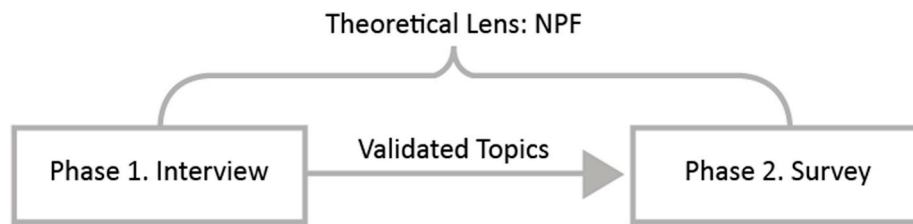

Fig. 2. Multiphase research approach employed to explore funding for marine conservation with the Narrative Policy Framework.

representatively selected from a subset of data from a database managed by The Foundation Center (2018) that includes ocean-related funding opportunities available to Oregon organizations since 2002.[1] We determined representation by maintaining a distribution of organizational size and type of organization that is consistent with the larger dataset (Fig. 3). Organizational size was manually calculated based on the distribution of each funder's total funding across the dataset. Each funder was then categorized as either small (<1st quantile), medium (>1st quantile and <3rd quantile), or large (>3rd quantile). Type of organization was provided by the dataset and included private foundation, corporate giving program, governmental organization, and charity. Within those parameters, specific funding organizations were randomly selected to participate in an interview.

One individual from each organization participated in a 30-min semi-structured phone interview covering three main topics: organizational characteristics, past decision-making discussions, and future funding opportunities. Interviewees were highly knowledgeable of the decision-making processes within their organizations and were personally involved in some capacity. Discussions were fairly unstructured to allow prevalent themes to emerge naturally. Probing questions were used when new topics emerged and required further description, or when more clarification was needed to fully understand the concept. Throughout the entire interview process, we reflected on emergent themes and iteratively adapted the interview guide to include emergent concepts.

3.2. Survey methods

A survey was distributed to investigate the relationships between themes elicited during interviews (organizational characteristics, focusing events, character roles) and funding outcomes across a larger sample. Results were then statistically correlated with each organization's past funding decision (both the amount of money and recipient of funds), which was available through The Foundation Center's dataset (2018).

A 15-min survey was electronically distributed to funding organizations included in The Foundation Center's dataset (2018). The survey included 35 questions covering organizational characteristics, focusing events, character roles, and future marine funding (see questionnaire in the appendix). Organizational characteristics were elicited through multiple-choice questions. The various focusing events identified through interviews were included in one large survey question, wherein respondents reported the degree (on a scale of one to seven) to which the event was regularly considered during decision-making. For example, an event with a response of 7 indicates that this type of event is strongly considered on a regular basis. Character roles were elicited by asking respondents to evaluate who was responsible for causing marine challenges (the villain), who was most negatively impacted by marine challenges (the victim), and who would most benefit from their own organization's funding (the beneficiary). Each question allowed respondents to skip, report that they do not know, or fill in an *other* response.

Survey results were descriptively explored to determine the frequency and variation of responses. Though descriptive statistics do not identify correlations with other factors, they do reveal the characteristics that were most or least common among the sample. To assess correlations, survey results were appended to each organization's funding history as available by The Foundation Center (2018). This allowed us to statistically test relationships between organizational characteristics, focusing events, and previous funding decisions. Some organizations provided multiple contacts for survey completion; however, due to the nature of the dataset, only one survey response could be utilized in the proceeding statistical analysis. We chose to include survey results from the individuals who were most directly involved in the allocation process (this information was elicited through a survey question) as they were the most likely to report accurate and authoritative information regarding allocation decisions.

Multiple pairwise correlation tests statistically estimated the correlations between survey responses and funding outcomes. Funding outcomes (the dependent variable) were tested as the average amount of funding for marine programs, human-based recipients, and environment-based recipients. Average funding was calculated by

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[1] Only 80.5% of funds were actually distributed to Oregon programs. The resulting dataset contains 459 unique records spanning from 2002 to 2018, across 50 distinct funding organizations.
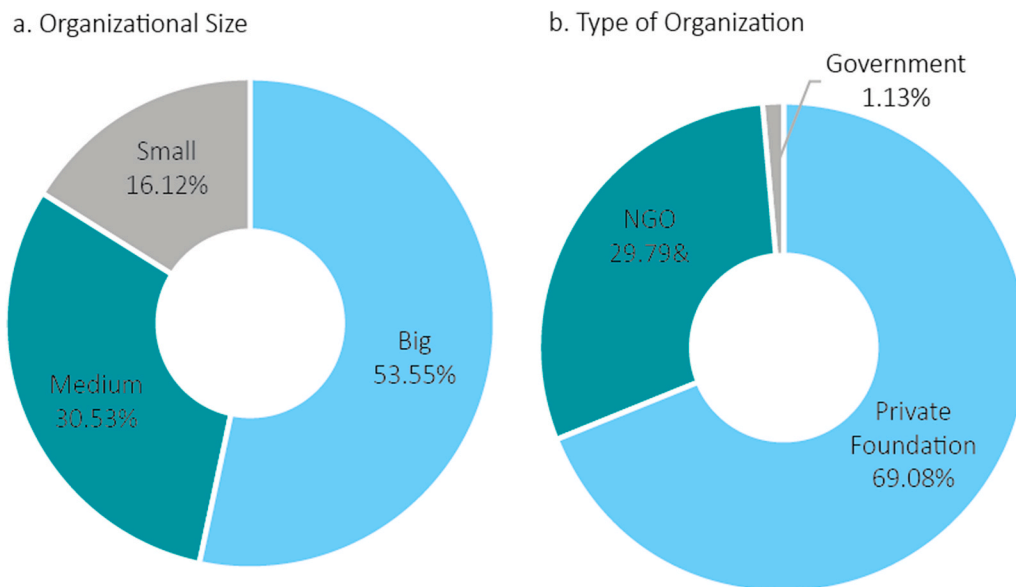
Fig. 3. Summary statistics from The Foundation Center (2018) database used for representative sampling. Organizational size is identified as the total amount of funding allocated between 2002 and 2018, and categorized based on quartiles. Retrieved September 2018.

summing yearly funding data into one aggregate measure and then dividing by the total number of grants, by funding organization. Types of recipients (marine programs, in this case) were aggregated into two categories (Human-Based Recipient and Environment-Based Recipient) and tested as dummy variables. Both dummy variables were coded as "1" if the funder had ever funded a proposal conducted by a human-based or environment-based recipient, respectively. If they had not, the dummy was coded as zero. Some funders had 1s in both categories because they had funded both types of recipients.

Each of these three dependent variables was correlated with multiple independent variables that were collected through the survey. Categorical survey questions, such as allocation process and moral foundation, were transformed into dummy variables. Scaled survey questions, such as event consideration, were kept as ordinal variables. Additionally, multiple dummy variables were generated as control variables to account for specific characteristics of each organization.

Character roles were statistically correlated to funding recipients as dependent variables, to explore how a funder's type of recipient (i.e. human or environment) is related to their perceived narratives of marine issues. Correlations were conducted in Stata SE using the pwcorr command. This test calculates Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r), which indicates the strength of a linear relationship between the two included variables and the statistical significance (p-value) of r (Pickett and Wilkinson, 2007).

4. Results

4.1. Interview results

One individual from ten organizations agreed to participate, making up a response rate of 83.33%. Interviewed funders confirmed that allocation processes, organizational priorities, and organizational moral foundations as critical drivers for their marine funding decisions. These three characteristics played a large role in the decision-making process and often directly influenced funding outcomes. In addition to influencing funding decisions, these characteristics illustrated a funder's underlying priorities and motivations for funding marine conservation.

Funding organizations self-reported as following one of four allocation processes, which we further demarcated into categories that differ in distribution of power and decision rationale (see definitions in Table 2). *Hierarchical decision-making* included multiple levels of

Table 2

Allocation processes identified through exploratory interviews, along with a definition and exemplary quote.

Allocation Process	Definition	Example
Hierarchical	Top-down approval with a focus on strategic plans	"Working through multiple layers of our organization to get approval"
Mission Statement	Consistency with the mission statement	"What we thought would be needed to get to our goals"
Collaborative	Egalitarian discussions considering multiple rationales	"Working in concert with our program officers and CEO"
Individual Values	Individual liberty to pursue personal goals	"Each board member chooses one or two projects a year"

authority and oversight, with funding decisions often starting at lower levels and earning approval through increasing levels within the organizational hierarchy. Organizations with hierarchical structures typically considered strategic plans, which were also developed through a hierarchical process and were usually revised on a regular time-scale. Many organizations reported an allocation structure that was driven by adherence to their *mission statement*, which included some top-down approval and emphasized consistency with the mission. One organization explained that their allocation decisions were "what [they] thought they needed to get to [their] goals" (Interview 8, February 2019). *Collaborative decision-making* centered on egalitarian discussions that aimed to fulfill multiple objectives, sometimes including the mission statement and values of individual employees. Lastly, smaller organizations reported a free allocation process that only considered board members' *individual values*. Some of these organizations provided each board member with a set budget, which the member could then distribute at their discretion. Mission statement structures were the most common and occurred through all types and sizes of organizations. Individual values only occurred for smaller, often family-run, foundations and larger foundations typically utilized the hierarchical process.

Respondents referred to various priorities that they desired in proposals they funded (see definitions in Table 3). These priorities may indicate a funder's underlying motivation for funding marine conservation. For example, those that prioritized locality tended to have a higher interest in community-based proposals while those that

Table 3
Priorities identified through exploratory interviews, along with a definition and exemplary quote.

Priority	Definition	Example
Durability	The proposal's ability to create long-lasting and persistent change	"[My organization] likes to target root causes"
Efficiency	The strength of outcome related to the cost of funding the proposal	"Getting the most bang for our buck"
Locality	Distance to a community-of-place or community-of-interest that is targeted by the funder	"Responding to community need"
Longevity	The length of time that the funder must remain invested in the proposal to see results	"It takes decades to get stuff done"
Opportunity	How easily a proposal can achieve its goals in the given social, political, and economic climate	"Is there an enabling environment for this project to succeed and create real change?"
Reality	The ability of a proposal to target documented and/or researched challenges	"Everything is evidence-based"
Urgency	If the proposal, or funding itself, is needed in a time-sensitive and high-risk situation	"Is there a genuine need for money?"

prioritized reality were more interested in research and academia.

Through either explicit or implicit mention of values and goals for marine conservation, it became apparent that each organization operates through different moral foundations. Moral foundations have been identified in environmental ethics and psychology research and describe how people and institutions place value in the environment (see definitions in Table 4) (Moore and Nelson, 2011). Many funders utilized strong language when discussing marine challenges, and this language often exemplified a moral foundation. For example, one funder explained that "our constituencies are the 8 million other species that inhabit the planet, not the human species" (Interview 1, December 2018), a view that exemplifies the intrinsic moral foundation.

Funding organizations mentioned a wide range of focusing events that they regularly considered during allocation decisions. Although these events did vary quite widely, they could all be aggregated into one of four categories: money, organizational or scientific learning, threats of or actual harm, and political actions or structures (see examples in Table 5).

Many of these events have the potential to impact all funding organizations since they occur on a national or regional scale. Moreover, a funder may place more emphasis on a particular event because of how they perceive the event to be related to their funded proposals or marine conservation as a whole. As such, each funder differentially identified the events that were most salient to their own funding organization. These perceptions stem from within the funding organization itself and may be related to the organizational characteristics previously identified.

Table 4
Moral Foundations identified through exploratory interviews, along with definitions based on (Moore and Nelson, 2010).

Moral Foundation	Definition
Equity	Concerned with the equitable distribution of environmental challenges among human communities
Future Generations	Environmental protection is necessary so that future generations can use it and enjoy it
Intrinsic	The view that the environment has the right to exist, even if it does not provide anything to humans directly
Stewardship	A desire to protect the environment because we have a duty to do so
Utilitarian	Valuing the physical and monetary aspects of the environment

Table 5
Focusing events brought up during exploratory interviews, categorized into those dealing with money, learning, harm, and politics. *Governmental funding has been counted as both a money and a political event since funders recognized both the political aspects of government funding and the purely monetary aspects.

Category	Definition	Focusing Event
Money	Events related to a funding organization's own funding sources, the behavior of other funding organizations, and political funding	Governmental Funding* Funding Capacity Other Funders Stock Market
Learning	The growth of organizational knowledge or emerging scientific research	Scientific Literature Results from Previously Funded Proposals
Harm	Events imposing some sort of harm on an environment or community, or threatening to impose harm	Threats to Currently Funded Proposals Natural Disasters Social Events
Politics	Some form of political action that would either help or impede upon marine conservation initiatives	Legislation Political Barriers Governmental Funding*

Interview respondents suggested that these events impacted their funding decisions in three major ways: increased or decreased funding resources, funding reallocation, or temporal shifts in funding. Certain events, particularly those having to do with money, directly alter the amount of money available to funding organizations for future allocation. When events such as these occurred, funders were forced to reduce funding. Funders also reacted to the threat of decreased resources by prematurely reducing their funding commitments. Events can also encourage funding reallocation, or the lateral redistribution of funding to other organizations or topics. Funders may choose to fund different organizations, proposals, and locations to enhance benefits or avoid negative interactions. For example, one organization explained their perception that political barriers in the U.S. hinder successful marine conservation. In response, this organization chose to reallocate their funding resources to international marine conservation in countries with more flexible or supportive political systems. Funders also explained that some events lead to temporary accelerations or pauses in funding. Unanticipated events, such as natural disasters or a threat to a currently funded proposal, may necessitate immediate financial support to mediate or prevent harm. Conversely, events that introduce temporary constraints, such as a change in the presidential administration, may encourage funders to pause their funding until those undesirable conditions change.

Respondents were asked who they perceived as playing character roles within each of the events they discussed. Interviewees generally reported that roles were consistent across all events; for example, if one organization found the U.S. Government responsible for causing political barriers, they typically found the U.S. Government responsible for any negative event. However, different funding organizations did not choose the same institutions as filling each role.

Interviewed funding organizations reported the villain as the U.S. Federal Government, Extractive Industries, and even Coastal Communities (Fig. 4). Victims were most commonly coastal communities and vulnerable populations. Interviewees also discussed the entities that they perceived as benefiting from their own marine funding (outcome). For example, one organization reported coastal communities as the primary beneficiary, since they most commonly funded proposals with intended outcomes for communities.

4.2. Survey results

The sample covered 10.73% (n = 32) of funders included in the database. In total, surveyed funders had allocated 57 grants totaling $1,624,139 to marine programs between 2002 and 2018. Surveyed funders were highly skewed toward foundations and the majority
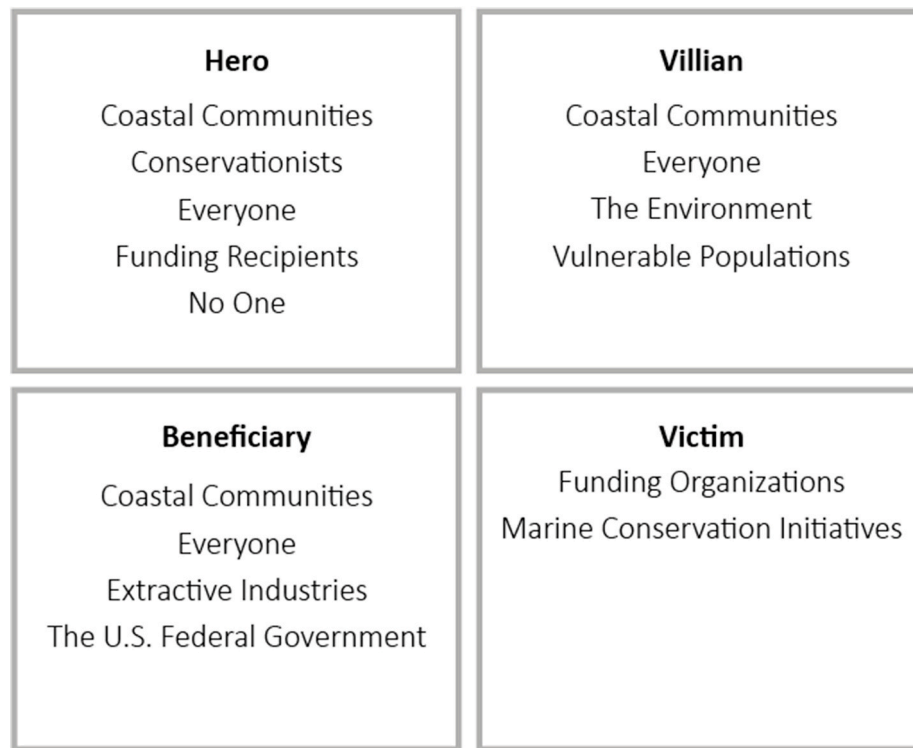
Fig. 4. Character roles proposed by the NPF and each entity fulfilling that role.

resided on the west coast (Table 6). Foundations varied in age from 13 years to 79 years of operation. Nearly equal amounts of funding were allocated to human-based and environment-based recipients, making it a fairly balanced comparison. Funding organizations interviewed in phase 2 were included in this sample; due to anonymity, it is not possible to compare their survey responses to their interview responses.

Raw frequencies of survey results characterize the distribution of organizational characteristics, focusing events, and character roles across organizations that fund marine programs (Table 7). Pairwise

correlations suggest statistically significant relationships that may impact funding amounts and recipients. Also of interest is the absence of expected significance, indicating a potential disconnect between qualitative funding expectations and quantitative funding realities.

Collaborative allocation processes were most common among surveyed funding organizations, followed by mission statements and individual values. Interestingly, hierarchical processes were not reported by any respondent, even though they had been identified within interviews. This may be due to a limited sample that did not reach those hierarchical organizations. Pairwise correlations did not support any significant relationship between allocation process, funding, and recipient. This suggests that the actual structure of decision-making may not impact decision outcomes.

Locality and efficiency were the most highly considered priorities but were not significantly related to marine funding. Two priorities were significantly related to higher funding: opportunity and durability. Funders that preferred proposals with high levels of opportunity were moderately more likely to allocate larger amounts of funds for marine programs than other priorities ($p = 0.0135$). This suggests that funders allocate more funds to proposals that demonstrate their ability to easily achieve their goals in the given social, political, and economic climate. Additionally, funders allocated more money to proposals that had the intention of creating long-lasting results than those that did not ($p = 0.0663$). Priorities were also related to funding recipients: funders that prioritized urgent proposals funded the environment-based recipients less ($p = 0.042$), and funders that prioritized efficient proposals funded human-based recipients more ($p = 0.0525$). The first finding may suggest that funders do not perceive environmental challenges as particularly urgent. The second finding suggests that funders perceive human-related projects as more efficient than environmentally-related proposals.

Nearly half of the surveyed funders reported a stewardship moral, suggesting that funders perceive themselves as fulfilling a duty to protect the environment. No funders demonstrated an intrinsic moral foundation, even though that had been present in the interviews. This again may reflect our limited sample size. Moral foundations were not

Table 6

Summary of basic organizational information from funding organizations surveyed. Organizational size is identified as the total amount of funding allocated between 2002 and 2018 and categorized based on quartiles. Percentage of each categorical value, with raw frequency in parentheses. Types of accepted proposals reports the percent of grants that were allocated toward a specific proposal type, not the actual amounts of funding that were allocated through those grants.

Organizational Information	Descriptive Statistics
Type of Organization	
Foundation	65.63% (21)
Charity	9.38% (3)
Corporate	9.38% (3)
Government	9.38% (3)
Academia	6.25% (2)
Location	
West Coast	43.75% (14)
East Coast	25.00% (8)
Gulf Coast	12.50% (4)
Not Coastal	18.75% (6)
Organizational Size	
Large ($442,533 - $42,001)	21.88% (7)
Medium ($42,000 - $2001)	53.13% (17)
Small ($2000 - $231)	25.00% (8)
Types of Accepted Proposals	
Human-Based	77%
Environment-Based	23%
Number of Employees:	Mean = 13.83; Min = 0; Max = 100
Age:	Mean = 33.68; Min = 13; Max = 79

Table 7
Correlation table indicating the correlations (r) between dependent variables (average amount of funding for marine programs, environment-based recipient, human-based recipient) and independent variables (organizational characteristics, focusing events). * - p < 0.1; ** - p < 0.05; *** - p < 0.001. Raw frequencies in parentheses with corresponding dummy variable, and total weight in parenthesis for numeric variables.

	Average Amount of Funding for Marine Programs	Environment-Based Recipient	Human-Based Recipient
Summary Statistics	$28,493.67	23 Recipients	7 Recipients
Organizational Characteristics			
Allocation Process:			
Collaborative (52%)	0.347	0.0406	−0.1823
Mission Statement (28%)	−0.2683	0.2041	−0.0268
Individual Values (12%)	−0.1442	0.1195	0.305
Hierarchical (0%)	–	–	–
Priority:			
Locality (24%)	−0.1735	0.2052	−0.2236
Efficiency (16%)	−0.1619	−0.2557	**0.4287***
Longevity (12%)	−0.1862	0.1325	0
Reality (12%)	−0.165	0.1325	−0.2887
Opportunity (8%)	**0.5299****	0.1053	−0.2294
Urgency (8%)	0.0905	**−0.4474****	0.6205
Durability (4%)	**0.4081***	0.0725	−0.1581
Moral Foundation:			
Stewardship (48%)	0.1937	−0.1873	0
Future Generations (24%)	−0.1457	0.1502	−0.126
Utility (4%)	−0.1202	0.0526	−0.1325
Equity (4%)	−0.0088	0.0526	**0.3974***
Intrinsic (0%)	0	0	0
Focusing Events			
Harm (weight = 239)	0.1888	−0.0422	−0.1879
Money (weight = 239)	0.1943	−0.0569	−0.0231
Learning (weight = 228)	0.0939	0.0722	−0.0026
Politics (weight = 162)	**0.397***	−0.0451	−0.0874
Controls			
Location:			
West Coast (44%)	−0.2426	0.2614	−0.0144
East Coast (24%)	0.1617	0.1657	−0.1418
Not Coastal (20%)	0.21	**−0.5898*****	**0.3563***
Gulf Coast (12%)	−0.1004	0.1089	−0.2303
Size of Organization:			
Big (20%)	**0.7753*****	0.1336	−0.2212
Medium (44%)	−0.2562	**−0.3733***	0.2614
Small (24%)	−0.2756	−0.1418	0.1657
Number of Employees (mean = 13.83)	0.1282	−0.0012	−0.0546
Age (mean = 33.68)	**0.4392***	0.1576	−0.3641
Type of Organization:			
Foundation (72%)	−0.0246	0.0458	0.1138
Corporate (8%)	−0.1049	−0.1839	0.087
Charity (8%)	−0.1744	−0.2303	0.1089
Government (8%)	0.2008	0.3273	**−0.6922*****
Academia (4%)	−0.1046	0.3273	0.0602

related to the amount of marine funding but were related to the recipients of those funds. Organizations that reported an equity moral foundation funded human-based recipients more than organizations with other morals (p = 0.0828). This result reflects their value of equity and indicates that their value is frequently being reflected in their funding distributions.

Organizations most strongly considered harm and money events, followed closely by learning events. Political events were the least commonly considered, which may be due to a sample highly skewed toward non-governmental organizations. However, funders that more

strongly considered political events funded more money toward marine programs than those that did not consider political events (p = 0.0747).

Funding organizations that allocated money toward environment-based recipients were less likely to view the U.S. Federal Government as the villain (p = 0.0495) (Table 8). This may indicate the belief that environmental challenges are not due to governmental actions. These funders were also less likely to perceive conservationists as the beneficiary of their funding opportunities (p = 0.0401). Funders that preferred human-based recipients were correlated with the perception of coastal communities and the U.S. Federal Government as villains (p = 0.0947; p = 0.0107).

5. Discussion

Obtaining funding for any proposal can be a challenge; funding for marine conservation initiatives is compounded with stagnant funding sources, low transparency in the decision-making process, and limited coordination (Blasiak et al., 2019). Previous studies began to address these challenges by identifying economic trends and funding sources (Berger et al., 2019; Birz and Lott, 2011; Bos et al., 2015; Elliott et al., 1997; Lerner et al., 2007; McClanahan and Rankin, 2016; Wang, 2011). However, those studies do not explore the actual perceptions and narratives that drove those funding decisions. Results from this study help fill that knowledge gap with qualitative and quantitative evidence that organizational characteristics, focusing events, and character roles do influence the amounts and recipients of marine funding within our sampled funding organizations. When examined in aggregate, these findings unveil previously hidden funder characteristics and potentially provide insight for strengthening future marine funding proposals.

Beyond marine conservation funding decisions, we believe this research also contributes to the development of narrative theory in decision-making. Recently there was a call within the NPF literature to advance the framework by moving beyond describing narratives to determining if there are associations between narratives and tangible outcomes (Jones, 2018; Jones and McBeth, 2020). In this research, we identified associations between NPF characters and funding recipients. To our knowledge, this is one of the few NPF studies to empirically correlate narrative elements to specific outcomes in a statistically meaningful way (but also see McMorris et al., 2018). Additionally, this study contributes to the theoretical development of the NPF by situating the concept of focusing events within the NPF's setting. In this way, this research can contribute to ongoing attempts by NPF researchers (e.g. Crow et al., 2017; McBeth and Lybecker, 2018) to position this important concept within the decision-making process.

5.1. Previous funding: increasing transparency

Marine funding is crucial for effective marine conservation (Blue Earth Consultants, LLC., 2013, Bos et al., 2015; Lennox et al., 2017; Johansen and Vestvik, 2020). However, many of the processes within funding organizations are hidden (Blasiak et al., 2019), making financial planning a guessing game. This research helps increase transparency by

Table 8
Pairwise correlations between funding recipients and perceived character roles. Victim roles were tested, but are not displayed as none were significantly correlated to funding recipient. * - p < 0.1; ** - p < 0.05; *** - p < 0.001.

Funding Recipient	Villain			Beneficiary
	Coastal Communities	U.S. Federal Government	General Public	Conservationists
Environment-Based Recipient	0.0556	−0.4564**	0.1601	**-.05345***
Human-Based Recipient	**0.3944***	**0.579***	**−0.406***	−0.068

unveiling organizational characteristics that are most common amongst marine funders, indicating factors that are significantly related to funding decisions, and identifying whom funders intend to benefit through their funding decisions. Notably, these findings suggest that strategically framing a proposal through priorities, moral foundations, and characters may increase the likelihood of acceptance.

Understanding the characteristics of funding organizations helps reduce the uncertainty surrounding marine funders by revealing their processes and perspectives, and potentially serves as a basis for future funding studies. Interviews indicated that a funding organization's priorities and moral foundations are connected to that funder's underlying motivation for funding marine conservation. For example, funders that prioritize urgency over durability may be more focused on short-term outcomes than long-term outcomes. Those funders may also be more interested in achieving high impact and noticeable change, as opposed to the gradual change that often occurs in long-term proposals. Interviews suggest that moral foundations are also important organizational attributes that impact the types of proposals that are solicited or accepted. Prospective proposals may be more successful if they are aware of those motivations and appeal to a funder's priorities and moral foundations. This conclusion has also been supported by Freeling and Connell (2020).

Interviewees also identified numerous character roles that shaped their narrative understanding of marine conservation. However, specific roles were not consistent across interviewees. For example, one funding organization may view the coastal communities as the *victim* while another may view them as a *beneficiary,* depending on the funder's own unique perspective. This suggests that character roles align with an organization's perceptions toward marine challenges and conservation as a whole. Proposals may be framed in multiple ways, highlighting different characters as the villain or victim. Funders may be drawn to proposals that mirror their own perceived character roles as more aligned with their organizational values or goals.

Results from the survey and correlation analysis have uncovered consistencies and inconsistencies in funder's behavior. Consistencies reveal situations when funding outcomes are aligned with a funder's perceptions. Funders who value equity are more likely to fund human-based proposals, which often include some aspect of equity. Conversely, funders that blame the general public are less likely to fund human-based proposals, instead supporting environmental-based proposals. There is also a consistency within our theorized decision-making structure itself: consideration of political events and prioritization of opportunity were both related to higher funding. We expect that these components should behave similarly, since the *opportunity* priority is highly related to political events.

Inconsistencies suggest a possible disconnect between funding goals and funding realities. Funding organizations identified communities as both the villain and the victim, reflecting the *Tragedy of the Commons* wherein resource users exhaust a resource until it is no longer useable (Hardin, 1968). Most surveyed funders believed that communities were most at risk from marine challenges. However, it does not appear that funders believe their funding actually addresses this issue. The total amount of money funded by organizations who believe they help coastal communities and the general public was the lowest of any beneficiary ($7321 and $67,000, respectively); most money was granted with the idea that the money would not help anybody at all. Although this option was not initially offered in the survey, as it is not particularly intuitive, respondents physically wrote in that they believe their funding will not benefit any human or environmental entity. This gap between funding needs and funding realities may be a result of the lack of coordination and lack of appropriate follow-up that was identified by Blasiak (2019). Alternatively, it may indicate a perception that funding cannot alleviate the marine-related challenges placed on communities. This could be due to a perceived inability to change human behavior, or a belief that challenges are too large to be alleviated by any smaller-scale funding source. Future research may further investigate this trend to gain a deeper understanding of why marine funders do not allocate more resources for helping this common victim.

5.2. Funding futures: will the funding limitations continue?

Most organizations expected funding for marine conservation to either decrease or stay the same, because of the perception that marine funding is already sufficient or perhaps even oversaturated. This relates to the *urgency* priority: since funders perceive marine conservation initiatives to already have enough funding, funders feel as though their funding is not critically needed. One respondent shared this sentiment, explaining that "[this funding area is] already saturated with funding" (Interview 10, February 2019). However, economic analyses suggest that a significant amount of additional funding needed each year to accomplish the marine conservation goals (Johansen and Vestvik, 2020). Additionally, multiple funding organizations explained that they may increase funding if there was an expansion of governmentally-supported marine conservation, if marine conservation were to become a more salient social issue, or if proposals had a closer connection to community needs.

Even though future marine funding may stay constant, our findings suggest that funding may change in distribution. Survey responses suggest that marine funding may be moving in the direction of equity and coastal community support. Increased community engagement may contribute to this trend by influencing funders to increase funding opportunities that target community-level change. One survey respondent did indicate that their organization would consider increasing funding for marine conservation if there was "a greater intersection with equity", which we can assume to mean social equity. Similarly, research by Freeling and Connell (2020) identified that funders are more interested in funding conservation initiatives that benefit humanity. Other surveyed funders shared frustration with past marine funding for failing to "address the need for long-term thinking", and believe that "too much short-term thinking has harmed the ocean". This frustration may be reflected in the prioritization of durable projects, which was the lowest priority but was correlated with high amounts of funding.

While these findings do not indicate that the challenges of funding are coming to an end, they also do not reject the possibility that funding will increase. Although distributions of funding may shift toward human-based recipients, marine conservation initiatives can still apply for and receive those funds. Human dimensions monitoring has become a more common aspect of marine conservation, and many initiatives now have dedicated social science staff. By channeling proposals through these human-focused efforts, marine conservation initiatives may be able to secure more non-governmental funding.

5.3. Applied recommendations

By understanding a funder's shifting priorities and perceptions, marine conservation initiatives can consciously develop targeted proposals. The trends identified in this research support various actions or strategies that marine conservation initiatives could apply as they approach funding organizations. Considering the geographic scope of this study, recommendations may be highly relevant to the state of Oregon, moderately portable across the U.S. in general, and minimally applicable internationally.

1. Many funding organizations, especially smaller ones, are more reliant on internal discussions than the technicalities within their mission statements. Marine conservation initiatives may be able to branch out to funders that do not have marine objectives explicit in their mission statements by appealing to the funder's general perceptions and priorities.
2. Proposals may be more successful if they highlight their *opportunity* to succeed, specifically in regards to political support or the ability to overcome barriers. This is particularly important if a *political* event

has occurred that has the possibility of decreasing the proposal's opportunity for success.

3. Human-based proposals may find greater success when they highlight their ability to *efficiently* produce outcomes (Freeling and Connell, 2020), especially if those outcomes can prevail in the face of political decisions. This may be done by discussing how the benefits of the proposal outweigh the funding requested. Additionally, since organizations that fund human-based proposals may be more likely to view the U.S. Federal Government as the villain, proposals can highlight how their work will succeed regardless of governmental actions or actually alleviate some of those challenges.

4. Funders recognize that marine systems are complex and interconnected. When making allocation decisions, they strongly consider threats or stressors placed on their currently funded proposals. Requests for new funding may be more compelling if they suggest the possibility of relieving those stressors.

5. There is a trade-off between funding effort and outcome. Seeking funding from local funders may increase the likelihood of being funded (as *locality* is a common priority among smaller funding organizations), but the grant sizes may be smaller. Conversely, grants from larger funding organizations may be harder to obtain but are more fruitful. Reflecting on recent external events and priorities may help determine which approach to utilize. For example, if the political setting is supportive of the proposal or if the proposal has high *opportunity,* there may be a higher likelihood of obtaining a large grant. If a harmful event has impacted a local community, then a funding request may find more success with a smaller funder.

Prior literature and this research highlight the range of financing opportunities available to marine conservation from non-governmental sources (Berger et al., 2019; Bos et al., 2015; California Environmental Associates, 2017; Johansen and Vestvik, 2020; Sumaila et al., 2020). We suggest that policymakers support financial stability within government marine conservation initiatives by developing legislative frameworks that enable the acceptance of external funding. Flexible funding structures will allow marine conservation initiatives to explore non-governmental funding sources, a practice that has been shown to increase program resilience (Lennox et al., 2017). Government agencies may encourage these policy decisions and utilize this research to illustrate the significance of flexible funding mechanisms.

5.4. Limitations

Funders were difficult to communicate with because many organizations avoid unsolicited communications, as we were told that cold calls are typically a request for money. Many funders answered calls with a firm statement that they "aren't accepting any requests for funding", upon which our intention was explained as purely research-driven and that the goal was not to obtain money. While the initial solicitation email did include language directly addressing this assumption, we expect that some funders never opened the emails. As funders are rarely studied or communicated with outside of the need for money, we are not surprised by this response. Of the organizations that were successfully contacted, the majority of organizations expressed surprise at the request.

Since many funders actively discourage unsolicited communications, a sizeable portion of the population did not provide any contact information. However, each organization was required to provide a physical address on their 990 tax forms. Therefore, a mailed paper survey may have been a more successful survey mode for this specific audience because we could have directly contacted every single organization in the population. Additionally, funders may have been more likely to open a mailed invitation. This mode was unfortunately beyond the capacity of this project due to, ironically, our own funding constraints.

Analysis of the collected survey data indicates that actual responses were not significantly correlated with any organizational characteristics. Respondents were appropriately varied across region, type of organization, and size. There were slightly more responses from smaller foundations, but that is consistent with the greater dataset (The Foundation Center, 2018). This analysis suggested that the final dataset was a representative sample, so it may be portable to other contexts. However, future research should verify these results through a larger and more diverse survey sample. This could be achieved by considering the entire national or international pool of funders, or by employing techniques to overcome low response rate.

6. Conclusion

Funding challenges may reduce the operational capacity and effectiveness of programs that implement marine conservation. By using the NPF to investigate marine funders as decision-making organizations operating within a broader context, we uncovered processes and perceptions related to funding decisions. We found that priorities, moral foundations, and focusing events influence funding outcomes. We also identified critical character roles related to funding outcomes, which may be utilized to frame funding proposals. Pairwise correlation tests suggest that these relationships do exist, but do not statistically illuminate the strength or consistency of those relationships. Therefore, more in-depth studies that specifically focus on certain relationships are necessary to increase funding transparency.

This study provides numerous opportunities for future research to more thoroughly investigate relationships, such as that between the prioritization of *opportunity* and the consideration of *political* events. Many organizations reported *opportunity* as the most important project factor that is considered when selecting marine projects to fund. However, political events were the least important external events during allocation discussions. This disconnect may be further investigated through research designs targeting the relationship between funders and political institutions. Future research may further explore funder's moral foundations and their relationship to funding outcomes.

Another area for future investigation concerns an organization's consideration of money events. These events were the most commonly discussed events across all funders, but this consideration did not necessarily translate into higher or lower granted amounts. Perhaps money events do not result in funding increases or decreases but instead, lead to lateral shifts in funding appropriation. Future research can explore this relationship to understand how money-related events actually impact funding decisions.

Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Appendix. Survey Questionnaire

Purpose: You are being asked to take part in a research study. The purpose of this research study is to better understand funder decision-making processes. In order to be in this study you must be of legal age to consent, which is 18 in most states.

Activities: This study will occur through an online survey. Time: Your participation in this study will include the completion of a 5–10 min online survey. Risks: N/A Benefit: We do not know at this time if you will benefit from being in this study. If desired, we can provide you with the finished report that utilizes this survey.

Confidentiality: The results of this study will be synthesized and shared with Oregon State University as a Master's essay, reported to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), and may eventually be published in a peer reviewed journal/report. To this end, we will share survey responses with ODFW, but we will not include your name or any other information that may serve to identify you or your organization.

Voluntary: Participation in this study is voluntary. Please feel free to skip any topics that you would prefer not to discuss in a survey setting. Study contacts: If you have any questions about this research project, please contact me: Adrian E. Laufer, at laufera@oregonstate.edu[retired school email]. By clicking the "next" button and taking this survey, you acknowledge that your participation in this study is voluntary, you are at least 18 years of age, and that you understand and accept the project information and confidentiality explained above.

o I consent, begin the study.

o I do not consent, I do not wish to participate.

1. Are you affiliated with an organization that provides funding opportunities for environmental conservation?

o Yes

o No {skip to the end of the survey}[2].

2. Has your organization funded marine & coastal conservation projects, currently or in the past?

o In the past, but not currently {display question 4a}

o Both in the past and the present {display question 4b}

o Currently, but we had not in the past {display question 4c}

o I don't know.

3. What types of projects does your organization primarily fund?

_____

4a. Why did your organization decide to terminate funding for marine & coastal conservation?

_____

4b. Why does your organization fund marine & coastal conservation?

_____

4c. Why has your organization decided to start funding marine & coastal conservation?

_____

5. To the best of your ability, please estimate your organization's general budget for marine conservation funding in the past funding period.

_____

6. In the past 10 years, how has your organization's funding for marine & coastal conservation changed?

o Increased

o Stayed the same

o Decreased.

Organizational Characteristics.

First, I will ask you some questions about your organization and funding history.

7. What type of organization do you affiliate with?

o Federal government agency

o State government agency

o Non-governmental organization

o Community foundation

o Company-sponsored foundation

o Corporate giving program

o Governmentally-linked foundation

o Independent foundation

o Public charity

o Academia

o Other: _____

8. Please estimate the number of people employed by your entire organization.

_____

9. Where does your organization get money from?

o Charitable contributions

o Stock investments

o A different funding organization

o A government entity

o Endowments

o Interest

o Other: _____

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[2] Survey was distributed electronically through *Qualtrics* and utilized various display and skip logics. Survey logic is shown here in italicized brackets. All questions allow one answer unless otherwise specified.

10. Compared to other funders, I think my organization offers …
o MORE funding.
o about the SAME amount of funding.
o LESS funding.
o I don't know.

11. To the best of your knowledge, for what purpose does your organization primarily fund marine & coastal activities? (please choose 1).
o Research
o Evaluation
o Policy advocacy
o Network-building and/or collaboration
o Capital and infrastructure
o Leadership and/or professional development
o Capacity-building
o Individual development
o Presentations and/or productions
o Program development
o Financial sustainability
o Outreach
o Student training and/or engagement
o Other: _____
o I don't know
o We don't fund marine activities.

12. On a scale of 0–5, where 0 is no participation and 5 is full decision-making power, how directly do you participate in funding decisions?

	Not at all	Slightly		Moderately		Incredibly
	0	1	2	3	4	5

13. Does your organization accept unsolicited funding requests?
o Yes
o No
o In certain instances
o I prefer not to answer.

14. Which process best describes your organization's allocation process?
o Collaborative decision-making
o Addressing the mission statement
o Based on individual values of employees or board members
o Hierarchical decision-making
o Other: _____
Past Funding Decisions.
Now, this survey will ask some questions on events and how they may have impacted your funding decisions.

15. When choosing projects to fund, which of the following does your organization tend to prioritize? (select all that apply).
o Sustainability of impact
o Efficiency, or getting the most "bang for our buck".
o Urgency
o Our relationship with the community we would assist
o Policy windows
o Evidence-based need
o Whether we want to partner with the project in the long-term
o If there is community support
o Other:_____
o None of the above
o I don't know.

16. The following environmental values define the various reasons that people appreciate the environment. In your opinion, which environmental value does your organization most reflect?
o Utility: protecting the environment to preserve the direct value gained from the environment through resource extraction and jobs
o Equity: supporting equitable distribution of impacts among human communities
o Stewardship: protecting the environment because it is our duty to do so
o Future Generations: protecting the environment so that future generations can use it and enjoy it
o Intrinsic: protecting the environment because it has the right to exist, even if it doesn't provide anything to humans directly
o None of the above
o I don't know
o This doesn't apply to my organization.

17. In your opinion, who is most responsible for the challenges facing marine & coastal environments?

o The U.S. federal government
o Conservationists
o The general public
o Extractive industries
o Academia
o Coastal communities
o Other: _____
o I don't know.

19. In your opinion, who is most affected by the challenges facing marine & coastal environments?
o The U.S. federal government
o Conservationists
o The general public
o Extractive industries
o Coastal economies
o Coastal communities
o Academia
o My organization
o No one is affected
o Other: _____
o I don't know.

20. On a scale of 0–7, to what extent does your organization consider the following external events when making funding decisions?

	Not considered	Mildly Considered		Moderately Considered			Strongly Considered	
	–	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Media attention on marine & coastal issues								
Natural disasters								
Political or institutional barriers								
Scientific literature								
Results from my organization's previously allocated funding								
Threats to currently funded projects								
Other funding organizations' decisions and/or input								
Health of the economy								
Governmental funding								
Social movements or uprisings								
Other 1: _____								
Other 2: _____								

21. Please explain how "*{event from question 20 with the highest value}*" impacted funding decisions.
_____

22. Who do you expect will **most benefit** by your organization's budgetary changes?
o Conservationists
o The general public
o Extractive industries
o Coastal economies
o Coastal communities
o Academia
o No one will be affected
o Other: _____
o I don't know.

23. In your opinion, do you expect your organization to increase or decrease funding for marine conservation in the future?
o Increase
o Stay the same
o Decrease
o I'm not sure.

24. Which of the following conditions may influence your organization to increase funding opportunities for marine conservation? (select all that apply).
o Increased governmental support
o Heightened public awareness and concern
o Stronger existing research
o Increased funding capacity of my own organization
o More promising proposals and/or funding opportunities
o We would not increase funding for any reason
o Other: _____
o Other: _____
o I don't know

o None of the above.

25. Which of the following conditions may influence your organization to reduce funding opportunities for marine conservation? (select all that apply).

o Decreased governmental support

o Reduced public awareness and concern

o Decrease funding capacity of my own organization

o More promising proposals and/or funding opportunities in other subject areas

o Less urgent need for funds

o We would not decrease funding for any reason

o Other: _____

o Other: _____

o I don't know

o None of the above.

26. Please provide more information on future funding for marine conservation.

_____

27. Is there anything else you wish to add about funding for environmental or marine conservation?

_____

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