Table 3. The three challenges of decision-making for society, the groups that must share them, and the methods used. Abridged from Renn (2015).

	Complexity of the problem	Uncertainty in available knowledge	Ambiguity in social and cultural judgements
	>>>>>> Escalation in group engagement >>>>>>>		
Who shares the challenge	Experts	Experts; stakeholders	Experts; stakeholders; the public
How they address the challenge	"Ask experts for relevant knowledge."	"Involve all affected stakeholders to collectively decide the best way forward."	"Include all actors so as to expose, accept, discuss and resolve differences."
Sequence for the cooperative discourse model, overseen by a team of leaders from each group	Step 2. Experts from multiple disciplines judge each option against each criterion.	Step 1. Ask experts and stakeholders for all concerns and goals; then their criteria for judging options.	Step 3. Randomly-selected citizens evaluate each option (participatory discourse).

He suggests that each successive challenge requires an "escalation" in group engagement (Table 3).

Luckily for us, Renn ends his article with a hybrid model called cooperative discourse, which I think can be scaled to conservation decisions (the last row of Table 3). One dives into the central column – consultation between experts and stakeholders – to establish goals and criteria. Then one goes back to the experts alone who judge the options against all these criteria. Finally, one asks representatives of the public to evaluate the same options in an informal discursive manner. The whole process is guided by a team of leaders drawn from all three groups.

The Delphi method: a secret ballot before sharing

There are many sharing tools and "expert elicitation" tools (Renn, 2015; Kaner, 2014), but I have found the central tactic of the Delphi Method to be particularly powerful, even when used informally. The tactic is the secret ballot. You must collect the judgements of a group, such as scores, weightings, estimates of probability, etc. individually, by some form of secret ballot, before letting them discuss their opinions as a group. These secret votes can then be shared. Individuals with judgements far from the average judgement can choose to explain their vote. Only then should the group seek consensus. This avoids the very common pitfall of group think driven by domineering individuals.

Voting charts

Charting the distribution of individual votes for any numerical judgment helps the group 'see' the degree of divergence or convergence in the estimates. Figure 4 shows the voting distributions for Option 4 in the SCD 2008 case study of Figure 1. Seven people scored each