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| Possible elements | Some sub-components | Example Keanly et al, 2013 cited in Leith et al 2018 |
| The nature of the problem (inclusion/exclusion of issues and what is at stake) | Interpretation or analysis of issues/data/evidence (what is important and why); what is considered in and out of scope (what is the criteria for inclusion/exclusion); What is important context for this problem. | The river mouth silts up causing flooding across the hinterland. Artificial opening causes large fish kills. |
| The stakeholders (who is it a problem for) | The type of stakeholders, how many of them, their status | Stakeholders are farmers, fishers, state government agencies, environmental advocates and recreational users of the river. |
| Dynamics or interactions among issues |  | Opening the mouth or not will have economic implications as well as impacts on protected species and fish stocks. |
| Goals or outcomes sough | Range from vague goals to precise, measurable, time-bound objectives | We need to work out a system where opening mouth can achieve protection, regulation and landowner rights. |
| Uncertainties | Probability and risk; contingencies and precaution, ambiguity and ignorance. | There are likely to be winners and losers in the artificially opening the mouth, as there are through not opening it. Some risks are known other are uncertain. |
| Timeframes | Urgency of dealing with the problem; time it will take to deal with the problem; timeframe of impacts on stakeholders. | These risks are affected substantially by the timing of any artificial opening. The better we can program the timing, the more likely we are to get a win-win outcome. |
| The culprits (who/what is responsible for the problem, or can be blamed) | Individuals, groups, corporations, governments and any others who have contributed to the problem | Historically, local farmers and recreational fishers have artificially opened the mouth, these openings sometimes cause fish kills and damage to local fauna and flora. |
| The solvers (who can address the problem) | Methods that are needed to address the problem, agencies or individuals who have an important role, type of expertise, skill, knowledge or technical capacity needed. | Therefore, we need to involve all actors in defining priorities for artificial opening, then rate the priorities, including the scientific understanding of the systems to find consensus about the best way to do mouth opening. |