

Some comments from students in response to a final test question:

"What was the biggest challenge of your project, and how would you handle it differently next time?"

Time, group and project planning issues

- Coming to a group consensus about what to do and how to do it.
- Time management. "Our group started our project in November, after daylight savings, so we only had a limited amount of hours per day to work in the creek."
- Time allocation especially with conflicting group member schedules.
- "availability of group members"
- "work schedules"
- "I think it would have been beneficial to go out into the field at the first opportunity"
- "I would start the fieldwork as soon as possible"
- "divide the work early on so each group member has a clear idea of their role in the project's completion"
- "the size of our reach and the short winter days."

Accuracy and protocol issues

- Need for a predetermined protocol.
- Need for a prepared data sheet.
- "point accuracy concerns"
- "Planning on errors enabled one to prepare better for them and have more time to fix them."
- "The field notes and plan view drawing proved invaluable for discovering sources of error, so making a more accurate, detailed account of our field environment would have helped even more."
- Accurate data collection: "project data taking... [recommend] designating one member to this [task] and thereby eliminating erroneous data taking."
- "deciding on a level of detail that balanced efficiency and thoroughness"

Instrument issues

- Instrument knowledge. Learning the instruments took longer than it should have.
- "I would have spent more time learning to use the total station before getting out into the field."
- Instrument malfunction.
- "Sometimes we forgot to set the horizontal circle when we moved the [instrument]."

Site issues

- "Often vegetation was so thick it slowed our total points for that day"
- "lack of clearly defined benchmarks" [from a previous study]

Stakeholders & External/Previous Study Data Issues

- Getting access to previous research.
- Problems dealing with agencies -- lack of timely response.
- "Having the support and buy-in of Presidio Trust employees was critical to planning and executing our project."
- Previous study was "pretty vague and the methodology was written in a way that proved very difficult to repeat."
- Lack of a baseline study, before a restoration project.
- "I would have tried to set up a meeting with the people who wrote the previous study in order to get all the details."

Data processing

- "Data processing was extremely difficult and only one person in our group knew anything at all about how to fix it."