DOING MORE WITH LESS: Reaching Resilience Goals in the Northeast with Collaboration through Networks

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Local Solutions: NE Climate Change Preparedness Conference
Challenges

Networks: type, value and application

Collaboration in practice

How to measure?

How to sustain?
Wicked Problems

- Those looking at the problem cannot fully grasp its size and shape
- Those trying to solve the problem are part of the problem
- We may not have the right tools/ tools may not yet exist
- Problem is unique/ never happened before – so looking to the past in ineffective.

Adapted from Rittel & Webber 1973
Trends that create Barriers to Implementation

- Changing demographics
- Political polarization
- Shift in funding from government to private foundations; grants 1-2 years per
- Small grants to individual orgs less available
- Government agencies working with new restrictions
- Smaller staff/ No staff
- Workload and range
Addressing Barriers

For example, if it is desirable to apply:

• Vulnerability Assessments
• Structured Decision-Making
• Or other initiative where the participation of multiple stakeholders are required

• Purposeful Networks
• Deliberate Collaboration
Purposeful Networks
Types of Networks and examples

- Citizen Science
- Ecological Stewardship
- Public/Private partnerships
- Civic or municipal networks
- By Megaregion
- By Eco/Bio Region
- [resource] Conservation Networks

Kennebec Woodland Partnership, ME; Cons. Agencies, Water agencies, Land Trusts, land owners, Forestry interests
Conservation Networks

- Conservation networks (CNs) are an association of individuals that cooperatively manage a resource or meet conservation goals.
- They are valuable because of their on the ground experience, shared expertise and interdisciplinary nature.

(Batterbury, 2003; Forman & Godron, 1986; Lankford, 1997; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008)
Value-added Knowledge

- CNs add value to knowledge by sharing among those with different skill sets, across content boundaries, physical barriers, and hierarchical levels.

- Innovation occurs as they pass knowledge along.

(Briske, 2012; McEathron, 2008; Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Rickenback, 2011; Zander & Kogut, 1995)
Purposeful Network Example: RCPs

Regional Conservation Partnerships

- Land trusts, local governments, landowners and localized conservation action groups.
- They work together on management and conservation status of land in a particular region.
- The geographic range of each RCP varies in size from a few hundred to half a million acres.
Example: RCPs

- Both a physical and psychological presence for policymakers and the public
- Coordinate for large parcel projects
  - Outright buys, Easements
- Coordinate and Leverage funds
  - Government & Foundation grants
- Match strengths with tasks
- Non compete
  - Formal agreements (MOUs), informal agreements
- Many function within a socio-professional network
Socio-professional networks

• As financial capital becomes more rare, *social capital* becomes more important

• **Social Capital** "refers to the collective value of social networks and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other."  Putnam 2000

• Networks can *share and sort* an overload of information
Networks - other notes

- Not enough just to be networked
- Information sharing should be deliberate and relevant
- Invest in boundary spanners
- Network activity may ebb and flow over the life of an initiative
- Be okay with network transformation or fade out
- How best to collaborate in networks?
Deliberate Collaboration
Collaboration

- Happens between individuals, not organizations
- However, must be accepted as part of organizational culture
- Requires trust and high quality sharing
  - Knowledge Transfer
  - Communication Infrastructure
Knowledge Transfer and Communication Infrastructure

Adapted from Perera et al. 2007
Conditions for Collaboration

- Shared Mission and Values
- Real knowledge and expertise for task
- Goals, roles, timelines and deliverables clearly defined
- Face to face meetings
- What about formal agreements? MOUs?
Assessment and Sustainability
Assessment and Sustainability

How do we avoid collaboration fatigue and “organizational entropy”?

- Recognize and resolve conflicts quickly
- Get real about Resources and/or Financial support of your partners and the network as a whole
- Be okay with dissolution
Assessment and Sustainability

- How do we know collaboration or our networks are working?

- Results – Was the goal met?
  - Catalog progress statistically and visually
  - Seek stakeholders outside the networks to gain their view

- Consider using interdisciplinary tools to optimize the effort
Connecting: SNA techniques in Sci-metrics

- Mapping relationships to identify potential collaborators

from Boyack, 2009
Measuring: Linking Activities with Goals

- Use indices to measure network and collaboration efficacy and correlate with other numbers: Landowners served, acres conserved, etc.
Tools exist in other disciplines and sectors

- Social Network Analysis
- Science of Team Science & Scientometrics
- Education
- Hospital Administration
- Business and industry
- Conservation Psychology
Thank you

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