Towards Co-Delivery of Climate Adaptation: Transformations in Cross-Scale Adaptive Governance Networks

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Abstract

The potential for social network research to inform climate adaptation policy and implementation is underutilized. Previous research has indicated that networks can transmit information across a wide range of participants and thus are an important factor when dealing with change and uncertainty in social-ecological systems. However, underexplored is how cross-scale networks address the problem of institutional fit when dealing with climate adaptation. Science and planning are occurring on a regional level, however, it is at the level of the community that adaptation management will be delivered, hence co-delivery. This paper focuses on network governance in the Northern Rocky Mountain Ecosystem in North America and combines social network analysis and qualitative interviews to identify the role of cross-scale linkages in catalyzing adaptation efforts. Social network analysis maps the emergent network patterns and focuses on the structure of relationships and the implication of those relationships for communication, coordination, and integration of knowledge and practice. Drawing on extensive empirical research with community-based conservation groups and regional landscape initiatives, this research concludes that co-delivery of climate adaptation at the local level requires transformation of networks at the broader regional level. Having the right network members at the core of the network is critical for facilitating communication, translating information to usable knowledge, and coordinating across scales and organizational boundaries.

Keywords: Adaptation to climate change, Adaptive capacity, Adaptive Governance, Learning, Livelihood, Local knowledge, Cross, scale, Shared learning, Social, ecological systems, Social network, Transformation

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