

The Commons Digest

formerly known as The Common Property Resource Digest

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Welcome to the Autumn/Winter 2007-08 edition of the *Commons Digest*. This issue is organized with the 2008 IASC biennial meetings in Cheltenham, England in mind, and highlights one of the conference themes: Exploring New Approaches to Community Governance. **David Brunckhorst** opens the *Commons Forum* with a stimulating essay reminding us of the value of holistic and socio-ecological approaches to resource governance, such as those seen with a landscape view. **Bernadette Montanari**, bringing in her perspective from work in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco, advises us to remember the importance of local actors in development policies and initiatives. The next response comes from **Chipo Plaxedes Mubaya**. In his essay, Mubaya reminds us that community level dynamics must be understood before larger scale challenges can be addressed. Next, **Felipe Murtinho** points out how temporal and spatial scale-mismatches can impact adaptive capacity, advising us to build our knowledge of both failures and successes to improve policies for dealing with environmental degradation. The *Commons Forum* closes with a perspective from **Camilla Sandström**. Sandström suggests close collaboration and communication among users and across scales for enabling better integration for improved management. **Enjoy!**

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Applying community governance for local benefit: The High Atlas Mountains <i>Bernadette Montanari</i>	5	‘Commons’ researchers, historical experience and literature have a lot to offer the considerable challenge of global resource management and environmental degradation. Researchers and policy makers not only need a more seamless dialogue and understanding, we also need to be willing to be bold and innovative in using the available knowledge to address community governance issues in operational and practical ways. In turn, these become ‘learning laboratories’ building new, practical knowledge and adaptive capacity.	
Understanding Community Dynamics <i>Chipo Plaxedes Mubaya</i>	6	This <i>Commons Forum</i> is, hopefully, a conversation piece aimed at stimulating thoughts and discussion. I must declare up front however, where I am coming from – my biases. As a landscape ecologist interested in resource governance issues and therefore society, community and collaborative mechanisms, I am interested in innovation and knowledge building towards “integrative” resource governance that build resilience and sustainability capacity within and across landscapes and regions.	
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which to integrate cross-scale interactions of resource use, property rights, agency jurisdictions and ecological patterns and processes. Understanding local systems and their interactions in the context of larger systems allows us to see processes that materialize at broader landscape scales that can not be seen at a local scale. The

emphasis is on practical applications for adaptive management – community governance with flexibility to evolve. Well considered theory and research needs to lead innovation in ‘on-ground’ practice and applications, break down ‘command-control’ policy barriers, and provide new understandings towards future adaptive capacity. This is approached from a multi-level, multi-scale view, but based in complex systems theory and landscape ecology; the latter, provides cross-scale context/s for evolving institutions and resource governance.

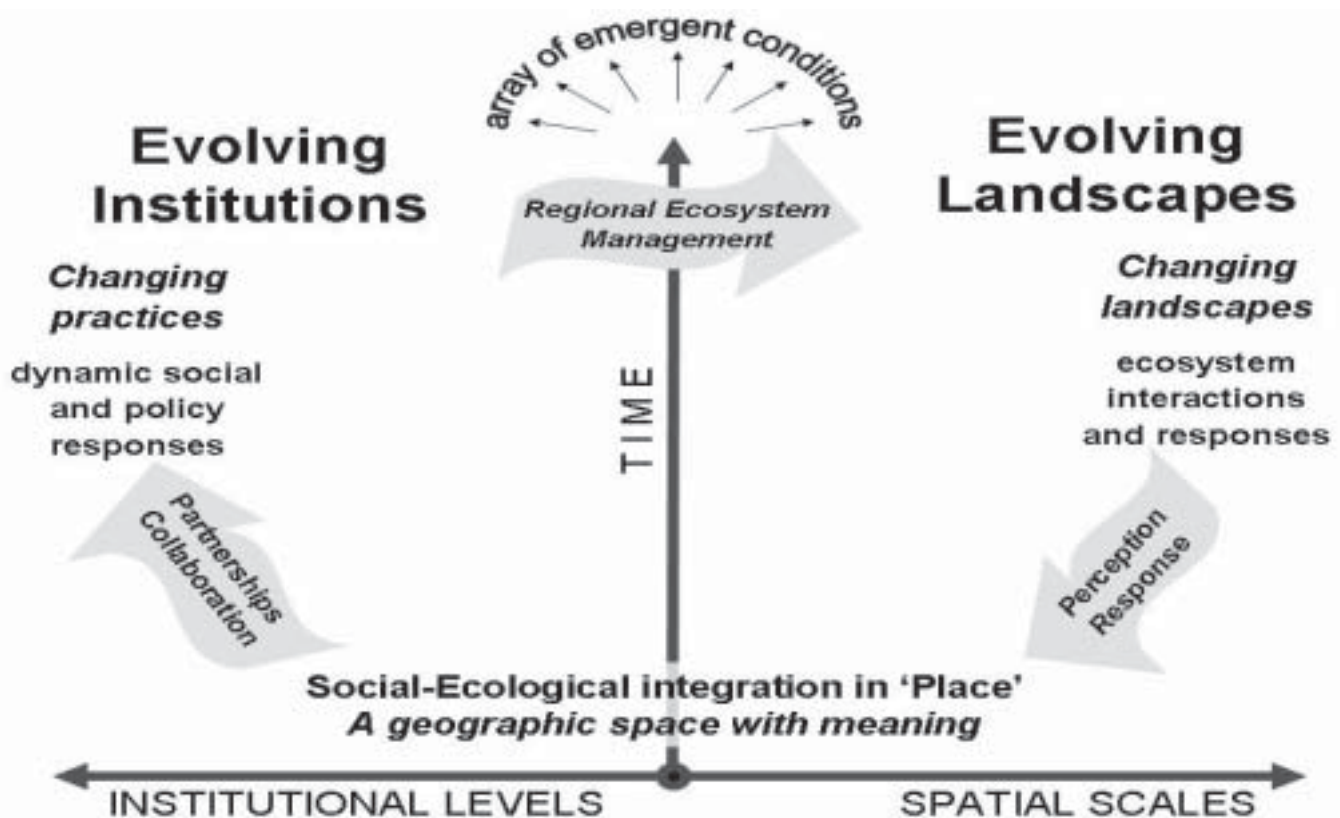
The landscape internalizes the interactions amongst the ecosystem and institutional elements. Local to regional landscapes do a reasonable job of summarising interdependencies of social-ecological systems interactions in various patterns and processes that materialize over time. Tine DeMoor in the June 2007 *The Commons Digest* made the salient point that many negative impacts of human resource use do not become apparent for some time. History, including policy history, is very important, indeed one reason for time lags and ‘surprises’ are the different rates and scales of operation and interaction of systems variables. In Australia for example, vegetation clearing started in the early 1900s, for the purpose of increasing production of farms, began the slow inexorable rise of water tables and finally, some 70-80 years later, “outbreaks” of salinised soils suddenly devoid of productive capacity. Feedback and feed forward loops, responses and re-organisation influence landscape patterns and processes (at various scales) along with institutions (at various levels), which collectively shape geographies of ‘place’ attachment and community engagement along with other emergent conditions – a context or two! The following, albeit simplistic, diagram attempts to encapsulate some of those dynamic systems elements from a landscape ecologist’s perspective.

Social-ecological systems interactions and interdependencies operating across spatial and institutional scales influence co-evolution of future landscapes and institutions. Feed-back and feed-forward loops of interactions and responses effect change, but also create social-

ecological contexts of meaning, valuable for cross-scale integration towards sustainability.

To a landscape ecologist, property and policy institutions can seem contrary and contradictory. Clearly, many property concepts and applications and many policies can play a significant role in community governance in protecting or regulating resource access and use. But they can also play a significant role in adversely fragmenting resource management, biodiversity conservation, interrupting ecosystem services, or externalising environmental

has often been supported, if not promoted by, land development or ‘management’ policy decrees on a variety of land and resource tenure types; or alternatively, the lack of achievable policies and policing in open access situations, notably the oceans and atmosphere. Concepts and applications of property and policy are influential drivers within social-ecological systems interactions and emerging futures for landscapes and regions. Nested and networked systems of people, place and environment interactions – including



degradation. Perhaps not surprisingly, I greatly appreciated Walter Coward’s key note address to the last IASCP meeting in Bali, “Property Landscapes in Motion” (see *The Commons Digest*, September 2006). Several readings of Walter’s piece have been helpful as I grapple with the role of landscape ecology research in terms of the huge drivers of change on landscapes in contemporary times. Visualising ‘Landscapes in Motion’ reminds us that applications of property and policy are considerable forces in systems dynamics influencing resilience and sustainability (e.g. land clearing and salinity). Human society ignores such at its peril. Since the industrial revolution, the tools at hand for human alteration of ecosystem services and resource bases have escalated. Such landscape change

institutional levels, biogeographic scales of ecological process and pattern, and community identity with landscape and resources – are all important in providing context and understanding towards sustainable resource governance.

There is ‘context’ and ‘context’, of course. The quantity and complexity of externalities that must be resolved by resource governance is constantly increasing for at least two reasons. Firstly, population growth leads to increasing interdependence between citizens and an increasing potential for externalities from resource use decisions and private consumption. The second relates to spatial proximity. The impacts of modern technology and the overloaded assimilative

capacity of ecosystems results in the constant emergence of new externality problems that span distances from the local to the global. With the increasing complexity of social-ecological interdependencies operating at various scales, the task of deciding who will be represented or will participate in what level of community governance and collective decision-making is a formidable one. Local resource issues need a local forum and regional issues need a regional forum, but where should the boundaries be drawn to define the constituencies for each forum? Resource management decisions made without adequate representation of stakeholder interests are likely to be ignored or actively resisted. There is a continuum of 'local' and 'regional' landscapes through which we need to try to understand bounded and cross-boundary dynamics of social-ecological interactions to build capacity to explore novel, appropriate community governance arrangements.

Despite a growing body of theory that emphasizes the importance of socio-spatial aspects in the representation of community interests (particularly for participative resource management), regionalisation for natural resource governance remains dominated by river catchments. Sociologists and social geographers suggest that river catchments rarely represent the area of interest to resident communities (unless very small and contained for other reasons). From a landscape ecologist's point of view, rivers and their tributaries represent water flow connections, but rarely represent the combined manifestation of biophysical or land use variables which change considerably throughout a catchment or river basin (e.g., elevation, topography, soils, geology, climate) and also affect what is transported, added or assimilated at different points. So, what is a "region" for resource governance? How do we approach the problem of a delineating a meaningful region to engage community governance and their shared natural resource base? One approach, called "eco-civic regionalization" is based on three basic requirements for efficient and effective natural resource governance. The first principle is that the nature and reach of environmental externalities of resource use should determine the size and nesting of resource management regions. Secondly, that the boundaries of resource governance regions should enclose areas of greatest shared interest and importance to local residents – or in other words, the boundaries of community governance regions should pass through areas of minimum collective interest to local people. Thirdly, the biophysical characteristics of a resource

governance region should be as homogenous as possible. The latter, multi-variable ecological landscapes or ecoregions will tend to reflect land use and provide resource management efficiencies. These three principles have been translated into spatial social survey and social-ecological GIS modeling techniques to derive nested hierarchies of 'eco-civic' resource governance regions for the state of New South Wales in Australia. The technique is of interest to the EU Commission to assist understanding of community and resource governance regions that span multiple nation-state jurisdictions.

Implementation and operation of new approaches to community governance, which might be multi-level, across traditional agency jurisdictions, and/or include cross-property resource management of private and public lands or resources, requires a clear understanding of incentives, benefits and responsibilities coupled with an understanding of the ecological landscape linkages, and characteristics of place attachment, trust and reciprocity amongst the community of owners and managers. Some 'on-ground', learning laboratory experiences are contributing insights. A local landscape model, the 'Tilbuster Commons', involved rotational grazing of a single herd of cattle across multiple individual private landholdings. The cattle were collectively owned by the landholders who set up a company to manage the resource enterprises across their properties, with profits distributed through proportional share holdings. Multiple benefits included: setting aside of conservation areas; stream restoration; risk management; improved biodiversity, land and pasture; drought resilience; improved carrying capacity and financial returns; and (the most highly valued), 'freeing' up of time for farm families. A large regional scale 'Biosphere Reserve' model established in the salt ravaged, endangered Mallee ecosystems of South Australia has grown to include an area of more than 9,000 square kilometres, across more than 30 properties representing 9 different tenure types of public and private land. A community trust sets the over-arching policy framework and coordinated cross-property and cross-agency jurisdictional management across State and Federal government agencies, private landholders, and 4 local government municipalities.

Knowledge building and practice for community governance must be embedded, or 'integrated', with

holistic approaches towards ecological sustainability. Local to regional landscapes provide useful lenses to examine and understand social-ecological systems interactions. The landscape view focused upon is that of 'theatres' of actors and dramas of emerging patterns of relationships amongst each other and nature. As we approach the next IASC Conference in Gloucestershire, England, summer 2008, "Governing shared resources: connecting local experience to global challenges", it is important to reinforce the value of understanding contextual elements for local to regional resource governance through more holistic, perhaps landscape, analyses of interdependent social-ecological systems interdependencies.

Further reading suggestions:

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COMMONS FORUM RESPONSE

Applying community governance for local benefit: The case of the High Atlas Mountains, Morocco

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As an ethnobiologist, what Brunckhorst describes in his article is very relevant to what I have been working on. What seems to be prevalent in all areas of development whether landscape development, natural resources management or biodiversity conservation, is a the key issue of true representation of local actors. I strongly agree with Brunckhorst when he states in the lead essay that "concepts and applications of property and policy are influential drivers within landscapes and regions." To this I would add, "how to ensure that the right decisions and policy applications are applied in the right measure for beneficial future outcomes?" This is indeed a difficult task. I will cut through the theoretical framework that has been presented in the article and come straight to the context that applies to my work. The place where I am currently researching, the High Atlas Mountains of Morocco, certainly confirms these issues at stake. In this, what I ask myself is what will be the long-term consequences and what kind of impact will ensue from the decisions applied now?

In this particular location, customary law, the traditional Jama institution gave the right to local people to harvest medicinal plants and to collect wood for cooking and building purposes. On one hand, this practise has greatly contributed to the erosion of the local natural resources; but on the other hand, it has permitted the local population to fulfil their basic needs and to bring a valuable cash income to the household, especially as regard the local aromatic plants. In the last few years however, the local population has become increasingly aware of the potential economic value of the resources as well as the sustainability issues. It is relevant to point out that this population is illiterate, living in a non-monetary system, and living in what I would call chronic poverty conditions.

Over the past three years, a project to distil essential oils has slowly emerged. This initiative is high on the devel-

opment institutions' agenda, that of targeting poverty, natural resource erosion and out-migration of the area. This decentralized distillation project is the only one in the region and represents a significant economic opportunity for local people. However, the villagers have never taken part in any major commercial venture before. Furthermore, lack of secure tenure to the areas where the plants are gathered, together with lack of political representation and empowerment, are key obstacles to sustaining this economic opportunity. A handful of external agents are implicated in this operation, the local Department of Water and Forestry being one of them. Over time, this particular Department has assumed ownership over most of the land and while under the new agreement in connection with the project, local people will hire the land from the latter for the purpose of harvesting the aromatic plants. To this effect, a contract will be signed between the parties. This is an instance where the representation of community interests that Brunckhorst refers to is of vital importance.

Following the point that Brunckhorst has made regarding the role of property concepts, applications and policies and their possible resulting negative impacts over resource management and biodiversity conservation, it would seem appropriate to question the long-term effects of implementation of the current agreement. What is even more relevant in this case is not only will the land access for harvesting the aromatic plants strongly depend on this agreement, so will the resulting income issued from the transformation of these raw resources.

To date, the local villagers have collected the aromatic plants in an unofficial manner, therefore getting a more or less strong income from the collection of these aromatic plants. Although this source of income is only spread over a period of two to three months, it is a vital economic support for the household.

Tine De Moore has clearly made the point (2007 *The Commons eDigest*) that “negative impacts of human interactions do not become apparent for some time;” one may question the long-term repercussions of this policy implementation. I would add to this that additional parallel systems should be developed to buffer unseen circumstances and (or) unpredicted outcomes.

This enterprise initiative is of vital importance to the local population of this valley. The “eco-civic regionalisation” that Brunckhorst has described does, in my view encapsulate in theory the principles of good local governance and what could be a true representation of the local

actors. For this project in the High Atlas Mountains, a major step has been achieved and that is the partnership and “integration” of local political-governmental institutions into development initiatives. Where I remain sceptical is the long-term results and impacts of such implications. My position on this and to conclude, is that although these institutions will play an important role in promoting and supporting development, local actors remain the vital and most suitable elements and must occupy a prime place in any development policies.

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Commons Forum *Response*

Exploring New Approaches to Community Governance: Understanding Community Dynamics

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David Brunckhorst states that “many property concepts, applications and policies can play a significant role in community governance protecting or regulating resource access and use.” I tend to agree with him, basing my views on my experiences through research in community governance of resources. One of the fundamental elements of governance is the capacity of communities to participate and contribute to decision-making on access to and use of natural resources. Of importance in this regard is the provision of incentives to communities by creating policies that guarantee property rights of the same resources to the concerned users. For example the Communal Areas Management Programme for Indigenous Resources (CAMPFIRE) in Zimbabwe confers proprietorship of resources to communities within the peripheries of national parks and living with wildlife. The idea behind this concept is to enhance accountability on the users and therefore sustainability of the resources.

Nevertheless, noble as the idea might seem on paper, as Brunckhorst rightly puts across, it has transpired that on the ground, the same policies that are geared towards fostering sound management of resources can contribute to the ‘adverse fragmentation’ of resource management and ‘interruption of ecosystem’ functions. Where it would be expected to regulate resource access and use, community governance can lead to further depletion of resources. This comes about when access to these resources becomes problematic. For instance, certain policies and institutions in Zimbabwe have made it almost illegal for communities to access ‘their’ resources. It has become difficult for communities to access fish as policy on fish has become so restrictive that access is limited to

large scale fishers who have permits to fish. In addition, communities have not been able to access benefits from their wildlife in the form of game meat and cash dividends as before as these proceeds have been intercepted by rural district council officials before they reach the communities. This, it can be concluded, is why poaching has reportedly been on the increase. Where communities are not able to realise benefits from the resources that are considered to be theirs, they have no incentive to conserve them and end up utilising them in such a way that individuals try to maximise gains. In essence,



Bringing home elephant meat distributed by the local leadership.

there is incongruence between policy on paper and policy on the ground. What I would call ‘giving with one hand and taking back with the other’. The granting of overall proprietorship over resources representing ‘giving’ and the prohibitive sectoral policies ‘taking back with the other hand’. This mismatch of policy as written down with policy in practice has affected regulation of activities in management of resources. Indeed, research and knowledge searching at local level should inform practical solutions on the ground for policy makers and attempt to solve global challenges. Such experiences as those that have just been highlighted present an opportunity for addressing policy constraints at different levels.

While it remains valid that ‘knowledge building and practice for community governance must be embedded,

or ‘integrated’, with holistic approaches towards ecological sustainability’, a sociological point of view, in my opinion, suggests a more wholesome approach to sound community governance. This approach encapsulates fundamental elements such as social equity and economic efficiency in addition to ecological sustainability. Emphasis on one or two of these elements leaving out the others presents a situation where community governance results in distress. The whole idea behind this approach is the need to guarantee access, use and management of resources to ensure that users realize economic benefits. There is also a need to guarantee that other sections of users are not marginalized in accessing and using these resources. Also implied is the need to ensure that the

resources are not over-harvested, reducing the chances for future generations to enjoy them.

Consistent with neo-liberal thinking, markets play a significant role in shaping incentives for conservation of natural resources, thereby resulting in improved community governance and livelihood security. The assumption behind this assertion is that if communities place a high value on a natural resource, this may consequently lead to sustainable management. Rather than isolating resources for conservation, they must be exposed to the market as their ‘uniqueness and scarcity lead to high valorisation and thus pro-

mote conservation’. A case in point is Omay Communal Lands in Zimbabwe where community governance is in distress. Among other factors, markets for resources such as game trophy have become unreliable due to a decline in tourist activities and the current economic hardships in the country. In addition, policy regarding marketing of products requires permits that they do not have and which they consider to be very expensive. However, care must be taken not to overemphasise marketing of resources against ecological sustainability.

My thinking is that although the idea of linking local to regional resource governance is noble, there is need for thorough understanding of the community dynamics surrounding resource management at the local level before attempting to address challenges at a larger scale.

There is evidence pointing to the fact that community resource governance, though well planned, is diseased. Although external forces seem to be contributing to the ‘disease’ that has affected community governance, it is important to first analyse local networks and elements that foster/thwart social capital that is fundamental to collective management of resources. These include among others, trust, co-operation and “voluntarism” of community members. There is therefore a need to build a knowledge and practical base that can inform policy first at the local and then regional levels.

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Dambo (wetland) cultivation is conducted throughout the year (outside of the rainy season) in the Omay study area.

COMMONS FORUM RESPONSE

Governance and Adaptation in Watershed Management

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In the lead essay, Dr. Brunckhorst comments on the importance of implementing new community governance approaches for resource management to deal with environmental degradation. I want to discuss two salient points in his essay, first the importance of a multi-scale approach in environmental governance; and second, the importance of understanding how to build knowledge to increase the adaptive capacity for environmental resources management. I'll use a case study of managing flood risk in a Mexico watershed to deal with these topics.

Societies and ecosystems interact over many temporal and spatial scales. Frequently, the scale of the ecological system and the scale of the social organization responsible for resource management are not aligned. Social organizations trying to manage environmental resources at inappropriate scales, might not receive the appropriate feedbacks signals from trial and error management processes. So, these scale-mismatches affect the ability to accumulate knowledge, learn and adapt to manage environmental resources.

Research led by Dr. Hallie Eakin is an excellent example of how scale-mismatches can impact adaptive capacity for flood risk management. Since 2004, Dr. Eakin and colleagues have been conducting research in the Upper Lerma Watershed, a highly populated and important economic region in Central Mexico. Two predominant scale-mismatches have been found in Lerma Watershed: spatial mismatches and temporal mismatches.

Spatial scale-mismatches occur in the region due to differences in the biophysical scope of flood dynamics and the organizational scope of the managing agencies. Flooding biophysical dynamics occur at the watershed scale, however, in Upper Lerma, some management actions and decisions are taken by agencies whose jurisdiction is lesser (municipal level) or greater (federal level) than the watershed level. These decisions that include dam operation, river maintenance and most important meteorological, river and dam monitoring are

often poorly coordinated between the responsible agencies. Eakin and colleagues have found two decision-making deficiencies that are in part due to a mismatch between the spatial scale of the biophysical properties and the organizational structure created to manage flooding. First, decision-makers are often unable to make decisions when they are required. For example, due to the importance of dam operation in Lerma, decisions are centralized by the federal water agency in Mexico City. Sometimes, when dam water levels are too high, local officials complain that central orders to release water arrives too late, increasing flood risk. Second, many of the decisions that are made are simply local band-aids that do not provide long-term resolution to the causes of the flooding problem. For example, some municipalities in Lerma are cleaning and dredging sections of rivers to reduce risk of flooding. Nevertheless, municipal officials recognize that these isolated efforts are not sufficient and a coordinated effort for the whole watershed is needed.

In Lerma, temporal scale-mismatches take place because public officials often have never experienced a flood due to the terms of the public officials and the frequency of floods in the region. In Lerma, there were two major flooding events in 1998 and 2003, and several minor events in different municipalities of the watershed each year. Likewise, most public officials at state and municipal level responsible of flood management and disaster relief change their jobs every three years. When public officials get their jobs many do not have previous experience in managing flood risk, and when they finally get the training and gain experience, they leave their positions with the arrival of new public officials.

These spatial and temporal scale-mismatches in the Lerma Watershed have serious consequences on the adaptive capacity to manage flood risk. This becomes apparent in terms of lack of human, social, political and financial capital, but most important, in a lack of capacity to accumulate knowledge and manage the information to learn from previous experiences to effectively manage flood risk. These translate in a flooding chronic problem in Lerma despite the efforts of governmental organizations at different jurisdictional levels. The cumulative impact of chronic and repeated low-grade flooding can be large, particularly in terms of public and private resources spent on recuperating damages.

Building knowledge to increase adaptive capacity for environmental resources management is important when social-ecological systems are rapidly changing and these changes threaten the livelihoods of human populations. Investigating prior processes of relatively successful governance and adaptation, and comparing them to relatively not successful cases like the Lerma Watershed, will increase our understanding of how to manage social-ecological systems. Understanding how and why certain successful governing systems emerge and adapt to demographic, economic, and ecological conditions, will let us design policies to build adaptive capacity to deal with environmental degradation. As Dr. Brunckhorst states, we have to address community governance issues in operational and practical ways, to do this, we have to learn from our own successes and failures.

Further Readings:

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COMMONS FORUM RESPONSE

Meeting the challenge of incongruent scales – the role of government?

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David Brunckhorst commentary addresses the crucial problem of building integrative and adaptive resource governance, within and across landscapes and regions. It is easy to agree with the need of developing such holistic landscape analysis to connect local or regional experiences with global challenges, especially in the context of broader landscape scales. This is however, as Brunckhorst denotes, not without complications.

One such complication is related to what has been defined as incongruence between scales. In many policy areas, such as example biodiversity conservation, the policy development and the management process is separated between different levels; the international level

where the environmental standards are set and the local or regional level where the standards are to be implemented, with few existing connections between the levels. The international standards and agreements are mainly focused on for example the function of ecosystems and conservational needs rather than on local communities and socio-economic concerns. Although the objectives of the standards may be in the long-term interest of the local community it may not address those immediate local concerns that those who are dependent on the resource must handle in their daily lives. The obvious risk with this situation, where the local level only serves as an implementing body, with limited possibilities to influence the environmental policies, is that the legitimacy of the management system will be undermined which in turn will affect the possibilities to achieve sustainable landscape development. Large carnivore policy and management in the Scandinavian countries is a representative example of incongruent scales. At the moment carnivore populations successfully are rebounding and recolonising areas they have been



One of the large carnivores in Sweden: the Lynx

absent from since the 1800's. Due to the lack of formal discretionary power at the regional level, poaching has become a severe threat to the survival of, in particular, the wolf population.

To be able to meet the challenges of incongruent scales it is necessary to move from problem-solving in simple systems to problem solving in complex systems. Multi-level and cross-scale institutional reforms enhancing vertical and horizontal integration are thus needed. Institutional analysis, considering what Elinor Ostrom defines as nested systems i.e. how the regional or local landscape is related to the framing institutions that impacts and put demands on policy development and management may be a useful tool to deal with such complex systems. However while scaling up the analysis a level, from the local level to a regional landscape level; it is also essential to consider other types of actors. The government, which often has played a minor role in the study of the commons, has a key role to play in developing the capacity to deal with multiple objectives at a landscape level.

Vertical integration may be enhanced by the government serving as an intermediate link between the local, regional and the international level to balance different interests, reconciling local and global agendas. Experience from multi-level governance studies of for example the European Union or other federal structures may be of interest here.

The absence of horizontal integration between different governing structures and related interests tend to generate conflicts, and reduce policy creativity, adaptive and innovative capacity. Crucial to improve horizontal integration is thus coordination. Interesting initiatives, offering new modes of governance, linking different

sectors, private and public actors including industry and different levels of government, into frameworks for effective horizontal coordination on a landscape level are Biosphere reserves and Model forests. With more than 500 Biosphere Reserves and about 50 Model Forest, and a number of Model Forest candidates throughout the world, these initiatives may play a significant

role as working examples of sustainable management of natural resources where local and national actors see the need to address sustainability issues and create an innovative platform for sustainable landscape development. Since the boards of these initiatives often include a variety of governmental official from different levels, which can advance the ideas and interests of their own organisation, they may produce a certain amount of coordination without formal interventions.

To meet the challenges of incongruent scales, I agree with professor Brunckhorst that there is an urgent need for better communication between users and producers of knowledge to ensure a holistic understanding and that that results of our studies are communicated to the surrounding society. Transdisciplinary knowledge production, that is located in the interface of research and management, with close collaboration between different types of actors, offers such a process, also enabling vertical and horizontal integration.

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RECENT PUBLICATIONS

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Books

- Baland, J.-M., P.K. Bardhan, and S. Bowles, eds., 2007.** *Inequality, Cooperation, and Environmental Sustainability*. Princeton & New York: Princeton University Press and Russell Sage Foundation.
- Bardhan, P.K., and I. Ray, eds. 2007.** *The Contested Commons: Conversations between Economists and Anthropologists*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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See you there !

Reminder

Governing shared resources: connecting local experience to global challenges

The 12th Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of Commons

14-18 July 2008
Cheltenham, England

The IASC 2008 global conference will take place in Cheltenham, England, hosted by the University of Gloucestershire with logistical support from the University's Countryside and Community Research Unit (CCRU).

The emphasis of the conference is the exchange of knowledge on shared resources or 'commons': between developing and developed world, between practitioners and researchers, and between old and 'new' commons. The overarching theme of governing shared resources aims to encourage discussion on new ways of using, managing, protecting and creating what many understand as 'commons'. The themes recognise the wide variety of understanding over the term 'commons' and the need to link practical experience at the local level with larger global commons issues.

Conference Themes

1. Understanding the benefits of commons
2. Property rights: recognition, protection and creation
3. Community and governance: exploring new approaches
4. Analysing the multi-functional nature of complex commons
5. Evolution and enclosure of commons
6. Social movements, networks and collective action

Proposed Special Symposia

Symposium on Social learning as a way to conceptualise commons management problems.

Participation is regarded as the key to creating effective policies yet participation can take many forms and focuses attention on notions of power and influence. Notions of participation itself influence the manner in which different interests may be able to become involved in the policy process, and limits the range of potential solutions. Recent suggest that social learning occurs through collective engagement with a problem. Exploring commons management problems through a social learning approach might result in participants re-conceptualising their role and relationships with the resource.

The symposia will explore the potential for social learning as a means of achieving more effective governance of commons.

Symposium on the role of common property rights in a global economy focused on privatisation of resources

Conceptions of resource efficiency are often based on simple and narrowly focused measures such as GDP, net income, profit margins, or total outputs in physical units of certain materials. The current economic approach assumes economic growth is achieved most efficiently through private ownership resources for production. A more holistic conception of 'efficiency' would encompass a wider array of measures and require a balancing of a range of outputs including environmental and social impacts as well as the purely monetised aspects of economic goods.

Pre-conference workshops

A series of pre-conference workshops will run on the day before the start of the conference. These will cater both to those new to the concept of 'common-pool resources', and to the expert. Workshops on the following topics are currently planned:

Introductory workshop on the commons

'New' commons: what are they, where are they, and how should they be managed?

Research design and methods (qualitative and quantitative)

Institutional analysis

Applications of Game Theory to new commons

Measuring the economic costs and benefits of commons

Participatory research techniques

Writing scientific reports and getting published

For more information please contact the organisers at iasc2008@glos.ac.uk