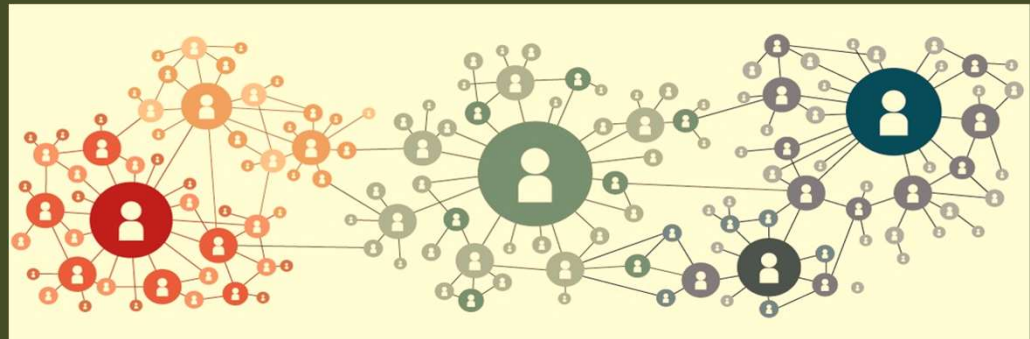


REACHING OUT IN THE RCP NETWORK: Getting the Most out of Peer Exchange

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RCP Network Gathering

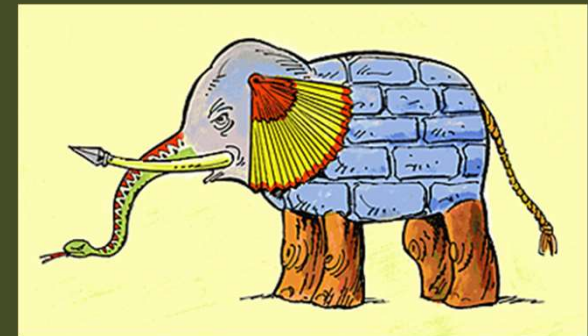
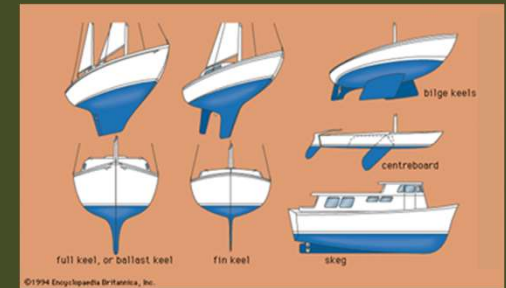
November 15, 2018

Addressing Risks to RCP Resilience

- Why stay “resilient”

- Institutional memory

- Knowledge Transfer



Overview

- Orientation to RCP research
- RCPs: Community of Practice or Not?
- Trading on CoP practice
- Rapid Strategic Planning Activity
- Invitation and delivery of research survey

Defining the Problem

4

- Conservation theory promotes collaboration, yet practice is often “top-down.”
- No normalized pathway for practice to influence theory, and a resistance to on-the-ground, systemic, interdisciplinary practice.

(Gordon, 1954; Gunderson, 1995; Hardin, 1969; Kemmis, 2002; Karl et al., 2012; Olsson, Folke, & Berkes, 2004; Ostrom, 1990; Perera et al. 2007; Salafsky et al., 2002)

Defining the Problem

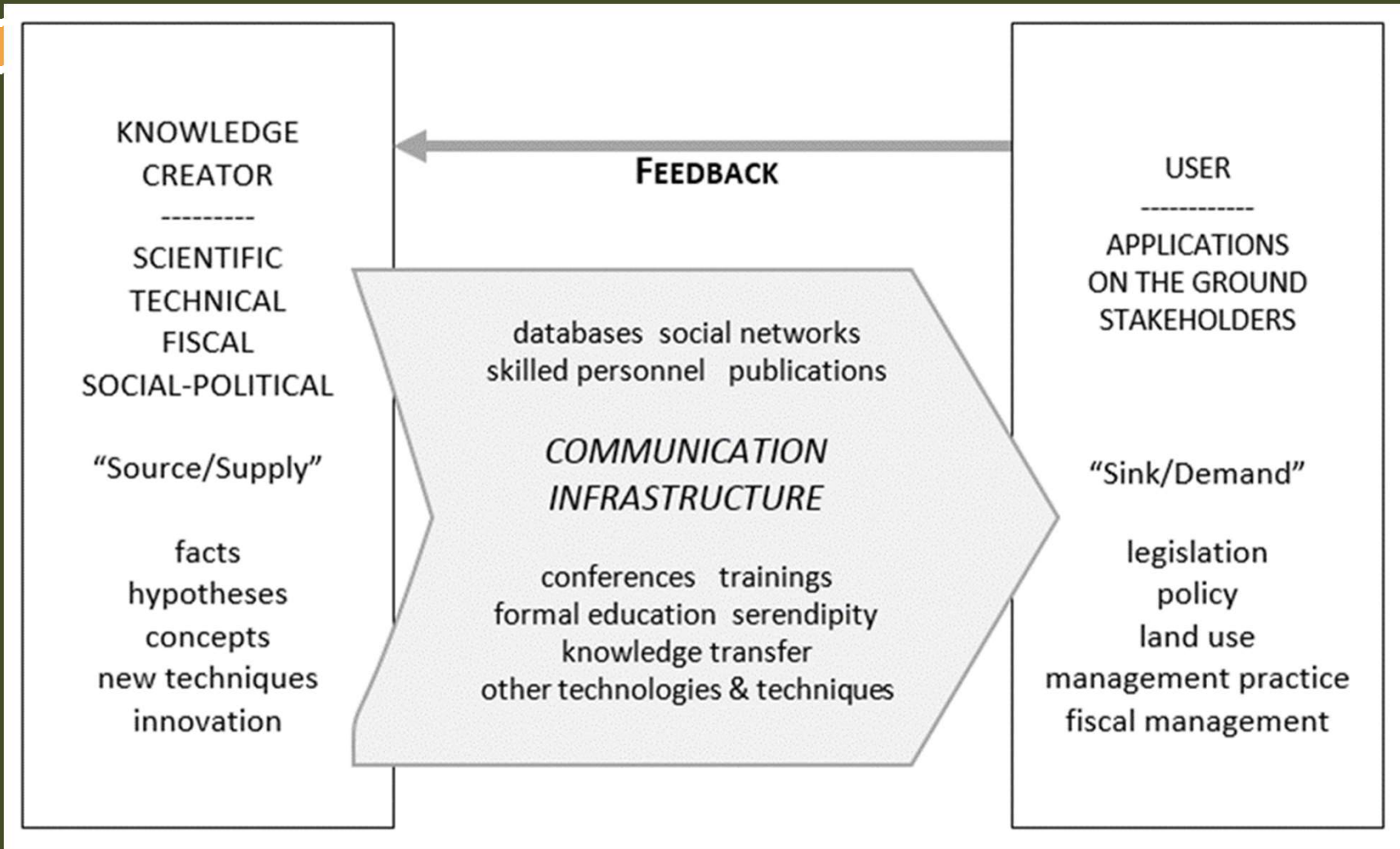
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- There is a disconnect between how we manage social and natural systems even though one is reliant on the other.
- There are barriers between disciplines and practices; lack of communication infrastructure between.

(Buse & Perera, 2006; Gera, 2012; Lin et al., 2007; Meadows, 1997; Perera, Buse, & Crow, 2007; Olsson, Folke, & Hahn, 2004; Williams & Ellefson, 1997)

Defining communication infrastructure

6



J. Weiss 2016

Inspired by “Illustration of factors central to knowledge transfer” (Perera et al., 2007)

What are Conservation Networks?



- An association of individuals that cooperatively manage a resource, collaborate to meet conservation goals, and/ or support a conservation initiative.

(Batterbury, 2003; Forman & Godron, 1986; Lankford, 1997; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008)

What are Conservation Networks?



- They are valuable because of their on the ground experience, shared expertise, and interdisciplinary nature.
- Networks can share and sort an overload of information.

(Batterbury, 2003; Forman & Godron, 1986; Lankford, 1997; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008)



Networking among environmental educators in NYC: Current status and desired outcomes

Introduction
This project used Action Research to explore the benefits of networking among environmental educators in NYC.

Environmental Education Advisory Council (EEAC)
• National Network of EEACs
• National Environmental Education Foundation
• National Environmental Education Research Institute
• National Environmental Education Research Institute
• National Environmental Education Research Institute

Research questions
• What are the benefits of networking among environmental educators in NYC?
• What are the future desired outcomes of networking?

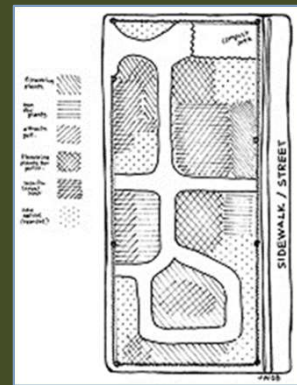
Methods
• Action Research approach
• Interviewed 10 environmental educators
• Interviewed 10 environmental educators
• Interviewed 10 environmental educators
• Interviewed 10 environmental educators

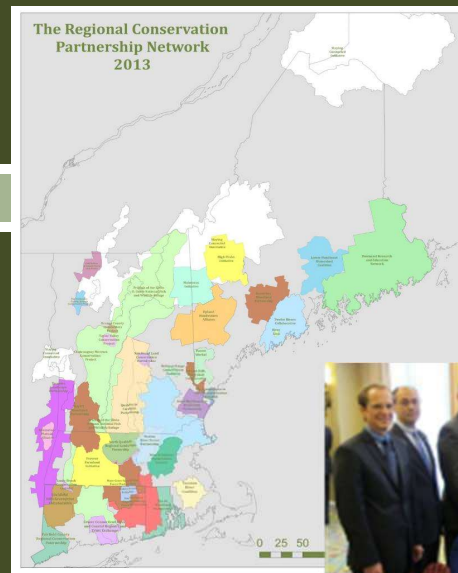
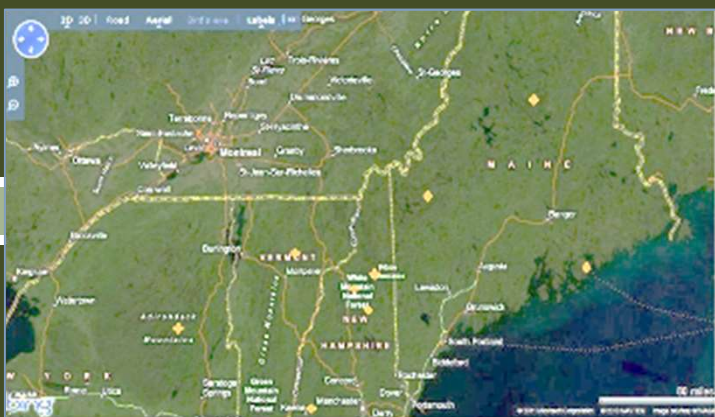
Results
Citywide networking provides environmental educators the following benefits:
• Increase in knowledge and skills
• Increase in confidence
• Increase in visibility
• Increase in resources
• Increase in support
• Increase in opportunities for professional development
• Increase in networking opportunities

Discussion
Important results of the Action Research were:
• Networking opportunities in NYC
• Increase in knowledge and skills
• Increase in confidence
• Increase in visibility
• Increase in resources
• Increase in support
• Increase in opportunities for professional development
• Increase in networking opportunities

Conclusion
Networking among environmental educators in NYC provides many benefits and is a priority for EEAC. It is important to continue to support and expand networking opportunities among environmental educators in NYC.

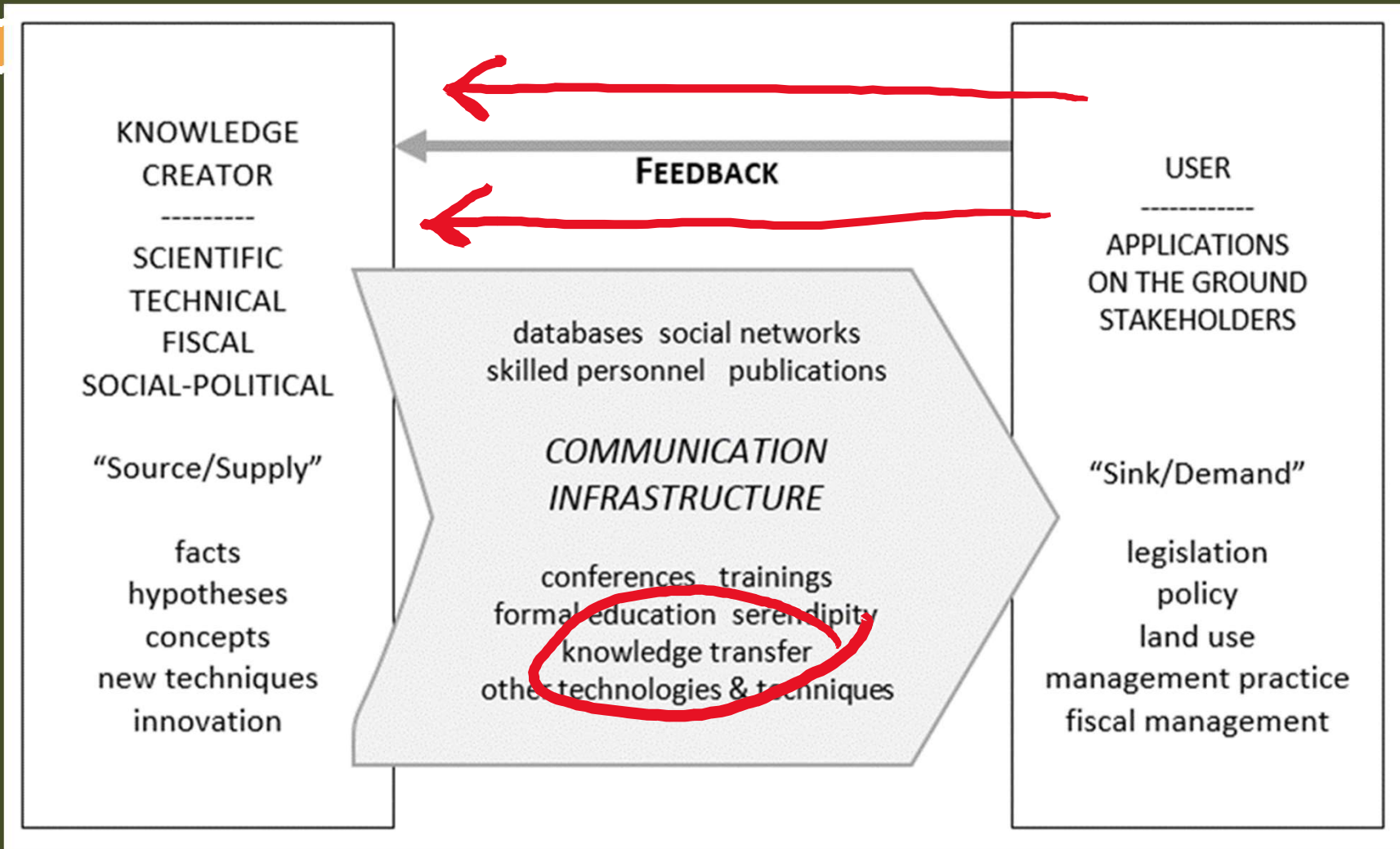
Acknowledgments
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Defining communication infrastructure

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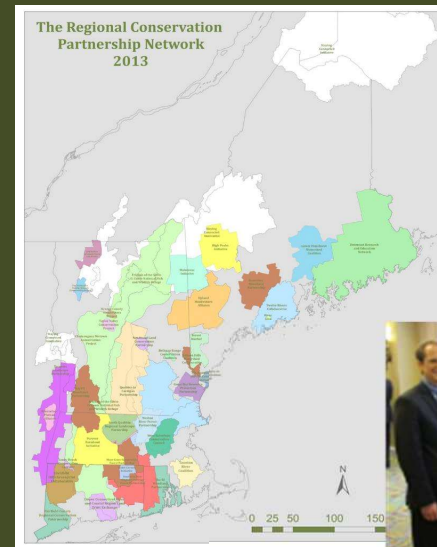


J. Weiss 2016

Inspired by "Illustration of factors central to knowledge transfer" (Perera et al., 2007)

Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network

- Different sorts of institutions
- Pursue functional landscapes and corridors
- A physical and psychological presence
- Anecdotal success for landscape scale conservation
- Increase in RCP formation 2008-2010



RCPs Collaborate!



An elastic and vibrant type of collaboration:

- Individualized by RCP.
- They value trust, clear goals, communication and storytelling.
- Link stakeholders with those who have needed skills.
- Leverage shared resources to conserve land and influence policy.
- Non-brittle, fluid structure – promotes resilience and sustainability.

RCPs Communicate!

14

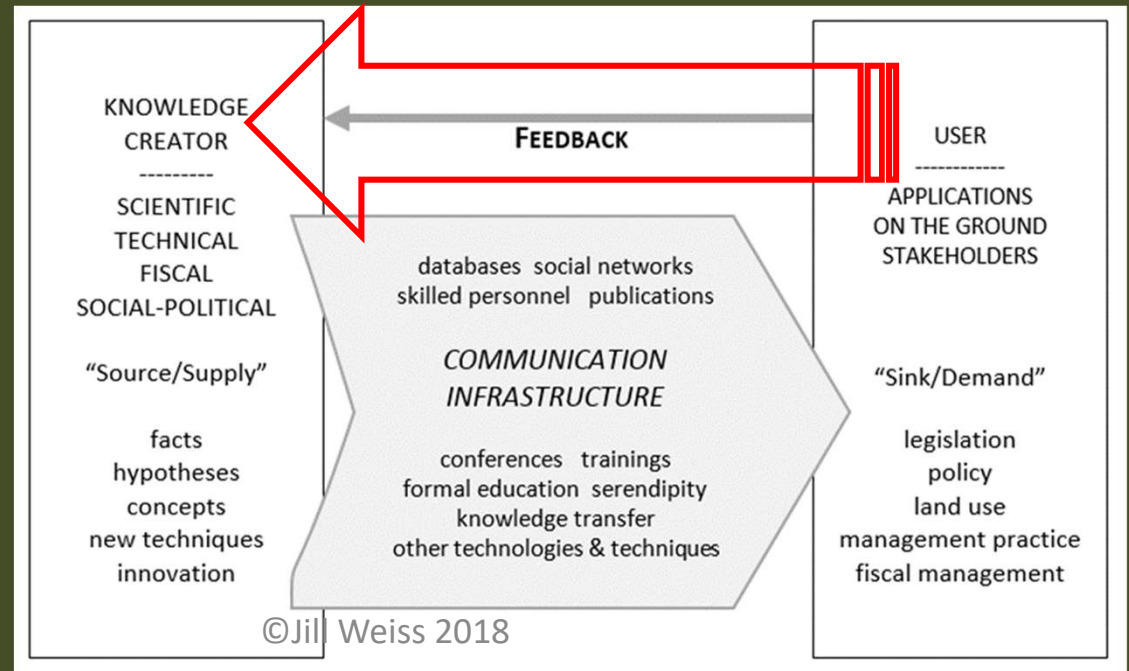


RCPs in New England actively:

- ❑ Create and maintain conduits to share knowledge.
- ❑ Connect theory to practice to policy.
- ❑ Maintain feedback loops to improve system.
- ❑ Pragmatic: Promote and spread good ideas.
- ❑ ...essentially creating *communication infrastructure*

Promising practices that build communication infrastructure and feedback in Conservation Networks

- Ephemeral partnerships
- Boundary spanners
- Weak ties



Ephemeral Collaboration

1. Pull together to bolster capacity.
2. Loosen ties to work autonomously.
 - ❑ Temporary intensity, action based.
 - ❑ Network activity may ebb and flow over the life of an initiative.
 - ❑ Be okay with network transformation or fade out.

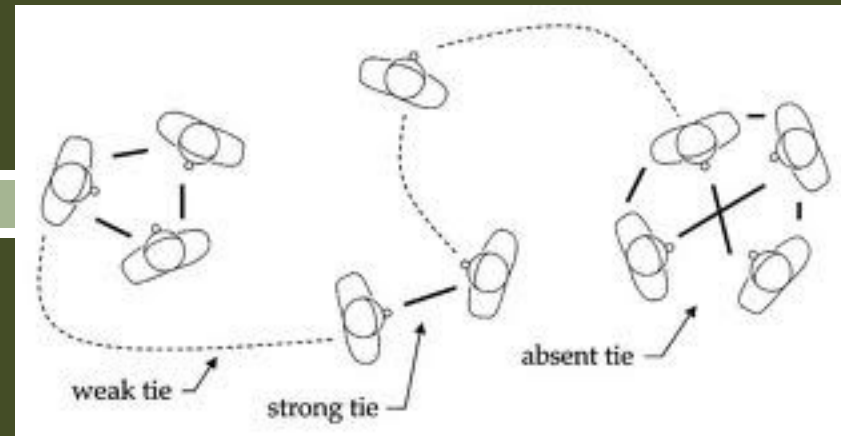


Boundary spanners

- Create connections across organizations and disciplines. They “select, transmit, and interpret” information.
- Able to move tacit knowledge between parties – codifying it though socialization.



Social Network



- Tie strength
- The currency of relationships
- Social closeness, connection, distance between individuals
 - Strong: trusted friends, family, allies
 - Weak: acquaintances
- Yet: Checking in with weak ties promotes dynamism and resilience in the system.

(Granovetter 1973, 1977; Burt 2001; Prell et al., 2009; Weiss 2016)

Communities of Practice (CoPs)

- CoPs are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

Brown and Dugid, 1991; Davenport and Prusak, 1998; Lave and Wenger, 1991



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The informal network of Alpine Stewardship in the Northeast

More specifically, CoPs:

- Have a shared domain of interest
- Membership implies a commitment to the practice
- Shared competence in the practice distinguishes members from other people
- Competencies may not be recognized as expertise outside of the community

■ Is Alpine Stewardship in the Northeast a CoP? ✓ Yes



Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Are these CoPs?

- White Mountain Trail Collective?
- Regional Conservation Partnerships?



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Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Are these CoPs?

- White Mountain Trail Collective?

✓ Yes



- Regional Conservation Partnerships?



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Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Are these CoPs?

- White Mountain Trail Collective?

✓ Yes

- Regional Conservation Partnerships?

✗ No



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Communities of Practice (CoPs)

Are these CoPs?

- White Mountain Trail Collective?

✓ Yes

- Regional Conservation Partnerships?

No-????

I'm not sure!



My mind is changing



□ Since 2011

- More RCPs have formed, some within other RCPs
- Materials and practices are becoming standardized
- Knowledge sharing is normalized
- Tacit knowledge is being codified



What kind of CoP?

- Daily Practice Community
- Formal Expert Community
- Informal Network Community
- Problem Solving Community
- Latent Network Community

A few benefits, and concerns...

Benefits

- If content/practice is relevant, CoPs tend to get stronger
- RCPN may be able to take advantage of established and tested CoP-strengthening practices to further the cause!

Concerns

- Homogenization of practice → less resilience
- Stagnation/energy sink if no new inputs
- Land trust centric
- Putting organizing or tradition before problem solving

Let's trade on the benefits!

CoP Cultivation:

- ❑ Investing in the practice builds capacity for the network
- ❑ Practitioners can take collective responsibility for managing the knowledge they need
- ❑ Create links between learning and performance
- ❑ Address tacit and dynamic aspects of knowledge sharing
- ❑ Structure does not have to be formal
- ❑ Members need high- value learning experiences

Workshop activities address threats

- Strategic planning as operating principle rather than event
- Identify allies in the network and reach out to them
- Identify/ address barriers to collaboration



Community Basics

- Members engage in joint activities
- Help each other
- Share information
- Build relationships
- May not interact on a daily basis
- Shared practice takes sustained interaction
 - ▣ Expertise, tools, stories, ways of solving recurring problems



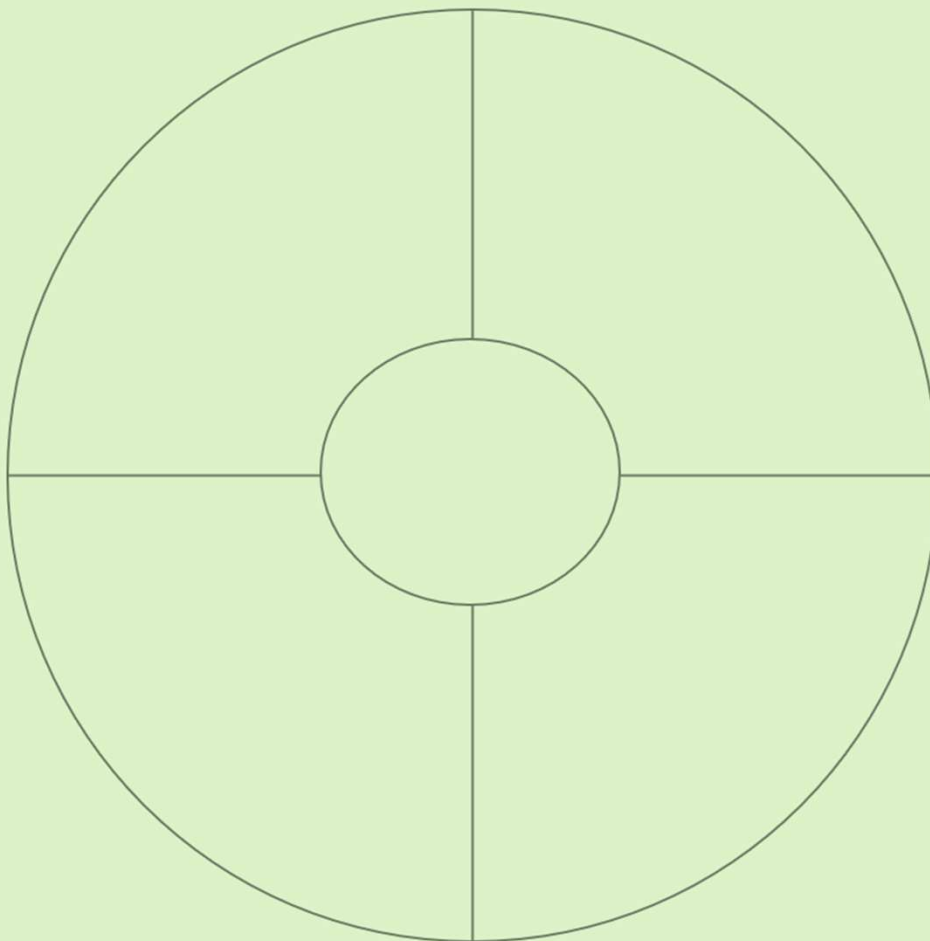
Collaboration



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

Mapping Your Network

Mapping your network



Prentice
Zinn 2017
RCP
Gathering

Characteristic CoP Activities

- Problem solving
- Information request
- Seeking expertise
- Reusing assets
- Coordination and synergy
- Discussing developments
- Documentation of projects
- Visits
- Mapping knowledge and identifying gaps

SWOT Analysis Re: Knowledge Transfer



By Xhienne - SWOT pt.svg, CC BY-SA 2.5,
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Thank you



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Link to related dissertation:

https://etd.ohiolink.edu/pg_10?0::NO:10:P10_ACCESSION_NUM:antioch1468416493

Other sources upon request.



v 11/20/17c jw

Survey: Peer Knowledge Exchange Activities In Conservation Networks

- Seeking participants in one or more RCPs in New England/New York
- Seeking scientists, agency representatives and other allies that support or interact with one or more RCPs in New England/New York
- Testing a survey instrument about learning and sharing knowledge in RCPN
- 3 minutes

The purpose of this study is to find out about how members of regional conservation networks communicate, share knowledge, and apply what they learn. In this survey I will ask members of the RCP Network about how they share information and support each other's work within their RCP and across the wider Regional Conservation Partnership Network (RCPN).

You are invited to be part of the study because you participate in RCPN activities. Please note the following about the study and ask questions if you need clarification before you participate in the survey.

If you prefer, we can administer the survey to you through a neutral third-party later by phone or electronically.

Participants must be aged 18 years or older.

There are no known physical or financial risks from participating in this study. You will not be exposed to greater risks and you would normally experience in the course of day-to-day work.

To protect your identity, the surveys are anonymous, ask for no personal information, and your answers cannot be linked back to you. The researcher will not name the participants in the study and reports the result from it, and will not share identifying information with anyone from your organization or the greater network.

This study is of a research nature it may offer no direct benefit to you.

I, the researcher, may include the data and results of the study in future scholarly publications and presentations. This confidentiality agreement will be effective in all cases of data sharing. Through these generalized findings of the study, participants may benefit through improved understanding of how networked conservationists share knowledge and participate in communities of practice, and learn new practices for reaching their conservation goals.

Thank you



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