Building a Network for Cross-Disciplinary Engagement in Conservation

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• Switzer staff will be monitoring questions during the webinar to solve technical issues and pass content questions along to our presenters.
ALDRICH & WYERMAN (2005); NRCS (2007)
Conservation Development (CD) is an approach to the design, construction, and stewardship of a development that achieves functional protection of natural resources while also providing social and economic benefits to human communities.
The Conservation Development Global Challenges Research Team is an interdisciplinary team of scholars and practitioners seeking to advance research on conservation development at a global scale. Housed within Colorado State University's School of Global Environmental Sustainability, our group includes fourteen collaborators from three universities and seven departments at CSU. We aim to transcend disciplines, schools of thought, and research perspectives and advance the science and practice of Conservation Development in the United States and around the world.

MEET THE TEAM

The Conservation Development team consists of members representing four different Colleges at Colorado State University as well as many other external organizations...
VISION

We aim to synthesize data on existing CD practice, establish a rigorous scientific basis for evaluating CD designs and policies, and engage with land use planning, development, and conservation practitioners to inform the design of future projects in the U.S. and around the world.

ACTIVITIES

• **Synthesis**: comprehensive review of the social, economic, and ecological dimensions of residential land development

• **Research**: case study of land use and home sales in >400 CD subdivisions in 19 Colorado counties

• **Outreach**: communicate results via website, presentations, workshops, and develop a collaborative learning network
**Vision:** To *cultivate cross-boundary communication and expertise* in CD practice.

**Goal:** To assess what tools CD practitioners believe would facilitate collaboration and the value of a learning network

**Process to Date:**

- Created an advisory board,
- Conducted 30 semi-structured interviews of CD practitioners,
- 22 interviews transcribed (NVivo).
Preliminary Results

Stakeholder Information
Tools to Facilitate Collaboration
Learning Network
“...I would like to start working a little bit more directly with homeowners associations but right now it’s just a research focused study....” (ID103, Coded as Researcher)
“...The other thing that I do is to actually walk the property and design conservation subdivisions for clients, who are typically developers and sometimes land owners...” (ID116, Coded as Site)

“...Well, as I said, we help communities make decisions on how they grow and change. We do that by, for instance, projecting growth of a particular community into the future...not just the amount, but the location of growth...20 years into the future...” (ID118, Coded as Community)
PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Stakeholder Information

Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

Learning Network

- Web-based tool
- Networks currently in place
- Networking, relationships
- Certifications or guidelines
- Other tools
- Regulations
- Conferences

0 5 10 15
“...I don’t know of any sort of centralized resource for conservation development information. I don’t have any materials in my office on conservation development that I can hand to someone if they come in...whether it is a website, press materials, you know, short videos, all of that kind of stuff.” (ID109, Coded as Web-based tool and Other tools)

“In current economy a webinar online resource that doesn’t cost too much would be the best format. Because the chances of being able to travel to a conference are slim.” (ID123, Coded as Web-based tool)
“...No, it’s all relationship-based...all the tools are there now. What it is about, is trust building and relationship building, and that’s not a technical tool.” (ID125, Coded as networking, relationships)

“I think just having a directory of practitioners would be one thing. That suggests just an exchange of information and experiences. But it would be nice to have it associated with some kind of institution...” (ID121, Coded as both Networks currently in place and Networking, relationships)
“...I think that a good regulatory process that demands that applicants start off with a concept plan and a site walk...start off with a site walk based on inside analysis. It requires that there be specialist called in to consult on that.” (ID116, Coded as Regulations)

“...we are trying to incorporate a formal role for the Davidson Land Conservancy and the development review process...it is kind of a legal framework that says, you know, when you do this any kind of development, or what have you, you need to engage a few of the land trusts...” (ID120, Coded as Regulations)
**Preliminary Results**

Stakeholder Information

Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

**Learning Network**

**Function**

Is it a useful idea?

How often would they access?

Willingness to contribute?

**Content**

“*Yes. I think that would be excellent because I think that part of the problems that I encountered is that there is nothing out there like that*” (ID113, Coded as Yes)

“I don’t want to dismiss the value of that, but I think having something like that, a go-to, I guess my one reservations is *that I feel like there is already so much out there on the web. So how do you try to make this network stand out?”* (ID103, Coded as Don’t Know)
Preliminary Results

Stakeholder Information

Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

Learning Network

Function

Is it a useful idea?

How often would they access?

Willingness to contribute?

Content

“...Well that’s a hard one. The problem is they have to be dynamic, things have to change on it or it becomes static like the one I have right now. So it has to be continuously updated and have a group of people updating it...” (ID104)

“...Definitely monthly...possibly weekly to sort of click through and see what is new. Seeing if there was some sort of...If there was something on the front page to go back to on a frequent basis. Relevant stories that are happening, or research that is just now being published...It has to be more engaged...” (ID115)
PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Stakeholder Information
Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

Learning Network

Function
Is it a useful idea?
How often would they access?
Willingness to contribute?

Content

“Yeah. *As soon as I had something to contribute, I would be glad too.*” (ID112, Coded as Yes)

“...if you actually got something like that up and running and I felt like people were going there and asking these kind of questions, *I could have this conversation like I have had with you with one person everyday for the rest of my life, I would do that...*” (ID117, Coded as Yes)
Preliminary Results

Learning Network

Function

Content

Stakeholder Information
Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

- Case Studies
- Guidelines or Models
- Forums, Q&A
- Conferences
- Networking Opportunities
- List Serve
- Economics
- Other content
- Leadership
- Regional differences
- Webinars
- How common CD is

Graph showing the frequency of different Learning Network elements.
Preliminary Results

Stakeholder Information
Tools to Facilitate Collaboration

Learning Network
  Function
  Content

“... Just come up with a series ... What is it, what do we do, how much does it cost... recommendations like don’t use it in these certain circumstances ...” (ID101, Coded as Case Studies)
• Practitioners recommended novel ways to present case studies, e.g., virtual tours, stakeholder interviews, highlight regional differences, etc.

“... you could *interview a zoning officer* who saw through a conservation development and kind of the compromises that they made... *Or a developer* ...could talk about the pros and cons of doing a conservation development. And then you could *interview some homeowners* and things and what they like and don’t like about conservation development.” (ID110, Coded as Case Studies)
“… I think some of it would be just topics like, if ‘x’ became a development, how do you measure it? How do you actually determine what kind of impacts roads, development and housing have? How that intersects with wildlife placement. I guess if you could cover a lot of different topics, it is just prioritizing them.” (ID119, Coded as Guidelines or Models)

“… If there was something that said, “Certified Conservation Development.” So there has to be a full infrastructure around certification process and how did that work and who are people who have that training and so forth and so on. It is the same network that is built up around Energy Star…” (ID120, Coded as Guidelines or Models)
“… Another thing I think that would be really, really helpful is, again, to go back to this idea about the profitability. If there were statistics or a fact sheet or something available...then how much would a house in a traditional subdivision sell for on a per square foot basis compared to a conservation subdivision. Is it really more profitable to build a conservation development?” (ID110, Coded as Economics)

“...you have got to understand what consumers are thinking and the best way to do that is to get focus groups or survey research or a combination into providing numbers, financial numbers. (ID118, Coded as Economics and Other Content)
**Discussion**

- **Learning Network:**
  - Clear practitioners would like to be engaged, though it must be dynamic
  - Significant guidance regarding content

- **Remaining questions to be analyzed:**
  - Understanding of CD
  - Opportunities and Barriers for CD

- **Next steps:**
  - Review findings with the advisory board
  - Focus on how to increase knowledge transfer and increase collaborations across these groups
  - Seek resources to support the creation of a Learning Network
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