Methods and Tools to Engage Collaborators and Enhance Conservation

Capacity Building Session Notes

Presentation Notes:

1. Using social network analysis (SNA) to understand and catalyze conservation-David Baker and Patrick Bixler
   a. Texas Hill Country Alliance case study: includes 14 water conservation organizations and 66 land conservation groups
   b. Strength of social network analysis- commonalities of where people get their information
   c. How to capture all relevant stakeholders and collect data in SNA?
      i. Conduct interviews and surveys
      ii. "self-bounding" approach to snowball sample out
   d. How to capture /measure change through time?
      i. Crowd sourcing information
      ii. iterative surveys across time-constantly collect new data
   e. Integration of SNA into strategic planning
      i. Organize people around thematic issues or watersheds? (geography versus interests)
      ii. EPA approved watershed protection plan-one way to organize stakeholders
   f. Learning and adaptive management
   g. Convening funders is a huge component
   h. Privately owned landscape-97% of Texas is privately owned-need to engage private landowners
2. Collaborative Adaptive Management (CARM)-David Augustine and Angela Dwyer
   a. Situation-stakeholders active in their landscape and care about conservation
   b. Emphasis on adaptive management and collaboration
   c. Making decision that would achieve 3 different objectives
      i. Birds
      ii. Cattle
      iii. Plants
   d. Participatory process necessary to build trust among stakeholders
   e. Importance of connecting science and management
   f. Adaptive management "circle" is more of a spiral
   g. Default decision making tool?
      i. Strive for consensus
      ii. Majority voting if consensus can't be reached
   h. Importance of incorporating social science and therefore having a diverse team
   i. 10-year process, but revisit decisions/management approach each year-adaptive management
      - Focus of experimental design is cattle rotation
      - 2 years of planning was key
      - 15% loss of cattle productivity with rotational grazing

- Resting pastures was more beneficial for birds and other biodiversity

3. Put collaboration on the map to build capacity and connect-Joe Zebrowski
   a. Put your collaboration on the map
   b. Why maps?
      i. Common view of landscapes
      ii. Platform for agreement
      iii. Authoritative
   c. Story maps are a great way to share your story
      i. Build off of existing maps and adapt them to suit your needs
      ii. Participatory mapping
      iii. You don't need to be a GIS specialist to use these mapping tools
   d. Return on investment
      i. How do you know if users find these tools useful?
      ii. Ability to track who is using and how they are using
      iii. Surveys

Group Discussion:

- Social Network Analysis
  o Get ahold of the PPT they did and highlight the questions they answered using SNA (who are the players, how do they work together, how do they talk about working together…?)
  o Get ahold of one of Patrick's surveys to share with practitioners and to provide an example of what a data gathering tool for SNA looks like
  o Get SNA tools they mentioned were Gephi and R - both are free and have helpful tutorials
  o What opportunities are there for hybridizing social network data and data visualizations to complement and enhance geographic maps? The former is obviously powerful and could be used to communicate relationships between groups, organizations, projects and other spatially explicit units; the latter is more intuitive. Food for thought.

- Collaborative Adaptive Rangeland Management (CARM)
  o People seemed really interested in learning more about the research results pointing to lack of improvements from rotational grazing. Be sure to point people in the right direction to find those results
  o People also seemed interested in better understanding the model of collaboration they used. I wonder if they have distilled this down to a practitioner-friendly case study or document of some sort describing their procedural and decision rules, membership structures, and so forth?

- Story Mapping
    - ESRI has affordable pricing for nonprofits
    - There are free platforms as well (e.g. Google Maps/My Maps), but as Joe said, 'you get what you pay for'
    - To track the utility/ROI on maps, use page view counts (analytics)
    - Someone requested putting together a set of descriptions of the organizations represented at the conference, like the bios for speakers, but describing their organizations (I imagine mission/purpose/major issues). Good story map material?

3 Key Takeaways:

1. Adaptive Management
2. Trust
3. Bridging Science and management (and importance of social science)

Key Next Steps: (insert key next steps identified to advance work on this topic----bold the top three)

1. Difference between recognizing differences and reconciling differences
2. Create more story maps
3. Integrate social network analysis tools
4. Play to strengths of multiple scales (local, regional, national)