

Exploring The Role Of Social Assessment In An Adaptive Management Framework During Forest Plan Revision

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Introduction

- Currently 14 Eastern Region National Forests are undergoing management plan revisions.

- The Forest Service has begun to adopt an adaptive management approach during revisions.

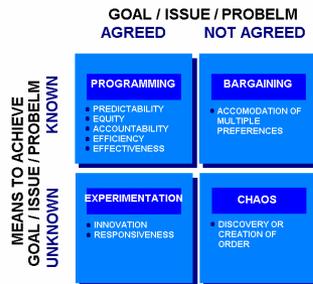
Adaptive management seeks to:

- Offer solutions by small experimental steps
 - Find better ways to meet goals
 - Identify gaps and improve understanding
 - Encourage innovation and learning
- Inherent in this process is risk and uncertainty.

Questions for adaptive management process:

- What information is needed?
- How is this information collected?

Information Needed



- To orient a planning processes goals and means to achieve these goals must be understood.

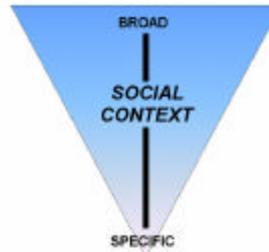
Figure adapted from Christensen (1985). Coping with uncertainty in planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 51(1): 63-68

Defining Goals/Issues/Problems:

- Social assessments provide the means to assess the *social conditions and patterns* of communities living around and users of a National Forest.

Social conditions assessed include:

- Socioeconomic
- Political
- Cultural
- Community



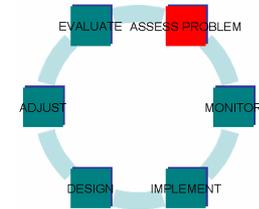
Data to define social context combines:

- Secondary data (broad context)
- Primary data (specific context)

These data can help:

- Determine social patterns and trends
- Aid in stakeholder analysis
- Aid in social conflict assessment
- Define the problems, goals, or issues of an adaptive management process

Addressing Goals/Issues/Problems:



- When problems, goals, or issues are defined, adaptive management provides the means to achieve the outcome through experimentation.
- By taking small experimental steps efficient, favorable means to goals can be achieved.

Figure adapted from Nyberg, B. (1999). *An introductory guide to adaptive management for project leaders and participants*. Forest Practices Branch, B.C. Forest Service

Research Challenges & Suggestions

- The social climate is complex and dynamic.
- Using *census data* and a *functional community/places* framework may provide meaningful secondary and primary data for defining social context.
- Scale, time, and cost are limitations to monitoring meaningful long term conditions.
- Content analysis of news sources may reduce limitations of data collection over long term conditions .
- Creating useable knowledge may best inform the public and management.
- Presenting data with visual media (maps and symbols) may best display dynamic conditions and inform public and management.