



USDA Forest Service

URBANFOREST CONNECTIONS

webinar series

Social Networks and Knowledge Systems for Urban Stewardship and Sustainability

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PRESENTER ABSTRACT

Linking Science and Practice: The importance of knowledge-action systems for achieving sustainable solutions

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This presentation describes knowledge-action systems analysis (KASA) as a tool to design and implement effective arrangements for linking science and practice. Linking science and practice is a centerpiece of promoting sustainable solutions, but multiple barriers exist to achieve this integration. Many social and political scholars now recognize that one-way, or even two-way, interactions are not enough to achieve successful linkages between science and practice because of the complexity of actors, and ways of knowing beyond scientific knowledge, that are involved in producing policy-relevant knowledge for sustainability. Decision-makers now have the challenging task of understanding which actors are producing relevant knowledge for sustainability, based on what knowledge systems (e.g., data, models, knowledge networks, tacit or experiential knowledge), and whose knowledge or expertise should count in decision-making.

Knowledge-action systems define this complex network of actors, their visions of the future, and the knowledge systems underlying the production of knowledge to advance specific policies, decisions, and actions related to sustainability. The KASA includes a combination of surveys and analytical tools from social network and governance approaches into an interdisciplinary methodology that stakeholders and decision-makers can use as part of their tool-kit in understanding, designing, and implementing successful knowledge-action systems. This presentation draws on work in San Juan, Puerto Rico that implements the KASA tool for urban land use sustainability to illustrate the process of analyzing knowledge-action systems and their value in addressing challenges and opportunities for linking science and practice. The presentation includes a discussion of the value of KASA to address multiple dimensions of sustainability, including urban ecosystem services decision-making.