



Social dimensions of conservation

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Social science in conservation

- While biological sciences is **in place to inform** conservation policy development
- And, although we may get the **biology right**, conservation interventions still **fail to reach the targets** set
- Why is this?

*‘Conservation interventions are the product of **human** decision-making processes and require changes in **human** behavior to succeed’*

Mascia et al., 2003. Editorial in Conservation Biology 17(3): 649-650

Social science disciplines



Political science

Anthropology

Economics

Psychology

Sociology

Geography

Law

International relations



Social science in conservation

- There are **multiple roles** for the social science:
 - Accessing **local ecological knowledge**
 - Reviewing international, regional, national **law**
 - Analysing **local bylaws and planning** documents
 - **Translating biological knowledge** into policy
 - Balancing **economics with ecology**
 - Developing **media and public awareness** materials

The main role of the social scientist

In my view, is **to connect stakeholders and facilitate conservation:**

- **Access knowledge from local communities**
- **Provide local communities** with biological research
- **Researchers to policy** makers
- Know the applicable **laws**
- **Read people and situations**
- **Diffuse conflict**

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- For the \$\$\$ MONEY?



Natural resource managers

- Main task of managers is to identify, engage in and resolve **social value conflicts**
- Identify and accommodate **social values**
- Who has the skills to manage people?
 - Biologist
 - Social worker
 - Lawyer
 - Sociologist
 - Psychiatrist?

The Challenge

*'One of the anomalies of **modern ecology** is the creation of two groups, each of which seems barely aware of the existence of the other.'*

The Challenge

*The one
studies the human community, almost as if it were a **separate entity**,
and calls its findings sociology, economics and history.*

The Challenge

*The other studies
the plant and animal community and comfortably relegates the
hodgepodge of politics to the liberal arts.*

The Challenge

*The **inevitable fusion** of these two lines of thought will, perhaps, constitute the outstanding advance of this century.'*

Aldo Leopold 1935

Why?

1. Why is the Human Dimension (HD) important?
2. Why would we want to incorporate human behaviour patterns into conservation?
3. Why would we be interested in human values?

Why?

- Humans are an integral part of the ecological system...
- There is invariably a legal obligation to do so...
- Failure to consider HD results in failed management...



Human Dimensions of Conservation



Definition :

*'The term human dimensions refers to **how and why humans** value natural resources, how humans want resources managed, and how humans affect or are affected by natural resources management decisions. Human dimensions inquiries strive to understand human traits and how to incorporate that understanding into management planning and actions. It covers a variety of ideas and practices including cultural, social, and economic values; individual and social behavior; demographics; legal and institutional frameworks of management; communication and education; and, decision-making processes of management.'*

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Human Dimensions of Conservation



1. How and why humans value nature
2. How humans affect nature
3. How humans want nature managed



How and why humans value nature



- Individual behaviour towards wildlife and nature is dictated by **beliefs** and **affective responses**
- **Beliefs** are information we hold **as true**
- **Affective responses** refers to **'feelings' or 'emotions'**, both positive and negative that we experience
- Beliefs and affects are key components of:
 - Attitudes
 - Norms
 - Values



How humans affect nature?

Human Behaviour includes all forms of **passive and active human behaviour** or human activities. The following are four broad categories relate to human behaviour towards natural environments:

1. Recreation, tourism & leisure
2. Urbanisation
3. Commerce, transportation and industry
4. Stewardship and public involvement

How humans want nature managed



Management of wildlife and protected areas:

- **Maintenance** of game populations
- **Sustainable use** of natural resources
- Preservation of **biological diversity**
- Preservation of **traditional lifestyles**

