DOING MORE WITH LESS:
Reaching Resilience Goals in the Northeast with Collaboration through Networks

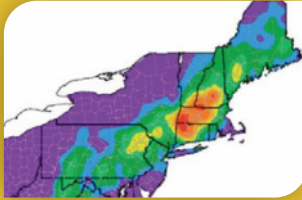Jill Weiss

Environmental Studies PhD Candidate,
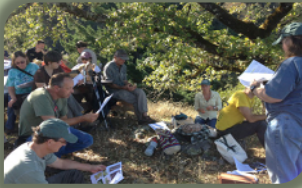Antioch University New England
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Monday, May 19, 2014
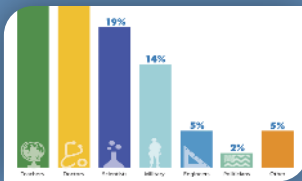Local Solutions: NE Climate Change Preparedness Conference

Challenges
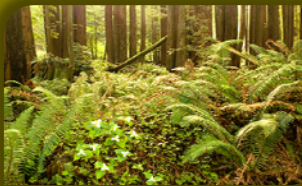
Networks: type, value and application

Collaboration in practice

How to measure?

How to sustain?

Wicked Problems

- Those looking at the problem cannot fully grasp its size and shape

- Those trying to solve the problem are part of the problem

- We may not have the right tools/ tools may not yet exist

- Problem is unique/ never happened before – so looking to the past in ineffective.

Adapted from Rittel & Webber 1973

Trends that create Barriers to Implementation

- Changing demographics
- Political polarization
- Shift in funding from government to private foundations; grants 1-2 years per
- Small grants to individual orgs less available
- Government agencies working with new restrictions
- Smaller staff/ No staff
- Workload and range

Addressing Barriers

For example, if it is desirable to apply:
- Vulnerability Assessments
- Structured Decision-Making
- Or other initiative where the participation of multiple stakeholders are required

- Purposeful Networks
- Deliberate Collaboration

Purposeful Networks

Types of Networks and examples

- ☐ Citizen Science
- ☐ Ecological Stewardship
- ☐ Public/ Private partnerships
- ☐ Civic or municipal network
- ☐ By Megaregion
- ☐ By Eco/ Bio Region
- ☐ [resource] Conservation Networks

Kennebec Woodland Partnership, ME; Cons. Agencies, Water agencies, Land Trusts, land owners, Forestry interests

Conservation Networks

☐ Conservation networks (CNs) are an association of individuals that cooperatively manage a resource or meet conservation goals.

☐ They are valuable because of their on the ground experience, shared expertise and interdisciplinary nature.

(Batterbury, 2003; Forman & Godron, 1986; Lankford, 1997; Svendsen & Campbell, 2008)
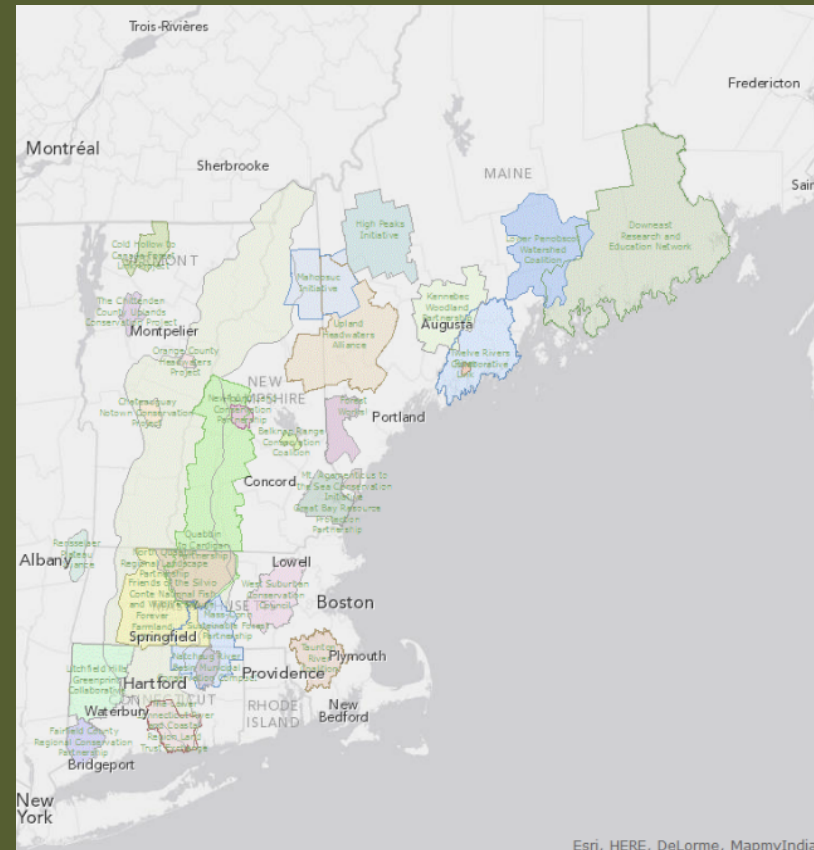
Value-added Knowledge

- CNs add value to knowledge by sharing among those with different skill sets, across content boundaries, physical barriers, and hierarchical levels.

- Innovation occurs as they pass knowledge along.

(Briske, 2012; McEathron, 2008; Reagans & McEvily, 2003; Rickenback, 2011; Zander & Kogut, 1995)

Purposeful Network Example: RCPs
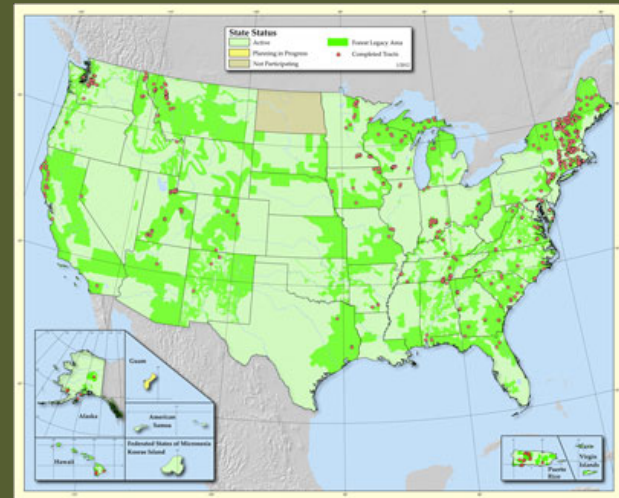
Regional Conservation Partnerships

- ☐ Land trusts, local governments, landowners and localized conservation action groups.

- ☐ They work together on management and conservation status of land in a particular region.

- ☐ The geographic range of each RCP varies in size from a few hundred to half a million acres.
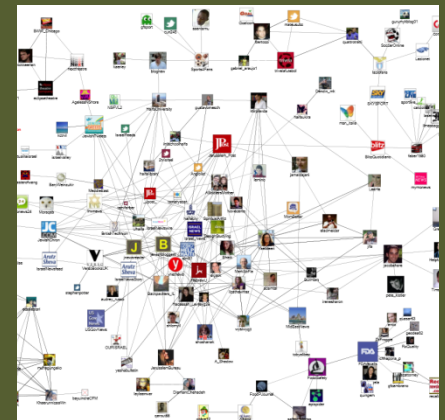
Example: RCPs

- Both a physical and psychological presence for policymakers and the public
- Coordinate for large parcel projects
  - Outright buys, Easements
- Coordinate and Leverage funds
  - Government & Foundation grants
- Match strengths with tasks
- Non compete
  - Formal agreements (MOUs), informal agreements
- Many function within a socio-professional network

Socio-professional networks

- As financial capital becomes more rare, *social capital* becomes more important
- Social Capital *"refers to the collective value of social networks and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other."* Putnam 2000
- Networks can *share and sort* an overload of information

Networks - other notes

- Not enough just to be networked
- Information sharing should be deliberate and relevant
- Invest in *boundary spanners*
- Network activity may ebb and flow over the life of an initiative
- Be okay with network transformation or fade out
- How best to collaborate in networks?
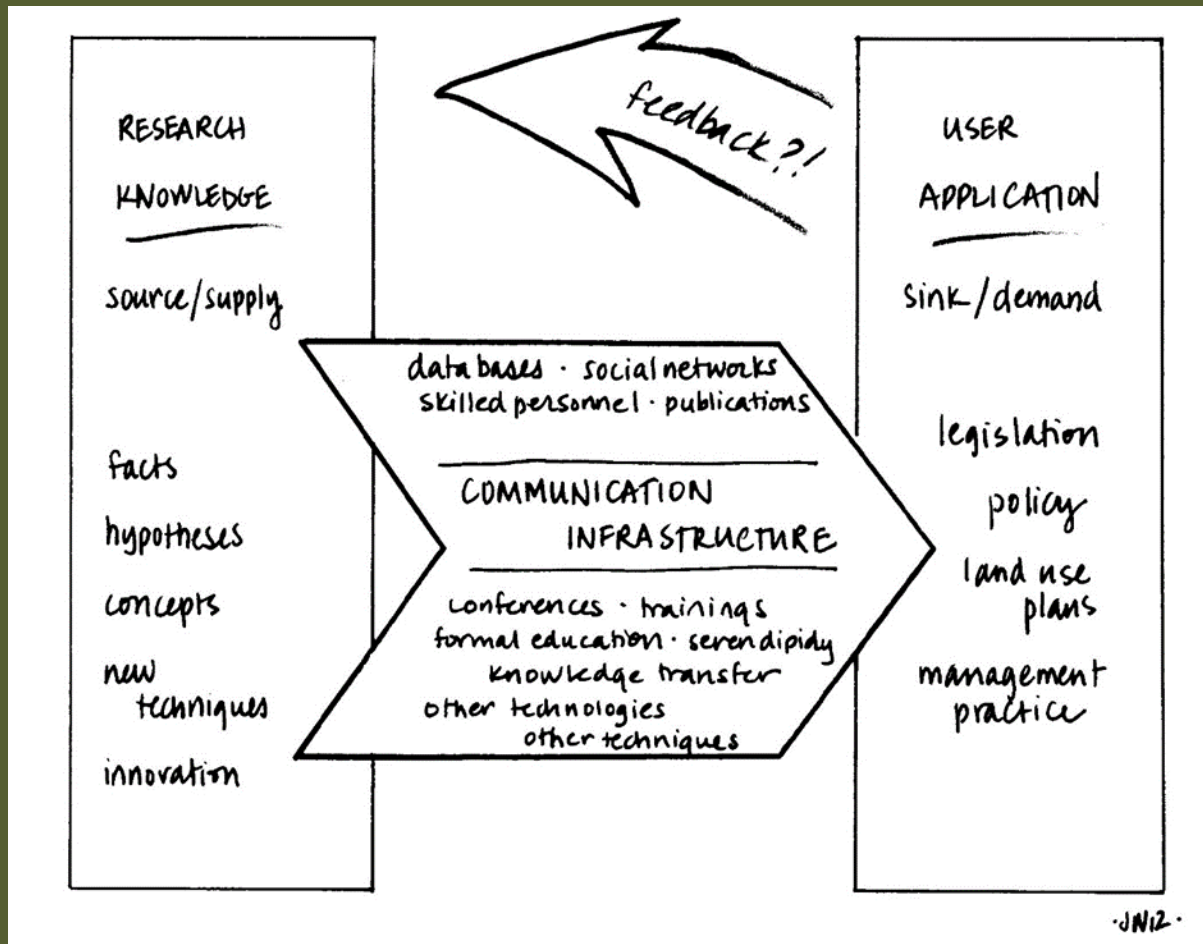
Deliberate Collaboration

Collaboration

- Happens between individuals, not organizations
- However, must be accepted as part of organizational culture
- Requires trust and high quality sharing
  - Knowledge Transfer
  - Communication Infrastructure

Knowledge Transfer and Communication Infrastructure

Adapted from Perera et al. 2007

Conditions for Collaboration

- Shared Mission and Values

- Real knowledge and expertise for task

- Goals, roles, timelines and deliverables clearly defined

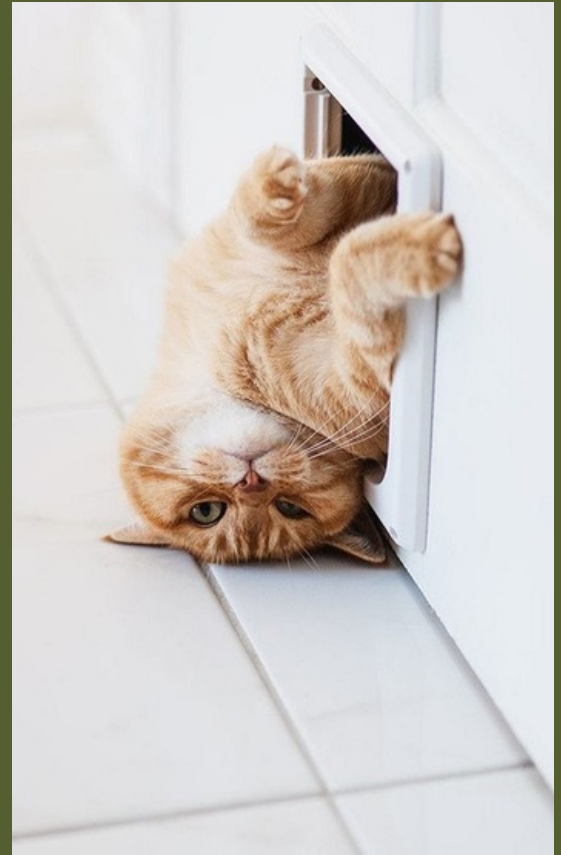- Face to face meetings

- What about formal agreements? MOUs?

Assessment and Sustainability

Assessment and Sustainability

How do we avoid collaboration fatigue and "organizational entropy"?

- Recognize and resolve conflicts quickly
- Get real about Resources and/or Financial support of your partners and the network as a whole
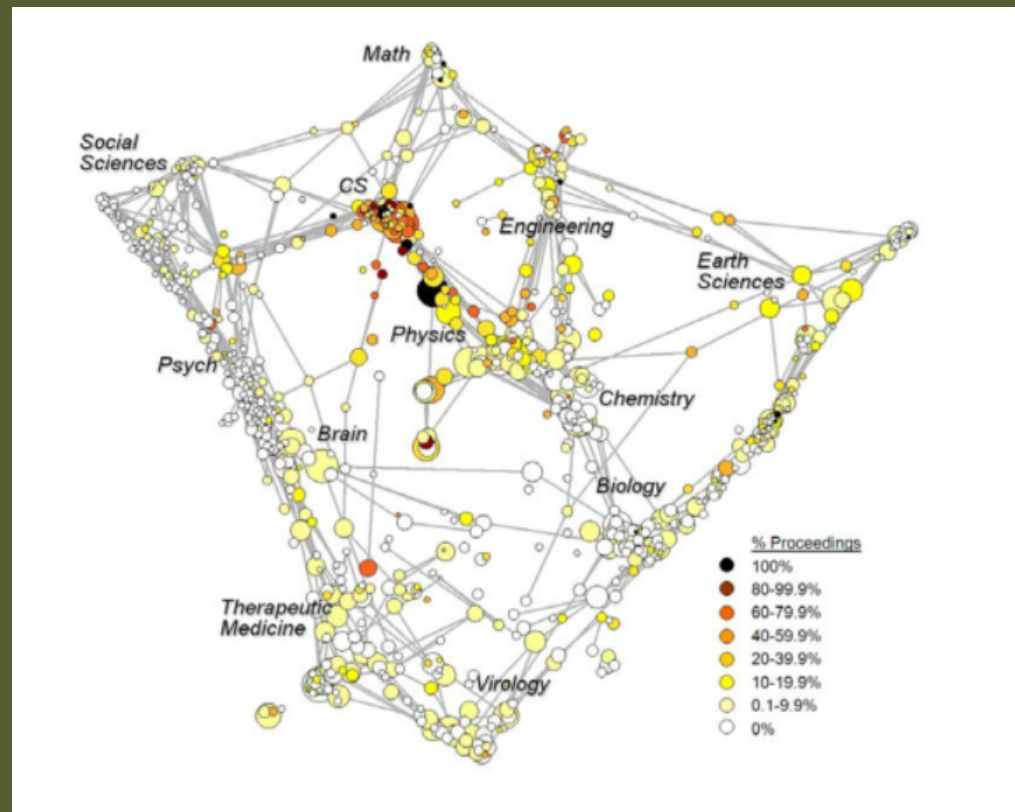- Be okay with dissolution

Assessment and Sustainability

☐ How do we know collaboration or our networks are working?

☐ Results – Was the goal met?

- ☐ Catalog progress statistically and visually
- ☐ Seek stakeholders outside the networks to gain their view

☐ Consider using interdisciplinary tools to optimize the effort

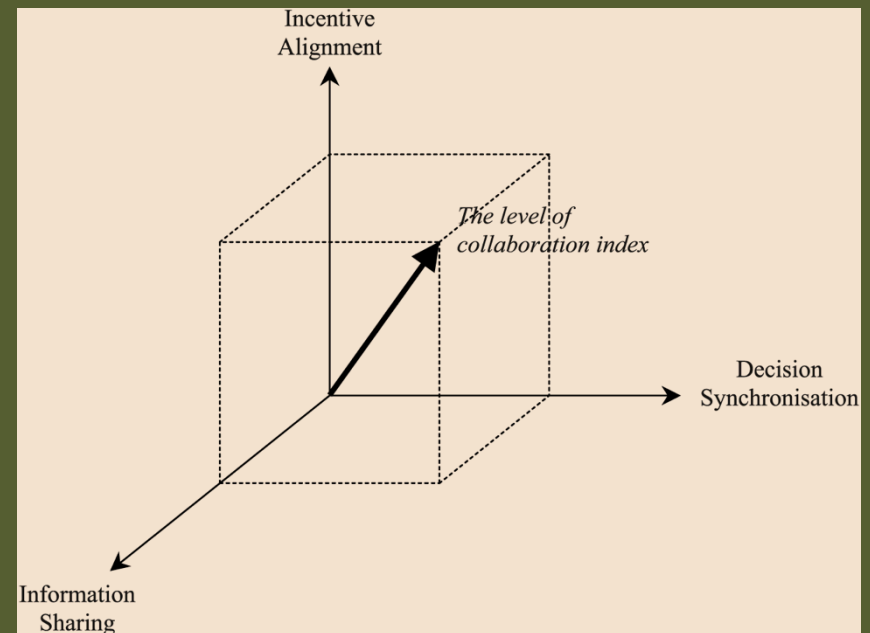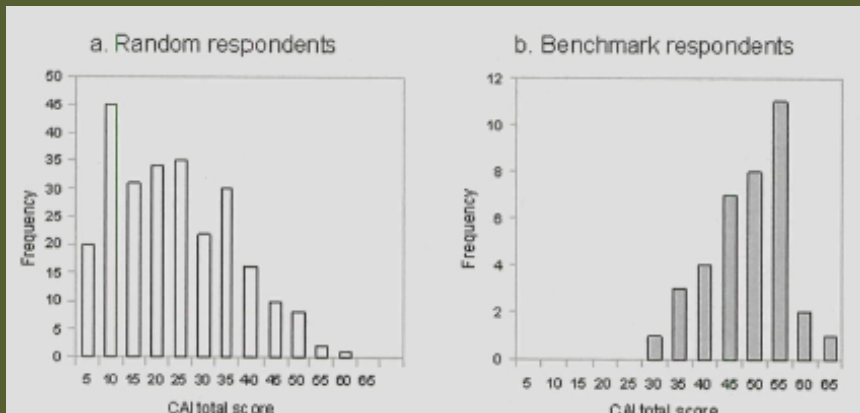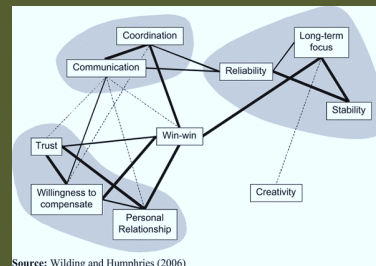# Connecting: SNA techniques in Sci-metrics

- Mapping relationships to identify potential collaborators

from Boyack, 2009

Measuring: Linking Activities with Goals

☐ Use indices to measure network and collaboration efficacy and correlate with other numbers: Land owners served, acres conserved, etc.

Source: Wilding and Humphries (2006)

Tools exist in other disciplines and sectors

- Social Network Analysis
- Science of Team Science & Scientometrics
- Education
- Hospital Administration
- Business and industry
- Conservation Psychology

Thank you

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