

Adapting Project Design to Local Conditions

Learning on the Fly in an Interagency Collaborative Effort

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HUMAN DIMENSIONS OF CLIMATE CHANGE Pilot Project

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATIVE



Emphasize partners as listed across bottom of slide:

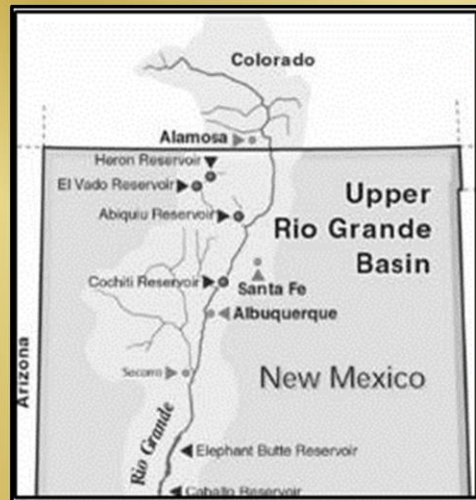
USGS, BLM, NPS, DOI, USFS, USFWS, NOAA, BOEM

Partners represented primarily by social scientists of multiple types, with a couple of climate change/ecologists mixed in.

All the partners are deeply interested in how agencies are working with local communities to address the effects of climate change on natural resources and the people who use them.

HDCC Pilot Project General Study Area

- Northern New Mexico
- Southern Colorado

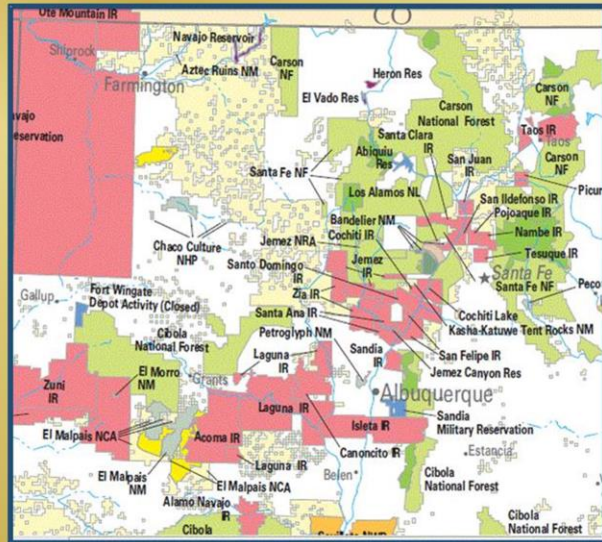


Pilot area chosen because researchers could access it easily.

American southwest is also generally thought to be region of greatest climate change effects over next 50 years.

Modern Land Status

Northern New Mexico



Highest concentration of different federally recognized Tribes in the United States. This area also contains the highest density of Spanish and Mexican land grants in the United States. The Hispanic occupation of the area dates to the early 1600's. Albuquerque and Santa Fe are national and international destination cities. Incredibly rich history and prehistory.

Human Dimensions of Climate Change Project: Initial Approach

GOALS

- Obtain local perspectives
- Use local knowledge
- Determine what information people need
- Develop a “bottom-up” approach

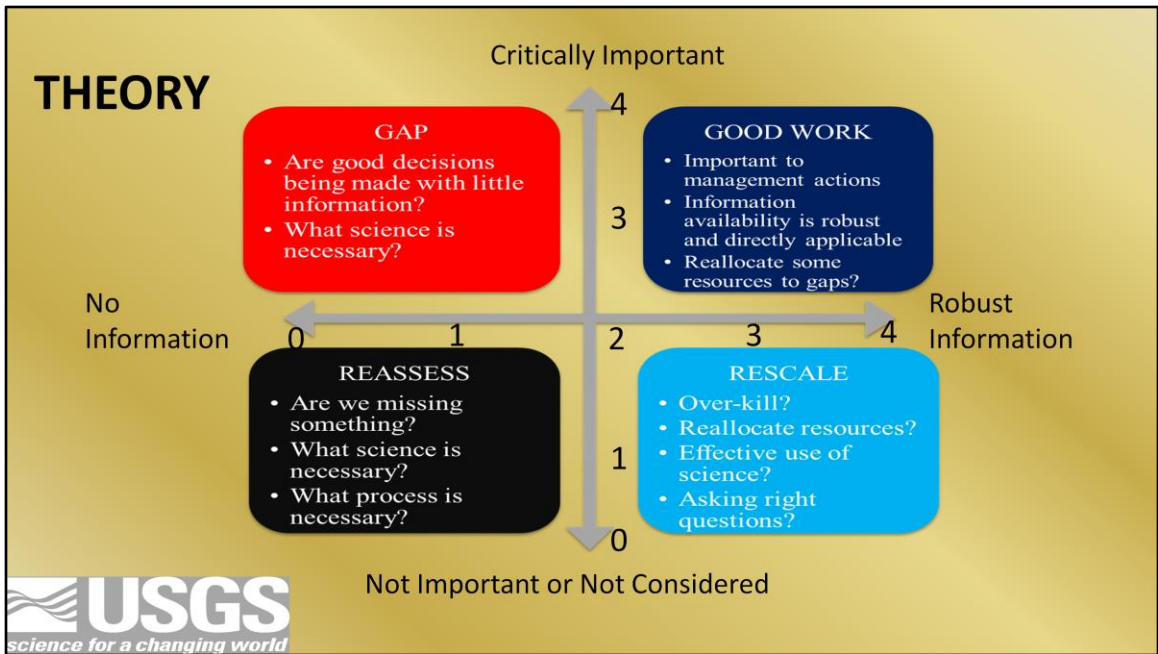
METHODS

- Facilitated general workshops
- Open discussion and workgroups

As determined by partners through multiple iterations and reviews.

- to better inform federal land management decisions
 - of social and economic conditions to identify climate change related concerns
- and what information people have to address their concerns
- in contrast to previous “top-down”

directives



Partner consensus was that this approach would be useful for determining the quality and quantity of information being used by “field level” federal land managers to assess the human dimensions of climate change.

First Workshop:

Albuquerque: April 14
Federal Land Managers

Results:

- Confusion about goals of workshop
- Multitude of approaches to the general topic of climate change
- Lack of actionable direction to address climate change
- Incorrect basic assumptions by design team
- Priorities driving pilot design did not match those of participants



Confusion over what a “human dimension” issue was.

Confusion between agency policies/definitions.

Misunderstanding about purpose of workshops.

Unsupported assumptions that most partner agencies were “on the same page” in understanding and addressing climate change.

Because initial assumptions were incorrect, questions about the quality and quantity of information being used to address climate change issues were incorrect.

Different priority levels and perspectives between agencies and even individual managers.

No implementation/operational level direction on what to do to address climate change related issues.

REALITY



Participant driven issue identification after first workshop in Albuquerque. Everything is a gap in information. This was like asking people to assess the quality of information they use to determine the usefulness of quantum mechanics. Participants didn't even know what questions to ask to figure out what information they needed.

Panic Induces Overnight Changes:

No longer assume participants:

- Had identified human dimension problems.
- Were actively addressing climate change issues.
- Had operational policies in place to address climate change issues.

Changes in Methods:

- More facilitated discussion.
- More focused questions and follow-ups.
- Greater emphasis on human dimension issues and less on information quantity and quality.



A realization by all concerned that the first workshop was a complete failure. A long drive from Albuquerque to Taos after the first workshop, and six people sitting in a hotel room until 2:30 am changing basic approach of the pilot.

Second Workshop:

Taos: April 15

Federal, State, Tribal Land
Managers

Results:

- Participants realize human dimension issues are not being addressed.
- Recognition of conflicting mandates.
- Increasing RATE of environmental change.
- Lack of operational policy that defines climate change issues.



Participants know that they are not currently addressing social and economic issues associated with climate change, because they can't currently clearly identify climate change related effects.

Conflicting regulatory mandates, such as preserving endangered species habitat in the face of environmental shifts

Increasing RATE of environmental change cannot be usefully addressed by current federal planning processes

Adaptations: Insights from workshops

- Do not assume that there is much familiarity with existing climate change policies.
- Start with natural resource quality and quantity issues;
- Re-focus the project on local perspectives and issues;
- Re-tool the approach to start with general human dimension questions;
- Move to more focused group settings and individual interviews.



Start with the known (natural resource issues); work toward the unknown, i.e., implications and concerns for local communities

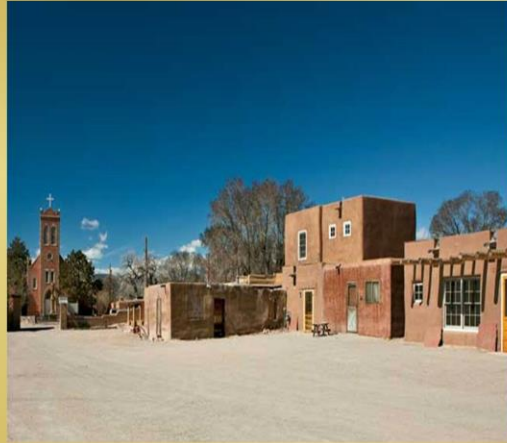
Refocus the inquiry from data quality to education/outreach/local perspectives

Redesign the project to increase knowledge and awareness of resources available to land managers to address human dimension issues, websites, publications, private sector efforts.

As the type of participants change, move toward focus group-type settings in which questions are clearly defined, and there are clear parameters for the discussion.

Next Steps: Local Community Views and Perspectives

- Recognize that long time residents of the study area will be even less familiar with climate change information and policies;
- Engage local people as facilitators, interpreters, and data collection assistants;
- Design more focused efforts and continue to learn about the perspectives and concerns of local communities;
- Communicate the messages about conflicting mandates and rate of change to decision makers.



Initial audience were mostly federal land managers. As the audience changes to local residents, increase ability to address language issues, different perceptions of the problems, cultural differences that may affect data release. Develop and be able to provide a general statement about what various federal land managers are currently doing about climate change.

Points for the Partnership

- Be aware of differing perceptions
- Look outside the partnership for reality checks
- Understand differing priorities
- Cultural differences (whether between communities or agencies) shape perception

