

Organizational Issues

Group II

Early Input for Problem Framing and Formulation

- NEON
 - Emphasis on LULC
 - Support from a Center for Modeling & Data Synthesis (~NCEAS)
 - RFI: Role for social scientists not prescribed -- emergent?
- CLEANER
 - Full range of economic, behavioral, perception, and decision-making studies
 - Centralized Program Office & Cybercollaboratory
 - Social Science participation in network design
- LTER
 - Social science has been added from the bottom up

Top down vs. Bottom up?

- Need strong centralized organization to support data collection, model development, interoperability and communication to others
 - Must be adaptive to emerging needs and evolving foci of local sites
- Need strong, local (site) groups of social and physical scientists working together on problems of local interest
 - Social scientists must be able to bring their own dependent variables to the table -- lasting collaborations

Ability to Utilize Existing Social Science Initiatives and Datasets

- Local site datasets should be comparable with national survey data (and as a result, datasets from other observatory sites)
- Interoperability across Observatories?

Social Science Data Compatibility

- Protocols are not already set up to integrate data from different social science projects
 - There is an opportunity right now to build a model for social data as it relates to ecological data.
 - The alternative is every Social Scientist inventing their own wheel; creating data sets which are often incompatible.
- > Need to support process for protocol development

How do we decide what Social Science to include?

- Different disciplines have different scopes.
- Should we leave it up to individuals?
 - Creates a smattering of data that is difficult to integrate
- A Social Science advisory council?
 - A collaborative group that would make data models and priorities available before projects are designed.
 - Could potentially ensure wide scale compatibility.

Current Social Science Knowledge Base

- Millennium Project revealed that we have minimal knowledge currently of indirect social drivers towards environmental change.

Idea:

Social Science Advisory Council

A committee of Social Scientists and Ecologists that meets regularly to determine and assess priorities in research.

Any system adopted must ensure flexibility.

- Should we allow Social Scientists to bring their own variables to their projects?
 - In NEON's example, the variables had to relate to NEON's priorities
- Deciding which questions take priority is extremely difficult, controversial.

Difficulty of Determining Priority

It can take years to get Social Scientists to agree on questions, data collection goals, language.

Such a body would have to be institutionalized in order to be effective.

- Even harder to make sure guidelines are being followed.
- High cost of actually bringing people.

How can we utilize technology and the Internet?

- Brining people together easier?
- We could actually use data collection from people's homes via electronic energy use sensors, water use sensors.

Ethics of Social Science Priorities

- Would a codified set of priorities set artificial limits on Social Science research?
 - NEON example
 - Social Science looks at Human use of water on a local scale

end

Human Impact

- Human impact can be measured, for instance in water quality.

