

Call for Papers - Interdisciplinary Workshop

Perspectives on Forest Conservation – tackling the frontier between policy and conservation science

Freiburg, Germany, 19th-21st June 2013

Background

Forest conservation and sustainable management have been subjects of increasing attention in recent years. At the global level, the REDD+ mechanism tackling deforestation and forest degradation has attracted unprecedented interest in the context of multidisciplinary scholarship. At national and subnational levels, there are an increasing number of studies that address forest conservation issues and conflicts all over the world. Many scholars point at growing pressure on forest ecosystems from different sides: competing land use interests, intensification of timber and forest management, bioenergy and related policies, as well as (globalizing) markets being only a few of the factors that are frequently addressed.

In this context, forest conservation strategies are of crucial importance. Taking a closer look, these strategies differ greatly with regard to the type of forest, but also the socioeconomic context and the respective 'tradition' of forest and conservation policy. While conservation concepts are informed by ecological research findings and knowledge, forest conservation policies follow their own political logics. They are marked by conflicting interests, beliefs, interpretations, and underlying knowledge cultures. Moreover, in several regions of the world, forest conservation policy is marginalized by political forces that are beyond the scope of the 'conservation community', some of which are mentioned above.

At the same time, ecological knowledge on forests is growing continuously, and, with it, the complexity of forest ecosystems becomes more and more apparent. "Old truths" of forest conservation are challenged by new evidence. Yet, also the necessity for long-term forest conservation strategies is reinforced. In forest conservation policy, growing complexity of ecological knowledge meets societal logics of simplification and polarization. Decision makers face challenging questions about the 'right' knowledge basis for forest conservation, the 'right' connection of knowledge with policy making, and finally the 'right' tools to conserve forests and forest biodiversity given pluralistic (and often antagonistic) societal demands and powerful market forces.

Focusing on academia, there is, on the one hand, a remarkable gap between both the social and ecological sciences research communities. This gap is reinforced by different ontological and epistemological assumptions, different disciplinary cultures and even 'languages'. This holds true when, for instance, a policy is analyzed from an 'ecological' and a 'social' perspective, and both seem to be incompatible.

Yet, on the other hand, there is growing interest in, and a pressing need to more effectively link the social and ecological science analysis of forest conservation. This comes with increasing acknowledgement of the necessity to take up interdisciplinary perspectives in order to provide a better knowledge base for complex forest conservation policy problems. These efforts encompass interdisciplinary research projects, joint data gathering and analysis, and even joint theory building, but also less systematic, but nevertheless innovative approaches for assessing and even bridging the disciplines.

Objectives of the workshop/Call for papers

In this workshop, we aim to address the frontier between forest ecology and conservation science, and the social and political sciences analysis of forest conservation. Our main goal is to facilitate, but also to critically reflect on bridges built for forest conservation. We have three objectives

- 1 To facilitate exchange between ecological and social science researchers on the topic of forest conservation, including sustainable management,
- 2 To provide a platform for intensive discussion on selected papers that tackle the frontier between both conservation ecology and social/political sciences,
- 3 To collate the most innovative contributions in a special issue publication of a relevant interdisciplinary journal, for instance, Ecology and Society.

For this purpose, we invite **theoretical and empirical papers** that

- combine both ecological and social science analysis of forest conservation related topics,
- assess the political feasibility and effects of ecological knowledge and conservation concepts for forest conservation policy making,
- address the role of ecological knowledge and concepts in forest policy conflicts and policy making,
- assess the role of diverse types of knowledge (ecological, social science) at the science/policy interface in forest conservation
- address innovative processes and instruments that aim to improve the communication of different types of knowledge in forest conservation policy

Participants

The workshop will provide a forum for scientists who are active in forest conservation research, including fields such as forestry, forest ecology, landscape ecology, and landscape management, as well as political/social science scholars from fields including policy analysis, anthropology, and rural sociology, who investigate forest conservation policy related questions. Most importantly, it offers an opportunity for scientists who are interested in an interdisciplinary exchange between ecology and policy/social science that addresses forest conservation related issues.

Deadlines

Please send an abstract (300 words) to Carolin Maier (carolin.maier@ifp.uni-freiburg.de) by **February 10th, 2013**. Notifications of acceptance will be sent to authors by **February 25th, 2013**. Complete conference papers are due by **May 31st, 2013**.

Costs

For contributing participants the costs of the workshop will be covered. Participants are expected to cover their own transportation and accommodation expenses as well as the cost of the official dinner. The workshop is sponsored by the German Federal Ministry on Education and Research and is organized within the European collaborative research project BeFoFu (www.befofu.org), which is funded under the European BiodivERsA Network (www.biodiversa.org).

Key note speeches

Our discussion during the workshop will be facilitated by the following key note speakers¹:

- **Louise Fortmann**; Professor of Natural Resource Sociology & **Justin Brashares**, Associate Professor (Wildlife Ecology, Conservation and Socioeconomics), both University of California, Berkeley: “How social scientists and conservationists can learn to speak with each other, and what they may have to say to each other”
- **Jerry F. Franklin**, Professor of Ecosystem Analysis, University of Washington & **K. Norman Johnson**, University Distinguished Professor, Oregon State University: “The opportunities and risks of “politicised” forest conservation sciences – lessons learned from the U.S. Pacific Northwest”
- **Juergen Bauhus**, Professor of Silviculture and Vice Dean of the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources, University of Freiburg,: “Forest Conservation – Dancing between values, science, and on-ground implementation”
- **Michael Pregerning**, Professor of Environmental Governance, University of Freiburg: “What's the problem? Theoretical folktales about ineffective science-policy interactions – the case of forest conservation”

Contact and organization

1 Scientific team

Georg Winkel & Metodi Sotirov (Forest and Environmental Policy Group, University of Freiburg, Germany)

Jessica De Koning & Esther Turnhout (Forest and Nature Conservation Policy Group, Wageningen University, The Netherlands)

Alistair Jump (University of Stirling, UK)

Susanne Winter (Technical University of Dresden, Germany)

Axel Gruppe (Technical University of Munich, Germany)

Gerhard Weiss (University of Life Sciences, Vienna, Austria)

Marieke Blondet (AgroParisTech, ENGREF, Nancy, France)

2 Contact

Georg Winkel: georg.winkel@ifp.uni-freiburg.de

Carolin Maier: carolin.maier@ifp.uni-freiburg.de

¹ Titles of keynote speeches are preliminary.