



Climate and Energy Decision Making Sponsored Seminar

Dave D. White

Associate professor in the Arizona State University School of Community Resources and Development and Director of the NSF's Decision Center for a Desert City



Presenting on:

“Boundary Work for Water Sustainability and Urban Climate Adaptation: Lessons from the Decision Center for a Desert City”

November 12, 2012

12 noon

(Lunch served at 11:50 am)

129 Baker Conference Room

Department of Engineering and Public Policy

Seminar Abstract: Recent sustainability research has focused on the role of knowledge-action-systems as networks of actors and their future visions, institutions, and the practices and dynamics of knowledge production for environmental decision making. This work highlights the significance of active boundary work to construct, manage, and enhance the interfaces between stakeholders for the co-production of credible, salient, and legitimate knowledge for action. While there is increasing agreement on the broad principles of boundary work, developed through a growing body of case studies, there remains a need to develop a systematic and generalizable explanation of the determinants of effective boundary work and process for evaluating outcomes. In particular, the question remains of which specific boundary work activities and which actor-networks and institutional forms are most likely to produce desired durable outcomes. In this seminar, Dr. White addresses this question with illustrations from the Decision Center for a Desert City (DCDC), an NSF-funded trans-disciplinary collaborative group designed to bridge science and policy for water sustainability and urban climate adaptation in central Arizona. He will discuss challenges inherent in designing, managing, and reflexively evaluating knowledge-action-systems for sustainable development.

Speaker Bio: Dave White is associate professor in the Arizona State University (ASU) School of Community Resources and Development and Director of the National Science Foundation's Decision Center for a Desert City (DCDC), which studies water-management decisions in the face of growing climatic uncertainty in central Arizona. Dr. White also holds appointments at ASU as Senior Sustainability Scientist with the Global Institute of Sustainability and affiliate faculty with the Consortium for Science, Policy, and Outcomes and the School of Public Affairs. Dr. White's research focuses on developing theory and methods for linking knowledge to action for sustainable resource management. With DCDC, he has developed and studied processes, outcomes, and institutional forms of boundary organizations for the co-production of knowledge and decisions; identified divergent perspectives between stakeholder groups at the science-policy nexus; and tested competing methods for gathering information on sensitive topics from decision makers. This work has contributed to the development and refinement of new tools and techniques for collaborative environmental decision making such as DCDC WaterSim. Dr. White is a recipient of the ASU President's Medal for Social Embeddedness. He received his Ph.D. in Forestry from Virginia Tech.

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