Community engagement, advocacy, and the application of science in the Boise River Basin

RQ: How is science used to influence water use and management in the Boise River Basin?

Objective

The purpose of this research was twofold. First, we evaluated how nonprofit groups advocating for support of ecosystem services in the Boise River Basin are using science in their respective activities. Second we evaluated how elite stakeholders incorporate both science and stakeholders into their decision making.

Methods

- Built database of over 500 stakeholders
- Identified 501(c)3 nonprofits working to restore, enhance, protect, or preserve the natural world. N=13
- Identified elite stakeholders working to influence decisions regarding water use and management in the Boise River Basin. N=321

Nonprofits

- NGOs’ primary roles are of advocacy, education and engagement.
- Groups tend to both collaborate and compete as they position themselves for influence.
- NGOs use science to demarcate their own identities as well as influence decision makers.
- Science is obtained through consultants, citizen science, staff, and state/federal agencies.

Elite Stakeholders

- Elite stakeholders represent a diversity of organizations.
- Influencers and decision makers rely heavily on information from government agencies.
- Organizations tend to seek out stakeholders when making decisions.

Results

Survey Respondents’ Organizational Affiliation

- Other
- Agricultural Interest
- Business Interest
- Government Agency
- Native American Tribal Community
- Non-profit NGO Group
- Policy or Law
- Recreational Users
- Scientific

Survey Respondents’ Engagement of Stakeholders

- yes 18.16%
- no 73.47%
- don’t know 8.37%

Survey Respondents’ Use of Information

- Colleagues
- Government/Agency Reports or Datasets
- Media
- Non-Profit/NGO Groups
- Professional Journals
- Public Leaders and Authorities
- Surveys
- Teachers
- Field/Case Studies
- Personal Observations
- Professional or University Scientists
- Public Popular Opinion
- Other

This research was made possible by the Bullitt Foundation and by the NSF EPSCoR Program and the National Science Foundation, award#IIA1301792.