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Special Issue: Strengthening bidirectional linkages between social and ecological systems in landscape ecology

Guest Editors

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Theme & Objective

Landscape ecology research has broadened its scope and study systems are frequently conceptualized as socio-ecological, socio-environmental, or coupled natural-human systems (“coupled systems” as follows). However, many of these endeavors emphasize ecological patterns and processes as the focal dependent variable or use ecological questions to drive the research. Fewer emphasize a social focus on bidirectional linkages or feedbacks, or put forth a social research question to drive the analyses. Challenges to social science components of coupled systems research include lack of social science-specific metrics and terminology, mismatch of conceptual theory and system of study, mismatch of ontologies and epistemologies, disciplinary gaps in knowledge about systems of interest, integration of qualitative and quantitative information, few large-scale and longitudinal datasets, and mismatch in temporal and spatial scales of analysis. Furthermore, criticisms exist about the quality of environmental social science research because of inadequate social science expertise in associated data collection and analysis.

These topics were presented at the “Integrating social science in landscape ecology research - challenges and opportunities” symposium during [IALE-North America 2021 Annual Meeting](#) held on April 12 - 16, 2021 virtually.

In this special issue, we aim to highlight examples that describe:

1. social science contributions or components as feedbacks connected to ecological systems at the landscape level;
2. strengthening bidirectional linkages between social science and landscape ecology;
3. how social science and landscape ecology are better integrated into ongoing research.

Contributions should address the basic question: *how can social science and landscape ecology be better integrated in my research?* We are especially interested in contributions that go beyond unidirectional relationships and identify social drivers and ecological responses and feedbacks between them. Also of interest are feedbacks within the social subsystems, and gaps in representation of social complexities.

We invite theoretical contributions, contributions from empirical studies collecting primary data about social and environmental processes that drive changes in coupled systems, and modeling studies emphasizing process-based approaches. [Students and Early Career Researchers](#) are especially encouraged to submit their research. Since we hope to have constructive examples that address

challenges of coupled systems research with a social focus, we ask contributors to clearly identify in the manuscript text relevance to items 1-3 above.

Pre-submission enquiries are welcome.

→ Submission Deadline: December 15, 2021

- Please follow the [submission guidelines](#).
- Please submit online via [Editorial Manager](#) and select article type “*SI - Strengthening bidirectional linkages*”.

→ Expected Publication: 2022

(Accepted articles will be made available [Online First](#) on an ongoing basis.)

About the Guest Editors

Dr. Anita T. Morzillo researches interactions between human activities and natural resources using tools from both natural and social science. Broad research areas include landscape ecology and human dimensions (social science), with applications for wildlife management, forest management, water resources, urban ecosystems, outdoor recreation, rural communities, and human-nature conflict within the wildland-urban interface. Dr. Morzillo’s research activities can be viewed [here](#).

Dr. Jennifer A. M. Koch researches integrated approaches for modeling and analysis of socio-environmental systems with applications for natural resource management, conservation planning, and sustainability solutions. She furthermore focuses on the synthesis of qualitative and quantitative information for simulation modeling. More about Dr. Koch’s research interests can be viewed [here](#).

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