

Uncovering Relational Governance in Wildlife Conservation

Humans are inherently relational beings. Strong, positive relationships between humans produce lower rates of anxiety, depression, and more trusting and cooperative relationships. Humans also have inescapable inter-relationships with the natural world, on which they depend for survival. Aldo Leopold pondered these interconnections in the early 20th Century, but wildlife conservation entities are still learning how to govern these dynamics and doing so in the face of unprecedented challenges. This seminar will convey that wildlife conservation as an institution needs to be transformed to meet 21st Century challenges by embracing relational thinking. I will discuss how my lab's funded research on communication strategies, self-governance, and institutional alignment in the context of land ownership helps us uncover the conditions and means (what is put in place) needed for wildlife conservation entities to improve how they can master the art of governing complex and inescapable human-nature relations.