



Lecture 1: Civic Ecology

Episode 2: Civic Ecology Principles and Values

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Overview of the Lecture

Episode 1: Introducing Civic Ecology

Episode 2: Civic Ecology Principles and Values

Episode 3: Interview



Learning Outcomes

- An emerging distinctive community-based systems approach to sustainability, referred to as civic ecology.
- A postmodern relational (ecological) paradigm oriented towards interconnectedness, self-organization and co-evolutionary dynamics.
- An ethical system rooted in a deep sense of kinship and mutuality with the larger community of life on Earth.
- An adaptive learning approach combining scientific and local knowledge to maximize flexibility and responsiveness during interventions.



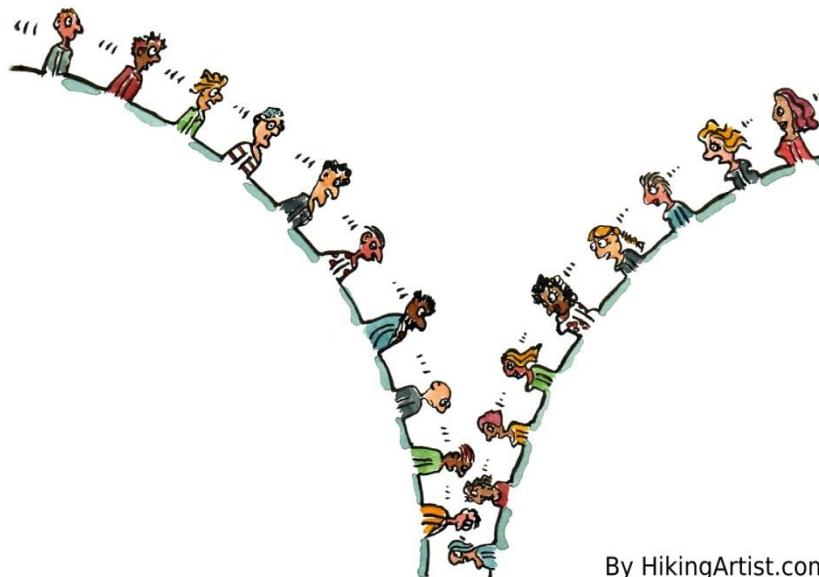
Structure of Episode 2

1. Civic Ecology Principles (Part II)
2. Learning and Working Together
3. Civic Ecology Values



Principle 5

We cannot do it alone.



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We Cannot Do It Alone

- Central to civic ecology is an adaptive community learning (ACL) process concerned with developing understanding and action.
- Embedded in the concept of ACL are the principles and practices of collaborative inquiry and adaptive management.
- Collaborative inquiry is a participatory, democratic process concerned with bringing together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others (Reason 2002).
- Adaptive management is an iterative learning-by-doing approach to management.



Learning Together

- Collaborative inquiry is a systematic approach to developing understanding and action.
- A way of working with other people who have similar concerns and interests, in order to:
 - Understand their world, make sense of their lives and develop new and creative ways of looking at things.
 - Learning how to act to change things they may want to change and find out how to do things better.



Learning Together

In collaborative inquiry all the active subjects are fully involved as co-researchers in all research decisions regarding to both content and method.

All participants:

- Are involved in the design and management of the inquiry.
- Get into the experience and action that is being explored.
- Are involved in making sense and drawing conclusions.
- Can take initiative and exert influence on the process.



Learning Together

Collaborative inquiry is about community, democracy and the natural world within which we exist and interact.

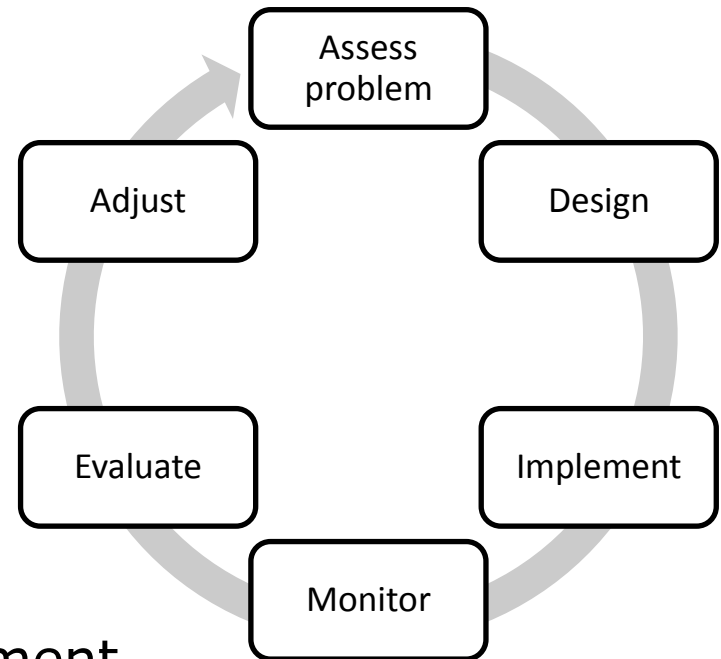
Engaging people into active learning within communities of practice; thinking, acting and learning together to understand each other's perspectives.

- **Investigating** - where are we now?
- **Visioning** - where do we want to be?
- **Designing & Implementing** – How do we get there?
- **Charting progress** - How do we know if we are getting there?



Working Together

- Adaptive management is an approach to management relying on the collaboration and participation of a diverse set of actors.
- Fostering a governance system that encompasses complexity, cross-scale linkages and social learning.
- Focusing on the ability of systems to learn/adapt while facing shocks and long-term pressures.
- Continual evaluation of management policies and practices against experimental outcomes (*learning-by-doing*).





Working Together

Developing strategies that are sensitive to feedback (both social and ecological) and oriented towards building resilience and adaptive capacity.

Such strategies include:

- Dialogue among interested groups and actors
- Developing complex, redundant and layered institutions
- Combining institutional types, designs and strategies that facilitate experimentation and learning



Working Together

Traditional Management Adaptive Management

- Goal oriented
- Controlling change
- Focusing on single variables and parts
- Causal relationships
- Interested in prediction
- Eliminating uncertainty
- Scientific epistemology
- Command and control/technocratic

- Direction oriented
- Facilitating change
- Focusing on sets of relations & the whole
- Emergence
- Interested in possibility
- Embracing uncertainty
- Diverse epistemologies
- Democratic/participative



Effects on Systems

Traditional Management

- Standardization
- Homogenization
- Dependency

- Externally directed
- Dysfunctional emergent properties
- Poor ability to respond to change
- Unsustainability

Adaptive Management

- Diversity and innovation
- Heterogeneity/coherence
- Autonomy-in-relation at all levels
- Self-organization
- Healthy emergent properties
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Greater sustainability



Institutional Support

Adaptive management significantly influenced by the extent to which social institutions:

- Facilitate social learning
- Develop effective networks
- Store local knowledge and experience
- Foster innovation/flexibility in problem-solving
- Empower community members



Civic Ecology Values

- Civic ecology principles and practices imply and are expressed through a changed set of thinking assumptions or habits.
- Giving rise to or affirming a set of values which reflect a sense of mutuality, of belonging and meaning in life:

sufficiency

conservation

equity/justice

community

respect

diversity

inclusion

democracy

self-reliance

autonomy-in-relation

participation

resilience



Civic Ecology Values

- Instead of an ethos of manipulation, control and dependence, civic ecology emphasizes “capacity building”.
- Facilitating and nurturing self-renewal and self organization in the individual and community as a necessary basis for systems health and sustainability.
- Values such as differentiation, empowerment, self-worth, critical thinking, cooperation, creativity and participation are resonant with this perspective.



Conclusion

- Human communities will become increasingly just and sustainable if their citizens understand, are committed to, and share, a set of purposes and moral and ecological principles.
- Shared purposes and principles cannot be handed down from above – they must be developed from the bottom-up through social learning and citizen participation.





Exercises for Self-Study

1. Why does a detached, instrumental rationality promote inequality, alienation and ecological degradation?
2. What does civic ecology mean and what does it seek to achieve?
3. How can civic engagement and the performance of civic duties promote individual and social wellbeing?
4. Discuss the principles of civic ecology and their relevance to a more just and sustainable society.



References

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