

# Hill Country Conservation: A Network Approach

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# Presentation

## Preface



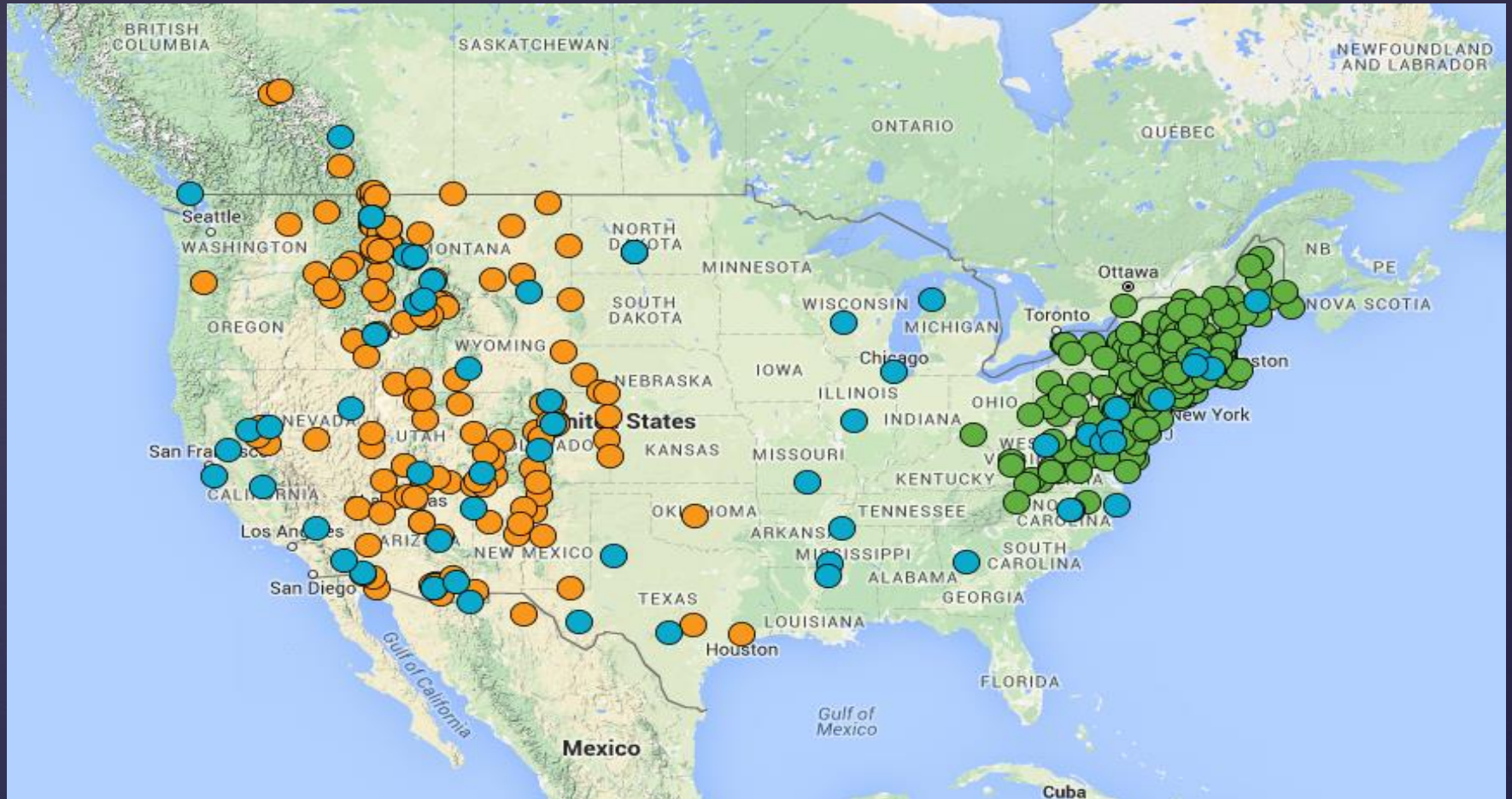
## Two Questions:

- 1. How can we use the theories, tools, and insights from social science to develop innovative strategies that enhance our ability to achieve land and water conservation goals in the Texas Hill Country?*
- 2. How can we develop and grow a network for large-scale social and environmental impact?*

Growing numbers of conservationists, policy makers, and practitioners agree that new approaches are required to address the most important land and water issues facing North America.



Over 300 initiatives identified as and/or self-identify as “Large Landscape Conservation”



Large Landscape Conservation: wide-angle, systems view that sees every landscape as an intricately connected community of living entities sustained by a wide-ranging community of people

***Conservation social network*** - a set of relationships between stakeholders involved in or affected by conservation/environmental initiatives (water, land, climate, biodiversity, etc.), including individuals, government and non-government organizations











# Hill Country Land and Water Conservation Network Research and Strategy

## Research Questions:

- ⌘ What does the current Hill Country conservation social network look like?
- ⌘ How are people talking about threats and opportunities? And potential for working together better?
- ⌘ What are drivers and drawbacks to collaboration?

# Preliminary Results:

## Drivers and Drawbacks to Hill Country Collaboration

### Drivers:

- ⌘ Build support for initiatives – grassroots support is political power
- ⌘ Increase capacity for communication
- ⌘ Leverage resources to accomplish shared goals
- ⌘ Relationship and trust building

“There is not enough local support for the scale of what we need to do...it requires money, money requires politics...to change politics you need grassroots support”

### Drawbacks:

- ⌘ Sharing credit for accomplishments
- ⌘ Takes time, takes resources, takes extra effort at communication
- ⌘ Partnering requires more time and energy
- ⌘ Balancing deliverables of organization with needs of group

“This isn’t my grant – I support this, but I can’t lead a committee”



# Hill Country Land and Water Conservation Network Research and Strategy

## Activities and Objectives:

- ⌘ Convene a Roundtable of interested peoples
- ⌘ Make recommendations for strategic networking to strengthen linkages between organizations across scales and sectors
- ⌘ Catalyze a conversation about prioritizing conservation actions using measures of social connectivity
- ⌘ Build and sustain a dynamic network

## **Inform**

Collect and share information on the theory, practice, policy, and performance of local and regional initiatives

## **Connect**

Link people and organizations through workshops, events, peer-to-peer exchanges, and the web to build personal and professional relationships

## **Build and Sustain a Dynamic Network**

## **Investigate**

Examine needs and opportunities: identify gaps in knowledge and practice; examine policy and practical barriers; explore methods of assessing regional network performance

## **Support**

Promote and support a network and large landscape approach as a solution to issues of human, wildlife, cultural, and ecological health.



# Network Governance

## A Continuum of Responses



<sup>1</sup>intermediary organization: an agent who acts as a link between parties



## Adapting to Change in the Crown of the Continent

### An Ecosystem Scale Approach to Collaborative Management

Reuling, Johnson, Higgins, Bixler, Williams, Tabor



Roundtable on  
the Crown  
of the Continent

# Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent

Figure 1: Pre-2013 Adaptive Management Initiative Organizations. The map below illustrates how different organizations were connected, and how strongly they were connected, prior to the start of the Adaptive Management Initiative. The size of the "nodes" represents cumulative incoming and outgoing ties.

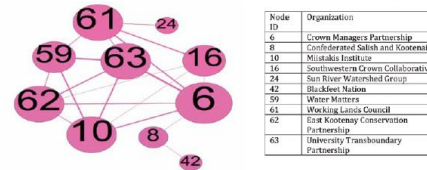
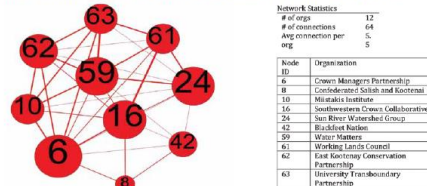
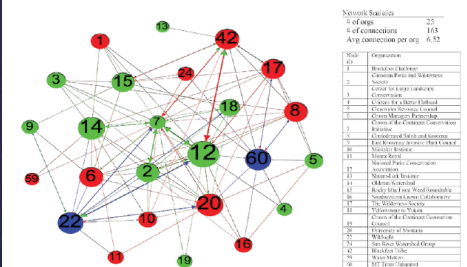


Figure 2: 2013 Adaptive Management Initiative Organizations. The map below illustrates how different organizations were connected, and how strongly they were connected, after one year of the Adaptive Management Initiative. The size of the "nodes" represents cumulative incoming and outgoing ties.



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Figure 3: 2015 Adaptive Management Initiative Organizations. The map below illustrates how different organizations were connected, and how strongly they were connected, after three years of the Adaptive Management Initiative. Color indicates the year that the organization joined the AMI initiative (red=2013, green=2014, blue=2015).



From 2013 to 2014, the core organizations in the AMI network expanded from 12 to 21 organizations and the number of ties expanded from 64 to 169. In 2014, some of the most central organizations in the network included: the National Parks Conservation Association, the Center for Ecosystem Science, the Crown Managers Partnership, the Mistaken Institute, the Wilderness Society, and the Crown of the Continent Conservation Initiative. Many of these organizations were new to the AMI network that year.

This highlights a very important point on evaluating network progress and network change: the network will go through cycles and different phases. In many cases, it wasn't that the organizations were necessarily "new" to the network, but that the role they played had changed (for example, from being an organization offering project support to being a lead organization on a proposal).

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<https://www.dropbox.com/s/quab1szrqcnfchs/Crown%20Primer.pdf?dl=0>



# What Can You Do?

Please take the Network Survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/hillcountrynetwork>

Give us your thoughts – come talk to us at Table Talk!