

A Framework for Analyzing the Structure of Partnerships for Collaborative Environmental Management

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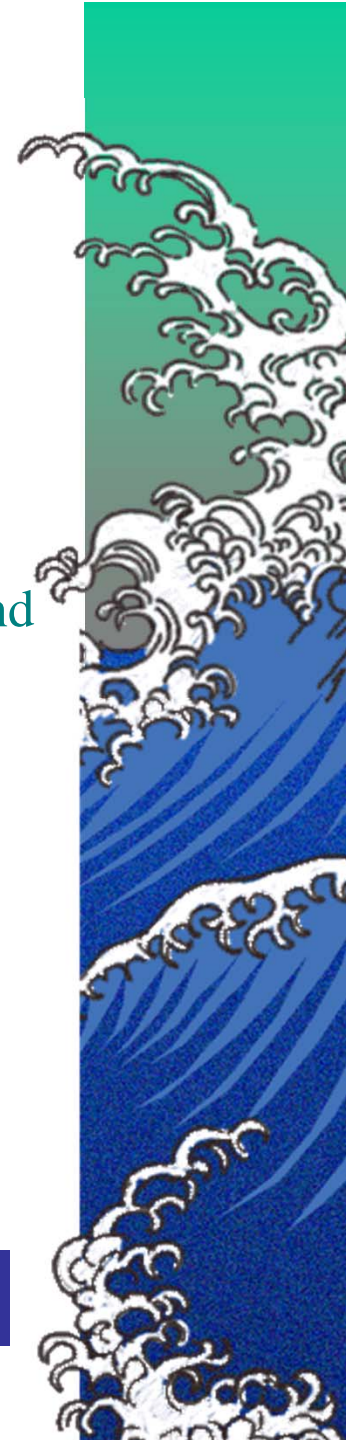
Collaborative Environmental Management

- **Common themes**
 - Approaching problems from a “systems” perspective
 - Stronger scientific basis behind policies
 - Public participation and stakeholder involvement
 - Integrating and coordinating policies and programs
- **Emphasis on single cases and “lessons learned” rather than theory development**
 - Unclear what factors influence the effectiveness of CEM partnerships
- **Little focus on the structural properties of “partnerships”**
 - Examine what CEM partnerships “do” without examining how their strategies and structures influence these processes



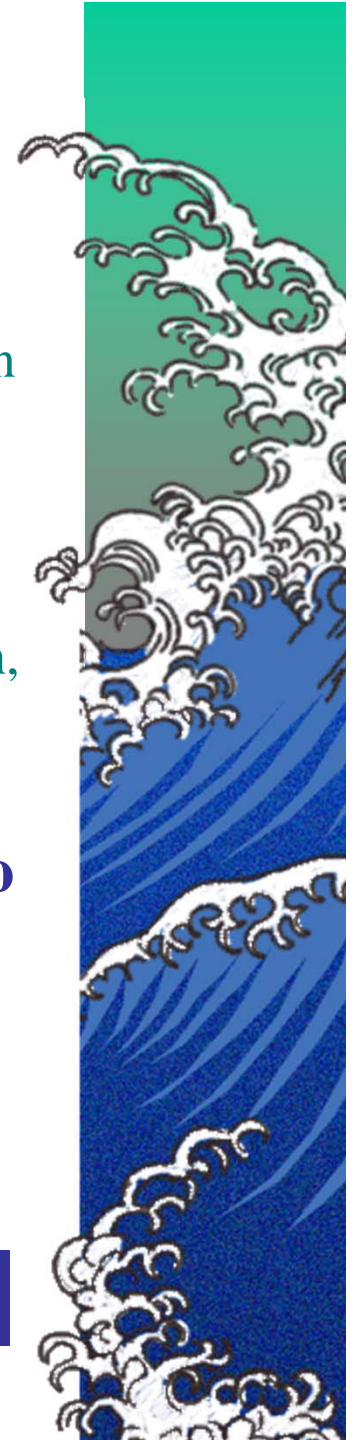
CEM has a Strong Institutional Orientation

- **Problem solving capacity is widely dispersed, few actors succeed by acting alone**
 - Collaborate by modifying policies, changing the structure of institutional arrangements, improving coordination, etc.
 - Politics, power, negotiation, compromise, conflicting values, and lack of resources (e.g., money, staff, authority, etc.) impose practical limits on how much “collaboration” is possible
- **Partnerships are often formed to jointly solve problems and improve the governance of interorganizational networks**



Obstacles to Theory Building

- **Lots of research little agreement**
 - Example: no agreement on the answers to the “big questions” in public network management proposed by Agranoff and McGuire (2001) a decade ago
- **No consistency in definitions**
 - scholars within the fields of management, public administration, public policy, political science, and sociology tend to use different terminology and theoretical perspectives
- **How can you build theory or provide sound advice to practitioners if you don't agree on what you are studying?**



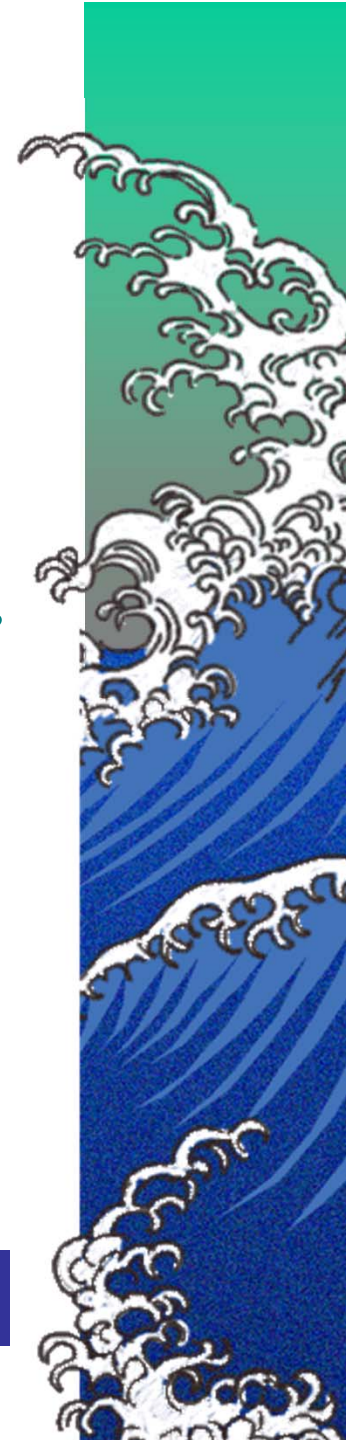
Obstacles to Theory Building

- **Is “collaboration” a**
 - New type of public management
 - Process
 - Network/network Process
 - A second-order organizational arrangement
- **Few attempts to link together these competing perspectives**
 - Different aspects of the same interorganizational phenomena



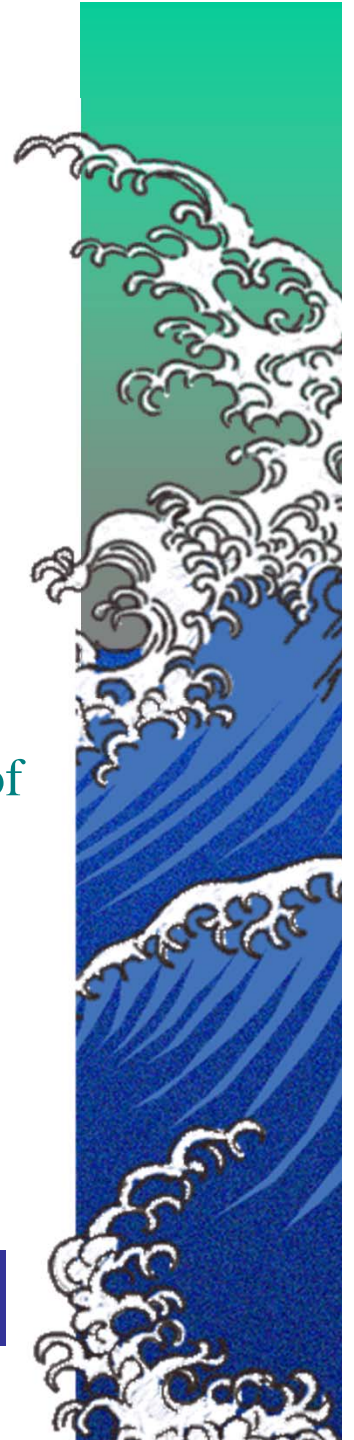
Collaboration is defined as

- **Any joint activity by two or more organizations intended to create value by working together rather than separately**
 - Interactive process involves an autonomous group of rational actors who use shared rules, norms, or organizational structures to act or make collective decisions
 - Politics, bargaining, negotiation, and compromise become critical control mechanisms because organizations remain relatively autonomous
 - Exchange mechanisms tend to be social
 - Participation may require action/contributing resources



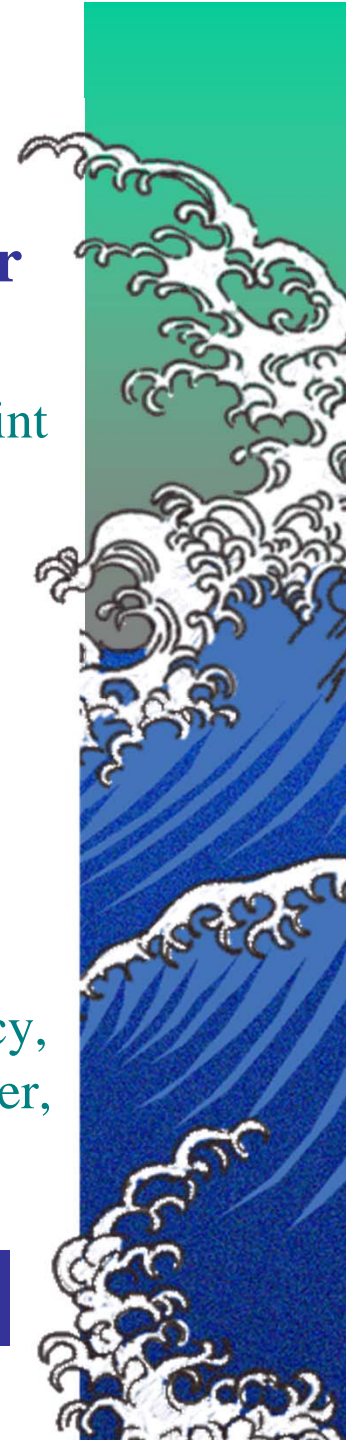
Collaboration as a Network Process

- **Action sets**
 - Groups of organizations that form temporary or permanent alliances for a limited purpose or common area of involvement
 - Collaboration/Collaborative Partnership
 - Actions Sets at different levels
- **Interorganizational network**
 - Totality of all of the organizations connected by a certain type of relationship and is typically bounded by a common orientation such as a policy area, type of service, or a geographic area
 - Policy space that CEM works within



Collaborative Partnerships

- **An organization whose membership consists of other organizations (and in some cases individuals)**
 - When organizations embrace collaborative processes, make joint decisions, and act as a single entity – new organization
 - Membership requires duties, obligations, and resource
- **Different terms in use**
 - Partnerships, coalitions, alliances/strategic alliances, consortiums, network broker, network administrative organizations, collaborative organizations
- **Different functions**
 - Convener, catalyst for action, conduit for information, advocacy, organizer, funder, technical assistance provider, capacity builder, partner, dispute resolver, or facilitator



Central Arguments in the Paper

- **CEM participants should “think holistically, act strategically”**
 - Lots of choices about how to “collaborate”, particularly when it comes to scale/boundaries, issues, and who to involve
 - As scale increases, so to do scope of problems, actors, and institutions involved
- **Formation of a CEM partnership involves strategic choices that shape its structural characteristics**
- **The strategy and structure of the CEM partnership also influence its processes and what it can and cannot do**



Determining the Policy Space for CEM

- **Consistency**
 - *Horizontal*: organizations at a particular level pursue the same policy for the same issue
 - *Vertical*: organizations at different levels pursue the same policy for the same issue
- **Comprehensiveness is viewed in terms of**
 - *Space* (geographic scale), *actor* (proportion of actors involved), *issue* (proportion of interdependent issues), and *time* (long range view of the consequences and ability to solve problems)
- **Aggregation**
 - Extent to which problems and policy alternatives are framed from an “overall” perspective rather than from a particular actor



CEM Partnerships Require Choices About

- **Nature of the partnership and what it should do**
 - Space (geographic scale), actors, issues, and timeframe
 - Typically they are organized around one or more focal problem(s) that motivate collective action
- **Who gets to make decisions? How will decisions be made?**
 - Need some process for aggregating preferences and making decisions over some period of time
- **What will be done? How will it be done?**
 - How will joint actions be coordinated
 - Horizontal consistency is often easier to achieve than vertical consistency



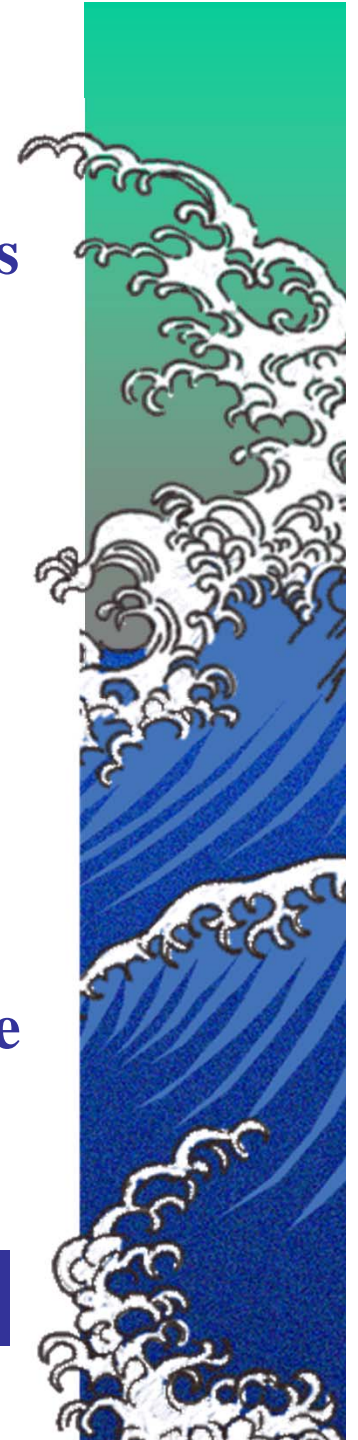
Framework for Comparative Analysis

- **Based on work of Elinor Ostrom and her colleagues**
 - Institutional analysis focuses on examining rules used to structure order among humans
 - Rules can be formal (e.g., laws, policies, regulations, etc.) or informal (e.g., shared understandings)
- **The “structure” of a CEM partnership is the product of 3 interrelated sets of rules**
 - Boundary (member and strategy)
 - Decision (preference aggregation, distribution of power, distribution of roles or responsibilities, and, distribution of participation)
 - Coordination (exchange, monitoring, dispute resolution, and enforcement)



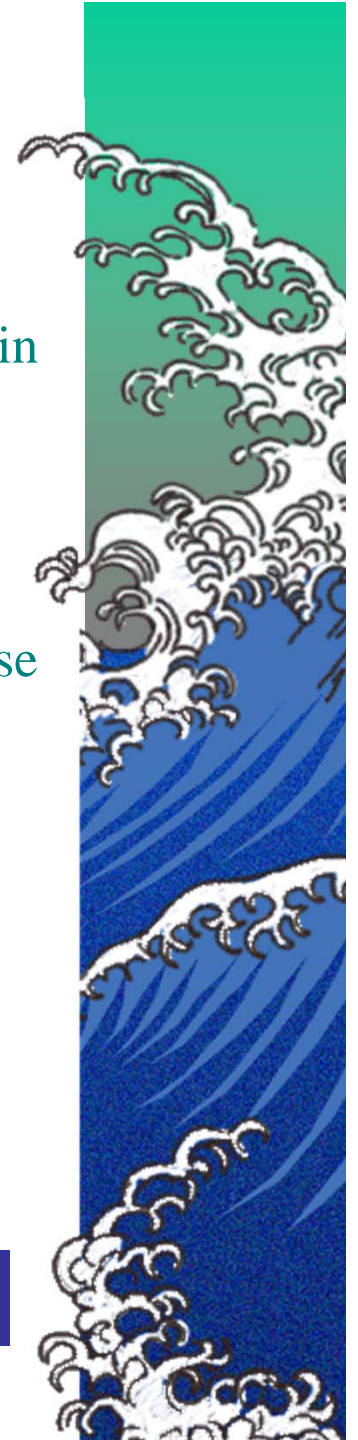
Boundary Rules

- Configuration of *member* and *strategy* rules generates the boundary that distinguishes the watershed partnership from other organizations
- **Member Rules**
 - Who can or cannot be a member
 - Different types of members (member, associate member, ex officio)
 - Members are organizations but individuals might be included
 - Voluntary or required by a higher-order set of rules (e.g., state statute)
 - Rules pertaining to expansion or expulsion of members
- **Selection of members will influence and constrain the strategic options for the watershed partnership**



Boundary Rules

- **Strategy Rules**
 - Specify shared definitions of a problem or set of problems within the domain of the organization
 - Specify the responses to problems that are legitimate or illegitimate – what it can or cannot do, what are its roles or processes
 - Specify how it will acquire resources needed to accomplish these tasks
 - Specify the relationship between the partnership and other network members – relationship to the “turf” of network members
- **Strategy will influence the membership structure of the watershed partnership**



Decision Rules

- **Determine how members interact and make decisions**
 - Rules are likely to evolve towards formality and complexity and may have a path-dependent quality
- **Preference Aggregation Rules**
 - Consensus is common but formal structures may have more complex voting systems
- **Distribution of Power Rules**
 - Equality, voting vs. nonvoting, creation of executive boards, centralized vs. decentralized
- **Distribution of Roles/Responsibility Rules**
 - Officers, sub-units, work groups, specialization of functions
- **Distribution of Participation Rules**
 - Width: degree each member participates in each decision
 - Depth: degree each member can influence a specific decision



Coordination Rules

- **Coordination rules define mutual exchange rights among members**
- **Exchange Rules**
 - Set up the operating procedures that govern resource exchanges between the member and the collaborative organization or between members
- **Monitoring Rules**
 - Created to govern exchange process and ensure that members follow through on commitments
- **Dispute Resolution Rules**
 - Specify how conflicts among members will be resolved
- **Enforcement Rules**
 - Sanctions for noncompliance of rewards for compliance



What settings are conducive to collaborative environmental management?

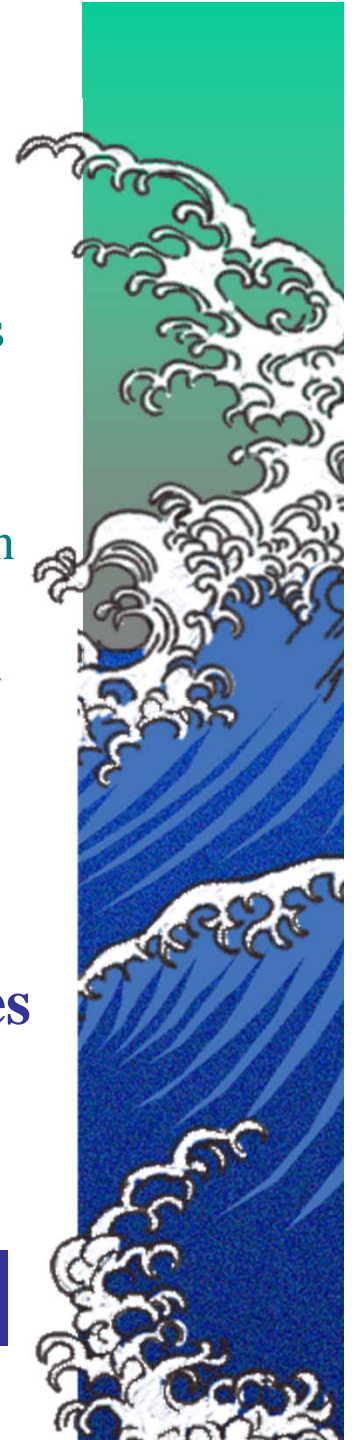


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Complex Environmental Commons

- **Collaborative environmental management (CEM)**
 - Occurs settings that differ in important ways from typical CPRs examined in the literature
- **CECs are characterized by 3 factors**
 - Complex network of organizations is involved in rule making in the governance system
 - High diversity in the perceived value and appropriate use of the resource being managed
 - There are multiple, interrelated environmental problems requiring attention
- **Kauneckis & Imperial (2007) propose 5 conditions that facilitate the emergence of integrated approaches to CEM**



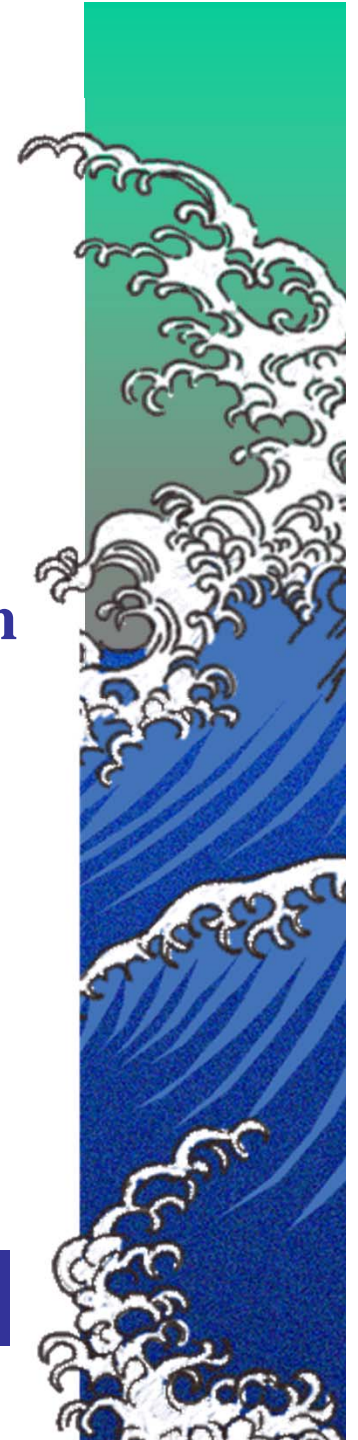
Conditions that Facilitate CEM

- **“Trust” among potential members of a CEM partnership**
 - Trust is complex and both a precursor to and produce of CEM
- **A shared definition of the focal problem(s) that motivates collective action**
 - Need agreement that problems exists in the first place and a shared understanding of its causes.
 - Policy entrepreneurs to frame shared focal problems and solutions in ways that motivate and maintain participation



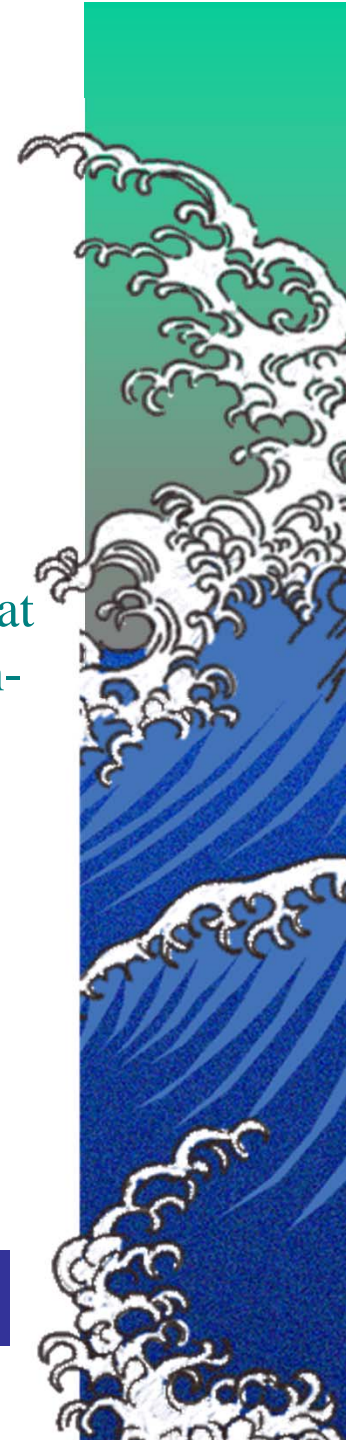
Conditions that Facilitate CEM

- **Recognize mutual interests and avoid win-lose situations**
 - CEM participants must be willing to work together on some issues, while agreeing to disagree on others while respecting these differences
- **Balance of power among policy actors, at least within the confines of the partnership**
 - Participation in a CEM partnership is often voluntary
 - When there is no satisfactory BATNA or a NATNA, cooperation is more likely



Conditions that Facilitate CEM

- **A Wide range of policy instruments is available for CEM**
 - Enlarging the range of policy instruments increases range of alternatives for problem solving
 - Diversifying policy instruments also increases the likelihood that competing interests can find courses of action that generate win-win or win-no-lose situations.



What are some potential paradoxes complicating CEM?



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Stability vs. Change

- **Stability in organizational structures when viewed over time**
 - Inertia is not a symptom of “bad” management but is actually a by-product of an well designed organizational system
 - Changes in core strategies, structures, and processes will be more difficult to achieve than minor changes at the periphery
 - Changes associated with CEM may prove beneficial over the long term but disruptive aspects can also have dire consequences
 - As CEM partnership matures, it is likely to focus on maintaining its resources
 - Questions whether “adaptive management” of natural resource systems is possible



Reliability & Institutionalization

- **Modern world favors organizations that demonstrate a capacity for *reliable* performance**
 - Partnerships have to *reproduce* their structure consistently
 - Do this by institutionalizing rules, routines, and procedures
- **Institutionalization is a “two-edged sword”**
 - Institutionalization lower the transaction costs and promotes stability that enables the CEM partnership to endure
 - It also makes it resistant to change because changes disrupt internal routines and external linkages, which reduces reliability



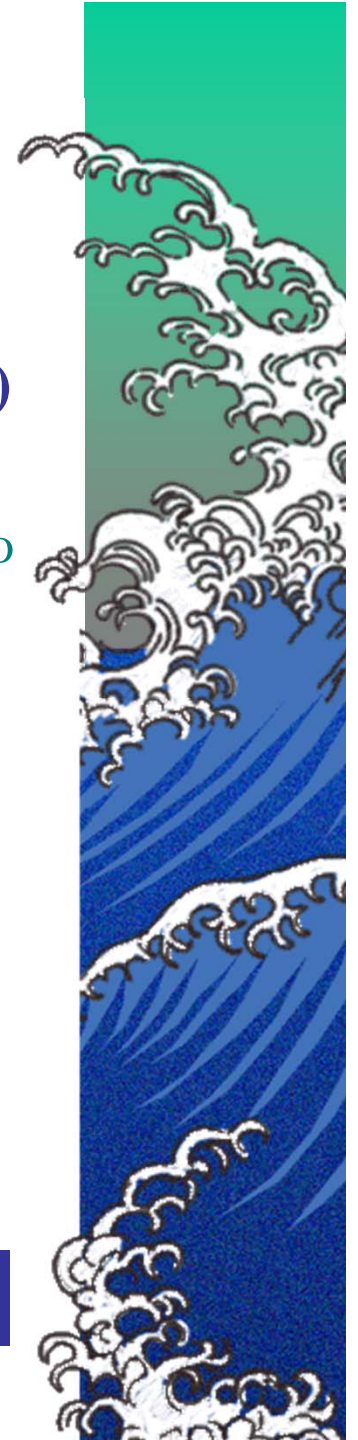
Accountability

- **Modern world favors organizations that *account* rationally for their actions**
 - CEM partnership must document how resources are used and reconstruct the series of decisions, rules, and actions associated with outputs or outcome
- **Accountability is also a “two-edged” sword**
 - Too much emphasis on accountability or poorly designed monitoring systems can create disincentives for joining and/or contributing resources



Legitimacy

- **Legitimacy is needed to acquire resources (e.g., membership, public or political support, money, etc.) needed to survive**
 - CEM partnerships must be perceived as a legitimate response to water resource problems
 - Enhance (or reduce) legitimacy through choices related to membership, strategy, decision, or coordination rules
 - As partnership ages, it should develop stronger exchange relationships, become part of the hierarchy, and have their actions endorsed by powerful actors



Summary & Conclusions

- **Think holistically, but CEM is inherently a strategic endeavor**
 - Practical limits to how much any collection of policies and programs can or should be “integrated” at the horizontal or vertical level
 - Prospective gains of any institutional change must be weighed against the potential costs of change
 - Sub-optimum level of integration may be intentional or desirable because the transaction costs to move to an alternative institutional arrangement may be too high



Summary & Conclusions

- **Institutions matter**

- Little attention is sometimes given to the strategic choices associated with the structure of CEM partnerships
- There does not appear to be one “best” way to organize the interactive processes associated with CEM
- However, certain structures impose clear limits on what can be done and how things are done
- It is important to give a lot of thought to the rules that provide structure to the partnership because they can be hard to change



Questions?



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