

Chapter 18

Conclusion: From Describing to Prescribing—Transitioning to Place-Based Conservation

William P. Stewart, Daniel R. Williams, and Linda E. Kruger

Abstract The chapters of this book describe various perspectives from the social sciences of place-based conservation. The prescriptive implications are often close to the surface and become entangled with them. This chapter highlights four overlapping approaches to the practice of place-based conservation and acknowledges the difficulty of separating descriptions from prescriptions: (1) a planning process, (2) an emergent process, (3) an organizing concept, and (4) a framework for policy. Yet to be considered are the incorporation of cultivating new communication channels, developing civic capacity, identifying appropriate roles for expertise, integrating multiple geographic scales, and customizing governance strategies. Addressing these challenges will support transitions to place-based conservation.

Keywords Land-use planning • Natural resource policy • Civic capacity • Stakeholder conflicts • Multiscalar governance

Reflecting back on the content of this book one can see an important tension between descriptive and prescriptive accounts of place-based practices in conservation. As social scientists the contributors to this volume have described the diversity of

W.P. Stewart (✉)
Department of Recreation, Sport and Tourism, University of Illinois,
104 Huff Hall, Champaign, IL 61820, USA
e-mail: wstewart@illinois.edu

D.R. Williams
USDA Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station,
240 West Prospect Road, Fort Collins, CO 80526-2098, USA
e-mail: drwilliams@fs.fed.us

L.E. Kruger
USDA Forest Service, Pacific Northwest Research Station,
Juneau Forestry Sciences Laboratory,
11175 Auke Lake Way, Juneau, AK 99801, USA
e-mail: lkruger@fs.fed.us

place-based practices emerging in conservation and the forces driving these changes. The chapters reflect various frameworks for characterizing, interpreting, and otherwise providing commentary on practices familiar to the authors, along with rationales for adopting place-based conservation and suggestions for improving its application in natural resource decision-making. At the same time the implicit premise of each chapter is that utilitarian models of conservation have exhausted their ability to address today's levels of complexity and uncertainty. Out of necessity conservation agencies are experimenting with different forms of governance and operational approaches in efforts to manage land and create working solutions in their practice of conservation. At some point the delineation between describing the operations of place-based conservation and prescribing a path forward becomes blurred. Place-based strategies for conservation are receiving increasing consideration as conservation moves toward broader inclusion of the public in decision-making, expanded sensitivity to local socio-ecological dynamics, incorporation of local and traditional knowledge, enhanced recognition of multi-scalar processes, and greater flexibility in governance structure.

Because this book is directed at conservation decision-making practices, prescriptive implications are close to the surface of the descriptive activity of the science, and ultimately, difficult to untangle from each other. Thus this chapter highlights four overlapping approaches to the practice of place-based conservation.

18.1 Approaches to the Practice of Place-Based Conservation

Considering that conservation manifests through on-the-ground actions some might argue that conservation has always been place-based. As Williams (Chap. 2) points out, all practice by necessity requires some level of context-dependent synthesis. Yet utilitarian conservation practice often has overtly aimed to transcend place and context by seeking a more scientific and generalized account of the most fungible resource commodities embedded in the landscape (Larsen et al., 1990). This model of resource management has relied heavily on professional expertise to conduct technical analysis for identifying conservation strategies and assessing their consequences (Kruger, 1996). One major strategy of place-based conservation has been simply to set aside large land tracts as nature preserves in an effort to insulate them from the most transformative pressures of the modern world. In recent decades however, conservation practitioners have begun to recognize that resources are embedded in complex and ecologically and socially dynamic places at multiple scales. Beyond broadening the framework for managing resources conservation practice has been challenged to confront the ways local contexts are interconnected and embedded across multiple spatial and temporal scales (Allen & Hoekstra, 1992; Lejano & Ingram, 2007; Schneider, 2001; Silver, 2008).

On another level place-based conservation is still emerging as an alternative application of conservation practice. For example, place-based practices have made inroads in governing bodies such as watershed councils. However these practices have remained largely embedded within traditionally isolated bureaucratic entities focused on conserving specific resources or designated preserves—irrespective of context, scale, and place meanings critical to the advancement of place-based conservation. The evolution of this book is another case in point. At the outset the intention was simple: to advance the integration of social science research on place with the practice of conservation. Somewhat unexpectedly in the ensuing dialogue among the contributors myriad implications surfaced for place as a powerful force for organizing conservation in an overall sense.

Yet merely understanding social science perspectives on place will not ensure their incorporation into conservation practices. For instance, implementing actions to more fully address place-based knowledge might be considered worthwhile even as such knowledge continues to be disparaged as lacking a utilitarian orientation. Place-based knowledge detached from scientific frameworks is sometimes viewed as emotional, arbitrary, and subjective within rational conservation processes focused on technical aspects of resources allocation. However when conservation is reduced to technical frameworks of decision-making, what counts as legitimate characterization of a place is controlled by scientific and technical experts (Appleyard, 1979). Thus in a curious twist constituents with local knowledge and non-utilitarian place meanings are finding ways to represent their “views from somewhere” through scientific expertise (Sarewitz, 2004). To be sure such expertise has legitimate claims to participate in framing the meanings of place, but many other meanings also merit representation and legitimacy in decision-making forums. And it is easier to integrate broader understandings of a place into conservation when processes are purposely designed for this than when processes exclude, tolerate, or otherwise treat them in superfluous ways.

Merging social science perspectives on place into conservation decision-making has implications for governance. Place inspires a geographic turn in thinking that calls for integration of multiple scales and jurisdictions. Traditions associated with organizational and professional culture, scientific privilege, and special interest groups sometimes run counter to certain place meanings (Chaps. 4 and 11). With the growing recognition of the importance of place for organizing conservation the complexities of multi-scalar place meanings and complexity of coupling social and ecological systems demand greater attention (Davidson, 2010; Fischer, 2000). Places are spatially embedded (or nested; see Morse, Hall, & Kruger, 2009) and associated with distinct meanings, material attributes, and processes unique to each scale. Emphasizing the importance of relationships to place the contributors to this book have articulated the need for a socio-ecological understanding that connects policies and operations across multiple scales through polycentric governance. As described in previous chapters place-based conservation can potentially address this complex need by engaging stakeholders across different geographic scales through strategies for legitimizing stakeholders’ relationships with place and connect them with governance forums.

This book also offers methods for representing and negotiating place-meanings and suggests ways to integrate them into governance structures. Put simply place-based conservation is the integration of the ideally perspective-free objective view sought in natural sciences, which Entrikin (1991) terms the “view from nowhere,” with the context-dependent experiences of “somewhere,” which reflect place specific meanings, knowledge, and sentiments. As Kruger, Hall, and Stiefel note (2008), several overlapping approaches to the practice of place-based conservation have emerged. Four of these came into focus during the development of this book. They are place-based conservation as: (1) a planning process, (2) an emergent process, (3) an organizing concept, and (4) a framework for policy. They provide collective insight into the various ways in which place-based conservation can be implemented. These approaches focus on ways people come to understand and make decisions about the practice of conservation. Distinct from other starting points for conservation, these strategies reflect the human proclivity to form deep-seated relationships with places and assert that human relationships with places have significant roles to play in the practice of conservation.

18.2 Place-Based Conservation as a Planning Process

The first approach involves the relatively straightforward recognition that conservation planning is about the disposition of somewhere (a place) and not just something (a resource). It recognizes that places are associated with diverse, often competing meanings that are “pliable in the hands of different people and malleable over time” (Gieryn, 2000, p. 467). Much of the impetus behind place-based conservation is a desire to recognize and give legitimacy to more holistic, systemic, and contextual qualities of places and landscapes. The goal reflects increasing concern for capturing and incorporating diverse forms of knowledge and the full range of place meanings and values into conservation planning.

People not only have diverse and evolving relationships to places but often ground their claims in normative or ethical terms that add political dimensions to places. Recent years have seen a growing interest in the idea of the politics of place within the natural resources field (Cheng, Kruger, & Daniels, 2003; Masuda & Garvin, 2008; Wulforth, Rimbey, & Darden, 2006; Yung, Freimund, & Belsky, 2003) to account for the fact that different groups of people hold competing meanings for a place. At the same time place meanings and identities serve to define social group differences (e.g., locals versus outsiders). Acknowledging places as repositories of meaning requires resource managers and planners to come to terms with the multiple meanings put forth to represent a place and the potential for conflicting meanings.

Historically the utilitarian view recognized that stakeholder groups assigned different levels of utility to various resource commodities. The meanings of these natural resources did not stray far from their assigned utilities, and often the meanings were not viewed as being consciously assigned; rather they were framed as an inherent property of the resource. In contrast the place perspective recognizes that resources are imbued with symbolic, spiritual, and historical meanings—as well as meanings associated with

commodity values—and that constituents may hold to different meanings. Focusing attention on planning processes reminds us that place meanings often reflect temporary snapshots, so to speak, from within evolving socio-political process of negotiation and contestation. Much of the conflict in natural resource planning centers on whose meanings will prevail, and plans for resource management frequently constitute a sense of place that empowers the planners' meanings over those of other constituents (Appleyard, 1979; Kruger & Shannon, 2000). In contrast place-based conservation involves a value-explicit, political approach to planning that in effect adjudicates among competing meanings and practices by shifting the emphasis from expert-defined place meanings toward a process driven by dialogue and negotiation (Ansell & Gash, 2008).

A key premise of utilitarian resource management has been that science could eliminate politics in the service of the public interest by using rational methods—such as “decision” science (i.e., economic valuation, linear programming)—to evaluate conservation alternatives and resolve difficult value questions. In contrast place-based conservation addresses the underlying politics directly by seeking place-specific stakeholder collaboration to address management conflicts (Kruger, 1996).

One goal of place-based conservation is to invigorate the process for identifying relevant meanings of a place and transform them from individual or interest-based to collectively negotiated aspirations. This calls for a planning process that broadens the discourse from a narrow focus on “my place” to a broader one of “our place.” Such a process would allow participants to identify and share place meanings, potentially leading to mutual understanding and the legitimization of diverse views (Chaps. 8, 9, 11, 13, and 17). Ideally such negotiation and legitimization of place meanings should precede discussions about resource allocation, recommended actions, and science-informed judgments—all of which contribute to place meanings and are compatible with place-based conservation.

Although greater consensus on the meaning of place may result from such a process, planning processes also should allow for dissent and expanded meanings. As an example, in 1991 following years of pressure from American Indian groups Custer Battlefield National Monument was renamed Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument to recognize all Americans who sacrificed their lives there. As part of its planning process memorial markers are still being added to honor the Cheyenne warriors who died more than a century ago (Denzin, 2011; Greene, 2008). Important functions of planning processes are to elicit the various relationships to place and recognize them as accumulated layers of meaning rather than a consensual or timeless whole. To be clear, place-based conservation is not a call for homogenizing place or to work toward a monolithic agreement.

18.3 Place-Based Conservation as an Emergent Process

Places are always changing, always becoming. Likewise place-based conservation is an emergent—that is, evolving—process of prescribing courses of action and responding to change. A process that ideally emphasizes a strong sense of collaboration and inclusiveness unfolds in creative and dynamic ways. Place-based collaboration

requires an engaged community of constituents willing to work through resistance and negotiate power relationships (Chaps. 2, 3, 9, 11, and 16; see also Kruger, 2001). The process is advanced by a spirit of citizenship and self-governance distinct from traditional conservation, which often implies “being governed” and done “by the government” (Mason, 2007).

Place-based conservation is also emergent in the sense that it lacks standard protocols or institutionalized guidelines and is influenced by local and extra-local participation. For example, localized conservation planning forums on ecological restoration often devote significant attention to place meanings through a dynamic process in which socio-political forces play out in the dialogue. Such projects depend on community-based involvement for their vision, initiation, and ultimately for the sustained maintenance of the place (Jordan, 2003). Among restoration advocates it is widely agreed that restoration objectives should consider the diverse views of local residents and their senses of history (Ehrenfeld, 2000; Higgs, 2003) and indeed goals usually must be negotiated during planning (Davis & Slobodkin, 2004; Hull & Robertson, 2000).

For instance, in the American Midwest the widespread appreciation of native flora and the notion of prairie restoration sometimes clashes with the need for removing trees to restore such landscapes (Vining, Tyler, & Kweon, 2000). For people who consider themselves environmentalists eradicating non-native vegetation may seem destructive to wildlife habitat and other ecosystem benefits and threatening their sense of place (Gobster & Barro, 2000). As implementation phases begin others may learn about the project and realize that they value the historic aspects of the prairie. Within the on-going dialogue they voice concerns for inclusion of human-made structures in restoring the landscape (Stewart, Liebert, & Larkin, 2004). In several Midwestern restoration projects unfolding and participatory planning processes have allowed a variety of voices to affect the goals of the project and new relationships to place come to light (Tyler & Blader, 2000; West, 2001).

As part of an emergent process place meanings are accumulated, contested, and reconciled, and ultimately serve as a primary force behind decision-making. This is a distinct approach to place-based conservation grounded in local engagement and multi-lateral governance structures. Whereas place-based conservation as a planning process begins with the need to legitimize place meanings and practices, emergent processes disclose the need to establish place meanings as the process unfolds and may lead to an evolution of the planning process to address implications of new place meanings. These new place meanings enter the dialogue due to individuals who experience a latent sense of place or felt value (Chap. 6) or due to a community of people discovering their collective identity through the planning dialogue (Chap. 17).

18.4 Place-Based Conservation as an Organizing Concept

Part of the power of place-based conservation is its potential for organizing myriad facts and values from a range of perspectives. Organizational power lies with the various levels of governance and institutional processes for negotiating place

meanings. Places are embedded in multiple geographic scales, each of which holds potentially distinct ecological, economic, social, and political implications. Each level of governance has a complex history shaped by institutions, agencies, special interest groups, and other constituencies with preferred relationships to place. For conservation practices to account for the compatibilities and tensions across these realms is an enormous undertaking. However the first step is to open up a public process of identifying and representing the mix of place relationships. Transparency in connections between various layers of governance allows constituents to understand the organizational layout.

This book's section on mapping place meanings provides excellent examples of utilizing place as an organizing concept. Explicitly mapping place meanings organizes subsequent steps in land-use planning. Several chapters illustrate the accumulation of meanings and embeddedness of place within socio-ecological systems and show ways in which multiple levels of governance are relevant to conservation decision-making (Chaps. 14, 13, 15, and 12). For Watson et al. research on the Flathead Indian Reservation (Chap. 16) mapping place was essential in establishing a basis for a trusting relationship with governmental agencies. Place as an organizing concept enabled tribal participants to talk about their lives and publicly recognize their connections to place, allowing individual's to transcend some of their reluctance to "go public" with their personal/cultural relationship to place. Christensen and Burchfield's feedback to constituents regarding nuances of their place meanings encouraged a thoughtful public involvement process that exposed previous myths of dichotomies and polarization (Chap. 17). This is not to say conflict was resolved but to assert a starting point for public involvement in a community that otherwise might not understand its own diversity of place-meanings. Although each of these points in hindsight appears obvious, without a framework that emphasized the importance of place meanings the organizing potential of place would not have been realized.

18.5 Place-Based Conservation as Framework for Policy

The fourth place-based conservation approach relates to legislation and policy. Although no single chapter of the book directly addresses this, legislated place meaning has a rich precedence in conservation law. An obvious example is the establishment of national parks in the U.S. that use enactment language to characterize normative meanings of place. Naming a place as "Yellowstone National Park" coupled with language that asserts its meanings in terms of a "public park or pleasuring ground for the benefit and enjoyment [of the nation's people]" (17 Stat. 32) provides an enduring framework for policy. Not only providing meanings of place, legislation may also contain language with explicit detail on the operations of publicly designated places.

Throughout the world protected areas exist where governments or other authorities have officially defined place meanings by legal decree. Such directives are generally abstract in language, leaving implementation largely to the discretion of administrative authorities, but at times they include prescriptive mandates. For example, the

1972 World Heritage Convention of the United Nations (UNESCO) stipulates criteria for designating sites to protect natural and cultural heritage. Currently UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites includes more than 900 places, where site administrators are responsible for managing the places according to well-defined guidelines.

Another example of place-based policy including specific mandates is the Illinois Land Conservation Act of 1995 (P.L. 104–106), which established the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. The legislation divided up 26,000 acres of the former Joliet Arsenal into a restoration site for a prairie, a veterans' cemetery, two landfills, and two industrial parks, and described place meanings and guidelines for implementing future policies at Midewin. Place-based conservation is increasingly approached as a framework for legislation. In the 1990s an impetus for place-based legislation in the U.S. came from entrenched polarization and paralysis in decision-making which led the U.S. Congress to establish decision-making structures to clarify land management goals. This often included the formation of governing boards associated with particular locations (see Nie & Fiebig, 2010, who describe several cases of place-based legislation on forested lands in the American West). Place-based conservation fits well with multi-scalar governance in that it identifies public values beyond resource uses and specifies material and locational aspects of place (Keiter, 2003). Place meanings are indirectly reflected in the goals generally stated in terms of wilderness, stewardship, resource production, sustainable production, and/or restoration of ecosystem health (Nie & Fiebig).

The governance challenge would be to reconcile legislated place meanings from a national perspective to implementation at the regional and local levels. For example, Bray and Velazquez (2009; see also several essays in Callicott & Nelson, 1998) describe problems related to displacing indigenous peoples by applying the American wilderness concept to the developing world. Central governments essentially imposed legislated place meanings without any concerted effort to reconcile them with localized place meanings, resulting in the forcible removal of people from their various homelands in Latin America. Due to the recognition of such contrasts in place meanings between national and local levels Bray and Velazquez (2009) predict the future of conservation to be one of co-management of people-centered protected areas that "derives its legitimacy from multi-scale and participatory governance" (p. 13). Note that Bray and Velazquez (2009) focus on the rights of indigenous people as opposed to the imperatives of state-sponsored legislation; they did not explicitly account for other kinds of place meanings that also will need to be reconciled as part of any co-management regime.

18.6 Moving Forward with Place-Based Conservation

For place-based conservation to move forward several issues need further consideration. These can be viewed as tensions sensitive to challenge, rather than as limitations or barriers, and will exist as sticking points in the transition to place-centered forms of conservation practice. The tensions characterized below

influence each other and will likely arise concomitantly. In order to move forward with place-based conservation further research and incorporation of the following actions are needed.

18.6.1 Cultivating New Communication Channels

Place-based conservation efforts require participants to be open to developing functional relationships with one another. Fostering communication channels that invite participants to listen, learn, and share with their peers poses challenges particularly when polarization and political fragmentation prevail. Attitudes of sustained open-mindedness in participants and the structuring of stakeholder forums to encourage appreciative dialogue can help overcome such barriers to communication. However more talking does not necessarily lead to more learning. Research directed at structuring stakeholder forums to create appreciative dialogue is a growing area of interest and urgently needed. Fortunately research interest is growing in these areas. As well burgeoning communication technologies and social media are expanding networking among those who care about places (Pahre, 2011).

18.6.2 Developing Civic Capacity

Some scholars posit that society operates on an assumed distrust of people and organizations (Nie & Fiebig, 2010). A basis of place-based conservation is the need to build trust. Nie and Fiebig note that the implementation of some environmental legislation has been fraught with uncertainty, distrust among stakeholders, and lack of coherence in agency actions. This history points to the need for restoring civic capacity for decision-making either prior to, or as part of the process of, initiating practices related to place-based conservation. Depending on the extent of polarization developing civic capacity may be a long-term undertaking that requires significant commitment and energy across stakeholders. This challenge is related to the need for cultivating new communication channels, for at some point stakeholders will need to talk, listen, and allow opportunities to learn from each other. There are currently several techniques to build civic capacity (Daniels & Walker, 2001). Adapting such techniques to contexts of place-based conservation will take continued research and creative development.

Sometimes relationships to place are not discussed with outsiders due to a history of distrust between groups. In such instances asking stakeholders to openly share place meanings may lead them to opt out of public dialogue. At other times stakeholders may withhold place meanings to protect the locations of resources (e.g., best hunting spots, berry-picking patches, swimming holes) or keep secret some intimate knowledge of place. Building civic capacity is about increasing trust among people who share living and working places; trust is an important element to effective place-based conservation.

18.6.3 Identifying Appropriate Roles for Expertise

Some versions of place-based conservation are directed at integrating scientific knowledge and understanding of a place rather than seeking inclusive stakeholder dialogue and identifying public place meanings. Place knowledge evolves as new constituents enter the dialogue, bringing fresh information and subsequent evolution in collective knowledge. Although some place-based knowledge is tied to science (e.g., habitat for certain species) other knowledge is not (e.g., information about a tribal ceremonial site). Recognizing various kinds of knowledge suggests a need for appropriate strategies for integrating science and other expertise into place-based conservation. Such recognition is about accommodating various kinds of expertise while also withstanding resistance and coercion by special interest groups.

In other words, there are needs to further circumscribe the roles for science and expertise. To be sure scientists and managers are stakeholders of places and their place meanings also need representation. While their relationships to place are worthwhile to share with other constituents, they are not automatically privileged nor viewed as more legitimate than the place meanings of others. Rather scientific and managerial meanings should be considered in contexts of other stakeholders' meanings.

18.6.4 Integrating Multiple Geographic Scales

Questions of scale are an inherent part of place-based conservation approaches. The integration of decision-making authority across levels of governance is a tension explicitly identified with place as an organizing concept. However it exists across all four approaches to place-based conservation. Mapping place meanings may be appropriate given the various scales of planning, and likewise collaboration may also have an optimum range of scale for which it is most suitable. Geographic scale is explicit within participatory mapping exercises and not only corresponds with explicit meanings of place but reflects the people whose voices are identified (Chap. 13). Multiple geographic scales are not just about multiple physical scales but relational scales of people and place. For example, two people at the same planning forum may represent different geographic scales regarding their place (i.e., regional versus local relationships to place). To move forward governance structures need transformation in ways that are more polycentric (and multilateral) than hierarchical (and linear).

Flint (Chap. 3) addresses another aspect of integration of geographic scales by suggesting that new spaces of engagement are needed to encourage connections (see also Cox, 1998; Chap. 5). Rather than operating through discrete levels, new forms of governance integrate and connect actors from multiple places with shared purposes across larger scales. While the participatory mapping

chapters pair people with their places without addressing governance structure, Flint's chapter characterizes the need to re-think governance structure to create new spaces of engagement. Essentially these new spaces of engagement could provide authority that reconciles and legitimizes various relationships to place across multiple levels of state, region, and locale. Research that identifies capacities to integrate and form connections across geographic scales comprises an important set of questions for implementing place-based conservation and moving it forward.

18.6.5 Customizing Governance Strategies

Place-based conservation is not given to a "cookbook approach" for prescribing decision-making practices nor is it likely to evolve into standardized environmental assessments or step-by-step guidelines. For some the state of the practice may appear risky and vague. The lack of specific guidelines or structure poses a risk of the process becoming politically hijacked by a powerful interest group particularly in situations where trust is lacking. Without specific guidelines for implementation place-based conservation may lead to constituent concern about outcomes and suspicion of hidden agendas. On the other hand there is ample room for creative opportunities to break through stale conflicts of the past (Chap. 12).

Also needed are improved methods that connect the mapping of place meanings to a socio-political process of making shared meanings and collaborative action. In some contexts the mapping of place meanings may suffice as a starting point for place-based conservation, while in others developing an innovative socio-political process is an appropriate beginning. The nature of place-based conservation is highly conducive to customizing the approach to governance in ways that fit the socio-ecological context. The customization will be based upon reconciliation of the above tensions that generates a relatively inclusive dialogue, integrates scientific expertise with a diverse set of place meanings, and situates places within a multi-scalar context considering various creative policy tools for governance. The lack of specific guidelines will result in opportunities for inspiration drawing from the deep-seated significance of people's relationships to places and the ability to customize governance strategies that fit and feel right.

18.7 Making the Transition

The shift to place-based conservation has been occurring over several decades and it is still unfolding. As in most public decision-making contexts some participants will be invested in maintaining the status quo and may resist a transition to place-based conservation. Many are skilled in using the current system to their advantage,

and changes to the process of decision-making and planning practices could reduce their influence. Thus despite the appropriateness and benefits of place-based conservation political resistance may thwart its implementation in some instances.

Although much has been written about place-based collaboration the transition to place-based conservation likely involves adjusting institutional practices and reinterpreting policies to allow for collaborative forums and customization of governance structure. Evidence for this can be found in the U.S. Department of Interior's establishment of Landscape Conservation Collaboratives, aimed at coordinating conservation initiatives nationwide (Wood & Hoffman, 2011). Australia's movement toward "connectivity conservation" (Wyborn, 2011) is another example. The extent to which existing conservation-related policies support place-based conservation merits further study.

Making the transition to place-based conservation is related to the challenges of cultivating new communication channels, developing civic capacity, identifying appropriate roles for expertise, integrating multiple geographic scales, and customizing governance strategies. If these changes occur in concert the shift in locus of power will likely be organic and perceived as a natural evolution. There are numerous examples of governance structures and decision-making contexts in which this shift is in progress (Wyborn, 2011). Studying these cases would be helpful in determining "best practices" for transitioning to place-based conservation.

On the surface place-based conservation is a simple and intuitive set of approaches—simple because it is centered on people-place relationships, intuitive because of its compelling premise that people naturally form relationships with places. Yet considering traditions of the practice place-based conservation is transformative and complex. It shifts the focus from resource conservation and product/service delivery to a more holistic and collaborative style of governance that operates at multiple scales. From this perspective place meanings are negotiated among constituents in a process of co-creation that includes scientific and technical assessment. The negotiation is complex because it encompasses competing uses, knowledge, expectations, and norms for given places. Additional layers of complexity come from the contemporary emphasis on the conservation of ecosystem services and political negotiation over dynamic socio-ecological systems. In short the integration of knowledge with conservation practice can only be achieved within place-based contexts.

Ultimately place-based conservation is a *way of thinking* about conservation practice. It deliberates on places that people care about, allowing for controversy and dialogue up front. But it is also a strategy for dealing with the enormous complexity that comes with recognizing interconnectedness of dynamic social and ecological processes at multiple scales. Some stakeholders, institutions, and professionals likely will continue to resist the shift to place-based conservation, and many challenges remain in its implementation. But the transition is inevitable. Place-based conservation brings specificity to the management of places that people identify with, care about, and want reflected in conservation.

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