GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE, CLIMATE, AND CITIES SEMINAR SERIES

SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE AS A SYSTEM: INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND STEWARDSHIP NETWORKS

Abstract

Who governs the urban environment? This presentation describes the multi-scaled system of urban environmental governance, drawing upon empirical research from New York City. Better understanding of the actors, institutions, discourses, and relationships that drive urban greening can help shape more effective policy and programs going forward. We begin with an exploration of individual users and stewards of green space. What motivates people to engage with the urban environment? Is there a relationship between volunteerism and civic engagement? Data are drawn from studies across different site types, including community gardens, tree planting programs, and 'natural areas' in parks. Then we explore civic organizational stewards as we ask: What are the organizational characteristics and spatial footprints of stewardship groups? What are the patterns, gaps, and overlaps in the stewardship system? Finally, we move to a discussion of the way in which civic groups, private entities, and public agencies work together (and apart) in polycentric networks to shape policy and programs. Our presentation hopes to further shape the discussion about people and their relationship to green infrastructure, climate change, and resilience.

Speaker Bios

Dr. Erika S. Svendsen is a research social scientist with the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station, based at the New York City Urban Field Station (www.nrs.fs.fed.us/nyc). She studies environmental stewardship as it relates to governance, social resilience, and human well-being. Dr. Svendsen holds a BA in Political Science from Allegheny College, a Masters in Environmental Studies from Yale University, and a PhD in Urban Planning from Columbia University.

Dr. Lindsay K. Campbell is a research social scientist with the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station, based at the New York City Urban Field Station (www.nrs.fs.fed.us/nyc). Her current research explores the dynamics of urban politics, natural resource stewardship, and sustainability policymaking. Dr. Campbell holds a BA in Public Policy from Princeton University, a Masters in City Planning from MIT, and a PhD in Geography from Rutgers University.

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