



In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Art
Cameron Childs

Will present her Master's Capstone Project

**Case Study of an Emerging Adaptive Co-Management Process in
the Agua Fria Watershed, Arizona, USA**

Adaptive governance techniques are emerging to allow people to operate in complex socio-ecological systems in the face of uncertainty and rapid change. One such approach is adaptive co-management (ACM). ACM emphasizes learning-by-doing and broad stakeholder participation. This case study investigates an emerging ACM arrangement in Arizona as it formalizes over the first year. Three government agencies and 23 non-government stakeholders agreed to develop a coordinated resource management plan for two grazing allotments (65,000 acres) in the Agua Fria Watershed north of Phoenix, Arizona. Thirty one interviews were conducted and coded using qualitative data analysis and MAXQDA software. From this coding process, social and structural process variables emerged. Process strengths include third-party facilitation, synergized leadership, and unifying activities (e.g., field meetings and a shared history exercise). Barriers also emerged such as time and funding constraints, stakeholder distrust of government, and a missing mechanism for documenting decision-making. This applied research contributes to the ACM literature by investigating influences on a new co-management process during its first phase of formation, and by identifying “rules of thumb” for future collaborations. These insights may be applied to other collaborations working to address multifaceted problems in social-ecological systems.

Friday, April 20, 2012
2:30 p.m.
Wrigley 481

Faculty, students, and the general public are invited.

Supervisory Committee: Dr. Abigail York, Dr. David White, and
Dr. Gita Bodner (The Nature Conservancy)