Center for Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM)

Natural Resources Institute, University of Manitoba

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Date:	**2/17/12**	**Entry Number:**	**1194**
Case Study Name:	**Managing natural resources in face of evolving conditions: A social learning perspective**		
Author:	Maarleveld, M. & Dangbegnon, C.		
Document Type:	Conference paper		
Year:	1998		
Language:	English		
Document Location:	http://hdl.handle.net/10535/2272		
Full Citation:	Maarleveld, M. & Dangbegnon, C. (1998). *Managing natural resources in face of evolving conditions: A social learning perspective*. Paper presented at the "Crossing Boundaries" 7th Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property, Vancouver. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/10535/2272.		
Region:	Europe, Africa		
Country:	Netherlands, Benin		
Ecosystem Type:	Lake; lagoon; mangroves		
Social Characteristics:	Other		
Scale of Study:	District, municipality		
Resource Type:	Fisheries; watershed; surface water		
Type of Initiative:	Development project, Government initiative;		

Community Based Work:	Resource management
Keywords:	None
Summary:	**In many natural resource systems, people find themselves to be increasingly interdependent as the number of resource users and types of uses multiply. Analyses which make use of the prisoner's dilemma, tragedy of the commons and logic of collective action effectively illustrate how certain types of interdependence can trap us in resource use patterns which inevitably lead to destruction of a resource system. However, these analyses are challenged by numerous others which indicate that people are capable of coordinating decisions and actions to overcome such destructive patterns of resource use. Resource management practice indicates a great diversity in ways in which individual choices and action are coordinated *to balance* needs and interests of users with the capacity of the resource system. Coordinated decision making arrangements and actions vary from quite simple rules of thumb, for example, restricting fishing in spawning seasons, to complex social-economic arrangements such as the Balinese water management.** **Nonetheless, the conclusion that sustainable resource management is simply a question of reaching everlasting optimal equilibria by getting the right institutional arrangement should not be drawn to hastily. This would neglect the dynamic nature of managing natural resources. After all, human use changes resource systems; resource systems themselves entail change processes; and, human needs and interests regarding resource systems change. From the interplay of these changes new, often unforeseen interdependencies of actors and (collective) consequences of decisions and actions can emerge. Consequently, *continuous* adaptations of existing management practices are required to ensure sustainably managed resource systems.**