

The provision of environmental goods and services by local non-governmental organizations: An illustration from the Squamish Forest District, Canada

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Abstract

In rapidly-growing rural areas, new demands for provision of environmental and recreational goods and services have been accompanied by governmental policies and programs designed to involve non-governmental organizations (NGOs) directly in environmental decision-making and day-to-day management. In this paper, it is argued that certain local-level NGOs have become increasingly influential in the provision of environmental goods and services locally by combining their understanding of policy-making, with an awareness of local environmental issues and opportunities for specific projects. By developing a four-part framework, the term 'exchange agents' presented by Lowe *et al.* (1993) is adapted and developed to explain the means by which NGOs gain influence in environmental management. The framework focuses attention on the changing character of rural areas, NGO roles and orientations, networking among NGOs and funding partnerships between NGOs and public agencies. The framework is used to explain the differential influence of local-level NGOs in the Squamish Forest District, located near Vancouver, Canada. From this analysis some cautions are raised about 'community stewardship', the rubric by which local-level environmental policies and programs are currently implemented.