

Editorial

THE BUZZ

[Lance Gunderson](#)¹ and [Carl Folke](#)²

THE BUZZ ON BUZZ

As a noun, the word “buzz” is defined as “a continuous, humming noise, as of bees, or of a general expression of surprise or approbation.” This issue of *Ecology and Society* encompasses both of these aspects of the definition. The first is the way in which the journal seems to be as busy as a beehive in producing scholarship on sustainability. In other words, the journal seems to hum with excitement and activity in the field of sustainability science, as described below in the section on this issue. The second aspect of the meaning of buzz is surprise and approval.

We were both happily surprised and delighted to celebrate in approval when our own Buzz (aka C. S. Holling) was awarded the 2008 Volvo Environmental Prize. We want to add our voices to the many accolades and congratulations to Buzz for receiving such an august and important award. It is great recognition for someone who has created many fields of research and befits five decades of groundbreaking scholarship and creativity. In the award announcement, the Volvo Environmental Foundation described Buzz (Fig. 1) as “one of ecology’s great integrative thinkers for his pioneering lifetime work on ecosystem dynamics, transformation and resilience, and adaptive management.”

Buzz was the founding Editor in Chief of *Ecology and Society* more than 10 years ago. He saw the creation of the journal as an experiment; he wanted to see if the Internet would support an interdisciplinary and integrative scholarly venue. The journal has continued to publish on the fields that were created by Buzz’s fertile mind and visions, as suggested by the award of the Volvo Environmental prize.

SPECIAL ISSUES

The buzz in this issue continues to be the size and quality of special issues. Two of those are completed, and they are both quite inspiring and at the very forefront of sustainability science. The first is the special feature [Social Learning in Water Resources Management](#), with an editorial by [Claudia Pahl-Wostl, Erik Mostert, and David Tabara](#). The second is [Crossing Scales and Disciplines to Achieve Forest Sustainability: a Framework for Effective Integrated Modeling](#), and the editorial is by [Michael J. Papaik, Brian Sturtevant, and Christian Messier](#). We would like to thank these guest editors for their work in putting those issues together and invite our readers to take a closer look.

Several others are still in progress, with 18 papers published in the last six months in the following special issues: [New Methods for Adaptive Water Management](#), [Navigating Trade-Offs: Working for Conservation and Development Outcomes](#), [Do We Need New Management Paradigms to Achieve Sustainability in Tropical Forests?](#), [The Influence of Human Demography and Agriculture on Natural Systems in the Neotropics](#), [Managing Surprises in Complex Systems: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Resilience](#), and [Catastrophic Thresholds, Perspectives, Definitions, and Applications](#).

THIS ISSUE

In addition to the many contributions to the special features, the regular issue contains articles that increase our understanding of the complex relationships between people and their environment. As the scales of environmental issues increase and the consequences of our actions become more severe, it is even more important for the scholarly community to provide leadership as we learn our way into an uncertain future. The articles in this feature contribute to that learning. Five articles

¹Emory University, ²Stockholm University

Fig. 1. Buzz Holling, [the father of resilience thinking](#).



address the interaction among actors, institutions, and management: [Levrel and Bouamrane \(2008\)](#) examine outputs from co-construction experiments in West African biosphere reserves, [Erin Bohensky \(2008\)](#) presents two frameworks for resilient pathways for South African water management, [Tucker et al. \(2008\)](#) propose an approach for comparing different forest types through the use of undisturbed reference forests, [Leon Hermans \(2008\)](#) explores the use of actor analysis in environmental policy analysis through four case studies in water resources management, and [Nkhata et al. \(2008\)](#) discuss resilient social relationships and collaboration in the management of social-ecological systems.

The management of marine ecosystems is the focus of two articles: [Daniel Kramer's \(2008\)](#) assessment of adaptive harvesting in a multiple-species coral-reef food web and a study by [Ban et al.](#) of spatial solutions in marine conservation with indigenous communities.

The remainder, and the bulk, of the articles in this issue deal with transformations of landscapes, the mechanisms involved in those transformations, and

the results of such broad changes. [Reidsma and Ewert \(2008\)](#) explore the role of regional farm diversity in reducing the vulnerability of food production to climate change, [Törn et al. \(2008\)](#) examine the attitudes of local people to nature conservation and tourism in Finland, [McKenna et al. \(2008\)](#) present a case study from Northern Ireland on accurate mental maps as an aspect of local ecological knowledge, [Inge Aalders](#) uses Bayesian belief networks to model land-use decision-making behavior, and [Guzy et al. \(2007\)](#) inform policy research by using agent-based modeling to assess future impacts of urban expansion into farmlands and forests. Source/sink patterns of disturbance and cross-scale mismatches in a panarchy of social-ecological landscapes are the subjects of an article by [Zaccarelli et al.](#), and [Geoff Evans \(2008\)](#) looks at the transformation from “carbon valley” to a “post-carbon society” in a climate change hot spot: the coalfields of the Hunter Valley, New South Wales, Australia. [Rissman and Merelender \(2008\)](#) evaluate the conservation contributions of conservation easements through an analysis of the San Francisco Bay Area protected lands spatial database, and [Opdam et al. 2008](#) consider the use

of ecoprofiles to set biodiversity targets in participatory regional planning. Finally, two important articles, one on a complex systems approach to the comparative analysis of tortoises in arid ecosystems by [Leuteritz and Ekbia](#) and the other on the detection and assessment of ecosystem regime shifts from fisher information by [Karunanithi et al.](#), increase our understanding of ecological resilience.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

This issue contains more than 40 articles that reflect the hard work and contributions of the authors. However, many more people are involved in making these publications possible. All of the articles have been subject to a rigorous review process, for which we are thankful to the anonymous reviewers who gave freely of their time. We are also immensely grateful to our fantastic editorial board, who do an outstanding work in helping us select reviewers and assess the significance and quality of the manuscripts that are submitted. We are now in the process of further extending the editorial board to reduce the pressure on individual board members. The reason is the growing interest in social-ecological systems and resilience in times of change. Social-ecological resilience research addresses the interplay between periods of gradual change and periods of sudden and abrupt change and how to deal with disturbance and make use of change for novelty, innovation, and development, while simultaneously supporting key elements for sustained development. In this journal we explicitly recognize that social-ecological systems are not just temporarily linked but are truly interdependent and co-evolving across many different spatial and temporal scales.

To what extent are human societies adapting their capacity for learning and foresight to deal with new global challenges? How can prosperous pathways of societal development be stimulated to emerge in the light of these challenges? These questions were central at Resilience 2008: Resilience, Adaptation, Transformation in Turbulent Times, the first major international science and policy conference on resilience held in Stockholm, Sweden, in April 2008. It was hosted by the Resilience Alliance in collaboration with the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences and the International Council for Science (ICSU), with the Stockholm Resilience Center, the Beijer Institute, and the Stockholm Environment

Institute serving as the local organizers. The conference gathered close to 600 participants from a broad set of disciplines, and there was a lot of buzz in both senses of the definition given above. Morning plenary sessions by Buzz Holling, Elinor Ostrom, and Steve Carpenter were followed by parallel sessions with invited speakers and contributed papers selected through a blind review process. The afternoon featured a science fair with speed talks, panel discussions, poster sessions, and musical performances that included an evening concert. There was also a discussion between artists and scientists on Changing Matters: the Resilience Art Exhibition, which was integrated into the conference and highlighted the work of artists selected by a jury. The conference ended with a policy day during which insights and challenges were discussed by scientists, politicians, business leaders, NGOs, and other interest groups. Many of the presentations at the conference were filmed and made accessible immediately on the Internet; they can still be seen at www.resilience2008.org. Please feel free to make use of the materials on this Web page.

We end with a statement of our appreciation to the authors, editors, and staff for contributing to these timely, important, and relevant scholarly debates and dialogues on the resilience and sustainability of social-ecological systems. We ask your help in making the buzz louder and even more surprising.

Responses to this article can be read online at:
<http://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol13/iss1/art42/responses/>

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