

William H. Butler

Visiting Assistant Professor

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Urban Affairs and Planning

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## ACADEMIC BIOGRAPHY

### Education:

- Ph.D. in Environmental Design and Planning (Virginia Tech, 2009)
- Master in Urban and Regional Planning (Virginia Tech, 2003)
- B.A. in French and Economics (dual major) (Guilford College, 1996)

### Areas of Specialization:

- Environmental Planning and Policy
- Collaborative Planning
- Community Dispute Resolution and Public Participation
- Social-ecological Resilience
- Interorganizational Networks
- Social Learning

Will's background in economics, French, and environmental planning is telling of his wide ranging research and teaching interests. From examining the economic relationship that ties Martinique to France to his most recent work studying the potential of multiscale learning networks to foster social change, Will has a deep curiosity in how institutional systems emerge and mechanisms of social action that can foster system-wide change.

His most recent research examines the US Fire Learning Network, a multiscale collaborative planning network that aims to initiate ecological fire restoration across the United States. A joint project between US public land management agencies and The Nature Conservancy, the network links more than 50 landscape scale collaborative planning efforts to develop ecological restoration plans for fire adapted ecosystems. Will has examined multi-scale network dynamics, describing the purpose, design, operations and management characteristics of the network to develop broader theoretical assertions about collaborative planning networks. He is particularly interested in how the network enables collaborative planning across multiple scales fostering the potential for system wide change in fire management through changes in management plans, practices, and policies.

Building on this foundation, Will currently is examining other types of multi-scalar networks that are being used as social organizing mechanisms to respond to large-scale and long-term environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and recovery from environmental disaster. He is currently working with colleagues at Virginia Tech and University of Colorado, Denver on a large scale study of Climate Change Networks.

## **RECENT PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS**

Butler, William H. and Bruce Evan Goldstein. **Springing a Rigidity Trap through Multi-scalar Collaborative Networks: Inspiring change in fire management through the Fire Learning Network.** In preparation for submission to *Ecology and Society*, September 2009.

Goldstein, Bruce Evan and Butler, William H. **Expanding the Scope and Impact of Collaborative Planning: Combining Multi-stakeholder Collaboration and Communities of Practice in a Learning Network.** Revised and Resubmitted to *Journal of the American Planning Association*, August 2009.

Goldstein, Bruce Evan, Butler, William H., and R. Bruce Hull. **The U.S. Fire Learning Network.** In press at *Journal of Forestry*, 2009.

Goldstein, Bruce Evan and Butler, William H. **Fostering Institutional Change by Coordinating Collaboratives With a Social Imaginary in The U.S. Fire Learning Network.** In press at *Journal of Environmental Planning and Management*, 2009.

Goldstein, Bruce Evan and Butler, William H. **Learning Networks to Catalyze Change in Socially-Explicit Fire Regimes: Ecological Restoration through Storytelling.** In press at *Society and Natural Resources*, 2009.