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**What's the Difference? Water Managers' Use of Climate Information across Regions and Scales of Decision Making**

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Managing water resources is becoming more challenging given the increasing and often competing demands placed upon water resources and the uncertainty of future conditions. Scholars theorize that access to and use of techno-scientific information increases adaptation potential. Thus, a key strategy to improve water resources management under heightened uncertainty is to enhance the accessibility and use of scientific information to help water managers characterize risks and vulnerabilities to climate variability and change and inform adaptive response options. Boundary organizations such as Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISAs) facilitate the use of climate information by working directly with stakeholders to generate and shape information products to better meet user needs.

Previous scholarly work has investigated how RISAs co-produce useful climate information. This research adds to our understanding by empirically testing information use as a dependent variable to enable a deeper focus on what motivates use among water managers at different scales of decision making and in different regions. Specifically, this research investigates the supply of climate information by two NOAA RISAs and the use of that information by local and state water managers across two US regions—the Pacific Northwest and the Southwest. The study uses data collected through a survey (n=2,651) of municipal (local) water managers and in-depth qualitative interviews with RISA clients (local and state water managers).

Results suggest different state and local decision contexts affect information use in important ways. A key strength of boundary organizations is the ability to navigate and bridge those differing contexts. Results also suggest regional differences in information uptake matter. However, while differences exist, significant commonalities also emerged indicating characteristics of innovation adoption may be similar at localized scales of decision making.

**Thursday, 6 January 2011, 3:30PM**

Refreshments 3:15 PM

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