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Resilience in Complex Socio-ecological Systems

"Resilience in Complex Socio-ecological Systems"

A central question for Ecology is how do we assure ecosystems are resilient to environmental change? Global change, wrought by modification to climate and land use, has placed considerable stress on the planet's ecosystems and underscored the need to measure ecosystem resilience, understand mechanisms behind resilience and to provide appropriate management to assure that our ecosystems continue to deliver the services we require. This volume was conceived with certain constraints. Resilience was not to be limited to the ecology of ecosystems. Rather, resilience should also consider aspects of social resilience, including those of the economics of resilience and the differing sentiments and needs of groups of stakeholders. There was no attempt to limit the volume to a single definition of resilience, such as ecological or engineering resilience, but to examine something of the range of work that is ongoing in this domain. Here, we present five articles that illustrate something of the diversity of work currently being undertaken from first principles theoretical work on the definition and measurement of socio-ecological resilience, via experimental systems, to practical case studies in real world systems. The volume is a snapshot of some of the work currently being done on the resilience of complex socio-ecological systems. As is noted in this issue, socio-ecological resilience research is still embryonic, but there is clearly plenty of exciting and challenging work remaining to be done to achieve a more sustainable future.

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