

Jacob Cabral
MAJOR ADVISOR
Anita T. Morzillo

Title: Stakeholder networks for managing multiple forest stressor

ABSTRACT:

Roadside vegetation poses a risk to the reliability of utility infrastructure, as falling trees cause a large number of power outages during storm-related events. To maintain tree health and decrease the risk of tree damage to powerlines, stakeholders who manage roadside forests adopt vegetation strategies that also address forest stressors, such as extreme weather events and pest outbreaks. However, little is known about the forest manager collaboration network that exists to address such issues across landscapes comprised of diverse land use types, land ownerships, and land management objectives. Our objective is to evaluate social network interrelationships among the Connecticut forest management community as they influence decision-making about roadside vegetation management and multiple forest stressors. Using semi-structured interviews, qualitative data will be collected from Connecticut stakeholders who manage for medium- and large- sized forestlands that exist along roadsides. Social network analysis will be used to identify the structure of stakeholder interrelationships, and to explore how information regarding roadside vegetation and multiple stressors is diffused across the forest management community. Results will reveal how information flows throughout the forest management community, including occurrences of resource accessibility and collaboration among forest managers. Results also may demonstrate opportunities for and barriers to collaboration among stakeholders across jurisdictions and provide insight for cooperative planning of adaptive vegetation management strategies.