

## 2021 Interdisciplinary Ecology Seminar Series

**Speaker:** Dr. Stephen G. Perz

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**Title:** Participatory Action Research for Conservation and Development: Experiences from the Amazon

**Date:** Monday, September 20, 2021

**Time:** 1:50 pm – 2:50 pm

**Location:** Live Stream & Recording via Zoom

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Participatory action research (PAR) is especially valuable in contexts where there is rapid change, high social inequality, and great uncertainty about the future, which drives stakeholder demand for information to support their goals. The Amazon offers such a context, for it is the epicenter of conservation and development issues of global importance like climate change, and it is home to diverse stakeholders engaged in contestation over environmental governance. Stakeholder mobilization has changed the terms by which research is conducted, from the definition of priority topics to the application of findings. Due to stakeholder mobilization, research in the Amazon is now necessarily participatory, for stakeholders routinely issue demands about how research will be conducted and for what purpose. We provide an overview of several experiences of implementing PAR by different teams or networks, focusing on the complementary contributions of outside researchers and local stakeholders. The heart of the paper reports on three types of experiences of PAR on conservation and development in the Amazon: 1) participatory data collection for co-production of knowledge for environmental governance, 2) inclusive environmental monitoring systems, and 3) innovative models of knowledge exchange to facilitate collective action. These experiences constitute models that can be replicated in other places for broader impact to support conservation and development.

Stephen Perz has conducted research in the Amazon on the social-ecological impacts of infrastructure and the political ecology of environmental governance. He has received more than \$17 million in funding from NASA, NSF, USAID, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. His work features collaboration across disciplinary, national and organizational boundaries. He has over 110 peer-reviewed publications in scholarly journals and books, including his book, *Crossing Boundaries for Collaboration: Conservation and Development Projects in the Amazon*, and an international edited volume *Collaboration Across Boundaries for Social-Ecological Systems Science: Experiences Around the World*. He has chaired nearly 30 PhD dissertations in the Department of Sociology and Criminology & Law, and the School of Natural Resources and Environment. In 2015, he was selected the UF International Educator of the Year for Senior Faculty.

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