

April 14, 2020 Social Science Working Group Call

Attendees: Kira Sullivan-Wiley, Deepak Ray, Jaime Ashander, Güray Hatipoglu, Kathy Gerst, Melissa Kenney, Jody Peters, Michael Gerst, Quinn Thomas

Agenda/Notes:

1. Blog Post Updates

- Kathy's post is out: <https://ecoforecast.org/social-science-in-ecological-forecasting-people-refining-forecast-visualization/>
- Nat reached out to Kira and Jaime about what he is writing - integration of forecasting in the social system with the natural subsystem/human subsystems reinterlaced for the purpose of forecasting. It is the social science in modeling take on things
- Jaime has his post that needs a little work to get out. Has a fairly complete draft that needs to be reviewed by RFF folks. He will send his text to Nat to see if it can be combined or if it will be two separate posts that will cross-reference
- Mike Gerst's post was pretty ready to go previously. He hasn't looked at it in a while, but he will look at the posts already put up and those planned to make sure there is link/continuity
- Social Science webpage: <https://ecoforecast.org/social-science/>
 - This is now live on the EFI website and includes links to the blog posts as well as links to the meeting notes

2. Güray to present his blog post idea

- How can we assess the impact of forecast on decision making and society
 - Info for stakeholder/decision-makers
 - Measure the impact of implementation of forecasts
 - The information currently available for decision support systems
 - Reaching out to stakeholders who have the potential for using ecoforecasts/decision support systems. How to use the RCN/competition call - this could be one of the types of things we can use this community for. Identify stakeholders and reach out to them. Use the competition for an experiment on how to integrate ecoforecasts
 - Can get feedback from stakeholders and these people may also use other decision systems
 - "Usable science literature" - good search term
 - Jake Weltzin USGS - workshop on forecast focused on users has a USGS white paper in review. Workshop focused on ecological forecasting needs - stakeholder/partner desires. Users of forecasts were given the floor to shape the conversation. Want the forecasts to be driven by the user side of things. Jake might be willing to share the report. Jody can put Güray and Jake in touch with each other and check about if the report can be shared with this group.
 - 2 ways to think about the lit -

- Very decision focused. Does decision improve with forecast info
 - Second piece often from government view - who perceives value. This is difficult to figure out. Trying to figure out how values it is a challenge to qualitatively describe the value that exists within the community.
 - We can see if there are revealed elements. Are these products used to communicate and integrate into other decision support/science support products
 - Update from Quinn: Jake will talk about the partners/users side of things at the RCN workshop. There was a table that shows the things the users want forecasted.
 - Deepak: Consider COVID-19 and how the government responded. There were model predictions and then the US government responded. This is a type of forecasting and a response.
 - Good example of where a forecast guides policy, but makes assumption about human behavior and it is also policy that dictates human behavior
 - The Theory group is talking about a blog post looking at COVID-19 forecasts. Check in with Jody or Jaime to get connected with that conversation/project
 - Is there any lit looking at the forecast penetration into policymaking from forecasts from different fields (e.g., public health, biophysical, environmental, etc). Are certain fields more successful in having their forecasts incorporated into policymaking?
 - Melissa; thinks there are things related to weather forecasts. Disaster warnings. Something is impending, what is the behavioral response on the policymaker side.
 - There is a lot related to climate change, but those are projections, not forecasts
 - Melissa will think about this more
 - General question: are there norms around where you should be more skeptical in the policy realm?
 - Answer may be complicated by what various governing bodies value. This plays a big part in forecasts with dollar value associated with them. Mike expects those forecasts will have a higher uptake
3. RCN Virtual Meeting Prep - 1 slide/5 minute presentation about what the group has been doing. We have one more meeting on May 5 that we can use to finalize details.
- If you haven't registered please do so! <https://ecoforecast.org/efi-rcn-2020-conference/>
 - Plan for meeting
 - 1st day: 3 sessions

- Supply side - NEON folks talk about NEON data products. Forecasting challenge will use identified products
- Demand side - Jake Weltzin review the white paper. Lessons learned from having users drive the conversation
- How to build forecasting challenge - Ethan White
- Breakouts
- Updates from EFI Working Groups
- 2nd day: brainstorm concrete path forward
 - Concrete goal at end of meeting: Put dates on calendar for folks that want to clarify rules for forecast challenge
 - Expect to launch forecast challenge within 6 months to 1 year after the challenge rules are defined
- Key thing this group can provide is a real perspective on demand side/societal side. Drive that conversation. What is the utility of the forecasts to society. Think broadly from algal bloom forecast from one random lake in N. Dakota can be used to be more broadly applied
- This group is in tune with the user perspective. Also want to think beyond how the group can help the forecast community can develop that will be useful. But what are the social science type questions that can be addressed? For example:
 - Skill assessment of a forecast. How to pull from larger social science lit on forecast assessment.
 - Model aggregation - 0 multiple models can be thought of as a community's expert judgment of how a system could be best represented to develop hypotheses and forecast into the future. Think of each model as expert judgment
 - Work with user communities. How do we value emerging decision support uses that may not have existed before or existed in narrow niches that couldn't be broadly structured
 - Work from IonE - natural capital. How forecasts can be integrated into models they develop to look at the human side of forecasts.
 - Design of decision support tools and how to roll out successful forecasts
 - Input side - interesting questions. E.g, covid and environmental projections happening right now. The forecasts right now are screwed up because there is expected human behavior that has stopped temporarily. Think about human inputs in forecast challenge models
 - Think about how this group's research can intersect with the forecast challenge
- Divide and conquer within the breakout groups to provide the Social Science input
- Value for 2nd day - have group of social science think about opportunities that can be useful for answering social science questions

- Use the slide/presentation to let people know what the group has worked on and what the goals are moving forward
- Between now and next call - mock up what to go on the slide and then go through that to make sure that things that are said will be included from the group