



*The Natural Resources and
Environmental Studies
Institute and Canfor*

NRESI Lecture Series



Guest Lecturer:
Dr. Terry Chapin
Professor
University of Alaska Fairbanks

“Managing for Sustainability in a Directionally Changing World: Climate Change in Interior Alaska”

Human activities are altering many factors that determine the fundamental properties of ecological and social systems. Is sustainability a feasible goal in a world in which these controls are changing with a directional trend over time? This is global problem, but Alaska is particularly appropriate place to address this question because of rapid climate warming. This has profoundly affected factors that influence landscape processes (climate regulation and disturbance spread) and natural hazards; the goods that people harvest from ecosystems such as food, water, and wood; and many of the cultural benefits that people derive from ecosystems. Four broad policy strategies emerge for sustaining social-ecological systems at times of rapid change: (a) reducing vulnerability by sustaining basic ecological processes and reducing those hazards and stress that cause changes; (b) increasing adaptability by maintaining a diversity of options and experimenting with potentially innovative solutions; (c) fostering resilience by learning to cope with surprises and strengthening feedbacks that stabilize the current state of the system; and (d) facilitating transformation to new, potentially more beneficial states by taking advantage of opportunities created by crisis. Each strategy provides societal benefits, and all of them can be pursued simultaneously.

Date: March 29, 2007

Time: 7:00 pm

Place: UNBC, Canfor Theatre - Room 6-213

(refreshments will follow)

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