COPING WITH A CHANGING CLIMATE IN IDAHO: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR LOCAL PLANNING

Idaho American Planning Association Conference
2010

Blaine County ?

- Population 23,000
- Contains 5 incorporated towns
- 2,644 square miles
- Significant water resources; Big Wood River, Warm Springs, East Fork, Trail Creek, Deer Creek, Warm Spring Indian Creek. Dependent on snow pack.
- 80% is publically managed land;
  - U.S. Forest Service, BLM

Initial Steps

Become a ICLEI member in 2006:

- Initially focused on County operations.
  1) Conducted a GHG assessment of all county operations and employee commutes

  2) Set reduction goals; Blaine Environmental, Economic and Energy Sustainability Team

  3) Implemented policies and projects to reduce emissions
    - 4-10 work week, energy retrofits, rewables on gov buildings

Planning and Policy

Mitigation

- BuildSmart Building Code
- EECBG Regional Partnership (7)
  - Regional Energy Efficiency and Conservation Strategy
  - Community Audit and Retrofit Rebate Program (CARRP)
- Solar & Wind Ordinance
- Regional Multi-model transportation plan

Adaptation

- Open Space Levy
  - $ to protect/purchase undeveloped floodplain, water rights, and sensitive natural resources area
- No new development in FP
- No development on hillsides
- USGS study and management plan

Challenges

- Uninformed Elected Officials and Public
  - Denial
  - Scope issue; global to local outcomes
  - Connecting the “dots”; the science
- The State of Idaho
  - Lack of leadership
  - State statues limiting local authority over water and development;
- Property Rights vs. Planning
- Short-term cost/benefit analysis vs. long term analysis

Opportunities

Federal support

- Funding for reducing energy consumption, renewable energy projects (EECBG), sustainable communities (HUD grants)
- Future federal policies

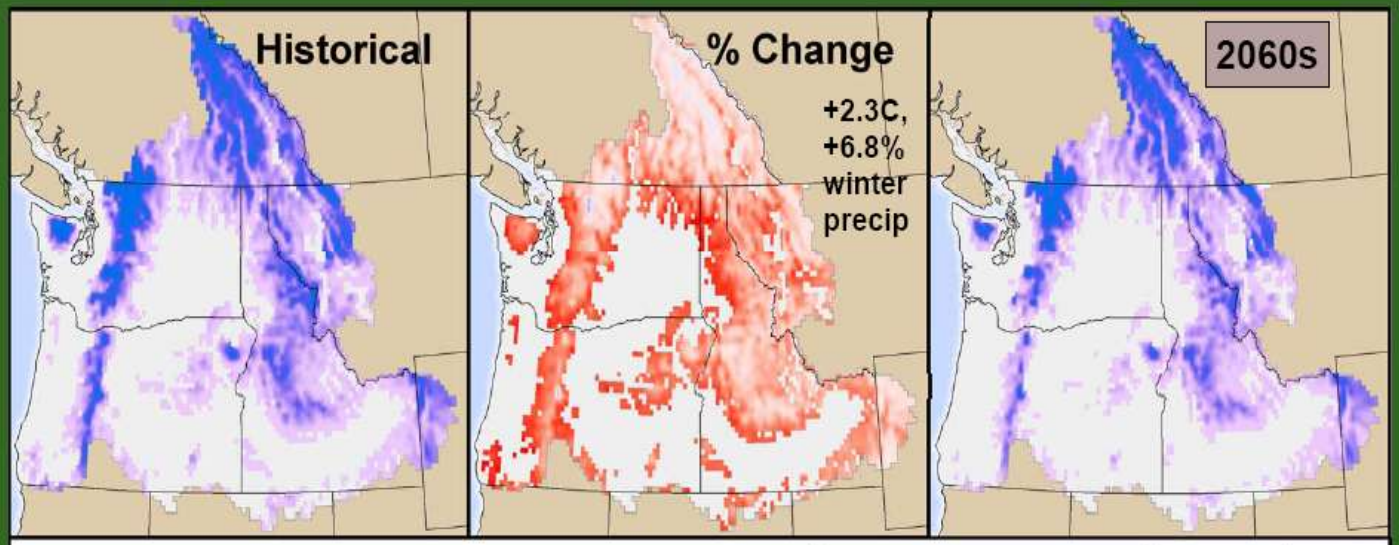
Power in partnering

- Creating Regional Partnerships e.gs. Grants, projects, plans
- Jurisdictions coordinating and supporting growth, transportation, energy use and economic planning and policies
- Public/private partnerships
  - Idaho Power, NGOs

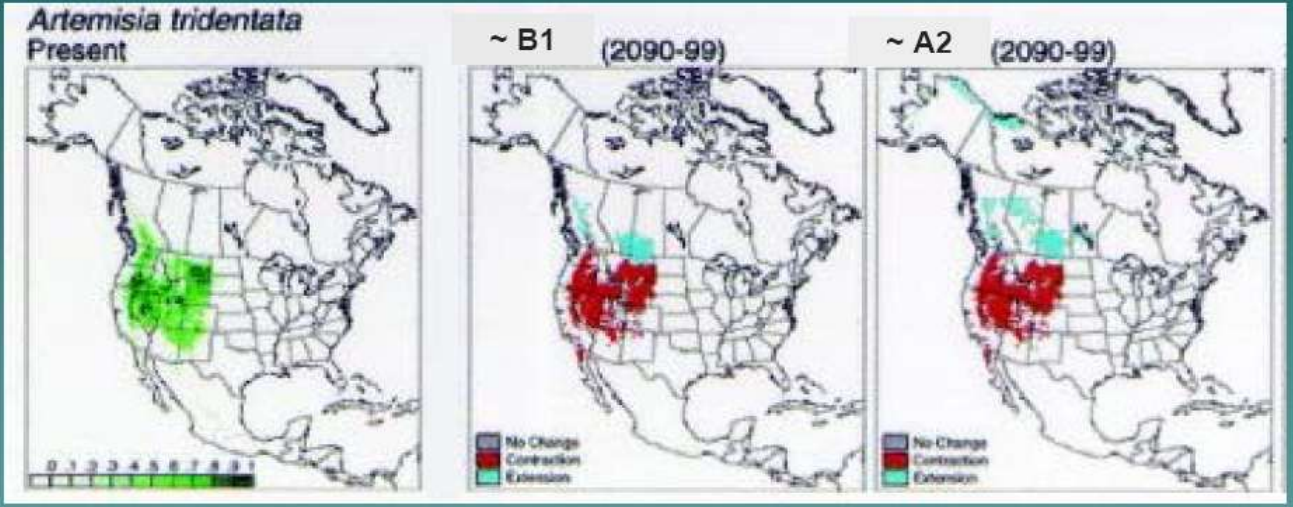
Tools

- Regionally climate change models for the PNW; *Climate Impacts Group* (*Washingtonhttp://cses.washington.edu/cig/*)
  - *Connects the dots; changes in temp,* precipitation, runoff, vegetation, wildfire projections
    - e.g. *Integrating Climate Change with Forest Vegetation Models for Adaptation Planning*
  - incorporating climate change information into long-range planning
    - e.g. Hydrologic Climate Change Scenarios for the Pacific Northwest Columbia River Basin and Coastal Drainages (*http://www.hydro.washington.edu/2860/*)

The warmer locations are most sensitive to warming



Climate Envelope Example: Sagebrush



Shift of range (defined by climate & soils) into Canada even under mild warming by 2100

AJ Hansen et al. 2001

Tools

- Comprehensive Plan: Sustainability or Climate Change Chapter
  - Opportunity to educate elected officials and the public on climate change and the significant role land use and the built environment play in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
  - Incorporating GHG and Energy Reduction Benchmarks and Indicators
- Community/Regional Energy Plan
- New development– GHG Impact Assessments
  - GHG projections associated with new structures and location

Lessons Learned - Idaho

- Educate first – use information/sources with "legitimacy" and a rational nexus i.e. USGS, NOAA, Established models, etc.
- Use "the planning process" to engage and educate stakeholders.
- Find Partners
- Find other ways to support Adaptive and Mitigation policies besides "Climate Change"
  - e.g. green building – energy security, cost benefit, economic development

QUESTIONS ?