

Protected Areas - the change from within: How can people in Protected Areas manage with seemingly endless organisational change?

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Outline

- Introduction: Themes of Change
- ‘Lenses’: Evolution, Interdisciplinarity, Career Strategies
- Implications for Organisational Change: Examples
- Some ‘Thought Questions’ to take away

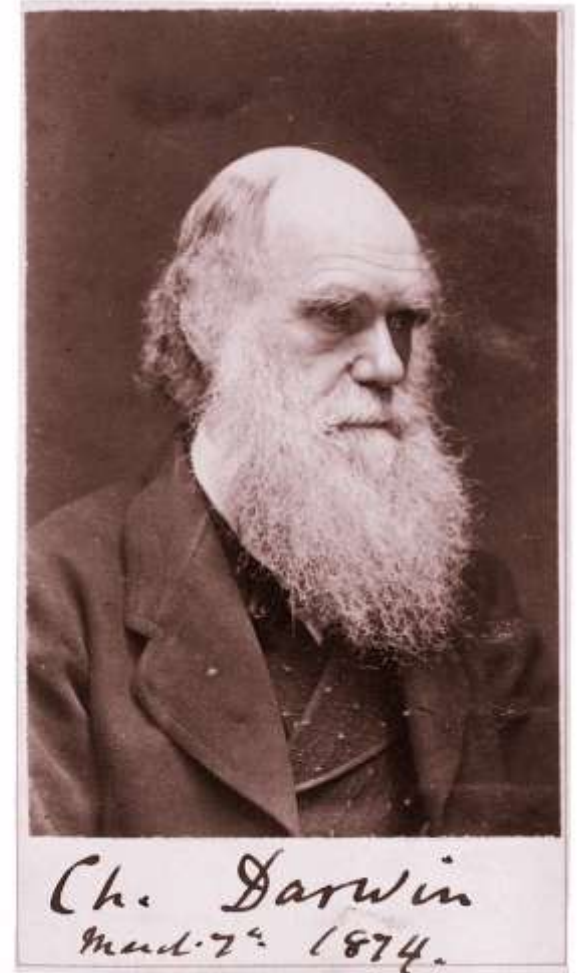


Dealing with change: Some key themes

- Change is natural.
- Change is uncomfortable!
- Reflecting on and understanding processes of change can help in shaping them
- Change can lead to creativity, other positives
- Think about collaborations (partnerships, networks) as ways to increase resilience.

Evolution: change in nature

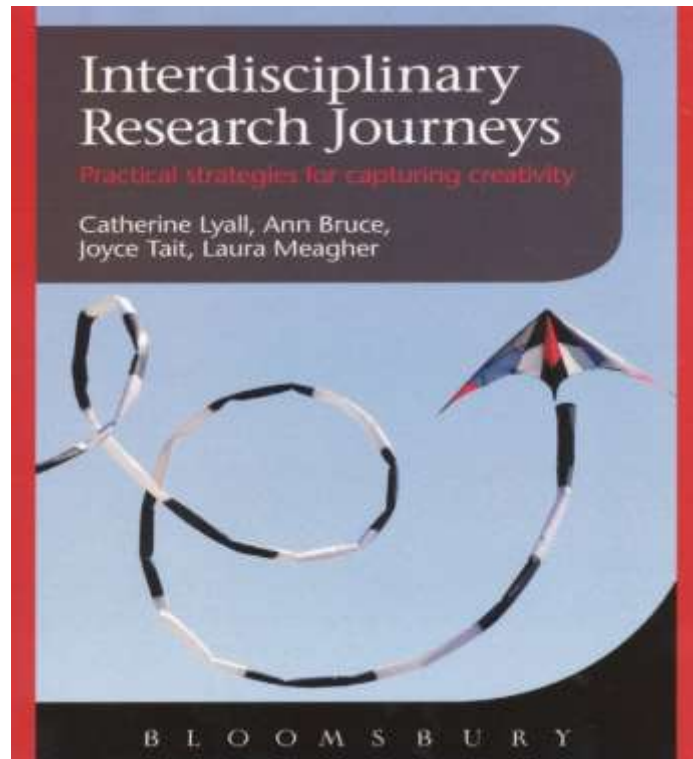
- Ongoing change over time
- Some species endure; some change dramatically; some branch into multiple species; some go extinct
- Understanding helps protect species, deal with invasive species, etc.





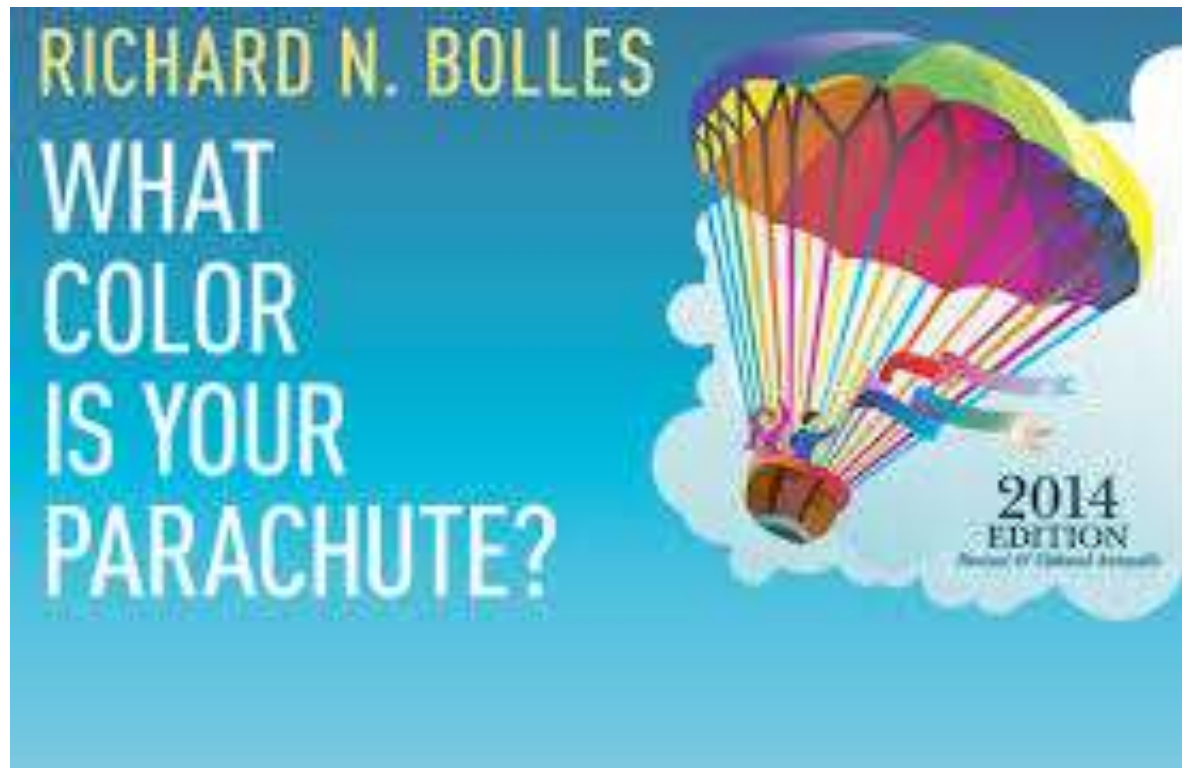
Interdisciplinarity: Change in research behaviours

- Interdisciplinarity needed to tackle ‘wicked problems’ of interest to society, funders
- But interdisciplinary research can backfire on researchers
- Interdisciplinary collaborations can lead to genuine creativity and innovation
- We are learning about processes involved



<http://www.bloomsburyacademic.com>

What Color is Your Parachute?





Individual career strategies

- Importance of reflection, self-analysis in 'owning' career
- Freeing up creative career changes through self-knowledge and re-configuration of building blocks – expertise, experiences, enthusiasm



Implications of key themes for Organisational Change: A few examples



Deliberately changing an organisation's mission/‘persona’

Cook College, Rutgers University:

Used to be: ‘the agricultural college’

Then: ‘the agricultural and environmental college’

Now: the School of Environmental & Biological
Sciences



Transformation of the land grant universities' mission of service

- External catalyst/funder of change, the Kellogg Foundation
- 'Enforced reflection' with stakeholders before any strategies
- Learning by doing – and sharing across 12 major change projects



A novel consortium – learning and self-protection

- The Scottish Universities Research Policy Consortium
- Co-production by very different universities of a multi-chapter guidance document
- ‘Armour’ pre-empting government from imposing one-size-fits-all research policies



The Promoting Partnership Initiative: University of St Andrews, University of Dundee

- Mergers were ‘in the air’
- Offered pre-emptive alternative: strategic initiative that facilitated reflection and development of ‘nodes of collaboration’
- Social Dimensions of Health Institute: novel joint initiative, now 10 years old



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- Network of organisations funding/coordinating national plant health research
- Rise in problems, decline in expertise (and other resources)
- Specific transnational activities *and* increased willingness to collaborate

The James Hutton Institute: a merger

- Mergers are hard work! Not a single operational process/system was the same between the two institutes that government merged into one
- A key step in culture change: inclusive, staff-wide reflection and development of Our Future, Our Values
- A key step: making the most of breadth as an opportunity, fostering interdisciplinarity, 'highest quality integrated and innovative science' – with new funding opportunities

Some 'thought questions'

Change is natural.

- What types of change are taking place or likely to be taking place within my organisation? Are drivers of changes internal or external, or both?

Change is uncomfortable.

- Is something about a particular change making me, my colleagues, my unit or organisation especially 'uncomfortable'? Is there any way to turn that anxiety into a healthy discomfort that leads to constructive change?

Reflection on change processes can help to shape them.

- How can I 'step back' mentally and think about ongoing changes as processes which I can learn about and perhaps even shape?

Creativity can emerge.

- While things are changing anyway, what opportunities are opening up or could be identified and pursued?

Collaboration can enhance resilience.

- What partnerships, collaborations or networking activities could help to protect the issues and professional foci/responsibilities I care about?



Thank you.

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