

**Communities preparing for climate change: Insights from community development and roundtable discussion** [View Abstract](#)

- [Dr. Jeff Sharp](#), Rural Sociology, Ohio State University
- [Dr. Steve Gasteyer](#), Sociology, MSU

**SESSION ABSTRACT**

The session begins with an overview of what we know about rural community action and some of the important ingredients that allow some communities to successfully act and work together and limit the ability of others to do so. Concepts such as social infrastructure, community fields, social capital, and community capital will be reviewed, with the core thesis being that the existence of community leadership and organizational structures that are focused on general community well-being and that are well linked to and inclusive of a community's diversity will be best prepared to manage the diverse opportunities and challenges that are likely to arise from climate change in the coming years. We will also review a number of different community issues and identify how the existence of these social resources have been found to be useful to rural communities confronting opportunities and challenges that might parallel some climate change impacts, including community development, economic development, natural resource management, rapid growth, and natural disasters. We will then move to an open dialogue among participants about some of the challenges and opportunities they recognize as researchers and/or community officials/citizens and the community development or research needs they feel are necessary to adequately prepare for potential climate change impacts.

**PRESENTER BIOSKETCHES**

**Jeff Sharp**

Jeff Sharp is associate professor, Department of Rural Sociology, The Ohio State University. Dr. Sharp focuses on agricultural and community change at the rural-urban interface as well as public attitudes about topical food, agricultural, and environmental issues (recently looking at matters such as local foods, animal welfare, energy, and large-scale livestock facilities). He is currently involved in the Ohio Survey of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Issues, a biennial survey of rural and urban Ohioans.

**Stephen Gasteyer**

Steve Gasteyer is assistant professor, Department of Sociology, MSU. He researches the structures and processes that influence community level access to critical natural resources and capacity to manage those resources. Relatedly, he also applies a systems analysis to understanding community leadership and economic development decision making. Topics he is currently focused on include the role of coalitions, social networks and social capital in the protecting water quality; community capitals, coalitions, and the development of sustainable food systems; and systems approaches to understanding community leadership and economic development support structures. His research focuses on the US, Middle East and West Africa.