

Work on the edge:

*Experiences of an independent
coastal researcher and consultant*

Susi Moser, Ph.D.



Stanford University

PRACTICING GEOGRAPHY

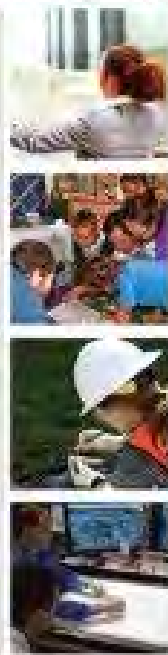
Careers for Enhancing
Society and the
Environment

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Geography Careers in Consulting

Susanne C. Moser and Angela Donelson

OUR JOURNEY INTO CONSULTING: AN INTRODUCTION

"Oh really?" was the question that rang in my transition from academia into consulting. I (Susi) didn't know it at the time, I had made no plans. Contrary to all the "how-to" book advice (which I read only much later), I didn't carefully consider the transition, nor what it would mean to run my own business. But here I was: One late afternoon in December 2007 I was catching up on phone calls while driving home from a briefing with Boston's mayor, Thomas Menino, about what climate change might mean for his city. While in the meeting, a long-time colleague from a research program run by the California Energy Commission had left a message to ask for my advice on some social science research priorities the state should include in its strategic research plan. So, I called him back, gave my advice, and as we chatted, he told me that the state is considering hiring a social scientist (on a long-term contractual basis) to help them strengthen the social science side of their climate change portfolio. "Oh really?"

By the end of that conversation, a serious offer to be that social scientist was on the table, and I was considering it equally seriously. For months, I had felt the growing urge to change jobs; at the time I was on research leave from the National Center of Atmospheric Research (NCAR) in Boulder, Colorado, one of the country's premier research laboratories for atmospheric science. Moreover, my partner had just declared a desire to go back to graduate school to obtain a doctorate—the only school that offered the desired degree was . . . in California.

What followed was a month-long frenzy to gather as much information as I could about the logistics of consulting. I dove blindly into the cold waters of contract negotiations, found out I had to be a subcontractor to a big company to make it happen, had no money to pay a lawyer to explain the legalese I was asked to sign, lost sleep over deciding on a company name, and gave my notice to NCAR. By the end of February 2008, we moved.

In retrospect, and several years wiser and farther down the road of consulting, I marvel at the way the stars aligned and how courageous and willing—or really, naive but lucky—I was in letting go of a secure income with lovely benefits and vacation, and yet, how the need for a change, more fulfilling work, and the desire to be my own boss catapulted me out of that "safe" place, through all the fears and not-knowing into a new career.





OH REALLY,

**PLEASE TELL ME
MORE**

The Work Life of a Strange Hybrid



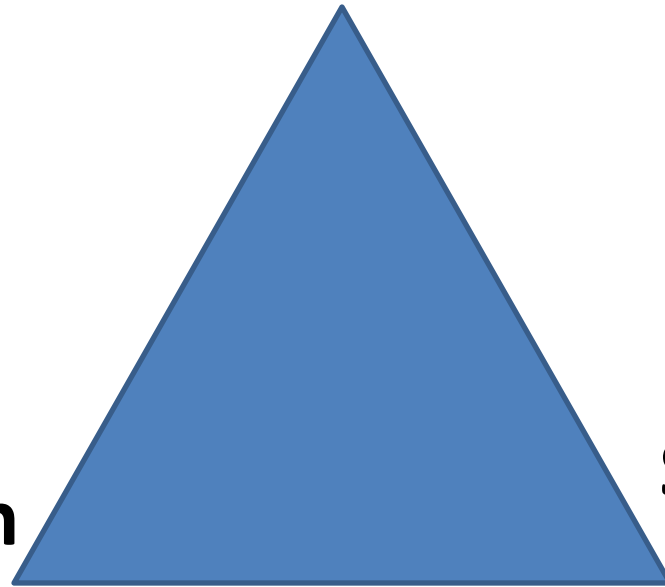
My Clients and Partners

- Local, state, federal government agencies
- NGOs
- Foundations
- Other academics
- Other consulting firms
- Professional societies and science policy-makers



My Work Foci

Adaptation



**Communication
& Engagement**

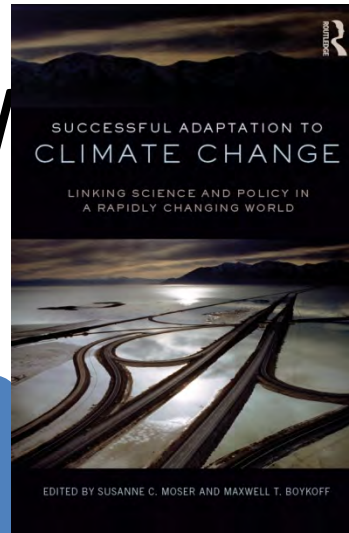
**Science-Policy/
Practice
Interactions**

Examples of Value

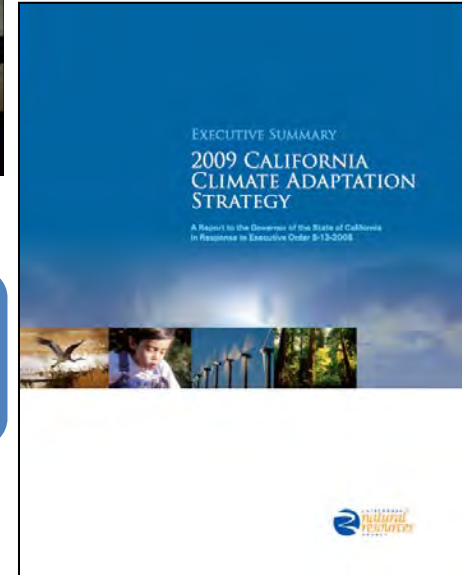


Review/
Evaluation

Use-Inspired
Research



Scoping
Strategies



Enabling
Action



Education/
Advocacy



Find out more:

Susi Moser, Ph.D.

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The image shows a screenshot of a website for Susanne Moser, Research & Consulting. The website has a green header with the text "SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE". Below the header is a navigation menu with links for Home, Services, Publications, About, Partners & Clients, Resources, Testimonials, and Contact. The main content area features a large heading "Social Science for Climate Change" and a sub-heading "Interdisciplinary Research, Productive Science-Policy Interaction and Effective Communication for Social Change". The text describes the central theme of her work as change, particularly climate change and social change, and discusses her research and consulting services. A small photo of Susanne Moser is visible on the right side of the page.

SOCIAL SCIENCE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

Susanne Moser
Research & Consulting

Home Services Publications About Partners & Clients Resources Testimonials Contact

Social Science for Climate Change

The central theme of my work is change. Particularly climate change and social change.

How does it happen? What are its effects? How do we deal with it? And how do we change ourselves, our practices and institutions, to adapt to change, live rich and meaningful lives, and create a fair, sustainable, humane, and beautiful world?

I conduct research and provide consulting services addressing these questions.

Interdisciplinary Research, Productive Science-Policy Interaction and Effective Communication for Social Change

As a leading US expert on adaptation, science-policy interactions, decision support, and climate change communication, I emphasize practical, collaborative, solutions-oriented work.

I have extensive experience working in the US, Australia and Europe, in coastal, forest, and conservation sectors, and in urban and rural communities. I have led and participated in projects which assess the impacts of climate change; examine the vulnerabilities and preparedness of communities and ecosystems; identify barriers to adaptation and strategies to overcome them; explore what adaptation "success" might mean, and help communities move toward it.

My focus on policy analysis, governance, communication, and human behavior stems from my commitment to putting the best available science to work in policy and management areas. I can help