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**Conceptualizing Gender and Adaptive Governance in Canadian Forestry  
Communities**

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**Key Words:** gender, forestry, communities, adaptive governance, climate change

**Abstract:** Climate change and industrial restructuring are inducing rapid and extensive economic, environmental, and social changes in forestry communities across Canada's boreal region, with specific impacts for Canada's Aboriginal peoples. At the University of Saskatchewan, I am initiating a project that examines the capacity of these communities to establish "adaptive governance" arrangements in the face of these changes. Adaptive governance refers to the ability of governance institutions to respond to current environmental and social disturbances as well as to define and achieve sustainable policies and management practices. To be adaptive, a governance system must establish mechanisms that are inclusive of a range of interests and stakeholders and effective in monitoring, responding to, learning from, and harnessing changing conditions.

In this paper, I ask, what is the conceptual connection between adaptive governance and gender? How do our assumptions, practices, and performances of gender affect the institutions, capacities and implementation of governance arrangements? Can such understanding inform the institutions we establish for adaptive governance? This paper draws on literature in feminist theory and environmental management to develop a theoretical framework to address these questions and to conceptualize governance structures and processes that facilitate adaptation in a way that is sensitive to gender and power relations.

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