Ecological Risk Assessment Is a Flawed Paradigm and Has Outlived Its Usefulness in Informing Environmental Management

Rochelle Araujo
National Exposure Research Laboratory
US EPA Office of Research and Development

ACES Phoenix AZ
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- The views represented here in NO WAY represent the official positions of the US Environmental Protection Agency
Hmmm....

- Risk assessment wasn’t even that good at simple environmental problems
  - Single chemical, homogeneous populations
- Why do we think that extending it to more complex problems won’t be even worse?
Dose

By the time we go from to

Response

The crap is on the fan
Risk Assessment

- The art of letting something bad happen long enough...
- So that you can understand it well enough...

TO MAKE IT STOP!
But...What Did That Pretense to Rigor Gain us?

Risk assessments that take 25 years
DIOXIN

Corporate welfare
For lawyers
And...on the bright side

- Boundless funding for grad students!
  - Just one more study.....please!
Psychosocial Implications of Risk

• Polarizes society into risk avoiders (citizen weenies) and risk embracers (titans of capitalism)
• Promotes a culture of blaming others
• Promotes the idea that failure to give offense is the same as doing the right thing
And now they flip-flop..
It’s all Risk Assessment

Source...tree
Exposure...gravity
Threshold..One a day

Relativity..
The ultimate risk assessment..

Don’t exceed speed of light!

Risk that ecosystems
Will subsume entire economy

100%
Especially if there are Stakeholder meetings!

And Post-Its!!!
A Parable
Fewer Assumptions…
..More Solutions!
Risk Assessment had its Day

But....
It is so Ov-er!