

Title:

Storytelling for drought resilience: local communities, memories and legacy

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Narrative approaches with a focus on story and storytelling are increasingly being drawn on in interdisciplinary projects as a way to bring together diverse voices (communities of interest, disciplinary languages, expert and lay knowledge) to tackle a common problem and increase public engagement. Personal stories can be rich in long-term, local-level information, illuminating social values and norms, whilst sharing stories can be a process of social learning and an opportunity to create new narratives around a particular issue or community. The Drought Risk and You (DRY) project is using historical resources such as images, maps and newspaper reports about UK drought as stimulus to collect memories about past drought and catchment-level water use. Local and lay knowledge of drought impacts and adaptation strategies derived from the stories will feed into hydrological models. As part of 'narrative workshops' being held with diverse stakeholders across the UK, the ongoing drought science will be used as additional stimulus for storytelling. This paper will report on the early stages of the narrative work in the project, focusing on the pilot case study area surrounding the River Fowey, Cornwall, UK. It will discuss the value of using various storytelling approaches for exploring this type of data and the interrelationship between memories and archives of past drought and how these can be harnessed (or act as barriers) to inform future drought plans and adaptation strategies at different scales.