

CMMAP Internship 2011  
Grad Student Colloquium

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Investigating  
approaches to local  
climate action  
programs and  
practices in CO

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# Introduction

- Internship with Rocky Mountain Climate Organization (RMCO)
  - Who/what is RMCO?
    - Colorado Climate Project
    - Colorado Climate Network



# Why is this important?

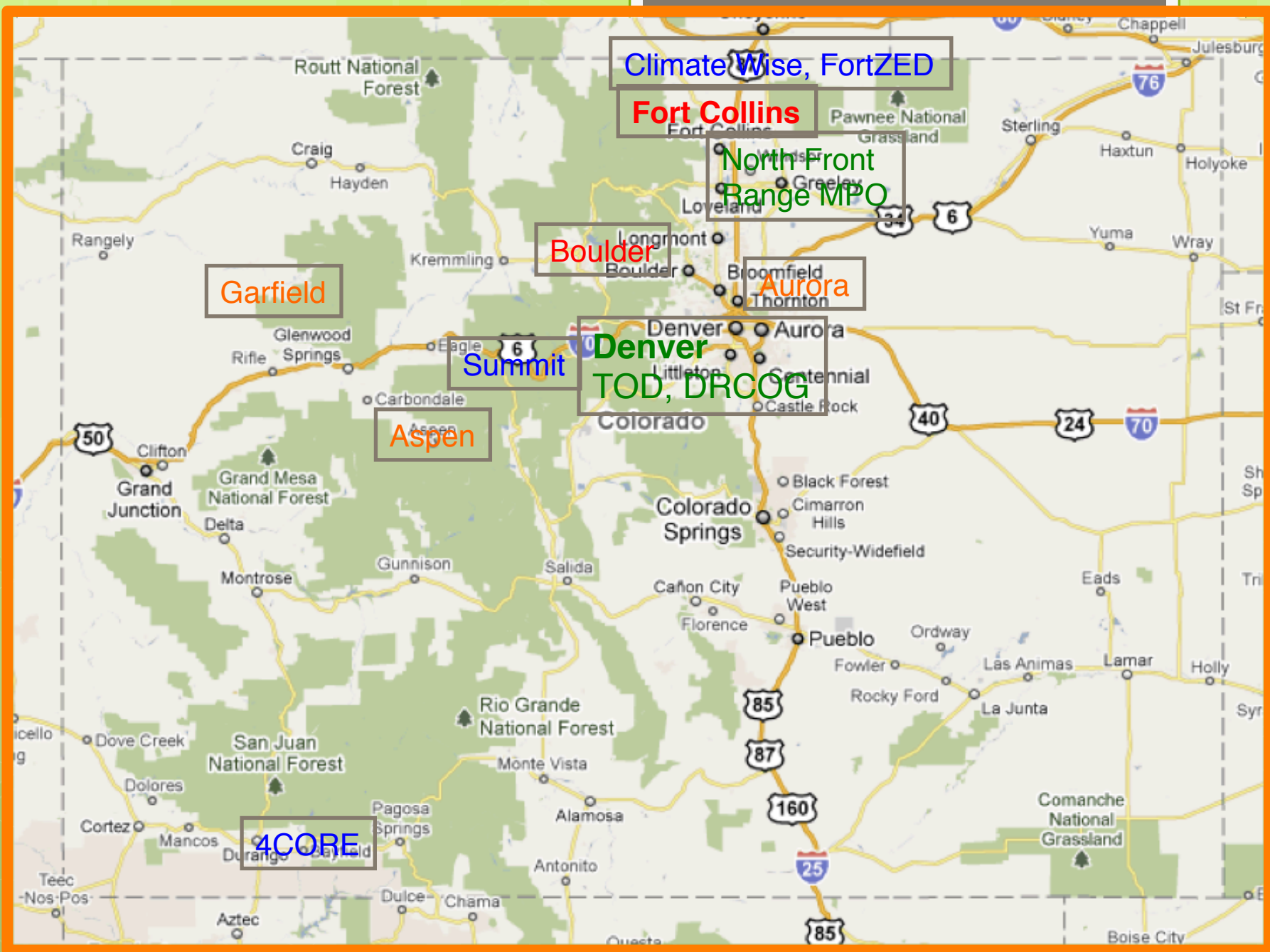
- *“Common institutional barriers to climate protection governance include local governments having limited professional capacity and internal coordination problems [...] Additionally, **local governments often lack the expertise or data needed to develop comprehensive plans, conduct GHG emissions inventories, or to monitor or evaluate progress**” (Krause 2011)*

## Other factors

- *“The influence of neighboring jurisdictions, the presence of staff members assigned to energy or climate planning, and the level of community environmental activism are found to have the greatest impact on climate mitigation policy adoption” (Pitt 2010)*

# Model Practices of Local Climate Programs

- 13 in-depth case studies, 4 categories:
  - ◆ Climate Action Plans
  - ◆ Energy Efficiency Programs
  - ◆ Renewable Energy Programs
  - ◆ Transportation/Land Use Programs



Climate Wise, FortZED

Fort Collins

North Front Range MPO

Boulder

Aurora

Denver  
TOD, DRCOG

Summit

Aspen

Garfield

4CORE

# Format of write-ups

## Climate Action Plans

- Narrative description of the plan
- Overview of plan elements
- Implementation strategies
- Plan adoption

## Other Programs

- Narrative description of the initiative
- Detailed description of practice components
- Detailed indicators of success
- Messaging, marketing

# Categories of Governance

Apolitical,  
Economic

Summit

4CORE  
FortZED

Denver TOD

Climate Wise

North Front  
Range MPO

DRCOG

Aspen

Aurora

Park City CAP

Garfield

Environ-  
mental

Boulder CAP  
Fort Collins CAP

Governmental

Private,  
Commercial/  
Business,  
Nongovernmental



# The big picture

- *“Urban climate governance has primarily been driven by policy entrepreneurs and transnational **municipal networks**, reliant on persuasion and soft forms of (self-) regulation through which an emphasis on the win-win potential of addressing climate change in the city has become orthodox” (Bulkeley 2010)*
- *There tends to be a focus “on the energy area where financial savings can be accrued and the politically sensitive areas such as transport and planning...have been largely ignored” (B&K 2006)*

# The even bigger picture

- *“The process of making policy also constitutes what the object to be governed should be”* (Bulkeley 2010, p246)
- The cities that are taking the lead on local climate action are in effect defining *“what it means to act in response to climate change”* (Bulkeley 2010, p248)

# Future issues, or Things beyond the scope of my project

- Given that *“we simply do not know what the impact of many of the initiatives that have been undertaken over the past two decades has been or what these achievements might amount to collectively,”* more detailed evaluation is needed (Bulkeley 2010)

# Contesting the norm

- Toly (2008) argues that the “CCP [*Cities for Climate Protection*] and its member cities most often frame the call to action in terms of cobenefits that primarily satisfy the demands of other competing first principles,” which serve to legitimize “neoliberal ecopolitical principles” and dilute “the capacity for norm contestation.” (Bulkeley 2010)

# References

- Bulkeley H, Kern K, 2006, “Local Government and the Governing of Climate Change in Germany and the UK” *Urban Studies* 43(12): 2237-2259.
- Bulkeley H, 2010, “Cities and the Governing of Climate Change” *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 35: 229-253.
- Krause RM, 2011, "An assessment of the greenhouse gas reducing activities being implemented in US cities" *Local Environment* 16(2): 193-211.
- Pitt D, 2010, "The impact of internal and external characteristics on the adoption of climate mitigation policies by US municipalities" *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 28(5): 851-871.
- Toly NJ, 2008, “Transnational municipal networks in climate politics: from global governance to global politics” *Globalizations* 5: 341-356.