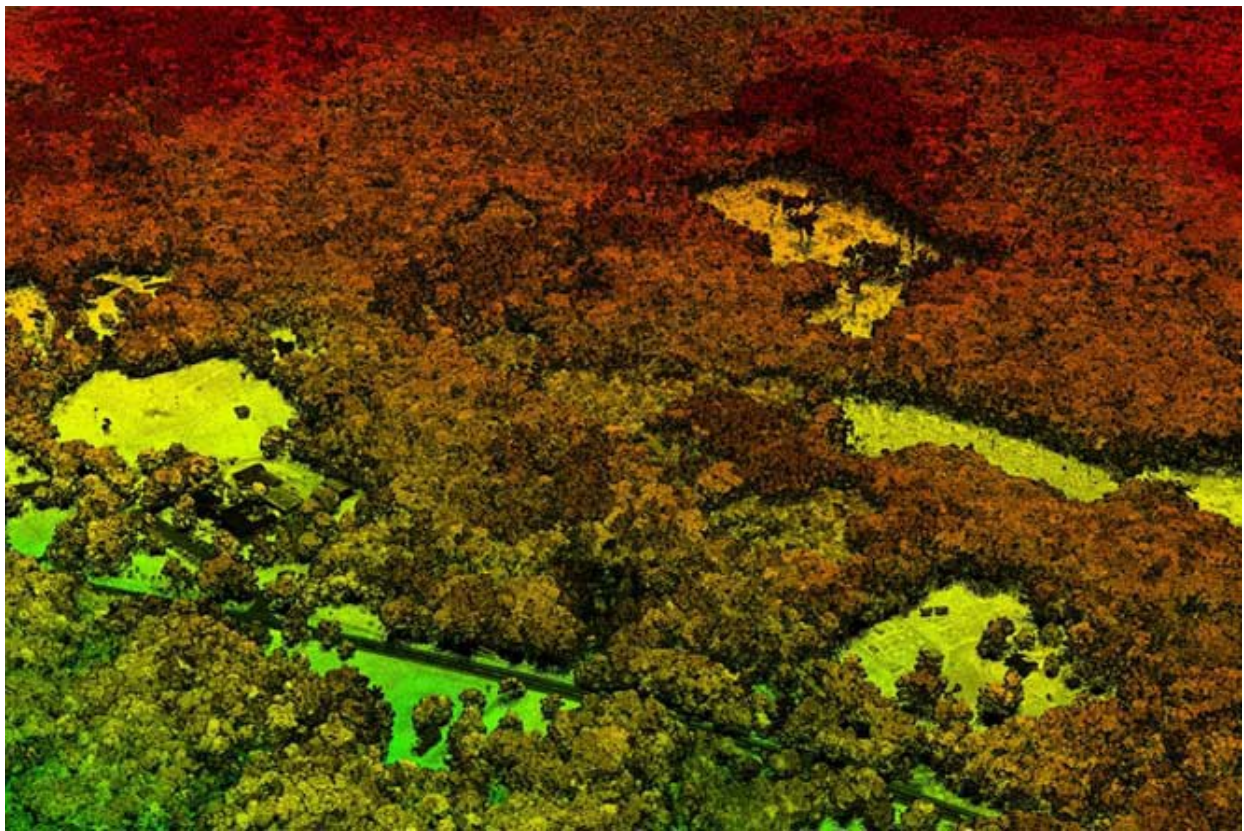




SESYNC Feedbacks

News from the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center

NEW WORKSHOPS | Deadlines Approaching Dec. 6 & Jan. 10



People, Land, and Ecosystems: Leveraging NEON for Socio-Environmental Synthesis Workshop

February 10-12, 2020

Deadline to Apply: December 6, 2019

SESYNC invites applications from a diverse array of scientists for a 3-day workshop focused on how **National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Airborne Observation Platform (AOP)** data could be used in socio-environmental (S-E) synthesis and convergent research. The workshop will seek to address several systemic problems that currently limit convergent research that uses the highest remote sensing technology to study problems at the interface of ecology, land change science, and social science. [Learn more.](#)

S-E Approaches to Watershed Management and Governance Workshop

February 18-21, 2020

Deadline to Apply: January 10, 2019

SESYNC invites applicants for the first workshop in the **Socio-Environmental (S-E) Early-Career Researchers Program**, titled "S-E Approaches to Watershed Management and Governance." This workshop will provide an opportunity for recent PhDs and PhD candidates interested in learning about S-E research related to watershed management and governance. [Learn more.](#)

See all [current opportunities.](#)





Academics in Canoes Getting Coffee

An interview on collaborating across disciplines with Phillip P.A. Staniczenko and Steven M. Alexander

Former SESYNC Postdoctoral Fellows Phillip P.A. Staniczenko and Steven M. Alexander understand well the rewards and challenges of interdisciplinary science. While at SESYNC, the two researchers became familiar with each other's disciplines and approaches to research, ultimately spurring an interdisciplinary collaboration. Together they investigated **how social influence impacts the decision-making of artisanal fishers**, who, rather than industrial trawlers, make a living using fish pots submerged near the shoreline or hooks and lines cast from small boats known in the Caribbean as canoes. Their findings were published recently in *Fish and Fisheries*.

Staniczenko, now an assistant professor at City University of New York, Brooklyn College, recently reflected on his experience working with Alexander, now a science advisor at the Canadian Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

So grab a cup of coffee, settle in, and hear how Phillip's time at SESYNC laid the foundation for a successful interdisciplinary collaboration. He'll explain how he was able to navigate the sometimes unpredictable waters of the collaborative process without feeling like he was stuck in a canoe without a paddle. **Read what he has to say**.

SCIENTIST SAYS | Tips for Better Science Writing



A photo taken by Lauren White from Mt. Nittany, near State College, PA, the site for this year's conference.

Three Lessons I Learned from Attending the 2019 Science Writers Conference as a Scientist

A SESYNC Postdoc shares her science writing takeaways.

By Lauren White

Recently, I attended my first **Science Writers Conference**, which was held this year at Penn State University, in State College, PA, on October 25-29, 2019. I've been interested in science communication for a long time and have dabbled in writing blog posts for a few scientific journals and non-profits. Despite this interest, I've had very little formal training in science writing, so I was excited to explore these skills in a professional context. Here are a few of my takeaways for other academics and researchers interested in communicating science:

1. Telling a good story might mean thinking differently than we're used to.

I know many other scientists who are interested in and excited about science communication. But, crafting a story that conveys our research at large can be challenging when our training encourages us to focus on the particulars. As scientists, we are taught to couch our language in uncertainty, and when we are too close to the problem, it can be hard to connect the nitty gritty details of our everyday work back to the bigger picture.

But I learned one helpful solution is to partner with mentors who specialize in communication to get critical feedback. Identifying the key points of your story takes practice but is important! Because whether you're presenting a scientific poster or making a pitch to an editor, finding the essential elements of a story is key to making the strongest impression. **[Read more.](#)**

Find more science communication tips in SESYNC's **[Communication Tutorials: Storytelling video.](#)**

Inter-species re-entanglement



Boturini Codex: Broken tree omen marking foundational bond between god and people



Florentine Codex: Hummingbird seasonality



Codex Azcatitlan: Passive and active hummingbird god



Florentine Codex: Bird and flower as heart and Huitzilopochtli

A slide from Dr. Iris Montero's presentation "Pliny in Tlatelolco: Natural History between Two Worlds."

How Hummingbirds May Show a Different Interpretation of Natural History

A recent seminar explored different cultures' interpretations of what natural history can entail.

By Alaina Gallagher

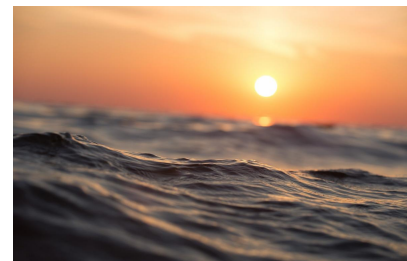
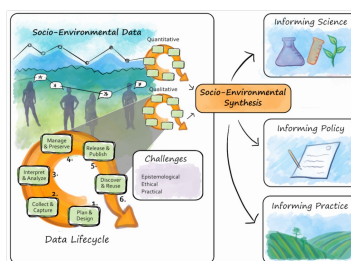
Hummingbirds may be some of the lightest birds on Earth, but in the history of central Mexico's indigenous peoples, they hold significant weight. Viewed as a warrior deity, Huitzilopochtli, an important Aztec god, was often depicted as a hummingbird among the Mexica people.

When the Spaniards arrived to the New World, however, they had a very different impression of these tiny birds found only in the Americas. Upon returning home, Europeans described them as delicate flying jewels-not fierce, mighty creatures like the Mexica people saw them.

So, how can a small bird have such a different meaning to two groups of people?

Dr. Iris Montero, a Visiting Assistant Professor of Hispanic Studies from Brown University, explored this juxtaposition in her recent SESYNC seminar titled "Pliny in Tlatelolco: Natural History between Two Worlds." During her presentation, Montero explained what these contrasting views may indicate about different cultures' interpretations of our human connection to nature. [Read more.](#)

SESYNC RESEARCH | Publications from SESYNC Scholars



As featured on [CNN](#), a study of diverse datasets, including pollen, coinage, and funeral practices, reveals that the effects of the late antique plague pandemic commonly known as the Justinianic Plague may have been overestimated. SESYNC postdocs Lee Mordechai and Merle Eisenberg are lead authors on the [article](#) "The Justinianic Plague: An inconsequential pandemic?" in *PNAS*.

[Read the SESYNC article.](#)

Former SESYNC postdoc Steven Alexander and SESYNC-affiliated researcher Kristal Jones are lead authors on a new [article](#) in *Nature Sustainability*, titled "Qualitative data sharing and synthesis for sustainability science." The paper emerged from a Qualitative Data Sharing [workshop](#) led by Alexander and Jones held at SESYNC.

[Read the SESYNC article.](#)

A new [comment](#) published in *Nature Climate Change* suggests that a new modeling approach can help researchers, policymakers, and the public better understand how policy decisions will influence human migration as sea levels rise around the globe. Led by David Wrathall and Valerie Mueller, the comment emerged from a SESYNC [Pursuit](#).

[Read the SESYNC article.](#)

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How do we fold who we are into what we study? How can different backgrounds & identities empower research & better solve socio-environmental problems?

A new grad wkshp blends [#interdisciplinary](#) [#synthesis](#) [@sesync](#) w/ [#DiversityandInclusion](#) [@ESA_SEEDS](#): sesync.us/sesyncseeds



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Another fun & productive week of science synergy with this amazing group [@sesync](#) -- elements, microbes, ecosystem services, math... and babies! [@rachelpaseka](#) [@atstrauss](#) [@thijsfrenken](#) [@agonzalezlab](#) [@e_seabloom](#) [@lawhite_ecology](#) [@angieLPeace](#) [@dedmerW](#)



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Also, be sure to check out this [recent article](#) from UMD's College of Computing, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences on [SESYNC Director Margaret Palmer's](#) recent Science on Tap Lecture.

"Qualitative data sharing and synthesis for sustainability science." Published in *Nature Sustainability*, following the *Qualitative Data Sharing Workshop*, led by former SESYNC postdoc Steven Alexander and SESYNC-affiliated researcher Kristal Jones.

"The Justinianic Plague: An inconsequential pandemic?" Published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* by SESYNC postdocs Lee Mordechai and Merle Eisenberg.

"Winter weather whiplash: impacts of meteorological events misaligned with natural and human systems in seasonally snow-covered regions." Published in *Earth's Future* by Nora Casson and Alix Contosta as part of the Pursuit [Winter weather whiplash: Developing indices of extreme winter weather variability and socio-ecological responses.](#)

"Know your watershed and know your neighbor: Paths to supporting urban watershed conservation and restoration in Baltimore, MD and Phoenix, AZ." Published in *Landscape and Urban Planning* by former SESYNC postdoc Dexter Locke and colleagues.

"Meeting the looming policy challenge of sea-level change and human migration " Published in *Nature Climate Change* by David Wrathall, Valerie Mueller, and colleagues, as part of the Pursuit [A forecast of the timing, locations, sequence and likeliest destinations of populations displaced by sea level rise and coastal extremes.](#)

"Development, environmental degradation, and disease spread in the Brazilian Amazon." Published by Marcia Castro, Andres Baeza, Mercedes Pascual, and colleagues in *PLOS Biology* as part of the Pursuit [Synergistic interactions of environmental degradation, socio-economic development and infectious disease dynamics in the Amazon region.](#)

"Usable environmental knowledge from the perspective of decision-making: the logics of consequentiality, appropriateness, and meaningfulness." Published by Art Dewulf, Nicole Klenk, Carina Wyborn, and Maria Carmen Lemos in *Current Opinion in Environmental Sustainability* as part of the Foundation [Advancing the Science of Knowledge Use: Mechanisms, Applications and Gaps.](#)

"Testing predictability of disease outbreaks with a simple model of pathogen biogeography." Published in *Royal Society Open Science* by former SESYNC postdoc Colin Carlson and colleagues.

"Social ties explain catch portfolios of small-scale fishers in the Caribbean" Published in *Fish and Fisheries* by former SESYNC postdocs Steven M. Alexander and Phillip P. A. Staniczenko with colleague Örjan Bodin.

"Does crop diversity at the village level influence child nutrition security? Evidence from 11 sub-Saharan African countries." Published in *Population and Environment* by SESYNC-affiliated researcher Kristal Jones and colleagues.

"Residential household yard care practices along urban-exurban gradients in six climatically-diverse U.S. metropolitan areas." Published in *PLOS One* by former SESYNC postdoc Dexter Locke and colleagues.

"The greenspace-academic performance link varies by remote sensing measure and urbanicity around Maryland public schools." Published in *Landscape and Urban Planning* by former SESYNC postdoc Dexter Locke with colleague Matthew H.E.M. Browning.

"Yards increase forest connectivity in urban landscapes." Published in *Landscape Ecology* by former SESYNC postdoc Dexter Locke and colleagues.

"Intrinsic and extrinsic drivers of intraspecific variation in seed dispersal are diverse and pervasive." Published in *AOB Plants* by Clare Aslan, former SESYNC postdoc Noelle Beckman, SESYNC postdoc Evan Fricke, and colleagues, following the [Seed Dispersal Workshop.](#)

"Shifting currents: Managing freshwater systems for ecological resilience in a changing climate." Published in *Water Security* by Theodore Grantham, John H. Matthews, and Brian P. Bledsoe, as part of the Pursuit [Climate change & water resources adaptation: Decision scaling & integrated eco-engineering resilience.](#)

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