



SESYNC Feedbacks

News from the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center



HUMANS & THEIR ECOSYSTEMS | A Complex Relationship

As we close out Earth Month, it's a good time to think about the various ecosystems that surround us and how we benefit from them. From mountains, to rivers and streams, to deserts, to beaches and the sea, nature in its many forms provides humans with immeasurable assets. But how we assign value to those assets and factor our own needs into the equation of preserving ecosystems is complex. In addition, living ecosystems are dynamic systems that are constantly experiencing change—complicating human efforts to make our interactions with them more sustainable.

The following SESYNC resources explore the different avenues in which researchers think about ecosystems, including the services that ecosystems provide and that humans derive benefit from; the ways we assign value to ecosystems from an economic standpoint; and the impacts of evolving or new ecosystems that appear amidst ever-changing socio-environmental conditions. We encourage you to explore.



Ecosystem Services Lesson, Part 1: Defining and Valuing Nature

This lesson explores what ecosystem services are and are not, as well as methods used by economists to place value on them. It also explores why the concept of ecosystem services has become popular, including its use by policy makers and natural resource managers.

Ecosystem Services Lesson, Part 2: Linking Ecosystems & Their Processes to What People Value and to Human Actions

This second lesson focuses on actionable science by exploring how to link ecological outputs from Lesson 1 to valued and socially relevant measures, which lead to policy actions. This process involves understanding linking measures and using causal analysis to help inform management and the public.



Ecosystem Services Lesson, Part 3: Intrinsic and Relational Values of Nature

This third lesson focuses on intrinsic and relational values of nature. It explores the culturally driven assumptions that people may bring to their perspectives on nature. It also introduces learners to the diverse historical and contemporary perspectives on ways of living with nature that go beyond

economic exchange value.

Economic Valuation of Natural Resources and Ecosystem Services Lesson

This lesson aims to explain how monetary environmental benefit estimates are used in decision making and public discourse. It also helps learners develop basic knowledge of various valuation methods and the data they use.



Integrating Spatial Ecology and Resilience Theory to Understand Ecosystem Service Flows Lesson

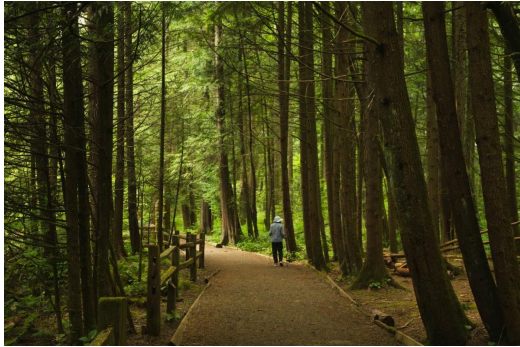
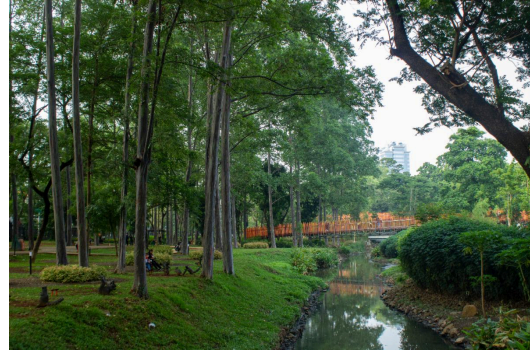
An essential new avenue of research integrates ecological with social benefits by considering how spatial distributions co-influence ecosystem and social network resilience. **This lesson is a guide to understanding the basics of spatial resilience and applying its insights to a city**

in your region.

Exploring Novel Ecosystems Lesson: Field Trip to an Urban Forest Patch

This lesson introduces Urban Forest Patches (UFPs) as novel ecosystems. Learners

will go on a local field trip to explore elements that challenge the resilience of small forest patches (note: an online alternative to a field trip is also provided). They will be asked to consider the unrealized potential and value of UFPs that may be unnecessarily derided as weedy, trashy, or dangerous.



Socio-Environmental Services & Management of a Novel Ecosystem Lesson: Urban Forest Patch Case Study

This lesson explores the socio-environmental dynamics of UFPs by immersing participants in a role playing experience. Here they will simulate being ecosystem managers tasked with working together to select management strategies that

produce the greatest net benefits relative to particular ecosystem services, while maintaining the resilience of the ecosystem as a whole. This exercise will elucidate how management of many ecosystems in UFPs involves tradeoffs, and how ecosystem managers must negotiate to plan for the most positive overall outcomes across socio-environmental services.

Novel Ecosystems and Natural Resource Management: For Whom? Lesson, Part 1

Novel ecosystems are combinations of species, associated with humans' influence on nature, that differ from those that existed historically at that site; these species also tend to "self-organize" (i.e., not require human maintenance). **In this lesson, participants**

consider disciplinary and sector perspectives on decision making related to managing ecosystems that have been or are about to experience dramatic changes due to human activities.



Novel Ecosystems and Natural Resource Management: For Whom? Lesson, Part 2

This lesson explores the concept of novel ecosystems from a scientific, management, ethical, and personal perspective. Learners delve into the challenges and nuances associated with natural resource management decisions. It aims to get learners to consider

who is included in management decisions and processes that may open doors to those who are typically left out.

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