

Integrating socioeconomic into urban ecosystem services

A CEED workshop, (UQ, March 2014)

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Picture your ideal city park. Perhaps it has benches, well-maintained jogging paths, plenty of green lawn space to spread out a picnic blanket. Perhaps it has a 'wilder' feel to it, with dense pockets of native bush and narrow dirt footpaths that allow for uninterrupted bird-watching and respite from the city bustle. Now what if no human ever visited it? Perhaps the very 'wildness' that appealed to you has the local residents worried about homeless folks in the bushes, and they'd rather drive to the parky-park that's several kilometers away. But maybe they cannot go to that parky-park because they only have one car for their large family and it can't be spared for recreation. What service does that unvisited park provide to the local residents then? What services could or should it provide?

This workshop sprang into being because several of us in the CEED network started wondering how the context around an urban park matters. Specifically (but still very generally!), how does the socioeconomic context matter? And how does that influence the tossed-about idea of ecosystem services? We sat down to hash out these ideas over a two-day workshop in the beautiful new fifth floor space that CEED occupies at UQ. Our goal was to come up with not only the conceptual foundation for how to incorporate socioeconomic into urban ecosystem services but also to address it in an actionable way.

During the workshop, we sometimes felt we were talking ourselves in circles (really, how do you define a 'service'?!), but we emerged from it with a rich array of ideas and key overarching messages that helped keep us on track. Our main take-home message was that socio-economic factors influence both the provision and realization/delivery of ecosystem services. Understanding that concept will help tailor green space policies and management strategies. In our opinion, that understanding and the actions that stem from it will enhance the effectiveness of city planners and managers' efforts to bring ecosystem services to their city's residents.

We are currently working on a manuscript that will expand these thoughts and give them some teeth. We'd like to stress that we are NOT creating a new framework (lots of those floating around nowadays) and instead our manuscript will serve as a guide to operationalize the components of urban ecosystem service frameworks that have been vague (ie, that socioeconomic bit). Keep your eyes peeled for more! 🍷



Discussing urban ecosystem services were (left to right) Kerrie Wilson, Jonathan Rhodes, Catherine Lovelock, Danielle Shanahan, Chris Ives, Matt Mitchell and Marit Wilkerson.

Dbytes

Dbytes is EDG's internal eNewsletter. It gets sent to members and associates of EDG each week, and consists of small snippets of information relating to environmental decision making. They might be government documents, research articles, blogs or reports from other research groups. Here are seven bytes from recent issues. If you would like to receive the *Dbytes* eNewsletter, email David.Salt@anu.edu.au

1. Senate committee report into offsets

A Senate committee issued the report from its inquiry into environmental offsets.

http://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Environment_and_Communications/Environmental_Offsets/Report/index

2. Drivers of practice change in agricultural land management

This ABARES study focuses on the key factors landholders consider when making decisions to adopt specific land management practices.

http://www.daff.gov.au/abares/pages/publications/display.aspx?url=http://143.188.17.20/anrd/DAFFService/display.php?fid=pc_dpclmd9abh_20140626_11a.xml

3. Auditors on capacity to manage compliance of EPBC Act

The ANAO issued a performance audit: 'Managing Compliance with Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 Conditions of Approval'.

<http://www.anao.gov.au/Publications/Audit-Reports/2013-2014/Managing-Compliance-with-EPBC-Act-1999-Conditions-of-Approval>

4. The Action Plan for Australian Mammals

CSIRO's Publishing's new The Action Plan for Australian Mammals 2012 book is now out and stock is available. The authors are John Woinarski, Andrew Burbidge and Peter Harrison.

<http://www.publish.csiro.au/pid/7010.htm>

5. Green Paper on developing Northern Aust

Minister Warren Truss issued a Green Paper on northern development and announced the members of a Northern Australia Advisory Group.

http://www.minister.infrastructure.gov.au/wt/releases/2014/June/wt084_2014.aspx

6. Great Barrier Reef Report Card 2012 & 2013

The Great Barrier Reef Report Card 2012 and 2013 measures progress in action taken to improve water quality in the reef between July 2009 and June 2013.

<http://www.reefplan.qld.gov.au/measuring-success/report-cards/2012-2013-report-card.aspx>

7. Effectiveness of Party Climate Policies

The Climate Institute issued 'Effectiveness Review of Party Climate Policies: July 2014 - Policy Brief'.

<http://www.climateinstitute.org.au/articles/media-releases/climate-credibility-or-company-subsidies-party-policies-reviewed.html/section/397>