

**ACES 2014 Afternoon Workshop 5**  
**December 8, 2014 | 1:00pm-4:30pm**

**Title: *Communicating Ecosystem Services Using Collaborative Learning and Mental Models***

**Why this workshop is important:**

Engaging stakeholders in ecosystem service management is one of the greatest challenges facing researchers conducting assessments and policy makers implementing science based programs. High impact communications about the value of ecosystem services can motivate people to act in ways that protect and sustain the services they care about. Decision-making about ecosystem services requires engaging people with diverse and conflicting perspectives in dialogues about what is at stake, who benefits and who stands to lose. This workshop provides participants with practical and effective techniques immediately applicable in a variety of contexts to improve ecosystem service communication and stakeholder engagement strategies. Collaborative Learning is a powerful stakeholder engagement process that can move groups forward in spite of conflicts, uncertainty and complexity. Collaborative Learning, designed with knowledge of the mental models used by stakeholders, can reduce conflict, contribute to development of shared meaning among the group and facilitate actions that sustain ecosystem services recognized as important.

**Who should attend this workshop?**

This workshop is for ecosystem services professionals working in research, policy and management. Effective communication facilitates collaborative partnerships and on-going adaptive management approaches to value, manage and sustain ecosystem services. This workshop provides resources to design stakeholder processes and to improve communication and learning within existing projects to achieve desired outcomes. Participant experience will be used throughout the workshop to illustrate principles and connect techniques to participants' work in ecosystem service communication.

**What participants will learn during the workshop:**

Collaborative Learning is a versatile and practical approach to ecosystem service communication. It is used to engage public and professional groups and build effective stakeholder teams to identify shared goals and develop action oriented strategies for achieving those goals. Participants will identify current challenges of ecosystem service communication. Using an ecosystem service project in Maine as a case study, participants will learn how to apply the four phases of Collaborative Learning to their own work. Participants will learn how to conduct a stakeholder assessment and design meetings to build shared understanding, identify sources of conflict and reveal opportunities for making progress. Knowledge of the mental models people use to think about ecosystem services can improve the effectiveness of communication. Moving decision makers from awareness to collaborative action can be accomplished with the six-step "Ideas to Action" process of Collaborative Learning. Participants will learn this process and receive the worksheets to implement this powerful process in their work. Evaluating stakeholder involvement and facilitating on-going partnerships benefits from careful analysis of stakeholder input. The training concludes by acknowledging the challenges faced by change agents and ways you can design your ecosystem services communication to take advantage of the five most powerful qualities of ideas that capture the hearts and minds of people to foster change.

## **Workshop Agenda**

1:00 – 1:30	Challenges of ecosystem service communication
1:30 – 2:00	Collaborative learning and mental models - tools for communicating about ecosystem services
2:00 – 2:30	Understanding your audience and conducting a stakeholder assessment
2:30 – 3:00	Break
3:00 – 3:45	From ideas to action - moving from awareness to collaborative action
3:45 – 4:00	“Change Agent” challenges and five secrets of success

### **At the end of this workshop, participants should be able to:**

- Identify the scope of ecosystem service communication challenges
- Define Collaborative Learning and describe how it can be adapted to their work with ecosystem services
- Describe ways to apply Collaborative Learning to improve communication about ecosystem services
- Describe the four phases of Collaborative Learning
- Assess stakeholders in a Collaborative Learning process
- Evaluate and analyze stakeholder input into an ecosystem services action strategy and time line

### **Presenter Qualifications:**

Dr. Christine Feurt has developed and presented environmental communication trainings nationally and internationally for over 30 years for the National Park Service, Peace Corps, Smithsonian Institute, Academia and the National Estuarine Research Reserve System (NERRS). She has been a professor of Environmental Studies at UNE for the past 17 years. Dr Feurt’s courses focus on environmental communication and stakeholder engagement in sustainability science. Dr Feurt developed this training from her dissertation research and 10 years of applied research experience with stakeholder engagement for ecosystem service management in New England.

### **Contact Information:**

Christine Feurt, Ph.D.  
University of New England  
Director, Center for Sustainable Communities  
Department of Environmental Studies  
11 Hills Beach Road  
Biddeford, ME 04005-9599  
207-602-2834 fax 207-602-5926  
cfeurt@une.edu