

ACES 2018 Town Hall Description

Title: *Ecosystem Services and/or Nature's Contribution to People?*

Description:

Just over twenty years ago, a couple of landmark publications (Costanza et al. 1997, Daily 1997) greatly increased attention given to the role that ecosystems play in providing the life support system for humanity and in supplying a wide array of benefits to people (Costanza et al. 2017). These benefits, called ecosystem services, include regulating environmental conditions, supplying material goods, and contributing to cultural and spiritual meaning. Earlier this year, authors participating in the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) published a paper to explain the notion of “nature’s contribution to people” or NCP (Diaz et al. 2018). NCP “builds on the ecosystem service concept” but “differs from earlier work in several important ways,” which include recognizing “the central and pervasive role that culture plays in defining all links between people and nature” and “the role of indigenous and local knowledge in understanding nature’s contribution to people” (Diaz et al. 2018). The call to replace ecosystem services with NCP provoked a storm of controversy. One response to Diaz et al. by de Groot et al. (2018) stated that the “introduction of NCP as if it were a ‘new’ term risks plunging the large and diverse ES/NCP community into unnecessary paralysing debates and will confuse policy makers and practitioners.” This panel will address the current state of play on the ecosystem services – NCP debate, where there is potential common ground, and how the community can move forward.

Moderator:

Stephen Polasky, University of Minnesota

Panelists:

Robert Costanza, Australian National University

Mark Gough, Natural Capital Coalition

Ida Kubiszewski, Australian National University

Carl Shapiro, US Geological Survey

Moderator References:

Costanza, R. et al. 1997. The value of the world's ecosystem services and natural capital. *Nature* 387: 253-260.

Costanza, R., R. de Groot, L. Braat, I. Kubiszewski, L. Fioramonti, P. Sutton, S. Farber, and M. Grasso. 2017. Twenty years of ecosystem services: how far have we come and how far do we still need to go? *Ecosystem Services*. 28:1-16.

Daily, G. 1997. *Nature's Services: Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems*. Island Press.

de Groot, R. R. Costanza, L. Braat, et al. 2018. Ecosystem services are nature’s contributions to people. *Science*. <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/359/6373/270/tab-e-letters>

Díaz, S., U. Pascual, M. Stenseke, et al. 2018. An inclusive approach to assess nature’s contributions to people. *Science* 359: 270-272.