

Workshop Summary

Monday, December 8, 2008, 9:00am-12:00pm

Evolution and Valuation of Ecosystem Services

Workshop Organizers:

Joseph Nicolette, Vice President; EcoValuation Practice Director, CH2M HILL

Karin Lilienbecker, Western Region Ecosystems Market Segment Lead, CH2M HILL

Workshop Presenters:

David Nicholas, USEPA OSWER

Joe Nicolette, Vice President; EcoValuation Practice Director, CH2M HILL

Bruce Peacock, Natural Resource Economist, DOI

Mark Rockel, Natural Resource Economist, CH2M HILL

Jon Weier, SE Ecosystems Market Segment Leader, CH2M HILL

This workshop will provide an overview and understanding of the evolving "ecosystem services" field and provide an assessment of how ecosystem services are quantified and can be applied in evaluating actions that affect the environment. These actions will include the integration of ecosystem services into resource management decisions affecting environmental sustainability, conservation, land management and development, site remediation and natural resource damage assessments. The workshop will provide discussion of the recent development of policies, strategies and solutions that utilize ecosystem services (e.g., broadly described as net environmental benefit analyses [NEBA]) in managing both short- and long-term environmental issues. The workshop panel will address the technical, legal, and historical basis for the application of ecosystem services to a wide variety of environmental issues. The panel will present recent case studies that utilize ecosystem service valuation in various contexts.

Agenda Topics:

1. Origin and Evolution of Ecosystem Services
2. Environmental Economic Methods for Ecosystem Service Valuation and Quantification
3. Understanding Net Environmental Benefit Analysis (NEBA): Application as it applies environmental sustainability, conservation, land management and development, site remediation and natural resource damage assessments:

Case Studies:

1. Application of Methods: Demonstrating the Net Benefit of Site Cleanup: *An Evaluation of Ecological and Economic Metrics at Two Superfund Sites*
2. NEBA Case Study

Discussion:

With a significant part of regulatory decision-making focused on the protection of human health, regulatory agencies have recently re-emphasized their mandate to protect the environment while providing sustainable solutions with increased attention to the ecological benefits of their policies and actions. This renewed effort recognizes that these agencies face a growing demand for more rigorous and comprehensive accounting of the ecosystem impacts. Therefore, an understanding of ecosystem services, how they are quantified, and how quantified ecosystem services can be applied in decision-making is paramount.