Workshop Summary

Monday, December 10, 2012: 1PM – 4:30PM

Valuing Ecosystem Services: Why the Controversy? Everglades Restoration Case Studies!

Workshop Overview:
In the continuing controversy regarding an accepted approach and methodology to Ecosystem Services Valuation (ESV), this paper will consider current policy documents and Everglades Restoration case studies and demonstrations, including potential applications to the Central Everglades Project as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). The Organizer will pose the “controversy” question to subject matter experts a priori, as the means for further discussion. The strongest message from the National Research Council, in their 2005 Study - *Valuing Ecosystem Services: Toward Better Environmental Decision-making* - was that failure to place a value on ecosystems gives them a default value of zero. The alternative of not placing a value on ecosystems (planetary biomes providing both local and global services, one at a time, or holistically), appears to be the root cause of an unsustainable planetary trajectory. At this point of uncertainty of planet earth’s future, hence social-well-being, we need to institutionalize an approach to ESV as disaster avoidance. This workshop will push for action in that direction, by presenting case Everglades studies that demonstrate a viable approach and methodology as an example to follow.

Case Studies:
Case Study #1: Valuing Ecosystem Services of a Restored River of Grass
Presenter: John Arthur Marshall

Case Study #2: An Ecosystem Services Valuation of a Restored Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades Watershed in the Face of Sea Level Rise
Presenter: James O’Donnell, Environmental Engineer, UF

Case Study #3: An Ecosystem Services Valuation of the Central Everglades Project Implementation
Presenter: Leslie Richardson, USGS (Invited)

Target Audience:
The specific target audience for this workshop are those with an interest in the ecologic and economic value of restoring the Everglades relative to costs. Since the Everglades is one of the largest restoration projects on the planet, a case study that provides an example to follow may be of interest to public sector representatives looking to understand the ranges of applications of ecosystem services and how these concepts can be integrated into future policy and guidance, such as the 2011 White House Report: *Sustaining Environmental Capital – Protecting Society and the Economy*.

Conference Themes:
The workshop aligns well with the overarching theme of the conference: Linking science-based practice using actual case studies as the means for better environmental decision making in execution of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan.
Agenda:
Brief introduction of controversy and counterpoints by John Marshall, Organizer, followed by presentations, noted above, with “peer review” by subject matter experts in Q&A.

Workshop Organizer.

John Arthur Marshall, the Principal Organizer, is Chairman of the Board, ArtMarshall.org, and has been involved a number of Ecosystem Service Valuations applied to the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) planning. This included participation and presentations in two previous ACES conferences; the 2000 - 2012 Greater Everglades Ecosystem Restoration (GEER) conferences; and Everglades Coalition Conference. The Organizer is an advocate of calculating the ecosystem services benefit of CERP and comparing the benefits with costs as a means to overcome the long-standing resistance and delay of a more total system approach to CERP, because of focus on “sticker-shock” costs with insufficient attention to ecosystem services benefits. Recommendations in the 2011 White House report asking the Federal Agencies to get on with an ESV approach looks like a door-opening for institutionalizing a better approach to environmental decision making. The Organizer has observed CERP proceedings at close range for the past 14 years. The Organizer was a double agent for the Federal government, retiring as a Colonel, USMC, in 1993, and retiring as a Civil Servant System Engineer, 1997; BS in Geology, UF; MS in Aeronautical Systems Synthesis, UWF.

Workshop Presenters:
John Arthur Marshall, Principal Organizer
Leslie Richardson, US Geologic Survey (Invited)
Subject Matter Experts (2), TBD