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Breaking Story

Pinpointing How Nature's Benefits Link To Human Well-Being



The things that people take from nature -- water, food, timber, inspiration, relaxation -- are so abundant, nature's benefits seem self-evident. At least until you try to quantitatively understand how and to what extent they contribute to human well-being. In today's world, where competition for and degradation of natural resources is increasing globally, it becomes ever more crucial to quantify the value of ecosystem services -- the precise term that defines nature's benefits -- and even more important to link how different types of ecosystem services affect various components of human well-being.

Scientists at Michigan State

University's Center for Systems Integration and Sustainability, in two parallel papers published in this week's journal *PLOS ONE*, develop an entirely new integrated approach to quantify both human dependence on ecosystem services and human well-being so as to promote the understanding of the linkages between them -- an important step toward improved understanding, monitoring and management of coupled human and natural systems.

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