



SE SYNC Feedbacks

News from the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center



CHECK IT OUT | Exploring Popular S-E Topics

From Plastic to Food Waste to Environmental Justice—S-E Research Topics for Every Interest

Socio-environmental (S-E) research covers a gamut of topics related to how humans interact with their environment. And over the past decade, SE SYNC researchers have worked on almost every topic imaginable—from historical plagues, to insect invasions via commercial trade, to redlining's correlated effects on tree cover and human health, to governance impacts on local fishing communities.

As a result, no matter what kind of S-E topic you're interested in, we likely have a publication, project, or resource that explores that particular issue in depth.

Below, you'll find some resources on popular S-E topics, such as:

- Plastic pollution in the oceans
- Urban gardening and environmental justice
- Non-native species
- Equitable water access
- Human-wildlife interactions
- Urban planning and green infrastructure
- Food waste
- Landfills and waste
- Environmental injustice's impacts on marginalized communities.

These resources feature recommended readings, lectures from experts, and engaging and

thought-provoking activities—ideal for anyone inspired to develop new solutions to existing S-E problems! We hope you'll explore.

The Wicked Plastics Problem

This lesson provides an overview of optimal scenarios for the next decade of plastic-waste management. Learners will review recent science that details strategies for waste reduction; research and briefly present findings on a waste-reduction strategy; and synthesize results across strategies. Taking an optimistic approach, this lesson trains learners how to select and engage with the most aggressive, systemic reductions in plastic use. [Learn more.](#)



Urban Gardens and Environmental Injustices

Urban gardens are often sources of food and income and provide environmental benefits for communities that have been marginalized. However, urban community gardens also often contain contaminated soils (and sometimes plants). And inadequate, unclear, and inconsistent guidelines don't sufficiently address risks to gardeners. In this SESYNC seminar, Dr. Melanie Malone summarizes methods used to address these issues, followed by more detailed recommendations of how community researchers can collaboratively work with communities and resist oppressive systems of risk. [Learn more.](#)



Debate: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Non-Native Species Lesson, Part 1

This lesson introduces the differing viewpoints on non-native species—including those who are concerned over the need to control non-native species vs. those focused on their value. Here, learners participate in a debate representing each side of the argument, and a science advisory board (SAB) will evaluate the outcome seeking some common ground. [Learn more.](#)

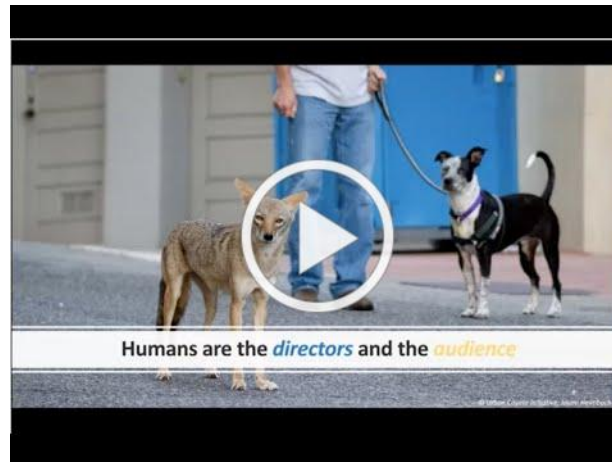


Political Ecology in Action Lesson: Water and People

This lesson uses issues at the intersection of water and communities to illustrate how political ecology frameworks can help provide insights into the origins, dynamics, and inequities associated with socio-environmental problems. [Learn more.](#)

Coyotes, Conflict, and Cities

In this SESYNC seminar, Dr. Christopher Schell uses the example of the coyote to demonstrate how social heterogeneity in the built environment contributes to human-carnivore conflict. He cites evidence using mixed methods that suggests that both human footprint (e.g., building densities) and human presence (e.g., visitation) have substantial influence on how coyotes navigate urban environments. In sum, behavior can be used as a fundamental trait to understand how society shapes the ecology of cities. [Learn more.](#)



Audio Interview: Food Waste

In this audio interview, SESYNC's Erin Duffy talks to Dr. Quentin Read about his research to find real-world solutions to the pressing problem of food waste and the challenge of creating a more sustainable food system. They discuss Quentin's and his team's efforts to model the impacts of the food system on human and natural communities by using techniques from ecology, environmental science, and economics. [Learn more.](#)



Food Waste

Succinct Science—Audio Interviews from SESYNC • Aug 23, 2021



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Green Infrastructure Lesson: Urban Metabolism and Smart Cities

As human migration to cities increases alongside the pressures of climate change, the challenge of how to develop and manage cities sustainably intensifies. Using the concepts of urban metabolism and smart cities, learners explore initiatives that bring cities closer to human equality and ecological balance with their surroundings. [Learn more.](#)



Integrating Social and Equity Dynamics into Ecological Studies Lesson: The Landfill Case Study

This lesson uses the case study of the municipal landfill as a frame for investigating how cultural practices and social inequality lead to marginal living environments, which disproportionately affect the poor and people of color. [Learn more.](#)

Dissecting the Decision-Making Process Behind Green Infrastructure Siting

In this SESYNC seminar, Dr. Fushcia-Ann Hoover presents her research examining how planning processes for urban green infrastructure interact with, mitigate, or exacerbate existing injustices. She pays special attention to the dynamic ways cities have organized around race and racism. In this talk, she explores the relationship between stated economic-based decision-making criteria and language that centers equitable decision-making and prioritizes environmental justice communities and residents. Her talk concludes with recommendations for developing GI planning criteria rooted in just and sustainable processes. [Learn more.](#)



CONTACT US | We Want To Hear From You!

We'd like to hear from you! Do you have updates or outcomes tied to your SESYNC research that would make for an interesting research spotlight? Are you looking for a resource on a topic that we haven't covered yet? Do you want to share an idea? Contact us at communications@sesync.org.

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