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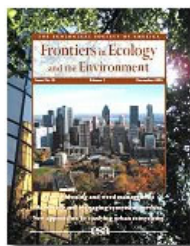
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Reviews

A call to ecologists: measuring, analyzing, and managing ecosystem services

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Humans depend on ecosystem services, yet our ecological understanding of them is quite limited. In the classic example, when New York City decided to protect the Catskill Watershed rather than build an expensive water filtration plant, planners reasoned that the protection plan would be the cheaper option, even if they underestimated the area required by half. Such reasoning reflects our inability to predict how to manage lands to provide ecosystem services of sufficient quantity and quality. Human domination of the biosphere is rapidly altering the capacity of ecosystems to provide a variety of essential services; we therefore need to develop a better understanding of their ecological underpinnings, and to integrate this knowledge into a socioeconomic context to develop better policies and plans to manage them. We present a three-part research agenda to create the knowledge base necessary to accomplish this goal.

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