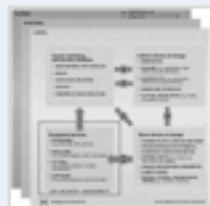


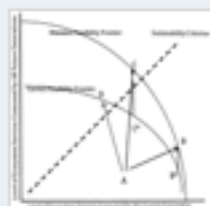
Abstract

Keywords

1. The richness of the ecological sciences



2. Ecosystem services and sustainability in a general equilibrium framework



3. Becoming serious about environmental governance

4. Conclusions

Acknowledgments

References



# Ecosystem services: From eye-opening metaphor to complexity blinder

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## Abstract

What started as a humble metaphor to help us think about our relation to nature has become integral to how we are addressing the future of humanity and the course of biological evolution. The metaphor of nature as a stock that provides a flow of services is insufficient for the difficulties we are in or the task ahead. Indeed, combined with the mistaken presumption that we can analyze a global problem within a partial equilibrium economic framework and reach a new economy project-by-project without major institutional change, the simplicity of the stock-flow framework blinds us to the complexity of the human predicament. The ecosystem services approach can be a part of a larger solution, but its dominance in our characterization of our situation and the solution is blinding us to the ecological, economic, and political complexities of the challenges we actually face.

## Keywords

Ecosystem services; Climate change; Methodological pluralism; General equilibrium analysis; Sustainability; Governance