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Finding Common Ground for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services

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Recently, some members of the conservation community have used ecosystem services as a strategy to conserve biodiversity. Others in the community have criticized this strategy as a distraction from the mission of biodiversity conservation. The debate continues, and it remains unclear whether the concerns expressed are significant enough to merit the opposition. Through an exploration of the science of biodiversity and ecosystem services, we find that narrow interpretations of metrics, values, and management drive much of the tension and make the common ground appear small. The size of this common ground depends on the relationship between biodiversity and ecosystem services and how they respond to management interventions. We demonstrate how understanding this response can be used to delimit common ground but highlight the importance of differentiating between objectives and approaches to meeting those objectives in conservation projects.

Keywords: *conservation, trade-offs, economic value, intrinsic value*

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