



Environmental Institutions Seminar Series

Presents

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The Role of Science in Large-Scale Ecosystem Management: The Florida Everglades as a Case History

Thursday, September 25, 2003
12:30 pm – 2:00 pm

F.E.L. Building, Room 117 (off lobby), Duke University
(behind LSRC building on the corner of Circuit and LaSalle ext (LSRC Service Drive))

Abstract

The Florida Everglades is the largest wetland in the US and widely regarded as one of the most important in the world for the ecosystem services it provides. The protected portions of the Everglades are adjacent to one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the US (Miami) and downstream of a large expanse of sugar cane, a crop maintained by unusually high federal price supports. Within the Everglades are several species of endangered plants and animals, including one bird that is found nowhere else on Earth. There are several federal and state agencies involved in management of the Everglades all in consultation with a wide variety of stakeholder groups. And there are corporations with millions of acres of sugarcane, Native Americans with new wealth from casinos; city managers needing to supply clean water to millions of people. Politicians would have us believe the Army Corps of Engineers can, for a modest \$8 billion of state and federal taxpayer money, "keep the Everglades on life support for ever." This talk will address the veracity of such claims, as well as a number of larger institutional and scientific questions such as:

- Can local interests and demands remain consistent with maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem processes, and if not what are the solutions?
- Should National Parks be national natural treasures, where nature is sovereign, or should national interests be required to yield to local interests?
- When even local interests disagree on how to balance protection with exploitation, whose interests should be given the most weight?
- What can -- or what must -- science do to inform the answers to these questions?

Biography

Pimm joined the faculty of the Nicholas School in 2002 as the Doris Duke Chair of Conservation Ecology. Pimm's expertise lies in species extinctions and what can be done to prevent them, with a secondary interest in identifying the impact on biodiversity with the loss of tropical forests. He has shared his expertise in over 200 articles and books; served on numerous national and international boards, committees, and review panels; as well as briefed government officials on conservation and endangered species issues. He received his BA at Oxford in 1971 and Ph.D. from New Mexico State University, in 1974.



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