

Current Projects

- **The Reality of Precaution:** Comparing Approaches to Risk and Regulation. This project examines the “precautionary principle” and its reflection in actual regulatory programs in the US and Europe. It goes beyond the current rhetoric of greater European precaution (e.g. regarding biotechnology, beef hormones and climate change) to study a wider array of concrete examples, including instances of greater American precaution (e.g. nuclear power, leaded gasoline, smoking, and mad cow disease in blood). The project includes four Transatlantic Dialogues being held in the US and Europe over 2002-2003.
- **Global Environmental Institutions:** The Center analyzes the design and effectiveness of current solutions for global environmental problems including climate change, persistent organic pollutants and loss of forests and biodiversity.
 - Global Climate Change:** This work focuses on the design of regulatory systems to match the scientific, economic and political complexity of global environmental problems. With R. Stewart of NYU, J. Wiener has proposed a new approach to climate change policy in which the US would contribute significantly to global greenhouse gas abatement by engaging China and other developing countries in an international emissions trading regime parallel to the Kyoto Protocol.
 - Certification Institutions:** This project analyzes the emergence and impact of new standards and organizations intended to “certify” the environmental acceptability of production practices, such as sustainable forestry codes, marine stewardship codes, organic farming and the chemical industry’s Responsible Care program.
 - Approaches to Biodiversity Conservation:** This interdisciplinary research project will evaluate the effectiveness of international to local strategies for biodiversity conservation. This research will be conducted by a multidisciplinary partnership between university faculty and individuals from conservation organizations, government agencies, corporations and multilateral institutions.

People at the Center

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Duke Center for Environmental Solutions



**A university-wide initiative
seeking creative solutions
to complex environmental
challenges through
multidisciplinary research
and analysis.**

<http://www.env.duke.edu/solutions>



Mission

Since 2001, the Duke Center for Environmental Solutions has worked to mobilize multidisciplinary thinking toward creative solutions to the most important and complex environmental challenges, through collaborations among scholars, decision makers and environmental institutions. We facilitate:

- **Analysis of complex environmental problems**
- **Exchange of research, findings, and ideas with policymakers and practitioners who can apply the findings to real world problems.**

Some of our Partners include:

Duke University faculty and students

Nicholas School of the Environment and Earth Sciences, School of Law, Sanford Institute of Public Policy, Fuqua School of Business, Pratt School of Engineering, School of Medicine, and Departments of Political Science, Economics, Sociology, and Biology.

Other Universities

University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, Harvard, University of Munich, NC State University

Government agencies

Non-government organizations

Corporations

Approach & Key Themes

Multi and Interdisciplinary

The Center responds to the need for environmental solutions that integrate comprehensive analysis from diverse disciplines. The Center's projects address environmental issues (e.g., land use practices, environmental impacts on vulnerable populations, risk analysis and regulation, global change, biodiversity conservation) that involve interconnections among science, social science, law, public policy and other fields.

Institutions

The Center's work focuses on institutions, including the systems, structures, and incentives that shape social interactions and environmental outcomes. The Center tests the role of institutions in practice and recommends desirable institutional designs to address complex environmental challenges.

Solutions

The Center's aspiration to solutions helps stimulate constructive, forward-looking, non-partisan, pragmatic responses to environmental questions. By contrast, the Center for Environmental Solutions carefully studies the tradeoffs involved in environmental decisions while working to identify and design creative, dynamic, positive-sum solutions. These include (a) policy solutions to regulatory and management problems; (b) institutional solutions to meet the need for structures that generate successful policies over time and space, and (c) intellectual and technical solutions to theoretical and empirical problems.

The Duke Center for Environmental Solutions' focus on institutions and solutions offers a distinctive and potentially powerful approach to identifying and answering environmental questions.

Activities

Key activities of the Center include:

- Research projects (see Current Projects).
- Duke's Seminar Series on Environmental Institutions. This series of workshops, begun in 1999, brings leading experts to present and discuss their work with the Center's multidisciplinary faculty and students.
- Duke's annual Colloquium on Environmental Law & Institutions convenes scholars and practitioners to address important and complex environmental challenges. The Eighth Annual Colloquium, "Reconstructing Climate Policy: Moving Beyond the Kyoto Impasse," was held in May, 2003. The starting point for the discussion was the recent book, *Reconstructing Climate Policy: Beyond Kyoto* by R. Stewart and J.B. Wiener (AEI Press, 2003).

At the May, 2003 colloquium, Roni Avissar, W.H. Gardner, Jr. Professor & Chair, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering at Duke University discussing his analysis of the relationship between Brazilian rainforest deforestation and weather patterns in the U.S.

