Weaving an Equitable and Sustainable Urban Fabric

BY MARIE DONAHUE

Supporting the development of livable cities has been a core component of NatCap’s strategic engagement and research in recent years, and for good reason. With rapid population growth in cities and expanding urban footprints, there is no shortage of demand for relevant science, approaches, and tools that improve our understanding of the role nature plays in improving the livability and sustainability of cities worldwide.

Read about the latest from NatCap’s Livable Cities Program and how our team is meeting this demand.

READ MORE
People on the Margins

BY ANNE GUERRY

The first time I saw an informal settlement, I was a twenty-something graduate student traveling in South Africa. I was stunned by the poverty and by the massive size of the settlements outside of Cape Town and Johannesburg—corrugated metal, tarps, and tangles of wire stretching as far as the eye could see.

Those were my straight-up ecology days. I was in Cape Town for a meeting of the International Temperate Reef Symposium, where I spent my days listening to talks about seaweed, limpets, and nearshore oceanography. At the time, there was no space in either my professional life or really in the field of ecology for shantytowns or the people living within them. I was struck by them, but whizzed by on the freeway.

*At NatCap, we’re exploring ways to collaborate with the newly launched RISE project (Revitalizing Informal Settlements and their Environments).*

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Anything but Par for the Course

BY MARIE DONAHUE

If you randomly ask someone on a city street to describe the game of golf, odds are good that even someone unfamiliar with the nuances of the game will be able to describe what a golf course looks like—the expansive and predominantly green open space on which the sport is played.

That landscape, like all managed green spaces in cities, has a range of impacts on the surrounding environment. And while it may come as a surprise to some members of the environmental community, leaders in the golf industry are taking serious steps to better understand those impacts and how to make golf and the courses on which it is played more sustainable.

*We’ve launched a new collaboration with the United States Golf Association—learn more about our partners and read the latest on how we are exploring the natural capital and community values that golf courses provide in cities.*
InVEST is our flagship tool with 18 different models for mapping and valuing ecosystem services. Check out all our software at naturalcapitalproject.org/software.

Sustainable development planning in The Bahamas, one map at a time

BY KATHERINE WYATT

The pressure to get this assignment right is enormous and the variables I have to work with don't fit neatly into a spreadsheet or programming language. It feels like no map, table, or narrative I could ever create would adequately represent the hopes and dreams of these communities.

I find myself at a large conference table covered with 250 maps on which the people of Andros Island in The Bahamas have annotated the geography of their lives. In black pen, there are circles around favorite fishing spots, arrows pointing to areas of frequent flooding, and small Xs noting hotels, restaurants, and important infrastructure like docks, packing houses, and airports. In blue pen are the things the community would like to see in the next 25 years...

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Blind men with an elephant?

BY EMILY McKENZIE

Some of you may recognize this story: A group of blind men learn about an elephant by touching it. Each feels only one part - the trunk, the tusk, the belly. When they describe the elephant, they are in complete disagreement.

Natural capital approaches are applied in complicated contexts. And, such as this Indian parable, teams applying these approaches often see only part of the picture. Governance and Accounting for the Management of Ecological Systems (GAMES)- a Luc Hoffmann Institute project with
the University of Cambridge, WWF, AgroParisTech, and NatCap-has developed a 'Context Diagnostic for Conservation' to help natural capital practitioners better understand the broader context in which they are working, or elephant they are touching, if you will.

In a recent interview, Clément Feger (University of Cambridge and AgroParisTech), Bhaskar Vira (University of Cambridge), and Laurent Mermet (AgroParisTech) told Emily McKenzie (WWF, Natural Capital Project) about the Context Diagnostic and what inspired its development.

2018 Natural Capital Symposium

BY HENRY BORREBACH

We’re pleased to announce the 2018 Natural Capital Symposium, which will take place at Stanford University from March 19-22, 2018. Our annual event has become a major convening of leaders from around the world, coming together to advance the science and practice of incorporating nature’s diverse values into decisions. There are two primary themes for this year’s Symposium: Livable Cities and Sustainable Development. Interactive and panel sessions throughout the Symposium will feature these topics, with additional opportunities to explore other themes such as securing freshwater, fostering resilient coastal communities, creating standards for the private sector, and human health and wellbeing.

Read more about the event, some of our keynote speakers, and how to register.

Recent Press & Publications

Dee, Laura E, Ross Thompson, Francois Massol, Angela Guerrero, David A Bohan
Trends in Ecology and Evolution, August 2017, Volume 32, Issue 8, Pages 549-552, 10.1016/j.tree.2017.06.001

Improving Decisions with Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Information: A Theory-based Practical Context Diagnostic for Conservation
Ferger, Clément, Laurent Mermet Emily McKenzie, Bhaskar Vira
Integrated planning that safeguards ecosystems and balances multiple objectives in coastal Belize
Verutes, Gregory M., Katie K. Arkema, Chantalle Clarke-Samuels, Spencer A. Wood, Amy Rosenthal, Samir

Nature Contact and Human Health: A Research Agenda
Frumkin, Howard, Gregory N. Bratman, Sara Jo Breslow, Bobby Cochran, Peter H. Kahn Jr, Joshua J. Lawler, Phillip S. Levin, Pooja S. Tandon, Usha Varanasi, Kathleen L. Wolf, and Spencer A. Wood

Research Brief: Green Infrastructure Benefits

Predicting dry-season flows with a monthly rainfall-runoff model: performance for gauged and ungauged catchments
Hamel, Perrine, Andrew Guswa, Jake Sahl, Lu Zhang

National scale evaluation of the InVEST nutrient retention model in the United Kingdom

Open Source GIS Tools Helping Save Mangrove Forests
By Ansel Lopez and Robert Aguirre, July 12, 2017

Society is ready for a new kind of science-is academia?
By Bonnie L. Keeler. OUPBlog, Oxford University. July 18, 2017

Stanford researchers create a better way to predict the environmental impacts of agricultural production

New method created to look at farm production's environmental impacts
Editor: Xiang Bo. XinhuaNet. April 22, 2017.

New method created to look at farm production's environmental impacts

This tool could let companies make greener choices

How green is that bioplastic? New tool could tell companies precisely
'Visionary' project to save the Belize coast provides valuable framework for other coastal nations

A new plan to save Belize's livelihood-giving reef and coasts

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Lightning Round: Aligning Profits with the Planet

Moving Beyond "Fire Bad" - Wildfire, forest management, and its impact on healthy watersheds

Seven Things We Learned by Listening to Those Who Make Water Funds Happen

Protecting natural capital, Interview with Henry Borrebach

Summer intern spotlight: Doris Duke Conservation Scholars Program

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Wetlands stopped $625 million in property damage during Hurricane Sandy. Can they help Houston
PBS NEWSHOUR August 31st, 2017 by Nsikan Akpan

Summer intern spotlight: Right Track

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