

U.S. EPA Science Advisory Board (SAB) Committee on Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services Fact-Sheet

Charge

The SAB initiated this project to assess Agency needs and the state of the art and science of valuing protection of ecological systems and services, and then to identify key areas for improving knowledge, methodologies, practice, and research.

Committee Membership

The Committee is an inter-disciplinary group (23 Members) of ecologists, economists, environmental specialists, and experts in related disciplines. A committee roster is attached to this fact sheet. The Committee has organized a Steering Group to assist the Chair and the Designated Federal Officer in planning the work of the Committee.

Approach

To fulfill this charge, the SAB Committee appointed by the Administrator is conducting a multi-year initiative with the goal of providing a first approximation of the advice needed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

- They will also advise the Agency on its draft *Ecological Benefits Assessment Strategic Plan*
- They will host workshops on science-based approaches to valuing the protection of ecological systems and services used in practice by groups outside EPA: in other federal agencies, state governments, environmental groups, business entities and international organizations.
- The Committee will focus on specific EPA decision-making needs by reviewing a range of EPA analyses supporting those needs and by intensively working on related "examples."
- Over the three-year initiative, the Committee will develop an advisory report on the Agency's draft *Ecological Benefits Assessment Strategic Plan* and three reports providing advice for strengthening the Agency's approaches for valuing the protection of ecological systems and services, their use by decision makers, and the key research areas needed to strengthen the science base. The three reports will include:
 - an initial short report, tentatively titled: Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services: Overview of the Problem and Possible Solutions
 - a report on effective utilization of methods at EPA for valuing ecological protection
 - a synthesis report that will focus on integration of economic and non-economic methods and results; integrated analysis and its relationship to decision making; possible applications of both in different contexts; and discussion of uncertainty analysis and data quality. It would illustrate how the Agency could use suite of tools to make the fullest use of available information and where research could be directed to get practical returns.

Specific Areas of Focus on EPA Decision-Making Needs

- Needs for benefit assessments supporting regulations protecting ecological systems and services
- Regional needs for assessing and communicating the value of protecting ecological systems and services
- Needs for assessing and communicating to Congress, the Executive Branch, and the public the value of EPA's programs protecting ecological systems and services
- Needs for information/communication products to communicate to the general public about EPA regulatory decisions protecting ecological systems and services and information/communication products encouraging voluntary actions to protect ecological systems and services

Status of Work

- The Committee held an "Initial Background Workshop" on October 27, 2004. The purpose was to identify the range of EPA's needs for science-based information on valuing the protection of ecological systems and services.
 - Minutes are posted on the web at:
http://www.epa.gov/science1/04minutes/cvpess_102703m.pdf.
- The Committee held a "Workshop on Different Approaches and Methods for Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services" on April 13-14, 2004.
 - Minutes are posted on the web at:
<http://www.epa.gov/science1/04minutes/valueprotecosys41304min.pdf>
- The Committee held an Advisory Meeting focused on support documents for national rulemakings on June 14-15, 2004.
 - Minutes are posted on the web at:
http://www.epa.gov/science1/04minutes/cvpess_061404m.pdf
- The Committee held an advisory meeting in San Francisco on Sept. 13, 14, and 15 focused on regional science needs, work-products, and activities by holding panel discussions, briefings, and break-out groups.
 - Minutes are posted on the web at:
http://www.epa.gov/science1/04minutes/cvpess_091304m.pdf
- The Committee held an advisory meeting on Jan. 25 and 26, 2005. The purpose of this meeting was to review EPA's Draft *Ecological Benefits Assessment Strategic Plan* and then to discuss economic methods and supplementary methods for valuing the protection of ecological systems and Services.
 - Minutes are posted on the web at:
http://www.epa.gov/sab/05minutes/cvpess_min_01_25-26_05.pdf
- The Committee held an advisory meeting on April 12-13, 2005. The purpose of this meeting was to continue discuss methods for valuing the protection of ecological systems and services, to continue work on the Committee's advisory on the Agency's draft Ecological Benefit Assessments Strategic Plan, and to plan committee activities.
 - Minutes are posted on the web at:
http://www.epa.gov/sab/05minutes/cvpess_minutes_4-12-13-05-final.pdf
- The Committee held a public meeting on October 25-26, 2005. The purpose of this meeting was to reach agreement on an initial committee report calling for an expanded and integrated approach for valuing the protection of ecological systems and services; to reach agreement on how to revise Chapters 3 and 4 of the draft Methods Report; to refine plans for the SAB Workshop, Science for Characterizing Ecological Benefits for EPA's Environmental Decisions and Programs, scheduled for December 13-14, 2005; and to discuss what additional report(s), including an "Applications Report," the committee will prepare.

For Additional Information

Please contact the Designated Federal Officer, Dr. Angela Nugent by email at nugent.angela@epa.gov or by phone at 202-343-9981.

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Science Advisory Board
Committee on Valuing the Protection of Ecological Systems and Services**

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