

Ecosystem Services: Identifying and valuing forest goods and services

What are ecosystem services?

Ecosystem services are benefits (forest goods and services, benefits to people) that people obtain from ecosystems. This term stems from economics as a way to bridge economics and ecology and to connect ecosystems to human well-being. This is a human-centered view of forest benefits and the goods and services produced by them.

Why consider ecosystem services in planning?

Considering ecosystem services provides assurances that a full spectrum of benefits has been evaluated by:

- Highlighting connections between ecosystems, flows of goods and services, and social and economic sustainability.
- Improving communication about tradeoffs among different types of forest and grassland benefits, and to broaden the context of planning.

What are the various categories of ecosystem services?

The 2012 planning rule uses the same ecosystem service categories as those in the [2005 Millennium Ecosystem Assessment](#), a scientific appraisal of the condition and trends of the world’s ecosystems and the services they provide.

1. **Supporting Services**, such as pollination, seed dispersal, soil formation, and nutrient cycling.
2. **Provisioning Services**, such as clean air and fresh water, energy, fuel, forage, fiber and minerals.
3. **Regulating Services**, such as long-term storage of carbon; climate regulation; water filtration, purification and storage; soil stabilization; flood control; and disease regulation.

4. **Cultural Services**, such as spiritual and cultural heritage values, educational, aesthetic, recreational experiences, and tourism opportunities.

What are “key” ecosystem services?

The 2012 planning rule specifies that: *“The responsible official should identify and evaluate key ecosystem services provided by the plan area that may be influenced by the land management plan.”*

To be deemed “key” two criteria must be met

1. Importance beyond the plan area.
2. Likely to be affected by the plan.

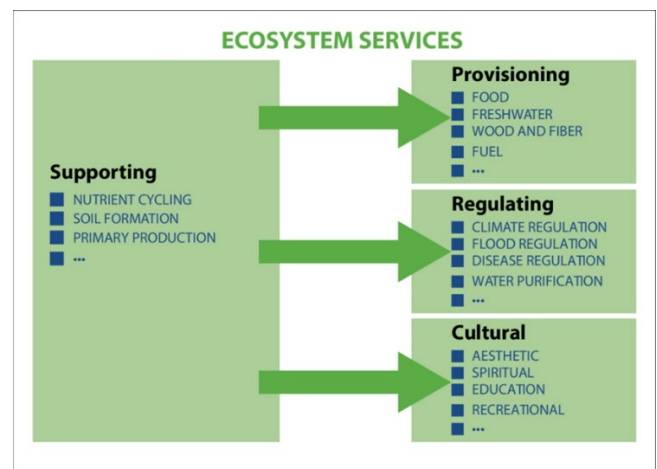


Image source: Park, Sarah & Suri, Sharon & Attwood, Simon. (2013). Assessing adaptation options for climate change: A guide for coastal communities in the Coral Triangle of the Pacific 7. Ecosystem Services Mapping. 10.13140/RG.2.1.3945.2400.

Literature Cited

Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005. Ecosystems and Human Well-being: Synthesis. Island Press, Washington, DC.