

Introduction

Workshop on Ecosystem Health in Medical, Veterinary, and Other Professional Curricula

This special supplement is the product of a 2-day workshop held on teaching ecosystem health in medical and veterinary curricula, and more generally, in professional curricula. This workshop was part of the International Symposium on “Healthy Ecosystems, Healthy People,” Washington, DC, cosponsored by the International Society for Ecosystem Health and the Center for Applied Biodiversity Science at Conservation International. The goal was to share experiences in teaching ecosystem health within professional schools. This supplement summarizes the discussion at the workshop and provides examples of successful ecosystem health programs already established, or about to be established, in professional schools.

This supplement summarizes the experience of teaching ecosystem health within medical, veterinary, and public health schools. David Rapport and Victoria Lee provide the history of ecosystem health and the events that led to the Washington symposium. They also summarize the challenges and opportunities facing ecosystem health. In his Commentary, Robert Lannigan summarizes the experiences to date, and discusses the common themes that have arisen from these pioneering programs in ecosystem health. John Howard describes challenges faced with the introduction of ecosystem health into professional curricula. These challenges, such as the broad scope of ecosystem health, the lack of previous experience in teaching and evaluation, and the transdisciplinary nature of ecosystem health are discussed in detail. Potential solutions, based on in-depth discussion at the workshop, are provided for each challenge.

The Profiles provide real examples of established ecosystem health programs. These articles are included in the supplement as detailed references for ecosystem health educators to use when considering introducing ecosystem

health courses. This early experience is being shared so that ecosystem health courses need not be continuously reinvented, but rather can be built on previous successes and experience. Glenn A. Albrecht, Nick Higginbotham, Patrick Cashman, and Kate Flint provide a detailed account of how transdisciplinarity and ecosystem health have become an integral part of the teaching of health sciences and environmental sciences at the University of Newcastle, New South Wales. Robert Lannigan describes how ecosystem health has become an integral part of an undergraduate medical curriculum in the Faculty of Medicine and Dentistry at the University of Western Ontario. Bruce A. Wilcox and Richard T. Kasuya describe their plans for establishing ecosystem health as a critical component of the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine. Three articles outline the experience of introducing ecosystem health into veterinary schools. Gretchen E. Kaufman, James Else, Kristin Bowen, Molly Anderson, and Jonathan Epstein outline the Tufts veterinary curriculum in which conservation medicine and ecosystem health plays a major role. Kirsten V.K. Gilardi, James G. Else, and Val R. Beasley describe the Envirovet Summer Institute—a novel summer program at the University of Illinois which focuses on ecosystem health as it applies to terrestrial wildlife, aquatic wildlife, and international development. David Waltner-Toews, John A. VanLeeuwen, Bruce Hunter, Normand Larivière, Denise Bélanger, and Judit Smits describe a well-established ecosystem health program delivered by a consortium of four Canadian veterinary schools. This program draws on 11 years of experience to provide a popular case-based curriculum. Robbie Ali completes the series of cases with a description of the global health program at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public

Health. This article describes in detail the planning of the course.

The Profiles and Commentaries found in this supplement represent experience to date. This supplement can be a guide for ecosystem health educators to overcome challenges previously faced by similarly-minded educators. Readers interested in pursuing ecosystem health curriculum development are encouraged to contact any of the authors for further information and guidance. Most readers of *EcoHealth* believe that ecosystem health should be an integral part of teaching in all spheres. Unfortunately, this is more hope than reality. Transferring our hope into reality requires careful planning and integration of eco-

system health curricula into all educational institutions. This supplement summarizes the first steps of a long journey in the introduction of ecosystem health into all professional curricula.

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