



Ecosystem Approach
NIA Best Practice Network
South Downs
September 2013

What is the ecosystem approach?



A strategy for **integrated** sustainable land and sea management that considers the whole ecosystem.

3 key elements:

- **Ecosystems** and their links to adjacent ecosystems.
- Puts **people** at the heart of environmental management
- **Value** of nature to people recognised as ecosystem goods and services.





Convention on
Biological Diversity



MILLENNIUM ECOSYSTEM ASSESSMENT

Adopted by the Convention on Biological Diversity in
1995 as the primary framework for action under the
Convention

*a strategy for the integrated management of land, water
and living resources that promotes conservation and
sustainable use in an equitable way*

Ecosystems and ecosystem services



Habitats

Species

Soils

Landscape/catchment
scale

Ecological connectivity

Adaptation to climate
change

Lack of excess
nutrients



Human health, wellbeing and prosperity



Regulating services



Provisioning services



Cultural services



Supporting Services

Underpinning biodiversity, geodiversity, landscape characteristics, green infrastructure and ecosystem processes

What is the difference between the ecosystem approach and ecosystem services?



Myth busting:

“the ecosystem approach is the new name for ecosystem services”



Ecosystem services are the services provided by nature that benefit people.

Ecosystem services are **part of** the wider integrated ecosystem approach which also includes the other key elements of involving **people** and **valuing** the natural environment in decision making.

Myth busting:

"The ecosystem approach is all about putting a price on nature"



The ecosystem approach is about ensuring that the value of the natural environment (not just monetary) is recognised in decision making.

*"Ecosystems should be managed for their **intrinsic values** and for the tangible and intangible benefits for humans, in a fair and equitable way"*



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Value



- Valuing the natural environment is **part of the approach** - not the whole approach.
- Valuation **doesn't have to be in monetary terms.**
- It recognises the value of ecosystem services that are **not traded in markets.**
- Natural resources **often appear as zero** in cost benefit analyses.
- Valuation **informs decision making** – it doesn't replace it.



Place Based Approaches and Spatial Planning



- Integrated local delivery – across agreed spatial areas and scales
- Healthy functioning ecosystem = improved environmental outcomes.
- Multiple benefits – multifunctionality - multiple outcomes

Wildlife habitat and movement corridor

Transport route:
walk & cycle

Flood storage zone

A key challenge is to find ways of translating the rhetoric of an ecosystems approach into practical action for spatial planning.

Open space for public recreation



Can work at local as well as landscape scale – e.g. Mayesbrook Park, East London



Redesigning of urban park to deliver multiple benefits:



- Flood regulation, landscape, recreation, biodiversity, urban cooling, adaptation to climate change.

- Re-naturalisation of brook and floodplain habitat creation - 1ha of additional flood storage.

- 1.7km river walk, new entrances “green finger” access routes.

- Access to Nature project:3 schools & park activities.

- Joint private and public funding.



Policy context and ecosystem approach

NATURAL
ENGLAND

UK National Ecosystem Assessment

Living With Environmental Change



Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services



HM Government

The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature



Outcome 1C. *By 2020, at least 17% of land and inland water, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, conserved through **effective, integrated and joined up approaches to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services** including through management of our existing systems of protected areas and the establishment of nature improvement areas;*