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## Valuing NATURE:



Photo credit: C. Zoladeski



### ECOSYSTEM SERVICES AND IMPLICATIONS

How much is the environment worth and how can we attach monetary value to the services performed by natural features and systems? The concept of 'ecosystem services' (also known as: 'environmental services', 'ecological services', 'natural capital', 'ecological goods and services') is rapidly gaining attention and interest from provincial, national, and international government agencies.

Normally cited and discussed only by senior levels of global governments, these concepts are now being assessed quite seriously by local governments and by the world's banks and private equity markets. Those who were speaking about the emergence of the carbon market a number of years ago (something that has come into fruition with carbon trading floors and equity funds) have turned their attention to this broader notion of the monetization of nature. As with most new ideas and emerging markets there are still many uncertainties and questions being asked. In uncertain times, corporations either wait for the dust to settle and for rules to emerge or they try to set the trends and affect the development of practical rules that can be effectively implemented by industry.

Becoming a leader in these emerging environmental services or biodiversity markets first requires an understanding of some important background.

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