

Mattijs van Maasakkers

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Dr. Basta
Co-director Environmental Science Graduate Program
Ohio State University
3138 Smith Lab
174 West 18th
Columbus, OH 43210

Dear Dr. Basta:

Having recently joined the faculty in the Knowlton School's City and Regional Planning Section as an Assistant Professor, I have quickly realized the vast breadth of research and teaching going on in the environmental arena at OSU. In order to be able to connect to that diverse array of researchers and students, I would like to join the faculty of the Environmental Science Graduate Program. As a member of the Graduate Program I hope to develop and participate in interdisciplinary research projects, and mentor students within those studies.

My research is on the role of science in environmental decision-making, and is therefore interdisciplinary in nature. Recently, I have studied the development of markets for ecosystem services in the United States. This analysis has required bringing together insights from disciplines as diverse as ecology, economics, political science and policy studies. I believe that in order to understand the institutional dynamics regarding which scientific information is (or is not) used to inform practical decisions, it is important to analyze that information itself as well. For example, I have found that to make sense of why a particular agency or individual does not want to a specific measurement system to assess the ecosystem service production of a site, it is critical to know how the measurement system operates.

Fundamentally, I think that the future of research on environmental issues and the decisions we make in relation to those issues has to assess and analyze the complex interactions between people and their environments. Single disciplines can contribute enormously in developing that kind of understanding and analysis, but new understanding and innovative solutions are more likely to emerge through the combination of insights. By joining the faculty of the Environmental Science Graduate Program, I hope to contribute to the development of those insights and solutions.

Sincerely,

Mattijs van Maasakkers
Assistant Professor in City and Regional Planning