

Chapter 13

“You Don’t Know What You’ve Got ‘Til it’s Gone”: The Case for Spiritual Values in Marine Ecosystem Management

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Abstract

Belief in the spiritual value of nature is most often associated with Aboriginal people, but is common to major religions and many people with no religious affiliation. This chapter traces the origin of whole ecosystem evaluation from the 1950s to the development of the “total economic value” and “ecosystem services” frameworks. I argue that debates over which categories are valid, summation methods, and concerns about “double counting” miss the larger question of whether the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. I review the case for and against inclusion of spiritual value and conclude that it has significant potential to express the intrinsic value of species and landscape and the totality to which they belong.

Keywords: Ecosystem, intrinsic value, instrumental value, spiritual value, Pacific Northwest, Aboriginal, ecotology.

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