EPS COLLOQUIUM
SPRING 2024

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JAN 29

River networks as ecological corridors for species, populations, and pathogens

Will future large-scale water resources plans make compelling arguments for including the reduction of the loss of biodiversity across scales in fluvial landscape? Is the structure of river networks a template for large-scale spread of waterborne disease infections? Are we capable to provide solid economic arguments for preventing water development schemes in the light of the social and economic cost of predicted increased burden of disease they would bring? It's time to rethink the distributive justice of water resources management and to reduce inequalities on a global scale. When we acknowledge that large-scale water management plans may cause loss of biodiversity or foster the spread of poverty-reinforcing disease, we account for the GDP impact of improved agriculture on the local economy, but do not yet put a price tag on the ecosystem services we lose for good, nor to the true cost of disease. This has to change. We now have the tools – reflected in water.