

**The Future of the Puget Sound Region:  
Applying Ecological Economics to Our Area  
with David Batker, MS, and Katherine Davies, DPhil**

**Wednesday, February 13, 2008**

**David Batker** is the Founder and Executive Director of Earth Economics. He completed his graduate training in economics under Herman Daly, one of the world's foremost ecological economists. Dave has taught in the Training Department of the World Bank, and has worked for Greenpeace International, specializing in trade and international finance. He also worked for two years with the Rural Reconstruction Movement, a Philippine non-profit group dedicated to ecologically sound community-based development.

You can find more information about David Batker and Earth Economics at: [www.eartheconomics.org](http://www.eartheconomics.org)

**Dr. Katherine Davies** is the director and faculty member of the Center for Creative Change, Antioch University Seattle. Her education includes a B.Sc., Sheffield University; M.A., California Institute of Integral Studies; and D.Phil., Somerville College, Oxford University. Her interests include progressive social change and social movements, sustainability, environmental health, social justice and public policy. She has more than 25 years of environmental experience as a program manager, consultant and senior government adviser in Canada and internationally. She has taught at the University of Toronto and the Queen's University. She is currently writing a book with the provisional title "Making Change: Ideas, Values and Strategies for Building the New Progressive Movement."

You can find more information about Dr. Davies and the Center for Creative Change at: [www.antiochseattle.edu](http://www.antiochseattle.edu)

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**Co-sponsor: The Russell Family Foundation** supports grassroots leadership and a selected number of nonprofit organizations in Tacoma and Pierce County. Regionally, its Environmental Sustainability program makes grants in western Washington to restore Puget Sound, improve environmental education and encourage green business practices. Globally, it funds a select group of nonprofits working on issues of peace and security. [www.trff.org](http://www.trff.org)

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**Partners:** American Lung Association of Washington, Breast Cancer Fund, Collaborative on Health and the Environment – Washington, Community Coalition for Environmental Justice, Environmental Coalition of South Seattle, Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County, Newground Social Investment, People for Puget Sound, Pollution Prevention Resource Center, Public Health – Seattle and King County, Sightline Institute, Social Venture Partners, Sustainable Seattle, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, University of Washington School of Public Health and Community Medicine, Washington Citizens for Resource Conservation, Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility, Washington State Nurses Association, Washington Toxics Coalition, Whidbey Institute, WithinReach

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For more information about the lecture series and evaluation form, visit [www.iceh.org/CHE-WAlectures.html](http://www.iceh.org/CHE-WAlectures.html)

## Applying Ecological Economics to Puget Sound: Health, Environment, and Economy

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### Comments from Kate Davies MA DPhil

The health of Puget Sound residents depends on a complex system of inter-related factors, including social and economic conditions, the physical environment, lifestyle and personal health practices, access to health services, and individual factors. Of these, the environment and the economy are the most important because they influence all the others.

Significant proportions of many common diseases in Puget Sound are due to environmental factors and there are significant economic costs associated with these conditions. In fact, environmental diseases and disabilities are likely to cost the Puget Sound region about \$1,587 million a year, of which about one-third is direct health care costs and two-thirds is indirect costs. These costs are largely preventable, born by society as a whole, and are not normally included in policy decisions.

We could create a regional Puget Sound economy and environmental conditions to promote health, instead of costing us. To do this, we need look no further than the determinants of health mentioned in the first paragraph above. By placing a greater emphasis on such factors as strong social and community systems, more equitable income distribution, better educational and literacy levels, and a clean environment, we would improve the health status of Puget Sound residents. This is not mere speculation - many countries whose economies place a greater emphasis on these factors already have much better population health status than the US. We know what needs to be done. Let's just do it!

For more information:

<http://washington.chenw.org/RIgroup/EnvironmentalCosts.pdf>

[http://www.nwpublichealth.org/docs/nph/f2005/web\\_ex\\_davies\\_f2005.pdf](http://www.nwpublichealth.org/docs/nph/f2005/web_ex_davies_f2005.pdf)

[http://www.rachel.org/bulletin/index.cfm?issue\\_ID=2529](http://www.rachel.org/bulletin/index.cfm?issue_ID=2529)

"Economic Costs of Childhood Diseases and Disabilities Attributable to Environmental Contaminants in Washington State, USA", *EcoHealth Journal* Volume 3 Issue 2, June 2006, p. 86-94

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### Comments from David Batker, MS

In the Puget Sound region we face the same paradox as all of humanity. Never before have we been so successful and powerful in terms of total population, technological prowess, energy, wealth and knowledge. Yet the sheer size of our economic enterprise now threatens the very planetary and local systems upon which we all depend. To attain sustainability, justice or greater economic efficiency we must change the economy of the Puget Sound Basin. Fortunately, change is natural to economies.

Ecological Economics, science-based and value-driven, houses solutions including the economic importance of natural capital: the benefits and resources provided as gifts of nature. Natural capital is often a common wealth: breathable air, climate, biodiversity, the water and nutrient cycles, ecosystem services such as flood and storm protection, recreation, aesthetic value and more. Measures are new and approximate, but Puget Sound basin studies show our natural capital is worth half to twice our built capital.

We have an impressive array of solutions, from green building to consuming less, that can secure a far more sustainable, just, and efficient economy here in the Puget Sound Basin. The effective achievement of these solutions requires new rules, and a better economic framework that shifts incentives and investment across the economy. Earth Economics is working with other organizations toward that goal.

For more information:

<http://www.eartheconomics.org>

**Ecological Economics: Principles and Applications** by H. Daly and J. Farley (2003)