

Topical Lunch - host Steven Wolf

July 2

12:00 - 1:00 PM

133 Emerson Hall

Title: A conceptual framework for resource-based assessment of environmental conservation

Sustainable development can be conceptualized as an 'innovation imperative.' Actors in public, private and civil society sectors must learn to do new things and do things differently in order to cope with scarcity and meet evolving standards of accountability. This innovation challenge is in part technical, for example the need to reduce carbon footprint while remaining economically viable, but it also involves cognitive change and institutional change (i.e., new ways of gathering, interpreting and applying information and new modes of coordinating interactions in variously scaled settings). My interdisciplinary research is focused on conducting empirical accounting of organizational processes of adaptation to environmental change. I seek to link data on socioeconomic resources and investments directed at sustainability problems to data on the material environment. The goal is to develop methods to assess and compare adaptation strategies in order to identify functional models. More specifically, we seek to understand how investments in human capital, management routines and network linkages contribute to improvements in environmental performance of organizations, sectors and territories. I am currently engaged in a collaborative national-level study of the Finnish forestry sector's response to new habitat conservation requirements and rising demand for biodiversity conservation. Additionally, I am involved in a collaborative assessment of responses to nitrogen pollution from agriculture in the Mississippi River basin. My aim is to initiate a new study directed at climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Please RSVP to Paula Euvrard pge3@cornell.edu AND Steven A. Wolf saw44@cornell.edu