

The Stockholm Seminars: Frontiers in Sustainability Science and Policy

This lecture is a part of a seminar series that cover a broad range of perspectives on sustainability issues, particularly focusing on the need for a sound scientific basis for sustainable development policy.

The lecture is free of charge and open for all interested. For more information: contact Albaeco 08-674 74 00 or www.albaeco.com/sthsem. To receive email notifications of upcoming seminars register at www.albaeco.com/subscribe

Life after Linnaeus: Systematics and System Dynamics in a Complex World

Dr. Nick Winder

Institute for Policy & Practice, Newcastle University, UK

Friday, February 22, 2008, 13.30–14.30

Linné Hall, the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences,
Lilla Frescativägen 4, Stockholm

Linnaean systematics has largely disappeared from the curriculum over the last 30 years. Hard scientists associate it with effete amateurism. Younger post-modernists seem to believe the world is a safer place because academics do not use language systematically. That is interesting, because there is not much else these communities agree about. Natural scientists and humanists tend to think on different spatio-temporal scales and this creates an auto-correlation between disciplinary structures and position in the administrative hierarchy. Tensions between regional, national and supra-national institutions and tensions between academic communities are artefacts of the same subsidiarity problems. It is conceivable that the rejection of systematics and tensions about subsidiarity are connected in some way. This seminar will build a few bridges between systematics and system dynamics and use them to explore socio-natural complexity. In Linnaean systematics, the species are fixed and universal. From the early 19th century onwards, however, we began to believe that they were mutable. Yet Linnaean taxonomy did not disappear and the (morpho) species concept remains indispensable. Instead, we re-built the foundations on which western science stands to accommodate a complex world - one in which taxonomies can be fixed on one spatio-temporal scale and mutable on another.

Dr Nick Winder is Principal Research Associate Institute for Policy & Practice at Newcastle University. He was an amateur naturalist who took a year off work to study science-based and systems archaeology in 1980 and got hooked. He spent ten years studying complex data structures and space-time confounding in archaeology. In early 90s he was working on natural and anthropogenic degradation in the Mediterranean. His research focus shifted to policy-relevant work and contemporary cultural ecodynamics. He is an expert on the management and sociology of integrative socio-natural science.

The Stockholm Seminars are arranged by:



Centrum för biologisk mångfald

