Ecosystem health scores to aid in conservation and restoration project reporting

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Conservation and restoration initiatives are lacking in reporting approaches that engender themselves towards easy implementation, short- and long-term impact and cost-effectiveness. Composing an interdisciplinary perspective for reporting on, and evaluating ecosystem health is expected to help close the gap from knowledge generation to management action. The objective of this research is to identify a new score-based methodology to assess ecosystem health through biodiversity, socio-economic and public awareness metrics. This will be done through a combination of an extensive literature review and the surveying of conservation professionals and academics.

Six pillars of conservation impact have been identified as; *fauna and flora, biotic and abiotic factors, threat management, community involvement, public awareness, and ecosystem services*. Several indicators will be developed for each pillar based on the results of the literature review and survey responses. These indicators will then be analysed to receive a low, medium or high score in relation to optimal conservation or restoration outcomes. Then the indicator scores will be added together to generate a pillar score and an overall ecosystem health score that is project-specific. As a result, we expect to find a general consensus among professionals and academics for indicator use in this methodology. We hope to see an increase in understanding of conservation and restoration challenges among the general public who have interacted with this new assessment methodology.

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