“Environmental Science Literacy and Effective Governance: An exploration with climate change and bioenergy as a case study”

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10:15 – 11:30 a.m.
Room A170
James B. Henry Center for Executive Development
Michigan State University

RSVP required, space is limited.
RSVP Mary Thompson at diedri13@msu.edu by TUESDAY, March 1.

Abstract
A number of major issues confronting modern society are striking for their complexity, and solutions to the dilemmas they pose will necessarily need to involve multiple stakeholders with sometimes competing interests. Scientific inquiry and knowledge are some of our most useful tools to bring to bear on these discussions. At the same time, demographic research and everyday experience make it clear that not all groups in society share the same science knowledge, nor even the same perspective on the factors and processes that shape scientific inquiry. Over the course of this presentation, we will share results from our research into the development of scientific reasoning about matter and energy in ecosystems by learners in formal education settings. Most learners need to make three crucial transitions in their reasoning in order to effectively utilize scientific knowledge in real-life, citizenship decisions: transitions in discourse, building of accounts, and constructing arguments from evidence. Each transition presents its own difficulties, but each is also soluble in part as individuals learn to work through the others. Using understanding of the potential role of biofuels as a case study, along with their connection to global climate change, we will discuss the implications of our findings for governance in the public sphere.

Seminar presented as part of the Environmental and Natural Resource Governance Fellows Program. For more information please visit www.nrconservation.msu.edu/nrconservation/enr_governance_fellows

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