



The concept of sustainable living suggests that society move from an exclusive, sectoral approach to valuing and using natural assets to an integrated approach. In addition, many believe that a society committed to sustainable living recognizes people as integral parts of the ecosystem(s) in which they live and work. *Modified from P.A Gray, L. Demal, D. Hogg, D. Greer, D. Euler, and D. DeYoe, "An Ecosystem Approach to Living Sustainably: A Perspective for the Ministry of Natural Resources." (Discussion paper prepared for the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Great Lakes Branch, Peterborough, Ontario, 1995.)*

use planning, an ecosystem approach provides early and systematic guidance on the interrelationships between human activities (existing and planned) and ecosystem integrity over time.

What would a framework look like? Development and implementation of an ecosystem approach to management means that the entire ecosystem is used as the spatial context in which to make decisions about human activities in the air, on the land, in the soil, and in the waters. A true ecosystem approach to management means that society designs programs on the basis of ecological time scales, which can be short (e.g., days and months) and long (e.g., hundreds and thousands of years). Within suitable spatial and temporal contexts, commitment through an ecologically meaningful philosophy and a corresponding suite of values is also necessary because the values provide the basis for the partnerships between the people who design and deliver the programs. In addition, the extent to which people can design and deliver the programs depends on the corporate culture in which they work. With the correct mix of space, time, values, partnerships, and corporate culture, natural asset managers can then employ the tools and techniques, such as policy and legislation, strategic plans, data and information collection and dissemination, and on-site management practices, to deliver an ecosystem approach to management. For an example of a framework, see the following diagram.

Holistic Approach to Land Use Planning

Ontario's 1997 Provincial Policy Statement, issued under the Planning Act, is based on a holistic approach to providing broad policy direction for local land use planning and decision making. The statement supports an ecosystem approach to managing natural resources, encourages planning on a watershed basis, and directs municipalities to take into account a full range of social, economic, and environmental considerations in decision making.