**WASS Seminar “Citizens for Nature”**

**Aim and Scope of the seminar**

The role of citizens in realizing, monitoring, protecting and managing nature and environment currently receives much attention and is widely debated, both by academics and policy makers (Buizer et al., 2015; Ten Cate et al., 2013). This role of citizens has significantly changed over the last decades, which can be seen in the light of trends such as a shift from government to governance and the rise of information and communication technologies (ICTs) in conservation research and practice, which has facilitated a vast array of participatory mapping and citizen science initiatives (Bonney et al., 2014). As a result of such trends, new forms of interactions have emerged between citizens, scientists, government bodies and non-state actors (Irwin et al., 1995). The character and location of many processes have changed, which has led to many novel arrangements in the domains of nature and environment with citizens as steering agents in numerous ways and to various degrees (Arnouts et al., 2012; Buizer et al., 2015). Examples of this include citizens monitoring the prevalence of certain species or the quality of a natural resource; citizens protesting against the cutting of trees; citizens developing and managing an ecological corridor; citizens participating in landscape planning activities; and citizens developing city gardens in public space, among others.

These new arrangements bring about several debates. First of all, evidence on the different roles of citizens in realizing, monitoring, protecting and/or managing nature and environment is somewhat scattered and lacks a clear overview. There are also many questions about the actual impact and/or effects of this increased citizen involvement in both the social and ecological realms. The relationship of this ‘green citizenship’ with policy and institutions elicits a re-definition of responsibilities of different state and non-state actors and highlights issues of legitimacy and accountability. Moreover, possible discrepancies between local initiatives and networks on a larger scale are an important topic of discussion, and concerns regarding the quality and reliability of information collected by volunteers are still a bottleneck in many participatory/citizen science initiatives.

The goal of the proposed seminar **“Citizens for Nature”** is to explore the increasingly important, and often contested, roles of individuals and organized citizens in policy and management of nature and environment. Specifically, the seminar aims to deepen understanding of this broad topic among participants from both an empirical and theoretical perspective, by discussing ideas on both content and theory from an inter-disciplinary and critical standpoint. The plenary discussion aims to trigger reflection on the potentials and the caveats of these participatory approaches for both conservation research and practice by addressing some of the unresolved issues introduced above.

This thematic activity will deal with topics such as citizen participation in monitoring and planning as well as different new forms of governance through which citizens possibly contribute to realizing, protecting and/or managing nature and environment. As such, the seminar contributes to two WASS themes: **“Knowledge in Society: Contestation, Boundaries and Bridges”** (Dr. Buijs’s presentation) and **“**[**Natural Resources and the Environment: Conflicts, Competition and Collaboration**](https://www.wageningenur.nl/en/Education-Programmes/PhD-Programme/Graduate-Schools/Wageningen-School-of-Social-Sciences/Research/Research-programme/Theme-Natural-Resources-and-the-Environments.htm)**”** (Dr. Raymond’s and Dr. Ambrose-Oji’s presentations).

Through a poster call to Wageningen University scholars and students, we as organizers look forward to learning from the diversity of theoretical and methodological perspectives applied to study the topic and to stimulate interaction among the various groups involved in the field. In addition, we will take the opportunity to share our own research, and obtain feedback, through a poster as well.

Posters are not required to be able to participate in the seminar but we encourage researchers at all levels (students, PhD candidates, post-docs and beyond) to consider sharing their research results and ideas that way.

**References**

Arnouts, R., Van der Zouwen, M., Arts, B. (2012). Analysing governance modes and shifts — Governance arrangements in Dutch nature policy. Forest Policy and Economics, 16, 43–50.

Bonney, R., Shirk J.L., Philips, T.B., Wiggins, A., Ballard, H.L., Miller-rushing, A.J., Parrish, J.K. 2014. Next Steps for Citizen Science." *Science* 343.6178 (2014): 1436-1437.

Buizer, M., Elands, B., Mattijssen, T., van der Jagt, A., Ambrose, B., Gerőházi, E., Santos, A., Steen Møller, M. (2015). The governance of urban green space in selected EU-cities – policies, practices, actors, topics. Copenhagen University, Copenhagen.

Irwin, Alan. Citizen science: a study of people, expertise, and sustainable development. Psychology Press, 1995.

Ten Cate, B., Dirkx, J., Hinssen, P., van Koppen, K., Vader, J. (2013). Burgerinitiatieven zijn beter voor de natuur. Of niet?, Wettelijke Onderzoekstaken Natuur & Milieu. Wageningen UR, Wageningen.

**Background of participants and organizers:**

**Name:** Dr. Christopher M. Raymond (confirmed)

**Affiliation:** Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management, University of Copenhagen

**Key research interests and achievements:** Social valuation of nature using Public Participation GIS techniques. Dr. Raymond is internationally recognised for the development of social science methods to integrate local and scientific values into environmental policy and planning; and for the development of new theories, methodologies and conceptual frameworks in the areas of ‘sense of place’, conservation behaviour, climate change adaptation and knowledge integration for environmental management.

**Seminar topic:** Engaging Citizens in Nature Using Public Participation Geographic Information Systems: Novel Methods, Recent Applications and Future Directions

**Abstract:**

Over the past decade, a variety of public participation geographic information system tools have been developed as a way of engaging citizens in nature conservation and landscape planning. Tools have been developed for a range of landscape management purposes, including the identification of: socially acceptable areas for national park allocations; preferences for different forms of residential, tourism and industrial development; and potential for conflicts between local, regional and national government priorities for environmental management. This presentation will showcase a range of survey and online PPGIS methods for generating data as well as novel techniques for analysing these data and integrating with biophysical attributes. Case examples will be provided from recent Australian or European applications. The presentation will conclude with a discussion of future directions in PPGIS and nature conservation research, with a specific focus on data collection and analyses procedures.

**Name:** Dr. Arjen Buijs/Dr. Bas Breman (confirmed)

**Affiliation:** Forest and Nature Conservation Policy group, Wageningen University

**Key research interests and achievements:** citizens, community participation, conflict management, environmental psychology, experiential value, value systems, water policy, landscape experience, leisure, public support, recreation. Dr. Buijs is senior researcher and assistant professor at the Forest and Nature Policy Group**.**

**Seminar topic:** Participatory monitoring and legitimacy in adaptive management

**Abstract:**

The shift from government to governance is usually described as a process from governmental steering to self-governance practices. However, actual practices are usually much more hybrid than suggested. Legitimacy and trust are crucial elements in such hybrids of co-governance practices. One field where such hybrids can be recognised is in the field of adaptive water management. Focusing on participatory monitoring practices, we investigate the role of citizens and other non-professionals in the monitoring of water management and how information relates to the legitimacy of decision making and trust between stakeholders. We discuss whether new ways of collecting, distributing and validating information are credible to and available for all relevant stakeholders and how such information can improve adaptive water management.

**Name:** Dr Bianca Ambrose-Oji

**Affiliation:** Forest Research, Forestry Commission UK  
**Key research interests and achievements:** community forestry, instituting decentralised forest governance, stakeholder engagement and partnership brokering, participatory and community-based monitoring and evaluation and understanding the management of natural resources in urbanising and peri-urban contexts. Dr. Ambrose-Oji is Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and Associate of CARIAD, Bangor University.

**Seminar topic:** Environmental citizenship in Britain: The nature of volunteering, collaboration, and ownership in community forestry

**Abstract:**

Community woodlands and community involvement in forestry is a fast evolving and increasingly significant area of environmental citizenship in Britain. In Scotland for example, there has been an estimated 67% increase in number of community woodland groups since 2007. The definition of community forestry remains contested in part because depending on the example, the degree of participation, involvement and influence of citizens differs and can fluctuate over time. The origins of community action, people’s motivations and the institutional arrangements  by which they carry on their activities vary quite considerably. Some communities collaborate to work in partnership with organisations to manage woodlands for joint objectives, others take part in more passive forms of volunteering to achieve organisational objectives, and some communities and community groups, often responding to environmental threats and conflicts, come to own or lease woodlands to achieve their own goals. It is not only the role of environmental citizens amongst these different configurations that varies, the impacts on woodland management and the stream of social, financial and environmental benefits derived from nature changes as a consequence. The presentation will describe different forms of environmental citizenship in the community woodland context and pose some questions about the impacts on Nature and people’s understanding of woodland ecosystems.

**Name:** Eira-Carballo Cárdenas

**Affiliation:** ENP, WUR  
**Main line of work:** Data interpretation and use for marine protected area management

**Seminar topic:** Citizen science and invasive lionfish in Dutch Caribbean marine protected areas: why do people (not) collect and contribute their data?

**Poster abstract:**   
Citizen participation in data collection for ecological research and biodiversity conservation is a centuries-old practice. As such, “citizen science” is not a new concept but several trends, namely calls for participatory governance of natural resources as well as the upsurge of the Internet and mobile information and communication technologies (ICTs), are contributing to the recent proliferation of citizen science programs and heightened research interest in the topic. The focus of this study is on citizen science in relation to management of invasive lionfish in marine protected areas (MPAs). Given the crucial role that volunteers play in lionfish control programs in MPAs, understanding their motivations, and barriers, to participate in conservation-related citizen science initiatives is important to ensure sustained participation. The main goal of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the factors that motivate and constrain individuals to collect and contribute their data on invasive lionfish in five MPAs in the Dutch Caribbean. Results indicate that motivations are dynamic, with issue novelty and sense of urgency playing a key role in citizens’ active reporting of lionfish sightings data during the initial stage of the invasion. At a later stage, reporting of capture data was mainly motivated by reaffirmation of self-identity as ‘lionfish hunter’. For some individuals lionfish became a resource (own consumption; for sale to restaurants) which was as a motive to keep lionfish location data secret. Both social and technological factors influenced individuals’ motivations to not/report their data.

**Name:** Thomas Mattijssen  
**Affiliation:** FNP, WUR  
**Main line of work:** Governance by citizens in the domains of nature and landscape  
**Seminar topic:** A typology of green citizen governance in the Netherlands

**Poster abstract:**  
The involvement of citizens in management and policy of nature and landscape has significantly increased over the last decades. Citizens all over Europe nowadays play a role in protecting, managing and/or realizing nature and landscape, and there are many examples of this in literature. This increased involvement can be seen in the light of a broader trend or ‘shift’ from government to governance, in which governing is not only a business of the central state but also of many different institutions and/or actors on different levels, including citizens. However, there remain many questions about the involvement in policy and management of nature and landscape. One important point of debate is that scientific evidence on the character and spread of this involvement so far is scattered. Although many see a trend in which citizens have become more involved in policy and management of nature and landscape, there is no clear overview of this trend. In what ways do citizens become involved, what do they do and how do they do it?

This study specifically focuses on the topic of green self-governance in the Netherlands. Green self-governance can be seen as a specific form of governance in which self-organizing citizens play a major and often initiating role in realizing, protecting and/or managing nature and landscape. The aim of this study is to provide an overview of green self-governance in the Netherlands and to describe initiatives on different characteristics as well as to construct a typology of green self-governance. For doing so, a large inventory of examples of self-governance has been made (n=263). On basis of this inventory, an overall view of activities, objectives, actors and networks and the financing of green self-governance can be provided. This has been used to create a typology of different forms of green self-governance in the Netherlands.