

New focus urged for ecological studies

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A University of Georgia anthropologist is urging more attention be paid to the social science aspects of long-term ecological studies.

Ted Gragson says without such increased focus, a fully integrated picture of how people interact with the natural world may remain incomplete.

"We need a more explicit examination of how social and ecological issues interact," said Gragson. "When we understand better the relation between humans and biophysical systems, our ability to forecast future scenarios will be vastly improved."

The study found "most ecological scientific research has focused on biological and physical systems in isolation from human influence, or considered humans and their activities as external perturbations to the functioning of biophysical systems."

The report by Gragson and Morgan Grove of the USDA Forest Service at the Northeastern Research Station in Burlington, Vt., appears in the current issue of the journal *Society and Natural Resources*.

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