

The Landscape ecology/SFE thematic group proposes a context and a focus for this topic

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Environmental heterogeneity has been the center of ecologists' attention for decades but ecological studies have historically been conducted at local scales. Today, the need for ecological studies to include large spatial and temporal scales is being repeatedly highlighted. The recognition of the central role of landscapes has led to the development of landscape ecology, a sub-discipline of ecology which aims at understanding the causes, either natural or anthropogenic, of spatial and temporal heterogeneity as well as its consequences on genetic, species and functional diversity, functions and ecosystem services. Conceptual and methodological approaches developed in landscape ecology are increasingly contributing to both our understanding of ecosystem functioning (e.g. meta-ecosystems, response time-lags) and the way we face current societal challenges (e.g. managing multiple species and ecosystem services in the context of interacting global changes).

The landscape has become a central concept in both theoretical and applied ecological studies and is being increasingly acknowledged outside of the academic arena as well. As a result, the French CNRS Institute of Ecology and Environment (INEE) has decided to consider 2016 as the year of the Landscape. The SFE is acknowledging that landscape ecology has today become one of the major sub-disciplines of ecology by considering it as one of its main key topics for its International Conference on Ecological Sciences, Sfécologie 2016. The conference will include three [selected symposia](#) grouped under the theme "2016 Year of the Landscape", which we hope will present an exciting synthesis of recent advances in landscape ecology.



The Landscape ecology/SFE thematic group is also encouraging the submission of abstracts examining the causes and consequences of spatial and temporal heterogeneity across all types of socio-ecosystems. Both theoretical and empirical studies are welcome. Submission of abstracts that explore interdisciplinary connections between ecology and other disciplines (e.g. geography, social and economic sciences) is also encouraged.