



International Society for Ecological Economics

Newsletter – February 2002

New President and Board for ISEE

On 1st January 2002, ISEE President-Elect John Proops took over the ISEE Presidency, for a two year period. He succeeds Dick Norgaard, who will continue to act as an ISEE Board Member, in the position of Past-President.

The other, newly-elected, ISEE Officers are:

President-Elect - Charles Perrings

Board Members - Paula Antunes, Kate Brown, Kanchan Chopra, Jonathon Harris

This Board will serve until December 2003, when Charles Perrings becomes President and a new Board is elected.

(See below for details on the recent ISEE Presidential and Board election. Details on Board activities will be posted on the ISEE website – www.ecologicaleconomics.org)

My Aims as President

by John Proops

Taking over as ISEE's third President is a challenge and a responsibility. My two predecessors, Bob Costanza and Dick Norgaard, both did an excellent job in launching and establishing the society, setting up our Journal and our biennial meetings, and also assisting in the establishment of our Regional Societies. So what contributions do I hope to make?

- First, with the new Board of ISEE, I intend to maintain what we have already established. The Journal continues to thrive, and as Bob Costanza intends to step down as editor later this year, I shall be involved in the installation of the new editor. Our March 2002 biennial conference in Sousse, Tunisia, will be the first in Africa; then we need to start arrangements for the 2004 conference, probably somewhere in North America.
- My second task is to develop further our website (<http://ecologicaleconomics.org>). When I became President-Elect in 2000, Dick Norgaard asked me for what area of ISEE I'd like to take responsibility, and I asked for the website. Since then, we have made some good progress, with the installation of a new site embodying a flexible architecture to allow future development. Those of you who have looked at the site recently will have noticed that more and more of the pages are losing their 'under development' tags, and are filling with content. In particular, we now have useful material in the teaching and research areas, and the beginnings of a working paper series. The initial entries of the Encyclopaedia of Ecological Economics should start to appear in a month or two.

My ambitions for our web site are very high – to make it the best academic environmental web site in the world! Of course, this won't happen overnight, but I shall be giving the web site a high priority over my two-year term as President, and hope that by January 2004 we have a site to be proud of. (See the fuller web site report below, by our new webmaster, Steve Morris.)

- My third area of focus will be the Regional Societies, and on how they relate to each other and to ISEE. When ISEE was first established in 1988, we were a small



enough group that a single international society was enough, especially as most of our membership was from North America and Western Europe. However, as ecological economics grew in world-wide popularity and policy influence, the need for regional groupings became obvious. We now have Regional Societies in (alphabetically): Argentina and Uruguay (La Plata SEE), Australia and New Zealand (ANZSEE), Brazil (EcoEco), Canada (CANSEE), Europe (ESEE), India (INSEE), Korea (KSEE), Peru (PSEE), Russia (RSEE), Sri Lanka (Lanka SEE) and the USA (USSEE). There are also moves to found Regional Societies in Japan, Meso-America, and Southern Africa.

I shall try to give all possible help to the establishment of the new Regional Societies, and offer any feasible assistance to those already established. In particular, I think stronger links between Regional Societies could prove very beneficial, and I shall be having discussions with the Regional Societies' Presidents to find out how we can best work together. Also, part of these discussions will be on how ISEE can act as a 'glue' for the global ecological economics community, encouraging diversity of approach but also identifying and stressing a unity of purpose in advancing the cause of ecological economics. (For a report on recent Regional Society activities, see below.)

Finally, let me stress that I view ISEE's main role as being very simple – to serve its members! I hope that all ISEE members will feel free to contact me with their views, comments and suggestions on how ISEE can better serve the global ecological economic community (please e-mail me at: j.l.r.proops@keele.ac.uk).

John Proops - Biographical Notes

It seems only fair that if I am to serve as ISEE President, that ISEE members should know something about me! Hence the following:

I was born in 1947, in Bristol, UK, and I am now Professor of Ecological Economics at Keele University, UK (I have been at Keele almost all of my academic career). My academic interests span the natural and social sciences, with my first degree being in mathematics and physics at Keele University. On graduation I studied engineering physics in Canada, and then worked for some time as a volunteer teacher in Nigeria. There I became interested in the process of economic development and restructuring, and I returned to Keele to take my PhD on the application of principles of modern thermodynamics to the analysis of economic systems.

On completing my PhD, I was appointed as lecturer in the Economics Department at Keele University, specialising in the teaching of mathematical economics and econometrics. As my career developed, my teaching and research has focused on socio-environmental issues, and my base at Keele is now the School of Politics, International Relations and the Environment (SPIRE).

My recent and current research is in three areas:

- The conceptual foundations of ecological economics, in particular: environmental attitudes, using Q methodology; the problems of 'environmental ignorance' and 'time' in policy making; the establishment of 'goals' for sustainable development.
- Empirical analysis of environmental issues, including: the economic determinants of CO₂ emissions; life-cycle analysis of power stations; the environmental 'footprints' resulting from international trade; the distributional impacts of environmental taxes.
- Mathematical modelling of economy-environment interactions, especially: the use of neo-Austrian capital theory and input-output analysis; the modelling foundations of 'green' national accounts.



Regional Society Conferences – Some Impressions

by John Proops

One of the pleasures of being President-Elect over the past two years has been attending both ISEE and Regional Society conferences. This year I was privileged to attend five Regional Society meetings, of: the European SEE (Cambridge), the United States SEE (Duluth), the Canadian SEE (Montreal), the Russian SEE (Moscow) and the Indian SEE (Bhopal). I also attended a meeting of Chinese ecological economists in Beijing (though China does not yet have an ISEE affiliated Regional Society).

What struck me most forcibly was that ecological economics has different and quite distinct regional 'flavours'. I was a founder member of ESEE (the first ISEE Regional Society), so I'm very familiar with the style of these European meetings – they are relentlessly academic and analytical! Also, European ecological economics is very self-confident, as well it might be – over the past decade, ecological economics policy prescriptions have become the mainstream for the Commission of the European Union (which establishes EU environmental policy). Although one hears some debate at ESEE meetings on the need to confront the 'neoclassical paradigm', this is not often a priority. Instead, the business is about laying down the techniques and understandings for an effective environmental policy, which sees nature as important.

One of the newest Regional Societies is the USSEE, which had a very successful inaugural meeting in Duluth last July. To a European, the style of the USSEE meeting was a revelation. First, several of the plenary speakers were not academics! Instead, they were from government, business and even journalism (I hear in-drawn breath from ESEE members). Second, the influence of natural science is far stronger than in Europe. While most ESEE members have social science backgrounds, it is apparent that engineers, biologists, ecologists and foresters form a significant proportion of USSEE membership. Finally, the early development of (neoclassical) environmental economics in the US, and its powerful policy influence there, makes US ecological economics sometimes seem rather defensive – can we really outface the Big Bad Wolf of the neoclassical paradigm? (Of course we can – ignore it and it will go away!)

Then on to Beijing, to meet representatives of the (non-ISEE affiliated) Chinese Society for Ecological Economics. This was a fascinating experience in many ways. It was my first trip to China, and none of my expectations were fulfilled. Experience in the Third World, and a long interest in Chinese history, had done nothing to prepare me for 21st century Beijing. First, the architecture – the historic low rise buildings are disappearing almost before one's eyes, being replaced by architecture that reminds me simultaneously of Orlando, Florida, and Frankfurt, Germany. Then, where were the bicycles? I understood these were the staple mode of transport – no more! Beijing has traffic jams to match any Western city, and the cars are Western too (though made in China). Finally, I'd understood Beijing had awful air pollution – but this too has been abolished, apparently overnight. What about ecological economics in China? Another big surprise – the Chinese society was founded before ISEE, their journal was founded before ours, and they have more members than the whole of ISEE! As in Europe, Chinese ecological economics has been very influential on policy, but even more so, and many Chinese ecological economists are in government planning and environmental bureaux, as well as academia. The one thing I was not surprised by was the focus of Chinese ecological economics, on socio-environmental issues relating to the emergence of a market economy, and on problems of agriculture and forestry, especially in arid areas. It would be wonderful if the Chinese SEE were to chose to affiliate to ISEE, but this may be some time off. However, in the meantime, there are plans for an edited volume (in English) on *Ecological Economics in China*, to give the



rest of the world access to some of the recent developments in the world's most populous nation.

Next, to Montreal for the CANSEE conference. Beautiful weather in a beautiful city, and a conference which displayed well the idea that Canada embodies both European and US traits. The plenary speakers were mostly academic, as in Europe, and Canadian ecological economics has a confidence based on its influence on policy making (especially through Statistics Canada). But as for the USA, many presentations reflected natural science backgrounds, with forestry being a important issue (not surprising given all the trees in Canada). Also, the final roundtable session was peopled entirely by activists and other non-academics, leading to a lively and wide-ranging discussion. (Is there a lesson here for Europe?)

Late September was in Moscow, at the RSEE meeting, and how the North wind did blow. This was the Russian Society's inaugural meeting in its new guise, having previously been a 'Chapter' of ISEE. Given Russia's intellectual history over the past century, it was no great surprise that discussions of the role of the neoclassical paradigm did not figure large. Instead, concern was focussed on the environmental effects of the enormous transition Russia is undergoing, as it moves from central planning towards a market system. There were also echoes of the Canadian concerns with forestry. But the main focus was on how a society that has experienced significant negative economic growth, and has an inheritance of major environmental damage, can use its excellent natural and intellectual resources to generate good environmental policy. The consensus seemed to be that this was an uphill struggle, but progress was being made.

Finally, in late December I went to Bhopal for the INSEE conference. The weather was clement, the setting was a delightful hilltop forestry management institute, and the breadth and quality of the presentations was impressive. As India is the world's second most populous country, and has an English speaking academic and managerial class, we are used to meeting first-rate Indian academics all over the globe. But there are plenty left in India, and the level of debate was of the highest order. Indian ecological economics apparently has a good presence in policy circles, as in Europe, though in India the problem of 'neoclassical economics' seem as more of an issue. The topics for Indian ecological economics are as would be expected: development, agriculture, forestry and (in a semi-arid country) water.

There were also meetings in November of EcoEco (Brazil) and the Del Plata Regional Society (Argentina and Uruguay), which I was unfortunately unable to attend. Peter May represented the Board at EcoEco, but sadly not at Del Plata, as this was at the same time. (Clearly there's a role for ISEE in co-ordinating Regional Society meetings!)

What did I learn from my meetings this year? First, ecological economics is in vigorous good-health. We are attracting large numbers of young researchers to our cause, and their energy and commitment is clearly having a major impact. Second, ecological economics is adapting itself to its environments. The 'flavours' of ecological economics I detected reflect different regional histories and institutional frameworks. By adapting this way, ecological economics is becoming more able to offer relevant insights and policy prescriptions to both academics and those in the political arena. Finally, without exception the conference participants I met seemed to be enjoying themselves, and who can blame them. We ecological economists are exceptionally fortunate that we are working in an intellectually exciting area, on important problems affecting all levels of nature and society, and are even becoming influential in the field of policy. Challenges remain, but already so much has been accomplished!



Report from ECOECO

On 21-24th November 2001, the Brazilian Society for Ecological Economics (ECOECO) held its Fourth Biennial Meeting in Belém, capital of the State of Pará (in the Amazon region).

It was a very successful meeting, gathering about 250 participants from all over Brazil, presenting and discussing papers on a variety of themes, focusing on the sustainable development of the Amazon region. Everyone who attended IVth ECOECO enjoyed the meeting and made us sure that ECOECO is increasingly becoming a privileged forum to carry on debates on this area.

The Program of the IVth ECOECO offered to participants:

1. *Short-Courses* (4 hours each one) on the following themes: 'Introduction to Ecological Economics'; 'Economic Instruments for Environmental Policies'; 'Trade and Environment'; 'Sustainable Economic Use of the Amazonian Resources'.
2. *Paper Sessions* organized according to the following themes: 'Ecological Economics: Theory, Methodology and Cases Analysis'; 'Macroeconomics of Environment'; 'Economic Instruments for Environmental Policies'; 'Sustainable Development and Regional Policies in the Amazon Region'. About 40 papers were presented.
3. *Plenary Sessions* on: 'Deforesting in the Amazon Region' (this session was widely reported by the local and the national newspapers); 'Alternative Funds for Sustainable Projects'; 'Environmental Management and Ecological Economics'. *Panel Sessions* – about 12 panels were shown.
4. *Field Session* A field trip to an Agro-industrial Co-operative formed by families who collect and process 'açai' (*Euterpe oleraceae* - palm tree), producing the pulp of this regional fruit, in Igarapé-M- is supported by the Program Poverty and Environment in the Amazon (POEMA/Federal University of Pará), which provides capacity building - technical, managerial and merchandising - to the Co-operative.
5. *ECOECO Assembly* when the members of ECOECO (and ISEE) discussed many subjects related mainly to the future activities of the society. A new board was elected for a two-year period. In the Presidency, Luciana Togeiro de Almeida succeeds Maurício Amazonas, who will continue collaborating to the society as a member of the board. Luciana Simões is the new Vice-President of ECOECO.

Report from ASAUUE

On November 22nd and 23rd, there was held in Buenos Aires city, the first meeting of ASAUUE, the Argentinean – Uruguayan Society for Ecological Economics. During these two days, people coming from different regions and organizations met at the Center for Advanced Studies, Universidad de Buenos Aires, to present and discuss new points of view, that could help in a little, to give some solutions for those important questions about environment and society.

Over 50 contributed papers were presented at the Conference in more than six main sessions. The Main Sessions addressed Global Environmental Points, Specific Environmental Issues, Classification, Management and Tools for Environmental Policy and Social Studies of environmental problematic. Themes in these sessions ranged from valuation, physical indicators, accounts, food security, environmental equity, land use planning to biodiversity conservation, agriculture and business, green accounting, and others. Many of these points were focused on the local or regional level.

More than one hundred people assisted and enthusiastically participated in the sessions. They comprised a rainbow of people from the Universities of Argentina,



Uruguay and Brazil, government representatives, policy makers, NGOs and students. Out of program, parallel sessions, were requested, to discuss and know more about a specific topic.

Walter A. Pengue opened the plenary session by presenting ASAUEE and the First Meeting Activities and the first Conference session, "*Environmental Aspects of Growing Cities*", was given by Dr. Jorge H. Morello. On Friday 23rd Dr. Hector Sejenovich, developed a central Conference theme, *Integration among Economy and Ecology*, while the last presentation was *Distributed Environmental Conflicts at Del Plata Basin*, by Dr. Daniel Panario.

After its legal constitution in September 2001, at the end of the November Meeting ASAUEE held a first open session for all members of the Society, where people were informed about the financial situation, future goals and there were discussions on the place and time of the next meeting. People decided that this new meeting of ASAUEE would be on biannual basis, avoiding clashes with the meetings of ISEE and Eco-Eco Brazil. This will to allow local researchers also to attend these meetings and reinforce the whole Society, by offering several and continuous activities related to Ecological Economics.

The next meeting will be held at Universidad de la República, Montevideo, Uruguay, in 2003.

Jorge H. Morello (Argentina), President, Daniel Panario (Uruguay), Vice-president, Hector Sejenovich (Secretary), Walter A. Pengue (Vice Secretary), Horacio Feinstein (Treasurer) and Gustavo Sension (Vice Treasurer) comprise the first Steering Committee of ASAUEE.

Contact: Jorge Morello (morello@cea.uba.ar), Walter Pengue (wapengue@sinectis.com.ar), email Society: ecoecoldelplatachapter@hotmail.com.

ISEE Web Site Developments

by Steve Morris (ISEE Webmaster)

The past year has seen the ISEE web-site (www.ecological-economics.org) change hands from Astrid Scholz to myself. First, thanks must go to Astrid for maintaining it for the past few years and for walking me through the hand-over period. During 2001, the site was re-designed, not just graphically but also in terms of its structure. I hope it is now more user-friendly, with additional links for navigating the site and an internal search engine. We now have the facilities to start to provide our members with extra services. We have already begun a Working Paper series (see below); also in preparation are an online Encyclopaedia of Ecological Economics, and a Foundational Paper series (both searchable by author and topic). Both these new features are scheduled for launch in the next few months.

We are also looking at various other improvements, the timing of which will depend mainly on technical constraints. One development is to construct an electronic discussion list which members can subscribe to via the web-site. Subscribers would then be able to notify members of publications or conferences that may be of interest to other members as well as engaging in more academic debates. Our original thought was to have this in a chat-room format, but given the current activity level within the site, it is unlikely at present that there would be enough people online at any given moment to make it viable.

We are also planning to put our membership database online, so members can find out about each other and, we hope, extend research networks. In due course, this



database will form the basis for online membership subscription, and eventually for the online elections of the President and Board members.

I mentioned earlier that a recent development within the site has been the addition of the Working Paper series. On a technical point, I have been asked why papers are published in Word and Acrobat. The simple reason is that you can open PDF files without having to have the Microsoft software – the Acrobat reader program is freely available on the web so having both formats increases accessibility to the resources. I hope that those who have placed a paper in this series have received some useful feedback from members. We would encourage all members, particularly with the Tunisia conference fast approaching, to make use of this facility. As the number of papers grows, it will be possible for us to archive both the Working Papers and those presented at conferences.

Finally, at present the entire site is open to anybody with access to the web. As the website becomes more and more central to the workings of ISEE, it is likely that much of the site will become accessible to members only, using passwords. This would also allow those subscribing to the journal to have electronic access through the ISEE website.

As ever, we are looking to improve the site and any suggestions are always appreciated. While some sections of the site now provide quite comprehensive resources and links, there are still sections that can be improved. While we will endeavour to find new material, it clearly helps when sites for linking are recommended to us. Many of the additional links have come from suggestions that members have sent in, so thanks must go to those people for their efforts.

In conclusion, the website is there to serve the ISEE members, so comments, criticisms (preferably constructive) and advice on how we can make it better, are eagerly sought. Please use the comments button on the site!

Forthcoming Meetings (see ISEE website for further details)

- **ISEE** will be holding its Seventh Biennial Meeting in Sousse, Tunisia, on 6-9th March 2002.
- **ANZSEE** will be having its Third Biennial Meeting in Sydney, Australia, on 1-3rd July 2002.
- **ESEE's** Frontiers 2 conference will be held in Tenerife, Spain, on 12-15th February 2003.

Full ISEE Election Results – 2001

President-Elect

Charles Perrings 203 – elected
Peter Soderbaum 129

Board of Directors

Paula Antunes 158 – elected
Beat Burgenmeier 120
Katrina Brown 186 – elected
Kanchan Chopra 191 – elected
Jon Erickson 101
Jonathan Harris 153 – elected
John Peet 113
Paul Safonov 129
Jan van der Straaten 118



Parting Words of now Past President Norgaard

The International Society for Ecological Economics has become a democratically run society. The number of regional societies has grown dramatically, especially in the south (Argentina-Uruguay, India, Korea, Peru, and Sri Lanka) but also in the north with the establishment of the U.S. SEE. The Society feels more international and more like a society, with the minor downside that it also feels like it is going in multiple directions as our differences are more democratically expressed. I am very pleased to have served as the President of ISEE during this critical transition.

At the same time, much needs to be done; the transition is awkwardly incomplete. During my own presidency, the Board participated very effectively in setting our new course. At the same time, I relied too much on the hope that members would volunteer and fill the void of having a professional staff working with me. Sylvie Faucheaux and Martin O'Connor stepped forward to run the 2002 biennial meeting. As this newsletter attests, John Proops has gone to great lengths to get to know the regional societies, experiencing our cultural varieties whenever possible. He has also taken the initiative of setting up a first-rate web site. Peter May and I have intersected several times in Washington, D.C. to review our finances with our accountants at the firm of Burk and Associates. Other board members have stepped forward at critical times, but I am concerned about how we can sustain the input. Twice I have led the process wherein the Presidents of the Regional Societies suggest candidates to run for ISEE positions. And twice I have underestimated the amount of time it would take to get and discuss the suggestions and then convince potential candidates to run for office. Democracy is hard work and we all have to do it, but more professional help would certainly have eased the burden.

I am very pleased to be passing the torch to John Proops. Indeed, because I am the last President to serve two consecutive terms (complicated by also becoming the father of twins and losing my own father), I started to pass tasks to John over the past year. He never said no ... except when I suggested that he might enjoy going to the meetings in Brazil on two weeks notice. John was steadfast in leading the search for a new editor for the journal. Having travelled around the world to regional society meetings, he now has an excellent feel for the diversity of the membership. He has hired a web master in support of one of his priorities who also assists him in other duties, so he has backed himself up a little better than I did. Lastly he has the depth and breadth of understanding, energy, dedication, and vision to make a superb President.

I would also like to welcome Charles Perrings as our new President-elect. It will make a significant difference to have three presidents working together at the top and I look forward to working with him.

Lastly, my thanks for all of the good work of the out-going board, my thanks to all who agreed to run for office, and my congratulations and condolences to our new board members.