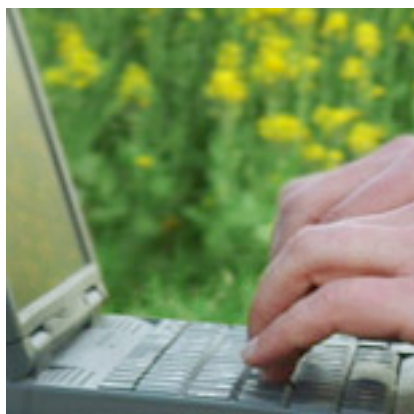


## Relu Newsletter



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### **1 Relu Newsletter lives on**

The Relu Programme formally ended on 31 March 2013 but the Relu newsletter and @Relutweets will continue to bring you news and updates on relevant research from across the research councils. We also plan some special issues, focusing on specific projects and programmes that may be of particular interest to stakeholders.

### **2 New policy and practice note series coming soon**

The Living With Environmental Change (LWEC) partnership is developing a new policy and practice note series that will enable research programmes to communicate findings for public, private and third sector audiences. The series will draw on the experience built up by the Relu Director's Office. Jeremy Phillipson and Anne Liddon will be looking to LWEC programmes, partners and task forces to identify topics and outputs that would be suitable for publication in the series. More information will be circulated soon but if you have any queries in the meantime contact Anne Liddon at [anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:anne.liddon@ncl.ac.uk)

### **3 Relu cited as example of good interdisciplinary practice**

In its first [Social Research Strategy](#) the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) cites the Relu programme as an example of good practice in interdisciplinary research. The strategy sets the focus and direction for the MMO's social evidence and research programme, and outlines the main areas of work. It also formalises the MMO's intention to engage in social research with partners and other experts in England and the UK.

### **4 Can natural and social sciences really engage?**

In a new article in Contemporary Social Science, Relu Director Philip Lowe and Assistant Director Jeremy Phillipson get to the heart of interdisciplinarity. In [Why social scientists should engage with natural scientists](#) they reflect on the experience of the Relu programme over the past nine years to address this fundamental question.

### **5 What lives inside a chicken?**

It might sound like a strange question to ask, but our most abundant food animal is an incubator of many bacteria - both helpful and harmful. The chicken's gut is a microbial world being explored using the latest DNA sequencing technology. Read the [whole story on the Global Food Security website](#).

## **6 Community involvement has an impact in Loweswater**

The latest news from Relu's Testing a Community Approach to Catchment Management project, is that following completion of the research, local people have carried on with the approach, forming their own Defra-funded 'Loweswater Care Programme' within the West Cumbria Rivers Trust. Loweswater Care Programme continues the strong collaborative ethic established in the former Relu project run by Lancaster University with the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. Researchers recently attended one of the new organisation's meetings, as guests, and were pleased to see Environment Agency data suggesting that Chlorophyll a (a key indicator of algal activity) is gradually diminishing in Loweswater.

## **7 Rural areas could help fuel UK economy**

Is the potential of the rural economy underestimated as an engine of economic growth? The final policy and practice note in the Relu series suggests that more tailored and focused support for rural entrepreneurs could pay dividends for the UK economy. "[Rural areas as engines of economic growth](#)" may be accessed on the Relu website, and the whole [Policy and Practice Note series](#) remains available on line.

## **8 Fun with Rufopoly at the Science Museum**

Around 40 people played the Rufopoly game at the Science Museum in London in March during an event to mark [Climate Week](#). [Rufopoly](#) is an interactive game that was developed by Relu's [Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe](#) project. It allows players to make their own journey through a hypothetical Rufshire, according to throws of the dice, and to examine the planning conflicts and dilemmas that arise along the way. The game has proved to be a popular and useful tool for students, stakeholders, planning professionals and councillors.

## **9 Putting ecosystems services into practice**

Ecosystem Knowledge Network is putting on two events: [Putting Nature's Services on the Map, Oxford, 29 April](#). This free workshop is for representatives of local government and their delivery partners who wish to explore what maps of nature's services can do to achieve cost-effective delivery of local government functions. [Applying Payments for Ecosystem Services in Practice, Bristol, 22 May](#). This workshop will enable participants to evaluate the prospects for initiating payments for ecosystem services in their own location and area of work, and how to respond to any opportunities.

To apply for places, please email Anita Sedgewick at [ekn@naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk](mailto:ekn@naturalcapitalinitiative.org.uk) (telephone 0333 240 6990).

### **10 Valuing Nature conference demonstrates how challenges are addressed**

The Valuing Nature Network unites novel natural science research with economics to bring the natural environment into government and business sector decision making. An event on 19 March 2013 highlighted successes from the Network, including insights into partnership working between academia, policy and business; and the benefits of working across academic disciplines. Members of the VNN management team showed how the current Valuing Nature Network projects have addressed the key research challenges that were set out at the start of the initiative. In addition, a number of other high-profile speakers from government organisations and academia illustrated the Network's relevance to both UK policy-making and the wider academic picture. Films from the event are available on the [VNN website](#).

### **11 Conference call for papers on European landscape change**

The International Association for Landscape Ecology 2013 conference, Changing European Landscapes: Landscape ecology, local to global, will take place in Manchester 9-12 September 2013. This major international event will examine how and why European landscapes are changing and how landscape ecology can help us to plan for the future at local to global scales. There is an open call for papers in all symposia at the congress. Abstract submissions for presentations or posters are welcome from people working in research, policy and practice. To submit a paper, visit the congress website at [www.iale2013.eu](http://www.iale2013.eu) to register your details or contact the congress organisers to discuss your ideas.

### **12 Home cooking or ready meal: what's better for the planet?**

Professor of Sustainable Chemical Engineering at the University of Manchester Adisa Azapagic unpacks the carbon footprint of her evening meal [in a blog for Global Food Security](#). She and her colleagues have developed the free tool [CCaLC](#) (carbon calculations over the life cycle of industrial activities) to help the food industry and consumers find out the carbon footprint of hundreds of different food items.

### **13 What is nature worth?**

Putting a price on natural assets is often controversial, but an ecosystems approach can provide the basis for integrating individual and collective values and feeding these into national and local decision-making. In February the Ecosystems Knowledge Network [held a webinar](#) in partnership with NERC's Valuing Nature Network (VNN), which provided an opportunity to air some of these issues. In the webinar recording, Ian Bateman, director of VNN, gives an overview of current thinking about valuing nature. RSPB economist Paul Morling then reflects on this from the perspective of the RSPB's work. The webinar ends with a discussion and series of questions from participants.

#### **14 Business partnership draws on environmental science**

A pioneering scheme is ensuring that environmental science has an impact on business. Claire Quinn from the University of Leeds, who worked on Relu's *Sustainable Uplands: Learning to Manage Future Change* Project is the new Living With Environmental Change (LWEC) researcher in residence and is working at Marks and Spencer for four days a week to see how a range of research funded by the Natural Environment Research Council can improve supply chain sustainability. As part of her LWEC-badged knowledge exchange fellowship, Claire will be looking at building stronger relationships between Marks and Spencer and the research community and exploring the best ways to translate science for a business audience.

#### **15 Relu academics bring knowledge exchange experience together**

Academics from across the Relu programme have pooled experience and expertise in an article published in Environmental Conservation. "[Knowledge Exchange a Review and Research Agenda for Environmental Management](#)" brings in expertise of those involved in research and practice of knowledge exchange from a range of disciplines.

#### **16 ESPA call for abstracts for annual science conference**

The Ecosystem Services for Poverty Alleviation's 2013 conference "Winners and Losers" will take place in London on 20 and 21 November. [The call for abstracts](#) is now open.

#### **17 Relu people:**

On 4 April a day of celebration and reflection at Newcastle University's Centre for Rural Economy's marked CRE's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday, and the achievements of its founder, Relu Director **Philip Lowe**. The day launched a year of seminars and associated activities.

**Alister Scott** who led Relu's *Managing Environmental Change at the Rural Urban Fringe* project has been named as Academic of the Year by Birmingham City University.

**Eileen Curry**, Relu's administrator throughout the nine years of the programme, retired at the end of March.

**Sari Kovats**, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social and Environmental Health Research at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has been appointed as the first LWEC Health Fellow.

**Mark Reed** who co-led Relu's *Sustainable Upland s Learning to Manager Future Changes* project and went on to lead the project *Sustainable Uplands: Transforming Knowledge for Upland Change* in now Professor of Interdisciplinary Environmental Research at Birmingham City University.