**ECOSYSTEMS AND SOCIETY WINTER SCHOOL**

**30 June – 4 July 2014**

NMMU’s Sustainability Research Unit and SAPECS would like to invite relevant Master’s and PhD students to an ‘Ecosystems and Society’ winter school that will be held at NMMU’s George Campus at Saasveld from 30 June to 4 July.

**Goals**

The goals of this Winter School are to develop the capacity of new scholars involved in, or planning to do, research on the link between ecosystems and society to plan, execute and interpret their research.

The focus is to strengthen the capacity of students starting out on their post-graduate journey at the interface of ecosystems and society in disciplines such as environmental science / studies, conservation ecology, botany, zoology, anthropology and geography. Established PhD students and academics will be part of the process, where conceptual frameworks, methods and tools will be discussed.

**Learning process**

The Winter School, which starts on the afternoon of 30 June and ends on the morning of 4 July, will commence with a morning field trip in and around Garden Route National Park where practitioners working at the interface of ecosystems and society will discuss their practical challenges.

The field trip will be followed by seven interactive capacity development sessions, characterized by interaction, reflection and dialogue between ‘new’ students, established academics and senior post-grads. Students will be required to bring along and iteratively refine their own research proposals and methodologies which will be presented and submitted for evaluation at the end of the meeting.

**Topics**

Sessions will include:

1. **Where to start.** Asking the right questions; clarifying research goals; coming to grips with the literature; forming a team.
2. **Conceptualizing your research.** Trans-disciplinary and social-ecological systems concepts and frameworks.
3. **Cementing collaborative relationships.** Who to work with and ask for inputs.
4. **Designing your project.** Adaptive design; coming to grips with multiple frameworks and knowledge systems.
5. **Collecting data.** Trans-disciplinary data collection techniques; social relationships; ethics; time management.
6. **Interpreting and analysing results.**
7. **Communicating and sharing information.**

Senior students will participate as session facilitators and tutors, and time will be allocated for them to further develop a paper on “*Challenges and opportunities facing students working on complex adaptive systems in Africa*”.

**Facilitators**

Learning facilitators are established academics at the forefront of their disciplines:

* Dr Reinet (Oonsie) Biggs (Stockholm Resilience Centre)
* Dr Georgina Cundill (Rhodes)
* Dr Luthando Dziba (CSIR)
* Prof Christo Fabricius (NMMU)
* Prof Heila Lotz-Sisitka (Rhodes)
* Dr Rika Preiser (Stellenbosch University)
* Dr Dirk Roux (SANParks and NMMU)
* Prof Sheona Shackleton (Rhodes)

A number of experienced PhD students have agreed to participate as tutors and co-facilitators.

**Cost:** R 3 500 per person including on-campus accommodation in student residences, field trip, refreshments and meals, excluding transport to the campus.

A limited number of places are available.

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| Please return to aneri.roos@nmmu.ac.za by 30 April 2014 |
| Name:  |  |
| Organization: |  |
| Degree registered for:  |  |
| Postal address:  |  |
| Telephone:  |  |
| Cell no:  |  |
| E-mail:  |  |
| Main areas of interest: |  |