Ecosystem use by indigenous people in an Oregon coastal landscape

Abstract

Data regarding probable uses of biological materials by the indigenous people of the Salmon River-Cascade Head area of the Oregon coast, USA, were used to estimate the people's use of various ecosystems near villages. Of 308 uses identified, 256 were attributable to a given species; 124 species were identified. All local ecosystems were important sources of organisms for the people, with no apparent concentration of highly used species in any particular ecosystem. One species was cultivated, one domesticated, and five acquired by trade. Four major plant resources, camas (Camassia quamash), yew (Taxus brevifolia), hazel (Corylus cornuta), and beargrass (Xerophyllum tenax), are not known from the Cascade Head landscape, but may have been available from elsewhere in village territory. House construction without use of cedar planks, as indicated by ethnographic records, may have resulted from the paucity of western redcedar (Thuja plicata) in the Salmon River lowlands. The scarcity of several widely used taxa near coastal village sites, especially western redcedar, may have limited the wealth of this indigenous population, even on the resource-rich Oregon coast.

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When used in this way, InVEST provides information about the comparative change in ecosystem services with different possible futures. It can thereby inform real choices and involve stakeholders in a powerful learning process. Assessing scenarios with InVEST can help to

• compare the delivery of ecosystem services under plausible alternative futures
• identify the potential ecosystem service tradeoffs of alternative interventions.