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Seminar  
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12-1 PM AEDT  
Online – All welcome!

<https://anu.zoom.us/j/81665106008?pwd=QVdTK240a1JUSEdZNnBOU3N1TkVBQT09>

## On leading a large interdisciplinary organization focused on environmental sustainability

**Professor Margaret Palmer**

**Director, National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center (SESYNC), USA**

Most of us do research because we enjoy it and because it's challenging and creative. But many of us also do it because we care about the environment. We want to solve environmental problems. But what happens when we accept the premise that all environmental problems are social problems? Must we step away from our core domain research? My answer to that is no. Domain-specific research is necessary but not sufficient. So called convergence research – variously called translational, actionable, or societally-relevant – is essential. And this can be of a fundamental research nature i.e., it is not limited to place-based or point-in-time solution-driven research. In this talk, I reflect on my own experiences as Director of SESYNC – the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center. I describe why a certain level of knowledge from different disciplines is required to move sustainability research forward. Why certain interdisciplinary collaborations fail, and others succeed. And why certain approaches to problem formulation lead to novel collaborations and high impact research.



MARGARET A. PALMER is the Director of the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center, an NSF- center dedicated to creating actionable science related for the sustainability of socio-environmental systems. As a Distinguished University Professor at the University of Maryland, she oversees research focused on watershed science and restoration ecology. Palmer is also known for her work at the interface of water science and policy, having served as a technical advisor and innovator to help build solution-focused teams that solve problems with social, legal, policy and scientific aspects. Extensively published, she has served on many editorial boards including *Limnology & Oceanography*, *Science*,

Environmental Research Letters, and Restoration Ecology and has been honored as a AAAS Fellow, Ecological Society of America Fellow, Aldo Leopold Leadership Fellow, Lilly Fellow, Ruth Patrick Awardee (ASLO), Sustainability Science Awardee (Ecological Society of America), Research Excellence Awardee (Society for Freshwater Science), Helmholtz International Fellow, and British Ecological Society Honorary Member. Beyond her vigorous research program, Palmer remains actively engaged in science matters associated with water policies and actions, particularly associated with the U.S. Appalachians.

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