



Seminar Series: Spring 2022

DATA RESCUE: SAVING ENVIRONMENTAL DATA FROM EXTINCTION

SPEAKER: Ellen Bledsoe, UA SNRE

DATE: Wednesday, February 23

TIME: 3:00-4:00 pm

LOCATION: ENR2 S107 & [Zoom](#)

ABSTRACT:

Historical and long-term environmental datasets are imperative to understanding how natural systems respond to our changing world. Although immensely valuable, these data are at risk of being lost unless actively curated and archived on data repositories. The practice of data rescue, which we define as identifying, preserving, and sharing valuable data and associated metadata at risk of loss, is an important means of ensuring the long-term viability and accessibility of such datasets. Improvements in policies and best practices around data management will hopefully limit future need for data rescue; these changes, however, do not apply retroactively. While rescuing data is not new, the term lacks formal definition, is often conflated with other terms (i.e., data reuse), and lacks general recommendations. My colleagues and I have outlined seven key guidelines for effective rescue of historically-collected and unmanaged datasets. We discuss prioritization of datasets to rescue, forming effective data rescue teams, preparing the data and related metadata, and archiving and sharing the rescued data. In an era of rapid environmental change, the best policy solutions will require evidence from both contemporary and historical sources. It is, therefore, imperative that we identify and preserve valuable, at-risk environmental data before they are lost to science.

