

Department of Environmental Science and Policy Seminar Series

“I don’t fish for sport, I fish for support”: Urban fishing and community wellbeing

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DATE: Friday, 09/23/2022 TIME: 10:30 am ROOM: SLAB103

Zoom: <https://miami.zoom.us/j/91344769359>



Abstract: In this talk, I discuss how the social-ecological elements and relationships of urban fishing—piers, bridges, fish, social interactions—constitute spaces that offer the possibility of affecting community wellbeing. In particular, I apply theories of commoning and infrastructures of care from the human geography literature to questions of how urban fishing spaces might affect the social and material dimensions of wellbeing. I examine these questions via a case study of urban fishing in Tampa Bay, Florida. Employing survey, interview, and field research, I analyze the role of urban fishing infrastructures in supporting or discouraging processes of commoning. I discuss evidence that commoning can increase community wellbeing in concrete ways (e.g., by contributing to collective food security, knowledge-sharing, exposure to economic and racial diversity, and shared experiences), but that these processes and infrastructures are simultaneously precarious and subject to social strife, changes in legality, and ecological contamination which can decrease wellbeing. I suggest that adopting a commoning lens is useful for better parsing how the elements of and challenges to wellbeing are intertwined, and where possibilities might exist for addressing these challenges. In doing so, I aim to contribute to theoretical discussions about the characteristics of commoning, links between commoning and more-than-human wellbeing and shifting understandings of urban space.

Bio: Noëlle Boucquey is Associate Professor of Environmental Studies at Eckerd College. Broadly, her research focuses on how relationships between human and environmental actors form in particular spaces, and with what effects on larger social-ecological systems. She asks questions about how access to and power over natural resources is negotiated, how technologies mediate our environmental knowledge and governance practices, and how particular assemblages of more-than-human actors perform in ways that affect their social-ecological wellbeing. She employs case studies in coastal and marine resource use and the governance of ocean spaces to think through these conceptual themes.