Environmental problems are often complex and it is widely recognised that they cannot be satisfactorily addressed by single disciplines. A review of forest cover change studies points to the need to carry out research integrating economic, political, social and environmental aspects. Existing interdisciplinary study areas, namely ecological economics, political ecology, sustainability science, and Earth system governance do not yet fully integrate all the required aspects. The argument presented in this seminar is that the establishment of greater synergies between those study areas would be beneficial in developing the broader study area of environmental governance. A definition of environmental governance as a subject of study is developed. The lack of an all encompassing theory of environmental governance is highlighted while the improbability of such a theory is acknowledged. In relation to normative work, the refinement of principles of good environmental governance could support the design and prioritisation of policies. Empirical research needs to include the testing of hypotheses arising from theoretical developments, assessment of policy uptake and new exploratory research. Methodologically, environmental governance might start from an interdisciplinary approach followed by further integration leading to a transdisciplinary study area which uses a mixed methods research approach.

Luca Tacconi is Associate Professor in environmental governance and Director of the Environmental Management and Development Program at the Crawford School of Economics and Government. His research focuses on the economic, political, and social factors that drive environmental change – resulting in loss of biodiversity and climate change – and their implications for rural livelihoods and poverty. He is conducting research on environmental governance, social and economic aspects of deforestation and climate change, payments for environmental services, and research methods for environmental management. He has worked on research and development activities funded by the Australian Research Council, the Australian Center for International Agricultural Research, the Australian Agency for International Development, the Department for International Development (UK), the European Commission, The World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme, the United States Agency for International Development, the Government of Japan, the South Pacific Regional Environmental Program. He has also collaborated with government and non-government organizations such as the Ministry of Forestry of Indonesia, the Ministry of Forestry of Vanuatu, The Nature Conservancy, Transparency International, and the World Wide Fund for Nature. Prior to his appointment to the ANU, he was senior scientist at the Center for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) in Indonesia.

Luca Tacconi

Tuesday 10 May
12.30pm - 1.30pm
Acton Theatre, Level 1, J.G. Crawford Building
Light lunch will be provided

Inquiries contact Christina Apps Ph: 6125 0187, christina.apps@anu.edu.au