



School of Natural Resources
and the Environment

Seminar Series: Spring 2018

THE BRAVE NEW WORLD OF ECOLOGICAL
RESTORATION: HUBRIS, HUMILITY AND THE
CHANGING FACE OF NATURE?

SPEAKER: Katharine Suding, *University of Colorado
Boulder*

DATE: Wednesday, April 11th, 2018

TIME: 3:00-4:00 pm

LOCATION: ENR2, S107



ABSTRACT: It is difficult to imagine a challenge that merits greater human attention than ecological restoration. There is a growing realization that we will not be able to conserve the earth's biological diversity through the protection of pristine areas alone, yet most of the world's ecosystems have undergone significant degradation with negative impacts on biological diversity and peoples' livelihoods. My talk will be anchored by three unassailable observations. First, as the inextricable link between our well-being and the well-being of ecosystems becomes more and more clear, restoration investment is increasing rapidly worldwide with ambitious global initiatives. Second, the relatively new field of restoration ecology is buffeted tremendously by rapid environmental, ecological, and cultural change. Third, despite an exponential increase in research focused on restoration over the last two decades, restoration science still lacks a robust framework for dealing with hallmarks of ecosystems worldwide – variability and change. I will present examples of new research frameworks that may help us navigate this terrain, emphasizing the need to reconcile the traditional view of restoration with one that speaks to a natural world of spatiotemporal variability, inescapable trade-offs and tipping points, and the realities of shifting environmental and human baselines.