

Former Agricultural Economics Faculty

STEPHEN B. LOVEJOY (1949-)

Dr. Lovejoy was perhaps best known as one who challenged his students, general audiences and colleagues to think critically by examining the assumptions and all the consequences (positive and negative) of policies and decisions. He was often cited as the Myth Buster, especially environmental myths where the science did not support the general public perception. His background in public policy and his academic training in economics and sociology provided him with a unique ability to focus upon assisting individuals and organizations to make better decisions, with fewer unanticipated consequences and based upon sound science.



Dr. Lovejoy's research program was quite broad but consistently focused upon policies and decision-making by communities, stakeholders and households. These projects included community responses to development, firm-level adoption of conservation, watershed planning, environmental policy and analysis of environmental systems. Most research projects involved scientists from a variety of disciplines and were primarily funded with extramural grants. During a leave of absence in 1987-88, he assisted the U.S. EPA in Washington DC in examining the interface between agriculture and the environment and served as a continuing consultant for EPA during the work on the 1990 Farm Bill. From 1988 to 1993, he coordinated Purdue's Center for Alternative Agricultural Systems focusing upon new production systems with productivity and environmental objectives. These research activities resulted in over 200 publications including 50 refereed journal articles, 20 book chapters/proceedings and two edited books. His research and educational programs have received awards for their excellence from a number of organizations, including the Soil and Water Conservation Society, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the American Association of Agricultural Economics. In 1990, Dr. Lovejoy was a member of the inaugural class of the national ESCOP Leadership Development Program.

His graduate and undergraduate courses stressed the development of a systematic method of making environmental decisions, both individual behavioral patterns as well as policy related to ecological integrity. His courses spawned simple, easy to utilize decision assisting software (DecisionMaker and DecisionWiz ©) to guide students in combining science and their values for better environmental decisions by assisting users with defining, conceptualizing, and gathering data in a systematic manner. He served as Associate Director of Purdue's interdisciplinary Natural Resources and Environmental Science program where he advised students and assisted in development of and administration of the program. In graduate

education, he supervised nearly 40 graduate students as major professor or committee member in 3 separate colleges and 9 departments.

Extension education has been a major focus of Dr. Lovejoy's program at Purdue. Emphasis has been on helping citizens understand the implications of alternative policies and the trade-offs accompanying those alternatives. Topics ranged from tax policy to agricultural policy to environmental policy. An additional emphasis was on environmental education for high school students focusing upon better decisions requiring good information about environmental consequences and relevant trade-offs but also required assistance with a framework for utilizing and integrating the information available, much like the software he and his students developed. He was co-developer of a software game for children entitled "What's Your E-IQ". He developed a quick and easy method for conducting needs assessment surveys utilizing spreadsheets that were emailed to staff. The survey was orientated to the water quality educational needs in Indiana . Those results were then used to refine the needs assessment survey that was administered to several thousand Hoosiers at the Indiana State Fair and to several hundred participants in a large multi-state trade show. He coordinated the outreach activities during the first year of the Center for the Environment in Discovery Park at Purdue in their efforts to be a leader in the development of "green technology."

Dr. Lovejoy used the media extensively to multiply his impacts and was interviewed more than 150 times by state and national television and print journalists. In addition, he was active in extension staff development activities and in assisting the Agricultural and Natural Resources staff with developing vision and mission statements. He also assisted the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts in designing a system to help local SWCD's become more effective. This entailed development of a metrics system and a software framework to assist analyzing a series of personal interviews.

In addition to his academic experience, Dr. Lovejoy had the opportunity to demonstrate his leadership abilities in the Lafayette community as well as in the State of Indiana . In 1989, he was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Board of Directors of the Indiana Institute on Recycling, which was created by Indiana 's General Assembly. He served 12 years on the Board of Directors of PEFCU as Chairman and Treasurer of the Board and helped them grow from a small vanilla credit union to the largest locally owned financial institution in Tippecanoe County . In addition, he assisted credit unions in over twenty states with their strategic planning and educational activities and served on the Boards of several local service organizations.