

Community-Soil-Air-Water: Building a learning ecosystem with community partners to advance environmental justice in Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Thursday, July 18, 2024 9:00 AM (20 minutes)

The Community-Soil-Air-Water (CSAW) partnership is co-led by the Georgia State University Department of Geosciences and two community-based environmental advocacy organization that focus on environmental justice—ECO-Action and the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA) in Atlanta, Georgia, USA. In collaboration with other community-based organizations and higher education institutions in metro Atlanta, the partnership has grown and evolved over the past 10 years, with a focus on identifying and answering critical community-driven questions around soil, air, and water. CSAW partnerships are rooted in shared values and co-developed practices for equity, transparency, and accountability. Its current iteration involves establishing a learning ecosystem of staff researchers, graduate students, faculty and community residents to identify socio-environmental questions and develop an asset-based model of collaboration with community-driven research. This integration of graduate education into inter-disciplinary science with geographers, soils scientists, public health experts, and hydrologists to address pressing questions is rooted in answering the question: How can scholars learn from, contribute to, and find solutions with communities facing fundamental problems related to Earth systems? Following a year of CSAW activities, we present our conceptual framework, as funded by the National Science Foundation-Cultural Transformations of Geoscience Community implementation grant, and best practices for building effective, accountable collaborations with community partners.

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