



Approaching Geoethics through Community Science

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Community science is a collaborative process in which scientists and community leaders work together to advance community priorities using science. It advances public participation and support in science, helps communities address pressing challenges, and contributes new questions, ideas, and perspectives to science. It also provides real world context for surfacing and grappling with ethical issues related to science.

AGU has been promoting community science through a four-year effort, Thriving Earth Exchange, which has launched and guided almost 100 community science projects related to Earth and space science in communities throughout the US and around the world. Examples of projects include working with a city that wanted to emit only its “fair share” of green-house gasses, working with local communities impacted by hydraulic fracturing, working with communities of color dealing with legacies of industrial pollution, and working with indigenous communities grappling with climate change. These examples illustrate the range of geoethical issues that can be surfaced and explored through community science.

Our presentation will introduce the Thriving Earth Exchange and share experiences from specific projects to illustrate ethical dilemmas raised through community science. We will show how tackling these dilemmas can contribute to developing more general geoethical principles, including the Thriving Earth Exchange Statement on Integrity in Community Science.

Drawing from this experience, we will suggest that one of the best ways to develop a robust, relevant, and equitable geoethics framework is to approach it as a participatory process and invite people from outside of geosciences to play a role in constructing that framework. In other words, we suggest including a community science approach as part of efforts to explore geoethics. Our presentation will conclude by offering suggestions for how to enact this community science approach.