

March 5, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

I write with respect to the Health and Ecosystems: Analysis of Linkages (HEAL) Initiative.

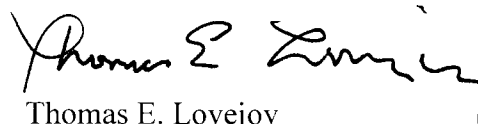
While I am largely known for my work in biodiversity and ecosystems what is less well known is that I studied a fair amount of epidemiology when I was doing my PhD. In fact there was a whole epidemiological side to my Amazon bird ecology thesis, namely with arthropod borne viruses (arboviruses). I was based in the Amazon at one of the arbovirus laboratories the Rockefeller Foundation established around the world, the Belem Virus Laboratory. I shared an office with Jorge Boshell who cracked the riddle of jungle yellow fever by observing *Haemagogus* mosquitoes swarming around woodsmen who had just felled a tree.

The story of jungle yellow fever is a great example and metaphor for ways in which environmental disturbance can lead to health consequences. Now that much of that kind of epidemiological work is no longer prominent, it is indeed time to return *systematically* to the links between environmental disturbance/degradation and health. This is precisely what HEAL proposes to undertake.

It is exciting to see how HEAL has developed since an exploratory workshop I participated in at the Wildlife Conservation Society about two years ago. This is a carefully developed plan and proposal to – most appropriately – move this field from the realm of the individual example to an intellectually robust framework for research on the links between human health and ecosystem health. It is very promising indeed.

I strongly commend this effort.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas E. Lovejoy
University Professor
Environmental Science & Policy