



# DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY

INDIANA UNIVERSITY  
College of Arts and Sciences  
Bloomington

## SPRING 2019 - COLLOQUIUM SERIES

**Dr. Ryan Holifield**  
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### **Stakeholder participation in Great Lakes Areas of Concern: Where to draw the lines?**

*\*Collaborative research with Kathleen C. Williams  
US Environmental Protection Agency*

**Abstract:** The Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC) program, part of the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between the US and Canada, designated 43 “severely degraded geographic areas” and targeted them for long-term remediation and restoration. Since the program began in 1987, it has emphasized stakeholder participation in remedial action planning as a central component. Although our research examines the AOC program as an important case study for participation in environmental decision-making in general, it also considers dimensions that are distinctive either to surface water governance or to the governance of the unique Great Lakes Basin. This lecture presents findings from a survey and a series of interviews with practitioners responsible for coordinating participation in the remedial action planning process at AOCs. First, our findings suggest the need for more attention to challenges that are often overlooked in conceptual models of participation, including recruiting active stakeholders and sustaining their participation over time. Second, they carry implications for debates in geography about the watershed as a scale of surface water governance, often regarded as more natural and appropriate than other scales. Our findings revealed tensions between the watershed and another “natural” way of delineating AOCs—the banks of waterways themselves—which in turn reflect competing priorities and expectations of stakeholders and government agencies.

**Friday, February 15, 2019**

**3:35 p.m. in Student Building 005**

(Refreshments provided at **3:15 p.m. in Student Bldg. 018**)

**Questions:** Dr. Taehee Hwang, (812) 856-2846