Watersheds and the geospatial distribution of adverse health outcomes

Alan Kolok, Ph.D.

Director of Idaho Water Resources Research Institute
Professor – University of Idaho

The geospatial distribution of adverse human health outcomes is generating considerable attention nationally. While these studies may be valuable in identifying hot spots of carcinogenicity nation-wide, the approach discriminates geographic boundaries using state boundaries, an orientation that does not take the environmental transport of potentially carcinogenic chemicals into regard whatsoever. For environmental epidemiology to become more explanatory, it may be valuable to geolocate adverse health outcomes in a manner that is environmentally relevant. Our recent work suggests that watershed boundaries may be useful in that capacity. In addition, our work also suggests that a focus on childhood disease, most notably pediatric cancers and birth defects, may be particularly valuable, as these diseases have the shortest latency periods between environmental exposure and onset. Examples from two states, Nebraska and Idaho will be presented to illustrate the over-arching approach.

Monday, January 27, 2020
3:00 p.m.
Marley 230

Light refreshments will be served at 2:45 in the courtyard