



Figure 1. Ecological systems are highly dynamic entities. Thus, all attributes of natural systems including levels of ecosystem processes (dark grey spheres) as will vary over time and space within a natural window of variability (dashed oval line). Only when the system attribute moves outside that natural window of variability (mottled grey spheres) should restoration be attempted. Once 'restored', the system is unlikely to be exactly where it was pre-disturbance. Although this figure is drawn in three dimensions, the true assessment of both reference and degraded conditions is likely to be multivariate. Illustration motivated by Walker and Boyer (1993).

