

# EMPATHIZE WITH

Ecology recognizes the complex and necessary relationships of all species, including humans. Our continued existence requires a harmony that values all organisms equally. This creates a dissonance with current western cultural ideals that value the individual above all else. Design can combat this by making our place in ecology clear while also leveraging tools like the use of social connections to bring about positive behavior change towards ecology.

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# W I

# THEORY ECOLOGY

## Opportunities

Create representations that make complex and invisible ecological systems less abstract and more comprehensible.

Use both personal data as well as collective data in order to prompt reflection on one's actions in the context of broader group impact.

Design tools that leverage ritual, nostalgia, and other social connections to drive positive behavior change.

## Insights

Ecology relies on the equal value of all resources regardless of their economic value.

For ecology to take a priority in people's lives, there is a need to experience ecology in ways that result in positive emotion to help nudge behavior changes.

Cognitive dissonance is one of the main factors that is preventing people from taking action to protect ecology.

Social convention plays the greatest role in how we treat our surroundings, this requires a social aspect in any possible solution.

Communicating science needs storytelling. Design is a form of storytelling. But...Design has the ability to dis-inform as much as it has the ability to inform.

## Context

Deep Ecology is a philosophy that promotes the equal value of all resources regardless of their contribution to human society, as well as the radical reconstructing of society in light of these ideas<sup>1</sup>

Cognitive Dissonance is the tension created when our beliefs are contradicted by new information (see Aesop's fable *The Fox and the Grapes*)

Tragedy of the Commons is a social science term that an individual has the tendency to act in the desire of self-interest even when it is contrary to the common good of all users, which leads to strained resources<sup>2</sup>

Situated knowledge "is information that reflects a context and originates with a viewpoint"<sup>3</sup>

Slow Design is "a design philosophy that focuses on promoting well-being for individuals, society, and the natural environment. It encourages people to do things at the right time and at the right speed which helps them to understand and reflect on their actions"<sup>4</sup>