



SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL FIRST VS. SOCIO-ECONOMIC FIRST

What are these perspectives and how are they different?

Both approaches intend to enhance the health and well-being of ourselves, our communities, our ecosystems, and our economies, but they go about it in different ways - based on different priorities.

Socio-Ecological First

Core Belief: We are intimately connected to and a part of our ecosystem (i.e. socio-ecosystem).

Emphasis on:

- Balancing & Enhancing Human-Ecosystem Interactions and Ecosystem Dynamics
- Resilient Abundant Economies rest on this Resilient Socio-Ecological foundation

Resilient Abundance here means:

- Healthy human communities
- Diverse and abundant economic opportunities
- Diverse and frequent ways people interact with the ecosystem
- Diverse and plentiful reproducing animal and plant populations; plentiful high quality air and water; thriving mycorrhizal networks; etc.

Socio-Economic First

Core Belief: Humans are separate from the natural world. Natural resources are here for us to use.

Emphasis on:

- Economic/Financial Growth as the root of prosperity, happiness, & health.

Resilient Abundance here means:

- Healthy human communities
- Diverse and abundant economic opportunities
- Higher profit margins
- Increased GDP
- More jobs

Photo Credit Frank K. Lake, Colleen Rossier, and John R. Perry (Pixabay)





Socio-Ecological First

What does this look like?

- **Socio-ecological-economic integration:** Many work in natural resources-related fields because of the complexity of ecosystem management.
 - e.g. ecosystem stewardship (thinning, burning, herd management)
- Frequent, regular monitoring of (and interaction with) ecosystem and species
- Alignment of ecological and economic benefits
- **Indigenous Stewardship ethic:** Resources (e.g. fruits, nuts, meat, fish, fuel, fibers) are not harvested for trade unless:
 - 1) Their habitat has been managed such that they are thriving & reproducing.
 - 2) The local animal and human populations have had their share.

Socio-Economic First

What does this look like?

- Many work in entirely socio-economic fields (i.e. finance, business, accounting, law, policy, IT, etc.), and live with minimal interaction with the outdoors.
- Disconnection between economic and ecological benefits sets up perverse incentives which lead to...
- Natural resources used in an exploitative manner (e.g. overharvesting).

Photo Credit: Stormy Staats (Klamath-Salmon Media Collaborative), Erdenebayer Bayasan, David Mark and Pierre Di Mauro (Pixabay)





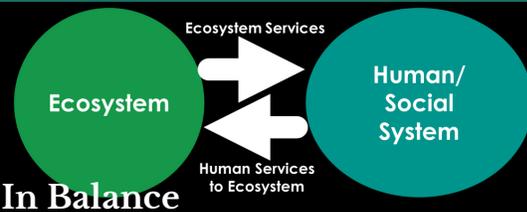
Socio-Ecological First What does this lead to?

- **Interconnection** between social, ecological, and economic factors results in:
 - Strong feedback loops between humans and the ecosystems upon which they depend and are a part
 - This results in:
 - **Quicker identification of ecological problems** (e.g. species in decline, pest/disease outbreaks, negative impacts of management actions)
 - More complete ecosystem understanding and thus, more **appropriate systemic solutions**
 - Increasing and increasing interconnection that leads to resilient abundance

Socio-Economic First What does this lead to?

- **Separation** between socio-economic gain and ecological impacts leads to negative externalities such as:
 - pollution,
 - erosion,
 - species extinctions,
 - increased risk of pest/disease/high severity fire
 - boom and bust cycles (due to disconnection between ecosystem and human system: supply & demand)
- These are often addressed with technological fixes rather than systemic solutions, and thus, do not result in long-lasting resilience ("whack-a-mole effect").

Photo Credit: Colleen Rossier and Pexels (Pixabay)



Karuk Cultural Teaching:
 "Before harvesting anything,
 manage habitat for it to survive,
 thrive, and reproduce."

