



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?

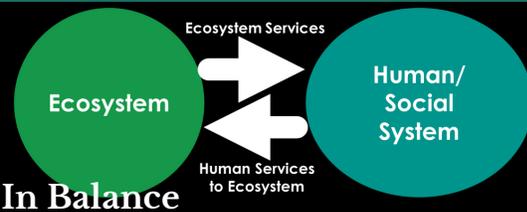
- **Interconnection** between social, ecological, and economic factors results in:
 - Strong feedback loops between humans and the ecosystems upon which they depend and are a part
 - This results in:
 - **Quicker identification of ecological problems** (e.g. species in decline, pest/disease outbreaks, 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

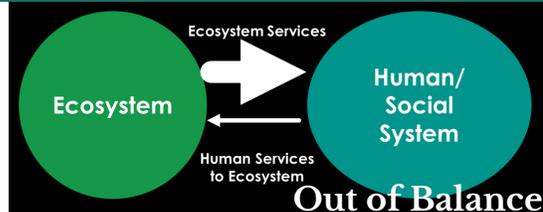
What does this lead to?

- **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."



This project was made possible through support provided by the United States Forest Service and The Nature Conservancy to WRTC, under the terms of Cooperative Agreement #WRTC_FAC_NET_2018. The content and opinions expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the position or the policy of the USFS, DOI, The Nature Conservancy, or the WRTC and no official endorsements should be inferred.