

ecological economics

the Shore Line documentary project

LEARNING OBJECTIVE: To understand how conventional economics undervalues the environment and to explore strategies to reconfigure our economies to care for our planet.

VIDEOS:



A Fragmented Shoreline (Canada)

Deborah Carlson, an environmental lawyer, describes the urgent need for coordinated governance of the Vancouver shoreline.



Gibsons: On a Search for Sustainability

(USA) Residents of Gibsons are challenging each other to re-imagine a more sustainable future. The city has become a “Living Lab.”



Beyond the Built (USA)

Artist Michael Singer with Planner Jason Bregman are re-designing water front infrastructure to co-exist with coastal ecosystems.



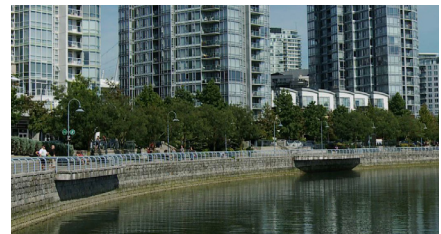
Rethinking Beach Replenishment (USA)

Surfer and activist John Weber helps communities to understand the limits of beach replenishment along the Jersey Shore.



Dreaming of Trees (India)

After a devastating cyclone, Sefali a youth organizer in the Sunderbans, initiates a massive tree planting campaign to protect her community.



Resilient Cities (Canada)

Deborah Harford, a communications and policy expert, tackles the challenge of making Vancouver more resilient.

GUIDING QUESTIONS:

Economics plays a significant role in shaping our behaviour, social norms, and political agendas.

- Gibsons: On a Search for Sustainability discusses re-envisioning our future. How might we change economic instruments (e.g. taxes, subsidies) to care for our planet?
- Although the environment and the economy are often presented as opposing forces (i.e. conserving the environment hurts business or promoting business implies damaging the environment), the environment is foundational to our economy. Describe 3 ways in which the environment is essential to a strong economy.
- Rethinking beach replenishment discusses the value of long-term thinking. How would economics change if it favoured long term thinking over short-term thinking?
- A number of videos address the ability of coastal habitat to support climate adaptation. What social, economic, and political tools can we draw on to promote conservation of coastal ecosystems?
- Over the course of 1 week, track the amount of garbage you produce. What, if anything, did it cost you to dispose of it? Where did it end up? What ecological impacts can it have? What economic policies can we introduce to reduce waste?

theshorelineproject.org

Workshop by Michele Molnar, economist at [David Suzuki Foundation](http://DavidSuzukiFoundation.org) and VP for Programs at the Canadian Society for Ecological Economics. Molnar teaches Introduction to Ecological Economics with Sustainable Business Leadership Program, BCIT.

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ACTIVITIES:

- During the modern era of human development, growth of towns and cities displayed a separation between nature and human activities. This was not the case in pre-modern times, when human settlements either integrated or co-existed peacefully with the nature. Sketch out a neighbourhood design that integrates green infrastructure and natural ecosystems into a city. Explain the benefits of each form of infrastructure in your design.
- The inventor of the game Monopoly (Elizabeth Magie) developed it with two very different sets of rules to be played in turn. Under the 'prosperity' set of rules, every player gained each time someone acquired a new property (representing a land value tax), and the game was won (by all) when the player who had started out with the least money had doubled it. Under the second, 'Monopolist' set of rules, players gained by charging rent to those unfortunate enough to land on their properties. Under this set of rules, whoever managed to bankrupt the rest was the sole winner. Can you come up with a third set of rules to support and recognize natural systems? Test these rules by playing a round with your classmates.

RESOURCES:

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Note: There is a useful website to introduce students to the key topics of this book with videos and podcasts: <https://www.kateraworth.com/doughnut/>.

Keywords: economics, ecological economics, climate adaptation, coastal habitat, green infrastructure, natural infrastructure.

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