

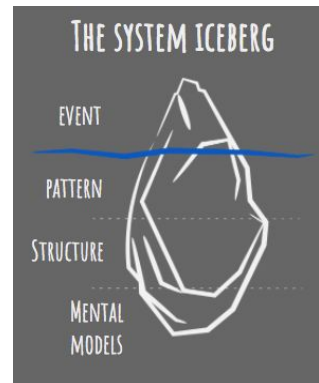
Changing our economic system to create balance: The System Iceberg

Context

The health of planet Earth is under threat. Scientists and Indigenous Peoples around the globe agree that if we continue on as we are that certain thresholds will be crossed. There are no simple solutions. We must look at the problem as a system, and change our mental models (the way we think about the world) and the structures that enable our economic system. We use the System Iceberg here to show how Ecosystem Management & Stewardship (EMS) can change our mental models and structures to achieve balance.

Key Elements

- A. Environmental degradation is an event, supported by our patterns, structures and mental models. Degradation is the result of our system.
- B. Let's take our forests and oceans as an example. We have depleted our forests and oceans because we are consuming more. Our mental model is that 'we need to consume more' and businesses tell us we need to 'consume more'. We need to make more money so that we can consume more.



Our economic structures are set up to take more and more from our forests and oceans, which provides more goods to consumers and more returns to business. The big problem is that we ignore the other ecological services provided to humans (and animals) from forests and oceans, like clean air and water, and food for future generations. Ignoring these services has brought us to this ecological crisis.

- C. EMS offers a structure to direct resources for people to rebuild ecosystem health. EMS changes our mental models by fostering an ethic of needing to replenish ecosystems and find balance. EMS can produce more constructive patterns and reverse the degradation of our planet.