

Ecological Design Principles

1. Work with nature, not against it.
 - a. Nature has developed elegant and complex systems that we can use as a model.
 - b. Look for patterns
2. Use what's available on site before bringing in outside resources.
 - a. The more local the better. This saves time, energy and material.
3. Observe your site and get to know all the elements and functions.
 - a. What is already growing on site? (trees, plants, bushes, etc.)
 - b. What man-made objects are on the site? (buildings, fences, power lines, sprinklers, etc.)
 - c. What animals use this site? (Besides people, what other animals use this site?)
 - d. When do different animals use this site? (what time of day do they appear?)
 - i. Ex: People and birds during the day. Raccoons, bats, owls, coyotes, rats, during the evening and night).
 - e. From what direction in the sky does the sun shine? Where is the sun? Follow the arc with your arm. This is the source of sun.
 - f. Where is the shade now? How does the shade move throughout the day? What areas get the most shade?
 - g. From what direction does the wind blow most of the time? (Hint, look towards the ocean.) From what direction does the wind blow some of the time? (Hint, it's the opposite direction?) What time of year do these winds usually occur?
 - h. Where does water flow when it rains? Is there a slope? Are there areas where water collects? Where does the water go? (Look for high spots and low spots in the landscape).
 - i. What areas get the most foot traffic? What areas do people spend the most amount of time? What areas do people spend the least amount of time?
 - j. Are there sources of artificial light or sound?
 - k. Dig up some soil and describe what it's like. Is it sandy? Rocky? Spongy? Crumbly? Dry? Wet? Is there life in the soil (bugs, mushrooms, etc.). What color is the soil?
4. After you spend a good amount of time observing the site and gathering all the information above, you can begin sketching out your map. Draw your map from a birds eye view. Map out all of the information you recorded above.