Ecological Civilization Website

Working Framework

Conceptual Underpinnings

- Open, accessible knowledge commons for diverse peoples to learn about ecological civilization as concept and practice
- To forefront China's ecological civilization, its manifold expressions of traditional wisdom and creative developments, and invite others to actively join the conversation
- Inspire others to rethink our relations with the earth and each other
- Complement the legacies of Teilhard and Berry and expand on the ongoing work of the Forum
- Affirm the life-giving nature of cosmic abundance and seek its promise
- Revisits our understandings of civilization through ecological civilization (eco civ)
- Frame our interactions with the Earth community not as dominance, but as interdependence
- Speak to audiences in China and the U.S. and build a bridge between the two
- Contribute to an intergenerational dialogue to foster meaningful conversation on ecological civilization across demographics

Website Design

- Three nested levels facilitating three "levels" of engagement
- Modular and easy-to-maintain
- The first/primary level
  - an engaging interface that draws viewers into the possibility of an ecological civilization
- Two phases for the build-out
  - First phase:
    - completed by next Spring
    - focusing on migrating content from Forum website
    - adding limited secondary levels to engage a wider audience

  o Second phase:

    ▪ maintain content

    ▪ expand to other thematic elements

    ▪ add tertiary levels

Homepage

- Homepage Style: vertical scroll based on Song period (960-1279 CE) paintings "A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains" and "Along the River During the Qingming Festival", but will add modern elements to the design (e.g., solar panels, EVs, wind turbines, etc.)
- Generative AI will be used to make the homepage
- Homepage design meant to convey a lucid vision of ecological civilization that is "explorable"
- Features on the image will be hyperlinked to secondary level of the website
  - o As users click on or hover over certain features, a mini scroll will appear above the feature (e.g., an image of people planting trees for the Ecological Restoration secondary level page)
- A simple, ink-style butterfly flapping its wings as loading page for the homepage

Detailed Explanation:

  For the homepage, we will adapt an elongated "scroll" done in the integrated style of two of the most well-known Chinese paintings (千里江山图 (A Thousand Li of Rivers and Mountains) and 清明上河图 (Along the River During the Qingming Festival)). Generative AI can be used effectively to create the necessary image to cut down on time and expenses, although some minor editing work with an image processing software is expected (e.g., Procreate, Photoshop, etc.). The idea would be to visualize the concept of ecological civilization and its fundamental components with a thoroughly evocative style. The homepage would then be a scroll depicting an eco-village embedded in a thriving landscape that visitors could scroll through (pun intended) and discover and interpret themselves. The homepage is meant to

embody the meeting of past, present, and future, where the past blends into our historic present and the future vibrates with untold potential. The image itself will include traditional Chinese designs in architecture and landscape integrated with modern elements. For example, a pagoda might have solar panels on top, while the landscape might also have windmills throughout, there might be an EV charging station in the village situated next to a traditional-style inn. The point would be to create certain level of interest (or even disturbance) that provides the opening for people to think deeper and explore further, to meaningfully engage. Further, a central component will be certain elements of the scroll being hyperlinked to the secondary level of the website (see below). For example, people planting trees could be linked to the restoration page, a clinic could be linked to the environmental health section, a library packed with bamboo scrolls could be linked to a resource page, an ancestral temple could be linked to a section on traditional wisdoms and practices, a regenerative farming plot could be linked to a section on agriculture, the EV charging station could be linked to a section on the role of technologies in eco civ, etc. The idea would be to start small and build out the website through time, so areas that can be conceivably linked to other relevant sections will be added in the beginning with a mind towards manageable expansion. Of course, we must be mindful of visitors who might have difficulty in navigating this style of website, so a simple dropdown menu at the top of the homepage will also be needed.

The whole point of this style of homepage would be to demonstrate in the best possible way within a digital space what eco civ looks like and invite people to explore it. It might also be good to add a relevant loading symbol for this style of homepage, maybe a butterfly flapping its wings or a Chinese calligraphy brush writing something or an inkstone (something minimalist, something small juxtaposed on a white background). We are leaning towards a simple animated ink-style butterfly in recognition of the importance of pollinator gardens, one of the most

accessible things people can do to have a positive local environmental impact (it also pays homage to a recurring motif in Chinese culture).

Secondary Levels

- Secondary level of website as drawing visitors further into an engagement with ecological civilization without overwhelming them
- Other than pages like "Resources", "Contributors", "Multimedia", etc., secondary level pages will be thematic, such as "Ecological Restoration", "Environmental Health", "Technology", "Cultural Heritage", etc.
- Secondary levels focus on interactive content and concise, engaging features (e.g., relevant infographics, videos, interactive maps, audio recordings, etc.)
- A very brief mini narrative on the particular thematic element (e.g., technology, health, etc.) as it relates to China's ecological civilization will be included (250 words max)
- Design should be flexible enough to exchange content as needed
- Interactive features and artistic styles should remain consistent throughout the website
- See last paragraph of this section for the possible secondary levels for this website

Detailed Explanation:

The secondary level is the area of the website that engages visitors' curiosities and encourages them to explore a little more deeply. We envision these pages to be based on thematic elements that stand at the heart of ecological civilization and the work of the Forum. In terms of the Forum, this is where we will move over much of the content from the forum. These secondary levels will be accessed through the clickable elements on the homepage, as described above. And to ensure flow between the aesthetics of the homepage, we are thinking that the secondary level should be open, inviting, and warm, possibly in a watercolor style.

The design of these levels will include an engaging banner with either a short-looped video or a nice image in the background. There still will not be too much text on this level, as

this is the part of the website that fans the spark of interest that the homepage cultivated, we do not want to overwhelm here. We are imagining about 250 words max for these pages interspersed with a series of videos, images, and dynamic tiles and interactive functions (e.g., a tile that when clicked flips over to reveal a short text explanation, etc.). The text should be in the form of an open-ended narrative/story on the particular thematic element. For example, the environmental conservation/restoration page could start with a brief intro on the role/importance of conservation/restoration in an ecological civilization, then move into some sub-themes in this category listed as tiles or sub-banners, and finally move into a "takeaways" (maybe more appropriately termed an "opening") that discusses how communities can get involved in related work, what areas still need to be developed in this regard, why is this work urgent, etc. This is a general framework, it does not need to be written as such for every secondary level section. For example, the resources page does not necessarily need such a structure. But it would also be nice to have a clickable side bar designed such that users can easily move through the major sections of the page (see mockup).

These secondary levels are designed to be flexible in their content and easy to maintain (i.e., exchange content as needed).

Note that the provided mockup of the secondary level of the website is *not* the final design, this is merely a general template to demonstrate proposed flow, general style, and range of interactive features we are thinking about. Regardless of the final style, we want the website to remain consistent throughout. In terms of features, all the interactive features seen in this mockup will be the only types/styles of interactive found everywhere on the website (excluding the homepage). For example, the horizontal scroll-through menu for the tertiary level links at the bottom of the mockup could be adapted for the list of videos on the multimedia page. In addition,

the overall style of the secondary levels will remain consistent throughout, so the top image (with different images of course) with header will remain the same throughout, font, picture styles, etc.

Here are some possible examples of secondary sections that we could add (*not* all will be added for the initial build-out of the website): Introductory Page (About Eco Civ/Us), Agriculture and Food, Energy, Environmental Health, Education, Conservation, Restoration, Technology, Cultural Heritage, Tradition, Economy (Green Development), Resources (books and articles, varied global statements, links to other websites, etc.), Multimedia (videos and other relevant multimedia, although some videos will be interspersed throughout the website), Mary Evelyn/John eco civ related trip/work, and a Contributors page. Feel free to add more if you can think of it. While we will add a lot of extra features that could be built out later (e.g., buildings, landmarks, activities, animals, etc.), if there are specific topics you can think of, it would be better to add the corresponding homepage features now if possible.

Tertiary Levels

- Final level as more text-based and engaging
- Tertiary levels related to particular themes of the secondary levels
- Not simple articles or blogs, but formatted as StoryMaps
- Some sections (i.e., Resources, Multimedia, Contributors) may not have tertiary levels

Detailed Explanation:

The final level of the website is meant to be more text-based and engaging. This is the "deepest" level of the website where users have the chance to explore the breadth and complexity of eco civ. These levels are meant to expand upon the related secondary level theme and will be hyperlinked within the secondary levels of the website. For example, one tertiary level could be on reforestation in China and will be accessible from within the Ecological

Restoration secondary level. While we could think of this level as blogs or short articles, it might

be better to follow the template of StoryMaps (e.g.,

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fabc8ac185bf45e6aeee07827714011a,

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/collections/eb3ccdecdf8b44e0a83616c2c7b72b3d?item=1,

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/52451a19179d4855b072996316ddba3c,

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/01c17e62ab224a7d9ba1e5dc3b23438e,

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/22ae60499fd449608ae591d2768bd816). Not all the

StoryMaps have it, but we really like the idea of having a navigable, labeled bar at the top so

users can easily go through these longer sections (e.g.,

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/22ae60499fd449608ae591d2768bd816 and

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/3c62e36182664c8ea73b46ad3c5e5031). The idea is to

embed a litany of engaging, relevant content with the text (interactive maps, videos, recordings,

images, infographic, etc.). As with these example StoryMaps, there does not need to be a single

template, but can be adapted to the content itself, we will likely use ArcGIS StoryMaps for this

purpose (as StoryMaps can be easily embedded into websites).

While the Forum team will make tertiary levels, this could be a great way to work with

partners to add content on eco civ as tertiary levels within the frame of the website.

It also pertinent to note that while we are adopting a nested tripartite structure, there will

be some sections that may not have the third level. For example, the multimedia section may just

be a list of videos and other multimedia content, while the resource section may just be a list of

books and other relevant resources.

Structure Overview

- Modular tripartite structure

      o   First level: invitational

      o   Second levels: engages curiosities

      o   Tertiary levels: deeper engagement

- Explore the digitalscape of an ecological civilization

<u>Detailed Explanation:</u>

The idea would still be to preserve a modular tripartite structure, where the first level is invitational and opens the door (i.e., aesthetically engaging, minimalist design that can engage a wide range of visitors), the second level draws in interested visitors (i.e., short paragraphs, infographics, images that can basically elaborate on the key elements of the theme the visitor clicked on), and the third level more deeply engages with visitors on specific subjects (i.e., the conservation secondary level will have hyperlinks to longer articles, blog posts, etc.). Each level is meant to mutually reinforce each other and draw people in without being to forceful or overwhelming. The goal would be to have first-time visitors' interests to be engaged from their particular circumstances to the extent possible and then given them enough "space" to follow the threads of their journey across the digitalscape of an ecological civilization.

We could think of this website as an ocean, the homepage is the glimmering surface that captivates, the secondary levels are the shallow reefs that reveal beauty and diversity, and the third levels are the depths that inspires a desire to explore its hidden mysteries and expand the horizons of our world. In this way, we hope the website will be situated at the intersection of world-defining processes, societal-level collective action, and a deeply personal journey of growth and discovery.

Workflow and Timeline

- Two phases
- First phase completed by Spring 2026 (we will add minimal new content)

- o Focus on homepage and secondary levels
    - ▪ Migrate content from Forum website in the following sections: Intro to eco civ, Resources, Multimedia, and Mary Evelyn/John China trips
    - ▪ Add the following secondary levels: Ecological Restoration, Health, Technology, Tradition, Culture Heritage, and Contributors
- ● Second phase as ongoing
    - ▪ Update content, add new secondary levels, and add tertiary levels

Detailed Explanation:

The website would be rolled out in two phases. The first phase would be on a relatively short timeline and aimed to published online by Spring 2026 at the very latest. For the initial build-out, we want to attend to making the homepage striking enough to pique the interests of a diverse audience and focus on forming select secondary levels of the website. This first phase might be best thought of as a proof-of-concept. The secondary levels chosen for the first phase of the website rollout are strategically focused on migrating content from the Forum's website and choosing a few themes that will be able to connect with a wide range of communities. In terms of migrating over content from the website, we see the following secondary levels to adapt the Forum's resources: 1) an introduction to eco civ section that can be framed as an "about us" section and drawn from the primary landing page of the current Eco Civ section of the Forum's website and the timeline section, 2) a resource page for the relevant materials curated on the Forum's page, such as info on books and articles, journals, reports and statements, helpful links, etc., 3) a multimedia page for videos, and 4) a section for the Mary Evelyn and John's trips in China and other trips and events related to China.

In addition to these initial four secondary level pages which can be more easily adapted from the Forum's current website, we will also attempt to build out a few new sections that can

further connect to and draw in visitors from all backgrounds. That is, we are looking to add content on what we view as core aspects of eco civ that is relatable to a diverse audience. While we can discuss this more, we can then initially focus on the following themes: Ecological Restoration, Health, Technology, Tradition, and Culture Heritage. Of course, we also hope to add a Contributors page during the first phase to highlight all of the great work everyone is doing and the work everyone will put into this project. For the Contributors page in particular, we would like to use flip over tiles for contributors' pictures such that when scrolled over or clicked on, the reverse side will be an image that conveys in some way how you are inspired by or connect to ecological civilization. You could explain this connection briefly in your bio or leave it to the viewer to interpret in an open manner.