

The HopePunk Project

Proposal Template

Your Name: Jacob Boisclair

Working Title: Reintroduction to Nature

Part I

Write a paragraph response (100-150 words) for each category.

Be Introspective: Where do you witness suffering? Identify your own beliefs, prejudices, motivations, and commitments related to this suffering. Where are the contradictions? In what ways are you complicit with the systems that perpetuate this suffering?

Through a false perception of nature being lost or gone, people have become unmotivated or even apathetic towards land stewardship and appreciation. Having been raised in the wilderness for much of my childhood, I am aware that nature is not a thing of the past, and that it continues to persist in spaces we can appreciate and respect. Nature, in all forms, ought to be protected. Through this appreciation and stewardship, we can develop a relationship with nature, and acknowledge our interconnectedness with nature. Sometimes it seems hopeless due to the complexity and depth of our impacts, ranging from simply littering all the way to chemical imbalances in watersheds. Through developing a relationship with the nature around us, and understanding our interconnected existence, we, as people, can garner hope and motivation to protect these ecosystems. However, even with people being aware of their personal impacts on local ecosystems (and abroad), the fact remains that large corporations still greatly contribute to the destabilization and harm done to these ecosystems. Knowledge is key in this movement; awareness of our actions and their environmental repercussions is necessary to facilitate change. I can personally regard my shortcomings on this subject, such as how I drive a non-electric vehicle, or how I still eat meat, or even how I contribute to fast-fashion, while still acknowledging the changes I've made in my lifestyle to bring about change.

Think: Identify the narratives (social, political, economic etc.) that allow this suffering to exist. Why and how do they persist?

Through the media, we have seen the devastation of local forest fires and consecutive natural disasters, as well as reports of species devastation and ecological collapse. This contributes to a sense of futility regarding environmental stewardship, which directly impacts people's willingness to affect change. Politically, we will see commitments made for protections of marine life, watersheds, and other key ecosystems, but in reality oil and gas subsidies continue to increase while old growth forests are harvested for lumber and waterways are polluted by the unregulated mining industry (Mt. Polley Mine disaster). Economically, people are unable to choose lifestyles that support the environment due to fiscal disparities and instability, as well as the unaffordability of environmentally conscious consumer products. For instance, oat milk is literally twice the price of dairy milk. Green infrastructure is also painted as implausible due to "high" costs. People are taught, in all sectors of life, to not care about the environment.

Seek Truth and Avoid the Trivial: Distinguish between facts and opinions within these narratives. In what ways will your chosen topic be meaningful to you and to others?

The hopeless, obituary-model portrayed by the media regarding the environment is false. While there is an abundance of environmental fallout occurring in the world around us, they completely ignore the opportunities for us to succeed and make meaningful change. We should not delude ourselves with the small victories presented by the media into thinking we have solved the problem, or that everything is on the mend, but rather we should be inspired by them to facilitate and motivate others to change. We need to hold our politicians accountable for their shortcomings and failed promises, acting with compassion to uplift one another and acknowledge our shortcomings. Economically, false narratives of unaffordable infrastructure costs and job-loss need to be replaced by hopeful narratives of job-creating industries and functional infrastructure transition plans which are already being told and implemented in other parts of the world. (Such as Scotland, where 97% of their energy demands in 2020 were met with renewable energy resources). By reintroducing people to their local environments and seeing first-hand the ways in which it thrives and struggles will strengthen the sense of connection these people have with the environment, which will in turn motivate them to create a new, better, and more hopeful narrative of land stewardship.

Envision an Alternative World: Imagine another response to this crisis and suffering. Propose a hopeful narrative.

Transitioning to a green economy would only occur if the people desired it, and held politicians accountable for their representation. If everyone had a meaningful connection with nature, they would have that desire and motivation. They, through their elected representatives, would be able to hold large corporations accountable for their mistakes. Through activism and public outcry, we would be transitioning into a green economy, wherein jobs are rooted in renewable infrastructure and energy production. Forestry and mining developments would be made under the direction and stewardship of Indigenous peoples, and regulated to be minimally impactful to local ecosystems. A personal relationship with nature would create a personal investment into its wellbeing, which would translate into all aspects of our lives.

Part II

Write a paragraph response (100-150 words) for each (except #2 and #3):

Embrace uncertainty as possibility. Identify your goal. Which strategies will you use to take action? What are the potential barriers? How will you maintain the willpower to persist and to stay focused on your goal?

My goal is to facilitate the deepening or creation of the connection between oneself and their local environment. I would like to host informational nature walks within our community, such as at McArthur Island in the spring, or perhaps up to Deep Lake in Westsyde, so that people who feel they have been disconnected with nature can see the ecosystems around them thriving. Potential barriers could be accessibility, or timing conflicts. However, one of the reasons why I chose this for my HopePunk project is because of its minimal barriers. Appreciation for nature is something I'm very familiar with and have a strong connection to, so drawing on that connection to facilitate it in others is a fantastic motivator for me.

Use evidence-based arguments: Identify five sources of evidence that support your hopeful narrative. Use MLA format.

“Renewables Met 97% of Scotland's Electricity Demand in 2020.” *BBC News*, BBC, 25 Mar. 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-56530424>.

Brend, Yvette. “7 Years Later, 2 Engineers Face Discipline for Actions That Led to B.C. Mine Disaster | CBC News.” *CBCnews*, CBC/Radio Canada, 12 Aug. 2021,

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/discipline-engineers-mount-polley-mine-waste-quesnel-lake-1.6137265>.

Nancy M. Wells, and Kristi S. Lekies. "Nature and the Life Course: Pathways from Childhood Nature Experiences to Adult Environmentalism." *Children, Youth and Environments*, vol. 16, no. 1, University of Cincinnati, 2006, pp. 1–24, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.16.1.0001>.

Bell, Nicole. "Teaching by the medicine wheel." *Education Canada* 54.3 (2014): 14-16.

Monika A. Gorzelak, Amanda K. Asay, Brian J. Pickles, Suzanne W. Simard, Inter-plant communication through mycorrhizal networks mediates complex adaptive behaviour in plant communities, *AoB PLANTS*, Volume 7, 2015, plv050, <https://doi.org/10.1093/aobpla/plv050>

Adopt a solutions-oriented stance: Identify your calls to action.

- 1) Go out and witness your local ecosystems, making mental notes about its condition or anything note-worthy, such as litter, populations of certain animals/organisms.
- 2) Sit in that space and be mindful, ask yourself questions. What do you hear? What can you see? How are all of these organisms connected? How do they work together to form this ecosystem? How are you a part of it? Are you a part of it? Why, or why not?
- 3) Do some research about the things you witnessed in your local ecosystems. Does this new information change any of the feelings you had when you were first there? Does knowing more information about these ecosystems bring you closer to it? Do you feel more connected knowing the names of some of the things that live there?
- 4) Go back to that ecosystem at a different time of the year. How has it changed? How hasn't it changed? How does this change affect you? How does this connect to the teachings of the medicine wheel?

Communicate effectively: What rhetorical strategies will you employ in order to communicate your narrative effectively? Why?

Regarding logos, I will provide information about the ecosystems we are walking through, including the organisms that live there, how they live there, and how the ecosystem has changed over time. This will demonstrate the complex lives these organisms experience. I will provide as much information as I can because knowledge is the first step to appreciation, which leads to gratitude. As someone who will be guiding this nature walk, providing information about the land and ecosystems present, as well as having lived in those spaces, I will appeal to their ethos through openness, transparency, and a sense of community. It is important for someone who knows and has lived with these ecosystems to guide others through them because without it, knowledge is lost, or worse, replaced by more apathy. This sounds very unacademic but I don't know how else to say it: you need someone who is already connected to uplift others into that state of connection. All of the information I'll provide, as well as being present in those ecosystems, temporarily a part of them, will call out to their pathos. The feelings of appreciation and then gratitude contributes to this. In addition, speaking of the interconnectedness of the ecosystem with ourselves will bring the relationships we have with these places to attention, contributing to a shared bond.

Practice empathy and mindfulness: What strategies will you employ to remain fully present, clear, compassionate, and resilient?

Through introspection, openness, and a willingness to learn, I will be able to practice mindfulness, and share it with others on the nature walk. Through reason and knowledge, I will be able to uplift others into that state of connectedness to facilitate appreciation, gratitude, and respect for those ecosystems.