

A CONVERSATION WITH:

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Which systems thinking skills do you use?

#2: Consider the Wholes and Parts
Local.

: identify Relationships
f many systems is it a part of?

#1 : se everage Points to Produce Effects
Somls and be able to adapt them.

What is your role within the STEM community?

My role is that of a connector and occasional disrupter. As someone who works in natural resource management, I've become acutely aware of the fast rate of change in the environment and the slow rate of change in curriculum provided to teachers to prepare their students for the uncertain future. So I've been trying to find ways to connect the education community with the environmental science community. I disrupt by telling the ecosystem recovery community that they are underutilizing the only resource large enough to influence change: students.

G. What complex problem do you address in your work?

Climate and environmental change are compromising the health of Puget Sound ecosystems and their ability to continue to provide the natural resources tribes and others depend on. Identifying opportunities for people to work together to increased efficiency and effectiveness around

H. What elements do you need to consider when addressing this problem?

The big picture is key when we have discussions around this issue. It's easy to get lost in the details of the specific study, and my colleagues are a group of passionate researchers who care very much about their work, so we spend a lot of time on the details. However, at the end of the day, we want to make sure we can answer those big picture questions, so being mindful of where each study fits in the search for effective vaccines is important.

. How did you get to where you are today?

I was inspired by my high school biology teacher - he really got me thinking about the way parts and pieces come together to form something bigger! In college, I majored in biology (genetics and biochemistry) and went to graduate school in genetics. After grad school, I had several different types of positions that involved managing people, managing money, managing data, and even managing cats. I was fortunate to work at a startup, an amazing experience, and for non-profit organizations where I felt more at home. I am successful in my current role because of the breadth of experiences I have had.

. What advice do you have for becoming a systems thinker?

"Pay attention and ask questions" is the advice my dad has shared with me many times. I agree, so I'm passing it on to you! If you can practice your observational skills in every day life, do it. Don't be afraid to ask "why?" Ask it to yourself internally, and when you can, ask it to someone externally. You'll find some people don't like to be asked "why," but there are some that really do! Identify those people that love the question and hold on to them in your life. They will be resources for you.