



Observations and reflections on the SEPR 2024 Conference—the 2nd International Conference on Socio-Ecological Practice Research

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The moral imperative of humanism is the endeavor alone, whether successful or not, provided the effort is honorable and failure memorable.

The American biologist E.O. Wilson (1929–2021; Wilson 1998, p. 7).

1 The SEPR 2024 Conference

In October of 2024, a group of more than 100 scholars and scholar-practitioners from nine countries around the world gathered in Weihai, China, for the 2nd International Conference on Socio-Ecological Practice Research (aka the SEPR 2024 Conference or *SEPR 2024, Weihai*). The meeting was jointly hosted by two Chinese universities—Shandong University (Weihai) and Tongji University, Shanghai—and the journal *Socio-Ecological Practice Research* [henceforth, the SEPR journal (<https://link.springer.com/journal/42532>)] in a venue that overlooks the Yellow Sea and served as an inspirational backdrop for the exchange of ideas.

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The conference itself was preceded with the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum cochaired by Professors Hui Wang from Nanjing Forestry University and Zhifang Wang from Peking University. The daylong Forum featured sixteen presentations by junior scholars—early career faculty members and graduate students (Appendix 1). This was followed by the 2-day plenary sessions of the SEPR 2024 Conference cochaired by Professors Jian Zhang of Shandong University (Weihai) and Yuncai Wang of Tongji University. Twenty-four scholars and scholar-practitioners shared their research (Appendix 2). The conference began with an energetic opening and ended with a lively closing ceremony (Figs. 1 and 2). It is important to acknowledge the many contributions of student volunteers from Shandong University (Weihai) that made all participants feel welcome and enabled an engaging and fruitful exchange of ideas and perspectives.

The conference and the forum shared the same goals set for *SEPR 2019, Shanghai*—the first SEPR conference 5 years ago: Building a strong community of international scholar-practitioners, practitioners, and students; advancing the scholarship of socio-ecological practice research (aka ecopracticology; Xiang 2019). Its overall themes were articulated in a 2023 editorial of this journal (Xiang 2023b). In that article (p. 361), Professor Wei-Ning Xiang of Tongji University who cochaired the conference's organization committee articulated two themes: (1) Celebrating ecological wisdom inspired socio-ecological practice throughout history and the world, and (2) advancing socio-ecological practice research with humanities, natural & social sciences, and engineering. The 40 presentations at the conference and the forum fell within the four topical areas under these themes and showed remarkable creativity and critical thinking in their development and delivery (Appendices 1 and 2). To increase intellectual engagement and reflection, each session (consisting of two to six presentations) concluded with a 20-min panel discussion in which the presenters returned to stage and fielded questions from a designated commentator and the audience (Appendices). In addition, each day of the conference (including the Young Scholar Forum) concluded with a 40-min wrap-up panel discussion in which a moderator facilitated lively exchanges among the five to six panelists and the audience (Appendices). These formats of communication



Fig. 1 Speakers of the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum and the SEPR 2024 Conference with members of the organization committee; taken outside the conference hall after the opening ceremony, October 19, 2024 (credit: *SEPR 2024, Weihai, China*)



Fig. 2 Speakers, organization committee members, and student volunteers; taken outside the conference hall after the closing ceremony, October 20, 2024 (credit: *SEPR 2024, Weihai, China*)

Table 1 The five components of the ecopracticological virtue “pursuing, with humility, a genuine interest in the study of socio-ecological practice” observed in presentations at the SEPR 2024 Conference and the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum

The five virtuous components	Presentations (numbers are IDs in Appendices)
Taking socio-ecological practice as an object of study that is study-worthy in its own right	1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 6 , 10 , 17 , 18 , 19 , 20 , 21 , 22 , 23 , 25 , 26 , 27 , 28 , 37 , 38 , 39
Studying what real-world practitioners did in concrete situations of socio-ecological practice	1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 10 , 17 , 18 , 19 , 20 , 21 , 22 , 23 , 25 , 26 , 27 , 28 , 39
Pursuing insights into what worked and worked well practically and morally in a real-world setting of socio-ecological practice	1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 17 , 18 , 21 , 22 , 23 , 25 , 27 , 28
Meeting practitioners’ needs for knowledge and tools in support of their performance in socio-ecological practice	1 , 2 , 3 , 4 , 5 , 6 , 7 , 8 , 12 , 15 , 17 , 18 , 19 , 20 , 21 , 22 , 25 , 27 , 30 , 31 , 32 , 33 , 36 , 37 , 38 , 39 , 40
Respecting practitioners as theorists of their practice—practitioner theorists, and digging into practitioners’ theories of practice for insights and inspirations	1 , 3 , 17 , 18 , 21 , 22 , 25 , 27 , 38

afforded time for collective reflection and initiated further conversation in the margins of the conference and the forum, and as such helped further advance the two goals abovementioned.

We participated in the conference and the forum, and played multiple roles—speakers, moderators, commentators, discussants, the organizing committee members, as well as editorial team members of the SEPR journal. From these experiences, in the following pages, we (1) highlight ecopracticological virtues observed at the conference and the forum; (2) reflect on emergent themes; and (3) offer suggestions for *SEPR 2026*, *Guangzhou*—the SEPR 2026 Conference and the SEPR 2026 Young Scholar Forum—to be held in 2026 and hosted jointly by the South China Agricultural University in Guangzhou, Tongji University, and the SEPR journal. We also remind the readers of this editorial that there will be two special issues of the SEPR Journal (aligned with the two conference themes aforementioned) to be published in 2025 that will include papers arising from both the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum and the SEPR 2024 Conference. The special issues are guest-edited by Professors Nathan Heavers of Temple University, USA, and Daniele La Rosa of the University of Catania, Italy, respectively.

2 Ecopracticological virtues observed at the conference and the forum

In the 2023 editorial, Wei-Ning Xiang identified and advocated three ecopracticological virtues—moral, actionable, and efficacious qualities—that socio-ecological practice researchers (aka ecopracticologists) aim to possess in their pursuit of scholarly excellence in ecopracticology (Xiang 2023b, pp. 365–366; also, Xiang 2023c, p. 445). At the SEPR 2024 Conference and the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum, we observed these commendable ecopracticological qualities in various presentations.

2.1 Pursuing, with humility, a genuine interest in the study of socio-ecological practice

Almost all 40 presentations demonstrated, to a certain extent, this ecopracticological virtue; yet, some reported

more systematic and fruitful pursuit efforts. In Table 1, we tabulate these presentations against the virtue’s five components Wei-Ning Xiang identified (Xiang 2023b, p. 365).

As shown in Table 1, eight out of the 40 presentations—1, 3, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, and 27 (in bold)—demonstrated all five virtuous components. Not only did they show curiosity in and ambitions for the study of socio-ecological practice, but also exhibited humble, actionable, and still rigorous ways of achieving them. One of them merits special recognition. In “Revitalizing agricultural heritage systems through socio-ecological practices: a case study of the Jujube industry in Jia County, Shaanxi Province, China” (presentation 1), Yue Wu (Fig. 3), a graduate student from Henan Agricultural University, credited the successful revitalization of the local Jujube industry to the strong leadership of a local government official Junfeng Du. Quoting Du’s celebrated dictum—“We need to find ways to increase the added value of Jujube!”, she showed how this plainly simple phrase captured the gist of Du’s theory of practice and had become a powerful actionable guide for the local people in their socio-ecological practice of rejuvenating the Jujube industry. The recognition of the practitioner theorist and acknowledgment of the role practitioner’s theory of practice played in the successful socio-ecological practice are indeed hallmarks of the first ecopracticological virtue and become two brilliant points that made her presentation stand out.

2.2 Theorizing, with empathy, from good practice for good practice

Exemplifying this second ecopracticological virtue, several presentations reported efforts to build academics’ theories of socio-ecological practice through an “Aristotelian theorizing” process (Xiang 2020, pp. 121–123; 2023b, pp. 365–366).¹ These are presentations 3, 17, 18, 21, 25, 27, and 28 (Appendices 1 and 2). In this fine-grained,

¹ For discussions on the constructs of “academics’ theories of practice,” “practitioners’ theories of practice,” and “Aristotelian theorizing,” see Xiang (2020, pp. 121–123; 2023b, pp. 365–366).









			
Yue Wu Henan Agricultural University, Zhengzhou, China (presentation 1)	Yuning Cheng The Southeast University, Nanjing, China (presentation 21)	Qin Du Guangxi Minzu University, Nanning, China (presentation 27)	Nathan Heavers Temple University, Ambler, USA (presentation 17)
			
Qianzi Jiang Shandong Jianzhu University, Jinan, China (presentation 28)	Wei Gao The South China Agriculture University, Guangzhou, China (presentation 18)	Daniele La Rosa The University of Catania Catania, Italy (presentation 19)	Steven Cooke Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada (presentation 38)

Fig. 3 Presenting at the SEPR 2024 Conference and the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum, the eight presenters mentioned in Sect. 2 of this editorial (Permission of use granted by the presenters and the photo owner—SEPR 2024, Weihai, China)

evidence-based process named after the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotele (384–322 BCE), the researchers analyzed firsthand evidence from concrete instances of good (i.e., efficacious and righteous) socio-ecological practice, dug into practitioners' theories of practice developed and used in these instances, and then synthesized insights so derived and inspirations from other sources to form their own grounded theories. Throughout this process, instead of being detached and disinterested spectators—whether “recording angels” or “hanging judges” (Wang et al. 2022, p. 161), these “academic theoreticians” chose to be “empathetic students of the past (human experience)” (Xiang 2023b, p. 366, parenthesis added) and made genuine efforts to be “engaging a phenomenon from the perspective(s) of those living it” (Corley 2015, p. 600, p. 601; parenthesis added). As such, their dedicated efforts showed considerable promise of producing academics' theories of socio-ecological practice that are true-to-life, useful-to-practitioners, and instructive-to-scholars.

It is noteworthy that in four of the seven presentations abovementioned, speakers reported a “bonus” they received in the process of empathetic Aristotelian theorizing (in Fig. 3, Yuning Cheng, Qin Du, Nathan Heavers, and Qianzi

Jiang). Just like over two millennia ago, Aristotele discerned by pure serendipity the meaning of phronesis (i.e., practical wisdom) in ordinary people's social practice (Schwartz and Sharpe 2010, pp.28–29; Xiang 2016, pp.54–55), these academic theoreticians of the twenty-first century reportedly discovered the significance of ecophronesis (ecological practical wisdom; Xiang 2016, 2023a) in real-world practitioners' socio-ecological practice *also* by serendipity. At the conference, they presented ecophronesis as an integral part of their grounded theories in the making. Professor Yuning Cheng of the Southeast University juxtaposed ecophronesis with the logic of socio-ecological practice as two pillars of his theory of “habitat ecological landscape environment construction” (presentation 21); Professor Qin Du of Guangxi Minzu University identified ecophronesis of the local people as the fountainhead of a time-honored nine-character golden rule for siting villages in the *fengcong depression karst* (喀斯特峰丛洼地) region in southwestern China (presentation 27); Professor Nathan Heavers of Temple University, as part of his continuing pursuit of a grounded theory about “micro-eco practices” (Heavers 2023), offered yet another firsthand account of ecophronesis (presentation 17); and Professor Qianzi Jiang of Shandong Jianzhu University stressed the

value of socio-ecological agility—a defining characteristic of ecophronesis—in the socio-ecological practice of water conservancy heritage protection and development (presentation 28). The inclusion of ecophronesis certainly enriched their would-be theories, but their empathetic theorizing experience and the eureka emergence of ecophronesis are equally valuable assets in ecopracticology that should be documented and preserved.

2.3 Asking, with courage and sincerity, hard questions about knowledge implementation and impact

Exemplifying this virtue, three presentations reported follow-up research on knowledge implementation and impact (i.e., knowledge I & I research; Bishop 2024; Xiang 2023b, p. 366). These are presentations 18, 19, and 38 (Appendix 2) by, respectively, Professor Wei Gao of the South China Agriculture University, Professor Daniele La Rosa of the University of Catania, and Professor Steven Cooke of Carleton University (Fig. 3).

“Why is it progressing so slowly?” asked Wei Gao, referring to a stagnant project he has been collaborating on with the local governments since 2022. The project aims to regenerate “the invisible urban nature” in high-density urban areas in Guangzhou and has a codeveloped plan that received broad support. He went on examining “hidden” yet persistent obstacles to the implementation of the project and explored socio-ecological practice pathways to move the project forward. Daniele La Rosa raised questions concerning issues in nature-based solutions (NBS) projects in European countries: their motivations, problem definitions, project lifecycles, and criteria for success. Drawing on his previous research (e.g., La Rosa 2019; La Rosa et al. 2021), he posited that many of the issues were resolved or even avoided in comparable projects that were completed in the past or even the distant past; and these “exemplar” projects can thus be a fountainhead of inspirations for contemporary practitioners and scholar-practitioners to deal with those issues. He and his team are in a process of selecting exemplary NBS projects in European cities. Steven Cooke presented a survey his team finished recently, in which they asked interviewees a simple yet profound question: Why do practitioners in biodiversity conservation use or not use the evidence scientists produced? Based on the survey findings and his own research experience (e.g., Cooke 2019; Cooke and Birnie-Gauvin 2022), he proposed a tripartite strategy for supporting and empowering practitioners more effectively.

Despite differences in their topical areas, these presentations shared two things in common: raising sharp questions about knowledge I & I issues real-world practitioners (or “front-line workers,” as Steven Cooke dubbed them in

his presentation) understand and care about; and proposing actionable ways for practitioners and scholar-practitioners to efficaciously deal with the issues through collaboration. Behind the commonalities are courage, sincerity, as well as insights and good intention.

3 Key themes that emerged at the conference and the forum

3.1 We are classmates

During the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum on October 19, Wei-Ning Xiang remarked that “we are classmates.” That phrase was repeated several times throughout the conference and the forum and resonated with participants. The notion behind that phrase was a recognition that we were all here to share, learn, and support each other. There is an inherent humility with this phrase in that it acknowledges that even the most “senior” individuals are still on their learning journey and that we were sharing in an inclusive space where all voices and ideas were welcomed and respected. The phrase really captures the feelings of mutual respect and open mindedness that permeated all the interactions—both on stage and in the margins of the conference and the forum.

3.2 History matters

Given the many environmental and social challenges facing humanity and the planet, it is imperative for human beings to focus on the present and the future. Yet, there is also much to learn from the past—whether the development of human civilization, the human experience of socio-ecological practice, technological innovation, or the paleogeographic and paleoclimate processes and events on the earth, to name but a few aspects of history. Failure to consider the historical context of the earth and humanity is nothing but a lost opportunity and, in some cases, will itself lead to a degradation of socio-ecological systems. We of course are not living in the past; yet, there is much wisdom, ecological practical wisdom (ecophronesis) in particular, human beings discerned from and accumulated in our many thousands of years coevolving with nature that must be acknowledged and harnessed to make sense of the world and to inform how we might think prudently about the future and act wisely.

3.3 Thinking and working across scales

Presentations highlighted the importance of scale in a variety of domains. Variations in spatial scales were apparent in many presentations, ranging from local and regional to continental and even planetary scales. This reflected the broad

scope of socio-ecological issues the researchers aimed to address. In terms of temporal scale, presentations included those centered on the past, present, and future, in some cases spanning thousands of years. In addition, institutional scale was well represented in terms of actions that were happening at the scale of a local community or in the purview of national governments or international bodies.

3.4 Learning and thinking across disciplines

Landscape design; Urban planning; Geography; Ecology; Agricultural science; Waste management; Engineering; Political science; Liberal arts; Computer science; Environmental education; Human health and well-being; Environmental decision-making. Those are but a few of the many disciplines that were represented by individuals and topics at both the SEPR 2024 conference and the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum. Many of the environmental and social challenges of today are inherently complex (if not wicked problems!) and demand interdisciplinary thinking (Dick et al. 2016). The diversity of disciplinary domains represented at the conference and the forum created ample opportunities for learning and sharing across disciplines. Indeed, many of the speakers delivered presentations that were themselves interdisciplinary, yet it was really the panel discussions led by commentators (following sessions) and discussants (during the wrap-up sessions) where the value of the diverse perspectives became most apparent.

3.5 Useful tensions were apparent

Given the diverse perspectives encompassed by conference participants, some useful tensions arose within and between the conference/forum sessions. Four tensions stood out. (1) A strong contingent of SEPR scholars contends that socio-ecological practice has much to learn from historical examples; however, others argued that socio-ecological practice research needs to look forward and address future issues. (2) Ecological wisdom, a major conference theme, was contrasted with survival wisdom, revealing that ecological wisdom may be a result of privilege rather than ordinary circumstances. (3) Exemplars of ecological wisdom presented at the conference and the forum (e.g., *inter alia* presentations 2, 3, 4, 20, 21, 22, 25, 27, and 28) and elsewhere (e.g., Heavers 2023; La Rosa et al. 2021; Xiang 2016, 2023a) stood the test of time; none of them however is a one-shot project, instead, they are all results of continuous acts of bricolage and tinkering performed by generations of practitioners (La Rosa et al. 2021, p. 331). And lastly, (4) while an underlying premise of SEPR is perhaps to narrow the implementation

gap (Bishop 2024), this community also thrives in the space between theory and practice [i.e., the “two world problem”, as John Forester (2020) put it].

3.6 Defining who we are by what we do is an ongoing activity

“Socio-ecological practice research—What is it (not)? What is it for (not for)? What does it do (not do)? Whom is it for (not for)?” is the title of a mini symposium within the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum (Appendix 1). The questions in the title, meant to stimulate discussions about the defining characteristics of socio-ecological practice research, alluded to a related and equally provocative question: If we consider ourselves as socio-ecological practice researchers (ecopracticologists), what is our distinguishing identity?

On this issue, Steven Cooke and Wei Gao offered their opinions (presentations 38 and 18, respectively, in Appendix 2). Steven Cooke regarded “us” as decision-support providers whose role is “to support (not replace) practitioners so they can make the best possible decisions with limited resources—also known as evidence-based decision-making” (parenthesis added). Wei Gao, on the other hand, advocated multiple identities for socio-ecological practice researchers—“students, teachers, and design steward”—and suggested “us” to play more engaged roles throughout the lifecycle of socio-ecological practice.

In addition, a broader yet still distinguishing identity was also mentioned in several presentations (e.g., 3, 12, 39, and 40 in Appendices). *Socio-ecological scholar-practitioner* is a term in the emerging nomenclature of ecopracticology; it was coined, defined, and has been harnessed by various authors of the SEPR journal (Xiang 2022, pp. 273–274). A socio-ecological scholar-practitioner is a scholar who is *committed* to the dual ambition of producing knowledge and advancing socio-ecological practice and *dedicated* to developing a credible scholarship, through socio-ecological practice research, that is useful to real-world practitioners and instructive to fellow scholars (*Ibid.*).

As the field continuously progresses, we foresee, discussions about our identity and roles in socio-ecological practice will continue.

3.7 A community of practice research is emerging

Notwithstanding the fact that defining ourselves is an ongoing activity and in itself a worthwhile intellectual endeavor, it is apparent that a community of practice research is emerging around the notion of socio-ecological practice research (or ecopracticology). At the most basic level, this community of

socio-ecological practice research (the SEPR community for short) is a group of individuals, us included, that share a common interest in the study of socio-ecological practice and are committed to the dual ambition of producing useful knowledge and advancing socio-ecological practice. Here, a piece of knowledge is potentially useful and ultimately used by virtue of its direct relevance, immediate actionability, foreseeable efficacy, profound insightfulness, and powerful inspiration (Xiang 2023b, p. 364). Furthermore, the SEPR community is a learning and supporting group that adheres to the maxim of mutual advantage: Together each achieves more (TEAM; or 同修共进 in Chinese). All SEPR community members are “classmates” (sub-Sect. 3.1) who share with and learn from each other so that every one can do better in work and life. Although the SEPR community of practice research is relatively nascent (e.g., relative to, say, health care where we could learn from their experiences; Noar et al. 2023), it is already delivering, as demonstrated by the broad scope of participation and high level of engagement at the conference and the forum and elsewhere (e.g., Bishop 2024). During the conference and the forum, there was an exceptional willingness to share experiences and to even formally collaborate across disciplines, topics, institutions, and countries.

4 Looking to the future

It is not an exaggeration to say that the participants at the SEPR 2024 Conference and the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum left with full minds and warm hearts. Socio-ecological practice research is rapidly becoming codified as a valuable area of inquiry that is inherently practical and is having meaningful impact on the environment, the society, and people (Bishop 2024). Yet, there is more work to be done. More attention is needed to identify the most appropriate and ethical mechanisms for bridging knowledge systems (including Indigenous knowledge which is itself a form of science but also exceedingly practical). There is also opportunity for more work by social and behavioral scientists to understand how practitioners operate (e.g., receive knowledge, make decisions, and share experiences) so that it is possible to better tailor scholarly activities in socio-ecological practice research to their needs.

Although scholar-practitioners were well represented at the conference and the forum, all participants were affiliated with institutions of higher education. To be more relevant to practitioners (those that may not be scholar-practitioners), it is essential that the tent is broadened even further to create opportunities and mechanisms to more directly involve and engage practitioners. This is not easy; the theory–practice gap is well known in the context of socio-ecological problems and creating spaces for sharing and building trust is challenging but important (Barnes

et al. 2024; Cooke et al. 2021; Forester 2020). To that end, we suggest that the organizers of the SEPR 2026 Conference and the SEPR 2026 Young Scholar Forum reach out to practitioners and invite them to play active and collaborative roles at the conference and the forum.² Perhaps webinars during the intervening periods between in-person conferences could serve as an opportunity to celebrate practitioners and the relationship between scholar-practitioners and practitioners. The SEPR journal, also represents an opportunity for fostering a community of practice research for all, including those unable to attend international conferences. There are already pathways for practitioners to be involved as authors in contributions to the SEPR journal, but it is our belief that those opportunities are underutilized. For example, SEPR has Showcase Articles that present exemplars of successful socio-ecological practice from around the world and throughout human history. Such articles present opportunities for practitioners to share their experiences. Similarly, we encourage scholar-practitioners to invite practitioners to be co-authors on coproduced projects. These and potentially many other activities could collectively help to further the development of the SEPR community of practice research.

In conclusion, we reextend the invitation Wei-Ning Xiang sent to socio-ecological practitioners, scholar-practitioners and students from around the world: “The path has been paved and stage set, let’s march on and act together with humility, empathy, courage, and sincerity—the heart and soul of ecopractico-logical research.” (Xiang 2023b, p. 367) With the abiding faith that “The moral imperative of humanism is the endeavor alone, whether successful or not, provided the effort is honorable and failure memorable.” (Wilson 1998, p. 7), we look forward to welcoming classmates, new and old, in the continuous honorable endeavor at the SEPR 2026 Conference and the SEPR 2026 Young Scholar Forum in Guangzhou!

² In our future directions/collaborations meeting on October 21, 2024, some ideas were discussed for including practitioners in the SEPR 2026, Guangzhou conference. These include, but are not limited to, inviting practitioners to present their joint projects with Professor Wei Gao (sub-Sect. 2.3), hosting PSP (practitioner and scholar-practitioner) panels or joint presentations, and site-visiting local projects. The PSP panels idea was proposed at the meeting by Marco Carlotti, a doctoral student in the Mediations Laboratory, Sorbonne University, France. It resonated well with other attendees.

Appendix 1 The 16 presentations at the SEPR 2024 Young Scholar Forum, October 18, 2024

Session 1

Exemplary instances of ecological wisdom-inspired and time-honored socio-ecological practice from around the world

Moderator Zhifang Wang (王志芳, Peking University, Beijing, China)

Commentator Nathan Heavers (Temple University, Ambler, USA)

ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
1	Revitalizing agricultural heritage systems through socio-ecological practices—a case study of the Jujube industry in Jia County, Shaanxi Province, China 通过社会-生态实践振兴农业文化遗产系统—以陕西佳县红枣产业为例	Yue Wu (吴月)	Master's student, College of Landscape Architecture and Arts, Henan Agricultural University, Zhengzhou, China
2	Socio-ecological wisdom of mulberry planting in the middle and lower reaches of the Yellow River—a case study of ancient mulberry grove system in Xiajin Yellow River Old Course, China 黄河中下游植桑的社会生态智慧—以夏津黄河故道古桑林系统为例	Ziying Zhou (周梓滢)	Master's student, College of Landscape Architecture and Arts, Henan Agricultural University, Zhengzhou, China
3	Socio-ecological practice in garden communion of Guangzhou during the era of Republic of China 民国广州园林交游中的社会生态实践	Yiman Li (李沂蔓)	PhD student, School of Architecture, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China
4	Ecological wisdom and modern innovation of ancient Hakka Villages in Southwestern Fujian Province, China: a case study of Sanzhou Village 闽西南客家古村落的生态智慧与现 代创新—以三洲古村落为例	Liqin Zheng (郑丽琴)	Master's student, Suzhou University of Science and Technology, Suzhou, China
Comments and questions by Nathan Heavers			

Session 2

Curated, completed case studies aiming to ease the theory–practice tensions by means of knowledge brokering, knowledge coproduction, and citizen science

Moderator Hui Wang (汪辉, Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing, China)

Commentator Zoe Moula (King's College London, UK)

ID	Presentation title	Presenter	Affiliation
5	The Eco-city: an urban manifestation of <i>Ecophrones</i> in the Anthropocene	Marco Carlotti	PhD student, Mediations Laboratory, Sorbonne University, France
6	Integration of Scientific Research into Socio-Ecological Practice and Planning Decision Making—The Case of Xining Plateau "Green Valley" Urban Planning Project 科学研究融入社会生态实践与规划决策—以西宁高原“绿谷”城市规划项目为例	Kexin Cheng (程可欣)	PhD student, College of Architecture and Landscape, Peking University, Beijing, China
7	Multiple Solution Modes for the Design of Wicked-Problem Herbaceous Plant Communities: Theory and Practice 抗解性草本植物群落设计的多解模式:理论与实践	Cangshuan Li (李仓栓)	Lecturer, Landscape Architecture and Art, Northwest A & F University, Shaanxi, China
Comments and questions by Zoe Moula			

Session 3A**Exemplary practitioner support projects—completed research projects that effectively supported practitioners in socio-ecological practice with new knowledge and custom-tailored tools**

Moderator	Yue (York) Che (车越, The East China Normal University, Shanghai, China)		
Commentator	Daniele La Rosa (The University of Catania, Catania, Italy)		
ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
8	Reshaping the Future of Mining Areas: Pathways to Spatial Renewal Driving Living Environment Improvement 重塑矿区未来:空间优化驱动人居环境改善的机制与路径	Sifan Guo (郭斯凡)	Lecturer, School of Architecture and Design, China University of Mining and Technology, Xuzhou, China
9	Construction method of herbaceous plant community in urban riparian zone under the concept of close-to-nature—a case study of Hunhe river in Shenyang 近自然理念下的城市河岸带草本植物群落景观设计方法研究—以沈阳浑河河岸带为例	Rui Wang (王睿)	PhD student, School of Architecture and urban Planning, Shenyang Jianzhu University, Shenyang, China
Comments and questions by Daniele La Rosa			

Session 3B**Exemplary practitioner support projects—completed research projects that effectively supported practitioners in socio-ecological practice with new knowledge and custom-tailored tools**

Moderator	Tong Wang (王通, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China)		
Commentator	Yasuhisa Kondo (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Kyoto, Japan)		
ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
10	Planning strategy of ecological protection and restoration of coal Mining subsidence wetlands: a case study in Yingshang County, Anhui Province, China 采煤沉陷湿地生态保护与修复规划策略研究—以安徽省颍上县为例	Cankun Li (李灿坤)	PhD student, School of Architecture and Design, China University of Mining and Technology, Xuzhou, China
11	Optimization of regional spatial form for thermal mitigation: a case study of the Golden Triangle Megalopolis in southern Fujian Province, China 海洋热调节作用下的城市形态优化策略探究—以闽南金三角城市群为例	Xiaohui Huang (黄晓辉)	PhD student, School of Architecture and Urban–Rural Planning, Fuzhou University, Fuzhou, China
Comments and questions by Yasuhisa Kondo			

Session 4

An open forum that features presentations on topics beyond the scope of the above three topical areas but relevant to the overarching theme

Mini symposium “Socio-ecological practice research—What is it (not)? What is for (not for)? What does it do (not do)? Whom is it for (not for)?” 社会生态实践研究:是什么不是什么?为了什么不为什么?做什么不做什么?为了谁不为谁?

Organizer and moderator Wei Gao (高伟, The South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, China)

Commentator Wei-Ning Xiang (象伟宁, Tongji University, Shanghai, China)

ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
12	Bridging knowledge gaps in urban residents' socio-ecological practices 城市居民社会生态实践中基本知识的匮乏与对策	Li Fan (樊漓)	PhD student, The South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, China
13	Conceptual design of underground spaces practicing ecological aesthetic concepts 践行生态审美理念的地下空间设计构想	Ye Chen (陈烨)	Lecturer, Shandong University, Jinan, China
14	Reflection on socio-ecological practice research and information architecture in the renewal of historical environmental conservation 社会生态实践思考与历史环境保护更新中的信息营建实践	Siyu Wang (王思又)	PhD student, The South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, China
15	Exploring the "can" and "cannot" of digital twin technology in ecological practice applications 探讨数字孪生技术在生态实践应用中的“能”与“不能”	Xiaotong Zhang (张晓彤)	PhD student, Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology, Xi'an, China
16	Ecological Wisdom in "Di Li Zhi Meng" and its impact on ecological practice 《地理指蒙》的生态智慧管窥及其对生态实践的影响	Zixu Cao (曹子旭)	PhD student, Xi'an University of Architecture and Technology, Xi'an, China
Comments and questions by Wei-Ning Xiang			

The wrap-up 17:42–18:40

Moderators

Hui Wang (汪辉, Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing, China)

Zhifang Wang (王志芳, Peking University, Beijing, China)

Discussants

Wei Gao (高伟)

Sifan Guo (郭斯凡)

Nathan Heavers

Daniele La Rosa

Kgosietsile (Kgosi) Velempini

Wei-Ning Xiang (象伟宁)

Appendix 2 The 24 presentations at the SEPR 2024 Conference, October 19–20, 2024

Plenary session 1A

Exemplary instances of ecological wisdom-inspired and time-honored socio-ecological practice from around the world

Moderator Yuncai Wang (王云才, Tongji University, Shanghai, China)

Commentator Steven Cooke (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)

ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
17	Micro-eco: gaining practical ecological wisdom through small landscape moves	Nathan Heavers	The Tyler School of Art and Architecture, Temple University, Ambler, USA
18	Exploring the Socio-ecological Practice Pathways of the Invisible Urban Nature Regeneration Plan 隐性城市自然活化再生计划的社会生态实践路径探索	Wei Gao (高伟)	College of Forestry and Landscape Architecture, The South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, China
19	Exemplar policies, plans and projects for nature-based solutions in cities: evidence from Europe	Daniele La Rosa	Department of Civil Engineering and Architecture, University of Catania, Catania, Italy
20	Construction of a heritage value assessment system for Red Flag Canal-type irrigation projects in China “红旗渠类灌溉工程”遗产价值评估体系建构	Tong Wang (王通)	School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Huazhong University of Science and Technology, Wuhan, China
Comments and questions by Steven Cooke			

Plenary session 1B

Exemplary instances of ecological wisdom-inspired and time-honored socio-ecological practice from around the world

Moderator Yue (York) Che (车越, The East China Normal University, Shanghai, China)

Commentator Nathan Heavers (Temple University, Ambler, USA)

ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
21	The logic and wisdom of habitat ecological landscape environment construction 人居生态景观环境构建的逻辑与智慧	Yuning Cheng (成玉宁)	School of architecture, the South-east University, Nanjing, China
22	Edible. medicine. scenery: plant landscape and its Zun Sheng wisdom in Lingnan traditional human habitat, China “食·疗·景”——岭南传统人居环境植物景观及其遵生智慧	Xiao-Mei Yuan (袁晓梅)	School of Architecture, South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China
23	Architectural and anthropological approaches to living heritage management in a port town of Oman	Yasuhisa Kondo	Research Institute for Humanity and Nature, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Kyoto, Japan
Comments and questions by Nathan Heavers			

Plenary session 1C

Exemplary instances of ecological wisdom-inspired and time-honored socio-ecological practice from around the world

Moderator	Hui Wang (汪辉, Nanjing Forestry University, Nanjing, China)		
Commentator	Yuning Cheng (成玉宁, The Southeast University, Nanjing, China)		
ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
24	Value analysis of core principles in architectural design in the context of Sino-Western exchange: a case study of residential space design in Fujian Tulou and the Palace of Yangxin in the Forbidden City 中西互鉴视域下建筑设计核心原则的价值解析—以福建土楼和故宫养心殿人居空间设计为例	Jinyan Wang (王金岩)	School of Civil Engineering and Hydraulic Engineering, Shandong University, Shandong, China
25	Domestic waste classification in Shanghai, China: a socio-ecological practice lasting 30 years 上海城市生活垃圾分类:一项持续30年的社会生态实践	Yue Che (车越)	School of Ecological and Environmental Sciences, The East China Normal University, Shanghai, China
26	Integrating ecological and indigenous approaches to enhance the sustainable utilization and conservation of forest resources in the Shaikarawe forest conservation area: a step towards addressing climate change in northern Botswana	Kgosietsile (Kgosi) Velempini	Department of Environmental Sciences, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, USA
27	Local ecological wisdom on site layout of ancient villages among several ethnic groups in the <i>fengcong depression karst</i> region, China 喀斯特峰丛洼地汉、壮、仫佬族传统乡村聚落选址的生态智慧	Qin Du (杜钦)	School of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Guangxi Minzu University, Nanning, China
28	The north–south difference in ecological wisdom of water conservancy cultural heritage: a comparative study based on Dujiangyan irrigation project and Daicun dam in China 水利文化遗产生态智慧的南北差异:基于都江堰和戴村坝的比较研究	Qianzi Jiang (姜芊孜)	School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Shandong Jianzhu University, Jinan, China
29	How did the social practices change and shape the historic ecological landscape? A case study of vineyard of Piedmont: Langhe-Roero and Monferrato, Italy	He Jiang (蒋鹤)	College of Landscape Architecture and Arts, Henan Agricultural University, Zhengzhou, China
Comments and questions by Yuning Cheng			

Session 2A

Exemplary practitioner support projects—completed research projects that effectively supported practitioners in socio-ecological practice with new knowledge and custom-tailored tools

Moderator	Kgosietsile Velempini (The University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, USA)		
Commentator	Yasuhisa Kondo (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Kyoto, Japan)		
ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
30	The characteristics of urban green space layout driven by ecological justice —Taking the first batch of national ecological garden cities in China as an example 生态正义驱动下的城市绿地布局特征研究—以首批国家生态园林城市为例	Jie-ning Wang (王洁宁)	School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Shandong Jianzhu University, Shandong, China
31	Connecting people with nature through nature-based arts therapies	Zoe Moula	Department of Care in Long Term Conditions, Florence Nightingale, King's College London, UK
32	Variation in local residents' recognition of marine debris in Miyako-jima Island, Japan	Shinsuke KYOI	Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Yamagata University, Yamagata, Japan
33	Building an eco-technological city: case studies from Morocco and South Korea	Jungyoon Park	Center for Global Community, Moun-Ji University, Seoul, South Korea
	Comments and questions by Yasuhisa Kondo		

Wrap-up of the day (October 19, 2024)

Moderator	Wei-Ning Xiang
Discussants	Marco Carlotti (Sorbonne University, France)
	Yuning Cheng (成玉宁, The Southeast University, Nanjing, China)
	Steven Cooke (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)
	Nathan Heavers (Temple University, Ambler, USA)
	Yasuhisa Kondo (The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Kyoto, Japan)
	Cankun Li (李灿坤, China University of Mining and Technology, Xuzhou, China)
	Xiao-Mei Yuan (袁晓梅, The South China University of Technology, Guangzhou, China)

Session 2B

Exemplary practitioner support projects—completed research projects that effectively supported practitioners in socio-ecological practice with new knowledge and custom-tailored tools

Moderator	Zhifang Wang (王志芳, Peking University, Beijing, China)		
Commentator	Daniele La Rosa (The University of Catania, Catania, Italy)		
ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
34	Continuous renewal and cultural heritage: new liberal arts practice in environmental design 持续更新与文化遗产:环境设计专业的文科实践	Jian Zhang (张剑)	College of Arts, Shandong University (Weihai), Weihai, China
35	Global spillover effects of the European Green Deal and plausible mitigation options 欧洲绿色协议的全球影响评估及调整方案	Honglin Zhong (钟洪麟)	Weihai Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, Shandong University (Weihai), Weihai, China
36	A new approach and implementation framework for constructing landscape ecological patterns based on ecological perception 基于生态感知的景观生态格局构建新思路与实施框架	Yuncai Wang (王云才)	College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, Shanghai, China
37	Advancing socio-ecological practice research in sub-Saharan Africa	Kgosietsile Velempini	Department of Environmental Sciences, University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, USA
Comments and questions by Daniele La Rosa			

Session 3

An open forum that features presentations on topics beyond the scope of the above three topical areas but relevant to the overarching theme

Moderator	Wei Gao (高伟, The South China Agricultural University, Guangzhou, China)		
Commentator	Kgosietsile Velempini (The University of North Carolina at Wilmington, Wilmington, USA)		
ID	Presentation Title	Presenter	Affiliation
38	Supporting and empowering socio-ecological practitioners to achieve a “good” Anthropocene	Steven Cooke	Department of Biology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada
39	Human-based analysis of urban resilience: A perspective of social-ecosystem dynamics 以人为本的韧性城市:一种社会-生态系统动态的分析视角	Wentao Yan (颜文涛)	College of Architecture and Urban Planning, Tongji University, Shanghai, China
40	How can landscape architects conduct research in the Pasteur Quadrant?	Zhifang Wang (王志芳)	The School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Peking University, China
Comments and questions by Kgosietsile (Kgosi) Velem			

Wrap-up of the conference (October 20, 2024)

Moderator	Wei-Ning Xiang
Discussants	Steven Cooke (Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada)
	Zoe Moula (King's College London, UK)
	Nathan Heavers (Temple University, Ambler, USA)
	Jian Zhang (张剑, Shandong University (Weihai), Weihai, China)

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Declarations

Conflict of interest The authors confirm that there is no conflict of interest.

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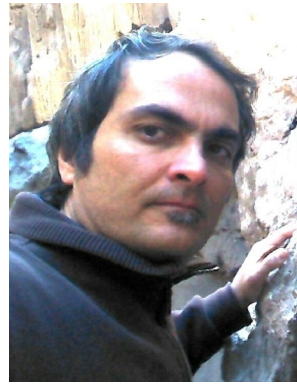


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Nathan Heavers is an associate professor in landscape architecture at Temple University, the US, with a focus on ecological design and landscape care. Cultivating real and imagined forests, his work examines the evolution of landscapes through tending and drawing as methods of building knowledge and nurturing places. Current projects include an urban forestry management plan for the George Washington Memorial Parkway, collaborating with Virginia Tech; and Wave Forest, a five-acre planting rehabilitating a former waste treatment site, working with Temple University graduate students.

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Wei-Ning Xiang is a freelance socio-ecological practice researcher (aka ecopractitioner), a professor emeritus of geography and earth sciences at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, USA (July 2023–present), and an adjunct professor of ecological planning at Tongji University, Shanghai, China (2016–present). He is the founding editor-in-chief of *Socio-Ecological Practice Research* (2019–present) and a former coeditor-in-chief of *Landscape and Urban Planning* (2011–2018). His research interests include ecological practical wisdom (ecophronesis) and socio-ecological practice research (ecopracticology). The photo was taken on the Tongji University campus on October 29, 2024 after the SEPR 2024 Conference.