HOW CAN ARCHITECTURE FOSTER A STRONGER CONNECTION BETWEEN ECOLOGICAL CONSERVATION RESEARCH AND THE PUBLIC?

To provide insight into the needs and views of experts, a variety of interviews were conducted. Directors and scientists from some of the country's leading interpretive science centers participated. The questions asked varied from what they perceived to be essential to their work to how they interacted with the public. The responses gathered added to the literature research that explored how the general public can best be taught. The feedback provided better articulation of information that was in some cases absent from articles. Perceived success of outreach initiatives from those that perform them removed the idealized review that directors commonly provide.

The main goal of an interpretive center is to advance our knowledge of nature. Entertainment of visitors is secondary. This more research grounded approach emphasizes the importance of providing for the experts. By showing the public live experiments they will be more engaged and inspired to take charge of their own lives.

Information provided gave insight into the public perception that scientists may have. Much of what the ministry does is report directly to lawmakers, skipping the crucial step of interacting with locals. "'Nobody flunks a museum' Frank Oppenheimer."

As humanity continues to expand the built environment the pressure placed upon the natural world continues to grow. The impact can be seen in the numerous issues. A hard reevaluation of how humans should react is needed as we forge into the next era of the Anthropocene. Despite this, society has chosen to largely disregard the individuals tasked to solve it. Scientists continue to feel resistance to their efforts in the self-righting nature of society.

Interpretive science centers gained a major foothold since the mid-eighties when the Monterey Bay aquarium pioneered a new approach to presenting research to visitors. This now ubiquitous approach presents more than static exhibits, but an immersive experience. From here the next step is to provide a space for visitors to not only learn, but become part of the ecological research itself. Views to laboratories allow for people to see how science is conducted. Adjacent spaces for experts and interested individuals are provided.

To better understand what works for science centers, case studies on a wide variety of existing buildings were conducted. Focus was placed on observing how public and private space were treated, either distinctly separated or intermixed. A set of common features that were present on most examples was assembled. This language helped to inform what was required in plan for a successful facility.

Give as much viewable frontage to research areas as possible. In several spots scientist are required to cross through public spaces. This creates points of spontaneous interactions between curious visitors and educated experts. Galleries have been placed next to laboratories and are given views to the environmental context which is referenced.

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