

CDLI's Biomimicry in community

Created by Julia Madden

Hello All!

I am excited to see your interest in this game I developed through the Catamount Fellowship at Mount Royal University. Before we get into the 'how to facilitate' this game, I'd like to give a little background as to what inspired it.

I was partnered with Tyson Banket from the Community Development and Learning Initiative, along with Dr. Robin Owen from the Biology department. From them, I was given a question to research over the winter 2026 semester. The question was ***"How might we learn from biological systems to harness the collective power of people by valuing and fostering grassroots, community-based practices working at the systems level of change?"*** In a nutshell, this question was looking at how we can learn from the land and its beings to deepen our community relationships.

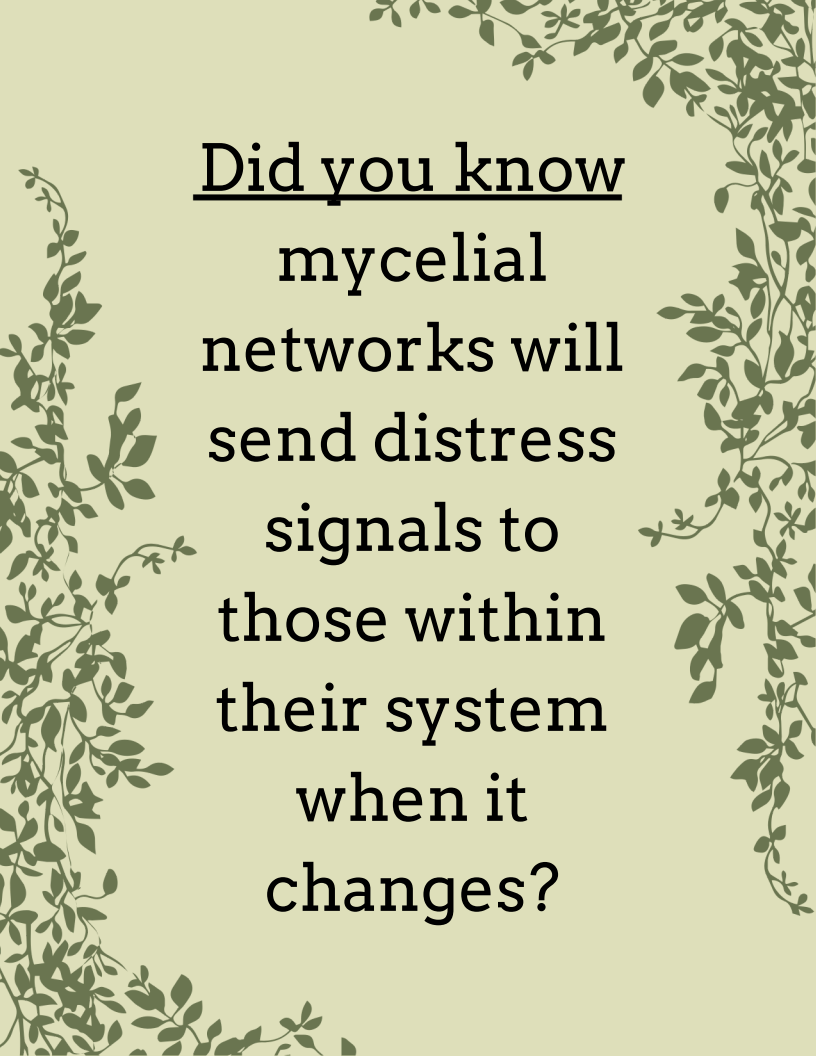
Over the semester, I looked at many topics, but one that stuck out to me was **fragmentation**. It's one we feel in both our communities and can see in the land. From polarizing ideologies to climate change, fragmentation affects us and ecological species deeply. We often think of ourselves as different from each other, but we aren't. Through this game, I wanted to highlight this topic and try to bridge that gap. The goal of this is to learn fun facts about the ecosystem and highlight our similarities to the land in a way that relates to community behaviours. The process of doing this is being in conversation with one another. Below is the template to facilitate whether you're indoors or outdoors.

CDLI's Biomimicry in community

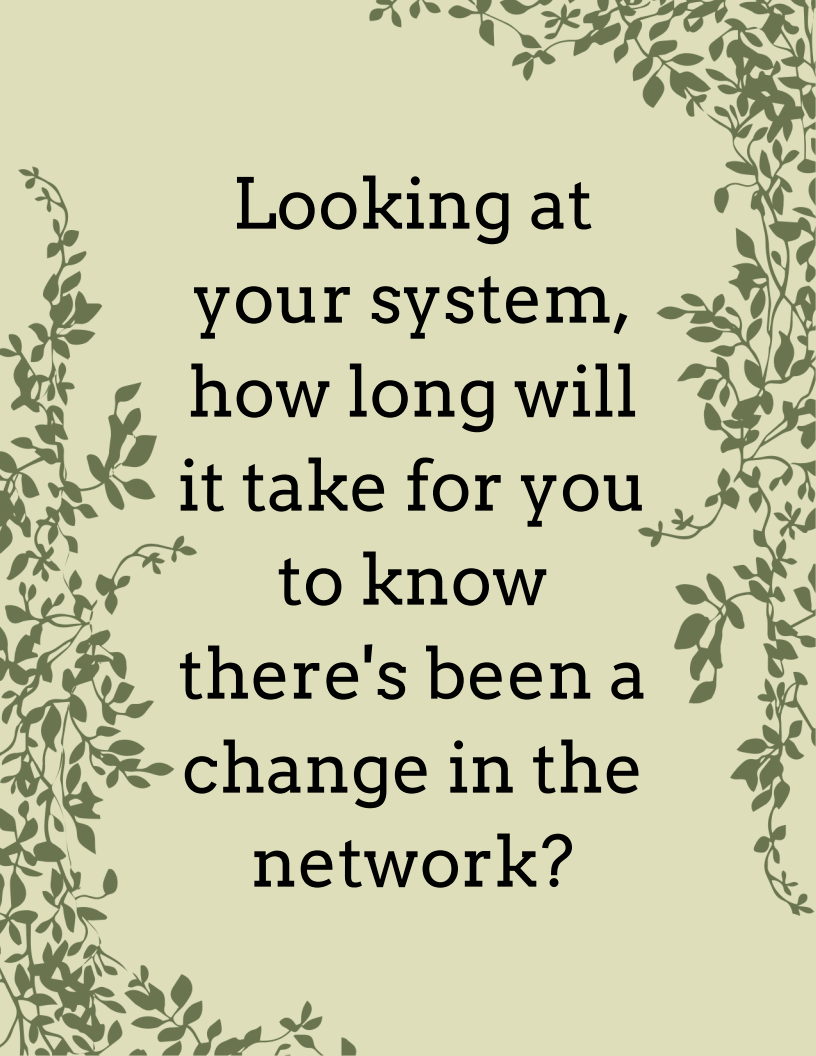
Curious how to play?

Here are some facilitation guidelines

How many people should there be?	As many people who are interested, suggest dividing participants into 3-4 groups for improved conversation.
How do we use the cards?	Scatter the cards in a given area, preferably outdoors like a scavenger-hunt. Where groups can walk around the area, find the cards and have a chat about them. Assign any amount of cards to be found by the groups.
How do I assemble this game?	Glue the matching set of cards to each other.
What size should I print?	4.25 x 5.50 in or whatever makes you happy!
How much time is needed?	Estimate about 5 minutes for on each group to respond to each card. Not each group has to find or respond to each card.
How do I introduce this game?	Start with a land acknowledgement and a grounding opening to people's current relationship to land.
How do I wrap this game up?	debrief after the game to occur for about 10-15minutes. Asking probing questions such as; • "What did you learn?" • "What was your favourite fun fact?" • "Did you see that you resonate with any of these fun facts?" • "Do you see yourself in any of these cards?"

A decorative border of green vines with small leaves frames the text on the left and right sides of the page.

Did you know
mycelial
networks will
send distress
signals to
those within
their system
when it
changes?

A decorative border of green vines with small leaves frames the text on the left and right sides of the page.

Looking at
your system,
how long will
it take for you
to know
there's been a
change in the
network?



Did you know...
mycelial networks
can allow for habitat
restoration?



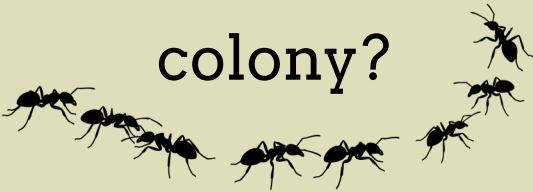


How is your
community working
to bring the good
forward?





Did you know
ants will shift their
work based on the
needs of their
colony?





How might you
adapt to meet the
needs of your
community?





Did you know
systemic changes
in the environment
can lead to plant
species spreading
thin and competing
against each other
for nutrients?





Does your
community compete
for resources?





Did you know
mycorrhizal fungi
play a role in
regulating plant
coexistence?



A decorative border at the top of the page featuring a dense arrangement of hanging flowers in shades of blue, purple, pink, and yellow, with green leaves interspersed among them.

Where in your
community might
there be a leader who
brings you together?



Did you know
mycorrhizal fungi
regulate much of what
we don't see below the
ground?



What systems might be
in place that you don't
see every day that keep
your community going?



Did you know
fallen trees can provide a
growing site for young
plants?



What past
experiences or people
have helped you
grow?





Did you know a quarter of a
teaspoon of soil can have up
to 10 billion microorganisms?





What diverse skills and
strengths do you bring to
your community?



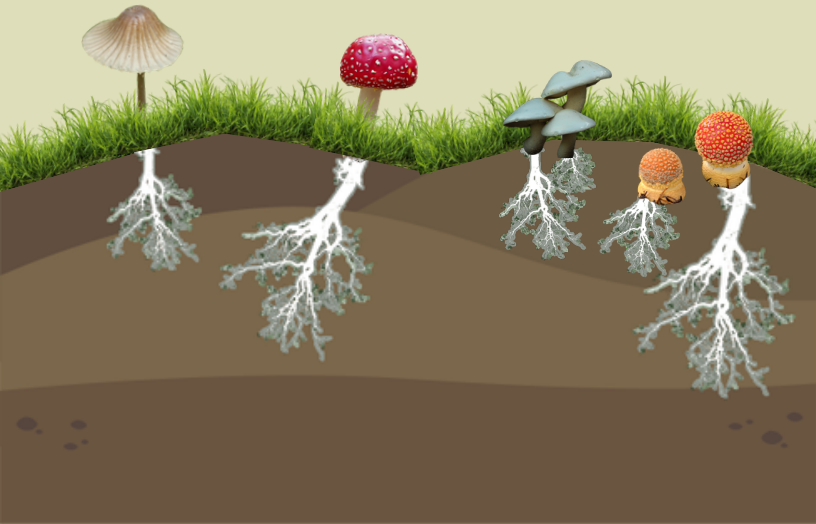
Did you know mycelial
networks will spread
nutrients to ensure all trees
and species can be
supported?



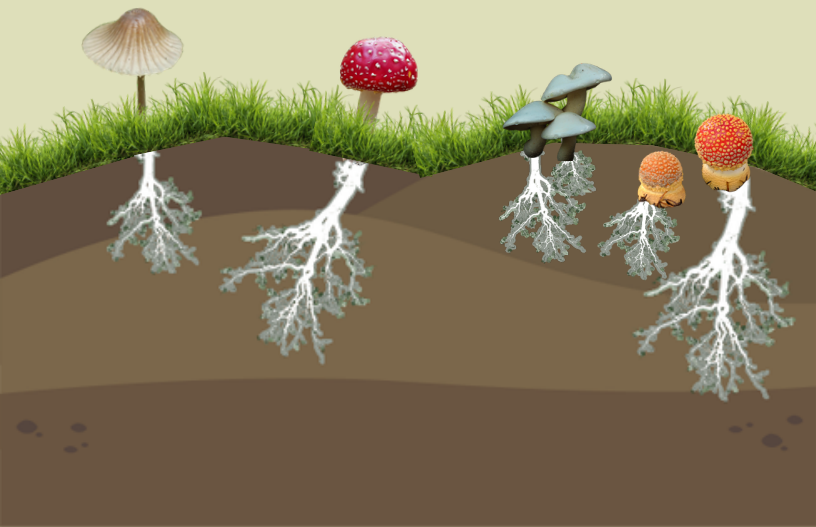
In what ways are you
supported that allow you to
support others?



Did you know the more
connected a mycelial
network is, the stronger its
species are?



How well connected do you
feel in relation to your
community?



Did you know that the
better connected a
mycelial network is,
the more productive
its organisms are?



Do you feel well
supported in your
community to make a
change? Why or why
not?



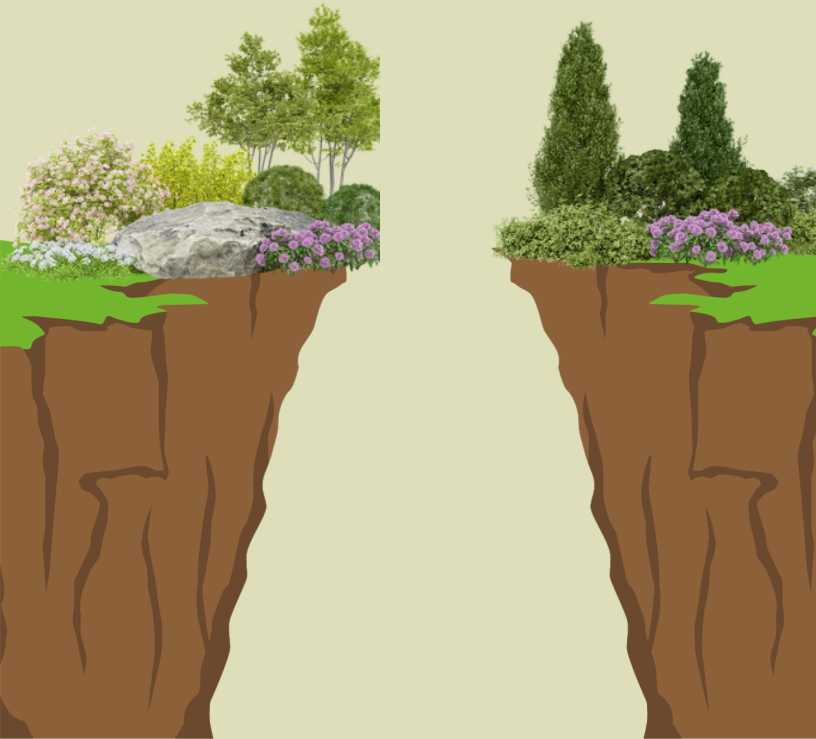
Did you know that after a forest fire, an ecosystem may not return to its original diversity even after a decade?



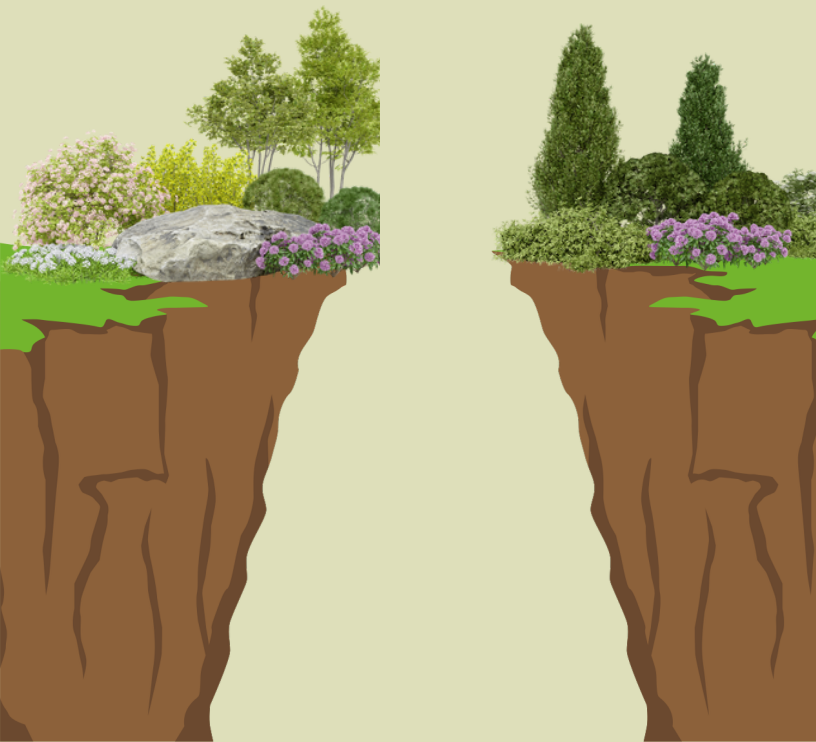
How might your community
reorganize itself after a
significant change? What
might be different going
forward?



Did you know organisms and species are just as vulnerable to fragmentation as we are?



Do you see fragmentation in
your community?



Did you know that nutrients
are spread throughout
ecosystems equally to best
support all species?



Who might you see in your
community carrying more
'nutrients' than others?

How can we better support
them?

