

# Panarchy 101

At the dawn of scientific research on sustainability, the ecologist C. S. Holling introduced a metaphor to describe the process of transformational change in ecosystems and speculated that this “figure 8” concept could be used to provide a theoretical framework that would enhance our understanding of systems of people and nature (Holling 1986). The book in which these ideas were first presented is currently out of print, but the original notion of the figure 8 and its rationale can be found in a later work (Holling 1987). Subsequently, the figure 8 metaphor was used to guide regional case studies (Holling 1995) and became known as “panarchy theory”. Since the mid-1990s, a group of ecologists, economists, social scientists, and mathematicians have worked together to elaborate the theory, develop models and applications, and evaluate examples (Gunderson and Holling 2001). The core ideas are the subject of ongoing research by a diverse group of scientists and managers collaborating under the rubric of the Resilience Alliance ([www.resalliance.org](http://www.resalliance.org)). In this issue, we are pleased to offer

status of panarchy theory by C. S. Holling, the original architect of this revolutionary concept.

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