

Planetopia

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San Francisco, CA

December 18, 2007



Planetopia is

A fun, lighthearted, educational adventure kit that helps connect children ages 7–12 to the nature that surrounds them. Planetopia teaches kids, in a simple and accessible way, about local ecosystems and encourages them to step outside and explore.



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MFA Thesis Project
Academy of Art University, San Francisco

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Planting a seed

My MFA thesis journey began in 2005, when asked to find a volunteering opportunity in my community for a course called Visual Communications Lab. I chose to become a guide at a farm in Los Altos Hills, CA, called Hidden Villa. It was a place close to my heart, as I had visited the farm countless times having grown up in Los Altos. Every Thursday, I would take a group of 2nd–4th graders out on an adventure. We would learn about the farm, the organic garden, and take a hike into the wilderness. While this was an educational field trip, one of our primary goals was for the kids to get to be kids, to get dirty, and to have fun in the outdoors. For many children, this was their first time experiencing nature. I was inspired by the profound effect that such simple things as a pretty flower, or climbing on a giant rock could have on a child.

My own childhood was filled with memories of climbing trees and running through the woods. I could only think that these early childhood experiences greatly contributed to my commitment to preserving our environment as an adult. I wanted all children to be able to experience nature like those who visit Hidden Villa, so I started to think about how I could extend the reach of environmental education beyond the farm.

< The Hidden Villa white barn

1. Try Something New
2. Take Care
3. Have Fun

Words to live by. The Hidden Villa 3 Challenges that are given to students at the beginning of each field trip. At the end of the day we ask the students if they completed each of the challenges.

Now, looking back upon my thesis journey, I ask myself the same question. Did I complete these three challenges? Absolutely.





Tending the Garden

As expected, I began with research. I wanted to gain a better understanding of the current state of environmental education. I had a sense that kids were spending less time in nature, but I wanted to see if it could be quantified. I gathered books, articles and journals. I spoke to as many parents and educators as often as I could. I was on a constant search for more information. Fortunately, I found the book *The Last Child in the Woods*, by Richard Louv. This book spoke directly to every point that I was trying to make with my thesis. It felt so good to have official validation to my thesis proposal. Louv wrote about a phenomenon that he coined Nature Deficit Disorder which is the problem that kids no longer have emotional connections to nature. He presented information on the benefits from spending time outside, from better health to improved test scores. I felt like I had struck gold with finding this book, and felt confident that my skills in graphic design could help combat Nature Deficit Disorder.

Shades of Green

The early days of the research phase of my thesis project also included figuring out what “shade of green” I wanted my message to be. Connecting with children would require a different approach than conveying an environmental message to adults. I realized that I could be much more subtle in my approach. I needed to establish emotional connections, make it tangible, and something that kids would look forward to, not be afraid of. One message from environmental education author Robert Michael Pyle struck a chord with me:

“To successfully educate children to become environmentally active citizens, they first need the opportunity to form strong bonds with their local, natural surroundings.”

I realized this was already happening at Hidden Villa, so my goal became to create a visual solution that encouraged further outdoor exploration outside of the classroom and field trips. The next step was to determine how this would manifest itself. I first thought that I would work directly with Hidden Villa to develop a set of tools that children could take home with them after visiting the farm. However, I quickly realized that this would limit my potential reach and creative freedom.

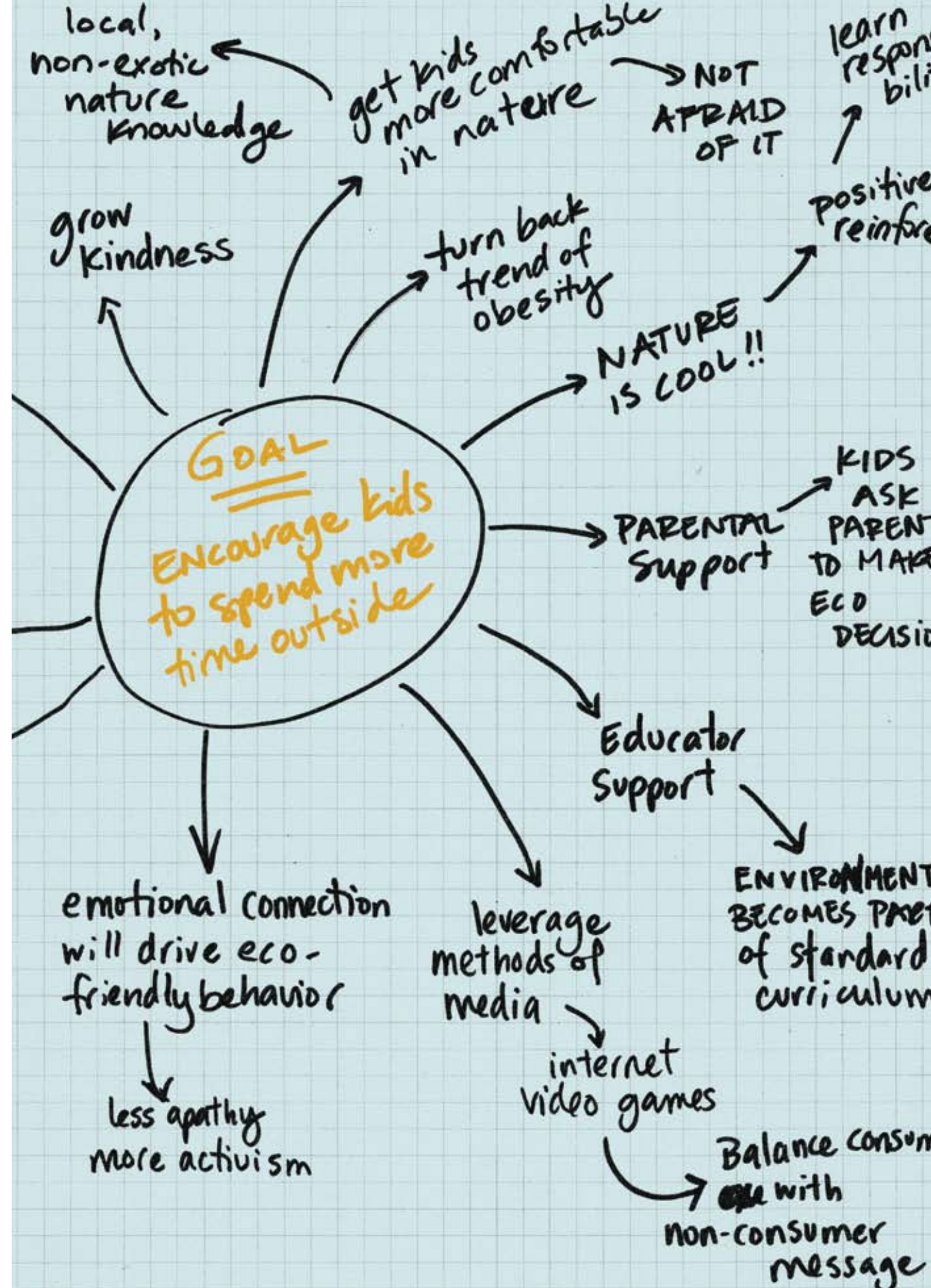


Research & Exploration

During my first semester of thesis exploration, I worked with David Peters as my advisor. Together we explored the root of the problems facing environmental education, and looked for possible solutions. I refined my hypothesis that connecting kids to nature was the key to tackling the world's climate problems. I researched existing tools for kids and teachers, determined who the key players were in affecting our children's behaviors, looked for missing links and ways to fill the gaps of environmental education. I developed a set of goals that I wanted my project to accomplish, from the simple to the grandiose. While I still wasn't sure how my project would manifest itself, I had narrowed down the possibilities based on the following assumptions:

1. Encourage unstructured play out in nature, not associated with an organized sport or goal (ie. boyscouts)
2. Target cooperation between parents and children with the wilderness and/or nature as a centerpiece
3. Speak to the critical need of nature in our children's lives
4. Demonstrate the ease of getting connected to nature on a small scale, and show the benefits for all as a result

Understanding the mind set of a parent without being one myself was challenging. David, being the father of a six-year-old son, provided a necessary perspective.



good
enough

existing situation = what doing them
who else + what can't learn from them

parents
feel

what's missing?

invent
the offer

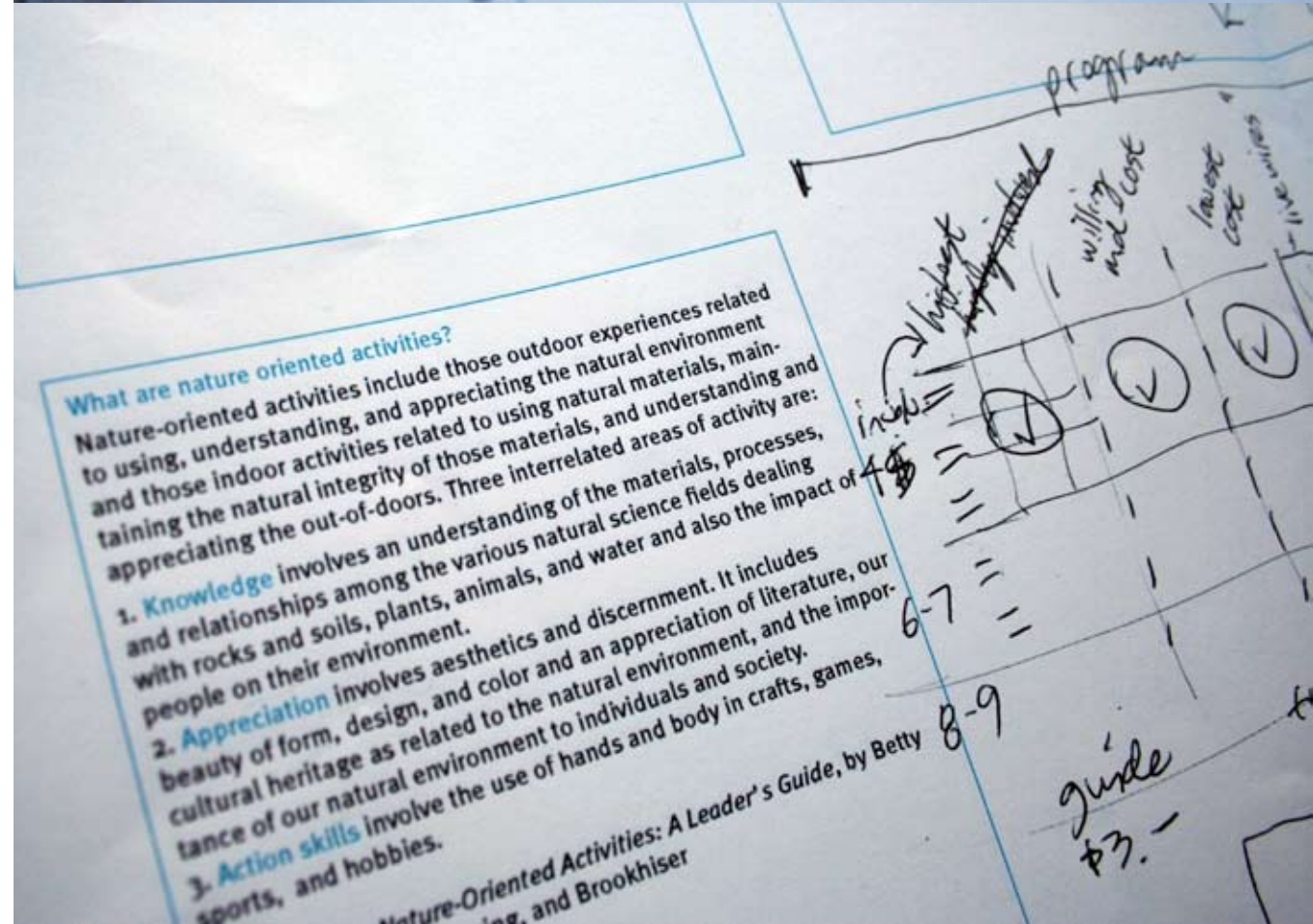
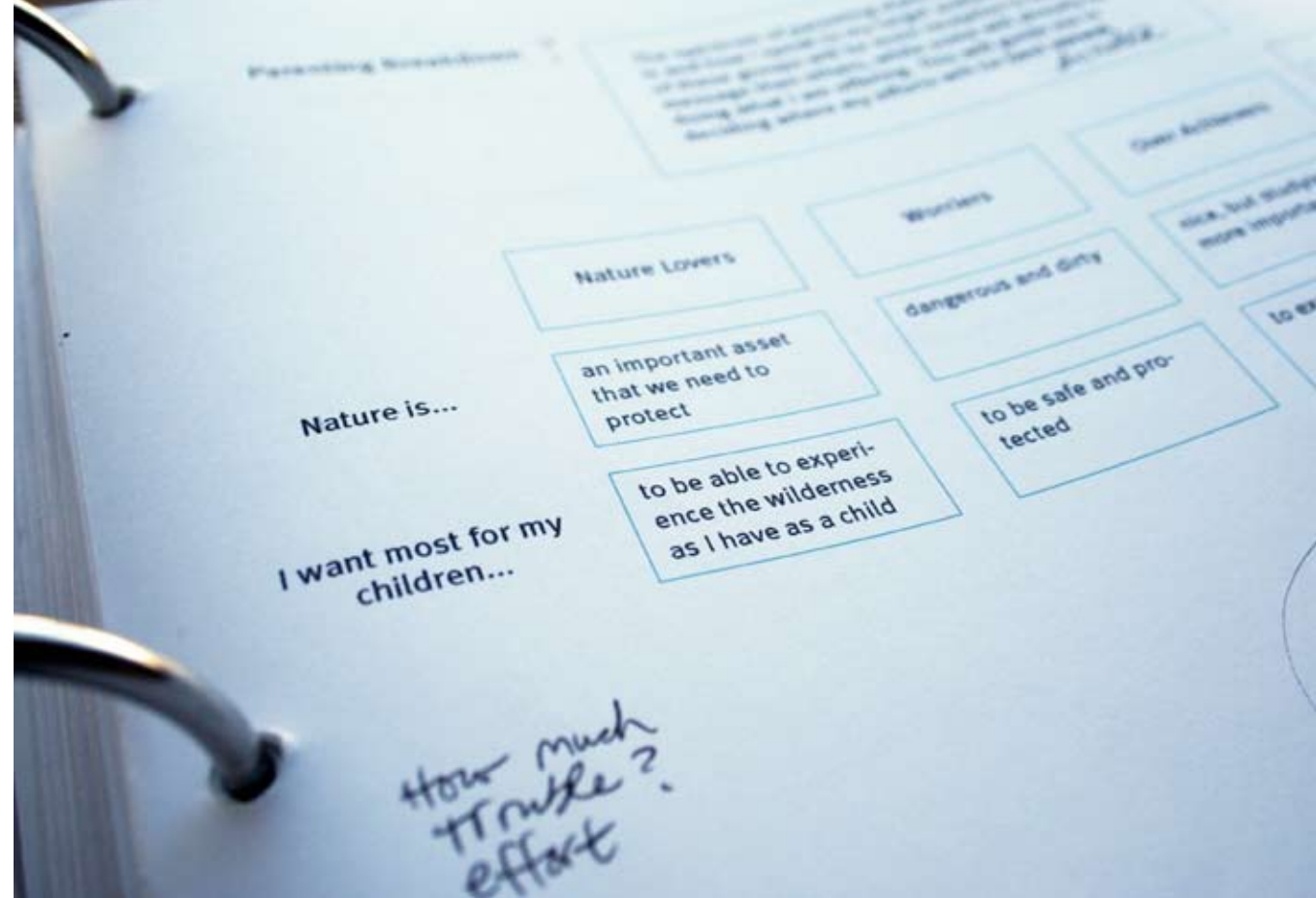
safe outdoor experiences they need?
and come back dirty and happy
for kids to have direct

*

>

The Language of Planetopia

Inquiry-based learning;
understanding through involvement;
nurturing attitudes; stewardship; building trust;
generating excitement;
establishing connections;
creativity;
respect; discovery; fun;
experiment; try something new;
love; nature play; unconstructed; parent involvement;
accomplishment; giving thanks;
simplicity; ease of use;
cast of characters; guides; biophilia;
positive emotional response; ecopsychology;
experiential education; environment as infrastructure;
conservation; explore; active; playful; silly;
imagination; discovery; wonder; awe; learning

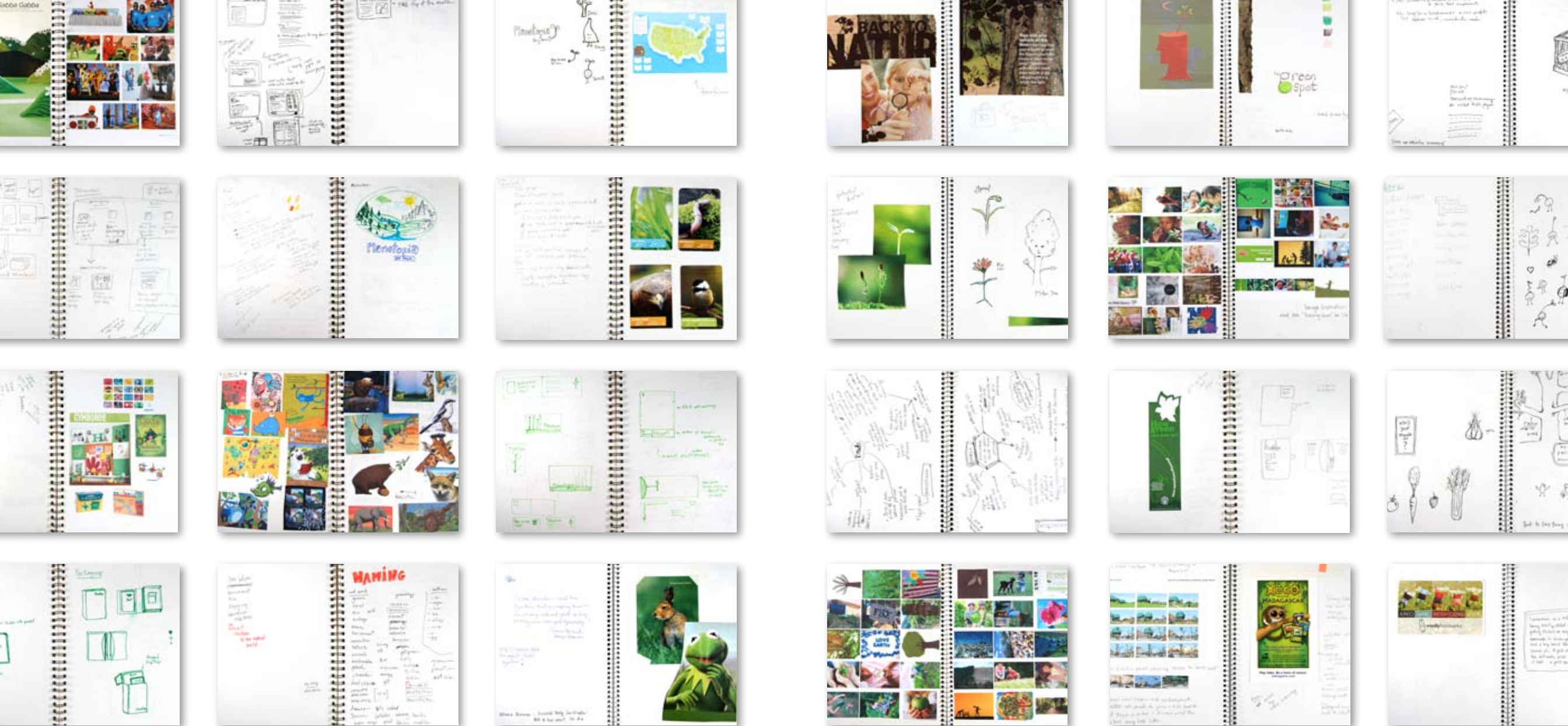




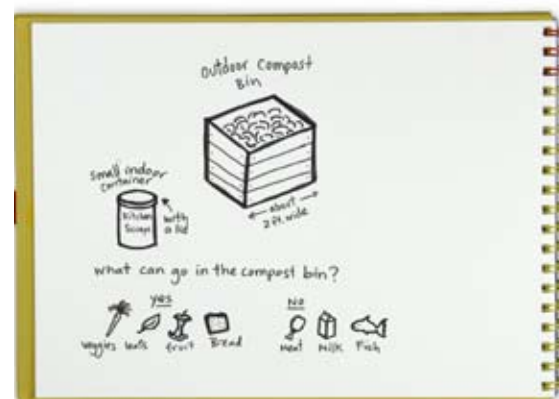
A Playful Solution

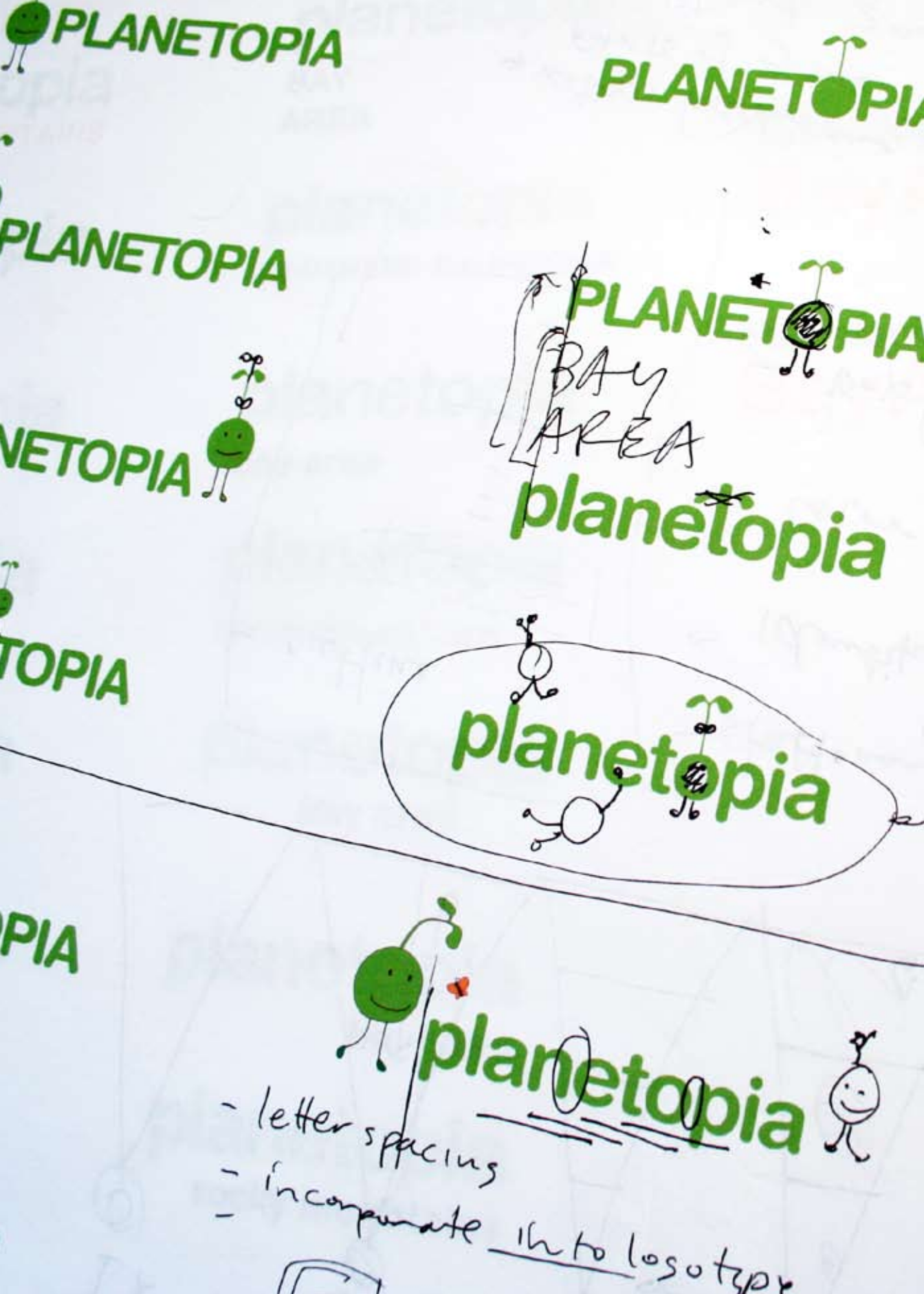
My research and analysis of the current state of environmental education yielded a solution in the form of a game. I felt that this would be the most fun, non-overt way to instill curiosity and plant the seeds for a genuine love of nature. It's a product that could be used at home, in the classroom, or with friends. I wanted the game to be beautiful and informative enough that a child would want to spend time with it even on her own. As I had never developed a game before, I set out to learn what kids liked and didn't like, what type of play was possible, and what adults were drawn to as well. I spent time discussing my project with parents, teachers, environmental educators and child psychologists to determine the best objective of my game.

The child psychologist's office was an excellent resource for game research. She helped me develop the rules for the game based on what she thought kids would respond to best.



My notebooks were helpful for sketching ideas, jotting down thoughts, collecting inspiration, or working out packaging construction.





Developing the Brand

Once I had successfully defined my deliverables, I needed to work on developing the visual identity of my project. My advisors for this phase were Jeremy Stout and Brad Rhodes. The product would be called Planetopia. I felt this was a fun, silly name, that also had a positive personality, and could be adapted for many locations. My first task was to distill my proposal into a concise mission statement:

Planetopia is a fun, lighthearted, educational, and clever product that helps connect children ages 7-12 to the nature that surrounds them. Planetopia teaches them, in a simple and accessible way, about local ecosystems and encourages them to step outside and explore.

I also developed key words to follow:

fun
educational
lighthearted
connections
simple
accessible
families
nature

Meet Sprout

Sprout inadvertently became Planetopia's mascot. As so often happens, he started as just a little character in my sketchbook, but I kept coming back to him, drawn by his charm and simplicity. Throughout the development process, Sprout would take on different roles, at times coming to the foreground as a major element, at other times slipping into the background.

In the end, Sprout served as the representative for the Bay Area edition of Planetopia. He adds another element to the logotype when stronger branding is needed. He also serves as a guide throughout the book, popping in to give tips or provide more information. He also acts as the game master—he's the one who can throw your game for a loop with his Sprout Says cards.





- ↳ à la Eric Carle but w photos
- photo collage style
 - cutouts from magazines etc to make textures / shapes
 - blocky → illustrative but using actual photos



- photo → same as cards
 - line art
- ← "ready made" style for activities



- all line drawings like paint by number
- ← MAP insert of where to go

Book & Game Development

Once I had a solid grasp of the look and feel of Planetopia the brand, I began development on the book and game. I had been doing research and collecting content throughout the previous semesters, so it was time to being the editorial process of determining what would actually make it into the book. Many of the activities included in the book I had learned while volunteering at Hidden Villa, others I found online. I included field trips that I knew from first hand experience would be fun. It was so hard limiting myself to the hundred pages that I did, because there is so much wonderful content that I could have included. I just kept reminding myself that if I got the book published in the end I could possibly add more content then.

I knew from the beginning that I wanted the book to support the game, for it to provide a richer experience after game play. I thought that if the game was about animals and ecosystems, that it would be wonderful to be able to turn to the book for more information about those animals, and for resources that would enhance the lessons about the animals. Brad Rhodes proved to be a tremendous help in realizing the structure and potential of the adventure kit.

Oat Grass

Oat grass is a common native plant of the Day Area. A native plant or animal is one that was originally from this area, and was not brought in by foreign people.

Most animals tend to eat the leaf of the plant, although some birds will eat the seeds. Humans eat oat grass seeds too - as oatmeal!

Watch It Grow!
Many kinds of food stores and nurseries sell oat or wheat grass seeds. Plant them in a small container, place it on a sunny window sill, water frequently and watch it grow!

Look and Learn:
Visit www.ourwildlifecenter.org and look for the page on Oat Grass. What does it look like? How do you use it? How do you grow it? What are some of the uses of oat grass?

O - careful

the many stripes

More like this

Herbivores
Nature's Vegetarians

A herbivore is an animal that gets its energy from eating plants and only plants. Deer, grasshoppers and rabbits are all herbivores. Even though plants are easy for these animals to find, many plants do not have much nutritional value. Herbivores that rely on these plants must spend a lot of their time grazing and knowing to get the energy they need.

Most herbivores turn part of the diet of plants further up the food chain. For example, a rabbit who eats grass might become a coyote's lunch. Therefore, they must have good strategies to help them escape their predators. Herbivores do this in a large variety of ways. Some butterflies have large yellow circles on their wings that mimic the eyes of a big cat to scare off predators that want to eat the butterfly. This is called camouflage. Deer, rabbits and other mammal herbivores often have eyes at each side of their head instead of the center so that they can detect movement around them at all times. And lots of herbivores have ways to camouflage or blend in with their environment so that their predators don't see them.

Can you think of some other examples of ways herbivores avoid being eaten by their predators?

Types: Mammals, Birds, Insects

too striped

Black-tailed Deer
Odocoileus columbianus

The black-tailed deer is very common throughout the Day Area. It is easily characterized by its tail, which is almost entirely black. It is sometimes called a mule deer. The base of each hoof of the black-tailed deer are close together.

Black-tailed deer are herbivores that eat leaves, grasses, and berries. They are usually found in wooded areas that provide good hiding places from predators, but will come to open meadows where they find their favorite foods.

Female deer will have one to two spotted fawns each year. They will take their young in the woods until the fawns are six weeks old. Their spotted bodies help camouflage them, and they must be very still to not be noticed by predators.

Being a very large animal, the only two local predators of deer are humans and mountain lions. The mountain lion serves an important role in keeping the deer population healthy. If there were too many deer they would eat all the food plants, causing the balance of the ecosystem.

Type: Mammal
Habitat: Woodland, meadows
Eats: Grass, leaves, acorns & berries

too deer

Omnivores
Eat it all!

An omnivore is an animal that gets its energy from eating both plants and other animals. People are the most common omnivore, and we share that title with raccoons, five-toed woodrats, foxes, bears, and skunks.

Because they eat all both plants and animals, omnivores can adapt to live in many different environments. There are lots of omnivores that we often see in our suburban neighborhoods because they have learned that humans throw away a lot of great food in the trash!

Look and Learn:
Visit www.ourwildlifecenter.org and look for the page on Omnivores. What do they eat? How do they live? How do they adapt to different environments?

too close competing

Black-capped Chickadee
Parus hudsonicus

The black-capped chickadee is a tiny bird that can be found in wooded areas, as well as suburban neighborhoods. You can identify it by its black head, white cheeks, and rump-colored breast. This chickadee is constantly moving, hopping and chattering away, searching for food.

They spend their time in the spring and summer in the woods nesting and raising their young. In the winter they come to suburban areas in search for new food. They are regular guests at bird feeders, so if you set one up in your backyard, you'll have a pretty good chance of having some chickadee visitors!

Type: Bird
Habitat: Woodland, suburbs, migrates south in the winter
Eats: Seeds, berries, insects and insect larvae

less text

Herbivores
Nature's Vegetarians

A herbivore is an animal that gets its energy from eating plants and only plants. Deer, grasshoppers and rabbits are all herbivores. Plants are often very easy for herbivores to find, but they are sometimes low in the nutrients the animals need to grow and stay healthy. Seeds are often packed with energy-rich nutrients like starches, but other parts of plants - the stems and leaves - don't have as many nutrients. Herbivores that rely on these plant parts must spend a lot of their time grazing and browsing to get the nutrients they need!

Some herbivores have digestive systems to help them get the most out of the plants they eat. Animals like sheep, goats, deer and cows have a special stomach called a rumen where microorganisms break down the tough parts of plant cells called cellulose. Animals with a rumen are called ruminants. Ruminants swallow their food and then regurgitate it, pump it back up and chew on it again to break down the cellulose in the plant. Once the cellulose is broken down, the food returns to the stomach where it is digested. When you hear that an animal is chewing its cud, it is re-chewing food that it had already swallowed!

Except for very large herbivores, such as adult elephants, most herbivores form part of the diet of animals further up the food chain. Therefore, they must have good strategies or adaptations to help them escape their predators. Herbivores do this in a large variety of ways! For example, some butterflies have large yellow circles on their wings that look like the eyes of a big cat to scare off predators that want to eat the butterfly. Deer, rabbits and other mammal herbivores often have eyes at each side of their head instead of the center so that they can detect movement around them at all times. And lots of herbivores have ways to camouflage or blend in with their environment so that their predators don't see them. Can you think of some other examples of ways herbivores avoid being eaten by their predators?

Common Day Area Herbivores:
Black-tailed Deer
Grey Squirrel
Grasshopper

smaller

Activity
Grow It!

Oat grass isn't just for horses! Oat grass is fun to grow at home on your windowsill. You can track its progress in a journal, take pictures of it, and make it!

1. Dig out or wheat grass seeds at a local nursery or health food store. At this point you should also pick up some soil and a flat container.
2. Soak your seeds. In water for about 4 hours. Rinse and drain them with cool water. Repeat this step about three times, every 8-12 hours. The goal is to have a small root coming out of the seed.
3. Sprinkle your seeds on top of a thick layer of damp soil, and cover with a tray or other item that will block out the sunlight. Water once a day.
4. Dissect in 2-4 days, when the grass has grown 1-2 inches, and move the tray to a well-lit place.
5. Keep watering every day. Watch it grow!

Look and Learn:
How long did it take for the oat grass to grow out from the soil?
How tall did your grass grow?
Did the oat grass have any roots?
What happened after a few days?

handwritten good - maybe not had

watch colors + reading

Honeybee
Oncophanes columbiana

Field Trip
Busy Bees

Visit www.ourwildlifecenter.org and look for the page on Honeybees. What do they do? How do they live? How do they adapt to different environments?

Type: Insect
Habitat: Gardens, meadows, woodlands, forests
Eats: Nectar

The honeybee is one of our hardest workers in the neighborhood. In our neighborhoods, and on the farm, without it, we would not be able to enjoy nearly as many fruits as we do. Not only does the honeybee do a lot of pollinating, it also makes that sweet treat - honey!

Coyote Point Museum
1501 Coyote Point Drive, San Mateo
Open Tuesday through Saturday 10 am - 4 pm,
Sundays 12 pm - 5 pm, closed Monday

Write you're there, check out the other neat exhibits on local animals, fossils, and earthquakes that www.ourwildlifecenter.org

not together

Black-tailed Deer
Odocoileus columbianus

The black-tailed deer is very common throughout the Day Area. It is easily characterized by its tail, which is almost entirely black. It is sometimes called a mule deer. The base of each hoof of the black-tailed deer are close together.

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Being a very large animal, the only two local predators of deer are humans and mountain lions. The mountain lion serves an important role in keeping the deer population healthy. If there were too many deer they would eat all the food plants, causing the balance of the ecosystem.

Type: Mammal
Habitat: Woodland, meadows
Eats: Grass, leaves, acorns & berries

X

Color Palette & Typography

Developing a comprehensive color palette was a critical step for the success of Planetopia. Not only does it convey the personality of the brand, it is a functional color palette as well. Each color represents one category of the food chain, so is used across all parts of the adventure kit, from the game to the book to the website. It is the easiest way for kids to identify the different categories. The colors needed to be distinctly different for each of the six categories, and at the same time work together as a family. I developed a set of secondary colors to partner with the main palette for use in typography and to add contrast.

Typography is kept simple and clear, with the use of the Helvetica Neue family. I chose this in part because I wanted to set my design apart from the garish, overly-stylized kid products currently on the market. I wanted the information to be clean and clear, not to be lost amongst drop shadows and bubble effects of other toys. Since the logotype is set in Helvetica Rounded, so I wanted to use a typeface that was complimentary, but that still allowed the logo to be unique. Color became the treatment that allowed the stoic Helvetica to become more lively and playful.

Producers

Pollinators

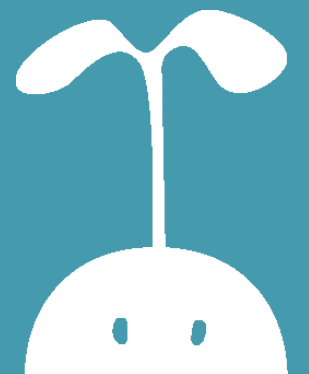
Herbivores

Omnivores

Carnivores

Decomposers

Welcome to Planetopia!





The Final Product

Two years later the prototype of the Bay Area edition of Planetopia is born. Alongside the Adventure Kit consisting of the Explore the Bay Area book and the Sprout Says game are an interactive website, promotional poster series, thought-provoking postcards and a self-mailing brochure directed at parents, educators, and retailers.

Planetopia gets elementary-school-age children in touch with their local environment, inspires awe and wonder toward the natural world, and encourages them to go explore the outdoors near and far. Planetopia is a scalable program, adaptable to any region. I have developed the prototype for the Bay Area, and see opportunities to expand to regions such as the Rocky Mountains or the Southwest. The kit would be sold in museum shops, local bookstores, and toy stores. It can be used either by families or teachers, as it follows the California State Board of Education standards for fourth grade life sciences. Planetopia is not meant to be preachy or guilt inducing, its singular goal is to foster a genuine curiosity and passion for nature.





Sprout Says Game

Sprout Says is the game that is the cornerstone for the adventure kit. It is a simple 2–4 player card game in which the goal is to be the first to form a complete food chain. Players are dealt six cards, and the remaining cards are placed in a face-down draw pile. Players take turns drawing and discarding their cards, trying to get one card from each of the six food chain categories: Producer, Pollinator, Herbivore, Omnivore, Carnivore and Decomposer. But things aren't as easy as that. There are also a number of "Sprout Says" cards, which can quickly flip around the status of the game. "Sprout Says" cards are all action cards, directly referencing environmental events such as the seasons, fire, or drought. Each of these cards will impact the animals based on their type, where they live, or what they eat.

For instance, one Sprout Says card tells us that it's winter time, therefore the birds are flying South. Any player who is holding birds in their hand (of any category) must discard all of them and draw new cards. Players quickly learn to strategize their hands so they don't suffer too badly when a Sprout Says card is played.

So far everyone who has played the game has had loads of fun. The girls on the previous spread, Maeve (7) and Nora (10), were my official kid-testers. They caught on to the rules very quickly, and became very attached to the characters. They were having so much fun that they begged me to leave it with them when I had to go.

Explore the Bay Area Book

The book extends the lessons learned from the game. Like the game, the book is divided into chapters based on each of the food chain groups. The color scheme is the same to facilitate cross-referencing. Within each chapter there are four types of spreads: Spotlights provide additional information about some of the local animals; Activities vary in complexity and relate directly to the animals in each chapter; Field Trips offer suggestions for excursions to local nature spots and museums; and Free Space, an area where kids can use to write or draw. Sprout pops in on occasion to deliver some helpful tips or additional information. The book encourages kids to sketch and take notes within the pages, to go outside and to use their imagination, making it a truly interactive experience.

I wanted the style to be clean, yet playful. I wanted it to stand out from the other cluttered, overwhelming designs for kids on the bookshelf. Typography is simple and straightforward, with sketched drawings illustrating the activities and embellishing some of the pages. The book is printed on an uncoated paper to facilitate writing directly on the pages. One mother who read the book stated that it is “a great resource for exploring our local habitat! The interactive format was very engaging and held my son’s interest.”

Be The Change

One reason that we are experiencing more problems with dangerous wildlife in our neighborhoods is that urban development has taken away the animals' habitat. One way to help protect the homes of the animals is to write about it to your local politician.

Things You'll Need:

■ Paper ■ Pen ■ Envelope ■ Stamp ■ The address of your local politician

Decide who you would like to write to. Your options include everyone from your city council members, to senators and congress people, to the president. Who do you want to write about? Think about what you care about having wilderness areas near your house. How do you feel if there were no more wilderness? What is important to you.

Write a letter to your local politician to help by signing important bills that protect the environment.

Send it! Letting your local government know you care about the environment will help them make changes to the law. Pay attention to what decisions are made.

Sprout

In 2001, the

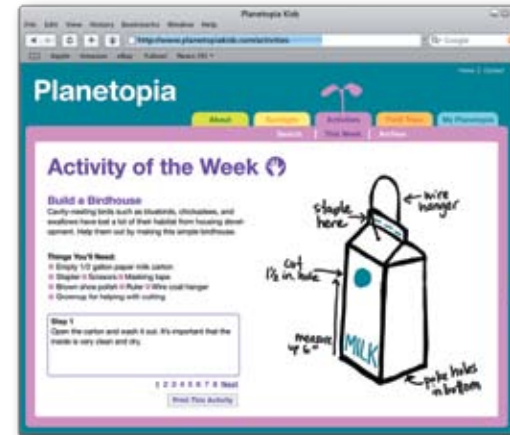


A few examples of each type of spread: intro, spotlight, activity and field trip. Color coding matches the categories in the game.

Planetopiakids.com

It's impossible to ignore the web these days, especially with children becoming tech-literate younger and younger. I felt conflicted with creating an online presence since the purpose of my thesis was to get kids offline and outside. At the same time, I felt that the easiest way to promote the Adventure Kit was to direct people to a website. My solution was to create a dual-purpose website. One part is a basic e-brochure, and the second part is an interactive section called My Planetopia. Kids create profiles and add new adventures, creating an online journal of the field trips they took and what animals they saw. This way I could get kids thinking about Planetopia on an ongoing basis in addition to encouraging them to go outside and explore.





Online Development

Screen shots of the planetopiakids.com website show how you could navigate through the pages. The home page is directed more towards the parents as an e-brochure. The other pages are kid-centered, providing activities and interactivity. Like the rest of Planetopia, the website can be easily adapted to have different regional content.



Deer live here.

Shhh! They can hear you...
Explore the Bay Area with Planetopia and learn about other animals that might live in your backyard.
www.planetopiakids.com



Honey Bees live here.

And they're helping to make your lunch.
Explore the Bay Area with Planetopia and learn about other animals that might live in your backyard.
www.planetopiakids.com



Banana Slugs live here.

Will you join the banana slug kissing club?
Explore the Bay Area with Planetopia and learn about other animals that might live in your backyard.
www.planetopiakids.com



Valley Oaks live here.

Show a tree you care. Give it a hug.
Explore the Bay Area with Planetopia and learn about other animals that might live in your backyard.
www.planetopiakids.com

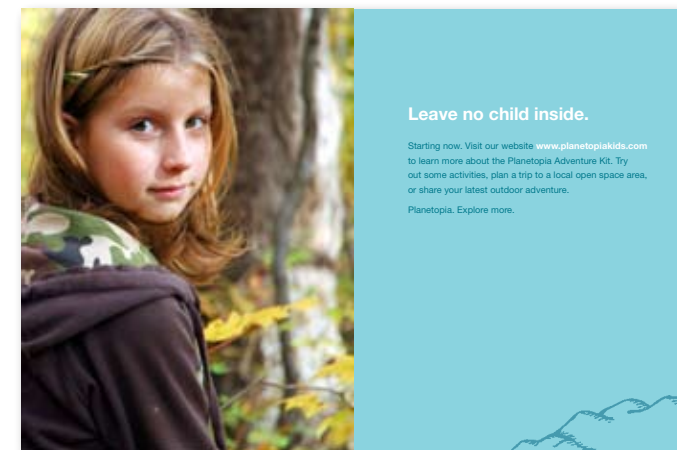
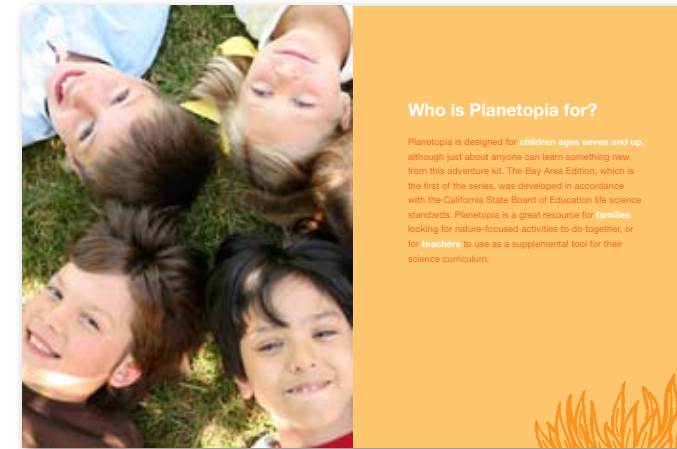
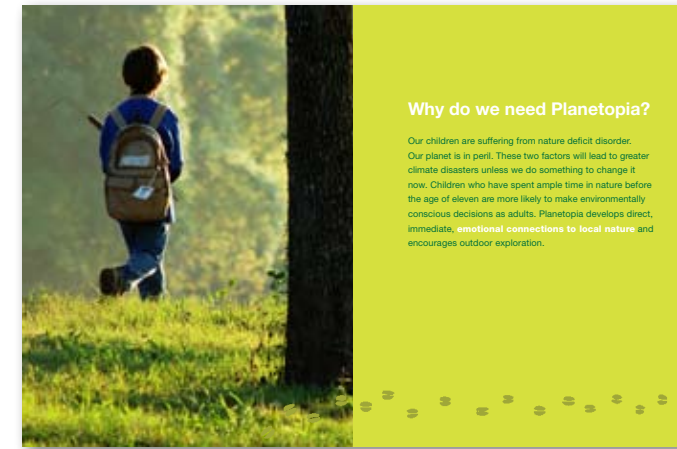


Poster Series

This promotional poster series is intended to surprise people about some of the local fauna. Far too many people are unaware of the vast amounts of wildlife that can flourish in such a developed region. Bringing awareness is the first step towards getting families to go outside and explore. There are six posters in total, one corresponding to each of the food chain categories, and directly referencing the color-coding of the book and game.

Brochure

The mailable brochure introduces adults to the world of Planetopia, and provides insight into why it is an important tool for children. They get to meet Sprout, learn about the components of the Adventure Kit, and get a feel for the visual style of the product. Readers are left with the charge that it is up to them to facilitate the reconnection of children to nature.



“I like to play indoors better ‘cause that’s where all the electrical outlets are.”

—5th grade student

Planetopia



“What is the extinction of a condor to a child who has never seen a wren?”

—Author and tree hugger

Planetopia



“Let us allow our children to love the earth before we ask them to save it.”

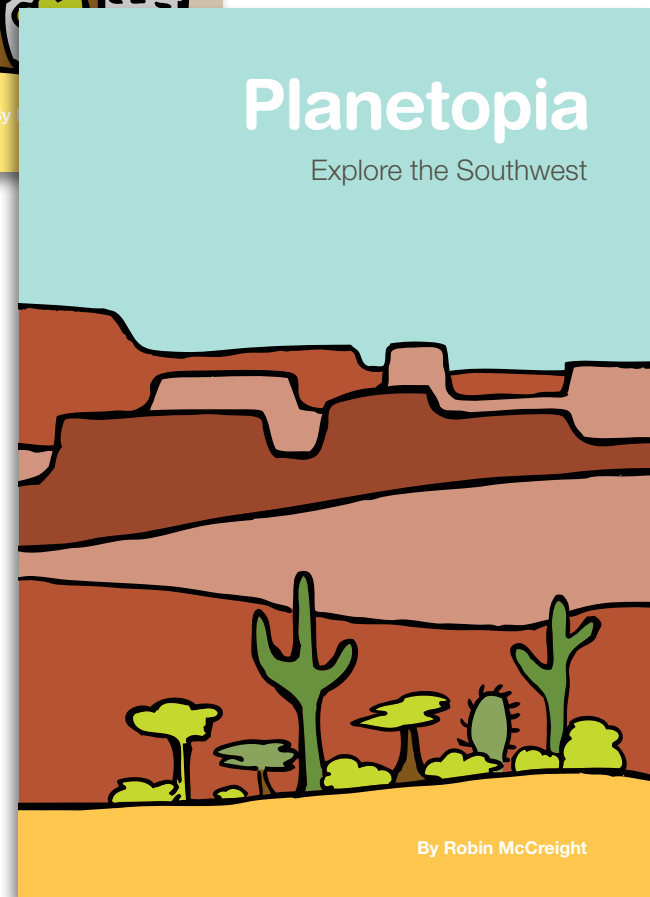
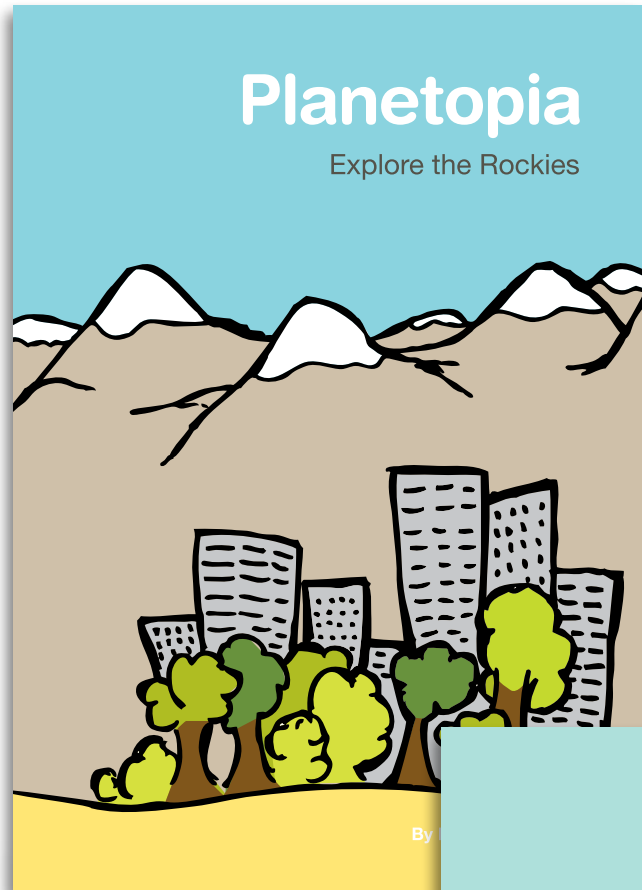
—Teacher and environmentalist

Planetopia



Salient Points

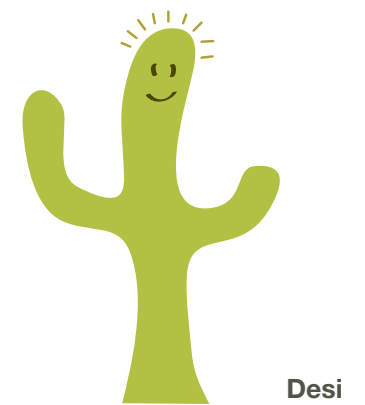
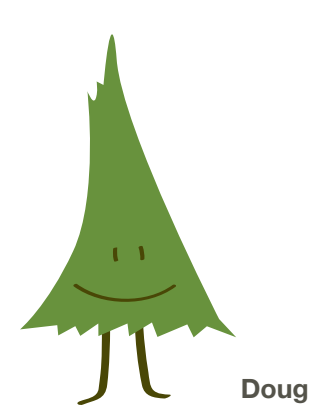
These thought-provoking postcards are designed to get people thinking about how they can improve the environmental education landscape. The back of the card provides supporting facts, and a directive to start solving the problem of nature deficit disorder now.

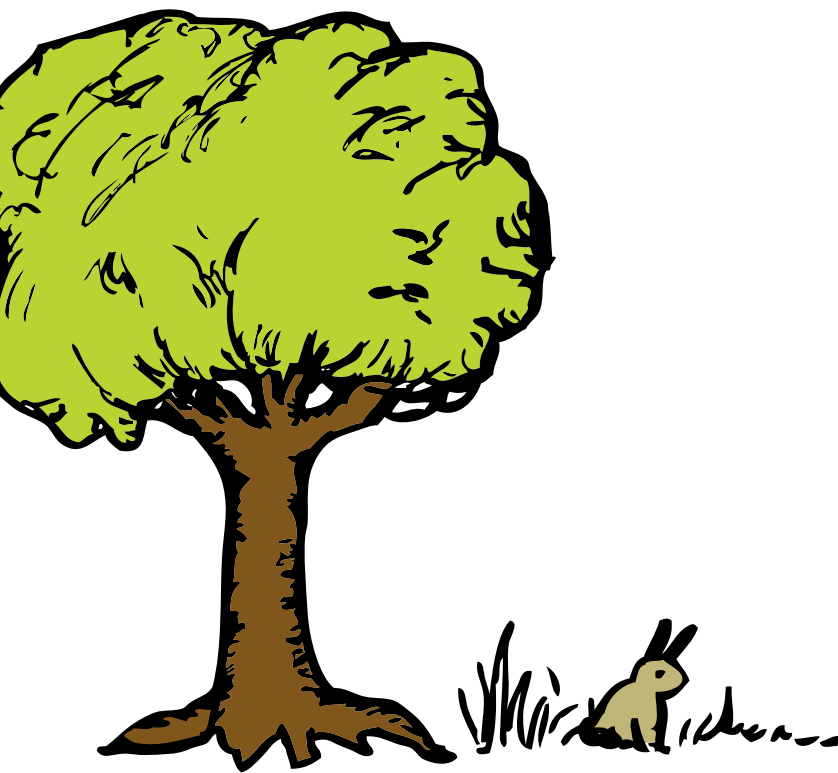


Brand Extensions

While I have initially developed the prototype for the Bay Area edition of Planetopia, I see the brand as being extensible to virtually any region. The benefit of having locally-focused resources is that it makes it very easy for families or educators to actually get the kids outside. The usefulness of the product is diminished as the range of locations increases. For example, the likelihood of a New York student to visit the Grand Canyon is much less than visiting the Hudson River Park.

In looking forward I have developed the look and feel for two potential extensions of Planetopia: for the Rocky Mountains and for the Southwest. Each has its own mascot, Doug and Desi, respectively, who are essentially friends of Sprout. Both of these take a wider angle at providing regional resources, with the understanding that it would be easier for a publisher to market a product that is geared towards a larger population.





Challenges

To say this project was challenging is an understatement. The most difficult part was balancing working on my thesis with the rest of grad school, and the rest of my life. Life kept intervening, creating barriers and detours. But I can honestly say that I am in love with my project. I feel more passionate about the subject than I did when I started, which is hard to believe. I kept wanting to add more: more information, more product extensions, more parts to the website, but just didn't have the time to get everything done. There are so many fun activities, and amazing field trips that I want the children of California to know about. It was really difficult drawing the line and moving forward.

Content generation was a real challenge. I wrote every word in the book, curated or took every photograph, and drew every illustration. Distilling all the research I had done was an immense task. I had never designed a web site before, or developed a game from scratch, so getting my head around how to create ones that made sense and were easy to use was challenging. Fortunately I had the help of wonderful people along the way.

I am ready to face the next challenge of trying to get my product to market. This is perhaps the greatest challenge yet. I have started to explore a few options, from pitching it to an independent publisher, or trying to get a curriculum company to pick it up, but I am still looking for other opportunities. I believe this product can and should be made available to the public, and I hope that I can make it happen.

Autobiography

I was born and raised in the Bay Area, and was incredibly fortunate to have had a childhood that included abundant time in the outdoors, whether it was hiking, climbing a tree, or digging in the mud. I have no doubt that these early experiences shaped my values towards our environment. I went back East to Skidmore College for my undergraduate degree. I majored in Business, partly for its practicality, and partly because I really enjoyed it. Art was always in the picture however, and I pursued a minor in Studio Art. I was always busy in college, riding on the equestrian team, singing in an a capella group, or serving as a resident assistant.

Upon graduation I joined the dot-com boom in Silicon Valley, having had enough of the cold winters of upstate New York. I managed a center that did college counseling for high school students, running everything from sales, to marketing, to the counseling itself. It was a great little startup, but I chose to move on to other things. My next job was at an art licensing firm, and it was here that I discovered my love and aptitude for graphic design. I helped the artists we managed with creating mockups of their art on various products. Even though I didn't exactly know what I was doing, I could feel in my gut that it was the right direction for me. So when my job started to shift into a more administrative field, I decided it was time to take the plunge and become a "real" graphic designer.

Four years ago I started the MFA program at the Academy of Art, and I am amazed at how quickly it has gone by. I have learned so much, and feel utterly confident in stepping out into the world as a skilled graphic designer.

Résumé

EDUCATION

Academy of Art University, San Francisco. MFA Graphic Design, 2007
Skidmore College, New York. BA, Business & Management, cum laude 1999
Skidmore in Paris, study abroad program, 1997–1998

WORK EXPERIENCE

Freelance Graphic Designer : 2004–present

While attending graduate school contracted with ideo, idsa, and Vox Design Group on books, brochures, promotional pieces, and other print collateral; Designed logos, identity systems, and promotional pieces for individuals and small businesses.

New Leaf Paper, San Francisco, CA : 2006

Graphic Design Intern : Designed swatch book for Sakura, a new recycled paper line; Developed advertisements placed in Ms. and Ode Magazines; Created sales pamphlets for New Leaf Paper Eco Audit; Revised corporate style guide; Designed secondary version of corporate logo.

Stanford University School of Medicine, Office of Student Affairs, Stanford, CA : 2004–2005

Advising Assistant : Designed quarterly Medical Student Newsletter, as well as other department & school-wide publications; Maintained Advising website; Supported the 4 MD Advising Deans

Administrative Assistant : 2003–2004 : Provided administrative assistance to the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs; Served as contact person for medical students regarding special programs

Courtney Davis, Inc., Portola Valley, CA : 2001–2003

Creative Marketing Manager : Created collateral materials for sales presentations including press kits for five artists at art licensing agency; Designed product prototypes using licensees' artwork; Assisted in the development and presentation of artwork to current and prospective licensees; Managed multiple projects through production; Managed administrative operations

Achieva College Prep Services, Palo Alto, CA : 2000–2001

Center Director : Developed and implemented grassroots marketing strategies; Created and marketed new client services; Managed, hired, and trained all full and part-time staff; Set revenue goals, conducted direct sales, and motivated team to meet & exceed goals; Brought in over \$80k in one month, setting a record across the division

Associate Director : 1999–2000 : Counseled high school students in all aspects of college admissions

VOLUNTEERING

Farm & Wilderness Tour Guide : Hidden Villa : 2005–present

Adventure Race Assistant Coach : Team in Training : Summer 2004 & Spring 2005

COMPUTER SKILLS

Macintosh cs3 Platform: Illustrator, InDesign, Photoshop, and Acrobat; Microsoft Office;
Working knowledge of Adobe After Effects, GoLive and Macromedia Flash

ACHIEVEMENTS & AFFILIATIONS

French Rabbit Design Scholarship, 2007

Exhibited at Academy of Art Spring Show, 2005, 2006, 2007

Seymour J. Goldman Award for the Outstanding Business Student, 1999

aiga Member, San Francisco Chapter

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Books

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- Chawla, Louise. "Children's Concern for the Natural Environment." *Children's Environment Quarterly* 5: 13–20. 1988.
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Websites

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- BioKids, www.biokids.umich.edu
- California Education Standards, www.cde.ca.gov
- Cal Photos, calphotos.berkeley.edu
- EcoKids, www.ecokids.ca
- ENature: America's Wildlife Resource, www.enature.com
- Environment California, www.environmentcalifornia.org
- Hidden Villa, www.hiddenvilla.org
- Journey North, www.learner.org/jnorth/
- Midpeninsula Regional Open Space, www.openspace.org
- NatureWorks, www.nhptv.org/natureworks/nw4.htm
- National Conservation Training Center, www.digitalrepository.fws.gov
- National Geographic, www.nationalgeographic.com
- National Park Service, www.nps.gov
- NWF Green Hour, www.greenhour.org
- Ranger Rick: National Wildlife Federation, www.nwf.org
- Teacher Resources: Environment & Ecology Series, sftrc.cas.psu.edu/EnvSeries.htm
- Wilderdom: nature activities for kids, www.wilderdom.com/games/

Many Thanks

I have many people to thank for their generous support in the creation of this book: Gordon McCreight, Rich and Shelley Casey, Jake Casey, Carol Gelatt, Garth Harwood and all the Hidden Villa staff and volunteers, Allison Fitzgerald, Bill Moggridge, Jennifer Neviaser, Chris Nutter, Ginny Strock, Phil Hamlett, Tom McNulty, David Peters, Brad Rhodes, Mary Scott, Jennifer Sterling, Jeremy Stout, my classmates from the Academy of Art, and all of my dearest friends and family. To my sweet dog Riley, for making me smile even when I was beyond exhaustion.

Thank you to Greg Cope who's beautiful photography really upped the ante of my project. Your photographs elicit oohs and aahs from everyone who sees them. I am fortunate you allowed me the opportunity to work with you.

I am very thankful for the patience and expertise of the folks at Jungle Digital Printing in Palo Alto. I would bring in a sample, say "I want it like this," and they would make it happen. Dang and Eddie truly made my project sing—it was worth every penny.

And it goes without saying, that I owe this whole project to the birds, the butterflies, the bunnies, the banana slugs, and the bobcats. May our children be able to enjoy your company for generations to come.

