In the discussions of common pool resources and the "Warm Data" lab, many of the insights I gained tie into other aspects of systems as a whole. In my final project, I will be discussing plastic production and the system of manufacturing and distributing plastic products with specific ties to certain areas where poor practices are having tremendous impact. I think that all systems either center around a common pool resource or have relationships with a common pool resource, thus there are many ways these insights can be incorporated into the system I will discuss in my final project. It is also true that, as Nora Bateson describes, it takes complexity to see complexity and there are several principles that govern management of common resources. These ideas have changed my approach to systems thinking in the context of common resources and will impact my approach to discussing my final project.

In the Ostrom article, one main finding was that users of a common pool resource, in this case forests, who are more engaged in the rule-creation process of how a resource should be used are more likely to follow rules and monitor the behavior of others than when a single-governing body has complete control over imposing rules. This insight is essential to understanding the plastic production system. One of the main concerns with this system is that the majority of users of plastic are either unaware or not concerned with the impact of plastic production on the environment. The decisions of companies to foster unsustainable plastic production methodology are often made at the upper levels, as CEO's and other top tier employees are the ones imposing such a system. There is also very little governance of this system, since there are few laws in place that restrict companies from engaging in unsustainable practices and few individuals with enough power to implement change on such a dramatic level. If users were to become more actively engaged in the process of creating rules and regulations and if there was a shift in power toward the collective population of users and away from authority figures, the plastic production system would likely change for the better. Individuals who are more active in understanding the negative feedback loop that plastic production has on the

environment, a common pool resource, the more likely they will be to engage in the process of changing that system.

Through the "Warm Data" lab, it became clear that no system is simple or has simple solutions. Upon first hearing Nora Bateson's argument that there is no such thing as a simple solution, I immediately rejected it. Is it really that complex for individuals to switch to using reusable shopping bags from using plastic bags? Isn't it a simple solution for coffee companies to use compostable materials or stop the use of plastic straws? The truth of the matter, as I now see it, is that these ideas are actually far more complex due to the relationships these changes would have with other parts of their respective systems. During the lab, I stayed at the "Politics" table for a fairly long time discussing well-being in a changing world with emphasis on the changing world aspect. In our discussion, we mentioned every single other topic in the room, especially social media, ecology, economics, and culture. This revealed to me that there is no simple solution to any of the political issues we currently face. Social media is changing the way people take in news in dramatic ways, and it is impossible to create a solution to the polarization of our current political system because it is rooted in so many other areas. This is an important insight for my topic of plastic production since it is not only a matter of changing company practices and government regulations. It is the impact of social media on consumer behavior, ecology of our changing environment, cultural shift in preferences, and infinite other subsystems that factor into the plastic production system. A change in one system will inherently affect the others, and there is no defined way to ensure the change you make has the impact you desire.

Overall, my main takeaway from this week's discussion is that everything in our world is interconnected. Managing a common pool resource is more than just implementing better rules and regulations. It requires an in-depth understanding of all other related subsystems to adequately create any kind of change. In my final project, I will approach it with the understanding that there is an infinite amount of factors that are impacted by the plastic production system. I will focus on the areas with

most relevance to the system while addressing the areas that I must leave out and set boundaries for

since no system is quite as simple as it might appear.