

The Science and Practice of Landscape Stewardship

Improving the dynamic relationship between nature and human wellbeing is a pressing issue of our time. Landscapes embody this tight interconnectedness and serve as unique sustainability learning hubs, showcased by the global rise of place-based and holistic landscape stewardship initiatives. Incorporating these exciting developments, this book explores the principles of landscape stewardship and their function in fields such as agriculture, ecological restoration and urban green infrastructure. It provides insights into the challenges and the potential of landscape stewardship and identifies future paths for the science and practice of landscape-related sustainability efforts. Aligning analytical perspectives with practical applications, it brings together contributions from leading scholars and innovative models of landscape stewardship from all around the world, making it an essential resource for anyone interested in developing sustainable human-nature relationships.

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The Science and Practice of Landscape Stewardship

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Preface

Landscapes and their manifold contributions to human wellbeing offer fertile ground for sustainability studies. In our previous work, we were interested in understanding the patterns, processes, driving forces and impacts of landscape change, proposing social-ecological analysis frameworks. With this volume, we want to contribute to developing a more proactive landscape science. Rather than only observing or responding to landscape change, such landscape science explores and supports innovative and passionate stewardship of ecosystems and landscapes, thus reinforcing feedback loops between humans and nature. Our primary intention is to investigate, both academically and practically, how and why people act as stewards in a diversity of landscapes in Europe and beyond.

This book is a central output of the European project ‘Sustainable Futures for Europe’s Heritage in Cultural Landscapes: Tools for understanding, managing, and protecting landscape functions and values’ (HERCULES). Funding has been provided from the European Commission through Grant 603447 (7th Framework Programme). Much of our landscape stewardship thinking originated in discussions with HERCULES project partners, in particular with Chris Raymond, Brian J. Shaw, Marie-Alice Budniok, Matthias Bürgi, Nora Fagerholm, María García-Martín, Geneviève Girod, Thanasis Kizos and Julianna Nagy. First ideas on landscape stewardship were presented to attendees of a HERCULES workshop on ‘Landscape Stewardship: Integrating a broad suite of landscape values into rural development policies’ (European Economic and Social Committee, Brussels, 03.06.2015). Interaction with master students in our classes ‘Rural Landscapes – Management and Planning’ at the University of Copenhagen and ‘Landscape Change, Nature Conservation and Ecosystem Services’ (among others) at the University of Hohenheim further supported structuring our ideas around landscape stewardship.

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