

The Science and Practice of Landscape Stewardship

Improving the dynamic relationship between humanity and environment is a pressing issue and landscapes embody this tight interconnectedness, serving as unique sustainability learning hubs and showcased by the rise of place-based and holistic landscape stewardship initiatives worldwide. This book explores the principles of landscape stewardship and their application in fields such as agriculture, ecological restoration and urban green infrastructure, providing insights into the potential benefits and challenges of landscape stewardship and identifying future paths for the science and practice of landscape-related sustainability efforts.

Aligning analytical and practical perspectives, this text brings together contributions from leading scholars in the field and innovative models of landscape stewardship from around the world, making it an essential resource for anyone interested in sustainable transformations of human–nature relationships.

Claudia Bieling has a background in forestry and environmental social sciences. In her position as a Professor for Societal Transition and Agriculture at the University of Hohenheim, Germany, she explores how more sustainable land-use practices may be achieved.

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PROOF

The Science and Practice of Landscape Stewardship

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Preface

Landscapes and their manifold contributions to human well-being 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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