



## Editorial

## A revised aims and scope for *Landscape and Urban Planning: An International Journal of Landscape Science, Planning and Design*

### 1. Preface

From time to time it is appropriate for editors to revisit a journal's aims and scope and assess whether the statement accurately describes what the journal is about to current and potential participants in the journal community as well as to broader societies of concern. With the third editorship of *Landscape and Urban Planning* now having been involved in planning and everyday operations for nearly two years, we have had time to review the journal's history and evolution, examine current trends in articles published in it and related journals, and think more broadly about the role of the journal in communicating knowledge to improve human and environmental well-being. Based on these activities, we present our revised aims and scope, followed by a brief elaboration of its various elements.

### 2. Revised aims and scope

*Landscape and Urban Planning* is an international journal aimed at advancing conceptual, scientific, and applied understandings of landscape in order to promote sustainable solutions for landscape change. Landscapes are visible and integrative social-ecological systems with variable spatial and temporal dimensions. They have expressive aesthetic, natural, and cultural qualities that are perceived and valued by people in multiple ways and invite actions resulting in landscape change. Landscapes are increasingly urban in nature and ecologically and culturally sensitive to changes at local through global scales. Multiple disciplines and perspectives are required to understand landscapes and align social and ecological values to ensure the sustainability of landscapes. The journal is based on the premise that landscape science linked to planning and design can provide mutually supportive outcomes for people and nature.

*Landscape Science* brings landscape ecology and urban ecology together with other disciplines and cross-disciplinary fields to identify patterns and understand social-ecological processes influencing landscape change. *Landscape Planning* brings landscape architecture, urban and regional planning, landscape and ecological engineering, and other practice-oriented fields to bear in processes for identifying problems and analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating desirable alternatives for landscape change. *Landscape Design* brings plans, designs, management prescriptions, policies and other activities and form-giving products to bear in effecting landscape change. The implementation of landscape planning and design also generates new patterns of evidence and hypotheses for

further research, providing an integral link with landscape science and encouraging transdisciplinary collaborations to build robust knowledge and problem solving capacity.

The journal publishes original, empirical research papers and notes on important international and regional issues in landscape science, with an emphasis on applied work that provides solutions for landscape planning and design. It also publishes occasional review papers and encourages analytical reviews of research and practice that provide an evidence base for planning and design. Special theme issues, thoughtful perspective essays, and critical commentaries of published research are also welcome. While a wide range of work will be considered within the aims and scope, submissions that focus on very small sites or sample sizes, are very locally focused, very applied or very theoretical are generally discouraged unless they can also demonstrate relevance to the journal's broader concerns for landscape-scale issues of international interest that make meaningful connections between science, planning and design.

Major content areas and sample topics of submissions include: landscape analysis and planning (applied spatial and temporal landscape change, suitability and risk assessment, landscape policy evaluation, assessment of ecosystem services, sustainability and resilience studies), social sciences and economics (landscape perception and aesthetics, human health and well-being, visualization, stakeholder involvement, valuation), landscape measurement and modeling (development of spatial/temporal/network/decision models, landscape/land use/land cover measures, GIScience and remote sensing technologies), urban ecology (vegetation ecology/diversity, green infrastructure and sustainable design, air/soil/water effects on landscape, urban climate research), animal and wildlife ecology (diversity analysis, animal/human/habitat relationships, landscape management to promote species conservation/minimize impact), and theory and practice (perspective essays and commentaries, design studies, pedagogy and scholarship).

### 3. Elaboration of aims

While the second editor Jon Rodiek helped to clarify the original statement of journal aims (Rodiek, 1992), the core purpose and goals of the journal have changed very little since the first editor Arnold Weddle initially discussed them 38 years ago (Weddle, 1974). We have detailed the journal's aims in a previous editorial (Gobster, 2011) and only enumerate them here. They include: a focus on landscape change, particularly with respect to problems

encountered by land use changes and their interactions with natural systems; a reliance on ecology as the foundation for landscape planning and design; the need to involve multiple disciplines in solving complex problems; and the importance of linking research to practice to effect positive change.

These four aims continue to be relevant and important, and we see no reason to alter a successful formula in guiding our own editorship. We do hope, however, that our revised statement of aims further clarifies their meaning while updating the contexts in which they are applied. Foremost in this respect is to explicitly place “landscape” as the journal’s focal point of concern. Earlier versions mention “approaches to land use,” “human use of the land,” and improving “the human made landscape,” and while these remain key aspects of concern, we feel that landscape as used and defined in the aims section of the new statement provides a more inclusive concept better aligned with its current uses by contributors. We have discussed the meanings of landscape in a previous editorial (Gobster & Xiang, 2012d), and build upon that work and the companion essay by Nassauer (2012) to provide a common touchstone for identifying the journal’s core concern while still allowing breadth to accommodate varied interests.

By the same token, we feel that the move in terminology from “land use change” to “landscape change” more accurately characterizes the current range of concerns being addressed by authors. These concerns include specific development and resources activities, broader scale human-related processes such as urban growth and shrinkage, and natural and human-influenced processes such as plant invasion, wildfire occurrence, and global climate change. The term is also more consistent with the development of broader ideas, discussed below, for how the science of landscape can be more closely linked with practice (Nassauer & Opdam, 2008).

Finally, defining landscape as an integrated social-ecological system broadens the earlier stated emphasis on “ecological understanding.” This is consistent with the journal’s foundations in landscape planning, landscape ecology, and urban ecology and the increased emphasis being placed on transdisciplinary, interdisciplinary, and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of humans and environments as coupled systems (e.g., Liu et al., 2007). This change in no way diminishes the importance the journal has always placed on the understanding of ecological processes and the protection of nature in the context of landscapes. It simply recognizes that in an increasingly urban and human-influenced world, social and ecological systems are inextricably related and cannot be understood in isolation from each other (Pickett, Buckley, Kaushal, & Williams, 2011).

#### 4. Elaboration of scope

While the language of the journal’s aims has changed little since 1974, wording of the scope has evolved over the years to accommodate and encourage new content in terms of the range of topics, fields of interest, and types of submissions accepted. The journal began as *Landscape Planning*, with a stated emphasis on “the use of land that has not been urbanised” (Weddle, 1974, p. 3). The rural regional or countryside focus reflected the emergence of landscape planning as a new field with problems different from urban or town planning, but the view of town and countryside as discrete entities rather than areas along a gradient was a difficult separation to make. The journal editor added an “Urban Fringe Series” in 1983 to accommodate the increasing number of submissions dealing with urban-related landscape problems and issues (Weddle, 1983), and when *Landscape Planning* incorporated its sister journal *Urban Ecology* in 1986 to form *Landscape and Urban Planning*, it became clear that the focus was not urban or rural but on the concept of landscape itself (Weddle, 1986). As mentioned above, our

revised statement affirms this central focus on landscape. It also more fully foregrounds and integrates the concern for landscapes that are urban or urban influenced as well as the social and cultural aspects of landscapes, reflecting the importance of these overlapping dimensions and their prominence as the context and focus of new submissions.

As a succinct statement of scope, the journal’s subtitle has historically been used to summarize its main topics or fields of interest. The original subtitle of *Landscape Planning* was *An International Journal on Landscape Ecology, Reclamation and Conservation, Outdoor Recreation and Land-Use Management*, with an editorial further listing sample subject fields (Weddle, 1974). These subtitle terms were changed in 1986 to *Landscape Design, Conservation and Reclamation, Planning and Urban Ecology* to acknowledge the incorporation of *Urban Ecology* (reclamation was already a part of the subtitle when the journal incorporated *Reclamation and Revegetation Research* in 1988). These terms were changed again in 1992 to *Landscape Ecology, Landscape Planning, and Landscape Design* to reflect a concern by the new editor to better “align the journal with the primary disciplines that support it” (Rodiek, 1992, p. v), then streamlined in 1999 to *Landscape Ecology, Planning and Design*.

We see the logic of this evolution and move it to the next logical step by adopting the more inclusive term *Landscape Science* to replace *Landscape Ecology* in the journal’s new subtitle. While the term *Landscape Science* has roots in Russian and German schools of geography going back to the early 20th century (Dikshit, 1997; Isachenko, 1973), it has been used with more frequency in recent years to describe a broadening of landscape ecological thought; incorporate more holistic, human and cultural dimensions of landscape; and direct scientific inquiry toward applied problem solving through diverse methodological approaches and stronger interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary engagement (e.g., McAlpine et al., 2010; Palang, Mander, & Naveh, 2000; Vos & Meekes, 1999). Similarly, urban ecology research frequently focuses on landscape-scale issues (Breuste, Niemelä, & Snep, 2008; Niemelä, 1999), and with increased attention paid to the ecology of cities as joint social-ecological systems, there has been greater use of landscape-relevant concepts such as green infrastructure and ecosystem services that require interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches to study (McDonnell & Hahs, 2009; Niemelä et al., 2012; Pauleit, Liu, Ahern & Kamierczak, 2012; Pickett, Cadenasso & Grove, 2004). Landscape planning has always recognized the fundamental importance of such ideas, and along with these major “parent” traditions of the journal, a number of cross-disciplinary subject areas such as landscape perception (Zube, Sell, & Taylor, 1982), sustainability and GIS sciences (Skidmore, Franklin, Dawson, & Pilesjö, 2011; Termorshuizen & Opdam, 2009), and disciplinary fields within the applied natural and social sciences help define the scope of a responsive and forward-looking landscape science for which this journal is well positioned.

A similar case for inclusivity can be made for retaining the terms *Landscape Planning and Design* to describe the applied dimensions of the journal’s scope. As areas of practice, landscape planning and landscape design have been distinguished from each other by reference to scale and directness of intervention, and while some see them as parts of the same process, professional planners and designers often view the two as activities that are interrelated yet very different from each other (e.g., Rodiek, 2006; Stiles, 1994). We understand and honor these distinctions, but at the same time recognize a broader use of the term design and the bridge role it can play in linking landscape science and landscape planning. In this respect we follow the lead of Nassauer and Opdam (2008), who view design as a range of activities and products for bringing about intentional landscape change, and argue that in the context of landscape ecology, design provides “a common ground for scientists and

practitioners to bring scientific knowledge into decision making” (p. 633; see also Nassauer, 2012).

Along with the activities and products of landscape planning and design, this conceptualization also helps make explicit the importance of landscape management, which receives considerable attention in journal submissions in terms of sustaining resource uses in a multifunctional landscape context, as well as the increased focus on landscape restoration and its social, historic, cultural and ecological dimensions (e.g., Hersperger, Langhamer, & Dalang, 2012; Seabrook, McAlpine, & Bowen, 2011). Additionally, it helps foreground important aspects of landscape policy covered by journal content, both in terms of jurisdictional policies affecting landscapes of various scales of concern as well as increased concern for policy mechanisms that affect governance and the equitable and meaningful participation of stakeholders (e.g., Beunen & Opdam, 2011). In these and other cases, this expanded role of landscape design provides the critical link between landscape science and landscape planning, providing hypotheses and a base of evidence for further research and facilitating the production of scientific knowledge through social learning, adaptive management, and other outcomes (e.g., Albert, Zimmermann, Knieling, & von Haaren, 2012; McAlpine et al., 2010).

This editorship's aims and scope should not be viewed as a rigid statement, but rather a guide to channel interest in the journal and promote scientific activity and dialogue toward the larger purposes of protection, sustainable use, and appreciation of landscapes. The real work of journal development is realized in the submission of significant, novel, rigorously researched, thought-provoking, well-written, and ultimately useful papers, and the dialogue that happens between authors, editors, and reviewers will serve to move the journal community in productive directions beyond the individual efforts of its participants. As always, your comments and suggestions are welcomed.

## 5. Editors' note

This editorial is the final installment in a series of editorials describing key revisions to journal content and policies regarding the submission of papers to *Landscape and Urban Planning*. Essential parts of this and previous editorials on article types (Gobster & Xiang, 2012a) and special issues (Xiang & Gobster, 2012) have been incorporated in the revised Guide for Authors. The full editorials along with three support editorials (Gobster & Xiang, 2012b, 2012c, 2012d) and a perspective essay by Nassauer (2012) are available for free online access through the “Editors' Choice” link on the journal's homepage: <http://www.journals.elsevier.com/landscape-and-urban-planning/>.

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17 May 2012