



Editorial

Progress and prospects

A year has passed since the new leadership of this journal was officially introduced in an editorial for the Special Issue commemorating our 100th volume of publication (Gobster, 2011). That editorial and several of the contributed essays to the Special Issue offered ideas for strengthening the journal and clarifying its mission for moving forward. These ideas have since been discussed with members of the Editorial Advisory Board, our Publisher Deirdre Dunne, and other members of the wider journal community, and were fleshed out for implementation at an editor's retreat in Shanghai this past October. While the most visible change might be our new cover design (more on this below), many other changes made thus far have been infrastructural ones to improve the journal's administrative and editorial operations. In this editorial we describe the progress of the third Editorship of *Landscape and Urban Planning* during its first 16 months of operation (September 2010–December 2011), and outline changes planned for implementation during 2012 that will be the subject of separate editorials in the coming months.

1. Progress

Activities and accomplishments to date fall into two broad goal areas.

Goal 1: *Operate an editorial office that maintains and enhances high levels of quality and efficiency in journal content and delivery, and continues to increase the journal's scholarly impact and practical relevance.*

In partnership with the USDA Forest Service Northern Research Station and the Environmental Policy and Culture program at Northwestern University, Editor-in-Chief Paul Gobster and Managing Editor Melinda Merrick established an editorial office in Evanston, Illinois. Many of our accomplishments during the first year were aimed at improvements in the administrative infrastructure and its interface with authors and reviewers. Among the most noticeable are...

- Development and posting of a thoroughly revised Guide for Authors (see http://www.elsevier.com/wps/find/journaldescription.cws_home/503347/authorinstructions).
- Adoption of the globally recognized APA 6th edition reference style.
- Development and beta testing of a new manuscript classification system.
- Acquisition and application of plagiarism screening on every new submission using iThenticate Cross-Check software.

- Analysis of desk review procedures and adoption of a systematic checklist for screening new submissions for basic technical and scholarly quality issues.

With the planned departure of Merrick in September 2011, the journal has moved to a new structure that combines editorial administration with production and publication activities. Both of these functions are now under the direction of Journal Manager Tracy Tufaga in Elsevier's San Diego offices, and will result in better efficiency and quality control as Tufaga will oversee the entire cycle of journal activities from new submissions to print publication.

Goal 2: *Develop the editorial structure of the journal as a dynamic, multi-tiered, collaborative body that provides its members opportunities for active participation, learning and advancement.*

A first-year priority of the editorship was to identify and appoint Editors to handle key content areas and help distribute the rapidly increasing manuscript submissions. We inherited a very talented and dedicated Editorial Board and have thus far been able to promote three members to Editorial positions:

- Suzana Dragicevic from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia was appointed Associate Editor in March 2011 and is primarily responsible for handling advanced modeling submissions in Geoinformatics and related areas.
- Wei-Ning Xiang from East China Normal University in Shanghai joined Gobster as Co-Editor-in-Chief on September 1. In addition to being equal partners for editorial leadership, Xiang will also handle submissions in the landscape planning and analysis content area while Gobster will focus on social science and economics.
- Mark McDonnell from the University of Melbourne also joined the editorial team in September as Associate Editor with primary responsibilities for submissions in urban ecology.
- Along with these board member promotions, Brad Blackwell from the USDA National Wildlife Research Center's Ohio Field Station was appointed Associate Editor in October. Blackwell completes the current editorial team and will have primary responsibilities for submissions in wildlife and animal ecology.
- In addition to these board promotions, this year we brought in five new board members and saw six retire. Incoming members include Roger Hammer, Eckart Lange, Xia Li, Joan Iverson Nassauer, and Robert Ryan. Former Editor-in-Chief Jon Rodiek continues to serve the journal as board member. Retiring members include Yasushi Asami, Johan Colding, Jianguo Liu, Robert Scarfo, Robert Szaro, Duning Xiao, and Byoung-E Yang.

2. Prospects

Looking ahead, we have identified three major areas of change as the foci for 2012. The goals deal with revision and expansion of substantive aspects of journal publication. They are outlined here and each will be discussed in detail in subsequent editorials. Key aspects of these changes will be summarized in the Guide for Authors with links to Science Direct provided for free access to the full editorials.

Goal 3: Review and update the journal's aims and scope, and incorporate a holistic definition of landscape to help guide the journal's mission.

While the aims and scope of *Landscape and Urban Planning* have been revised a number of times over the years to clarify and update the journal's mission in response to societal issues and the interests of the contributors, there remains a strong adherence to certain core principles that have governed its publication since its inception in 1974. As interpreted in last year's editorial these include:

- A response to societal concerns about the environmental and social forces bringing about landscape change.
- A better understanding of the relationships between human and ecological systems, particularly the linkages between land use and landscape change.
- A recognition that understanding these relationships and linkages requires the talents of multiple disciplines and professions concerned with landscape.
- A responsibility to link research questions and findings to the practice of landscape and urban planning, design, and management, as well as to the implementation of policies that guide these practices.

While these principles will continue to direct journal policy regarding the content and boundaries of articles considered for publication, it is also recognized that to move forward we also need a better understanding of the meaning of landscape and the utility it provides as an organizing concept for the planning, design, and management of social-ecological systems. Clarification of this understanding will help strengthen the focus of the journal, particularly with respect to modeling and experimental efforts in both the natural and social sciences, where efforts to measure can sometimes be seen as ends in themselves, rather than means to achieve a more harmonious relationship between people and place.

Goal 4: Reinforce the journal's aims and scope with an expanded content of article types and an improved process for handling Special Issues that together embrace the geographic, methodological, and disciplinary diversity of landscape-related issues and problems.

Landscape and Urban Planning features the publication of original research reported in the form of full-length Research Articles. While this will continue to be the primary focus of the journal, to facilitate the discourse of research and its implications for landscape and urban planning, design, and management, a limited number of articles of other types will also be published. The editors will expand the range of article types featured in recent years to include:

- **Research Articles** report the results of original, data-driven empirical studies of issues that fall within the journal's aims and scope.
- **Perspective Essays** present new ideas or frameworks; challenge current thinking, policies, or approaches; or otherwise offer thoughtful reflections aimed at improving our understanding issues.

- **Review Articles** cover a subject area of current or emerging interest through either a traditional narrative synthesis or systematic assessment of the research literature.
- **Research Notes** present a concise but complete description of a limited investigation serving as initial proof-of-concept results of new work or replications/extensions of previous research.
- **Comments** offer a forum for presenting critical or explanatory discussion on an article published in the journal.
- **Editorials** provide the journal's Editors and invited guests opportunities to raise significant issues of relevance to the journal's aims and scope, introduce Special Issues, and present important news and information about the journal and its members.

In addition to article types, we will also introduce new guidelines for the proposal of Special Issues, guest-edited collections of articles addressing important and timely themes that fall within the journal's aims and scope. Two Special Issues have been published under the new Editorship and three more are under development, and while the experience to date has been positive, there is a need for better decision-making with regard to topic selection and sequencing of issues over the course of the year. The new guidelines will introduce a more systematic and competitive process for proposal submission and acceptance, and clarify roles and responsibilities of guest editors and contributors to ensure high scholarly quality and relevance.

Goal 5: Take better advantage of multimedia and other technologies and formats for research delivery to increase the effectiveness of communication, better engage the diverse community of contributors and readers, and improve aesthetic content.

Ideas for incorporating new technologies for communicating landscape planning and design information into the journal date back at least two decades (McCarthy & Rodiek, 1991). Until recently, progress in achieving this goal has been modest, but as the balance of readers accessing the journal electronically rather than through print publication has shifted dramatically over the last five years, online delivery opens up new possibilities for adding value to research beyond traditional text, table, and figure presentations. The time is ripe to take advantage of these technologies, particularly with the focus of our journal on visually- and geographically-based forms of communication.

Technologies already available to journal contributors through Elsevier production services include free online color production of figures; embedded audio, video, and KML (Google Maps) files; graphical abstracts; and supplementary electronic material. While adoption of these technologies by journal authors is currently limited, many of them seem particularly well suited to communicating landscape research, and it is hoped that more proactive encouragement by the editors will spur adoption and diffusion of their use.

While the technologies mentioned above deal primarily with article-based content, this year we hope to begin exploring other web-based content to extend the reach of the journal beyond individual articles to inform and engage the broader journal community.

Aesthetic quality is a central dimension of landscape value, and aesthetic quality should also be a guide to how we communicate about landscape. In one small but important initiative this past year, we worked with board members Eckart Lange and Peter Jacobs and designers at Elsevier to update the cover of the journal. A major impetus behind the change is that because few people these days ever see the print issue of the journal, the cover type and image need to be read in icon form, most often seen on a computer screen. A single cover illustration will be solicited by invitation from authors of accepted papers and displayed for the entire volume in which the article appears.

With our editorial team now in place and up to speed, we are eager to face the challenges of this new year and work with authors, reviewers, and other members of the journal community in making *Landscape and Urban Planning* responsive to your needs. In our Editors' retreat we responded to the challenges of our team communicating across 19 time zones with the positive affirmation that "the sun is always rising on *Landscape and Urban Planning*." As facilitators of this global community, we are ever-thankful for your participation in the journal and welcome your thoughts on its continued improvement.

References

- Gobster, P. H. (2011). Editorial: Landscape and Urban Planning at 100: Looking back moving forward. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 100, 315–317.
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11 January 2012