



URBAN FORESTS, TREES,  
and GREENSPACE

A POLITICAL ECOLOGY PERSPECTIVE

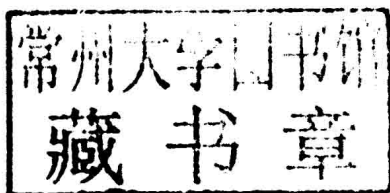
EDITED BY  
L. ANDERS SANDBERG,  
ADRINA BARDEKJIAN,  
AND SADIA BUTT

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A Political Ecology Perspective

Edited by  
**L. Anders Sandberg,  
Adrina Bardekjian,  
and Sadia Butt**



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# Urban Forests, Trees, and Greenspace

Urban forests, trees, and greenspace are critical in contemporary planning and development of the city. Their study is not only a question of the growth and conservation of greenspaces, but also has social, cultural, and psychological dimensions. This book brings a perspective of political ecology to the complexities of urban trees and forests through three themes: human agency in urban forests and greenspace; arboreal and greenspace agency in the urban landscape; and actions and interventions in the urban forest.

Contributors include leading authorities from North America and Europe from a range of disciplines, including forestry, ecology, geography, landscape design, municipal planning, environmental policy, and environmental history.

**L. Anders Sandberg** is Professor and former Associate Dean in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada. His two most recent books are *The Oak Ridges Moraine Battles: Development, Sprawl and Nature Conservation in the Toronto Region* (2013) and *Urban Explorations: Environmental Histories of the Toronto Region* (2013).

**Adrina Bardekjian** is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada, where she studies under-represented narratives and strategic visioning for urban forestry praxis. She is an urban forestry researcher, writer, and educator, and works with a number of organizations on diverse projects and initiatives.

**Sadia Butt** is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Forestry at the University of Toronto, Canada. She has worked in urban forestry for the last 15 years as a practitioner, researcher, and volunteer in raising urban forest awareness through environmental education.

“This book is the first to use the lens of political ecology to understand urban forests and finally provide us with a much needed politicized view of these spaces, based on case studies from around the globe.”

– *Guy Baeten, Professor of Human Geography, Lund University, Sweden*

“This wonderful volume incorporates new theoretical ground in the field of political ecology. Diverse chapters bring nuanced and balanced attention to the social and ecological dynamism that shapes the myriad ways through which urban forests constitute and are constituted by everyday lived experiences, politics, and institutional dynamics of today’s cities.”

– *Patrick Hurley, Associate Professor and Chair, Environmental Studies,  
Ursinus College, Collegeville, PA, USA*

“A collection that makes urban political ecology accessible to a wide readership without losing the sophistication needed to handle the complexity and contradictions of the field. Its compelling narratives stretch from unruly trees and people in diverse cities around the world, to original ways of thinking about nature and the city.”

– *Alan Mabin, Research Fellow, Capital Cities project,  
University of Pretoria, South Africa*

# Contributors

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**L. Anders Sandberg** is a Professor and former Associate Dean in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, Toronto, Canada. His two most recent books are *The Oak Ridges Moraine Battles: Development, Sprawl and Nature Conservation in the Toronto Region* (2013) and *Urban Explorations: Environmental Histories of the Toronto Region* (2013).

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# Preface

This book started as a conference idea three years ago and culminated in the conference “Urban Forests and Political Ecologies: Celebrating Transdisciplinarity,” (UFPE), held on April 18–20, 2013, at the University of Toronto. The conference was a huge success where academics, professionals, environmentalists and artists mingled to present and discuss their work on urban forests, trees and greenspace.

We would like to thank TD Friends for the Environment Foundation as the main sponsor of the conference. Its public outreach mandate was met wonderfully by the diverse attendees in the practicing, professional and artistic communities.

We would also like to thank the three conference partners: the Faculty of Forestry at the University of Toronto, the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University and the Humber Arboretum and Centre for Urban Ecology. In particular, we would like to acknowledge Amalia Veneziano and the conference organizing committee for supporting the initial idea for the UFPE conference, the volunteers and our art curator, Catherine Campbell, for their dedication to this unique event.

Sponsors from the University of Toronto included: the Faculty of Forestry, the Forestry Alumni Class of 1954 and the Department of Fine Art. Sponsors from York University included: the Faculty of Environmental Studies, the Vice-President Academic and Provost Rhonda Lenton, Vice-President Research and Innovation Robert Haché, Associate Vice-President Research Lisa Phillips, Canada Research Chair in Sustainability and Culture, the CITY Institute, York University Libraries and Osgoode Hall Law School. Other sponsors included: the International Union of Forest Research Organizations, the International Society of Arboriculture Ontario Chapter, the Network in Canadian History and the Environment, the Gosling Research Institute for Plant Preservation at the University of Guelph, DAVEY Resource Group, Tree Canada, the Ontario Urban Forest Council, Trees Ontario, the Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition, the Town of Oakville and Dr. Robert Bateman.

We also want to thank the many participants of the conference who stimulated the conversation around urban forests. Some of the participants at the conference have developed their talks into chapters for this book. But there are also many other contributors who we invited subsequent to the conference in order to broaden the geographical scope and theoretical depth of the book.

In addition to our own reviews of the contributors' chapters, we have also relied on external reviewers and some of the contributors for critical assessments. We would like to thank the following for their assistance: Jay Bolthouse, Matthew Gandy, Hilary Inwood, Owain Jones, Ute Lehrer, Terry G. McGee, Harold Perkins, Cate Sandilands, Lisa Wallace and Gerda Wekerle. We would also like to acknowledge all the other participants at the conference who presented papers and artwork and contributed to the discussions, especially Roger Keil, Professor at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University and at the time Director of the CITY Institute, who provided an extensive end-of-the-conference commentary on the two-day proceedings.

Tim Hardwick and Ashley Wright at Earthscan showed tremendous confidence and support for our efforts and the anonymous reviewers of the initial book proposal provided sober advice and great encouragement. The collaboration of all the above individuals for the conference, as well as the interest and support by Earthscan, have made this book possible.

L. Anders Sandberg would like to express a thank you to his wife Maria Legerstee for her support and inspiration. He would like to thank his co-editors for their enthusiasm and efforts to make both the conference and this book a reality.

Adrina Bardekjian would like to thank her partner, Chant Asaduryan, for his continual encouragement and creative insights. She would also like to express a sincere thanks to her co-editors, the contributing authors and conference participants for their inspiration and dedication to this work.

Sadia Butt is grateful for the opportunity to have worked with her co-editors, conference presenters and contributing authors. Their work continues to be both a source of knowledge and inspiration for future paths.

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