

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY & EVOLUTIONARY BIOLOGY

Fall 2014 Seminar Series

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The ecological complexity of human altered landscapes. Building a framework for forest restoration in New York City.

For the first time ever, the majority of the world's population lives in a city, and as this proportion continues to grow the importance of urban open space and parkland is recognized as vital city infrastructure. However, over the past hundred years, wetlands have been turned into airports, native ecosystems have been invaded by exotic plants and animals, and forests have been replaced with parking lots, roads, and high-rise buildings. The fragmentation and isolation of our remaining native forests has made them less resilient and increased their exposure to the ongoing and ever-increasing pressures that come with climate change and urban population growth. New York City is home to over 8 million people but has one of the most diverse and widespread urban park systems nationwide. With a rich cultural and ecological history New York City is a model system for conducting urban ecological research.

Native urban forest do still exist, and can be protected, restored, and expanded through thoughtful and persistent management. Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Detroit, New York City and many other cities in the United States and around the world are engaging in large scale urban greening projects. In many cities, these efforts have moved beyond street and yard tree planting to afforestation projects intended to establish urban forest stands comprised of native tree species in degraded urban landscapes. However, little data exists describing the ecology of the urban landscape. Recent efforts to better understand the ecology within New York City and strategies for natural resource conservation and protection has led to the formation of an *New York City Urban Field Station*, and the *Natural Areas Conservancy*, both multi agency partnerships with the mission to protect, conserve and restore green and blue space in New York City. Through these partnerships, ecological research in the urban landscape has begun to flourish with a focus on landscape level management implications.

Friday, Sept 19, 2014; Room 307, SERF; 3:30 - 4:30PM. Pre-talk reception: 3:00 PM in Dabney 568