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## Island Oases: Urban Open Space Values and Trends

William Ted Johnson

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Urban open space offers many benefits to the communities where they are found. However, as John Muir pointed out many years ago, they, along with many units of our National Park system, frequently find themselves under attack. Much has changed since the days when John Muir set out to know natural areas and to open the minds of Americans to their value, or have things really changed little? This bibliography of books and articles will be expanded into a bibliographic essay in the next issue of the *Electronic Green Journal* followed by a case study devoted to the current state of open space in the Valley of the Sun, Arizona, one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country. Images and interviews will highlight present perceptions as well as the future vision for this network of open space options ranging from community gardens for the hungry; city greenbelts for storm water catchments and recreation; riparian zones for water recharge and wildlife; lakes for recreation and flood control; canals for irrigation, biking, walking, and equestrian uses; and county parks with high desert peaks for rock climbing, habitat preservation, mountain biking, and hiking. Urban open space offers the essential "breathing room" that Muir advocated from the perspective of multiuse partnerships, which have become a standard of conservationists worldwide.

The wonderful advance made in the last few years-in creating four national parks in the West and 30 forest reservations embracing nearly 40 million acres, and in the planting of the borders of streets and highways and spacious parks in all the great cities to satisfy the natural taste and hunger for landscape beauty and righteousness that God has put, in some measure, into every human being and animal-shows the trend of awakening public opinion. Even good men opposed the making of the far-famed New York Central Park. With misguided pluck, perseverance, and ingenuity, but straight, right won its way and now that park is appreciated (John Muir, *The American Wilderness in the Words of John Muir*, p. 191).

### Books

A wide variety of books have addressed the topic of urban open space from a diverse array of perspectives, cultures, and time periods. Graduate student theses at various levels are common and most volumes deal with social or political elements, such as land values or crime, in the creation or maintenance of urban open space. However, a few titles concern themselves with biological or ecological factors related more to wildlife than human life.

Most of the authors listed here address the topic of urban open space from the widest possible point of view while a few focused on specific habitats such as roof tops, school grounds, or cemeteries. By and large, specific management plans for specific cities have not been included as there are hundreds, though the historical developments of New York's Central Park and Boston's park system are included along with a few international representatives for comparison purposes.

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## **Subject Headings**

The terms used to facilitate access to resources on urban open space range from *alleys* to *neighborhood* and from *open spaces* to *urbanization*. These terms may be made more specific with geographic descriptors or terms such as *growth*, *planning*, or *environmental aspects*. The most relevant search results will be derived from a search where a combination of terms is used. For example, *Land use, Urban and City planning* yields the book *Borders of Ecology, Place, and Mind: An Open-space Investigation in Tijuana, Mexico*.

The term *Parks* in combination with *Recreation areas* yields *Design of Urban Open Space: The Open Core as an Element of Organization*. The key point to keep in mind, of course, is that library resources are classified with terms that are not always obvious, so be willing to think outside the box and you will discover a wealth of resources, if your vocabulary is rich and varied.

1. Alleys
2. Cities and towns-Growth
3. City planning-Environmental aspects
4. Conservation of natural resources
5. Greenbelts
6. Greenways
7. Land use-Planning
8. Land use, Urban
9. Landscape architecture
10. Landscape design
11. Landscape protection-Case studies
12. Metropolitan areas
13. Nature conservation
14. Neighborhood
15. Open spaces-Designs and plans
16. Open spaces-Environmental aspects
17. Open spaces-Research
18. Parks-Design and construction
19. Parks-Designs and plans
20. Parks-Planning
21. Pedestrian areas
22. Public spaces
23. Recreation areas-Designs and plans

24. Sanctuary gardens
25. Stream conservation
26. Town planning
27. Urban beautification
28. Urban ecology (Biology)
29. Urban landscape architecture-Designs and plans
30. Urban parks
31. Urban policy
32. Urban renewal
33. Urbanization

## Articles

Magazine and journal articles constitute, on average, a more contemporary body of knowledge on urban open space than the books listed above. These articles also offer a greater proportion of resources devoted to biological factors where wildlife or vegetation patterns constitute the article's focus. The variety of journals offering these articles is quite broad, ranging from those devoted to city planning to those concerned with forest or wildlife management.

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space grasslands in relation to suburban edges. ***Conservation Biology*, 16, 1653-1658.**

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