

Acknowledgments

This book has its origin in the project “Ways of Knowing Urban Ecologies,” funded by Formas, the Swedish research council for sustainable development. Gathering together excellent interdisciplinary scholars from urban ecology, human geography, and environmental history, the project developed case studies on contested urban natures and the inclusive and exclusionary logics of natural resource management around wetlands, sand dunes, forests, coastal ecosystems, and agricultural fields in Cape Town, New Orleans, and Stockholm.

As part of this research group, we were intrigued by the wider story of urban nature that was flashing by in the local stories of our case studies; while highly textured and particular, maybe even peculiar, the stories extended to inform our thinking about urban nature and environmental politics elsewhere. It was these initial thoughts that gave rise to this book’s effort to tie together and make sense of local experiences on a wider scale but through grounded, textured studies and stories. This prompted us to form a wider group, which first included Amita Baviskar, Lance van Sittert, and Richard A. Walker, all of whom contributed chapters, and later to invite Martín Ávila, Jia-Ching Chen, James Evans, Lisa Hoffman, Jens Lachmund, Joshua Lewis, Lindsay Sawyer, and Anne Whiston Spirn to contribute to this volume as well.

We wish first of all to acknowledge all of the chapter contributors. We have been blessed with their skills in writing beautiful prose, their curiosity and dedication to the project, and their rich understanding of the places they write from. Through our shared and constructive dialogues, we sought collectively to understand more nuances of the “social lives of urban nature,” once suggested as a possible title of the book by Amita Baviskar. As you will see throughout the volume, the contributors offer extended lessons

and piercing insights, honed through long-term fieldwork and archival work and based on their commitment to their disciplines and interdisciplinary dialogues. Their chapters are in their own right crucial contributions to the growing “wild libraries” of urban nature.

We also acknowledge early important discussions and research presentations from human geographer Jane Battersby and anthropologist Lesley Greene, both from the University of Cape Town; environmental historian Paul Warde from Cambridge University; Andrew Karvonen, human geographer at KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm; and Lise Sedrez, environmental historian from Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro.

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