

## Past, present and future of landscape ecology

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The year of 2007 marks the 25th anniversary of the establishment of the International Association for Landscape Ecology (IALE) and the 20th anniversary of the founding of the journal, *Landscape Ecology*. In 1982, IALE was established in Piestany, Slovakia, primarily as a result of the concerted efforts by European ecologists and geographers to promote landscape research around the world. In 1987, *Landscape Ecology*—the official journal of IALE—was launched in cooperation with IALE as well as INTECOL (International Association for Ecology). Under the able and visionary leadership of the founding Editor-in-Chief, Frank B. Golley (Turner et al. 2007) and with the support of an elite group of editorial board members from Europe and North America, the journal started on a sound foundation.

The field of landscape ecology was born as an interdisciplinary science. Carl Troll (1939, 1971) envisioned landscape ecology as the integration between ecological and geographic disciplines, and defined it as “the study of the main complex causal relationships between the life communities and their environment” which “are expressed regionally in a definite distribution pattern (landscape mosaic, landscape pattern)” (Troll 1971). As I have argued

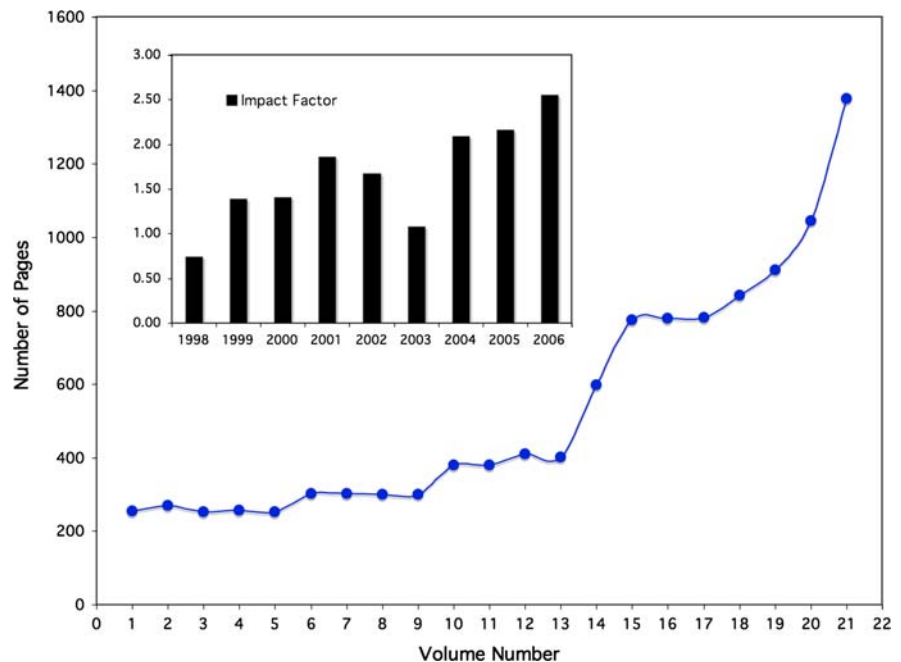
elsewhere (Wu 2006; Wu and Hobbs 2007), Troll’s conceptualization of landscape ecology embraced both the biophysical and pattern-process perspective and the holistic and humanistic perspective. These two perspectives have certainly been substantially expanded and fine-grained especially in the past 25 years. Most of the advances in theory and practice have been well reflected in the pages of the journal, *Landscape Ecology*. Indeed, the most salient and unambiguous goal of *Landscape Ecology*, since day one, has been to promote interdisciplinary and integrative studies of landscapes, especially on broad scales, not only to improve our understanding of the world of landscapes, but also to provide solutions to the plethora of problems occurring in our landscapes. In the inaugural issue of *Landscape Ecology*, Golley (1987) made this quite clear: “The task of correcting biospheric disorder is a universal activity, requiring information and insight from all. We intend that *Landscape Ecology* have this broad objective and that it be relevant to the problems that face mankind at the end of the twentieth century.” This interdisciplinary theme was the highlight of the most recent world congress of IALE—the 7th World Congress on Landscape Ecology, held in Wageningen, The Netherlands during July 8 and 12, 2007.

During the past 20 years, the journal has flourished with a steady increase in the scope, depth, quantity, and quality of published articles, thanks to the outstanding service of the Editors-in-Chief—Frank Golley (1987–1996), Robert Gardner (1997–1999),

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**Fig. 1** The number of published pages per year and impact factor of the journal, *Landscape Ecology*. The data on impact factor have become available since 1998 through Thomson Institute for Scientific Information (ISI; <http://www.portal.isiknowledge.com/>)



and David Mladenoff (2000–2004)—and several generations of diligent and knowledgeable members of the Editorial Board. The journal started with four issues a year (or per volume), and increased to six in 1995, eight in 2000, and ten in 2007. The total number of pages published each volume has increased exponentially from about 250 pages in the late 1980s to more than 1,300 pages in 2006 (Fig. 1). In the same time, the scope and diversity of articles published have also been broadened significantly. These developments are indicative of the rapid development of the field of landscape ecology around

the world in the past two decades. The impact factor and ranking of *Landscape Ecology* among all journals in ecological and geographical sciences also have increased steadily (Fig. 1 and Table 1). Indeed, *Landscape Ecology* has been the flagship journal in the fields of research focusing on the ecology and sustainability of landscapes.

The relationship between IALE and *Landscape Ecology* has been mutually beneficial. IALE and her members have promoted the success and popularity of the journal, while the journal has certainly enhanced the credibility and influence of IALE

**Table 1** Impact factor and rank of *Landscape Ecology* among all journals in the Ecology and Geography categories in ISI Journal Report (<http://www.portal.isiknowledge.com/>)

Year	Impact factor	Rank in "ecology"	Rank in "geosciences, multidisciplinary"	Rank in "geography"
1998	0.746	53 (88)	50 (of 111)	9 (of 19)
1999	1.396	32 (90)	29 (of 112)	3 (of 22)
2000	1.408	45 (145)	27 (of 117)	3 (of 23)
2001	1.863	33 (152)	18 (of 117)	2 (of 24)
2002	1.675	45 (160)	20 (of 121)	18 (of 31)
2003	1.080	80 (165)	50 (of 128)	16 (of 31)
2004	2.090	33 (107)	17 (of 128)	4 (of 29)
2005	2.170	37 (112)	16 (of 129)	6 (of 30)
2006	2.558	29 (114)	11 (of 131)	4 (of 30)

around the world. Undoubtedly, both the journal and IALE will continue to play a pivotal role in advancing the science and practice of landscape ecology in decades to come.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the founding of our journal and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of IALE, I have invited several leading landscape ecologists around the world to reflect on the past, present and future of landscape ecology. This issue includes the first three guest editorials by Marc Antrop, Paul Opdam, and Zev Naveh, respectively.

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