

LETTER FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

Guest Editorial

The environmental justice movement has grown phenomenally since the 1980s. Though the movement is rooted in activism, research, and scholarship occurring in the United States (US), in recent decades it has emerged as both a global movement and field of research. The broader environmental movement and environmental research in general have benefited tremendously by the emergence of environmental justice scholarship. This is the case because the new area of inquiry has contributed greatly to our understanding of the relationship between social inequality and the environment. It has also provided mechanisms for people who traditionally did not participate in environmental affairs to become actively engaged in them.

This area of research and scholarship is expanding rapidly and gaining wide public acceptance. Ergo, the time is right for *Environmental Practice* to place the spotlight on this field. The journal has published environmental justice articles in the past, but this year the journal's editors decided to devote an entire issue of the journal to the topic. This was done because of the growing significance of environmental justice to environmental professionals and interest it garners in all aspects of environmental policy making and practice. The volume covers several important aspects of environmental justice research. The articles range from those examining traditional environmental justice questions to others that focus on new areas of inquiry. The volume has 10 articles examining domestic and international environmental justice issues. After reading these articles, readers will gain a deeper understanding of historical factors that played a role in the rise of the environmental justice movement, the major tenets of environmental justice research, and the evolution of the scholarship in the field. Readers will also have examples of research articles that focus on several aspects of inquiry in the field.

The first article in this volume is mine. It is an historical overview of environmental inequities faced by people of color. It also discusses the rise of environmental justice scholarship and identifies the major areas of research foci in the field. The article provides a context in which to situate the remaining articles in the volume. The second article is my diversity study that asks, Are there racial and gender differences in wages amongst environmental professionals? If so, what factors account for those differences? My article does this by examining job mobility (changing jobs) amongst professionals in the environmental sector. The essay looks at racial and gender diversity in the sector, as well as at the differences in wages. It also analyzes how educational levels, the type of college one attended, and disciplinary major are related to starting and current wages. The article by Chris Wetzel, Thompson Lozier, and LucyRose Moller is a theoretical analysis of a local environmental justice conflict in Brockton, Massachusetts. The authors examine the strategies used by one environmental justice group in their opposition to corporate behavior in their community. The analysis focuses on the effectiveness of localizing environmental justice conflicts.

The next two articles are spatial analyses that use Michigan as a case study. Race, space, and the siting of noxious or unwanted facilities have been core areas of environmental justice research. Sangyun Lee and Paul Mohai's essay examines the racial and socioeconomic characteristics of neighborhoods adjacent to brownfield sites in the Detroit metropolitan area (Oakland, Macomb, and Wayne Counties). The authors analyze how the demographic characteristics of the census block groups are related to the quantity of brownfield sites that each contain. The authors also discuss the processes that have led to the presence of brownfield sites in the study area. Butts and Gasteyer are using traditional analytic techniques of environmental justice research to investigate a new area of inquiry—

racial and spatial differences in the pricing and delivery of social services. They use spatial analytic techniques to assess the delivery and pricing of water in Michigan. They provide an account of water-rate setting and delivery. They then use census data to analyze how water rates vary by location and how race and urbanization play a role in what residents pay for water.

Two articles in the volume examine non-White environmental attitudes, perceptions, and action. Nina Roberts and Tendai Chitewere's article studies minority users of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco. The authors report the findings of the focus groups they conducted. They assessed how minorities perceived the park, as well as the factors that influenced whether people of color recreated in the area. Kerry Ard and Paul Mohai use the data on congressional voting to examine how Hispanic members of Congress vote on environmental issues. They compare the Hispanic voting record to that of Democrats and Republicans. They discuss the significance of understanding how the voting records of minority congressional members might be related to environmental justice activism.

As this issue goes to press, environmental justice issues are making major headlines. A recently released report indicates that the poor are more vulnerable than ever as hunger and food insecurity increases globally. Monica White's article tackles the issue of food access by examining how farmers in Detroit are looking at ways to farm vacant land. White's article about D-Town farm examines the issue of urban agriculture and food sovereignty. White studies Black farmers' attempts to become food self-sufficient, develop a cooperative, and grow healthy organic food in the city. The author interviewed the farmers and supplemented those interviews with participant observations.

Sarah Darkwa's interest lies in the question, What is the reach of environmental

justice in African academic institutions? She approaches this by examining the extent to which environmental justice is being incorporated into the curriculum at a Ghanaian university. She conducted a survey of students and used it to examine their attitudes toward incorporating environmental justice into the curriculum. The final article is by Ducre and Moore. They

have obtained old maps showing the boundaries of redlined neighborhoods and have digitized them. They are interested in understanding the long-term impacts of redlining on neighborhoods. They present a methodology for digitizing the maps; they also report the results of pilot studies assessing neighborhood change over time.

It is my hope that the issue will stimulate further discussion, debate, and research in the field. I have enjoyed working with the authors of the articles and with the editorial staff of *Environmental Practice*. I hope that you find this special issue informative.

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