Special Issue

Spatial Heterogeneity of Forest-Steppes

Message from the Guest Editor

Forming a transitional zone between the closed forest and the treeless steppe belts, forest-steppes are among the most complex non-tropical ecosystems. Forest-steppes have an extremely high spatial heterogeneity of both environmental factors and plant communities. The long-term co-existence of various forest, scrub, and grassland communities results in high taxonomic and functional diversities at both the local and the landscape scales. Moreover, forest-steppes host numerous taxa of special conservation interest, including a high number of rare, endangered, or endemic species. Unfortunately, forest-steppes belong to the most threatened biomes on Earth. Vast forest-steppe areas, especially in Europe and West Asia, have been turned into croplands and tree-plantations, while surviving forest-steppe fragments are usually extremely small. The aim of this Special Issue of *Forests* is to contribute to a better understanding of the key role spatial heterogeneity plays in maintaining the high alpha, beta, and gamma diversities of forest-steppe landscapes, and to help effective conservation measures to ensure the maintenance of this unique ecosystem.

Guest Editor

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Forests (ISSN 1999-4907) is an international and cross-disciplinary, scholarly forestry journal. The distinguished editorial board and refereeing process ensures the highest degree of scientific rigor and review of all published articles. Original research articles and timely reviews are released online, with unlimited free access. Our goal is to have *Forests* be recognized as one of the foremost publication outlets for high quality, leading edge research in this broad and diverse field. We therefore invite you to be one of our authors, and in doing so share your important research findings with the global forestry community.

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