

## Preface

As we confront growing environmental and economic concern over the use of natural resources and the development of sustainable communities, there has never been a more important time to highlight the role of landscape management. The problems of changes in the surrounding us landscape has become an object of numerous studies: environmental, economical, philosophical and historical, and in addition - at time of the appearance of first significant threats for the human life. They appeared as an effect of nature unbalance caused by significant ecological threats. Landscape architects take an holistic approach of the sort needed to create environmentally sustainable places where people want to live and work.

The value of natural elements in urban and rural environments, and the economic, social and environmental benefits they provide, have gained more and more attention. How important these assets are, is demonstrated in all of the chapters in the presented monograph. Natural assets are often seen as separate entities at the expense of the natural environment. The advocacy of natural elements in rural landscape is based on the fact that a wide range of challenges depends on both its quality and integrity, including:

- safeguarding and encouraging biodiversity;
- social cohesion;
- public health and wellbeing;
- energy security;
- reconnecting people with the natural environment;
- sustainable use of a land resources (wind energy); and
- the importance of place-making in sustainable communities.

This monograph reflects the scope and diversity of today's practical aspects of landscape planning. The first 7 chapters introduce the reader to some of the key elements that shape the discussion of landscape management. The problems of cultural landscape are not placed in works and plans of local centers of studies and cultural habitat preservation. It will interest those interested in cross-border rural issues and intercultural research. However, as the example of water management shows, the serious challenge is to plan, design and manage them appropriately.

The topic under investigation, water in the rural landscape, including nature protected areas (e.g. NATURA 2000), presents a wide range of theoretical, disciplinary, and personal perspectives. A main value of the book is the various approaches taken to study landscape and water resources management in Polish regions: from identification of problems of chemical and mechanical degradation of water, through analyses of hydrological processes, till strategies of flood protection. Such perspectives contribute significantly to the growing literature on rural landscape problems.

Showing, in the present volume, problems connected with a landscape category, the series of articles are to throw some light on this matter from the viewpoint of different branches. It seems extremely important for the studies of cultural landscape, just like the subject of interdisciplinarity in water resources research. A Reader will find chapters taking up subjects the majority of which are a comprehensive elaboration.

I hope that this monograph provides a useful summary of the existing science, suggests some directions for new research, and stimulates greater discussion of this important topic in watershed management. In this sense, twenty chapters, written mostly by scholars, presents many scientific branches, make the monograph a very valuable source of programmatic inspiration for the further issues of Contemporary Problems of Management and Environmental Protection.

Katarzyna Glińska-Lewczuk