

The Mannahatta Project

Tuesdays, November 19, 26, Dec. 3, 10, 17; 6:10 - 8:10PM
also available online via [EICES' Distance Learning Program](#)

Few places have seen as many changes in ecosystem type and distribution as Manhattan Island over the last 400 years. Landscape ecology is the study of how ecosystems are distributed in space and time - and the consequences of those distributions for living things. Some of the questions addressed in this course are: What are the consequences of these changes for the plants, animals and people of Manhattan, compared to 1609, when Henry Hudson arrived in New York and ushered European development of the island, to the island we find today? How might the ecosystems and habitats of New York City change over the next 400 years? This course illustrates fundamental concepts and techniques in landscape ecology and geographic analysis, using Manhattan Island's ecological development as a case study, drawing from materials available from the Wildlife Conservation Society's Mannahatta Project (www.wcs.org/mannahatta).



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Image by Markley Boyer / The Mannahatta Project / Wildlife Conservation Society (reconstructed view) and Yann-Arthus Bertrand / CORBIS (modern city)



Dr. Eric Sanderson is a Senior Conservation Ecologist at the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS). Sanderson received his Ph.D. in ecology (emphasis in ecosystem and landscape ecology) from the University of California, Davis, in 1998, while studying with Dr. Susan Ustin. Starting at WCS in 1998, he established the "Landscape Ecology and Geographic Analysis" program to bring landscape thinking and geographic analysis tools into the conservation practices of the WCS. In 2002 Dr. Sanderson and colleagues created the Human Footprint map, the first look at human influence globally at less than 1 square mile resolution. He is also an expert on species conservation planning and has contributed to efforts to save lions, tigers, Asian bears, jaguars, tapirs, peccaries, American crocodiles, North American bison and Mongolian gazelle; and landscape planning conservation efforts in Argentina, Tanzania, Mongolia, and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem and the Adirondack Park, in the USA. He has edited two scientific volumes and written numerous scientific papers. His work has been featured in the New York Times, National Geographic Magazine, CNN, NPR, and The New Yorker. He is also the director of The Mannahatta Project, an effort to reconstruct the original ecology of Manhattan Island at the time of European discovery in the early seventeenth century. In 2009 he published a book, "Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City," illustrated by Markley Boyer. From May 20 – October 12, 2009, Dr. Sanderson curated an exhibition based on the Mannahatta Project on display at the Museum of the City of New York.

Interested in learning more?

Contact: Desmond Beirne, Director of Education Programs

E-mail: djb2104@columbia.edu

Phone: 212-854-0149