

Although *Governing through Goals* outlines the role that the High-Level Political Forum might play in promoting coordination within the UN system and steering national commitments through its periodic review of progress, it is likely to take a few years before this potential can be evaluated. Moreover, despite the commendable contribution the authors make to the study of the governance dimension of the SDGs, empirical evidence of the implications of goal setting at different scales is still relatively limited, thereby greatly hindering our capacity to assess governance outputs, outcomes and impacts in an era of rapid economic, social and environmental change. In order to fill the vast knowledge gaps currently underlying the SDG framework, the implementation of the future research and policy agenda discussed at the end of the book therefore remains an essential, if prodigious, challenge.

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*Transnational Environmental Law*, 6:3 (2017), pp. 554–557 © 2017 Cambridge University Press  
doi:10.1017/S2047102517000322

*Ecological Restoration in International Environmental Law*,  
by Anastasia Telesetsky, An Cliquet & Afshin Akhtar-Khavari  
Routledge, 2016, 318 pp, £110 hb, ISBN 9781138796836

The scholarly field of environmental law passed an important milestone with the publication of *Ecological Restoration in International Environmental Law*, the first specialist book devoted to this subject. Restoration of damaged ecosystems has been largely ignored both in the practice of environmental regulation and in scholarly enquiry, with few exceptions.<sup>1</sup> Compared with the abundance of literature on sustainable development and climate change law, eco-restoration law has struggled to garner the attention it deserves. Yet, restoration ecology is a burgeoning field, as evidenced by the growth of many dedicated journals<sup>2</sup> and international networks,

<sup>1</sup> E.g., B.J. Richardson, *Time and Environmental Law: Telling Nature's Time* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); M.A. Palmer & J.B. Ruhl, 'Aligning Restoration Science and the Law to Sustain Ecological Infrastructure for the Future' (2013) 3(9) *Frontiers in Ecology and the Environment*, pp. 512–9; D. Hughes, 'Land Conservation and Restoration: Moving to the Landscape Level' (2002) 21(2) *Vanderbilt Environmental Law Journal*, pp. 115–28.

<sup>2</sup> E.g., *Restoration Ecology* (Wiley) and *Ecological Management and Restoration* (Wiley).

such as the Society for Ecological Restoration.<sup>3</sup> This landmark book addresses the deficit. Moreover, it goes beyond an analysis of the 'international law' of eco-restoration and delves equally into national and local legal developments, putting the law in a scientific and cultural context.

The book is organized coherently into three parts. Part I investigates the nature of ecological restoration and its rationales, thereby placing the ensuing legal analysis in a wider setting. The opening chapters help the reader to understand the difference between restoration of nature and other forms of environmental repair, and the diverse reasons for engaging in ecological restoration. Part II consists of five chapters and reviews the law of ecological restoration at the international, regional and national level. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)<sup>4</sup> and the European Union (EU) Habitats Directive<sup>5</sup> appropriately receive special attention as important legal instruments for recovering nature's past. Part III addresses seminal thematic issues, including the role of private, non-state actors in restoration projects, the impact of climate change and, helpfully, possible future directions for eco-restoration law. The authors emphasize quite rightly the growing role of civil society groups and even business corporations in undertaking restoration, thereby helping to fill lacunae in official regulation. Indeed, the non-state sector has become so important that it deserves its own publication, as demonstrated in projects such as the Gondwana Link<sup>6</sup> and the Yellow to Yukon Conservation Initiative,<sup>7</sup> which rebuild ecological connectivity across vast distances. The book is thus more than a valuable inventory and analysis of the emerging field of eco-restoration law as it enables readers to appreciate the subject in a critical, interdisciplinary perspective and reflect on how the law might be improved.

What is ecological restoration, and how does law contribute to its aims? Although the authors coyly remark that 'in theory, ecological restoration does not need law or lawyers' (p. 5), they go on to affirm the importance of law towards the achievement of ecological restoration goals, such as ensuring coordinated landscape management (p. 6), specifying 'what an obligation to restore entails' (p. 23), and standardizing and disseminating best practices for restoration (p. 8). However, the particular contribution of law depends on the definition of restoration and the geography in which it is practised. The authors delve into some of these definitional and terminological complexities, covering the difference between restoration and remediation, reclamation or rehabilitation (p. 22); the long-standing debates over the appropriate historic environmental baselines for restoration (pp. 25–8); and the relationship of restoration ecology with new concepts such as 'novel ecosystems' (pp. 33–4) and 'rewilding' (pp. 35–6). The book does not provide definitive conclusions to these debates and controversies, but gives readers a useful sense of the different approaches that the law must navigate in resolving governance questions such as where and how restoration should be attempted, and who should decide (pp. 9–10).

<sup>3</sup> See at: <http://www.ser.org>.

<sup>4</sup> Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), 5 June 1992, in force 29 Dec. 1993, available at: <http://www.cbd.int/convention/text>.

<sup>5</sup> Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora [1992] OJ L 206/7.

<sup>6</sup> See at: <http://www.gondwanalink.org>.

<sup>7</sup> See at: <http://y2y.net>.

The book has a number of strengths. Firstly, it offers a multi-jurisdictional perspective of emerging eco-restoration law, covering not only global norms such as the provisions of the CBD, but also a variety of regional and national regulations in many countries. The particular emphasis is on legal developments in the United States (US), the EU and Australia. Arguably the geographical background happens to reflect the provenance of the three authors. Yet, they also review practices in a number of other countries, such as Brazil and China. We learn that Brazilian authorities were enacting regulations to promote restoration of forests and watercourses long before most Western nations (pp. 186–7) while, in China, national restoration programmes serve to reduce poverty by maintaining scarce agricultural land (pp. 184–5). These and further examples from the Global South help to dislodge any assumption that eco-restoration law is an initiative of the Global North only.

Secondly, the book squarely addresses one of the principal objections to investing in eco-restoration: climate change. The looming threat is that global warming might ‘undo’ restoration projects through, for example, rising sea levels that inundate coastal rehabilitation projects, or through the alternation of precipitation patterns to the detriment of newly planted forests and their inhabitants. The authors correctly identify several reasons not to abandon restoration, arguing that it ‘can enhance [ecosystems] capacity to sequester carbon’ (p. 264) and thereby mitigate warming trends, and further that restoration may ‘[help] people to adapt to the effects of climate change’ (p. 272). Ecosystems are dynamic; climate change merely introduces another driver of change that restoration ecologists and regulators must reckon with. However, the authors do recognize that this will be a challenging task for decision makers because of, among other factors, the ‘static character of existing nature conservation laws’ (p. 280).

Scholars versed in eco-restoration will appreciate that the subject cannot be meaningfully understood without an interdisciplinary lens, as the authors offer. This third valuable feature of the book is demonstrated in many ways. Part I delves into the debates among restoration ecologists on the definition of their field of practice, the philosophical questions about the goals that eco-restoration should pursue, and the cultural dimensions of humankind’s relationship with the natural world under assault in the Anthropocene. The authors’ reflections on environmental justice (pp. 54–6) helpfully link the scientific endeavours of restoration practitioners with the role of local communities as vital participants in many restoration projects.

A further virtue of this volume is its reflections on future governance reform, the subject of the closing chapter. Eschewing any ‘neatly packaged one-size-fits-all policy proposals’ (p. 286), the authors cogitate on the strengths and weaknesses of existing governance regimes and concur on the special importance of social justice and community participation in future regimes (pp. 288–90). Respect for public opinion, of course, is no assurance that restoration will ensue given that some stakeholders will find, say, reintroduction of wolves or reforestation of farmland harmful to their short-term self-interest. The authors also acknowledge the unique challenges of verifying whether restoration governance ‘works’ given the often long time frames necessary for seeing the results of restoration interventions (pp. 294–5). Thus,

prescriptive duties to restore damaged ecosystems face difficult compliance challenges, providing all the more reason for significant community buy-in to restoration programmes. The authors' earlier recommendation for a global, soft law 'Restoration Code' (p. 218) also correctly recognizes that future governance cannot rest solely on traditional regulatory instruments such as licences.

Every serious scholar of environmental law should acquire a copy of *Ecological Restoration in International Environmental Law*. Within the crowded literature of environmental law, which increasingly forces busy scholars to limit their reading to their narrow sub-specialties such as climate change law or biodiversity law, only a limited number of books can stand out. Telesetsky, Cliquet and Akhtar-Khavari have authored such a book. With their broad, multi-jurisdictional and interdisciplinary vista, they have made a seminal contribution to understanding the conceptual and doctrinal foundations of eco-restoration law in its global and national domains. Their book should also be read in conjunction with useful literature by non-legal scholars that highlights the valuable contribution of non-state actors to eco-restoration projects and governance.<sup>8</sup> Recent calls by George Monbiot and others for planetary rewilding are also relevant ideas with which lawyers must engage.<sup>9</sup> Hopefully, this book will lead to an entourage of scholars taking up the issues that seem likely to endure in a world in which the pace of ecological damage continues to exceed its repair. I highly recommend *Ecological Restoration in International Environmental Law*.

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*Transnational Environmental Law*, 6:3 (2017), pp. 557–560 © 2017 Cambridge University Press  
doi:10.1017/S2047102517000334

*Environmental Justice in India: The National Green Tribunal*, by Gitanjali Nain Gill  
Routledge, 2017, 238 pp, £110 hb, ISBN 9781138921108

Environmental justice is a multifaceted concept. It can be broadly understood as 'the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, colour, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies'.<sup>1</sup> It can also mean, more specifically, the adjudication of disputes in light of existing environmental laws. Gill delves into this narrower conceptualization of environmental justice. *Environmental Justice in India*

<sup>8</sup> E.g., C. Fraser, *Rewilding the World: Dispatches from the Conservation Revolution* (Picador, 2010); M. Hall (ed.), *Restoration and History: The Search for a Usable Environmental Past* (Routledge, 2010).

<sup>9</sup> G. Monbiot, *Feral: Searching for Enchantment on the Frontiers of Rewilding* (Penguin, 2013); M. Bekoff, *Rewilding Our Hearts: Building Pathways of Compassion and Coexistence* (New World Library, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> United States (US) Environmental Protection Agency, 'Environmental Justice', available at: <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice>.