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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Message from the Editor-in-Chief

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