

Editorial

Over the past few decades human activities have led to global ecological crises of no recovery. The thriving vibrant ecosystems are quickly turning into a degraded state, we are altering the landscape on an unprecedented scale, and current species extinction rates greatly exceed those of the historical past. The human impact on the environment is a multi-dimensional problem. It is a problem both for the environment itself and for humankind interacting with the environment. As the ecological crisis is a crisis concerning the way we perceive reality, then modern society will find no solution to the ecological problems unless it takes a broad perspective and integrates somewhat overlapping disciplines, for example humanitarian and ecological sciences.

The special issue 'People and Plants: A Humanitarian View', consisting of the first five papers of the current issue, notably differs from the traditional scope of the *Estonian Journal of Ecology*. The papers seek to contribute to the wider fields trying to see how the disciplines of environmental humanities perceive ecological research. Understanding human interaction with plants over time – both in terms of how the humans modified the plants and how the plants modified human culture and institutions – may give us an insight how the social context has shaped thinking on ecology and how ecologists are subconsciously driven by social evolution ideas. Although the methodologies used by humanitarians may lack standardized procedures that are a prerequisite in the natural sciences, the ideas developed in the special volume are certainly very useful when placing ecology in the social context.

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