

Epilogue

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This volume came together in the midst of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the spring and summer of 2020. As both Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous practitioners working with diverse Indigenous communities, these extraordinary times have touched us all in deep and profound ways. For some contributors to this volume, the virus has struck close to home, and for each of us, the crisis has had more than just practical consequences for our work and lives. Tragically, the virus has taken a particular toll on Indigenous communities and other communities of color, a painful reminder that Indigenous peoples and other vulnerable populations too often dis-

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proportionately bear the costs and consequences of the dominant society's policy choices. The fact that these trends have been similar across the world is a stark reminder for many researchers of the importance of thinking globally about local issues, and for decision-makers about the need to synchronize policies and government actions on a more global scale.

The COVID pandemic saw many national parks and other protected spaces of nature close down, either partly or completely. In a surprisingly short period of time, rangers and other park employees in North America reported that wildlife was seen in abundance in parks from Yellowstone to Yosemite and beyond. It is difficult and even hazardous to draw definitive conclusions from fragmentary and anecdotal evidence, but perhaps there are lessons to be learned. Rather than treating our preserved spaces of nature as commodities, managing these delicate ecosystems might benefit from a more ecological approach and, for that, Indigenous knowledge and practices may be even more helpful than previously thought.

National Parks are constructed spaces of nature that are based on an ideal. But that idea is historically rooted in a legacy of dispossession and colonization. As a result, it remains highly controversial and raises a plethora of multifaceted questions. While national parks are perhaps the most striking example of this "constructed wilderness," the issues of dispossession, agency, and management are present also in various other nature protected spaces such as marine protected areas, nature preserves, and wilderness areas. Grappling with those legacies is an essential step toward bridging diverse cultural concepts of nature. If we are to forge a path forward toward a more just and equitable paradigm for managing these vital ecosystems, settler states and Indigenous people must develop mechanisms for resolving contentious questions of ownership, governance, and the rights of both human and non-human entities. Ultimately, this volume is a snapshot of a moment in this much larger and ongoing conversation. The authors may disagree on the implementation of specific policy or the best practices of governing Indigenous lands, but we agree on one fundamental

principle: Indigenous peoples have an inherent right to their homelands and their presence must be powerfully enforced.

We would like to conclude by acknowledging those individuals and institutions who made this volume possible and recognizing the context within which it was produced. As noted previously, this volume would not have materialized without the “Bridging Cultural Concepts of Nature: A Transnational Symposium on Indigenous Places and Protected Spaces of Nature” held at the University of Helsinki in September 2018. This event was made possible by the generous financial and administrative assistance of the University of Helsinki Futures Fund and Vice Rector Hanna Snellman; the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies and Drs. Hanne Appelquist (editor of the series for this publication) and Tuomas Forsberg; the Indigenous Studies Program; Helsinki University Humanities; the Department of Cultures at the University of Helsinki; and the Center of the Pacific Northwest at the University of Washington, Seattle. We also want to thank Heli Rekiranta for creating most of the maps for this volume. In addition to the authors included here, we are thankful for the insights of Roberta Cordero, Julianne Cordero-Lamb, John Janusek, Antti Korpisaari, Sami Lakomäki, Janine Ledford, Aslak Paltto, and Teresa Romero. John Janusek sadly passed away before this book project was launched, but we want to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for his profound knowledge and understanding of the Andean cultures, especially Tiwanaku. The editors also want to express thanks to our many Indigenous friends who have generously shared their stories about the natural world and beyond.