



Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City

By Eric Sanderson

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Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City By Eric Sanderson

On September 12, 1609, Henry Hudson first set eyes on the land that would become Manhattan. It's difficult for us to imagine what he saw, but for more than a decade, landscape ecologist Eric Sanderson has been working to do just that. *Mannahatta: A Natural History of New York City* is the astounding result of those efforts, reconstructing, in words and images, the wild island that millions of New Yorkers now call home.

By geographically matching an 18th-century map of Manhattan's landscape to the modern cityscape, combing through historical and archaeological records, and applying modern principles of ecology and computer modeling, Sanderson is able to re-create the forests of Times Square, the meadows of Harlem, and the wetlands of downtown. Filled with breathtaking illustrations that show what Manhattan looked like 400 years ago, *Mannahatta* is a groundbreaking work that gives readers not only a window into the past, but inspiration for green cities and wild places of the future.

Library Journal:

"You don't have to be a New Yorker to be enthralled by this book. Highly recommended."

San Francisco Chronicle:

"[A]n exuberantly written and beautifully illustrated exploration of pre-European Gotham."

The New York Times Book Review:

"'Mannahatta' is a cartographical detective tale. . ."

"The fact-intense charts, maps and tables offered in abundance here are fascinating, and even kind of sexy. And the middle of the book, the two-page spread of Mannahatta in all its primeval glory—the visual denouement of a decade's research—feels a little like a centerfold."

"Upon closing the book you feel revved up, at the very least, and are likely to see

a way to build a future that is more aligned with what once was than with what can no longer be."

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this brilliantly illustrated volume, Sanderson and Boyer recreate the ecology of Manhattan as it was that 1609 September afternoon when Henry Hudson first saw it, "prodigious in its abundance, resplendent in its diversity." The project began as a simple thought exercise, when senior Bronx Zoo ecologist Sanderson (Human Footprint: Challenges for Wilderness and Biodiversity) tried visualizing pre-colonial Manhattan, but was promoted to full-blown science project after Sanderson discovered an "extraordinary" 1776 British Headquarters Map detailing the island's natural terrain. Developing a "georeference" system to coordinate the old map, Sanderson "relates its depiction of the old hills and valleys to their modern addresses." From there, he reconstructs data missing from the historical record using standard scientific tools-examining pollen layers, tree rings, archeological information, etc. Sanderson's text integrates political and sociological history; examines the culture of the original inhabitants, the Lenape (their word Mannahatta means "Island of Many Hills"); and covers a wealth of ecological data; he even shares his vision for the ecologically sustainable city of 2409. This wise and beautiful book, sure to enthrall anyone interested in NYC history, boasts maps, charts, photos and artist renderings, thorough appendices (including Lenape place-names and Manhattan's flora and fauna), and an extensive section of "Notes, Sources, and Elaborations." 120 color illustrations.

About the Author

Eric W. Sanderson is the Associate Director for Landscape Ecology and Geographic Analysis in the Living Landscape Program of the Wildlife Conservation Society at the Bronx Zoo. He is an expert in the application of geographic principles and techniques to problems in wildlife, landscape, and ecological conservation. He lives in New York City. **Markley Boyer** has worked with the Wildlife Conservation Society creating maps and visualizations for a new series of National Parks in Gabon. He lives in Brooklyn.

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