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Visioning Healthy More-Than-Human Cities

with Prof. Alice J Hovorka
Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change
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In cities around the world, humans encounter *nature* at every turn. Cities are made up of ecological processes (water cycles, soil formation, air circulation, energy flows) and provide habitat for diverse plants and animals that collectively shape urban form, function, and everyday life. In short, cities are more-than-human. Unfortunately, cities are often conceptualized in anthropocentric terms, rendering invisible the nature upon which humans depend, the nature that allows humans to thrive, and the nature that itself has a right to exist. What happens when we re-conceptualize ‘the city’ in terms of human and nonhumans living together as part of complex ecologies, all deserving recognition and opportunities to flourish within their own urban experiences? How might this help us vision necessarily *healthy* cities? Empirical examples of urban agriculture and urban animals help us imagine the possibilities. Feminist posthumanist conceptual frames help us articulate the possibilities therein.



Alice J. Hovorka is Professor and Dean at the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University in Toronto, Canada. She earned her PhD in Geography from Clark University in 2003 and is a Humboldt Fellow. Her research program broadly explores human-environment relationships, with specializations in feminist political ecology and animal geographies. She leads the SSHRC-funded *Lives of Animals Research Group* which applies interdisciplinary and action-oriented approaches to studying human-animal relations around the world (livesofanimals.info.yorku.ca). As Dean of the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, she leads and champions a community of faculty, students, staff, and collaborators in mobilizing knowledge for a just and sustainable future.