**IN CONCLUSION: AN ATLAS FOR THE BEGINNING**

**Insert planetary image of protected areas as per previous**

If God is now green and Adam were to be evicted from paradise again, then his punishment would not be to convert wilderness into farms but farms back into wilderness. Eve, renowned for her scientific curiosity, would lead the way. And so it is—as E.O. Wilson wrote at the dawn of the 21st century— the preservation and reconstruction of wilderness has become a ‘universal moral imperative’.[[1]](#footnote-1) More recently Wilson has called for half the earth to be set aside for biodiversity and he’s probably right.[[2]](#footnote-2) In this study however we have worked with the almost universally agreed upon target of 17% terrestrial protected area (and 10% marine) area by 2020 and applied it to the ecoregions of the hotspots.

As contradictory as the idea of cultivating wilderness is, as the map titled ‘Global Landscape Connectivity Projects’ shows, it is exactly what governments, NGOs, scientists, and many well-intentioned citizens around the world are increasingly coming together to do. Indigenous sacred sites, Greek groves, medieval forests and modern national parks notwithstanding, for the first time in history, humans are attempting, on a planetary scale, to reconstruct the landscapes they have hitherto ravaged.[[3]](#footnote-3) If national parks were the crowning conservation achievement of the 19th and 20th century, reflecting a time where nation-states were the predominant political unit, then surely the IUCN’s ever-increasing list of protected areas amounts to a new form of ‘World P-ark’ borne of 21st century global culture.

‘insert Global Landscape Connectivity Projects’

The hotspots in which the world’s most valuable and most threatened biodiversity is concentrated remain fragmented both within and across national borders and are highly vulnerable to the geo-political contingencies of sovereign rule. What then, if we were to consider linking the world’s most biodiverse and threatened landscapes into one contiguous World Park replete with appropriate governance and funding to not only protect but also reconnect what remains? Could not these lands constitute 21st century pilgrimage routes attracting people willing to not only look at the wilderness hotspots we have left, but more importantly, get their hands dirty and help build more. The World Park map shows this idea across two axes, one running north–south from California to Patagonia and the other east–west from China to Morocco. The formation of these two corridors is of course wildly improbable; but then, so too is every other form of global connectivity humans have constructed since Ortelius published the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* in 1570.

Insert world park map

The global project of protecting and enhancing the planet’s biodiversity is not however just about heroic landscapes; it is an issue which cuts across all scales, fromthe small urban spaces of our cities, through our industrial areas and agricultural lands, to the last stands of remnant habitat. Ultimately, this atlas is intended as a guide book of destinations for Lovelock’s ‘doctors of planetary medicine,’ McHarg’s ‘stewards’, or Janzen’s ‘gardeners’; a call to venture deep into the fraught territories of the world’s biodiversity hotspots: to live and work there, to educate and be educated in their ecologies and cultures. There, through land-use innovations at large and small scales, professionals can work with local communities to help form alternative, more biodiverse futures, for everyone and everything’s sake.

1. Edward O. Wilson, *The Creation: An Appeal to Save Life on Earth* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), 99. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Edward O. Wilson, *Half-Earth: Our Planet’s Fight for Life* (Liveright, 2016), 93. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)