

# Protected Landscapes: One Way Forward

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## INTRODUCTION

About 4% of the land area of the globe currently enjoys some form of protected area status—a monument to the vision and success of governments, nongovernmental organizations, and individuals across the world. It is a major contribution to global conservation.

However, major problems rise before us. In this paper we identify four problems and argue that the protected landscape approach (IUCN Category V) provides a timely opportunity to address and, given the political and social will, substantially resolve some of these problems. Believing that the United Kingdom is well-placed to provide a lead, we outline the nature of the challenge and develop an agenda for action.

## PROTECTED AREAS: THE PROBLEMS

*The size of the network* Today's human population exceeds 5.5 billion and is growing at a rate of some 1.8% per year. Using even the most optimistic scenarios of economic growth, health care, provision of family planning, etc.,

stabilization of global humanity at below 8 billion is unlikely. The 4% of the land area of the earth currently enjoying some form of protected area status will substantially fail to conserve the earth's biological riches (Holdgate 1989).

**The human cost** The idea of protecting or safeguarding areas of land whether for spiritual, cultural, or hunting purposes is thousands of years old and is widespread. In North America in the 1870s this concept of protecting, or setting aside, wild areas from human occupation and exploitation took on a now-familiar form with the creation of Yellowstone National Park. During the next hundred years this model has been copied across the world. The concept was honorable and the program of designation is a record of the success of the early conservationists. However, the program often achieved its objectives at a cost to the people who inhabited these protected areas—a cost which, by today's values, is becoming increasingly unacceptable.

**A set-aside approach** Early national park designations were established in sparsely populated areas and readily met the IUCN definition of "a large area of wild land where resource use is generally prohibited." This is now no longer the case. In Asia and Africa, where poverty stalks the borders of such protected areas, exclusion is being challenged. Wildlife poaching and unauthorized settlements are increasing. As human demands for land increase, existing designations will fail to achieve their objectives and new designations will become more difficult to establish. "If we treat our national parks, nature reserves and protected areas as islands set aside from human use, they will come under increasing attack and be at risk of submergence in a human sea" (Holdgate 1989).

**Conservation versus development** Against the backcloth of the reports

*Our Common Future* (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987) and *Caring for the Earth* (IUCN, UNEP, and WWF 1991), the protected area network, and its interpretation by the developed countries, is perceived as purist and inflexible, unable to respond to the development challenges clearly detailed in these two seminal reports.

Over a decade ago, the *World Conservation Strategy* (IUCN et al. 1980) emphasized that conservation of natural beauty, landscapes, and living richness had to be achieved within a framework of development that meets human needs. The protected areas network must play a constructive part in that global strategy; otherwise, it will be seen by the majority of the world's population as a rich countries' concept—the imposition of the untenable.

#### PROTECTED LANDSCAPES: THE OPPORTUNITIES

The purpose of a protected landscape or seascape is to maintain nationally significant natural landscapes which are characteristic of the harmonious interaction of people and land, while providing opportunities for public enjoyment through recreation and tourism within the normal lifestyle and economic activity of these areas. As P.H.C. Lucas (1992) states:

The protected landscape approach provides a clear and legitimate alternative to the national park in areas where the presence and impacts of resident populations and private ownership either rule out the "Yellowstone-model" national park, or where it is the very harmony of people and nature which makes for an environment of quality and distinctiveness.

In this comprehensive book, *Protected Landscapes: A Guide for Policy Makers*, Lucas identifies the values of

the concept, and how to approach selection, establishment, and management. He makes it clear that there are many ways to approach designation, but emphasizes that certain principles apply universally. A cornerstone in establishing these principles was set in place by the Lake District Declaration at the International Symposium on Protected Landscapes in October 1987 and subsequently adopted by the 17th session of the General Assembly of IUCN one year later (see Appendix)

***Opportunities for expanding the network*** In a world where the human population is increasing, and the demand for land for use by people essential for their livelihood is growing, it is becoming less easy to establish new protected areas. There has been a marked slowing down in the rate of establishment of such areas since 1980.

The burden of acquisition costs, and costs forgone, will make future state ownership less and less acceptable. Protection will have to be achieved in more subtle ways through controls allied to inducements to residents and landowners to favor beneficial land management practices. This is the heart of the protected landscape approach.

At IUCN's 18th General Assembly, held in Perth, Australia, 1990, delegates heard that Category V protected landscapes, often wrongly considered a dumping ground for unsuccessful national parks, could be the key to expanding the world network of protected areas. As Assembly rapporteur John D. Waugh observed, "Participants shared the conviction that the concept of protected landscapes is one whose time has come, offering greater opportunities for the future expansion of the network than additional Category II national parks."

***Human approach*** There is increasing recognition that the people who live in protected areas must not only have their rights safeguarded,

but must also play an active role in the planning and management of these fragile environments. It is they, more than anyone else, who have the most to lose by their destruction. As Damien Lewis (1990) concludes: "It is time that environmentalists looked towards a vision of conservation that embraces the indigenous people, safeguarding their lifestyles, their culture and their essential humanity from the destructive forces that are ravaging their lands."

Adrian Phillips (1989) states: "Our [U.K.] national parks have recently attracted a lot of international interest. Whereas, in the past, conservation around the world has tended to mean protecting nature against humankind, there is now a growing appreciation that, in many places, the environment is best protected through managing human activities so that they sustain environmental quality." The protected landscape approach provides a clear opportunity which not only allows, but actively encourages, the traditional lifestyle of the resident population to become an indispensable part of the conservation strategy.

***Conservation through development*** *Caring for the Earth* is founded on the ethic of care for nature *and* for people: a strategy of mutually reinforcing actions. The protected landscape designation does not divorce nature conservation objectives from human activity; quite the opposite. The objectives are achieved through such activities. In a phrase: conservation through development. As the Lake District Declaration puts it: "Although often much changed from their natural state, [protected landscapes] make their own special contribution to the conservation of nature and of biological diversity: for many of the ecosystems they contain have evolved the continue to survive because of human intervention." Moreover, "protected landscape goals can be achieved only through

mechanisms which influence in a positive manner how people manage the land they occupy, how various local authorities exercise their functions in the area, and how policies and practices of outside agencies impact on landscapes" (Lucas 1992).

***A model for sustainable development*** Protection of biological diversity has to be a major goal of multi-purpose land management on the land outside the protected areas network—currently some 96% of the earth's land surface. The protected areas network must provide examples or models to help realize this goal. It must be integrated into wider global programs shown to have relevance, otherwise the network and the programs will fail—the very theme of this 4th World Congress. Human survival depends on maintaining a sustainable development regime.

Protected landscapes are protected areas where people live and work in a way which leaves an important role for nature. They can act as models for the sustainable management of the wider rural territory. For example, in the U.K. the national parks (which are actually equivalent to Category V protected landscapes) have been effective test beds for countryside planning and management techniques which have been adopted for use in the wider countryside areas, e.g., ranger services, information and interpretation facilities, conservation management agreements, key project work, etc.

### THE CHALLENGE

***The need for more protected landscape designations*** Planning and managing protected landscapes is a complex business, synchronizing ecological, economic, and social skills and maintaining a fine balance often against a changing political backdrop.

Across the five continents, rural land use patterns reflect and record centuries of interaction between

humans and their natural environment. Some of these cultural landscapes are of international importance as increasingly a sense of shared heritage grows around the world. Many are designated as protected landscapes, indicating the wide application of the concept. Examples are wide-ranging and include:

- The dolmens, menhirs, cromlechs, and the terraces in Cevennes National Park in France.
- The Inanan great highway and ruins of Paredones in Cajas National Recreation Area in Ecuador.
- The "chalias" and "baidis" amidst the paddy fields of Bhawal National Park in Bangladesh.
- The ancient Welsh language and associated culture in Snowdonia National Park in the U.K.
- The Sengen shrine and Sannji temple in Fuji National Park, Japan.

All of the above enjoy IUCN Category V protection, but many landscapes are under threat. Cultural diversity is giving way to bland uniformity as economic forces run unchecked. Urgent action is needed.

***The nature of the challenge*** The Lake District Declaration states: "Protected landscapes are living models of the sustainable use of the land and natural resources upon which the future of this planet and its people depend. It is vital to protect such landscapes both for their present value and for the contribution that they will make to spreading the philosophy and practices of sustainable development over much larger areas of the world." Protected landscape objectives are often a combination of biodiversity and landscape conservation, and protection and enhancement of a traditional lifestyle. There is an early

need to identify and establish sound principles of good planning and management capable of wide application and adaptation to different situations (Lucas 1992). Such principles or models will represent a range of options enabling local people to influence change by selecting, developing, and adapting the model to their particular situation.

Change must be accommodated but continuity retained; thus key landscape features or cultural practices must be retained to pass on to future generations. Developing countries undergoing rapid population expansion represent a particularly stark challenge. In Central and Eastern Europe as countries move away from state ownership to embrace a market economy, and a strong sense of "localness" develops, the need for planning is urgent and the opportunity for enhancing local customs, local culture, and local landscapes is great.

### THE WAY FORWARD

The protected landscape concept can make a unique contribution to the protected areas network, and to sustaining the future of human society. But action is needed now. The following agenda is submitted as a basis for action:

- Create a greater awareness of the concept to achieve universal recognition;
- Advance the priority of the concept;
- Urge governments, via IUCN, to recognize the crucial role that protected landscapes can play in achieving sustainable development and in the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of all nations;
- Ask IUCN to promote an active exchange of experience between nations;
- Identify principles for the selection, planning, and management of protected landscapes;

- Urge governments, via IUCN, to designate, program, and fund additional protected landscapes;
- Establish working links between existing protected landscape agencies and authorities;
- Develop clear objectives for each protected landscape area, and prepare management plans sensitive to ecological and social conditions; and
- Encourage countries, or groups of countries, to establish codes of practice or conventions to protect and enhance the rich cultural landscape heritage of the world.

*The International Centre for Protected Landscapes* The agenda outlined above needs a focus to provide support and assistance to IUCN if significant progress is to be made. The International Centre for Protected Landscapes (ICPL) aims to provide such a focus. ICPL was established in April 1991 at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. A nonprofit organization, ICPL is funded by the Countryside Commission (England) and the Countryside Council for Wales. It also receives substantial financial support from British Petroleum plc. ICPL was established to:

- Provide a focal point for politicians, political advisors, senior administrators, planners, land managers, and academics interested in the protected landscape concept;
- Mobilize and bring forward experience relating to the planning and management of protected landscapes;
- Develop clear channels through which these experiences can be disseminated; and
- Receive and coordinate international visits, new ideas, and fresh experiences.

*In seeking to achieve its objectives, ICPL welcomes associations and contacts with organizations and individuals interested in promoting the protected landscape concept worldwide. Contact: International Centre for Protected Landscapes; University College of Wales; Unit 8, Science Park; Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3AH; Wales, U.K. Phone: 0970-622617. Fax: 0970-622619.*

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## Appendix. Highlights from the Lake District Declaration

In October 1987 an International Symposium on Protected Landscapes was held in England's Lake District. The declaration that came from this symposium underpins many of the aims of ICPL. The set of principles and actions in the Lake District Declaration include the following.

- People, in harmonious interaction with nature, have in many parts of the world fashioned landscapes of outstanding value, beauty, and interest.
- It is vital to protect such landscapes both for their present value and for the contribution that they will make to spreading the philosophy and practices of sustainable development over much larger areas of the world.
- There should therefore be universal recognition for this concept of landscape protection; much greater priority should be given to it; and there should be an active exchange of experience between nations.
- These inhabited landscapes are in a delicate and dynamic equilibrium; they cannot be allowed to stagnate or fossilize. But change must be guided so that it does not destroy but will indeed increase their inherent values. This means for each protected area a clear definition of objectives, to which land use policies within it should conform. It means also a style of management that is sensitive to ecological and social

emotional links to the land and by the operation of flexible systems of graded incentives and controls.

- The protection of these landscapes depends upon maintaining within them a vigorous economy and social structure, and a population that is sympathetic to the objectives of conservation. It means working with people at all levels, and especially those living and working in the area—the people most intimately affected by what happens in it.
- Governments, international organizations, development agencies, and nongovernmental organizations should recognize the crucial role that such landscapes can play in sustainable development and in the conservation of the cultural and natural heritage of nations, and should develop programs accordingly.
- Governments should adopt the protection of these landscapes as part of their public policies for the use of natural resources and provide sufficient funds to make this effective, and they should use these protected areas as models—"greenprints"—for the sustainable management of the wider countryside
- Governments and development agencies should direct funds destined for the support of agriculture or other economic objectives in these areas towards kinds of development that favor conservation.
- National and international organizations should promote a worldwide exchange of information and experience on the management of such landscapes and should encourage and extend training in this field.

**Source:** ICPL, *Protected Landscapes: Conservation through Development* (ICPL newsletter), No. 1, Spring 1992.