

# LANDSCAPE STEWARDSHIP:

## NEW DIRECTIONS IN CONSERVATION OF NATURE AND CULTURE

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Guest Editors:

*Jessica Brown*

*Nora Mitchell*

*Fausto Sarmiento*

### Introduction

**T**his past June, the Conservation Study Institute and QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment convened a working session of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas to discuss new directions for protecting landscapes with natural and cultural value. This meeting was hosted by Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in Woodstock, Vermont, and co-sponsored by the George Wright Society, the International Centre for Protected Landscapes, and US/ICOMOS.

Twenty-two landscape conservation practitioners from around the world participated in the working session (Figure 1). They presented case studies from regions as diverse as Andean South America, Oceania, the Eastern Caribbean, Europe, and northeastern North America. Participants discussed challenges and opportunities for protecting landscapes in diverse settings. Following a field trip in the Champlain Valley region of Vermont, the working session participants joined 60 of their counterparts from the New England states and eastern Canada for a one-day public forum at nearby Shelburne Farms.

At the working session, this consortium of organizations recognized the need for new models of protected areas that respond to the pressures on landscapes in many countries around the world. As countries

worldwide move to expand and strengthen their national protected areas systems, greater attention is needed to protecting landscapes where people live and work. Protected landscapes (Category V in the IUCN system of management categories) and cultural landscapes (a category eligible for the World Heritage List) can provide valuable models of how to integrate biodiversity conservation, cultural heritage protection, and sustainable use of resources. This approach can also provide a way to support leadership by local people in the stewardship of these resources.

A key outcome of the working session was the establishment of a task force on protected landscapes through the World Commission on Protected Areas. This task force is charged with developing a three-year global program to promote and

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demonstrate the use of the protected landscape designation. The program will identify key partners; evaluate and research existing protected landscape areas; organize and develop case study material; help to develop training and build professional skills, and work closely with specific regional protected landscape projects. Another important outcome was a plan for a pilot project on protected landscapes for the Andean region, focusing on themes which recognize the great diversity of cultural and natural resources of the region. The proceedings of the working session and public forum, available this spring, will summarize the presentations, case studies, discussions, and outcomes.

Both the working session and the public forum generated a great deal of enthusiasm for exploring new approaches to landscape conservation, and for sharing experiences with colleagues throughout the world. These discussions, and the interest they generated, have provided the background and the impetus for co-editing this issue of THE GEORGE WRIGHT FORUM on *Landscape Stewardship: New Directions in Conservation of Nature and Culture*.

To provide a broad context for this issue, we are pleased to include a contribution that explores the protected landscape approach by Michael Beresford and Adrian Phillips,

and one on the experience with cultural landscapes and the World Heritage Convention by Mechtild Rössler. In their article, Nora Mitchell and Susan Bugey examine the interface of protected landscapes and cultural landscapes and find opportunities for collaboration in the conservation of nature and culture. The next articles in this issue discuss the application of these protected landscape concepts in different regions of the world. Giles Romulus and P.H.C. "Bing" Lucas draw on protected landscape-seascape experience from the Eastern Caribbean and the Pacific to discuss the value of this approach in small island states. Fausto Sarmiento, Guillermo Rodríguez, Miriam Torres, Alejandro Argumedo, Mireya Muñoz, and Jack Rodríguez explore Andean traditions of stewardship that link nature and culture in specific case studies and suggest an innovative regional program for protected landscapes in the Andes. The concluding article by Jessica Brown and Brent Mitchell explores the value of the stewardship approach in protecting landscapes and the essential role of local people in conservation of their natural and cultural heritage.

We hope that you will share this issue with others and invite you to send your thoughts to the George Wright Society for publication in the FORUM.

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Figure 1. Protected landscape specialists from all over the world met at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park in June 1999. Photo by Greig Cranna.

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