

IUCN/WCPA SPECIALIST GROUP ON CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL VALUES OF PROTECTED AREAS (CSVPA)

FOUR-YEAR WORK PLAN 2013-2017

GOAL: Improve the understanding, recognition and safeguarding of cultural and spiritual values, meaning, and knowledge related to all aspects of protected areas and promote their full integration into all aspects of protected area management.

Explanation: CSVPA aims to focus attention on the broader cultural and spiritual significance of protected areas since an apparent focus on values alone plays into the tendency of some scientists and protected area managers to dismiss cultural and spiritual approaches to environmental conservation as folkloristic icing on the cake, having to do primarily with how people feel about nature, rather than having anything to do with what is actually there. In addition, talking primarily of values may give the impression of failing to acknowledge the reality not only of traditional views of nature and sacred sites for indigenous people but also of diverse views of nature in modern societies.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS:

The strategic directions of CSVPA's work for the next 4-year work plan period are as follows:

1. **SCOPE:** The full range of cultural and spiritual values in relation to protected areas so that it highlights the importance of knowledge and meaning as well as values in spiritual and cultural views of nature.

Explanation: CSVPA aims to connect better with opportunities arising from collaboration with WCPA and GPAP and aim at developing synergistic collaborations with protected area agencies, and other organisations responsible for PA management (at different levels: global, bioregional, national, local, etc.) CSVPA also aims to better align its work with the work of its Initiatives: the Delos Initiative focusing on sacred natural sites of mainstream faiths in technologically developed countries, and the global Sacred Natural Sites Initiative focusing on conservation of biological and cultural diversity at sacred natural sites. CSVPA will also work beyond a focus on indigenous cultures and mainstream faiths to include people and organizations that do not consider themselves religious in a traditional sense. This will help to reach a broader segment of the general public and make the work of CSVPA more broadly applicable.

An important aspect of this strategic approach will be to explore the more general cultural and spiritual significance of protected areas as humans experience it. We can bring people from traditional and modern societies together in protecting both nature and culture through building on their own values and views and through sharing those values and views. For example, through highlighting the importance of sources of meaning and ways of knowledge and science found in indigenous traditions, mainstream faiths, literature, and the arts - including painting, sculpture, music, and dance - that complement modern scientific approaches to knowledge and protected area management.

By facilitating and stimulating direct experiences of the environment in its vivid, concrete immediacy, works of art and culture and traditional views of natural features help to overcome the subject-object dichotomy that separates us from nature and rationalizes environmental destruction and desecration in the today's predominantly economic world.

2. **MAINSTREAMING:** Mainstream cultural and spiritual values more deeply into the work of IUCN and other conservation agencies.

Explanation: Although cultural and spiritual values have gained increasing recognition in protected areas and conservation work, there is a need to mainstream these further into the work of IUCN and other conservation agencies.

3. **INSTITUTIONAL ALLIANCES:** Further develop and strengthen the institutional linkages and alliances that CSVPA enjoys with other institutions both within and outside IUCN.

Explanation: Many institutions share the values of CSVPA, and many individuals active in CSVPA are themselves rooted in institutions. Working with these institutions is essential to extend the 'voice' of CSVPA. CSVPA is largely a collection of volunteering individuals under WCPA. Since IUCN does not have the resources to fully support CSVPA needs, greater institutional coordination will be required to become more effective.

4. **CLIMATE CHANGE:** Focus significant efforts on cultural and spiritual values and views in relation to the urgent issue of global climate change.

Explanation: Climate change has emerged as the single largest threat to the planetary system. These changes severely disrupt social, ecological and economic systems. This will affect protected areas and people whose responses will be differently influenced by cultural and spiritual values and views. The conservation and restoration of ecosystems is at the heart of climate change mitigation and adaptation and one solution lies in taking appropriate cultural and spiritual approaches. Many of the communities struggling with this critical issue, have shown remarkable resilience and adaptive capacity to change over the millennia, thus making significant contributions to protecting ecosystems and humanity.

5. **FRAMEWORKS:** Further develop and harmonize frameworks for the identification, protection, and integration of cultural and spiritual values related to protected areas and landscapes. Specific focus will be on extending international frameworks to the national level but attention will also be given to up-scaling local and regional frameworks to be integrated at the national and international levels.

Explanation: At the international level a number of frameworks now exist that recognise the cultural and spiritual values of protected areas. These include the Akwe: Kon Guidelines and Article 8j under the CBD, the World Heritage Convention, the 2003 Living Heritage Convention, the Convention on Intangible Heritage, the Convention on Cultural Heritage, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People and the IUCN/UNESCO BPG 16 Guidelines on Sacred Natural Sites. While at the global level advice and guidance can be extended and improved - for example by developing specific sacred site guidance for mainstream faiths - there is also a great need to integrate these frameworks and make them operable especially at the national level.

6. **MEMBERSHIP:** Recruit a wider range of members who have talents and expertise that would broaden and advance the goals of CSVPA. Provide services and opportunities to engage the interest of the membership and motivate greater participation in CSVPA activities.

Explanation: CSVPA benefits from a wide membership including, custodians, traditional leaders, natural and social scientists, writers, artists, and scholars of humanistic

disciplines such as history of religions, philosophy, history, and art history. CSVPA will seek to increase and better organize the input from scholars. CSVPA will seek to more effectively communicate the spiritual and cultural significance of protected areas to the general public and to outside entities impacting these areas with the help of writers and artists.

CSVPA will look into listing and helping provide opportunities and services to its membership. For example, helping them to get listed with the IUCN World Heritage Programme as experts for evaluations of World Heritage site nominations. This would include having them do reviews of natural sites that have sacred sites and other features of spiritual and cultural importance that are not being reviewed by ICIMOS. Similar things could be done with other activities in the IUCN and elsewhere that would benefit from the expertise of CSVPA members in cultural and spiritual matters.

AREAS OF WORK AND KEY ACTIVITIES:

During the last four years, CSVPA focused much of its attention on sacred natural sites (SNS) and this work is ongoing. During the upcoming four years, CSVPA will address broader issues having to do with the cultural and spiritual significance of protected areas through the following areas of work and key activities:

1. SACRED NATURAL SITES

- a. Continue and further develop the relationship that CSVPA has with the Sacred Natural Sites Initiative (SNSI), which grew out of the specialist group and that is now operating as an independent, self-financing entity. SNSI works with guardians, traditional knowledge holders, conservationists, and academics in support of the protection, conservation and revitalisation of sacred natural sites. Among its key tasks remains the translation and implementation of the BPG 16 Sacred Natural Sites, Guidelines for Protected Area Managers as well as the building of field programmes and the promoting of sacred natural sites in international and national policy venues.
- b. Continue and further develop the relationship that CSVPA has with the Delos Initiative, which is an independent CSVPA initiative that focuses on the role of sacred natural sites in technologically developed countries and mainstream religions.

2. NATIONAL PARKS AND PROTECTED AREAS

- a. Work with protected areas with a particular focus on national parks to initiate collaborations in such areas as interpretation, protected area management, conservation measures, best practices, and implementation of guidelines CSVPA has developed in order to help the parks and protected areas incorporate cultural and spiritual perspectives, improve their relationships with indigenous peoples and local communities, and garner additional, more sustainable support from the general public. In addition to sacred natural sites, this area of work will focus on the cultural, inspirational, and aesthetic values and significance of features of nature for people in diverse societies and cultures, both traditional and modern.
- b. Since national parks are the most heavily visited and visible of all protected areas, working with them will enable CSVPA to reach many more people and have the potential of spreading its cultural and spiritual approach to conservation more broadly and having the possibility of having greater influence on governmental and other policies and policy makers.

3. WORLD HERITAGE

- a. Continue and further develop work that members of the CSVPA steering committee have been doing with the UNESCO World Heritage Committee on religious heritage and sacred natural sites.
- b. Develop collaborations with the IUCN World Heritage Programme to make use of the special skills and expertise of CSVPA membership in evaluating and reviewing cultural and spiritual aspects of natural World Heritage nominations. Most properties nominated as purely natural sites include particular features - such as mountains, springs, rivers, and trees - that have cultural and spiritual significance as natural sacred sites or as sources of more general inspiration and renewal. CSVPA could fill an important gap here that would at the same time provide opportunities and benefits for the membership. The collaboration could include additional work with the IUCN World Heritage Programme on reactive reviews and monitoring of existing World Heritage Sites that have problems or are otherwise threatened. In all these collaborations, CSVPA could help with recognizing and working with various stakeholders for whom proposed and existing natural World Heritage Sites are important for cultural and spiritual reasons.
- c. Initiate and develop collaborations with ICOMOS to make use of the special skills and expertise of CSVPA membership to help in evaluating and reviewing cultural and spiritual aspects of natural features in cultural and mixed natural and cultural World Heritage nominations. Most of the experts ICOMOS draws on have expertise with manmade monuments and modifications of landscapes, so CSVPA could make a real contribution here.

4. GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES

- a. Initiate work on developing guidelines on the cultural and spiritual and spiritual values of protected areas. CSVPA proposes a WCPA PBG series volume on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas. This has long been an underdeveloped but nonetheless very important part of WCPA's work and it would certainly help in bringing the knowledge and expertise gathered within CSVPA to fruition. CSVPA's work has included development of guidelines for WCPA on sacred natural sites and for Euro Parks on intangible heritage.
- b. Complement the existing guidelines on sacred natural sites with guidelines for mainstream faiths. The existing guidelines developed over the last four years focus on sites that are primarily important for indigenous traditions and local communities. Sites that are important to mainstream religions have a set of somewhat different needs and requirements.
- c. Continue ongoing research on the diversity of concepts and values of nature in different cultures around the world and develop guidance for IUCN and other organizations on integrating these diverse concepts and values of nature into environmental conservation measures and protected area management.
- d. Develop chapters and modules on taking cultural and spiritual perspectives into account for the Protected Area Management e-handbook.
- e. Develop a WCPA-GPAP Natural Solutions leaflet on cultural and spiritual values.

5. CAPACITY BUILDING: WORKSHOPS AND MODULES

- a. Develop and deliver workshops for WCPA-GPAP, other sections of the IUCN, and protected area managers on implementing the guidelines that CSVPA, the SNSI, and the Delos Initiative have developed on sacred natural sites, cultural and spiritual values of protected areas, and intangible heritage.
- b. Develop and disseminate modules for training protected area managers in ways of making their work more sustainable by integrating spiritual and cultural perspectives into their approaches to conserving the environment and engaging local communities and other stakeholders with interests in their protected areas. These modules would be designed to fit into larger and more general training programs and workshops that managers are coming to for a number of different reasons, thereby extending the reach of the modules well beyond the more limited range of stand-alone workshops on the cultural and spiritual values of protected areas. Modules can also be developed into e-modules, for example in collaboration with the CBD.
- c. Organize a workshop to explore different concepts of nature in cultures around the world and how to integrate them into the work of the IUCN and other agencies working internationally to conserve the environment and preserve natural values. An output of the workshop could be a book or booklet on the subject.
- d. Organize a workshop or online discussion for CSVPA members to explore the scope of CSVPA and making its work more relevant and applicable to the rest of the IUCN. This should include meaning and knowledge in a more general approach to the cultural and spiritual significance of protected areas. But other ideas and approaches would also be encouraged and discussed. Members would be welcome to brainstorm on existing work proposed in this work plan as well as propose new ideas of their own. The workshop or discussion would lead to an action plan for guiding CSVPA in years ahead.

6. IUCN WORLD PARKS CONGRESS

- a. Prepare a proposal for a session on the cultural and spiritual significance of parks and protected areas to submit to the IUCN World Parks Congress being hosted by Australia in 2014.
- b. Organize and conduct the session on the cultural and spiritual significance of parks and protected areas at the Congress in Sydney in 2014.
- c. Work with SNSI and the Delos Initiative to organize other sessions and events at the World Parks Congress that promote the importance of culture and spirituality in the conservation of nature and highlight the various peoples, communities, and traditions for which the cultural and spiritual significance of nature is important.
- d. Work with TILCEPA and other organizations on plans they are developing for using the concept of mountain paths and pilgrimage routes as an organizing principle for the World Parks Congress.
- e. Work with TILCEPA and the Worldwide Indigenous Network on plans they are developing for making indigenous peoples a significant part of the World Parks Congress.

7. CAPACITY BUILDING AND SOCIAL SAFEGUARDS IN PROTECTED AREAS

- a. CSVPA is committed to help develop the elements of capacity building and social safeguards under WCPA and GPAP throughout all of its work.
- b. CSVPA is also committed to help develop these elements in collaboration with the CBD's Programme of Work on Protected Areas, in particular element 2. Both areas have been underdeveloped and CSVPA holds significant expertise to aid in the process.

8. CULTURAL RIGHTS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- a. CSVPA will continue work it has been doing providing input on the drafts of UNCRIP and various other UN documents and policies.
- b. CSVPA is working increasingly and more closely with the NGO Committee on Spirituality, Values and Global Concerns at the United Nations In Geneva. Several presentations have been made to parts of the UN such as EMRIP as well as affiliated NGOs. CSVPA will build on this work and further develop it over the next four years.
- c. CSVPA will continue to make appeals to the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights and to bring matters of insufficient recognition of cultural and spiritual values to the attention of the special Rapporteur on Indigenous Peoples.
- d. CSVPA will continue work it has been doing promoting FPIC and the development of social safeguards in protected areas.

INSTITUTIONAL LINKAGES AND ALLIANCES

CSVPA has working relationship with other IUCN commissions, themes and task forces, as well as working relationships with other institutions. Further potentials exist to expand these and other relationships, and CSVPA aims to strengthen these areas over the coming four years.

INSIDE IUCN:

1. World Commission for Protected Areas - WCPA

- **TILCEPA:** CSVPA is located within WCPA under the strategic Direction on Governance, Communities, Equity and Livelihoods (TILCEPA). TILCEPA is a joint effort with CEESP and so CSVPA works closely with CEESP. The CEESP Theme on Culture and Conservation is another working relationship.
- **Protected Areas Categories Task Force:** CSVPA works closely with the leadership of the Categories CSVPA and made significant inputs into the new categories guidelines.
- **Protected Landscapes Task Force:** CSVPA has an active working relationship with the Protected Landscapes CSVPA and several CSVPA Steering Committee members are active in PLCSVPA. During 2008 the two CSVPA produced a joint publication on the Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Landscapes, edited by a CSVPA SC member.

- **World Heritage:** Reviews and dedicated reviews and looking at the cultural importance of nominations on natural criteria and working together on a BPG on cultural and spiritual values.

2. Commission for Environmental, Economic and Social Policy - CEESP

CSVPA is part of TILCEPA and so works actively with CEESP. Many SNS are also Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas - ICCA and therefore CSVPA has a close interest in the development of the ICCA process. CSVPA Leader was on the Core group of TILCEPA during the previous 4 years and a member of Theme on Conservation and Culture (TCC). CSVPA Deputy Leader has been on the CEESP, Theme on Conservation and Culture (TCC).

3. Commission for Environmental Law:

- **Ethics Specialist Group:** CSVPA has several common members with the Ethics Specialist Group and began collaboration with the Ethics Specialist Group (ESG) in 2005, and re-established the connection at the 2008 WCc. The potential exists for greater collaboration with ESG as well as CEL as a whole, for example, over national legislation and policy models to support SNS and ICCA.

4. Species Survival Commission

- During the last 4-year work plan, CSVPA started exploring the cultural and spiritual values of species in relationship with the RED LIST species. Initial discussion on the potential of this work was discussed with the previous SSC Chair but has not restarted under the new SSC Leadership.

OTHERS OUTSIDE IUCN:

Currently CSVPA has formal links with:

- **The Mediterranean Institute of Nature and Anthropos (Med-INA);** Facilitates the Delos Initiative,
- **The Sacred Land Film Project (SLFP),** The Sacred Land Film Project is now developing a major four-part film series on the plight of important sacred natural sites around the world, again as a tool for public education.
- **The Cambridge Centre for Landscape and People (CCLP),** which is a focal point for research on cultural and spiritual values of landscape and nature.
- **EarthCollective (FSD);** Facilitates the Cultural Values and Nature Initiative (CVNI) and hosts the CSVPA website in collaboration with FSD. The Foundation for Sustainable Development (FSD) provides an extremely valuable support by hosting the CSVPA website.

Sacred Natural Sites Initiative: Originally part of CSVPA and now its own entity. Working partnerships have been developed with:

- The Association of the Indigenous Peoples of Tyrona of the Sierra Nevada de Santa

Marta Colombia

- The GEF Small Grants Programme
- the Alliance for Religion and Conservation
- The Gaia Foundation
- The Applied Environmental Research Foundation
- The Center for Humans and Nature
- The UN Committee on Spiritual Values & Global Concerns

Partnerships to consider and possibly initiate:

- The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
- ICOMOS
- The Mountain Institute (TMI)
- The Forum on Religion and Ecology
- The Nature Conservancy
- The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA)
- National Parks in various countries
- The Mountain Forum
- The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

POTENTIAL NEW AND STRENGTHENED LINKAGES:

There are many opportunities for stronger and new links with other commissions, taskforces and other non IUCN institutions, which are currently constrained largely by time. Within IUCN WCPA opportunities include Mountains, Transboundary, Caves and Karst, Marine, Management effectiveness Specialist Groups and Task Forces. Closer working with some of the organizations mentioned above is envisaged during the coming four years, in particular the IUCN World Heritage Programme.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR CSVPA ACTIVITIES:

In carrying out its activities, CSVPA and its members, within the overall framework of IUCN operations, shall emphasize:

1. **Integrated approach:** Use an integrated approach where equitable consideration is given to biological and cultural elements.
2. **Intercultural approaches:** Commitment to intercultural (or cross-cultural) processes promoting mutual understanding and learning across cultures recognizing there has been a dominant 'conservation culture'.
3. **Equity:** Place a high importance on issues of equity including; respect, prior informed consent, Confidentiality, and appropriate participatory processes.
4. **Effective Communications:** Communicate with CSVPA members and the wider community in an effective manner.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:

a. CSVPA Coordination

Co-Chairs: Bas Verschuuren and Edwin Bernbaum

b. Steering Committee

Major CSVPA decisions will be made through a consensus approach by the CSVPA Co-Chairs and a Steering Committee

Steering Committee Members

Edwin Bernbaum
Vita de Waal
Josep Maria Mallarach
Thymio Papayannis
Bas Verschuuren
Rob Wild

c. Members

Members are those individuals with an interest and expertise in the cultural and spiritual values of protected areas and who are willing to commit time and energy to furthering the activities of CSVPA, through for example bringing information from their own sphere of actions forward to inform other members and participate in debates and contribute to the communications of CSVPA.

CSVPA Members are encouraged to do the following:

- Participate in CSVPA communication via email exchange (CSVPA list serve) or via the CSVPA Newsletter, providing information of relevance to all members.
- Submit case studies for publications and other mechanisms of sharing lessons.
- Promote the understanding of cultural and spiritual values in their own spheres of influence and share the learning with CSVPA.
- Identify and recommend individuals, projects and institutions that could make positive contributions to the goals of CSVPA.
- Indicate their interest to otherwise support CSVPA and make suggestions for the improvement of its network.

e. CSVPA Initiatives

The main CSVPA initiatives consist of projects that have been successful in organizing and financing themselves and have particular relevance to the CSVPA work plan. The results of these projects are directly contributing towards the work of CSVPA and are relevant to the work of the WCPA. These are currently the Delos initiative and the Sacred Natural Sites Initiative.

FINANCING

CSVPA relies on voluntary contributions and spin off from the work that its members carry out in their professional careers.

CSVPA is not institutionalized but is rather a network of volunteers that hold CSVPA membership. In order to finance the projects in its portfolio, CSVPA relies on external (philanthropic) sources. Separate institutions affiliated with CSVPA members and CSVPA Initiatives have been successful in obtaining and managing funds to carry out their missions and contributing to CSVPA's mission.

Funding may also be desirable for those activities that are not part of CSVPA Initiatives but are part of the CSVPA programme of work as described in this document. A source of funding for enabling some of the activities described in this programme of work will be required as the outputs and products exceed the level of what can be obtained with merely voluntary input and they also incur material and operational costs.

The coordination of the work would also be aided by enabling volunteers that work on these projects to meet and advance the work. This can be done through presentations and workshops at international conferences, but some dedicated meetings will also be required.

To these ends, especially the development of the BPG's on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas, CSVPA will be applying for Commission Operating Funds.

CSVPA has also been considering options of establishing itself as a legal entity that can raise funds or allying itself with a larger organization that can manage finances for it and provide tax-exempt status for contributions.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

CSVPA is responsible for informing the World Commission on Protected Areas and as such needs to report on its work annually. This is also important for the WCPA to be able to review usefulness of CSVPA in fulfilling the mission of the WCPA and by extension GPAP.

In order to produce useful reports CSVPA makes use of;

- the contributions of its members shared through the email list serve,
- reports on progress of CSVPA projects and initiatives,
- Specific deliverables and outcomes achieved by CSVPA and its projects and initiatives.