



# Conserving Nature at Sacred Sites: State of knowledge and prospects for research

*Symposium held on 25 October 2011 at the University of Zurich*

*Nature conservationists over the last decade have begun to recognize and document the potential of sacred natural sites for preserving biological diversity. Sacred sites in this context are natural or semi-natural areas protected in the name of spiritual or religious beliefs that also offer special advantages of community-based, long-term resource management. While most studies about sacred natural sites have focused on traditional cultures and animistic beliefs, there is growing evidence that such sites located in Western, Judeo-Christian contexts also convey distinct conservation advantages. The goal of this symposium is to bring together a group of conservation researchers concerned with sacred natural sites in order to assess the field's state of knowledge, as well as to identify the most promising future research directions.*

**Gloria Pungetti**, Cambridge University, UK: *Biocultural and sacred landscape research for biocultural diversity conservation in Europe*

**Marju Torp Kõivupuu**, Tallinn University, Estonia: *Sacred natural sites. Post-Socialist Estonian model: discourse and (planning)problems*

**Emma Shephard-Walwyn**, School of Anthropology and Conservation, University of Kent, UK: *The role of Cornish standing stones to Biodiversity and their contribution to alternative management approaches*

**Fabrizio Frascaroli**, Institute of Evolutionary Biology and Environmental Studies, University of Zurich: *Sacred sites' potential for conservation in Western contexts: a preliminary assessment from Central Italy*

**Chiara Serenelli**, University of Florence, Italy: *Opportunities of cultural/spiritual routes for biodiversity conservation at the landscape scale. The Italian case-study of the Lauretana Pilgrimage Route*

**Sasha Ismail**, Ecosystem Management, ETH Zurich: *Effects of Fragmentation and Habitat Patch Degradation on the Survival of Native Tree Species in the Sacred Grove Landscape of the Western Ghats India*

**Toni Huber**, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany: *Research on Sacred Sites and Conservation on the Tibetan Plateau and in the Eastern Himalayas*

**Ashley Massey**, Cambridge University, UK: *Customary conservation in Sabah, Malaysian Borneo*

**Tobias Haller**, Social Anthropology, University of Bern: *Sacred Natural Sites: Some Reflections from Social Anthropology*

**Katrin Daedlow**, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany: *Governance and values in sacred natural sites: prospective insights from institutional economics and resilience thinking*

**Shonil Bhagwat**, Oxford University, UK: *Tropical forest recovery in sacred groves of the Western Ghats, India: Cultural revitalization?*

**Sigurd Bergmann**, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway: *Sacred geography: Religion in the lived space of climate change*

**Stephan Rist**, Centre for Development and Environment, University of Bern: *Spiritual dimensions of nature – towards a dialogue of thought collectives*

**Norman Backhaus**, Department of Geography, University of Zurich: *Conservation of sacred landscapes: holy safeguarding or unsaintly land grab?*

**Dipti Abhilash**, University of Zurich: *Role of performing arts in conservation of South Asian sacred natural sites*

**Shane Mc Corristine**, Scott Polar Institute, UK: *Spirits of Place: A Unifying Concept for Inhabited Sites in Arctic Exploration*

## Schedule |

9:30 – 10:00	– coffee, tea and gipfeli –	11:55 – 12:05	Katrin Daedlow
10:00 – 10:15	Welcome address and introduction	12:05 – 12:15	– short break and change of room –
10:15 – 10:25	Gloria Pungetti	12:15 – 13:00	Shonil Bhagwat
10:25 – 10:35	Marju Torp Kõivupuu	13:00 – 14:00	– lunch break –
10:35 – 10:45	Emma Shephard-Walwyn	14:00 – 14:10	Sigurd Bergmann
10:45 – 10:55	Fabrizio Frascaroli	14:10 – 14:20	Stephan Rist
10:55 – 11:05	Chiara Serenelli	14:20 – 14:30	Norman Backhaus
11:05 – 11:15	– short break –	14:30 – 14:40	Dipti Abhilash
11:15 – 11:25	Sasha Ismail	14:40 – 14:50	Shane McCorristine
11:25 – 11:35	Toni Huber	14:50 – 15:00	– short break –
11:35 – 11:45	Ashley Massey	15:00 – 16:00	Discussion and planning of future projects
11:45 – 11:55	Tobias Haller	17:30	– early diner for those who can come –

## Venue |

University of Zurich,  
Irchel Campus, room 10-G-03/04



**Directions |** From Bahnhofplatz (main train station) take Tram 10 direction Flughafen and get off after about 10 minutes at Universität Irchel or from Bahnhofquai (main train station) take Tram 14 direction Seebach and get off after about 10 minutes at Milchbuck.

**Hotel suggestion |** Apart Hotel, [www.aparthotel.ch](http://www.aparthotel.ch)

**For more information please contact** Claudia Rutte: [claudia.rutte@iee.unibe.ch](mailto:claudia.rutte@iee.unibe.ch) | Marc Hall: [marc.hall@ieu.uzh.ch](mailto:marc.hall@ieu.uzh.ch)