

0409 37

Workshop on Conservation Education for Specialists of African Countries

IUCN General Assembly

Nairobi, Kenya, 12th - 13th September, 1963

INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE OF NATIONAL PARKS IN
CONSERVATION EDUCATION

Part 1. Contribution of National Parks to the Advancement of Conservation Education by Harold J. Coolidge

The theme of the First World Conference on National Parks, which was held in Seattle, Washington, from 30 June to 7 July 1962, was "national parks are of international significance." The success of that Conference and the recommendations emanating from it have given us in a sense a blueprint for future action on a worldwide basis.

Such action has not been postponed for future consideration as is often the case. I propose to share my time in this workshop with two of my colleagues who are specifically doing something about the Seattle recommendations. The first is Jean-Paul Harroy, former Secretary General of the IUCN and now serving as Vice Chairman of our International Commission on National Parks, who is working on the U. N. World List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves. This list was established by vote of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations in 1959, and now includes areas reported by 81 countries. The second person is William J. Hart, former Director of State Parks for the states of Nevada and Utah, who is exploring the need for establishing an international office for park systems planning on a worldwide basis.

Three excellent papers dealing with the subject of education as related to the national park field were presented at the Seattle Conference by Daniel B. Beard of the United States, John A. Pile of Southern Rhodesia, and Tetsumaro Senge of Japan. I would like to refer to some of the points made in those papers on conservation education in the three countries represented.

Mr. Beard pointed out how effectively the National Park Service, a U. S. Government Agency established in 1916, has carried forward its mission to assure "that the opportunity to enjoy national parks would be provided and continued in perpetuity." Educational work in U. S. parks started about 1916 with "nature guidings" which meant that visitors were escorted and showed trees, birds, flowers, and rock formations. By 1935 this pattern was well established in many parks and the program under Carl Russell was characterized by the word "interpretation" which was defined as "an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects by first hand experience and by illustration media rather than simply to communicate factual information." They appreciated that interpretation was an art, and that its aim was to provoke interest.

Orientation which introduces visitors to what to expect from their park experience adds greatly to the values that they can acquire and this is done in many ways in the U. S. parks by talks, films, and naturalist camp-fire programs. Then there are "site museums" located at historical and archaeological sites and trailside exhibits that help to explain the story of the park. Actually the park is the exhibit, and the museums should be thought of as explanatory labels. The latest developments are the visitor centers that are used not only for orientation, but to stimulate interest and answer questions about the park in a relaxed atmosphere. 63 such centers are already established in U. S. parks, and it is expected that there will be 82 more by 1966. Greater emphasis is being placed on self-guiding facilities along park roads and trails because of the crowding and the short time that some visitors have available. Signs, markers, exhibits, nature trails with booklets keyed to numbered stakes or stations are being used. Publications based on research findings for those who want to make a more serious study of the parks are available.

John Pile emphasized the value of creating a natural resource conservation consciousness to underly any conservation education program. He defines the education problem as "(a) the education of the more advanced section of the community to the need for and methods of conservation and wise use of resources; (b) the education of the more backward sections of the population in adapting themselves to the new way of life thrust upon them, and to give them an appreciation of the importance of basic natural resources and how to conserve them for their own betterment and that of their children in the light of their new environment; (c) as progress is achieved with (a) and (b), the stimulation of interest in national parks and museums, and the creation of an awareness of the important part they have played in research, education and recreation."

Conservation education had to be started in the schools and to accomplish this the Natural Resources Board started conservation education courses for teachers in the school vacations. Two or three such courses catered to some 150 teachers each year. A Conservation Day and later a Conservation Week was instituted and a definite theme is now taken for a whole year with Wild Life Conservation being the theme for 1961. This education campaign has had a tremendous impact on Southern Rhodesia by creating an appreciation of the wild life resources, their conservation and wise utilization, and the importance of national parks and museums in the overall pattern.

Tetsumaro Senge told how the national parks in Japan are used for study tours as part of the regular curriculum for Japanese school children. In 1959 a total of 45,000 schools had school journeys involving more than 5,000,000 children, and five national parks were among the best ten destinations for such tours. Museums play an important part in this education aspect of national park activities.

Since most of Japan's limited land must be used for the various industries to support its large population, little remains in its natural state. Parks are, therefore, the most outstanding of those places which have managed to retain much of nature and are indispensably important spots to study geographical features, geology, ecology of animals and plants, etc. Japan's parks also include many of the country's historic relics, and are important places for the study of history, archaeology, and the arts and crafts.

Not only these three papers, but many others dealing with such subjects as principles and policies of national parks; scientific, economic and cultural values of such areas; optimum use; administration; and international coordination of national park and reserve programs, contributed substantive material that can be found in the proceedings of the Seattle Conference. The proceedings, which will be published in late 1963, together with papers from the Arusha Conference (Symposium on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources in Modern African States) can give us a substantive baseline for all aspects of conservation education dealing with this subject.

If we visualize a world in which most nations have national parks which can be an asset to their economy, and which attract large numbers of tourists often from foreign countries, it seems to me that we have a particular justification for making this subject a primary part of any education program. Such a program will strengthen the support of the park system within a country, as well as encourage visitors to share the values and knowledge that can be gained from this cultural asset. I maintain that natural beauty is the highest common denominator in the spiritual life of mankind, and that the inspirational values to be found in natural areas for the poet, the artist, the dreamer, or the tired city worker are of great cultural significance. We need to stimulate, especially at the elementary school level, a back to nature movement such as occurred at the time of Rousseau in the early 19th Century. If this can be achieved, then the children in elementary schools will not only have a basic understanding of and reverence for the natural world of which man is a part, but they will hopefully take a greater interest in solving problems of stabilizing the natural environment and the biotic community that is dependent upon it for survival.

National parks are a natural area for schools and colleges to visit in their nature study courses. Granted that they should not be used as collecting grounds for specimens, nevertheless they are often well adapted for observation of an undisturbed ecosystem, and their value to science as a reference study area will be increasingly appreciated as the undisturbed areas of the world get fewer and fewer.

Conservation education is particularly necessary for people whose homes are in areas close to national parks. They are constantly being subjected to questions as to the justification of this form of land use as compared to using the same land for some agricultural or industrial purpose. Unless those who are most affected by these areas become convinced of their values, the long range outlook of maintaining them will be jeopardized.

Another target group for whom special knowledge of parks and reserves is most vital is the government planning group which thinks in long range terms, but which is often made up of bureaucrats, who have little appreciation of the significance of what is at stake.

A third group which should have priority are the teachers of conservation in the teachers schools and colleges. They must have a dedication to the cause to enable them to inspire interest in this new subject, which has the potential not only to fit into existing curriculum of geography, agriculture, soil science, social anthropology, economics, etc., but also can make a case

for conservation as a special discipline to which some U. S. colleges have devoted entire departments.

The methods of giving such instruction will be handled in other sections of this workshop, but it seems to me that the preservation of the natural habitat as nearly undisturbed as possible for future ecological studies, as well as for the benefit of the species of animal and plant life that are found there, is the contribution that parks and reserves can make to this important subject. These habitats will have to be classified and zoned, but once this is understood and accepted by those visiting or living in regions adjoining such areas, great progress will have been made in establishing a solid educational base for strengthening the park concept. Another value of such education will be to make it easier to extend the boundaries of the preserved habitat areas.

Perhaps we can dream of the day when the entire world will be covered by a network of parks and reserves where principal biotic environments will be permanently preserved for research, education, and enjoyment of future generations. When that day comes there might be a free flow of administrative and technical people concerned with improved management of such areas who would not only visit areas similar to their own in other countries, but also spend some time carrying out practical work on an exchange basis.

Part 2. The United Nations World List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves by Jean-Paul Harroy

Our Chairman has clearly and convincingly analyzed for you the numerous ties which link national parks to valuable but as yet too scarce achievements. He also provided an account of the much needed education campaign developing in many parts of the world in favour of the conservation of nature and natural resources.

Upon his request, my statement approaches the problems from a particular point of view. This is indicated by the work to which I have been devoting myself for a year: the establishment of a "world list of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves," a resolution made in April 1959 in Mexico by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations.

With your indulgence, I shall begin with a brief historical comment.

The idea for a World List originated in 1958, at the 6th General Assembly of I.U.C.N., in Athens and Delphi. It formed the subject of a recommendation which had been transmitted to the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Next came resolution 713, voted the following year by the Economic and Social Council, requesting the Secretary-General of the United Nations "to establish, in cooperation with UNESCO and FAO, a list of national parks and equivalent reserves, with a brief description of each, together with his recommendations for maintaining and developing the list on a current basis and for its distribution".

This resolution also invited the Member States of the Organization to transmit to the U. N. Secretariat in New York all information necessary for the preparation of this list and the invited I.U.C.N. "to assist the Secretary-General, upon his request, in the preparation of the proposed list".

By early 1961, the United Nations and I.U.C.N. had received 52 replies. They drew up and published a preliminary list, approved by the Economic and Social Council at its New York session in April 1961, which expressed the wish that the work be continued.

A year later, about 30 additional replies were registered and a second list was published, this time through the good offices of the I.C.N.P. This expanded list was presented at the First World Conference on National Parks held in Seattle in early July 1962, in pursuance of the wish expressed by ECOSOC in its resolution of April 1961.

From the Seattle discussions and the subsequent consultations - more particularly those of the IUCN's Executive Board - it appeared that the task was far from being completed, that gaps remained to be filled, that the information published had to be systematized, classified, and even modified in order to establish comparisons among the areas cited in the list. This is the work to which I have been devoting myself for a year and the work I shall describe for you in a moment.

But first, continuing in the direction of Mr. Coolidge's report, I want to trace the basic purposes behind the establishment of the World List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves.

The first of these purposes is broadly stated, and encompasses the others. It is to help man to make use of the years left him before economic and social "development" have totally altered the natural world; to constitute an adequate network of national parks and nature reserves where portions of wild Nature will be safeguarded for the many reasons of which we are aware.

Fortunately, the number of countries in which such protected territories exist is large. On the other hand, some nations either do not possess any, or have not succeeded in insuring effective protection to territories which have been set aside. Established sanctuaries are often threatened by covetousness. Almost everywhere, economic interest appears antagonistic to the establishment or defense of the national parks, dedicated, as the term implies, to the satisfaction of the need for beauty, recreation or science common to a whole nation.

The publication of a list of achievements which merit the title of national park - or equivalent reserve - constitutes an international pooling of these sanctuaries, and a common inheritance for mankind. Used tactfully this list may prove useful for a variety of applications.

The first is to induce the governments of the countries where such parks and reserves already exist to insure their maintenance more carefully and to increase their value and number.

The second is to prompt either government authorities or private groups of countries where such sanctuaries do not yet exist, to create them as soon as possible and to provide such protection and supervision required to achieve inclusion in the United Nations list.

Because the validation of inclusion in such a list by high international authority will have been preceded by a strict objective analysis of each of the achievements listed, this might well encourage the responsible authorities to devote more attention to practical measures for maintaining their status in regard to national parks in their countries.

Finally, the systematic work of listing will have the virtue of requiring objective analysis, a long and delicate task with which I have been entrusted, and which will no doubt need more and more clarity of thought. We may hope that this will open the way to a tentative solution to a problem which continues to vex us. Indeed the questions now under consideration were asked the very day when the modern notion of nature protection was born and placed on the agenda of the tasks of I.U.C.N., when the latter was created at Fontainebleau, in 1948. These concern the imbroglio of nomenclature.

X
X X

The basic idea underlying this classification work is that it is not wise for the U. N. List to give an equal importance to actual situations that fundamentally differ among themselves because of the type of protection that they assure natural habitats on account of their size and the degree of enforcement in the application of their statutes.

In view of these considerations, three criteria were established. These were to enable the selection of the territories and to provide a basis for their inclusion in the list. As a rule, those which could not meet these criteria should be ruled out of the aforesaid list, unless special extenuating reasons justify the contrary in which case the reasons must be provided in the list.

Of course, innumerable shadings and interpretations, had to be considered in applying the basic criteria especially with regard to the level of the development and the degree of human occupation in the countries under consideration. These have been analyzed in a note, of which I have some copies here and which all those interested may consult.

Briefly stated, this is the outline of these criteria:

1st principle: "Areas which qualify as "national parks or equivalent reserves" shall be confined to those areas which have been accorded a status enabling them to enjoy absolute legal protection against human exploitation of their natural resources and against any form of injury to the integrity of the area resulting from human activity. While exceptions may in very special circumstances be made in regard to this principle, it is emphasized that they must invariably be regarded as exceptions."

2nd principle: Unless stated as exceptions, territories below 2,000 hectares in countries of which the population density is less than 50 inhabitants

to the square kilometer, or below 500 hectares in countries where this last figure is exceeded, will not figure on the list.

3rd principle: Excluded from the list, irrespective of their legal status, their size or their name, are the territories in which a minimum full-time management staff and a minimum budget per unit of surface are not assigned.

At present, the case of each country is being analyzed in the light of these three groups of criteria. The result of this analysis is transmitted to the responsible authorities for correction or comment. Dubious cases, with the material in support of our conclusions, are submitted for consideration to the members of the I.C.N.P. The territories which have met the criteria will be included in a preliminary draft of the definitive list. Governments will be able to appeal decisions until the authorities of the United Nations are asked again to ratify the full list.

These, briefly outlined, are the main purposes and the main approaches chosen to reach them. As you realize, there is still much to be said in order to throw light on the still numerous obscure points of this picture.

First, we could, for instance, endeavour to define "equivalent reserves" as mentioned in the ECOSOC Resolution as entities which deserve inclusion with the national parks.

A fundamental point which should be stressed once again is the discretion and tact which must prevail in carrying out of the selections and their handling throughout.

An important aspect which could be treated is the existence of many conservation achievements which, though valuable and real, were excluded from the United Nations list because of their insufficient size or consistency of adherence to requirements (e.g. hunting allowed, but good protection of rare flora). For such protected territories of the seventeen country members of the Council of Europe, the Strasbourg Committee of Experts for the Conservation of Nature and Landscape decided to undertake an enumeration, as complete as possible, of all the European achievements, including the "natural areas established for public recreation". The Executive Council of I.U.C.N., expressed a similar wish for the whole world. Though this should not be undertaken before the list of national parks and equivalent reserves is finished, preparations might be started.

This leads quite naturally to the notion of an harmonious balance to be maintained in each country, among these various provisions, from the strict nature reserves to the Nature park, including the national park and the numerous types of game reserves, forest reserves, natural monuments. Quite logically, the foregoing gives rise to the notion of "park planning" on which our friend William J. Hart will speak.

The hour has come for me to conclude.

I shall do it by knotting the thread between my own subject-matter, the world list of national parks, and yours - "a workshop on conservation education".

The preparation of a balanced list of these national parks and equivalent reserves should contribute greatly to the rational formulation of modern policies and programs in the matter of "conservation education".

But, under the circumstances, most of our efforts will be pointed in the opposite direction, as it is above all the action of education which constitutes the vital ferment for the success of my undertaking, the preparation of the list.

Let us repeat it once more: our purpose is to make use of the list as a psychological lever with a view to inclining the peoples and their governments to take advantage of the last years left them to complete their national systems of natural sanctuaries of any type.

And in order that this lever might have a chance of being of some value, my point d'appui must have been firmly established, through education which has succeeded in gaining their comprehension as well as their will to act. Without these, protection of the existing national parks as well as the creation of new national parks will have been beyond possibility.

Part 3. The Projected Park Systems Planning Program by William J. Hart.

Recommendation No. 12 was unanimously adopted by the First World Conference on National Parks because many nations felt, for a variety of reasons, that they should be able to benefit from the experience of others in the park field. The recommendation specifically urged the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), as the international leader in the field of conservation, to establish a Committee on Park Planning.

The committee which framed the recommendation included consideration of the whole spectrum of open space reservation which can provide for the daily demands of urban populations, as well as the pure nature reserves which meet the urgent demand for knowledge about the world around us. My task has been to examine the needs of a variety of countries to determine, from the standpoint of need and desire, whether there can be fruitful park counseling at the international level. Based on the reconnaissance, it is hoped that my recommendations to the International Commission on National Parks (ICNP) will enable the Commission to assist IUCN in choosing the best approach to providing the needed services -- it is no longer possible to consider the alternative of not doing the job. All of us are being helped by cogent advice rendered by a special international advisory committee chaired by Dr. Joseph L. Fisher of the U. S. A.

Every effort has and is being made to have a variety of natural, political and economic conditions examined to provide maximum flexibility in the machinery finally instituted by IUCN. cursory visits have been made to France, Greece, Spain, and Mexico. Greater depth was achieved in Costa Rica and a considerable effort was made in Turkey and Colombia. It is planned to do follow-up work to check validity in an African Special Project country and two Asiatic countries. Depending on the funds on hand and the judgment of the ICNP, one country may be selected to try a pilot effort to more critically test the validity of the broad recommendations endorsed by the ICNP.

The matter of terminology is being considered in conjunction with those working on the U. N. World List of National Parks and Equivalent Reserves. The tie is worth mentioning because there is a range of management alternative

41

available to governments governing the use of their natural resource base to achieve the most relevant conservation objectives. Any realistic advice which IUCN gives to a nation must be couched in terms that makes sense to the objectives of any nation requesting that assistance. One type of land use solution may not be able to meet all the needs of a particular country. National park use is one such alternative, but it cannot be considered in isolation. What ought to emerge soon is some agreement of the definitions of the alternatives -- particularly from an ecological point of view.

This leads to the observation (understatement) that the needs of countries vary from region to region and from country to country within regions. One way to discuss this aspect is to draw on the countries and regions visited. One can, for instance, say that there is general homogeneity among the countries of the northern Mediterranean which can be compared with the general homogeneous characteristics of Latin America. All of the Mediterranean countries are old and people have been intensively exploiting the natural resource base for centuries. No one seriously disputes the need to embark on large scale tree planting projects to stabilize soil and water and to create a more pleasant life. Such programs are popular. One university president is responsible for planting over 3 million seedlings on his extensive new campus. Each government, as a recognizable force, supports research and nursery operations pointed at massive field planting efforts. Latin America, on the other hand, is a new region. The resources have not been trampled into the ground. Here the emphasis is on accelerating the rate of exploitive use so that economic expansion will keep pace with population increase. Although nurseries have been established, there is little enthusiasm for them. Government is strangely ambivalent in that it controls most investment capital yet is vague and impotent in many subject areas (national park administration is a case in point).

Yet no one can deny that there are great cultural, administrative, and natural differences between Turkey and Spain or that Greece behaves differently than the other two. Costa Rica will react to problems in a different manner than will Colombia or Argentina. The main point here is that one can talk to government officers in northern Mediterranean countries in sophisticated terms about national parks, national forests, game refuges and so on and be able to receive accurate impressions about whether the government will activate programs in any or all of these fields. In Latin America there is a tendency to assume that one form of land use, as national park, will pose the solutions to whole range of resource problems and there is little understanding of the differences in management philosophy involved in the alternative types of designated areas or how the public areas can be complimentary to private land uses.

This means that care must be taken in choosing the talent a particular country needs at a given point of time. It is time, for instance, to have a qualified park planner visit Turkey to make a prototype park plan for a major national park. The planner can be assured of a core of receptive men who can work with him. He can also be assured that the plans will be, for the most part, carried out. Costa Rica needs a general land use planner and administrative specialist who can assist the government in delineating those areas which ought to be receiving conservation treatment of some kind to preserve the watershed resources on which the country is hinging a great deal of its hopes for future growth.

Without exception, the countries face the problem of providing for mushrooming urban populations. Old city parks, designed as passive areas for strolling and sitting, are outmoded and no longer have the capacity to meet the demand of greater numbers of city dwellers, more younger people -- requiring more space for active enterprises -- increasing leisure time, and the other hallmarks of industrializing modern society. Very little thought is given to areas peripheral to the city which can satisfy the demand tomorrow as the city grows outward, or about the implications of putting such requirements into the land use plans for the future development of the city, or about the amenities such planning infers for future residents of the city.

It is worth noting that such planning for the future could be translated into a present benefit by using some of the unemployed people in the city, many of them unskilled rural people displaced by the advance of mechanized agriculture and insufficient land to gainfully support the population. Such "city" people could be used to build park facilities in need today, learn new skills to better equip them for urban life, and teach many of them to appreciate the value of constructive play in industrial society.

Many types of park area, indeed many types of managed land area, offer many of the benefits of national park management: there is a specific niche in any country's natural and historic heritage that needs to be filled by national parks designed to protect and interpret scientific values of great significance. The basic objective is to organize a whole system of areas so that each segment of the public presenting demands on the land resource base will feel maximum satisfaction and national parks will enjoy the long term security of a nationally recognized land use.