



IUCN
WORLD PARKS
CONGRESS
SYDNEY 2014

A strategy of innovative approaches and recommendations to **inspire a new generation in the next decade**

Submitted on 22 December 2014, following the deliberations of the
IUCN World Parks Congress 2014

A promising future

Deepening the relationship between people and nature, and strengthening support for protected areas through direct and meaningful experiences has a positive impact on every facet of society. At the Congress we learned the importance of that one special experience in nature that at an early age triggers a transformative moment, instilling in individuals a deeply personal connection to nature. Parks and protected areas are life-sustaining and enriching places that awaken wonder and inspire hope. They are the best places to offer these special experiences, particularly against the backdrop of an increasingly urbanized world.

The groundbreaking leadership of young people in Sydney speaks to a generational change in protected areas conservation that will not, and should not, be denied. Young inspired conservation professionals are taking the reins and demonstrating new ways of tackling longstanding challenges and opportunities for protected areas. Together we must remove remaining barriers to their empowerment.

For society at large, and especially the new generation, technology touches every aspect of daily life, engaging new audiences, supporting learning, and helping to share experiences across social networks. Technology should not detract from nature experiences but rather be an enabling tool that helps people engage with nature on their own terms and share their experiences widely.

We must find ways to engrain the importance of connecting people and nature across all sectors of society as fundamental to creating a maintaining a culture of stewardship with a new generation. This culture should inspire and result in a future in which people are passionate about protected areas, are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps that can be taken to conserve and use it sustainably, and take action in its favour.

The current situation

Over the last ten years, concerns have grown about humanity's increasing disconnection from nature. From children with little opportunity to engage directly with nature; to people increasingly living in cities remote from the natural world; to young adults of the technology age for whom nature is seemingly irrelevant; to those communities most vulnerable to natural disasters; to poor people who struggle to live sustainably from nature's bounty; and to a generation who want to help protect nature but feel disempowered. All these characterize a strained relationship with the natural world and have been the seeds of a worldwide movement to transform this situation.

In Sydney we recalled Nelson Mandela's call of more than 10 years ago from the last World Parks Congress to actively engage the new generation in nature conservation and protected areas. We reviewed the progress

made in the past ten years and realized that, whilst things have happened, much still needs to be accomplished. More needs to be done to identify the baselines and to agree to targets to aim for. And more needs to be done to capture the impressive array of initiatives that are underway already.

It is clear that much has been done within those institutions already involved with protected areas; however greater focus on connecting people and nature is required and many other sectors are not yet sensitized to the cross-societal imperatives of connecting people to nature.

The Congress highlighted that many barriers still exist to effectively empowering young voices in conservation; that the technology landscape is a rapidly changing but powerful tool to support connection; and that the collective power of citizens is being harnessed to work in new and exciting ways.

The Inspiring a New Generation Stream has focused on the actions needed to better connect a new generation to nature as well as opportunities to better empower young people as tomorrow's conservation leaders. We want the WPC to start a new ground swell of youthful support for nature and protected areas. The WPC has served as the launch pad for new initiatives among leaders of all ages to move these ideas forward.

Recommendations for change

The Sydney Congress has provided a first-time opportunity to focus on inspiring a new generation to connect with, love, value, and conserve nature. Bold aspirational recommendations and actions across diverse actors are needed.

1. Through a WCPA-CEC led InterCommission Task Force (or similar mechanism) that engages partners across sectors such as health, outdoor recreation, citizen science, technology, and education, launch an integrated global programme within IUCN's Intersessional Programme 2016-2020, to connect young people to nature, thus contributing to the achievement of CBD Aichi Targets 1 & 11.
2. IUCN and at least 50 protected area management authorities, in collaboration with partners across sectors, adopt organizational policy, strategy, communication and action planning aimed at facilitating youth, urban dwellers, multi-cultural groups, and other new audiences to engage with nature and parks on their own terms, creatively and unconditionally.
3. Establish a global framework of metrics to measure and evaluate increasing youth and public engagement in protected areas and nature, including identifying baselines and gaps in knowledge on the connection between people and nature and the relationship between this connection and outcomes such as health, education, and conservation gains.
4. In partnership with the Education and Childhood Development sector and others, put in place a growing number of programmes that ensure all children have had at least one transformational experience in protected areas and nature at an early age.
5. Young people operationalise and scale up on-line platforms such as Cocomaps, CoalitionWild and NoWalls as well as social media and other mechanisms such as citizen science that showcase innovative programmes and partnerships and share the experiences and passion of a new generation connecting with nature.
6. Empower young people to be current and future leaders through their own efforts with support by IUCN, protected area agencies, NGOs and other sectors, through programmes that mentor and reward young conservation professionals ensuring real and meaningful contributions to decision-making and strategic thinking.

7. Action the WPC 2014 Young Peoples' Pact to ensure young people have an active, powerful and fully integrated voice.

Key partnerships needed

Young people

Protected area management authorities – recognizing the IUCN & CBD four types of PA governance

IUCN – Members, Secretariat and Commissions

Multilateral Environmental Agreements – area-based MEAs such as CBD, World Heritage, Ramsar, Biosphere Reserves

Conservation NGOs – particularly large International NGOs

Donors – Multilateral, Bilateral Donors, Development Banks, Foundations, Individuals, Charitable Trusts, etc

Other sectors, in particular the education and childhood development, technology, sports, outdoor recreation, human health, tourism and multicultural/immigration sectors