

PAN Parks

Lessons Learned Series



6

How to Lobby Decision Makers to Support Conservation Goals

March 2008



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Photos: Park archives from Majella NP, Central Balkan NP, Oulanka NP and NP Paanajärvi, and photographers Myke Koole, Rikako Fujita, Dragomir Marin, Vlado Vancura and North Trek.

Dear Reader,

This sixth issue of the PAN Parks Lessons Learned Series deals with the subject of why and how we need to lobby decision makers to support our conservation goals. Although the PAN Parks Foundation is neither a policy nor a lobby organisation, over the past 10 years since our conception, our team has learned the importance of informing decision makers and opinion leaders about our concept. Their support for effective local implementation of nature conservation activities is of vital global importance.

In the beginning, we learned the importance of presenting the PAN Parks concept within existing policy frameworks. As our organisation exclusively focuses on Europe, we took relevant EU Directive into account. Yet despite our European focus, our PAN Parks concept has a global relevance, and therefore it has been important for us to put our concept into the wider global policy context, such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). That is why our team works in cooperation with other conservation organisations such as the Europarc Federation, the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) World Commission on Protected Areas and many more.

This publication serves not only as a case study for managers of Certified PAN Parks, but for managers of all protected areas, even the ones that will never have the opportunity to join our network. Although the subject sounds technical, I hope you find it an interesting and useful read.

Sincerely,



Zoltán Kun



Zoltán Kun,
Executive Director,
PAN Parks Foundation

Background information: The Global Context

The number of protected areas has been on a steady rise since the establishment of Yellowstone National Park in 1872. The 2006 United Nations List of Protected Areas presents data on 102,102 protected areas covering 18.8 million km² and this information can be found in Figure 1 on the next page.

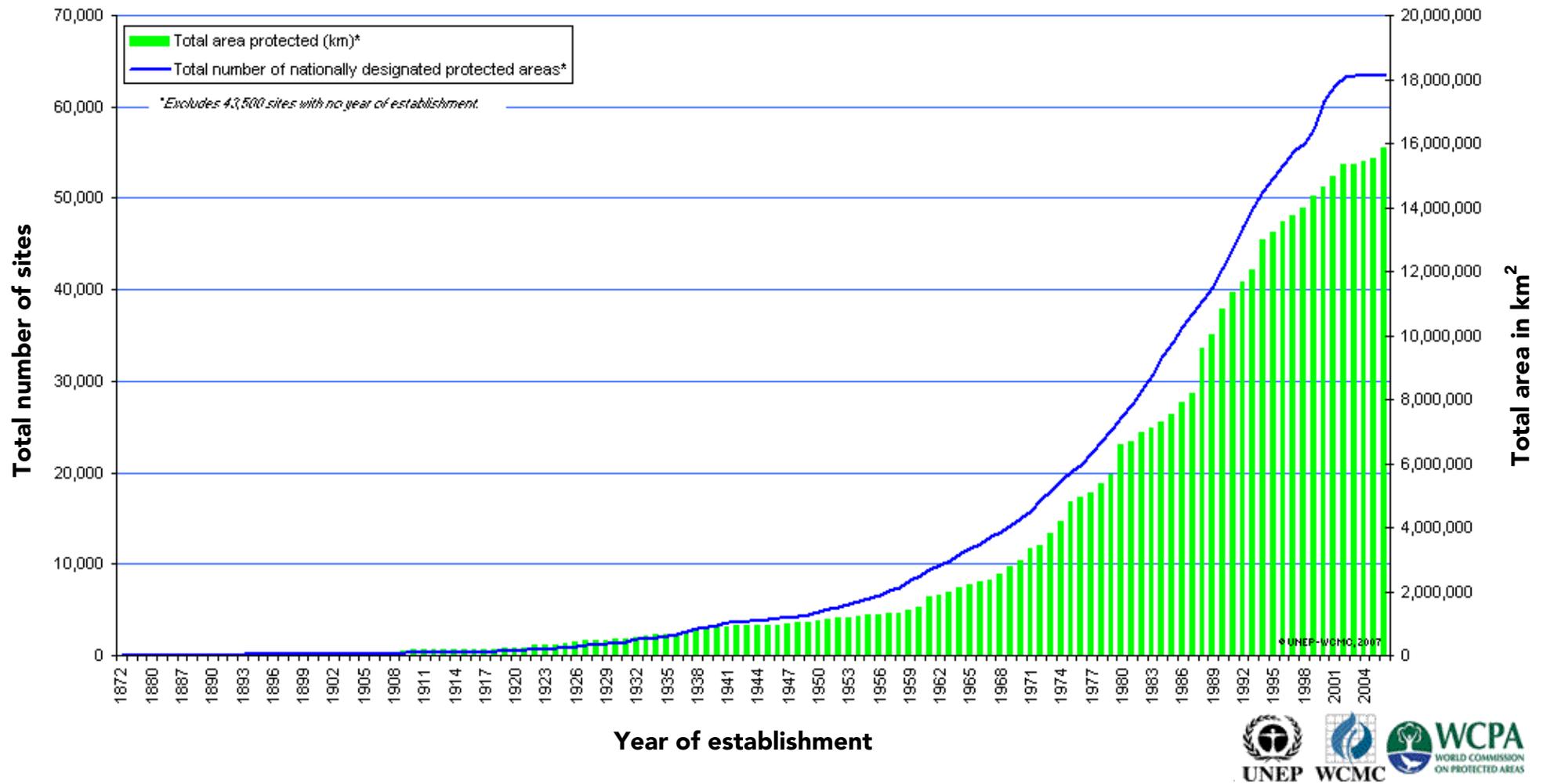
While pleased with the growth of protected areas, many people and organisations have questioned over the years just how many of these areas are just “paper parks” and if they are, then how can these protected areas be managed more effectively.

The WWF was one of the organizations that saw the rise of “paper parks” as a serious concern needing immediate attention. “Paper parks” is a term used for badly or non-managed protected areas, and exist as the name suggests only on the paper of designation and lack effective management. The Convention on Biological Diversity recognised the issue of “paper parks” and stated “the current global systems of protected areas (is) not sufficiently large, sufficiently well planned, nor sufficiently well managed to maximize their contribution to biodiversity conservation” (Programme of Work on Protected Areas, 2004).

Addressing this problem, the WWF started the PAN Parks Foundation to develop a method to check the management effectiveness of protected areas. Our Foundation developed a standard to follow which includes:

- a) A comprehensive set of Principles and Criteria,
- b) A verification manual defining the rules of the method, and
- c) Trained independent verifiers (the system will be explained in more details in an upcoming lesson in our series).

Figure 1: Growth in Nationally Designated Protected Areas (1872 - 2007)*



Source: World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA), produced by UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC) and the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, 31st January 2007.
For more information about Figure 1, please visit: www.unep-wcmc.org/wdpa/graph_background.html



*Certified PAN Parks are far from “paper parks”
Majella National Park, Italy*



Rila National Park, Bulgaria

Making Our Efforts Relevant to Decision Makers

As mentioned in my opening letter, we have found the easiest way for us to reach our conservation goals has been to ensure that our work is supported by other organisations and within existing policy frameworks. By doing so, we are able to communicate our message in a language that is understandable by key decision makers. Over the next few pages I will take you through some of the main ways we have made our work relevant to decision makers.

World Commission on Protected Areas: Framework for Management Effectiveness

Our goal of auditing management effectiveness of protected areas fits perfectly to the IUCN's and its World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) goals. WCPA developed a Framework for Management Effectiveness, which was first published in 2000 as part of their Best Practice Guideline series. The framework is based on the idea that protected area management should follow a procedure with 6 clearly different stages (Hockings et al, 2006):

1. The context and envisioning the site management,
2. The planning process,
3. Allocating the necessary resources (inputs),
4. The management process,
5. The outputs of the management activities, and
6. The results in impacts (a.k.a. outcomes).

✓ Our Relevance to WCPA

When designing the PAN Parks verification method, these 6 stages were taken into account. Having done so, our standard successfully satisfies the WCPA framework and our Foundation was able to sign an important Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the WCPA Europe. In the framework of the MOU, the PAN Parks verifiers will be testing the possibility of IUCN Category certification as part of their mission in two protected areas - Fulufjället NP in Sweden and Central Balkan NP in Bulgaria. The hope is to provide data for the World Database on Protected Areas managed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC) in Cambridge, England.

More information can be found at: www.unep-wcmc.org/wdpa



Retezat National Park, Romania

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The CBD, negotiated under the auspices of the UN Environment Programme, entered into force on 29 December 1993. There are currently 190 parties to the Convention, which aims to promote “the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components, and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.” The establishment and management of protected areas, together with conservation, sustainable use and restoration initiatives in the adjacent land and seascape, are central to CBD Article 8 (In situ conservation).

At its 7th meeting (February 2004, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia), the Conference of the Parties (COP) adopted the Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA). The PoWPA consists of four interlinked elements on: (1) direct actions for planning, selecting, establishing, strengthening and managing PA systems and sites; (2) governance, participation, equity and benefit-sharing; (3) enabling activities; (4) standards, assessment and monitoring. The programme basically aims to establish “comprehensive, effectively managed and ecologically-representative national and regional systems of protected areas”.

(Source: www.biodiv.org)

When we lobby decision makers and governments we often find ourselves to be extremely effective when we highlight the linkage/relevance of our verification method to the CBD. Protected area managers who want to adopt a similar approach must provide a review of the implementation of the PoWPA to the relevant government organisation and also detailed work plans for achieving the PoWPA, including gap assessment, threat assessment, management effectiveness, capacity assessment, equity and benefits assessment, governance, policy environment, sustainable finance and monitoring.

✓ Our Relevance to CBD

Each CBD signatory party needs to develop its own national implementation plan for PoWPA. In many countries, national implementation is linked to existing activities. Therefore if a protected area is member of the PAN Parks Network, it should present its work towards the central government.

What are the potential linkages of PAN Parks implementation to CBD's? Our team says that the PAN Parks concept is relevant to PoWPA implementation at the following goals:

Goal 1.4 → To substantially improve site-based protected area planning and management, which targets all protected areas to have effective management in existence by 2012.

✓ Our Relevance → PAN Parks Foundation developed a site-based management audit called verification. The process includes a regular monitoring which provides input for the protected area managers on how to improve effectiveness.

Goal 2.1 → To promote equity and benefit sharing, which targets equitable sharing benefits arising from the establishment and management of protected areas.

✓ Our Relevance → PAN Parks Foundation engages local entrepreneurs in the implementation of a Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy and therefore benefits from tourism flow to the protected areas.

Goal 3.4 → To ensure financial sustainability of protected areas, which targets mobilising resources for the effective management of protected areas.

- ✓ Our Relevance → We consider the tourism sector as a potential resource contributor to protected areas, therefore entering into philanthropic deals with tour operators and partnership with tourism industry investors.

Goal 3.5 → To strengthen communication, education and public awareness, which targets increasing the understanding and appreciation of the important benefits of protected areas.

- ✓ Our Relevance → Each PAN Park is engaged in communicating with local stakeholders (municipalities and entrepreneurs) while the Foundation presents the network in the international arena at conferences and tourism fairs.

Goal 4.1 → To develop and adopt minimum standards and best practices.

- ✓ Our Relevance → PAN Parks Foundation developed Principles & Criteria which forms the minimum standard for protected areas to join our network.
Learn more at: www.panparks.org/Introduction/Verification/Principles

Goal 4.2 → To evaluate and improve the effectiveness of protected areas management.

- ✓ Our Relevance → PAN Parks certification is renewed every 5 years through an site-based evaluation process.

Goal 4.3 → To assess and monitor protected area status and trends.

- ✓ Our Relevance → Third party management audit proving management effectiveness of each protected area in our network.

We suggest that each protected area management team investigate the CBD PoWPA and analyse their own work against these goals. You might even have a best practice example, which can be used by your own and/or foreign governments to improve the effectiveness of other protected areas.

The World Parks Congress

The IUCN 5th World Parks Congress, held every 10 years, provides the main global forum for setting the agenda for protected areas. Previous Congresses have had a tremendous impact in assisting national governments in creating new protected areas, and in directing more resources towards biodiversity conservation. The IUCN 5th World Parks Congress was held from 8 to 17 September 2003 in Durban, South Africa, and during it participants agreed on new commitments and policy guidance for protected areas worldwide. (Source: www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003)

The outputs of the Congress empower protected area managers and policy makers around the world. With the Durban Accord and the 32 recommendations in hand, protected area managers and policy makers can start a process with their governments, institutions and organisations to make the vision set in Durban – of protected areas as a common tool for biodiversity protection and poverty alleviation – a reality. At the same time, the Congress generated the political support to transform the outputs into action.



Borjomi-Kharagauli National Park, Georgia



National Park Paanajärvi, Russia

Overall, three broad themes are reflected in the World Parks Congress recommendations:

1. The importance of engaging with a broad array of people who reside near and around protected areas to ensure that their interests and needs are understood and considered in the management of these areas.
2. The recognition that protected areas provide a number of very valuable ecosystem services in addition to protecting threatened species, such as clean water, maintenance of critical habitats; and play an important role in relation to mitigation and adaptation to climate change.
3. Broad recognition of the importance of providing practical tools, guidelines and training, as well as resources, to protected area managers in order to help them achieve their objectives.

To review all of the recommendations, please download: <http://www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/wpc2003/pdfs/english/Proceedings/recommendation.pdf>

✓ Our Relevance in Light of the WPC's 2003 Recommendations

Within this Lessons Learned document, allow me to highlight the relevance of the PAN Parks Foundation towards two of the WPC recommendations:

1) **Recommendation 12:**

Tourism as a Vehicle for Conservation and Support of Protected Areas

The Workshop Stream of Building Broader Support for Protected Areas recommended that tourism sector representatives need to work together with protected area managers and local communities to ensure that tourism in protected areas:

- Respects the primarily role of protected area conservation,
- Makes tangible financial contribution to protected area management, and
- Ensures tourism contributes to local economic development (with special attention to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs)).

Our concept presents examples to all of these aspects as our local business partner are all SMEs and we provide an excellent tool to define their standard and how to work with them.

2) **Recommendation 18:**

Management Effectiveness Evaluation to Support Protected Area Management

Among other suggestions, the Congress recommended that states, protected area managers and NGOs report on the outcomes of management effectiveness evaluations. It was also recommended that states and protected area managers actually regularly improve management based on the outcomes of the management effectiveness evaluation.

Again, our concept presents a perfect tool through our verification process which includes a 5-year renewal cycle and a regular (sometimes annual) monitoring of progress. Our team's ambition is to report the results of the evaluations to the World Database on Protected Areas.

The European Union

The European Network of nature conservation areas called Natura 2000, based on two European Union directives, bird and habitat protection, already covers the most valuable and bio-diverse areas of the European Union. This means that at least a big part of European wilderness is protected under Natura 2000. Our goal is to respond to the challenge of finding the right approach to managing these territories.

It is my believe that the European Union needs to also address the issue of wilderness management and the questions of how to protect natural processes, how to identify the last remaining wilderness areas in Europe, and how to finance the management of these areas.



Central Balkan National Park,
Bulgaria

✓ Our Efforts to Lobby European Union Decision Makers

To achieve our goals, respond to the above questions and increase awareness about Europe's wilderness, we are currently lobbying with other international partners at the European Commission. In cooperation with organisations such as the Europarc Federation, Eurosite, Wild Europe and WCPA Europe we submitted a *Resolution on Wilderness Areas* to the European Commission. Following this, the IUCN European Regional Office and the WWF European Policy Office have also added their names to the Resolution, which significantly increases the importance and validity of this document.

Our Foundation has also started to collect signatures from our conservation and business partners in order to create a critical mass of support for the resolution. Our team encourages entities and individuals to support the resolution and request you to also invite your partners including local communities, municipalities, local business partners and NGOs to do the same.

The Resolution on Wilderness Areas is just one important element of a much wider campaign of activities linked to the protection of Europe's wilderness heritage. Here are some examples of the additional activities that our Foundation has planned:

- ✓ Development of practical guidelines for protected area managers for managing wilderness areas in the framework of the Birds and Habitat Directives of European Union. Our concept will be used as a best practice example in the guideline.
- ✓ Launch of the Corporate Wilderness Club in spring 2008 (see our Lessons Learned 3).
- ✓ A trip for decision makers and opinion leaders in spring 2008 to one of our Certified PAN Parks to increase their awareness of the existence of Europe's wilderness.
- ✓ A workshop on Europe's wilderness in Barcelona in October 2008, which is linked to the World Conservation Congress.
- ✓ Europe's Wilderness Days, PAN Parks annual conference in October 2008 in Majella NP, Italy.
- ✓ In cooperation with the Wild Europe Initiative we have suggested organising a wilderness conference in 2009.

Achievements

In developing our PAN Parks concept inline with both European and international standards and recommendations, we in turn made our concept very relevant to decision makers and governments. We have successfully used this relevance to lobby influential decision makers and have achieved the following:

- ✓ As a result of a 1999 European Union event held in Lisbon, Portugal, the PAN Parks Foundation was selected “as one of the most relevant initiatives to manage sustainable tourism in Natura 2000 sites”.
- ✓ There was a study conducted by Ecosystems Ltd and commissioned by the DG Enterprise of EC in 2003, entitled the “Using Natural and Cultural and Cultural Heritage to Develop Sustainable Tourism in non-traditional tourist destinations”. The study named Oulanka National Park, a Certified PAN Park, as one of the case study example.
- ✓ A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the WCPA Europe in 2007.

Let us provide here also two quotations:

- ✓ “I found their assessment in Oulanka National Park extremely valuable to improve the management effectiveness in the park and to highlight the real problems in protected area management in general. External evaluations are absolutely necessary to positively challenge the existing management practices and to bring in new ideas and lessons learnt elsewhere. I found the discussions with the verifiers inspiring, constructive and highly professional.”
~ Rauno Väisänen, Chief Executive, Natural Heritage Service, Finland
- ✓ “It is no surprise, that the approach implemented by the PAN Parks Foundation is therefore very interesting and inspirational. After 10 years of its experience, PAN Parks voluntarily shares practical lessons learned on how to approach wilderness area management, how to allow for an area’s sustainable use, and how to enable local communities to derive benefits from the wilderness area...I believe the work already completed by the PAN Parks Foundation ... are vital aids in the development of a European approach towards the management of wilderness areas.”
~ Ladislav Miko, Director of Director B, Protecting the Natural Environment, European Commission

Upcoming Lessons in the Series

- ✓ Conducting Independent Audits.....April
- ✓ The Value of a Research Network.....May

Contact Details

If you have questions please feel free to contact us:

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Oulanka National Park, Finland