



### TBPA in Focus

Kailash Sacred Landscape: A transboundary conservation and development initiative in the Hindu Kush Himalayas

MALOTI  
DRAKENSBERG  
PARK: A NEW  
TRANSBOUNDARY  
WORLD HERITAGE  
SITE

GREEN LIGHT  
FOR JOINT  
CONSERVATION  
IN BOTHNIAN BAY

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Transboundary Conservation

# TBeNEWS 8

December 2013



# Welcome Note



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Mount Kailash, a sacred mountain of as many as five religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Bon, has been a pilgrimage destination for centuries. Although a supremely sacred site, it is not seen by more than a few thousand pilgrims every year due to its remote and hardly accessible location in far western Tibet Autonomous Region. The area is highly rich in biological diversity and forms the upper catchment of four of Asia's major rivers. Due to its ecological and socio-cultural importance, the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in cooperation with national partners has taken an integrative conservation and development approach in safeguarding Mount Kailash and its wider region, encompassing parts of three countries: China, India, and Nepal. A vast transboundary conservation area is promoted through the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative. More details about this region can be read in the *TBPA in Focus* section of the TB eNEWS.

The 8<sup>th</sup> issue of the TB eNEWS features many interesting transboundary conservation stories coming from Asia, Africa and Europe. We also highlight Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group's engagement in preparing

a new publication focusing on transboundary conservation and that will be part of the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series. The new guideline will build on the existing guideline on Transboundary Protected Areas and Parks for Peace and offer improved understanding of transboundary conservation processes, including transboundary governance and management. We plan to launch the guideline at the next IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, in November 2014, and we hope you will join us at that event!

As always, we are thankful for your continued interest to contribute to the TB eNEWS which is being prepared on a bi-annual basis by IUCN WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group. TB eNEWS is available online at [www.tbpa.net](http://www.tbpa.net), while the guidelines for submitting articles can be found at the last page of this issue.

Looking forward to more stories, updates on progress of transboundary projects, and valuable experiences!

**Maja Vasiljević**

Chair, Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group  
IUCN WCPA



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## Kailash Sacred Landscape: A transboundary conservation and development initiative in the Hindu Kush Himalayas

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Kailash Sacred Landscape</b>
<b>Countries:</b>	<b>China, India, Nepal</b>
<b>Surface:</b>	<b>31,175 km<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Year of formal TB agreement:</b>	<b>2011 (Regional Cooperation Framework)</b>

The Kailash Sacred Landscape (KSL) is a transboundary initiative facilitated by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) in collaboration with national partners in China, India and Nepal and with financial support from DFID-UKaid and GIZ. Within its coverage, it includes most of Pulan County in the TAR-China, most of Pithoragarh District and a small part of Bageshwar District in India, and portions of Humla, Bhajang, Darchula and Baitadi districts in northwestern Nepal. It is the source of four of Asia's most important rivers, the Brahmaputra, Indus, Karnali, and Sutlej. and at the heart of this landscape lies the sacred Mount Kailash, revered by hundreds of millions of people in Asia and throughout the world.

Due to topographic, climatic, and altitudinal complexities, the KSL is known for its biodiversity. It lies at the intersection of several major floristic regions and is a habitat for more than 93 mammal species, 497 bird species, 56 herpeto-fauna, and 134 fishes and a viable populations of unique Himalayan endemics such as snow leopard, Himalayan musk deer, Himalayan tahr, Himalayan wolf, and Himalayan marmot, among others. Some of the protected areas in the KSL constitute Askot Wildlife Sanctuary (India), Api-Nampa Conservation Area (Nepal), and Manasarovar Wetland Complex as Ramsar site, with two more important protected areas Khaptad National Park (Nepal) and Changthang Protected Area (China) as connecting links. Over one million people live within the landscape; however, most of this population resides in India and Nepal, with very sparsely populated high-elevation areas on the Tibetan Plateau.

The Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative (KSLCDI) has been in its implementation phase since 2012, guided by a Regional Cooperation Framework endorsed by the three participating countries in 2011. With twin objectives of conservation and development, the KSLCDI is a transboundary landscape initiative to promote biodiversity and cultural conservation, ecosystem management, sustainable development, and climate change adaptation through regional cooperation. Led through rigorous consultative processes, the KSLCDI promotes biodiversity conservation and sustainable development through an integrated approach, notably at a transboundary level, and taking into consideration the perceived challenges brought by various drivers of change including increasing population, developmental pressure and climate change. The integrated conservation and development strategies and implementation plans focus on five broad components with institutional arrangements at both national and transboundary landscape levels, innovative livelihoods, ecosystem management, access and benefit sharing of bioresources, long term conservation and monitoring, and regional cooperation, enabling policy and knowledge management. The KSLCDI provides a unique opportunity for cooperation and common understanding on transboundary landscape issues in the region, including climate change, and represents an important and timely opportunity to conserve this irreplaceable cultural and natural landscape.

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# Twelve countries commit to the conservation of snow leopards



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On 22-23 October 2013 in Bishkek, Kyrgyz Republic, representatives from the 12 snow leopard range states joined Almazbek Atambayev, President of the Kyrgyz Republic, in outlining and endorsing a new global initiative to protect and conserve critical ecosystems in high-mountain landscapes inhabited by the snow leopard.

Together with conservation experts and the international donor community, the 12 states endorsed the Bishkek Declaration on Snow Leopard Conservation and the Global Snow Leopard Ecosystem Recovery Program (GSLEP). By endorsing these two documents, they committed, *inter alia*, to: engage local communities in conservation, promote sustainable livelihoods, and address human-wildlife conflict, and combat poaching and illegal trade networks, including through transboundary collaboration and enforcement.

Snow leopards (*Panthera uncia*) are one of the world's most enigmatic wild cats. They live and travel in solitude over vast distances of isolated and rugged mountain range in central Asia, and are incredibly adapted to thrive in some of the harshest conditions on the planet. Seldom observed in the wild, or at best a fleeting apparition, snow leopards are often referred to as the "Ghosts of the mountains".

Snow leopard numbers continue to decline throughout their range. Retaliatory killing for predation by snow leopards on domestic livestock, the poaching and unsustainable use of the key snow leopard prey, such as the ibex, markhor, blue sheep and the argali sheep, and illegal trade in snow leopards and their parts are some of the key threats to the survival of this magnificent cat.

The Snow Leopard Conservation Forum was hosted and organized by the President and Government of the Kyrgyz Republic, with support from the Global Tiger Initiative, NABU, Snow Leopard Trust, UN Development Programme, World Bank, Global Environment Facility, Snow Leopard Conservancy, USAID, WWF, and the Snow Leopard Network.

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Links:

[www.snowleopardnetwork.org/sln/Homepage\\_En.php](http://www.snowleopardnetwork.org/sln/Homepage_En.php)

[www.snowleopard.org/the-plan-to-save-the-cats](http://www.snowleopard.org/the-plan-to-save-the-cats)

[www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/10/23/saving-snow-leopards-not-just-a-days-work](http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2013/10/23/saving-snow-leopards-not-just-a-days-work)

# Heart of Borneo and Forever Sabah



© Harry Jonas

The International Conference on Heart of Borneo's Natural Capital: Unleashing their Potential for Sustainable Growth in Sabah was held in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia from 11-12 November 2013.

The two-day conference explored the future of the Heart of Borneo, including a focus on: REDD+, spatial planning to enhance conservation efforts, the role of NGOs, training and capacity building, research needs, and communication. The meeting had a dedicated session on Forever Sabah, a 25-year initiative to support Sabah's transition to a diversified, equitable green economy. Speakers presented on Forever Sabah's seven core areas, namely: forests, watersheds and communities, renewable energy, sustainable food and agriculture, waste water and soil, community tourism, and the Forever Sabah Institute.

Heart of Borneo is a government-led and NGO-supported initiative that was started in 2007 when the governments of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia signed a joint Declaration with the aim to secure a sustainable future for the island of Borneo's highland rainforest and biodiversity. The area on which the initiative focuses is one of the world's largest transboundary rainforests inhabited by species such as Bornean orang-utans, elephants, *Rafflesia* flowers. The Heart of Borneo also provides a source of livelihood for about 11 million people including the indigenous Dayaks.

Overall the conference illustrates the continued governmental, scientific, indigenous, and civil society support for transboundary and landscape-scale initiatives that take a multi-sectoral approach. Interestingly, Forever Sabah, as an initiative in its early stages, was called on to move beyond the development stage to begin implementation on projects across its seven focus areas. Similarly, the Heart of Borneo was largely congratulated for its progress so far, but was urged to better communicate its direct contribution to biodiversity and livelihoods.

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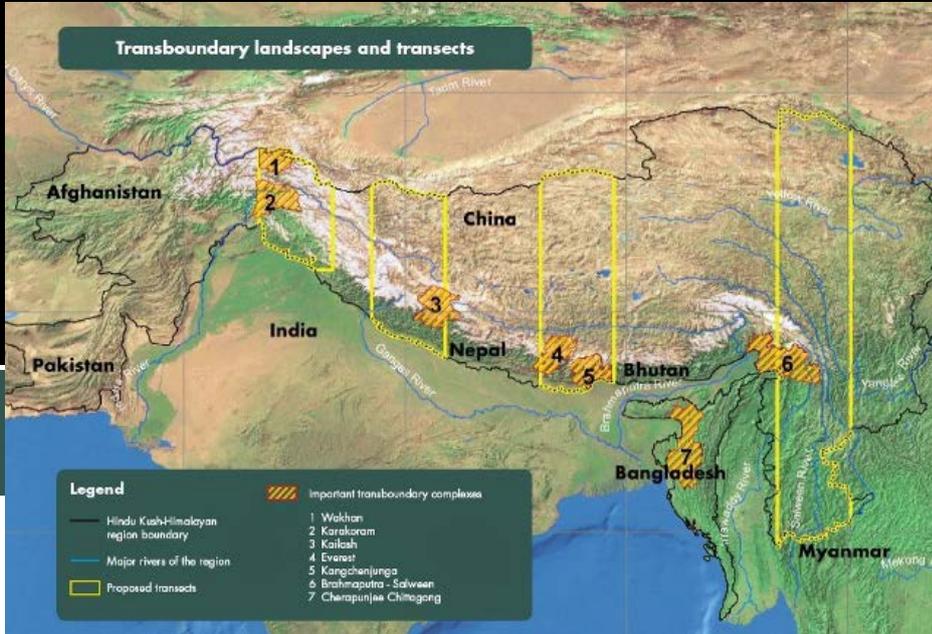
Links:

Conference programme: [www.sabah.gov.my/events/2013/HoB/HoBConference.pdf](http://www.sabah.gov.my/events/2013/HoB/HoBConference.pdf)

Heart of Borneo: [www.panda.org/what\\_we\\_do/where\\_we\\_work/borneo\\_forests/](http://www.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/borneo_forests/)

Forever Sabah: [www.forever-sabah.com/](http://www.forever-sabah.com/)

# ICIMOD's Transboundary Landscape Initiatives in the Hindu Kush Himalayas



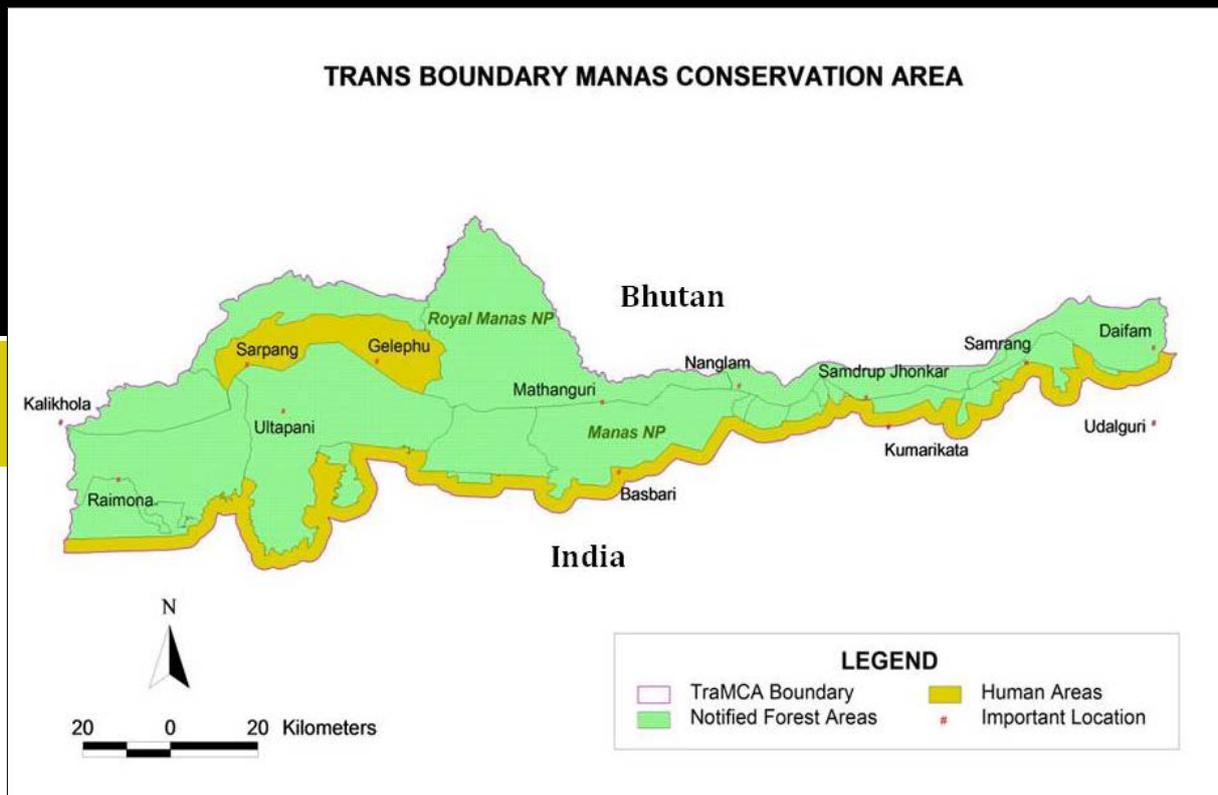
In 2008, a framework on 'HKH Transboundary Landscapes and Trans-Himalayan Transect' was developed with an objective to promote transboundary collaboration among the countries for effective conservation and development. During the process, seven representative landscapes across the gradients of precipitation, altitude and latitude and unique ecoregions were identified. Since 2008, ICIMOD and its regional member countries have made significant progress in mainstreaming the HKH Transboundary Landscapes and Trans-Himalayan Transect Framework. So far, five of the seven landscapes are at different stages of progress.

The Hindu Kush Himalayan region (HKH) stretches over 4 million km<sup>2</sup> covering Bhutan, Nepal, and parts of six other countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, India, Myanmar, and Pakistan. It is one of the most complex and fragile ecosystems in the world. Blessed with 14 highest mountains of the world, including Mt Everest, the region shows extreme heterogeneity of environments (climates and soils), rapid elevation changes (altitudinal vegetation belts), and variable directional orientation. The region is also facing severe socio-economic, environmental and ecological challenges through various drivers of changes including climate change. As an intergovernmental regional knowledge development and learning centre, International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has been proactive in conservation and development issues in the region for the last 30 years.

The HKH exhibits high biodiversity, often with sharp transitions (ecotones) in vegetation sequences, and equally rapid changes from vegetation and soil to snow and ice. The HKH is rich in endemics, because many species remain isolated at high elevations. The area is projected as the 'Third Pole' and 'Water Tower', and represents the last bastions of wild nature "islands" in a sea of transformed lowlands and provides a number of very important ecosystem goods and services. Interestingly, 39% of the HKH are under protected area network (IUCN category I-VI) with a number of other forms of protected areas such as Ramsar sites, World Heritage, Important Bird Areas, etc.

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# TraMCA: Transboundary space for people and wildlife



There is an immediate need to heed the call of nature and the reverberation from TraMCA is crystal clear. TraMCA—the Transboundary Manas Conservation Area extending across Bhutan and India is a region with high biological diversity. Managing protected areas is a difficult task, more so where national boundaries converge. However, with a vision to jointly develop and manage a transboundary conservation area, TraMCA was conceptualized in 2011 by various like minded stakeholders for the benefit of people and wildlife, who saw the need of further knowledge exchange on transboundary conservation issues and seek solutions. The area boasts with not only unique biodiversity hotspots, but also richness in endemic species, and showcases cultural and ethnic diversity.

The Manas Tiger Reserve in India and the Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan form the core of this biologically outstanding transboundary region that is home to tigers, elephants, rhinos and more than 1,500 other species of mammals, birds and vascular plants. The rivers that cascade down the Himalayas in this landscape are valuable for the ecosystem services they provide to both upstream and downstream communities in Bhutan and India.

TraMCA is an important landscape for achieving global tiger conservation goals of globally doubling the tiger numbers and is equally important in terms of the Indian Rhino Vision 2020, which seeks to increase the rhino population in the state of Assam, India. So far, there has been productive field level collaboration between Bhutan and India to contribute to the vision of TraMCA. Efforts are underway to get agreement between the Government of Bhutan and India for recognizing the TraMCA as a transboundary conservation space. The key objectives include: halting wildlife habitat loss and degradation in TraMCA, maintaining stable/increasing populations of priority species, reducing human wildlife conflicts, and getting local and state governments buy-in to the TraMCA goal and endorse TraMCA action plan and Memorandum of Understanding.

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# Transboundary cooperation on conservation and sustainable development of the Sundarbans ecosystem



© Herbert Acquay

The Sundarbans ecosystem in the delta areas of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers is the largest mangrove ecosystem in the world. It covers a total area of 10,000 km<sup>2</sup>, 60% of which lies in Bangladesh and the remaining 40% in the West Bengal of India. This ecosystem supports a rich and diverse flora and fauna, including globally endangered species such as Royal Bengal tiger (*Panthera tigris*). In fact, the last population of tigers in the world which live in mangroves is found in the Sundarbans. Other endangered species include the leopard (*Panthera pardus fusca*) and olive ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*). The mangrove forests also serve as a natural barrier, protecting local communities against storm surge, cyclones, and rising sea tides.

The Sundarbans has a high level of protection status in both Bangladesh and India and it is designated as UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ramsar site, and Biosphere reserve. Despite this high level of protection, the biodiversity in the Sundarbans faces a number of threats, including poaching of endangered species such

as the tiger for the illegal wildlife trade across Asia, human-wildlife conflicts—particularly tigers attacking people in local villages, and destruction of protected habitats for agriculture and aquaculture.

Bangladesh and India are both committed to increasing cooperation on the conservation of the Sundarbans, including signing a Memorandum of Understanding on joint activities in September 2011. However, conservation actions alone would not adequately protect the biodiversity over the long term because this ecosystem also supports the livelihood of about 4 million people who are among the most impoverished in Bangladesh and India. Therefore, conservation programmes have to be complemented or even integrated into programmes to improve the quality of life and livelihoods of the people living in the Sundarbans.

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# Wildlife crime in southern Africa reaches alarming rates



© Peace Parks Foundation

Poaching in southern Africa has risen to an alarming rate. According to the statistical data gathered by the South African Department of Environmental Affairs, there has been an increase by 6,800% between 2007 and 2013 of poached rhinos in South Africa only. While Kruger National Park leads the way in wildlife crime, poaching is also occurring in Transfrontier Conservation Areas (TFCAs) of southern Africa, such as the Lubombo TFCA and Great Limpopo TFCA. Peace Parks Foundation (PPF), based in South Africa, has taken a proactive approach to combatting wildlife crime as part of its involvement in projects throughout TFCAs in the region.

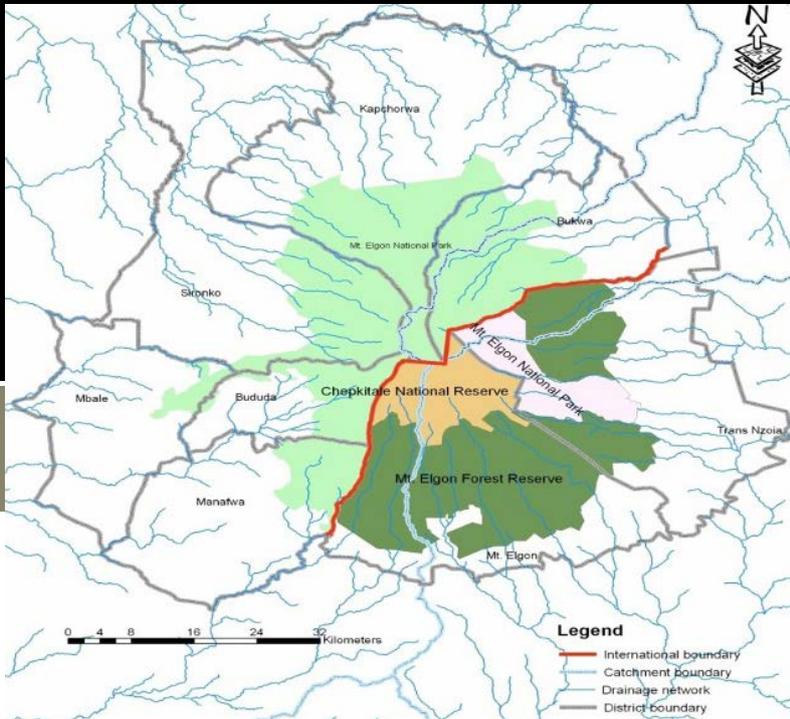
Drastic interventions are urgently required and they differ based on specifics of the regions. One intervention, amongst others, is rhino horn treatment whereby the rhino's horn is contaminated with chemicals to devalue the horn and make it undesirable for human consumption and ornamental purposes. A pioneering trial rhino horn treatment project is being directed by the Ezemvelo KwaZulu-Natal Wildlife with support from Peace Parks

Foundation as part of its broader involvement in the Lubombo TFCA that connects protected areas in Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland. Some of the key PPF's conservation measures in combatting wildlife crime are: supporting rangers with relevant equipment such as sniffer dogs and night vision binoculars, providing information received by unmanned aerial vehicles, raising awareness of wildlife crime among communities, facilitating joint training for joint transboundary operations, facilitating harmonisation of policy and legislation in countries with TFCAs.

Many of the crimes are conducted across international boundaries, having as a result strained relations between neighbouring countries. PPF continues to facilitate the establishment of fully functioning TFCAs in southern Africa, managed in harmony with their surrounding communities, and helping TFCAs fight against wildlife crime.

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# Mt. Elgon ecosystem: Prospects for a transboundary Biosphere Reserve



Mt. Elgon (4,321 m above sea level) is an extremely important transboundary ecosystem that strides western Kenya and eastern Uganda international boundary. The ecosystem is rich in biodiversity and a vital water catchment area that serves Lake Kyoga, Lake Turkana, Lake Victoria and the River Nile. It hosts over 400 species of plants, 300 bird species and a number of wild animals including African elephant (*Loxodonta africana*). The ecosystem comprises of Mt. Elgon National Park and Namatale Central Forest Reserve in Uganda and Mt. Elgon National Park, Mt. Elgon Forest Reserve and Chepkitale National Reserve in Kenya. In 2003, the Kenyan side of the ecosystem was declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in recognition of its importance as a water tower. Efforts are being made by the two states to nominate the whole Mt. Elgon

ecosystem as a transboundary Biosphere Reserve, which would be a global recognition of the site's importance for biodiversity conservation.

In the recent past, Mt. Elgon ecosystem has experienced unprecedented human induced degradation in form of deforestation and poor land use practices. Disasters such as landslides and floods are now common, widespread and real threat to the livelihoods of local people. As a way to address these challenges, Lake Victoria Basin Commission is implementing the Mount Elgon Regional Ecosystem Conservation Programme (MERECP). MERECP promotes transboundary cooperation between protected area institutions in Kenya and Uganda. A joint transboundary management plan has been developed, cross-border tourism promoted, climate change adaptation and REDD+ strategies formulated, coordinated patrols conducted, degraded areas restored as well as supporting initiatives to improve livelihoods. Other agencies such as UNDP and IUCN have been supporting ecosystem based and territorial approaches to climate change in the region as well as resilience framework for climate change adaptation.

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# Alatish-Dinder: Potential Transboundary Protected Area



Dinder National Park of Sudan and Alatish National Park of Ethiopia share about 75 km of the international boundary, forming a potential Transboundary Protected Area pending cooperative management development. While Dinder was established in 1935 and is also designated as UNESCO Biosphere Reserve since 1979, Alatish is a young protected area, established in 2006. The two parks share the Ayima and the Gelegu River, both tributaries to the Nile and host common wild animals which migrate daily and seasonally between the two protected areas. Some of the key species that inhabit the area are elephant, greater kudu, giraffe, hartebeest, waterbuck, while black rhinoceros, leopard, cheetah are occasionally found. Tropical savannah and grassland ecosystems are adjoined by extensive wetlands, forming Dinder Ramsar site and providing a refuge for large number of migratory birds.

In addition to common ecosystems and species that would benefit from common conservation approaches by the two countries, shared management threats such as poaching, wildfire, over-grazing, illegal fishing, uncontrolled collection

of non-timber forest products, smuggling, and drug trafficking, serve as potential ground for transboundary cooperation. Illegal hunting and farming represent some of the key threats to the parks and the number of mammal species has decreased largely in the last year due to these two pressures. As Alatish National Park doesn't have an active Management Plan, cooperation with Dinder could facilitate knowledge exchange and sound preparation of the Alatish management strategy.

Agreements between Ethiopia and Sudan on wildlife conservation, security, trade, agriculture and health would aid the transboundary conservation initiative process. Strengthening the transboundary conservation efforts would be a timely initiative, complementing the ongoing Nile Basin Initiative.

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# Maloti Drakensberg Park: A new transboundary World Heritage Site



© John Crowson

The uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site (WHS) in South Africa was extended to become a transboundary WHS at the 37<sup>th</sup> UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting in 2013. The South African Park was joined to the Sehlabathebe National Park of Lesotho forming the Maloti-Drakensberg Park WHS.

The Maloti Drakensberg Park WHS is the largest (249,313 ha) and most significant protected area in the Great Escarpment of southern Africa. It is an asset of international significance due to its unique natural and cultural values. The diversity of habitats is outstanding, ranging across alpine plateaux, steep rocky slopes and river valleys. Exceptionally beautiful natural landscape is a home for many endemic species, such as the Cape vulture (*Gyps coprotheres*) and the Bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*). Lesotho's Sehlabathebe National Park also harbors the Maloti minnow (*Pseudobarbus quathlambae*), a critically endangered fish species only found in this park. More than 250 plant species inhabit the WHS. Many caves and rock shelters contain an estimated

600 rock art sites, the largest group of paintings in Africa south of the Sahara desert. Over 35,000 images present the life of the San people covering the last 4,000 years.

In terms of management, the parks have a joint Management Plan formulated already in 2008 by a Joint Management Committee. The Committee was appointed by the relevant country conservation authorities to coordinate and authorise the implementation of jointly agreed management actions. This now formalised the joint cooperation between both parks that has existed for the past thirty years in assisting the Sehlabathebe National Park with fire management, radio communication, livestock theft and wildlife monitoring.

Apart from being a transboundary WHS, Maloti-Drakensberg Park is also a Ramsar site.

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# Pioneering cross-border wilderness trails in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area



© Chris Roche

The Great Limpopo Transfrontier Conservation Area (GLTFCA), a joint transboundary conservation initiative between Mozambique, South Africa and Zimbabwe, presents itself with a unique opportunity to use tourism development as a vehicle to facilitate regional conservation based socio-economic development. As such, the GLTFCA has identified a range of cross-border tourism products that can be developed within the context of the transboundary initiative and in partnership with a range of key stakeholders. These products include transboundary wilderness trails, self-drive 4x4 trails, and the development of a cross-border tourism node within the Pafuri/Sengwe area that forms the heart of the GLTFCA.

The implementation of a pilot-walking trail in the Pafuri/Sengwe Area was identified as a suitable candidate to pioneer the concept of cross border wilderness trails within the GLTFCA. After a fairly extensive planning and preparation period, the so-called Trans-Limpopo Walking Trail was implemented during the period 27-30 September 2013. Operated by the world-renowned Wilderness Safaris,

the pilot trail consisted of two groups of 8 people each, and was launched from the Makuleke Area (in the Kruger National Park, South Africa) into the Sengwe Area (referred to as the Sengwe Corridor, Zimbabwe). A key event linked to this trail was a one-day Shangane cultural festival, held in a village Chishinya. Approximately 2,000 people, including community leaders, local residents and the 16 trailists, participated in a day filled with music, song and dance.

Based on the success of this trail, planning has already started to offer a wider range of cross-border tourism products in the Pafuri Area. These could include a similar walking trail linked with a cultural festival, nature-based wilderness trails, and a mountain biking event. All of these will involve at least 2 or possibly 3 of the partner countries of the GLTFCA initiative. This in turn will ensure that local communities in all three countries receive tangible benefits from tourism development in the area.

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# Green light for joint conservation in Bothnian Bay



© Metsähallitus

Transboundary cooperation has a long tradition in Bothnian Bay region, but in the field of nature conservation, it has still not been widely practiced. Following the outcomes of the first meeting between Finnish and Swedish partners in the INTERREG financed project Cross-Border Co-operation of National Parks of Bothnian Bay, held on 21-22 November 2013, this practice will soon change. Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services in Finland and County Administrative Board of Norrbotten in Sweden agreed to further the transboundary conservation of the Bothnian Bay National Park, Finland and Haparanda Skärgård National Park, Sweden, while enhancing cooperation between other relevant stakeholders operating in the region.

Bothnian Bay is the northernmost part of the Baltic Sea, an area with unique natural processes. Land uplift, since last ice-age, is the most important geological phenomenon that has a regional impact on all biological processes e.g. providing new areas for primary succession. In addition, the sea is frozen for several months during the winter which also contributes to changes in the landscape. Rich variety

of birds nest in the area and the distinctive flora includes several rare or threatened species, some found only in this coastal uplift region. The region's cultural heritage is closely linked with the traditional use of natural resources in particular in regards to fishing and grazing practices. The two marine national parks are located approximately 20 km from each other along the international border.

At the initial meeting, both parties showed great interest in working together. Meeting ended with positive thoughts for the future cooperation: enthusiasms for exchanging information and good practices in national park management. In addition, tangible ideas for joint future actions were pointed out, focusing on cultural heritage preservation, development of visitor services and accessibility, and building a network of local sustainable tourism entrepreneurs.

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# Multidisciplinary transboundary cooperation in Pasvik-Inari



© Juha Paso



© Boris Erg

ABCgetheritage, a project funded by European Union's ENPI-programme (European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument) and national funding from Finland, Norway and Russia, gives monetary boost for the on-going Pasvik-Inari cooperation. The multidisciplinary approach of the project covers themes from biological, cultural and geological heritage – our common arctic heritage. In practice managers of the protected areas work together with archaeologists, geologists and researchers studying biodiversity and local economics.

Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park is situated on the northern tip of Green Belt of Fennoscandia. It consists of one Russian, three Norwegian and one Finnish protected area which are physically connected. The cooperation between the managers of these protected areas dates back to 1990s and it got renewed through the certificate provided by EUROPARC's "Transboundary Parks-Following Nature's Design" programme in autumn 2013.

ABCgetheritage project offers new concrete products for sustainable nature-based tourism and environmental education are made for schools, tourists and local people.

There will be for example a travelling exhibition about the unique characteristics of Green Belt of Fennoscandia which will be presented in nature centres, schools and libraries in Russia, Norway and Finland. Best practices about arranging environmental education in camp schools is published and a short documentary film is made about the Pasvik-Inari area and its international cooperation. Finally the effect of the project is measured in schools and among tourism entrepreneurs by web surveys.

Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park is doing its share for developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia by networking with other nature protection areas along it. Important result is that the experts from different fields get together with colleagues from other protected areas and best practices are discussed and developed further. At the same time the ideas about concrete activities are written down and included in planning of the future cooperation.

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## Via fabrilis II on the way: The tour of handicraft traditions



© Kamila Antosova

Czech Republic and Poland will develop visitor programmes in handicraft traditions at 11 more points of interest, joining the existent 15 stops along the Via fabrilis in the next two years. Via fabrilis II is a project conducted by Krkonošské museum, operated by Krkonoše Mountains National Park Administration in Vrchlabí, and Polish Muzeum Ceramiki in Bolesławiec. The project is funded by the European Union.

Cooperation between the two institutions dates back to 2002 and reaches its European wide success in 2009 when Via fabrilis project won the first prize at the Euroregion Nisa contest in the category of culture. The project was also successfully evaluated in Poland where it was ranked among the seven “wonders” of the European Union funded projects.

Via fabrilis offers a tour of handicraft traditions following the route Vrchlabí-Bolesławiec and connecting 15 places at which visitors can learn about handicrafts specific for this particular region. A number of multilingual publications (in Czech, Polish and German) were prepared and many exhibitions delivered with Polish partner. Joint website is also available.

From 2013-2014 new craft workshops will be organised to educate visitors and offer basic knowledge on traditional handicrafts. Additionally, one-day workshops will be organised to pass the knowledge on collection and preservation of historical objects. Via fabrilis II will complement well current tourism offer of the Krkonoše region.

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# Shaping the new WCPA Best Practice Guideline on transboundary conservation



© Thayatal National Park

Thayatal National Park in Austria hosted an *International workshop on defining transboundary conservation principles*, held from 16-18 October 2013, and organised by IUCN WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group and local host Thayatal National Park, with support of adjacent Podyjí National Park in the Czech Republic.

Transboundary specialists from around the world represented diverse sectors, including practitioners, international and national NGOs, academic institutions, governments, and the workshop donor (BfN). The participants presented a variety of transboundary conservation practice and models of cooperation. They discussed key emerging issues in transboundary conservation at global level, while focusing largely on providing an improved WCPA definition of Transboundary Protected Areas and other types of transboundary conservation practice, as well as transboundary governance models. The newly agreed principles will all feed into the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guideline (BPG) on transboundary conservation, a publication that will build on current BPG titled Transboundary Protected

Areas for Peace and Cooperation (published in 2001), offer improved knowledge and suggest new global standards in the given field. The guideline will be launched at IUCN's World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, in November 2014.

On the final day of the workshop, Thayatal and Podyjí National Parks organised a field excursion in the forests of the parks and rafting on the Thaya River.

The workshop was organised within the framework of the Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group's project titled 'Revision of the IUCN WCPA Best Practice Guideline on Transboundary Conservation', and financed by the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety (BMU) through the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN), MAVA Foundation, and WCPA.

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[www.tbpa.net/page.php?ndx=26](http://www.tbpa.net/page.php?ndx=26)

# Celebrating 10 years of EUROPARC's Transboundary Programme

## WCPA Europe strengthens support for World Heritage



© Maas-Schwalm-Nette Nature Park



© Boris Erg

2013 has been a very exciting year for EUROPARC, the big birthday year, celebrating 40 Years Working for Nature. On top of that, the Transboundary Parks Programme of the Federation has turned 10 and the 5<sup>th</sup> TransParcNet meeting took place in Nature Park Maas-Schwalm-Nette (Germany/Netherlands). In a landscape of heath lands, rivers and bogs the participants had three days to exchange news on cross-border collaboration in Europe, discover a protected area that successfully implements transboundary cooperation for more than 30 years, and reconnect with old and make new friends.

TransParcNet meeting is being held once a year. This year the meeting included discussions on the impacts of climate change on transboundary protected areas and possible mitigation strategies. New project ideas for EUROPARC's transboundary areas were also gathered and will be taken forward by the Transboundary Working Group. During two excursions the participants learned about an INTERREG project on the cultural and touristic valorisation of a national park region and the restoration of a former ammunition depot along the border.

EUROPARC strongly promotes awareness rising on the common responsibility for cross-border cooperation and border regions themselves, translating the European vision into practice. Our efforts in this field led to the 'Transboundary Parks-Following Nature's Design' programme, launched by EUROPARC in 2003. It is a special verification and certification system that aims to promote and facilitate transboundary cooperation between European protected areas.

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The International Academy for Nature Conservation on the island of Vilm, Germany, hosted the expert workshop, Enhancing the IUCN World Heritage Programme II – Focus Europe, held on 7-11 November 2013. The workshop was organised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) in cooperation with the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), the IUCN World Heritage Programme, and the IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe.

The key objective of the workshop was to agree on the way forward to strengthening IUCN's work on the World Heritage Convention, and specifically IUCN's regional network in Europe, including WCPA. IUCN's role as an Advisory Body to the World Heritage Committee was widely discussed, as well as WCPA Europe's role in supporting IUCN's works on World Heritage. The participants developed an action plan for WCPA Europe in enhancing the support for IUCN's work on World Heritage, including the network's improved internal communication, recruitment of new members, support for World Heritage processes (evaluations, monitoring and reporting, Upstream process, gap analysis, capacity building). The processes for evaluations and reporting on Transboundary World Heritage Sites were also debated. A strategy for presentation of World Heritage in Europe at the upcoming IUCN's World Parks Congress in 2014 was also discussed.

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# Morava-Dyje floodplains: Europe's pioneers in cross-border river restoration



© WSD

The triangle formed by Central Europe's Vienna (Austria), Bratislava (Slovakia) and Brno (Czech Republic) is a booming region but its centre still hosts one of the best river landscapes of Europe—the Lower Morava-Dyje floodplains (60,000 ha). Transboundary cooperation in this area made considerable progress in 2013 by achieving bilateral harmonised river restoration plans for both rivers. A new trilateral government declaration to be signed in May 2014 commits all related border water commissions to support cross-border river restoration.

The lower Morava River forms the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and then between Slovakia and Austria before it enters the Danube near Bratislava. Its main tributary, Dyje River, flows from Austria into the Czech Republic with long sections constituting the borderline. Until 1989 these areas were strictly “protected” by military, dissecting Europe by the “Iron Curtain”. After establishing Ramsar sites at national levels, the Lower Morava-Dyje became in 2004 the first trilateral Ramsar area worldwide. The Trilateral Ramsar Platform of ministries and NGOs endorsed Common Management Principles. Efforts to set up a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve are under way.

The mosaic of hardwood floodplain forests, large grasslands and water bodies is unique haven for over 500 endangered species such as eagles, beavers, and white storks (Europe's largest natural breeding colony).

After both rivers had been strongly regulated until the 1980s, shortening their lengths and triggering erosion, other wetland pressures increased. Dikes and upstream reservoirs altered natural flood retention, forestry, agriculture, sediment extraction, transport and recreation all intensified. Since the 1990s, various projects started to improve wetland management and reconnect river meanders but their technical execution proved complex due to the altered hydromorphology and the state borders. Still, the experience gained in various pilot works allowed preparing high-confidence designs and harmonise river restoration.

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Links:

[www.zinke.at/wetlands.htm](http://www.zinke.at/wetlands.htm)

[www.restorerivers.eu/NewsEvents/ERRC2013/](http://www.restorerivers.eu/NewsEvents/ERRC2013/)

[tabid/3167/AlbumID/13826-152/Page/0/Default.aspx](http://tabid/3167/AlbumID/13826-152/Page/0/Default.aspx)

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# Challenges and chances of cross-boundary cooperation for German National Natural Landscapes



© Eva Milz

Transboundary cooperation between National Natural Landscapes was the subject of a two-day forum organized by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (BfN) from 12-13 November 2013 in Fulda, Germany. Representatives from Biosphere Reserves, national parks and nature parks shared their experiences in cooperation with neighbouring European partners or between two or more federal states. Main topics of discussion were strategies of governance, nature conservation and sustainable regional development.

The Natural Landscapes have different bases and different levels for their concerted international, as well as national activities. Some cooperate on the basis of official contracts, drafted by ministries, while others work together for years without any official agreement. Both the “bottom-up” strategy and the “top-down” agreements were considered to have advantages, depending on the local conditions and aims. Many of the presented projects were funded by the European INTERREG programme. Cross-border cooperation in nature conservation is often a necessity in Europe due to many national boundaries and principles of transboundary conservation can easily be applied to federations such as Germany. People engaged in conservation management frequently struggle with the administrative barriers. There was mutual consent

among the participants that funding programmes of the federal states should be harmonized in order to minimize administrative work. Differences in the respective status of protection on both sides of the border have to be considered, along with sizes of budgets and legal frameworks. Other challenges are the diversity in funding and reporting systems, divergent models and different overall aims.

Language and cultural differences were not seen as major obstacles, whereas long-term contact persons were identified as vital for a trustful effective work. A functional organizational framework was also considered essential. The partners should be on equal terms and agree on fair benefit- and burden-sharing and respective responsibilities, and it is worth investing time to build a common set of ideas beforehand. Both sides can profit from the exchange of know-how, larger conservation areas and a common public performance.

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# International Peace Park Expeditions 2013



© International Peace Park Expeditions

In January 2013, International Peace Park Expeditions partnered with the University of Maryland and our local partners in Costa Rica (ASOPROLA) and Panama (AMIPILA and FUNDICCEP) for a service learning expedition with 15 students to Parque Internacional La Amistad. We donated over 500 hours of work, focused on sustainable practices and organic agriculture in the buffer zone of a transboundary biodiversity hotspot, helping construct a natural water filtration system, processing fair trade organic coffee, and producing natural health care products. We climbed Volcan Baru, the tallest mountain in Panama at 3,474 m, ascending through several micro-climates, alongside representatives from the Panamanian National Park Service (ANAM). After summiting, we cleaned the high altitude campsite, removing hundreds of pounds of garbage for proper disposal. Our expedition injected more than \$12,000 into the local economy, supporting sustainable practices and cross-border collaboration in these end of the road communities.

In March, at the Washington DC Environmental Film Festival we premiered "[Transcending Boundaries: Perspectives from the Central Albertine Rift Transfrontier Protected](#)

[Area Network](#)", focused on the tri-border region between Rwanda, Uganda and Democratic Republic of Congo where Fulbright Fellow, Elaine Hsiao, was conducting research. The film explores transboundary conservation through geographic, socio-political, and ecological lenses, sharing perspectives from stakeholders who play a critical role conserving this biodiversity hotspot despite conflict and instability, lack of sustainable livelihoods, and the activities of armed groups such as poaching.

We have also coordinated the development of two multi-stakeholder collaboration proposals. One focuses on National Park Capacity Building in the tri-border region of Kosovo, Albania and Montenegro in the Prokletije Bjeshket e Namuna Mountain Range. The other focuses on a Transboundary Multi-Criteria Analysis that combines Peace & Conflict Impact Assessment, EcoSystem Services Valuation and Social Multi-Criteria Analysis in two critical transboundary ecosystems on the borders Costa Rica shares with Nicaragua and Panama.

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## ‘Ohrid-Prespa Watershed’ nominated for a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve



© Boris Erg

The nomination for designation of a Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR) ‘Ohrid-Prespa Watershed’ was submitted to the UNESCO’s Man and Biosphere Secretariat by the Albanian and Macedonian Commissions for UNESCO at the end of September 2013.

The area of the proposed TBR covers Ohrid and Prespa Lakes, including three national parks; Galicica and Pelister in Macedonia, and Prespa in Albania, together with a number of other protected areas of different management category. The nomination procedure is envisaged as a two-step process started with the joint nomination proposal of Albania and Macedonia, and ‘leaving the door opened’ to Greece to joint in the future. It is expected that the UNESCO International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves will start considering the nomination documentation in early 2014. Pending positive evaluation, ‘Ohrid - Prespa Watershed’ will be the first Biosphere Reserve in both Albania and Macedonia.

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## Nature at the centre of regional dialogue



By officially endorsing a ‘Big Win for Dinaric Arc’ joint statement, nature conservation authorities from South-Eastern Europe have agreed to work together on strengthening cooperation in the region. With the support of IUCN, WWF and the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism of Montenegro, each institution has formed a set of national commitments setting a new agenda for protected areas and nature conservation. The joint statement was endorsed by the Republic of Albania, Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Republic of Croatia, Kosovo\*, FYR Macedonia, Republic of Slovenia and Republic of Serbia during the high level ceremony on 2 December 2012 in Budva, Montenegro, in the presence of Janez Potočnik, European Commissioner for Environment.

Opening the second Dinaric Arc Parks international conference, ‘Big Win for Dinaric Arc’ builds upon the milestone agreement for biodiversity made in 2008 at the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Bonn. On that occasion six governments from South-Eastern Europe signed a joint statement that sets out their national priorities in the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas and recognises the importance of regional cooperation for transboundary sustainable management of protected areas.

Responsible institutions have made a decisive step that will further strengthen their cooperation efforts and help create a regional platform that will facilitate the harmonization of nature conservation policies. The Big Win for Dinaric Arc event is an important contribution to the implementation of the project Toward Strengthened Conservation Planning in South-Eastern Europe, funded by the MAVA Foundation and implemented by IUCN’s Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe together with the environmental ministries and nature conservation agencies from the region.

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\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

## Sustainable tomorrow for Skadar Lake



© WCPA

## Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park passed into law



© Angela Selmani

IUCN Programme Office for South-Eastern Europe has initiated the implementation of a 3-year long project, Supporting the Long-Term Sustainable Management of Transboundary Lake Skadar, in partnership with the Institute for Nature Conservation in Albania and NGO Green Home of Montenegro. Improving practices and capacity for management of protected areas, the project intends to foster the effective management of biodiversity of Skadar Lake, natural border between Albania and Montenegro. Being largest on the Balkan Peninsula, Skadar Lake witnessed a number of political agreements toward its improved management and international conservation efforts. With its partners, IUCN will build on the gathered experience and establish a cross-border exchange platform for protected area authorities and other stakeholders to work jointly and ensure the sustainable future of the shared lake.

Funded by the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF), the project will aim to decrease the occurrence of illegal activities by strengthening law enforcement, encouraging the participation of civil society organizations in monitoring and protected area management, increasing transparency and awareness among key stakeholders and resource managers on the importance of biodiversity conservation.

The CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the European Union, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. Its fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

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In January 2013 the Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park in western Kosovo\* was passed into law. Connected with the Prokletije National Park in Montenegro and the Valbona and Thethi National Parks in Albania, there is now a contiguous chain of officially protected areas through the heart of the proposed Balkans Peace Park. Although there are many issues still to be settled, the Balkan Peace Park Project (B3P) welcomes this significant step towards a truly transboundary protected area, protecting the environment and bringing prosperity to its communities from sustainable mountain tourism.

Thanks to B3P and the development agency GIZ, and the energies of a local project team, there is now the 'Peaks of the Balkans' trail, a way marked circular mountain walking route of 190km through all three countries in the Prokletije/Bjeshkët e Nemuna mountain range.

For the sixth year, B3P ran its summer programme in the Albanian village of Thethi. In another piece of positive news, B3P Albania is a formally constituted NGO in Albania which has taken on a new lease of life this year. It turned Shkodër's annual Fun Run in March into a 'Peace Run' to promote B3P with over 200 people from many countries taking part. It also took a group of teenagers from Shkodër for a weekend of tree planting and environmental education in Thethi.

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*\*This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.*

## Drin Basin multi-stakeholder conference in Albania



Within the framework of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the Management of the Extended Transboundary Drin Basin, a regional conference was held in Tirana, Albania, on 11-12 December 2013. The conference gathered governmental institutions and other key stakeholders from Albania, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro and Kosovo responsible and working in water management and EU Water Framework Directive implementation.

The conference aimed to contribute to the GEF/UNDP “Enabling Transboundary Cooperation and Integrated Water Resources Management in the Extended Drin River Basin” project which involves five Drin Riparian countries, and to the Strategic Shared Vision adopted in Tirana on 24 November 2013.

During the conference Djana Bejko, Deputy Minister of Environment of Albania, recorded the significant progress on legal and institutional water management in Albania according to the EU Water Framework Directive. Stevo Temelkovski, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning of Macedonia outlined the progress on legal and institutional water management in Macedonia. The Drin Core Group and its Secretariat presented the past, on-going and planned activities for the implementation of the Shared Vision and the Drin MoU.

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For detailed information regarding the Drin Core Group initiative visit:

[www.twrm-med.net/southeastern-europe/supported-processes-and-projects/drin-river-basin/the-institutional-structure-for-the-implementation-of-the-mou](http://www.twrm-med.net/southeastern-europe/supported-processes-and-projects/drin-river-basin/the-institutional-structure-for-the-implementation-of-the-mou).

## World Parks Congress registration open



The IUCN World Parks Congress is the landmark global forum on protected areas held every ten years. It will be convened in Sydney, Australia 12-19 November 2014, with the theme “Parks, people, planet: Inspiring solutions” designed to reflect and help deliver IUCN’s three Programme Areas. The World Parks Congress 2014 will articulate the vital role of protected areas in conserving nature while delivering essential ecosystem services, position protected areas within the goals of economic and community well-being in the post-2015 development agenda, and demonstrate and guide how this can be achieved in practice. The event is being organized by IUCN and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA), and hosted on behalf of the Australian Government by Parks Australia and the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service, in the Office of Environment and Heritage.

The Congress will address eight streams: 1) Reaching conservation goals; 2) Responding to climate change; 3) Improving health and well-being; 4) Supporting human life (water, food and disaster risk reduction); 5) Reconciling development challenges; 6) Enhancing diversity and quality of governance; 7) Respecting indigenous and traditional knowledge and culture; and 8) Inspiring a new generation. Together with cross-cutting streams focused on marine, world heritage, capacity development and a new social compact, the Congress will inspire and motivate action to achieve the ambitious goals of sustainable development.

**To register**, visit the [World Parks Congress website](http://WorldParksCongress.org).  
Additional information: [worldparkscongress@iucn.org](mailto:worldparkscongress@iucn.org)



## Publications

### Governance of protected areas



Governance of protected areas – *who* makes the decisions – has generally received less attention than issues of management effectiveness and biodiversity monitoring. The Convention on Biological Diversity identified governance as one of the weakest elements in its Programme of Work on Protected Areas and this has caused frustration amongst human rights groups. A new best practice guideline from IUCN seeks to address some of these gaps. The manual provides a thorough description of the four management types recognised by IUCN (state governance, shared governance, private governance and indigenous and community conserved areas), numerous case studies, best practice guidelines and principles of good governance.

Transboundary protected areas are one particular sort of shared governance. Although most TBPA's to date have involved two or more state-governed protected areas, their cross border nature necessarily requires a large degree of stakeholder involvement, so that in practice governance is influenced by two or more state parties along with many other actors. Transboundary protection is not confined to governments or legal agreements but can and does include cross-border cooperation between private and community managed protected areas as well—in many cases informal agreements between communities who have immediate interests in the area can be more effective than formal statements from remote governments. Quality of governance is critical. Of particular importance here, the manual contains a detailed framework for assessing governance quality for a system of protected areas, which could well be applied across regional or national borders. The guidelines, which are freely available online, provide a resource that should help TBPA managers and others around the world.

*Governance of Protected Areas: From understanding to action*, edited by Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend Nigel Dudley, Tillman Jaeger, Barbara Lassen, Neema Pathak Broome, Adrian Phillips and Trevor Sandwith, Best Practice Protected Area Guidelines Series number 20, IUCN.

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### Tourism in transboundary Dinaric Arc protected areas



Recently published IUCN's manual *Sustainable tourism management in the transboundary areas of the Dinaric Arc region* presents practical steps that need to be implemented in order to secure sustainable tourism development. When well-planned and effectively managed, tourism can provide economic benefits to local people and increase the support for conservation of the natural and cultural resources it depends upon.

This manual intends to increase the understanding of the importance of planning, management and monitoring of tourism in protected areas in the Dinaric Arc. At the same time it reflects the specifics of protected areas and tourism development in transboundary context as well as potentials coming from joint cooperative management of tourism in this region. There are already excellent examples of such a management on-going in the transboundary areas of the Dinaric Arc, some of them presented in the current publication. The manual is published by IUCN and developed jointly by WWF Mediterranean Programme and SNV Netherlands Development Organization.

TB eNews

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# Guidelines for your contributions

The TB eNews contains information on your activities related to enhancement of transboundary conservation and cooperation. You are welcome to send us news about relevant projects and initiatives, to review any past event on transboundary conservation, and announce a future workshop, seminar, or a conference. We shall include any new publications, websites or funding opportunities that you send us.

In order to ensure all articles are included in one of our next issues, we would welcome contributions that contain up to 300 words in length. Please also include any graphic addition (photograph, logo, map or similar), indicating the credits. The size of the photographs has to be minimum 500 kB. You are responsible for the content of your contributions and all articles should contain the name of the author and contact email.

This newsletter is being prepared by IUCN WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group, which reserves the right to edit and shorten the texts as appropriate.

All contributions should be sent to Maja Vasiljević at [maja@ekohorizont.hr](mailto:maja@ekohorizont.hr)

Thank you for your cooperation,  
*Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group Executive Team*

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