

TERMS OF REFERENCE

IUCN WCPA GEOHERITAGE SPECIALIST GROUP (GSG)

Background

The IUCN WCPA Geoheritage Specialist Group (GSG) facilitates the conservation and effective management of protected area geoheritage (*1) and provides specialist advice on all aspects of geodiversity (*2) in relation to protected areas and their management. These roles recognise the concept of ‘geo’ as part of ‘nature’ in IUCN’s 2008 definition of a protected area and the clear link between geodiversity and biodiversity in the conservation of nature.

Definitions

***1 Geoheritage** is defined as:

“Globally, nationally, state-wide, to local features of geology such as its igneous, metamorphic, sedimentary, stratigraphic, structural, geochemical, mineralogic, palaeontologic, geomorphic, pedologic, and hydrologic attributes at all scales, that are intrinsically important sites or culturally important sites, that offer information or insights into the formation and evolution of the Earth, or into the history of science, or that can be used for research, teaching or reference” (Source: cited in Brocx, M. 2008, *“Geoheritage, From Global Perspectives to Local Principles for Conservation and Planning”*, West Australian Museum, Perth 2008 p13)

***2 Geodiversity:** Two Geodiversity definitions are provided:

1. By M. Gray: *“Geodiversity is the natural range (diversity) of geological (rocks, minerals, fossils), geomorphological (landform, processes) and soil features. It includes their assemblages, relationships, properties, interpretations and systems”*. (Source: Gray, M. (2004) *Geodiversity: Valuing and Conserving Abiotic Nature*, Wiley, London.)

2. By V. Semeniuk: *“Geodiversity is the natural variety of geological, geomorphological, pedological, hydrological features of a given area from the purely static features at one extreme, to the assemblage of products, and at the other, their formative process”* (Source: ‘The linkage between biodiversity and geodiversity’, in Eberhard, E. (ed), (1997) *Pattern and Process*, Environment Australia Environmental Task Force, Canberra)

Purpose of the WCPA Geoheritage Specialist Group

The Geoheritage Specialist Group’s purpose is to facilitate Geoconservation *3 and specifically:

- 1) To provide advice and guidance for all aspects of geodiversity as it relates to the establishment and effective management of protected areas;
- 2) To provide specific advice on the conservation and effective management of geoheritage in protected areas and to prepare guidance material as appropriate;
- 3) To identify significant geoheritage areas that could be formally reserved as protected areas by nations;
- 4) To provide specialist geoheritage advice for the assessment of World Heritage Site nominations;
- 5) To provide a mechanism for integrating geodiversity into all relevant IUCN programmes and activities;

6) To provide, as appropriate, a professional interface for IUCN between geodiversity and geoheritage stakeholders such as UNESCO, the mining industry and others.

***3.Geoconservation** is defined as:

“Actions and measures taken to preserve geodiversity and geoheritage for the future”

(Source: Diaz-Martinez, E (2013) Notes Arising from an IUCN WCPA Geoheritage Working Group Meeting, Mokpo, South Korea, Group Unpublished Manuscript)

IUCN GPAP/WCPA’s Quadrennial Programme 2013-2016

The WCPA Geoheritage Specialist Group activities have been integrated with IUCN’s Quadrennial Programme and its (subsequent) more detailed GPAP/WCPA priorities. All of the GSG Tasks fall within GPAP/WCPA Goal 2.

Integrating WCPA GSG Tasks into the IUCN planning hierarchy (A summary)

IUCN PROGRAMME AREA 1:

VALUING AND CONSERVING BIODIVERSITY

GPAP/WCPA Result 1

Capacity to effectively manage protected area systems to conserve biodiversity is enhanced

GPAP/WCPA Goal 2

By 2016 jointly branded IUCN/CBD Best Practice Guidelines and key new Knowledge Products are fully developed and linked to the Global Partnership for Protected Areas Capacity Development

WCPA GSG Priority Tasks

1. Prepare the Geoheritage Chapter for the IUCN’s Protected Area Governance and Management E-Book
2. Prepare a Protected Area Geodiversity Management Best Practice Guideline
3. Prepare an IUCN World Heritage Criterion (viii) Geoheritage Guidance Statement
4. Develop Background Protected Area Geoheritage Guidance Material
5. Address issues and initiatives identified by Resolution-048 (The WCC 2012) Titled *Valuing and Conserving Geoheritage Within the IUCN Programme 2013-2016*.

GSG Task 1. Prepare a “Managing Geoheritage” chapter for IUCN’s Protected Area Governance and Management E Book

Objective

To facilitate the effective management of protected area geoheritage by preparing high quality geoheritage management information for protected area management students and practitioners

Method

Involve IUCN WCPA’s Geoheritage Specialist Group and others as the *Principal Author, Supporting Authors*, advisors and peer reviewers in the development of the first geoheritage management chapter ever prepared for an IUCN protected area management book.

Accountability

Dr Roger Croft is the Principal Author of the Chapter

Actions:

- Develop an agreed chapter plan and identify *Supporting Authors*
- Complete a peer review of the draft chapter contents
- Produce a working draft chapter
- Review the draft Chapter by December 2013 with all contributors

- Complete a peer review of the Chapter with external reviewers