

PROTECTED AREAS LEARNING & RESEARCH COLLABORATION



Fostering excellence in governance and management in the Asia Pacific and Oceania regions

September 2014 Update Bulletin

The Protected Areas Learning and Research Collaboration (PALRC) will be launched at the IUCN World Parks Congress in Sydney in November 2014.

About this initiative

The Protected Areas Learning and Research Collaboration is a tertiary and vocational education and research initiative dedicated to natural and cultural heritage protection, stewardship and conservation management and capacity development for the Asia Pacific and Oceania regions. The Collaboration will benefit professionals and community-based conservation practitioners working on protected areas and other area-based conservation activities.

In its first operating year in 2015, the Collaboration will provide short courses and graduate certificate and masters courses. Three Australian universities - James Cook University, Murdoch University and the University of Tasmania - are in the process of having courses approved that specifically address selected competencies from the draft IUCN Global Partnership for Professionalizing Protected Areas Management (GPPAM) framework. We expect that other institutions will join the Collaboration in offering courses in 2015, and both Charles Darwin University and the University of South Pacific are examining this.

Formal announcement of initial course content and an invitation to enrol students for 2015 will occur at the World Parks Congress.

We hope to meet you at one of our side events or programme activities at the World Parks Congress, so keep an eye out for us. We will provide more details as they are confirmed.

As this initiative develops, we invite your comments, suggestions and support so that the Collaboration is relevant to your needs and aspirations.

Further background information about the Collaboration can be found at the end of this Bulletin.

Getting the Collaboration off the ground

The PALRC Steering Committee has representatives from each of the Asia, Pacific and Australian regions. Members are: Chair: Jane Hutchinson (Tasmanian Land Conservancy); Andrew Campbell (Charles Darwin University); Peter Cochrane (Australian Government Ambassador - IUCN World Parks Congress 2014) – Chair of the Stakeholder Advisory Group;

Glenys Jones (Independent, Tasmania); Michael Lockwood (UTAS) – Chair of Academic Program Committee; Susan Moore (Murdoch University); Daniel Oades (Kimberley Land Council); Scott Perkin (IUCN Asia Regional Office Thailand); Nunia Thomas (Nature Fiji); Vinod Mathur (Wildlife Institute India); Andry Sculthorpe (Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre); Lesley Vick (Micronesia Challenge Regional Coordinator); Graeme Worboys (IUCN); and Lu Zhi (Executive Director, Peking University Centre for Nature and Society, the Director of the Shanshui Conservation Centre and a member of the IUCN World Heritage Panel).

The Steering Committee is supported by a wider Stakeholder Advisory Group and an Academic Program Committee. Membership of all these groups is drawn from throughout the region with membership details available on request.

You can help

We would like your involvement through the remainder of 2014-15 and into the first operating phase of the Collaboration as we:

- engage with prospective funders for the collaboration to ensure wide enrolments and adequate operating funds
- finalise and publicise course content for 2015
- enrol our first students
- broaden our course offerings, university partners and student opportunities beyond 2015.

In addition to these activities the Collaboration will be aiming to secure accreditation from relevant bodies including the Global Partnership for Professionalizing Protected Areas Management (GPPAM).

Financial support

The Collaboration has been underwritten in this its establishment year by 150,000 AUD from the University of Tasmania and the Tasmanian Land Conservancy (TLC is one of Australia's leading private conservation organisations). In June 2014, our Gold Founding Partner made a 150,000 AUD gift.

We are working with and identifying prospective philanthropic, corporate or other financial supporters and inviting anyone who might like to consider becoming a Founding Partner or Supporter to assist the Collaboration in becoming a reality.

Our fundraising target is 600,000 AUD. With revenue from courses, we expect this will be sufficient to operate the Collaboration for the first four years.

Our first Gold Founding Partner has agreed to match the first private gifts to a total of 150,000 AUD with a dollar of their own. Our goal is to meet this \$150,000 challenge for private gifts by the end of October 2014. This will give us half the total amount required, and we will be looking to others to source the remainder.

All gifts and grants over 100,000 AUD up to 30 October 2014 will join the anonymous private donor and the University of Tasmania as Gold Founding Partners. All gifts and grants over

50,000 and up to 100,000 AUD will join the Tasmanian Land Conservancy as Founding Partners.

Gifts and donations made to the Tasmanian Land Conservancy for the Collaboration are tax deductible in Australia. Founding Partners and Supporters will be formally recognized (if they wish) for their contributions including (if desired) international exposure at the launch of the initiative at the World Park Congress. We will also keep Founding Partners and Supporters informed of progress and milestones through regular news updates.

For more information

Please contact Doug Humann (Development Director) for more information on how to get involved in this initiative and to discuss opportunities for supporting it.

If this update has been passed on to you by an associate, please email Doug directly to be placed on the mailing list for further information, including for our events at the World Parks Congress.

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Background Information

The origins of this collaboration

Australia has a long history of natural resource and cultural heritage management and a wide and increasingly integrated land and marine protected areas system. It has a proven record of innovative and adaptive approaches to conservation management, and continues to show strong leadership from practitioners, academics and researchers in this field.

The initiative for a Protected Areas Learning and Research Collaboration originated in the island state of Tasmania which is endowed with one of the best protected area systems in the world, with over 600 national parks and reserves, three World Heritage Areas, and covering almost 40% of the state's land area. The University of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, and the Tasmanian Parks and Wildlife Service joined with IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas, Murdoch University, Charles Darwin University and James Cook University, Parks Australia, and Parks Victoria to form an alliance to guide the development of this initiative and draw on the specialised strengths and capacities of partner universities, conservation organisations and protected area managers located across the Region.

A Memorandum of Understanding led by the University of Tasmania with Murdoch University, Charles Darwin University and James Cook University has initiated the collaboration's development and the creation of course content.

Further support for the initiative has come from:

- NGO partners including the International Union for the Conservation of Nature through the World Commission on Protected Areas, AC IUCN
- Global and government partners including the Australian Government (through Parks Australia)
- Regional and Indigenous partners including the Secretariat of the Pacific Region Environment Program (SPREP)
- University of the South Pacific
- BIOPAMA (Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management)
- Wildlife Institute of India

We invite your endorsement or suggestions of endorsement of other entities that can be added to the above list by emailing Doug Humann with authority to add entity names.

Email: doug@doughumann.com.au

The need

Throughout the region there are multiple IUCN Category I-VI protected areas (e.g. national parks, public and private conservation reserves, Indigenous Protected Areas, marine protected areas, and other conservation areas) along with community managed conservation areas cared for and lived in by people over the generations with the aim of ensuring the long term conservation of nature along with associated community, cultural and social values and the

provision of ecosystem services. With long-standing and mounting contemporary pressures on these areas and their custodians, it is vitally important to provide both a means to professionalize - and an opportunity to provide a career path for - managers and community members and others engaged in protected areas management.

- **Caring for natural places is a significant and growing sector in the conservation economy.** The area reserved as protected area in 2010 was 12.7% of the earth's terrestrial surface and 1.6% of its marine area. In Australia alone, there are approximately 9,000 terrestrial protected areas covering 13.4% of the land area and the world's largest network of marine reserves. Increasingly, protected areas are being managed not only by government, but also by indigenous communities, non-government organizations and individual landholders. For example, in Australia around 36% of the National Reserve System is in Indigenous Protected Areas.
- **All over the world, the challenges facing natural areas are increasing.** Not only do the "old" challenges still persist and need to be addressed (e.g. wildfire, poaching, invasive species, inappropriate developments and/or unsustainable use, inadequate plant and equipment), but there are additional global threats such as climate change, increasing biosecurity risks, competition for land and marine resources, growing population and economic pressures. These factors all point to a need for increasing commitment, resources and professional capacity to undertake the important responsibility of caring for the world's natural and cultural heritage and protected areas.
- **Natural areas management has become a complex and demanding field that requires practitioners with professional knowledge and skills across diverse fields.** For example, whether working in public, private, Indigenous or marine protected areas, today's protected area practitioners need to understand ecology, conservation planning, community engagement, risk management, visitor and tourism management, education and communications, business planning and financial management, governance, strategic planning, performance evaluation, and leadership. And the demand for social and economic benefits and services associated with protected areas has never been greater—think water; food; recreation; tourism; wildlife and habitat protection; power generation; and carbon sequestration, to name but a few.
- **Natural areas provide for people and their well-being in a variety of ways.** These range from providing the basic necessities of life in some communities (food, water, shelter and medicine) to providing ecosystem services for the world. In an increasingly urbanized world, natural areas provide important places for people to connect with nature, to breathe in clean fresh air and to experience the natural world, see wildlife in the wild, and appreciate natural scenic beauty. There are social benefits in people undertaking healthy outdoor activities in a beautiful natural environment, and in experiencing solitude, peace and quiet, and being able to look up into dark starry skies. For many people, natural areas are a source of inspiration, healing and renewal, and can provide ongoing links between past, present and future generations through shared experience, values, and knowledge including through the practice of cultural traditions, and through artistic expression of story-telling, writing, the fine arts, photography, music and dance.

- **Natural areas can be part of a natural solution to climate change.** With appropriate management, natural areas can provide opportunities (often in conjunction with large connectivity corridors and natural landscapes) to ameliorate or lessen some of the impacts and effects of climate change such as extreme weather events, extreme fire behaviour, flooding, and wildlife movement etc.
- **Natural and cultural heritage areas** each need specialised skills sets to ensure their protection and sensitive sustainable management, restoration and visitor use.
- **A robust, professional protected areas management sector is needed to capably address complex issues and deliver sound conservation outcomes.**

The opportunity

There is an identified need throughout the world and particularly in the Asia and Oceania regions for capacity building to support the development of protected area practitioners with the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies for effective management and care of protected area systems on land and sea. This need has been identified by the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) and its members.

Purposes

The purposes of the collaboration are to:

- Provide accredited training programs that meet the needs of the protected areas sector, focusing on the Australasia, Western Pacific and Asia Regions. Programs may be provided at Certificate, Diploma, Bachelors, Masters or Doctorate level and be one-off or articulated/modulated courses that lead to further accreditation and also provide a bridge from vocational to higher education training.
- Develop and deliver an integrated suite of training and educational products that provide the basic and advanced knowledge and skills sets required of practitioners at field officer level, protected area level and system manager levels for ethical, effective protected areas governance and management.
- Build international capacity and collaboration in protected areas management and training to support continuous learning and improvement.
- Draw on the strengths, expertise and specialised capacities of Universities, Protected Area agencies and other institutions in Australia and the Asia-Pacific Region to offer the highest quality educational training products, applied learning experiences and research.
- Build on and enhance Australia's unique opportunity to support excellence in natural areas training and stewardship.
- Foster, coordinate and disseminate natural areas research.
- Recognise and foster excellence in management and stewardship of natural areas.
- Contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity, healthy environments and the health of people through capacity development and training of protected area practitioners; information sharing and research, and as a consequence, the effective governance and management of protected areas.

Curriculum and accredited training courses

The curriculum offered by the collaboration will cover a range of core competencies referenced above and include fields relevant to protected areas practitioners.

For example courses will include ecological sciences, natural and cultural heritage management, Indigenous protected area management, business administration, risk and complexity management, private and public sector policy and governance, sustainable finance, operations management, public health and safety, incident management, community conserved area management, economics, planning, monitoring, evaluation and adaptive management, environmental law, tourism, sustainable use and natural resource management of land and sea.

Initial courses provided in the first year will demonstrate the cross-disciplinary approach of the collaboration by taking subjects from various schools and disciplines, including in areas of governance and administration, organizational behavior, business skills, and elements of natural and cultural tourism.

The collaboration will also focus on addressing identified knowledge gaps and needs in the Asia-Pacific Region. Special emphasis will be given to customising courses and providing expert tuition to suit specialised environments and contexts (such as karst areas and climatic specialization such as alpine/mountain environments, Mediterranean climate areas, temperate forests, tropical rainforests, tropical savanna, deserts and cool-temperate and tropical marine environments).

Courses will be linked to current research and management programs across Australia and the Asia-Pacific region and will include fieldwork based on contemporary issues, innovation and exemplary practice. National and international student exchanges and scholarships (including for Indigenous and disadvantaged students) will form an important part of the collaboration's operations. The collaboration will also offer opportunities for participants to develop cultural awareness and exchange. An international awards system will be developed to recognize, showcase and promote innovation and excellence in protected areas management and research.

The curriculum will also reflect the principles of - and the training resources provided by - the new compendium IUCN e-book *Protected Area Governance and Management* being prepared for launch (most probably simultaneously with the Collaboration) at the World Parks Congress (see <http://protectedareabook.org>). The e-book will be available free and used as an information source for students undertaking accredited protected area management training at field officer (ranger), area manager, and systems manager levels of competency and will be available as modules, by chapter or as an entire book. It will also be available as a printed copy at the actual cost of printing.

Benefits

In commending this initiative, Ms. Penelope Figgis AO, Regional Vice Chair for the World Commission on Protected Areas (Oceania) stated:

'The proposed Protected Areas Learning and Research Collaboration will help make sense of global environmental, social, political, and economic issues. It will build international capacity and collaboration in protected area management and provide training to support continuous learning and improvement. This is a bold and exciting initiative that will make a positive difference to the increasing challenges facing protected areas across the region.'

By taking part in the Collaboration's programs, protected area practitioners and other conservation and cultural heritage managers from across Australia, Asia, the western Pacific and from elsewhere in the world will be better equipped to successfully navigate the complex world of protected area management. The Collaboration will equip those working day-to-day in the field, policy-makers and executives with relevant knowledge and skills to make informed decisions and to undertake the actions necessary to achieve long-term outcomes for biodiversity conservation and healthy ecosystems through better management of protected areas throughout the Region and the world.

The Collaboration will play an important role as a regional hub for Australia and the Asia-Pacific Region. It will foster and forge national and international cooperation for capacity building, and will facilitate the establishment of professional communities of practice and mentoring and coaching opportunities in protected areas management and research. Links will also be established with other similar initiatives around the world to share advances, experience and contemporary practice.

