

# Nature-Culture Dialogues

## In Conserving Common Ground- Integrating Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation in Alberta's Protected Areas

### *Session 6 with Jon Weller*

As we are all aware, there is a need and a growing call to bring together nature and culture in conservation efforts. One of the clearest venues for undertaking this work is within parks and protected areas. This has not gone unnoticed, there is, currently, a growing acknowledgement that the management of cultural heritage resources is both an important responsibility of parks and protected areas and a means to enhance connection and concern for a place. Yet, at the same time, there remains uncertainty and a lack of clarity on how this is to happen in practice.

In this session, Jon discussed some of his ongoing research exploring the challenge of integrating cultural heritage conservation into the Canadian parks and protected area system as well some of the notable successes. Overall, his research aims to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the current system and develop recommendations, tools, and resources to support more effective cultural heritage conservation in parks and protected areas.

The hope with this session is to explore how parks and protected areas are incorporating cultural resource conservation into their work through collaborative and interdisciplinary initiatives, to identify areas for further research, and explore ways to enhance these efforts. In order to work toward these aims, you are asked to consider the following questions:

1. How can we most effectively make the case for an integrative approach to natural and cultural heritage conservation in parks and protected areas?
2. What are the key requirements for a park or protected area organization to effectively manage/integrate cultural resource conservation into their operations?
3. What are the persistent challenges parks and protected area managers face when trying to engage with cultural resource management?

Jon's thesis *In Conserving Common Ground- Integrating Natural and Cultural Heritage Conservation in Alberta's Protected Areas* looks at protected areas to be potential areas where the relationship between nature and culture plays out, and that it could be managed for *personal and collective transformation*. During the conversation he highlighted a few points that could be considered as the starting point for ensuring that protected area agencies take the responsibility for managing the cultural elements of the

landscape seriously during the management of protected areas. But the question remains unanswered; what more needs to be in place?

### Attendees

Jon Weller (JW)

Jane Lennon (JL)

Liana Jansen (LJ)

Marika Franklin (MF)

Brenda Barrett (BB)

Maya Ishizawa (MI)

Steve Brown (SB)

### SUMMARY

MF agrees with JW that protected areas can be potential areas where the relationship between nature and culture plays out and that it could be managed for personal and collective transformation. It is however often more exclusive for the middle class with paid entrance. This was also highlighted by Jon in his writing:

*Conserving cultural heritage within protected areas it thus a necessary and valuable task. It enables protected areas to be more than hold outs in an increasingly disturbed landscape, they can become enduring sources of understanding and models for personal and collective transformation.*

*One of the key threats to ongoing support for protected areas is the lack of diversity in their visitor base. Most visitors to US national parks, Bernbaum notes, "are middles-class white Americans and foreign tourists" (2017, p. 168), an observation that can be made in many other parts of the world (J. Byrne & Wolch, 2009; Floyd, 2001).*

MF has seen it happen before in South Africa, where a nature reserve was encouraged under the noble effort to protect nature but at the cost of its open access and traditional use of the space.

SB: This is also the case in Australia, and has had and continues to have deleterious impacts on Aboriginal peoples' rights to practice culture and to their wellbeing.

JW addresses this in his reference to 'taking responsibility' and engaging with the question of how humans have been part of the landscape:

*What taking 'responsibility' for this remaking means for protected areas is certainly more complicated than protecting nature from humans. Instead it is about engaging in the question of how humans are and have been a part of the landscape in an effort to restore and create a new and enduring relationship between humans and the natural world.*

JW: While this note about privilege is often true for protected areas, it is increasingly not the case with the growing acceptance of alternative models of protected areas (Category V, VI, Biosphere Reserves, Indigenous Protected Areas, Other Effective Conservation Based Areas) there is more and more a focus on how people can live in connection with the natural landscapes in a way that prioritizes nature conservation while also meeting their needs. The quote above captures that quite well.

JL: Could also add collaborative management approaches involving local people to enable 'good governance' and this collaboration helps reconcile the different views of experts in heritage systems.

As one example, England's lack of 'pristine' or 'untouched' landscapes enabled the management of their Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty/National Parks to be more 'culturally-focused' with towns and villages, and agricultural fields (countryside) to be included within the area. In both these systems it is the local communities that work together with the authorities (local/national respectively) to protect the area in terms of their planning controls. JW and BB both investigated this system of planning as a good case study.

MF, JW,  
SB, JL

MF, JW,  
SB, JL

<p>JW: It's a good case study for what it is. Certainly not entirely transferable elsewhere, particularly in North America and Australia, but in many places where there is a strong and consistent legacy of human habitation it makes sense.</p> <p>JL adds: ...and where there is small scale detailed land unit mapping to enable application of historic landscape characterisation as JW said our continents are large and there is not a good detailed mapping coverage.</p>	
<p>JW mentions seven points to consider as the starting point for ensuring that protected area agencies take the responsibility for managing the cultural elements of the landscape seriously during the management of protected areas (and asked for any other things that should perhaps be included within this list):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear Legislation</li> <li>2. Strategic Policy and operating procedure (high-level policy)</li> <li>3. Terminology (defining the terms)</li> <li>4. Dedicated staffing</li> <li>5. Agency-wide training</li> <li>6. Management Planning</li> <li>7. Policy guidelines for addressing Indigenous Cultural Heritage</li> </ol> <p>JW; One of the issues that emerged from the discussion was that even when these key building blocks are in place, as is the case in parts of Australia, and have been in place for some time, a robust and consistently integrated approach to managing nature and culture remains elusive.</p> <p>SB: In Australia, a resistance to better integrating nature-cultures can relate to the sense of threat that those 'experts' in the fields of ecology can have toward recognising people as a part of the environment (a very long standing issue); and thus a belief that somehow 'nature' can stand apart from people and their cultures. It is surprising that even the recognition of the Anthropocene as a geological era is not enough to shake this entrenched position.</p> <p>JW: This left open the conversation about what else needs to be done to ensure properly integrated work is achieved. The role of local champions/advocates was highlighted, as was the importance of training reiterated. But the question remains unresolved, what more needs to be in place?</p>	<p>MF, JW, SB</p>

## ACTION

Green- Done

2019/09

### 1. Divide of Nature and culture

a) A summary of the history of the divide between Nature and Culture (to include as a 10 min feedback in the next talk)?

MF: In one of the readings provided by DM: Adams, W. and Mulligan, M. (ed) 2003, Decolonizing Nature: Strategies for Conservation in a Postcolonial Era, Earthscan, London. The text below highlights some of the struggle of difference in world views, and the history thereof, but not yet the core of it (to be answered under b)

*In terms of direct political control by European powers, colonial rule was finally brought to an end in much of the world in the third quarter of the 20th century, especially as the result of a string of anti-colonial struggles that emerged in former European colonies in the wake of World War II. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, new post-colonial political structures emerged. The end of direct political control might have been expected to open the way for more independent thinking about the relations between society and nature, perhaps based on non-Western traditions and cultural fusions. This did not happen. From the late 19th century onwards, the decolonization process had involved the creation of 'modern' nation states that were built, essentially, on European*

models and traditions, and the deep ideological legacy of colonialism endured. Smith (1999) comments that indigenous people have been subjected to 'the colonization of their lands and cultures, and the denial of their sovereignty, by a Introduction 5 colonizing society that has come to dominate the shape and quality of their lives, even after it has formally pulled out' (p7). Modern European colonialism was not monolithic, and the diverse experiences of decolonization were complicated. In parts of the world where European settlement and land occupation was either complete or very extensive (for example, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the US, Canada and South America), direct imperial control by European political powers ended as the settler societies progressively assumed administrative control (in a relatively painless form of decolonization). But such settler societies had established their own, internal, forms of colonialism in order to dominate indigenous minorities (for example, in Australia; see Chapter 4), or profoundly suppressed majorities (as in the case of South Africa or Rhodesia [Zimbabwe] before majority rule). In many settler societies, indigenous peoples were herded into isolated fragments of their former terrain, on 'reservations', 'missions' or 'tribal lands', administered with a complex mix of brute exploitation, paternalistic exhortation and racist disdain. In such context's decolonization has often been piecemeal and is still far from complete. As decolonization reached its peak in terms of the political independence of nation states, new forms of trans-national and global colonization – in the form of cultural and economic engagement – began to gather force, accelerating rapidly during the last part of the 20th century. The process of political decolonization was therefore overtaken by globalization and neo-colonialism, making the transition to post-colonial societies complex and messy....

b) A list of references in environmental philosophy to reveal the deep root of Western separation (Fran, Steve?)

2. A list of principles starting from the IUCN 2016 Mālama Honua, and ICOMOS. 2017 Yatra aur Tammanah document (Done by JL).

Mālama Honua: <https://www.iucn.org/sites/dev/files/malama-honua-en.pdf>

Yatra aur Tammanah:

[https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/General Assemblies/19th Delhi 2017/19th GA Outcomes/ICOMOS GA2017 CNJ YatraStatement final EN 20180207circ.pdf](https://www.icomos.org/images/DOCUMENTS/General%20Assemblies/19th%20Delhi%202017/19th%20GA%20Outcomes/ICOMOS_GA2017_CNJ_YatraStatement_final_EN_20180207circ.pdf)

3. List of partners of different perspectives that need to be part of this principle document (IUCN, IFLA etc.)

4. Collect a list of examples of some of the best practice of merging C/N from around the globe. The list should include a summary of those efforts. The focus should be on best practice, although we could learn from both good and bad efforts.

4.1 West Lake, China

5. Organise a talk that covers the concept of 'Wilderness' - a concept many countries applied, but suffered by as a conservation model. (Fran, Jane, Nora, Brenda?). Who should we engage with for the Wilderness Congress in India in 2020?

**2019/10**

Training for ICOMOS experts, and access to local attitudes in WH review proses (suggestion/check?)

- Check for available Anthropological training methods that is available (LJ)?
- Suggest experts to have access to local attitudes?

Describe and add three principles from this talk to principles document (Thanks JL)

Description of each of these terms (Thanks AB)

1. The recognition of the condition of *Universal*
2. The *regional value*, special for every society.
3. The “*chronological time*”,
4. The “*regional evolution time*”
5. The “*maturation process of each individual from a region*”

**2019/11**

Do all of the above!

**2020/01**

Comment on the principles document that Jane compiled, and circulated with this document.

JL: From many case studies we can distil a range of issues for each principle, should we organize frameworks around these?

MF: Perhaps we could list the range of issues here?

JL: Listening to the country; clear objectives, modifications due to monitoring and a long-term commitment are lessons we have learnt.

MF: JL to expand/explain the reference to ‘country’ here, and perhaps list her *lessons learnt* here?

NM: Mentions the collaboration between IUCN and ICOMOS, and a potential project? (Perhaps NM could expand on the potential projects here.

**2020/02**

On top of the seven points that Jon mentioned what more needs to be in place for protected area agencies take the responsibility for managing the cultural elements of the landscape seriously during the management of protected areas?

Perhaps we need a bit more on ‘good governance’ (highlighted by JL)

**This meeting:**  
**Jon Weller**  
**24 February 2020**  
**1PM GMT**

**The next meeting:**  
**'Where to now',**  
**Conclusion, and summary of the six-month dialogue series**  
**31 March 2020**  
**10PM GMT**