

Viewpoint

"Land in Jeopardy"

A special phenomenon rising from affluence, and one of great concern to conservationists, is the growing promotion of secondary residences, vacation cottages and recreation-related developments of all kinds. Now in full swing, it affects many desirable areas of the world, making little distinction between developed or developing countries, tropical or temperate climates, lowlands and mountains. Its impact is widely evident in disfigured landscapes and damage to natural resources.

Most of this badly-conceived activity passes with little public notice, although occasionally a major magazine or newspaper takes time to focus attention on the problems, and on the unscrupulous promotional activities which so often cause them.

Recently a major US newspaper published a 6-part series of articles on the scandal-tainted "development" of large tracts of land in that country.

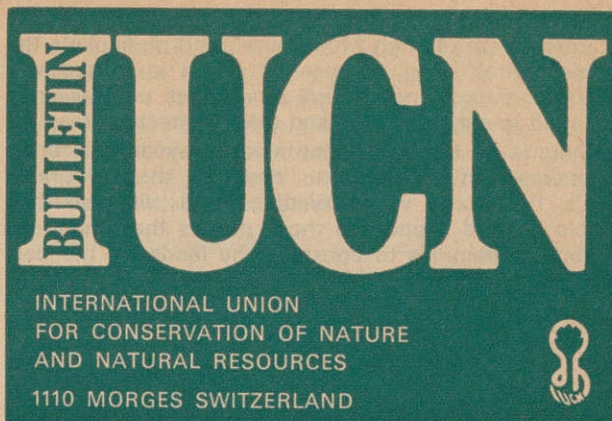
As the series points out, the desire of ordinary people to own a piece of land for a vacation or retirement home, or as an investment, is easily exploited. People who live in crowded cities, with all the attendant problems of noise, confusion, high costs and social disorder, often yearn for escape, for the peace and privacy of their own little place in the country, the woods or by some peaceful shore.

In affluent countries with large resources of unused land, such dreams have been realized by many families who have invested in legitimate and successful development projects. But the unfulfilled dreams of thousands of average people to own a bit of land all their own has provided a bonanza opportunity for exploitation by unscrupulous developers.

One method used is simple. First the developer buys a tract of unused, low priced land. He then divides the land into lots, often as small as 8 to the hectare, or even smaller, which are intended for sale to individuals as building sites at prices many times higher than the original cost. Elaborate advertising, promises of such developments as roads, water lines, sewers, community recreation facilities, and the like, annually lure thousands of naive, unsuspecting buyers to purchase lots that are unusable for their intended purpose. Far too often the bit of land turns out to be located in a swamp, a desert, or wilderness – and of course the promised improvements rarely materialize.

Problems of this kind, which are not by any means confined to the United States, are symptomatic of the almost universal drive by financial opportunists to exploit the scarcity value of habitable land and recreation resources. Thus the coastlines and scenic areas of the temperate zone, particularly in such sunny regions as Florida, California and around the Caribbean and Mediterranean seas, are under enormous pressure. Islands are special targets. Their areas are limited and therefore of greater value, and their appeal for those seeking solitude, rest or romance is substantially higher. Mountains have been turned into playlands and resorts and often irreparably scarred, while wild natural areas have lost their identity under the impact of people.

The social cost of most of this unregulated exploitation of land is high indeed, but the conservation damage is often enormous. Thousands of hectares of wetlands have been dredged and filled for subdivisions and their biological productivity and other values destroyed forever. Streams, bays and lakes have been recklessly polluted. Many beautiful natural areas rich in wildlife and scenic resources – lands that should have been preserved for the enjoyment and benefit of future generations – have been sacrificed to private financial gains. All these are genuine losses to societies as a whole in whatever countries the damage has been done.



NEW SERIES Vol. 4 No 7

JULY 1973

Published with the financial assistance of UNESCO; issued monthly

IUCN has long been concerned with problems of land use. Years ago a special committee of the Commission on Ecology was formed to look into the ecological aspects of land-use planning. That committee formed the nucleus for the present Commission on Environmental Planning, a group which has taken a leading role in calling attention to the urgent necessity for the exercise of intelligence in planning the uses men impose on the land.

In 1969 IUCN published a booklet (Supplementary Paper No. 21) under the title "Landscape Planning – A Policy for an Overcrowded World." The opening paragraph asks, and answers, the question:

"What is landscape planning? It is that continuing process which helps to make the best use for mankind of the limited area of the earth's surface while at the same time conserving its beauty and fertility.

"Its purpose is to help reconcile the needs of competing land uses and to incorporate them into a landscape within which civilizations can prosper without destroying the natural and cultural resources on which societies are founded.

"Based on an understanding of the nature and potential of landscape, it is *creative conservation*."

We commend this little booklet to all those who are involved in planning for land use, and in particular to those agencies which *should be* taking a far stronger hand in regulating the development of land resources for private business ventures.

Americans seem destined for further exploitation at the hands of hucksters selling off bits of cheap land for rich profits, and to suffer the growing mass of badly conceived subdivisions, new town locations, and resorts. So do the citizens of many other countries where inadequate regulation permits the kind of intensive development that results in ugliness, confusion and destructive abuse of the landscape and its resources. Unfortunately, as matters now stand much of the world seems to be "up for grabs" by anyone with the money and will to "develop" it.

In our view, the time is overdue for governments at all levels – aided by citizen groups – to take a long, hard, critical look at their policies covering land use.

Obviously, beneficial land developments are needed, but authorities should have the power and the wisdom to insist that professional planning takes into account the long-term ecological and social effects of land development projects. Societies can ill-afford further spoiled landscapes, over-taxed community facilities, shoddy construction and the loss of conservation values.

Certain areas of great interest, particularly coastlines, mountainsides of great beauty and others, should be closed to any of these so-called development schemes, *before* they come under pressure.

In the latter connection, IUCN is engaged with such projects as "Conservation of the Mediterranean Coastline", which we hope eventually to extend to other

important coast-lines of the world, "Islands for Science", "Conservation of High Mountains", and particularly the "Green Book", the purpose of which is to preserve valuable natural and cultural landscapes not presently included in national parks and other protected areas.

There is no doubt that the next few years will bring an increase of the effort to "develop" these desirable lands. IUCN and World Wildlife Fund will give their whole hearted support to those groups that undertake action programmes to conserve the lands for the best interests of this and of future generations.

Union Affairs

IUCN Executive Board

General arrangements for the 12th General Assembly and 13th Technical Meeting, which will be held in Zaïre in 1975, were approved by the IUCN Executive Board at its 53rd meeting, held in Morges 10-13 May.

Following a full review of the Banff General Assembly and of the suggestions and criticisms offered after that meeting, the Executive Board agreed that the complex of meetings at Zaïre should be lengthened to 10 days, including a break for an excursion. Principal emphasis will be given to the General Assembly, with more opportunities for discussion of IUCN affairs, including structure and functioning. There will be two open forums.

The Board further decided that the Technical Meeting should be scaled down. The use of panels may be omitted in favour of giving the principal speakers more time. The discussion section will be carefully structured to allow maximum audience participation. Simultaneous meetings will not be planned.

It was agreed that both pre- and post-Conference tours should be arranged including, if possible, visits in the region outside Zaïre.

The Board also agreed that the general theme should be "Conservation for Decision Makers", dealt with from the conservation point of view, and that this should be covered in a broad outline in an opening session of the Technical Meeting and thereafter in sessions devoted to specific aspects of a practical kind in limited fields.

In other non-programme decisions, the Board confirmed the constitution of the Executive Committee, which consists of the President and the five Vice-Presidents.

The Board adopted the following procedure in regard to nominations for the officers of the Union:

- (a) that approximately one year before each General Assembly the Membership of IUCN will be invited to suggest persons who might be nominated as voting members of the Executive Board, or as Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Commissions;
- (b) that this communication will include conditions relating to the appointments in question and set out the names of persons who will continue in office and those who will retire;
- (c) that, on the basis of the suggestions received, the Executive Committee and the Secretariat will work out a set of proposals which will be examined by the Executive Board and used as the basis for its nominations;
- (d) that these nominations will be circulated to the Membership three months before the General Assembly and the appointments will be made by the General Assembly in accordance with the Statutes.

This procedure is in harmony with the Statutes.

Australia Joins IUCN

Australia has notified the Union of its adherence to the IUCN Statutes, and thus becomes the 32nd State member. Earlier this year Norway announced its adherence, and Venezuela returned to State membership from January 1st.

The Board also decided that the Executive Board should, at its meeting immediately after each General Assembly, ask the outgoing members of each Commission to continue functioning *pro tem*, until the next Executive Board meeting, when the new membership will be finalized and the new members appointed.

The Board considered a wide range of matters during its two-day session, including the IUCN Programme, Commission business, Union affairs and external relations. Future Bulletins will discuss some of these matters as the programmes develop.

Executive Board approves 15 applications for membership

The Executive Board approved 15 applications for membership in the Union during its recent meeting. The new members, subject to final ratification by the next General Assembly, are listed below.

Non-governmental national organizations

Belgium	Union pour la qualité de l'environnement (Inter-environment)
Brazil	Sociedade Brasileira de Paisagismo
Canada	The Saskatchewan Natural History Society Canadian National Sportsmen's Show
Costa Rica	Fundación de Parques Nacionales S.A.
France	Ligue de Défense des Alpilles
Greece	Elliniki Etairia
USA	The American Humane Association

Governmental agencies

Canada	Canadian Forestry Service Environment Conservation Authority
Pakistan	Sind Wildlife Management Board
Sudan	Ministry of Natural Resources and Rural Development
Swaziland	Natural Resources Board
Sweden	Secretariat for International Ecology
United Kingdom	Peak Park Planning Board

Staff Notes

Three staff members complete assignments

Three members of the Secretariat's senior staff are ending their work for IUCN this summer.

Harry A. Goodwin, who has been on detail in Morges for the past two years serving as endangered species ecologist, retired on June 30 after a 32-year career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Prior to his assignment in Morges, Mr. Goodwin was Chief of the Office of Endangered Species for the Fish and Wildlife Service in Washington D.C. In Morges he took a leading part in revision of the Red Data Books and related activities, and in preparations for the Plenipotentiary Conference to Conclude an International Convention on Trade in Certain Species of Wildlife, which was successfully held in February and March

of this year. IUCN takes this opportunity to express deep appreciation to the U.S. Department of the Interior for its generosity in making Mr. Goodwin's services available to the Union.

At the end of July Samuel E. Jorgensen will complete a year of volunteer service at Morges. A retired executive of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mr. Jorgensen has served without compensation, working in particular on matters concerning wetlands, a field in which he is an authority.

Both men will return to the United States.

The third member to leave is Joseph Lucas, who will return to England after almost two years in Morges as a writer and editor, and in the last several months, as acting Executive Officer of the Survival Service Commission. Mr. Lucas, who came to IUCN after some years as editor of the International Zoo Yearbook, will engage in private writing activities but will maintain close contacts with IUCN.

Programme Activities

Meeting in Caracas to explore humid tropical forests development guidelines

IUCN is organizing an international meeting at Caracas, Venezuela, now planned for 10-12 December 1973, to consider the preparation and use of ecological guidelines for economic development in tropical forest areas of Latin America.

The meeting will bring scientists and technical experts together with representatives of government departments and international agencies concerned with economic development. They will review the best available information on ecology, land-use, and problems associated with economic development and consider how best this information can be used to formulate workable guidelines. The results will be presented in publications for use by those concerned with the planning or execution of development programmes.

Sessions will convene at the Instituto Venezolano de Investigaciones Cientificas (IVIC). The meeting will be directed by IUCN and participation will be by invitation only. Officers from government agencies dealing with agriculture, forestry and planning from Latin American countries as well as ecologists and planners from universities and elsewhere are being invited. About 80 experts are expected.

Technical meetings will be arranged in six half-day sessions. Session topics and discussion papers are planned as follows.

Session 1 – Forestry

*Natural forests, ecological and economic problems.
Tree plantations. Ecology and economics.*

Session 2 – Pastoralism

*The role of domestic livestock in the humid tropics.
Pasture development – ecology and economy.*

Session 3 – Agriculture

*Field crops. Role and limitations.
Tree crops. Role and limitations.
Agricultural chemicals. Ecological effects.*

Session 4 – Engineering

*Ecological effects of transportation development.
Ecological effects of major engineering projects.*

Session 5 – Wildlife resources

*Terrestrial wildlife in economic development.
Aquatic wildlife and fisheries.*

Session 6 – Natural areas and tourism

*National Parks and reserves.
Development of tourism.*

In advance of the meeting five background papers will be circulated. These will be, 1. *The changing nature of tropical forests since European colonization*; 2. *Shifting agriculture – its past, present and future*; 3. *Tropical soils – limits for development and guidelines for use*; 4. *Tropical climate in relation to economic development*; 5. *A review of general ecological principles relating to development in humid tropics*.

Working languages will be Spanish and English. Participants are expected to pay their own travel and accommodation expenses.

Part of the financial support for the meeting is being provided by a grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).

If Venezuela's coming presidential election falls on the days now planned for the Conference, or immediately before, the meeting will be delayed a few days.

Teaching methods handbook readied for publication

A methods handbook on environmental conservation teaching in primary and secondary schools, prepared by Professor R. N. Saveland of the University of Georgia, USA, has been published by IUCN in a first draft edition and has been circulated to consultants for comments. The Handbook is the outcome of a resolution of the First International Working Meeting on Environmental Education and the School Curriculum, held at the Foresta Institute for Ocean and Mountain Studies in the summer of 1970. It was financed by a grant from UNESCO.

New National Park for Pakistan

At the State Government's invitation, Dr. C. W. Holloway, Research and Planning Group, IUCN, spent March 1973 in the Sind Province of Pakistan where he and Khan Muhammad Khan, Deputy Conservator of Forests (Wildlife), prepared a management plan for the project Kirthar National Park. World Wildlife Fund provided a grant that enabled Dr. Holloway to participate in this project.

The park area comprises a southern extension of the Kirthar mountain range, and covers some 1,200 sq. miles. It is an arid region and the vegetation and wildlife have been depleted by over-use. Recent improvements in the area's administration have greatly reduced poaching, however, and a range management scheme is being initiated in adjacent land tracts where it is planned to provide alternative land to graziers and cultivators from within the park.

The area contains an impressive number of vertebrate species that includes the Sind wild goat *Capra hircus blythi*, leopard *Panthera pardus saxicola* and Houbara bustard *Chlamydotes undulata macqueenii*. It has sites of archaeological interest including the Ranikot fortress, which is a fortified area of some 15 sq. miles. The park is likely to sustain heavy visitor use once it is opened officially; the city of Karachi is less than 15 miles by road from the southern boundary.

The bulk of the proposed park was declared a wildlife sanctuary in October 1972; it is hoped that the area will be accorded national park status in the near future. It will be the first national park in Sind province and one of the first in Pakistan as a whole.

A meeting of East-European Committee of IUCN Commission on Education will be held 29 September to 7 October 1973 in the People's University of Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Its theme will be "Activities in the Field of Out-of-School Education Problems of Conservation of the Natural Environment".

Dr. Dusan Colic, Director of the Institute on Nature Conservation in Belgrade, is in charge of the organization, in cooperation with Dr. Szczesny.

Conferences and Meetings

Symposium on Wildlife Conservation and Utilization

From 4 to 8 June 1973, a Symposium on Wildlife Conservation and Utilization in Africa was held at the University of South Africa, Pretoria. The Symposium was sponsored by the Southern African Wildlife Management Association and attended by an estimated 600 people, mostly from Southern Africa but also from other parts of the world.

The keynote address entitled "Conservation and Utilization - toward reconciliation" was presented by Dr. R. F. Dasmann of IUCN and provided a framework for much of the discussion in which conflicting demands of conservation and utilization were examined as well as the conflict between species conservation *per se* and the conservation of total biotic communities and ecosystems.

Great progress has been made in Southern Africa over the past decade particularly in the areas of game ranching, game farming, and other forms of economically profitable use of wildlife. As a result of the renewed interest in wildlife, wild animals are being restored to private farms and ranches throughout Southern Africa. Restocking of previously depleted species on such areas as well as on national or provincial reserves has greatly enhanced the likelihood of continuing survival of once threatened species.

The papers presented at the Symposium were of a generally high quality. It is hoped that this meeting will play the role, for which it was advertised, of an Arusha Conference for Southern Africa - setting a new high level for future conservation work. The transactions will be published in the Journal of the Southern African Wildlife Management Association.

Conservation Notes

The Redwoods: a national park in continued peril

Attention of IUCN has been called by the Sierra Club to documents prepared by the United States Department of the Interior concerning the serious problems affecting the Redwood National Park in California. This park was created in 1968 after a long struggle which brought international attention and support to the cause of protecting the age-old redwood forests of California. Unfortunately, the park boundaries decided upon proved to be a compromise with the timber companies which was perilous to the resources to be protected. Particularly vulnerable was a long, narrow strip of parkland extending for seven miles along the bottom of Redwood Creek but having a breadth of only one-quarter mile from the center of the stream bed on either side. Above this parkland the upper slopes were left to the mercies of redwood logging companies noted for environmentally destructive logging practices. Current practices involve clear-cutting, hauling of logs downhill by tractors and the construction of roads and landings that in their totality lead to major soil erosion on the slopes, siltation of streams and undercutting of stream banks, as well as exposing trees adjacent to the clear-cut areas to serious loss through wind-throw.

The Redwood Creek strip of the national park includes some of the region's most spectacular redwood groves, scenic resources and important recreational potential. The existing danger is that this will be destroyed by the effects of logging around the park area. Purchase of the land needed to protect the park would involve the prohibitive cost of over 76 million dollars. (Only 92 million dollars were authorized for the purchase of the existing 58,000 acre park). Recommended by the Department of Interior study team, however, is the creation of a buffer zone to protect the park values, amounting to 10,600

acres. This zone would not be purchased in its entirety but a management easement could be obtained to put a halt to extensive clear-cutting, require the use of cable logging rather than tractor hauling of logs, and retention of the lands perpetually for commercial forest production. Special practices would be further required to protect tributary streams and unstable soils. Such a plan is considered financially feasible and within the limits of spending provided for the park.

It may seem strange that private companies should be paid to practise non-destructive logging rather than forced by law to abandon environmentally destructive activities. However, the redwood park strip may not survive another long legal struggle. IUCN expresses the hope that the necessary action will be taken by the United States Government before damage to the park becomes more severe. As the Sierra Club notes "the redwoods are falling fast".

Marine Turtles in French Guiana

The world's most important nesting beach for the leatherback turtle *Dermochelys coriacea* appears to be located in French Guiana, on the north east coast of South America, according to a recent study made by Peter C. H. Pritchard, a special investigator of the IUCN-SSC Marine Turtle Group. The leatherback is also the most abundant of the four marine turtle species which nest there. The other three, in order of abundance, are the green turtle *Chelonia mydas*, the olive ridley *Lepidochelys olivacea*, and the hawksbill *Eretmochelys imbricata*.

The turtles are now known to be migratory, the green turtles being derived from feeding grounds in Brazil and the ridleys from a wide area of northern South America, from Venezuela and Trinidad to Brazil. However, they are not presently protected by an international agreement, although they have been totally protected on the nesting grounds for several years now. Enforcement is necessarily sporadic at best, but the turtles are protected not only by the remoteness of their nesting area and the low human population density of French Guiana, but also by a cultural disinclination among the local people towards the consumption of turtle meat. The Society for the Protection of Nature in French Guiana (SEPANGUY) has produced a series of colourful posters exhorting people to protect turtles rather than kill them, and these have been posted in police stations, immigration offices, and also in the Indian villages.

Terrestrial turtles (e.g. *Geochelone carbonaria* and *denticulata* and *Rhinoclemys punctularia*) occur in French Guiana, but have no legal protection and, as in other countries of tropical America, are frequently used as food. However, they are not currently threatened with severe depletion except in the immediate vicinity of human settlements.

Commission to protect the Quetzal

The Ministry of Agriculture of Guatemala has taken steps to create a National Commission to Protect the Quetzal. The quetzal, national symbol of the country, is fast disappearing with the loss of virgin forest and the opening of hitherto untouched zones. The new Commission is made up of representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture, the University of San Carlos, the Ministries of Education, Defense and the Interior, and the Guatemalan Natural History Association.

Papua New Guinea has issued a set of stamps picturing four beautiful male birds of paradise to publicize attempts being made to conserve this unique family of birds and other wildlife of Papua New Guinea.