Canadian Inuit receive International Parks Award

Banff National Park (October 17, 1995) - The IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas today awarded the Fred Packard International Merit Award to the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada (ITC) on behalf of all Canadian Inuit for their key role in establishing national parks and protected areas within their homelands in Northern Canada.

Presenting the award, Commission Chair Adrian Phillips stated: "Through their national, regional and local organizations, Canadian Inuit have been instrumental in the establishment of a number of national parks, migratory bird sanctuaries, national wildlife areas and territorial parks. They have made an exemplary contribution to the global family of protected natural areas. The Inuit continue their stewardship through co-operative management of these areas, and they are pursuing establishment of additional conservation areas throughout the Canadian Arctic."

Mary Sillet, Vice-President of ITC, accepted the award, saying "Land is integral to the Inuit and this is demonstrated in the names that we have given to our regions. Nunavik in Northern Quebec means the mainland; Nunaput in the Mackenzie Delta means our land and Nunavut in the eastern Arctic also means our land. Inuit in the Northwest Territories, northern Quebec and Labrador have always cared for the lands upon which we depend. I am pleased that our role in the establishment of new national parks and conservation areas have received this international recognition. Protected areas are an important part of the efforts of our communities to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of the north for the benefit of future generations."

"It is significant that an indigenous nation is receiving an official acknowledgement of their contribution to environmental conservation", stressed Eduardo Fernández, IUCN programme officer for indigenous peoples' issues. "This award to the Inuit people guides us for the future: environmental conservation lies in a partnership among governments, conservation initiatives from society, and indigenous people. For this process to succeed, we need to understand the considerable value of indigenous ecological knowledge."

The Fred Packard International Merit Award, first presented by the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA) in 1980, recognizes extraordinary contributions in the service of parks and protected areas. The award was given during the North American Regional Meeting of CNPPA in Banff National Park. Over 100 park professionals from Canada, United States and Mexico have convened to prepare a regional action plan for the Commission.
CNPPA, one of six expert Commissions of IUCN, is the largest worldwide network of protected area managers and specialists. It has 830 members in over 190 countries. Its purpose is to promote the establishment and effective management of a worldwide network of terrestrial and marine protected areas.

Canada will host another international IUCN event in October 1996, when world experts, officials and organizations active in environmental issues will converge on Montreal for the IUCN World Conservation Congress.

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(For additional information, please contact Tim Lash, IUCN - Montreal. Tel. (514) 287-9704; Fax (514) 287-9057)

Founded in 1948, the World Conservation Union brings together States, government agencies and non-governmental organizations in a unique world partnership: over 800 members in some 130 countries. The IUCN mission is to influence, encourage and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature, and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.
BACKGROUNDER
Canadian Inuit Receive Fred Packard International Merit Award

In 1973, the Inuit of Canada first became directly involved in the establishment of protected areas in Northern Canada. At that time, the federal government was proposing the establishment of national park on Baffin Island, the first such designation in the homelands of the Inuit. Intervention by the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada resulted in legislation providing for the establishment of national park reserves. This allowed the creation of "interim" national parks pending the settlement of aboriginal land claims.

Since the establishment of that first national park reserve, now known as Auyuittuq, Canadian Inuit have continued to provide for protected areas in their land claims and in their planning for sustainable use and development of their traditional territories.

Inuit contributions to the establishment of parks and protected areas in Northern Canada include:
- Ivvavik National Park (the Inuvialuit of the Western Arctic)
- Aulavik National Park (the Inuvialuit of Sachs Harbour, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation and the Inuvialuit Game Council)
- Prince Leopold Island Migratory Bird Sanctuary (Inuit of Resolute Bay)
- Nirjutiqavvik National Wildlife Area (Inuit of Grise Fiord and the Baffin Region Hunters and Trappers Association)
- Ilgaliqtuq National Wildlife Area (Inuit of Clyde River and the Baffin Region Inuit Association)
- Keekerken Historic park (Inuit of Pangnirtung)
- Katannilik Territorial Park (Inuit of Lake Harbour and the Baffin Region Inuit Association)

Inuit are also involved in active discussions or negotiations concerning establishment of the following:
- Tuktu Nogait National Park (the Inuvialuit of Paulatuk, The Inuvialuit Game Council and the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation)
- an additional component of Tuktu Nogait in the vicinity of Bluenose Lake (Inuit of Coppermine and the Kitikmeot Inuit Association)
- a national park on Northern Baffin Island (Inuit of Arctic Bay and Pond inlet and the Baffin Region Inuit Association)
- establishment of Auyuittuq National Park Reserve as a national park (Inuit of Pangnirtung and Broughton Island and the Baffin Region Inuit Association)
- establishment of Ellesmere Island National Park Reserve as a national park (Inuit of Grise Fiord and Resolute Bay and the Baffin Region Association)
- a national park at Wager Bay, NWT (Inuit of Repulse Bay, Coral Harbour, Chesterfield Inlet, Rankin Inlet and Baker Lake and the Kivalliq Inuit Association)
- a national park in the Torngat Mountains of Labrador (Labrador Inuit Association)
- Arviat National Historic Site (Inuit of Arviat)
  - Piciqq National Historic Site (Inuit of Baker Lake)
  - a management plan for the Thelon Game Sanctuary (Inuit of Baker Lake and the Kivalliq Inuit Association)
  - the Pingualuit Provincial Park with the Quebec government (Inuit of Nunavik, Makivik Corporation and Kativik Regional Government)
A Proposal to Create a Temperate Grasslands Network

Participant List - CNPPA North America Regional Meeting
A Proposal To Create

A Temperate Grasslands Network

Within IUCN's Commission On National Parks And Protected Areas (cnippa)

WHY A NEW NETWORK ON TEMPERATE GRASSLANDS?

Components of the temperate grasslands biome are found in the plains of central North America; southern Brazil, Uruguay and eastern Argentina; eastern Australia; Mongolia, northern China, Kazakhstan, parts of southern Russia, and the Ukraine; with a narrow strip north of the Sahara desert in north Africa.

In the 1993 United Nations List of National Parks and Protected Areas, the analysis of coverage within protected areas of the world’s 26 biomes indicates that the temperate grasslands biome is the least protected of all. While a total of 264 protected areas comprising a total of 6,168,735 ha are reported as existing within this biome, the total level of coverage is a meagre 0.69%. Tropical grasslands and savannas, by comparison, have a much higher level of protection at 6.35% (IUCN, 1994).

This low level of coverage is relatively consistent around the globe. Temperate grasslands occur in four of the world’s eight biogeographic realms. In the Nearctic Realm, the Grasslands Province has a level of protection of 0.51%. In the Palaearctic Realm, where temperate grasslands are found in the Mongolian-Manchurian Steppe, for example, the level of protection is 0.88%, and 0.68% in the adjacent Pontian Steppe. Both the Argentinian Pampas and the Uruguan Pampas provinces in the Neotropical Realm have very low levels of protection, at 0.08% and 0.23% respectively. In Australia, protection in the Eastern Grasslands and Savannas Province exceeds the global average, but is still uncomfortably low at 2.01% (IUCN, 1994).

Threats to the temperate grasslands biome due to this low level of protection are further exacerbated by a number of management challenges. These include the ecological impacts of widespread domestic livestock grazing, the introduction of...
exotic species, fire management and, in North America at least, the continuous loss of grasslands through forest encroachment. In British Columbia, Canada, for example, approximately 30% of grasslands have been absorbed by encroaching forests (Pitt and Hooper, 1994).

Of these management challenges, the effects of livestock grazing appear to be the most pervasive. Recent research has indicated that “livestock grazing is the most widespread influence on native ecosystems of western North America”, where 70% of the 11 western states in the United States is grazed by livestock (Fleischner, 1994). In British Columbia, where most grasslands are grazed and less than 1% have protected status, “..."ancient" grasslands represent a much more endangered space...than do “ancient” or old-growth forests" (Pitt and Hooper, 1994).

An international network to link professionals and academics interested in the protection and management of temperate grasslands is proposed in order to improve the level of protection for temperate grasslands around the world, to improve the level of understanding of the problems associated with the protection of grasslands, and to provide guidance to governments and stakeholders to better integrate the protection of grasslands with strategies for sustainable development and biodiversity conservation.

WHAT WOULD THE NETWORK HOPE TO ACHIEVE?

The following are proposed as specific objectives for the network, in support of the Caracas Action Plan and the new CNPPA Strategic Plan, and as input to the development of the upcoming CNPPA action plan for North America:

• in conjunction with the World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), to review and map the extent of temperate grasslands protection throughout the biome, and to conduct a gap analysis to identify deficiencies in the system and potential new candidates for protection;

• based on the results of the gap analysis, and in consultation with members of the network, to prepare a strategy and action plan for an expanded global system of protected areas to represent the biological diversity of temperate grasslands throughout the biome;

• to address directly the question of why so little of this biome is in protected status, to develop strategies for improving the situation and for generating societal support for the protection of temperate grasslands;

• to share expertise and experience in the management of temperate grasslands, especially with respect to:

  • the impacts on grassland ecosystems from domestic livestock grazing;
  • the interaction between domestic livestock and wildlife, especially competing grazers and predators;
  • fire management;
  • forest encroachment;
WHO COULD PARTICIPATE IN THE NETWORK?

Membership in the network would be open to anyone with an interest and/or expertise in the protection and management of temperate grasslands. This would include CNPPA and non-CNPPA members alike, protected area planners, field managers, academics and researchers. Whoever could make a contribution would be most welcome.

If you are interested in contributing to such a network or have additional ideas as to how it could work and what it could accomplish, please contact:

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HOW COULD THE NETWORK FUNCTION?

It is proposed to create a network focussing on the protection and management of temperate grasslands, an informal alliance of interested individuals and agencies, similar to the CNPPA Network on Cave Protection and Management. The network would operate on a volunteer basis, and would have a convenor to coordinate work with WCMC and serve as a central point of communication for network members.

Linkages would be forged with other IUCN commissions, the Ecosystem Management and Species Survival commissions in particular, as well as other international bodies such as the World Wildlife Fund. Formal gatherings and workshops could be organized to correspond with IUCN general assemblies, congresses or CNPPA regional meetings. Mr. Bruce Amos, CNPPA Regional Vice-Chair for North America, has agreed to report on the activities of the network to CNPPA’s Steering Committee and IUCN’s Executive Committee.

- pest management (insects and exotic weeds); and
- special provisions for managing recreation use in a grasslands wilderness environment.

- to prepare a set of management guidelines for temperate grasslands considered by the network to be conducive to meeting the long term conservation requirements of grassland ecosystems; and

- to increase public awareness of the need to increase and improve protection of temperate grasslands.
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as of November 28, 1995
"IUCN is the most important conservation organization in the world today. Not one of the, but the most important. There is nothing else like it. We are the sleeping giant Burce referred to. We are known in many circles, with this phenomenal capacity that we have, particularly the capacity we have through our volunteers. IUCN may be the last best hope we have as a world if we are going to sustain life as we approach the 21st century.

If we are going to do that we are going to have to energize and honour the volunteers. It's going to require a new sense of leadership. The leadership model that I like actually comes from the Chinese philosopher, Lao-tse, who said to lead is to serve, and I think that is exactly what IUCN and its volunteer networks must do - serve the cause of conserving natural resources."

Excerpt from taped transcript of opening address by Dr. Jay Hair, President, IUCN (Address delivered on Sunday, October 15th, 1995).