LOOKING AHEAD TO CONGRESS

by STEWART BONNEY

An impressive 2,500 participants representing a total of 170 countries will, together with 15 heads of state, travel to South Africa next month to attend the 5th IUCN World Parks Congress, which is to be held in Durban between September 8 and 17.

This 10-yearly event provides the major global forum for setting the agenda for protected areas. The theme of the 2003 Congress, Benefits Beyond Boundaries, has been strongly endorsed by its patrons, former South African president and Nobel Peace Prize winner Nelson Mandela, and Her Majesty Queen Noor of Jordan.

David Sheppard, Head of IUCN Programme on Protected Areas and Secretary General of the 2003 World Parks Congress, said: “This Congress will provide the ideal opportunity to assess the achievements of protected areas policy in the last century and, more importantly, will set an agenda for these priceless areas in the 21st century. “We are committed to reaching out to all sectors involved with protected areas. The Congress will be an outstanding event which reinforces the vital role of protected areas in society, and establishes a far-sighted agenda for their protection.”

Previous Congresses — the last was held in Caracas, Venezuela in 1992 — have had a major impact in assisting national governments to create new protected areas and direct more resources towards biodiversity conservation. When asked in interview sessions at IUCN’s headquarters in Switzerland what should be the most important message conveyed by the 2003 Congress, leaders of the world’s largest independent conservation organisations expressed the following views:

Achim Steiner, Director-General of IUCN: “In less than 150 years we have created an extraordinary inter-generational gift, but there are also

---

ON OTHER PAGES . . .

AUSTRALIA
Interpreting desert landscapes 4
UK
Scotland’s next national park .... 6
USA
Buses cure parking problem .... 9
CANADA
Learning about reptiles .......... 10
SLOVENIA
New life for salt lagoons .......... 13
AUSTRALIA
Cave art discovery .............. 16
INDIA
Perils of ecotourism ............. 17
IRF
Rangers call for protection ...... 20
NEWS REVIEW
From Brazil, Kenya, Korea
and Norway .................. 21, 26
USA
The Sister Parks movement .... 22
UK
New path along ancient wall .. 24
READERS’ LETTERS ............. 27
SUBSCRIPTION FORM .......... 28
a number of challenges we must face up to. We need to view protected areas, not as something we keep human beings out of, but make human beings proud of and become responsible guardians of."

Peter Seligmann, Chairman of the Board of Conservation International: "Parks are not an option. No civilised nation exists which hasn't made a commitment to parks. We somehow need to educate the world that parks are an essential investment for strong, healthy economies and societies. If we get that across, we will have made some progress."

Mark Rose, Director of Fauna and Flora International: "Parks are there for wildlife but they are there for people as well. This Congress will benefit people, and it is going to benefit people in such a way that it will help them conserve areas which need to be conserved, and at the same time benefit them."

Claude Martin, Director-General of WWF International: "For too long the value of parks has only been considered as a cornerstone of conservation efforts. The time has come for our work on protected areas to be seen in a wider socioeconomic context. Therefore the challenge at this Congress, for all of us, is to demonstrate the links between our work on protected areas and the provision of environmental service functions, the contribution to the sustainable livelihood of people, as well as to poverty reduction strategies."

Steve McCormick, President of The Nature Conservancy: "To demonstrate how valuable — how invaluable — protected areas are in a variety of ways for human well-being and to recognise them for all the ecosystem services they provide. Parks should not be viewed as fixed boundaries; they need to be part of a mosaic of a landscape and not seen as separate fragments."

Michael Rands, Director and Chief Executive of Birdlife International: "Protected areas are important in their own right because they are very rich in biodiversity and will therefore bring benefits to future generations. But we need to get away from the idea that these are areas from which people are excluded. The only way for us to live sustainably is through a much more integrated approach to conservation."

Steve Sanderson, President and Chief Executive of the Wildlife Conservation Society: "To reiterate that protected areas are really important, even if sometimes they fall short. And however important they are, they are not enough. We should focus on the opportunities for parks in our daily lives, as a conservation stewardship by the citizens that can exist well beyond the confines of a park."

Jonathan Lash, President of the World Resources Institute: "Parks can't survive just behind walls. People who manage protected areas have to connect with one another, and strategies have to be connected with larger scale strategies of development and environmental protection."

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

The stated purpose of this year's World Parks Congress is "to demonstrate the relevance of protected areas to the broader economic, social and environmental agendas for the world in the 21st century, and to examine the challenges and opportunities facing protected areas in coming decades, by bringing together the world's foremost experts on protected areas."

The Durban Accord will be a global outreach statement from those participating in the Durban Congress to all constituencies with interest and involvement in protected areas throughout the world. It will seek to encourage a series of new dialogues and agreements in recognition of the beneficial role which protected areas provide to society.

An open consultation process on the draft texts of the Durban Accord and Action Plan was established last month and comments invited on recommendations prepared by a committee led by Bruce Amos, comprising Prof. Adrian Phillips, Marjia Zupancic-Vicar and Pedro Rosabal, with the support of IUCN's Dr Steve Edwards and Maja Zitkovic.

A number of motions to be considered at the Congress will address topics focusing on major issues of global policy for protected areas. Following any revisions arising from the consultation process preceding the conference, those motions which carry the endorsement of the relevant workshop streams or cross-cutting theme will, once moved and adopted, become Congress recommendations.

The following are extracts of a selection of the draft text motions.

- Strengthening Mountain Protected Areas as a key contribution to Sustainable Mountain Development.

Motion lead: Larry Hamilton.

Noting that mountain areas are often along international frontiers where conflict occurs, it was recommended that Congress endorse "the establishment of an adequate and representative network of mountain protected areas, with appropriate conservation linkages to adjacent landscapes, seascapes and communities, in all mountain areas of the world as a key part of mountain sustainable development."

- Financial Security for Protected Areas.

Motion lead: Carlos Quintela.

Conscious of the ever-present need to provide adequate funding to protected areas to ensure that their diversity, natural and cultural heritage objectives are met without compromise, and alarmed that protected area budgets in the early 1990s totalled only about 24% of the estimated US $17 billion required to maintain them, that Congress be asked to recommend that governments, national and international NGOs, local communities and civil society "focus on the need to increase and stabilise financial flows to protected areas and biodiversity conservation: remove policy and institutional barriers to sustainable financial solutions."

Also to "ensure that there is a proper valuation of the goods and services provided by protected areas and ensure that protected areas, surrounding communities and society in general benefit from the increasing number of opportunities to gain remuneration from ecosystem services provided by protected areas such as the provision of clean air and water, flood defence and disaster prevention, soil conservation, conservation of genetic material, recreational opportunities and carbon sequestration."

- Integrated Landscape Management to Support Protected Areas.

Motion lead: Peter Bridgewater.

Noting that while protected areas focus on biodiversity conservation, to be effective they must be managed in the context of the broader land/seascape, and recognising that managers of protected areas would more likely achieve their conservation objectives if they adopted integrated approaches which took into account ecological and social requirements outside of the protected areas, that Congress recommends governments, NGOs,
DEAR READER,
THE forthcoming World Parks Congress is of major importance to all who work in the global protected area community, and in this issue we have highlighted a number of the draft recommendations covering a range of key topical issues to be considered by delegates in Durban.

We intend to carry extensive coverage on proceedings in our November issue, and I very much look forward to meeting NPIB readers at the Congress.

NEW TITLE
To reflect the fact that our growing readership extends beyond national parks to encompass protected areas worldwide, we have been encouraged to modify our title to National Parks and Protected Areas International Bulletin. For its abbreviated title, however, we will continue to describe the magazine using the more user-friendly initials NPIB.

NEW TWO-TIER SUBSCRIPTION RATES
To assist those people who have limited budgets or who are disadvantaged by currency exchange rates, we have introduced a new two-tier subscription rate to make NPIB more affordable.

Those parks and other organisations paying for a "corporate" subscription will now receive two copies for the price of one, enabling the subscriber to give their second free copy to a colleague, or place it as a reference copy in a library or visitor centre.

Personal subscription rates are now 33% lower: for details turn to the back page.

Editor — Stewart Bonney.
stewartbonney@nationalparkinternationalbulletin.com

To the deterioration of cultural landscapes; threatens biodiversity; contributes to pollution and degradation of ecosystems; displaces agricultural land and open spaces; diminishes water and energy resources; and drives poverty deeper into local communities. That Congress recommends: "IUCN, through the WCPO Task Force for Tourism and Protected Areas, to work with key stakeholders, decision-making government departments and international agencies concerned with biological and cultural heritage policy to ensure that tourism provides financial support for protected areas; supports sustainable use of biological and cultural diversity; links practice to conventions and guidelines; assists in encouraging stewardship amongst local people; works to support local and indigenous community development and poverty alleviation."

NEW TITLE
To reflect the fact that our growing readership extends beyond national parks to encompass protected areas worldwide, we have been encouraged to modify our title to National Parks and Protected Areas International Bulletin. For its abbreviated title, however, we will continue to describe the magazine using the more user-friendly initials NPIB.

NEW TWO-TIER SUBSCRIPTION RATES
To assist those people who have limited budgets or who are disadvantaged by currency exchange rates, we have introduced a new two-tier subscription rate to make NPIB more affordable.

Those parks and other organisations paying for a "corporate" subscription will now receive two copies for the price of one, enabling the subscriber to give their second free copy to a colleague, or place it as a reference copy in a library or visitor centre.

Personal subscription rates are now 33% lower: for details turn to the back page.

Editor — Stewart Bonney.
stewartbonney@nationalparkinternationalbulletin.com

local communities and civil society “adopt and promote protected area design principles that reflect those inherent in the world network of biosphere reserves where core protected areas are surrounded by landscapes designed to enhance the conservation value of the core; and adopt and promote a policy framework on incentives that encourage involvement and ownership of local people in biodiversity stewardship.”

• A Global Network to Support the Development of Transboundary Conservation — Protected Area Initiatives.

Motion lead: Trevor Sandwith.
Noting the exponential growth in transboundary conservation initiatives worldwide resulting in more than 169 transboundary protected area complexes involving 666 protected areas in 113 countries, and acknowledging that despite considerable efforts over many years to provide guidance and support, the absence of an international forum to support and develop transboundary conservation initiatives in a co-ordinated and collaborative manner was impeding progress, that Congress recommends governments, NGOs, development agencies and specifically IUCN “support the establishment of an international forum that will act as a global network for transboundary conservation initiatives where IUCN members, CBD members, protected area managers and other audiences can collaborate, share lessons and continue the development of appropriate approaches and management; and develop with broad consultation an international enabling framework and internationally recognised designation/register of transboundary protected areas.”

• Tourism as a Tool for Conservation and Support of Protected Areas.

Motion lead: Robyn Bushell.
Noting that while tourism offers considerable potential benefits to protected areas, the ecological, social and cultural costs of tourism in and around protected areas can be considerable, and that if not appropriately planned, developed and managed, tourism contributes to the deterioration of cultural landscapes; threatens biodiversity; contributes to pollution and degradation of ecosystems; displaces agricultural land and open spaces; diminishes water and energy resources; and drives poverty deeper into local communities. That Congress recommends: "IUCN, through the WCPO Task Force for Tourism and Protected Areas, to work with key stakeholders, decision-making government departments and international agencies concerned with biological and cultural heritage policy to ensure that tourism provides financial support for protected areas; supports sustainable use of biological and cultural diversity; links practice to conventions and guidelines; assists in encouraging stewardship amongst local people; works to support local and indigenous community development and poverty alleviation.”

• “Good Governance” of Protected Areas.

Motion lead: Jim Johnston.
The degree to which protected areas meet conservation objectives, contribute to the wellbeing of society and achieve broad social, economic and environmental goals, is closely related to the quality of their governance, and acknowledging that the United Nations Secretary General has stated that “good governance is perhaps the single most important factor in eradicating poverty and promoting development”, that Congress recommends governments and civil society to “endorse the importance of governance as a key concept for protected areas and ‘good governance’ as essential for the effective management of protected areas of all types in the 21st century; and to adopt legitimacy and voice, accountability, performance, fairness and direction, as general principles of ‘good governance’.”

• Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas.

Motion co-leads: Aroha Mead and Alejandro Argumedo.
Recognising that in many cases protected areas established over lands and resources of indigenous and traditional peoples have affected their rights, interests and livelihoods, and that conflicts have emerged as a result, and acknowledging that protected area objectives should be fully compatible with and supportive of the objectives of redressing the conditions of
NEAR the Northern Territory town of Alice Springs lies the Alice Springs Desert Park — where art, science and expertise combine harmoniously with the landscape to create probably the finest interpretative activities in the world.

The park occupies some 1,300 hectares/five square miles in the foothills of the MacDonnell Ranges, of which 52 hectares/128 acres are devoted to different sorts of interpretation.

The park was created in 1997 in a bid to debunk the popular myth that deserts are devoid of life. It also encourages people to visit the many national parks that the Northern Territory and other states maintain in Australia's beautiful central deserts.

Being a ranger myself, I did not need to learn that deserts are full of life, but visiting Desert Park just after my arrival in the country's arid heart proved to be the best introduction.

I believe very much in interpretation. If we can't bring about a change in popular attitudes, we simply will not be able to maintain those pieces of nature we call protected areas for very long. True interpretation explains both connections and differences, and involves people, exposing them to new ideas, which is why I loved this park.

The exhibit area is divided into four major zones: the visitor centre, with its cinema and other facilities, and three open areas where the main desert habitats are represented.

The 3 km/two-mile meandering trail takes visitors first to the Desert Rivers habitat, then to Sand Country, and finally to a Woodland habitat.

Each habitat contains big enclosures where birds can be seen from panoramic glass windows, avoiding the need for wire to interrupt the view between the birds and the observer.

Visitors can enter some of the enclosures and walk around in them. The size and abundance of vegetation make it difficult to find some of the birds, adding to the impression of wilderness.

You know what birds are there because they appear in the signs, but the possibility of seeing some of the shy species depends on how much effort you put into the search.

Some of these birds are so colourful and bright that they break the general rule which says that bright plumage is typical of only the humid tropics.

The re-creation of some landscapes was difficult, such as the salt pan which required tons of salt.
It also takes a lot of effort to maintain the moisture in the Desert Rivers habitat, and to maintain the feeding times of some of the insectivorous birds.

Between the Sand Country and Woodland habitats is a large Nocturnal House. Near its entrance a reptile exhibition contains terrariums where visitors can see species they would be likely to miss in nature; then the further they progress into the house, the more the darkness intensifies.

The Nocturnal House has terrariums several metres long where visitors can see small nocturnal mammals which outside are threatened with extinction, including bilby, red-tailed phascogales and rufous hare wallaby.

One terrarium contains stick insects about 25 cm/10 inches long (huge!) which breed there; they are among the world’s largest insects. But, once again, a visitor passing too quickly in front of the enclosures can miss many of the sights. Sometimes it’s necessary to wait some time before an animal appears from its den.

At the exit of the nocturnal house, more terrariums with reptiles are revealed by gradually increasing light, so visitors do not emerge too suddenly into the full glare of daylight.

Visitors receive a daily programme of at least eight guided presentations which include cultural aspects of aboriginal life past and present. Some of the interpreters are aboriginal and it is very enjoyable to interact with them when they show aboriginal crafts, taste some of the bush food, explain the powers of medicinal herbs or the use of weapons.

One of the Desert Park highlights is the birds of prey presentation, performed in the Nature Theatre situated in open air in front of the MacDonnell Ranges, but with an ample roof to protect visitors from the sun.

At the announced time, ranger Jason Bell began an introductory talk about birds of prey, and after a while I became aware of a large bird soaring several hundred metres away. When it flew nearer, Jason started talking about the black-breasted buzzard. I was wondering how he could know that the buzzard would be on time to make an appearance when the bird accelerated down and flew in front of the amazed audience. It sped past twice more, while the

Above: Inside the Nocturnal House, where visitors can observe small nocturnal mammals which outside are threatened with extinction. Below: a trail leads visitors through three distinct desert habitats.

**ALICE SPRINGS DESERT PARK: FACT FILE**

are available for those who are less mobile.

At least eight guide presentations occur throughout the day at different locations, which are advertised on a daily programme distributed on arrival. Guide presentations usually last 20-30 minutes.

Allow a visiting time of anything between two hours (for a quick taste of the park) to four hours or longer for a comprehensive view of the locations.

Address: Alice Springs Desert Park, Larapinta Drive, PO Box 1046, Alice Springs. NT. 0871.

Telephone: +61 (0)8 8951 8788. Fax: +61 (0)8 8951 8720. E-mail: asdpbookings@nt.gov.au

Website: www.alicespringsdesertpark.com.au
ranger explained that this species was one of the few birds which used a tool to obtain its food. Saying that, he took an emu egg from his bag and lay it in the ground.

The buzzard approached again and landed near the egg. It selected a stone, picked the stone up in its beak, raised its head and let the stone fall on the egg, cracking the shell. Its meal was ready to be eaten.

As the buzzard flew off, Jason began to speak about the wedge-tailed eagle and, just three minutes later, one of these eagles — the biggest in Australia with a wingspan of 2.1 metres/seven feet — appeared, soaring in front of the MacDonnell Ranges.

It was soon joined by a second eagle, and the magnificent birds combined to perform an aerobatic display of pirouettes. First one and then the other passed in front of the theatre, giving the audience splendid views of them, and the best opportunity to appreciate their actual size.

While the pair of eagles remained soaring, another bird of prey entered the desert scenario before us — a brown falcon — and again we had the spectacle of a bird of prey flying free.

A film about the desert followed, ending with a view of the MacDonnell Ranges. The picture was maintained as the screen began to be raised, slowly to reveal the same view in real life visible behind a huge wall of glass.

Alice Springs Desert Park is also very prominent for its scientific work, and runs breeding programmes for several species, including one of Australia's rarest mammals, the rock rat (Antina), which has an entire population of only 50. The park has already won 11 awards, and worthy reflects the importance which Australia attaches to its protected areas.
be learnt from other countries’ experience with parks and conducted a full-scale consultation exercise to seek views from all those people who were interested.

From the outset, special efforts were made to contact the thousands of people who live in and around the mountain core to find out what they thought of the proposals. An innovative approach was taken to promoting the discussions by working in partnership with each of the community councils. Each council was given a little money and some basic training and then asked to stimulate local discussion and summarise the views they heard.

The community representatives all approached the task in a slightly different way, but one that was appropriate to their particular area. Some councils worked to involve young people through existing youth organisations or contributed to an on-line discussion forum. Others held small meetings for farmers and gamekeepers in local farmers’ houses, with discussion encouraged by a bottle of whisky. This process was judged to be a success, simultaneously gathering the information required, encouraging widespread participation and building the capacity of grass-roots local institutions. Overall, more than 3,000 people were involved in the debate and most showed general, if conditional, support for the designation.

Two issues were particularly contentious. The best location for the boundary proved to be difficult to determine and, as the proposals advanced through the various legislative stages, the line on the map moved one way then another, sometimes quite substantially. The designated park boundary is by no means popular with all interest groups, and some parties have already formed an alliance to campaign for expansion of the park boundary to include the south-western part of the mountain massif.

The debates surrounding planning powers for built development were also contentious, specifically the question of which organisation should take decisions on which issues. The final solution was for the four local authorities to administer most of the day-to-day development control matters, but for the park authority to be able to “call in” any application which looks as if it will be of greater significance to the park as a whole. The park authority will also prepare the statutory local plan(s) for the area.

THE NEW NATIONAL PARK
The result of all this work is a national park which has similarities with other protected areas, but one which has a unique combination of features too:

• The boundary of the park was drawn widely and encompasses an area of over 3,800 sq km/1,467 sq miles. Several villages and towns lie entirely within the park. Much of the land is owned privately or by non-governmental organisations (e.g. the National Trust for Scotland, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds). If the park aims are to be achieved, close partnership working between the park authority, the other public agencies, land managers and other stakeholders will be required.

• There are 25 members on the board of the national park authority. A number of innovative steps were taken to fill these places with...
people who hold an appropriate blend of skills, knowledge and experience. For example, a direct election was held for five local people to sit on the board, and encouragingly the level of participation was very good, with some wards seeing a turnout of 66%. A further 10 board members were nominated by the four participating local authorities. Overall, there is a very high degree of locally-based board members — indeed, 21 of the board members live in or very close to the park.

• Scottish national parks have a wider, more holistic set of aims than some other forms of national park. In the Cairngorms these aims reflect the role of people in managing the landscape, especially in the straths and glens (broad and narrow valleys). In some respects this attempt to bring people and nature together lies at the heart of new approaches to protected area management, as described in IUCN’s recent Management Guidelines for Category V Protected Areas (2002). There, the view is put that conservation cannot be achieved without the active involvement of the people close to the resource, and that management should be with and through local people, by and for them.

• The national park authority must draw up a national park plan and, once it has been agreed by ministers, all other public bodies have an obligation to try and ensure that it is delivered. The park plan will be the key framework for the collective delivery of the park aims. They have to be delivered collectively and in a co-ordinated way and, significantly, the legislation also stipulates that if there is conflict between the aims, greater weight must be given to conservation of the natural and cultural heritage.

• The founding legislation makes clear that the national park authority is an enabling organisation, with the duty to prepare a national park plan being a prime example of that role. The authority has a broad range of enabling rather than regulatory powers, and will fulfil its purpose by working with and through others, ensuring a more co-ordinat-ed and joined-up approach to complex issues which engage the many different interested parties.

LOOKING AHEAD

Many commentators have noted the irony in the length of time it has taken Scotland — birthplace of John Muir, the founding father of the US Park system — to get around to establishing national parks on her own soil. There can be no doubt that the model adopted in Scotland is quite different to that established in North America, but the approach used is tailored to fit the particular Scottish needs of the 21st century.

The management of this newest addition to Scotland’s family of protected areas will be eagerly watched by all those with an interest in the Cairngorms and in protected areas generally. No doubt there will be controversies ahead but the hope is that this new set of arrangements, set on a firm legislative basis and with strong political support at both national and local levels, will provide a secure foundation for the highest standards of resource management long into the future.

* FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:
Cairngorms National Park Authority
Tel: (+44) 1479 873535
www.cairngorms.co.uk
Scottish Natural Heritage
Tel: (+44) 1479 810477
www.snh.org.uk
(The website contains pages on the work undertaken by SNH to establish national parks in Scotland)
SHUTTLE BUSES RELIEVE CAR-BORNE PROBLEMS

by RON TERRY,
Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services, Zion National Park, Utah

NATIONAL parks in many countries are seeking solutions to the problems of congestion, air pollution and inadequate parking caused by the ever-increasing volume of car-borne visitors.

A classic example of such a problem arose in Zion National Park during the 1990s, where the 10 km/6.3 mile Zion Canyon Scenic Drive, offering access to many popular walking trails, began recording daily summer season figures of 15,000 visitors.

Difficulties in finding places to park along the narrow canyon drive led to complaints from visitors, and park managers — who were becoming increasingly concerned with the impact on the park’s resources — began considering a variety of alternatives. These included increased parking provision, closing the drive once all available parking space had been filled, or providing either a voluntary or a mandatory shuttle bus system.

Following consultations with the local community, it was decided that the course of action which would have least impact on resources and harmonise best with the National Park Service’s mission would be the adoption of a mandatory shuttle bus system, using propane-powered vehicles, during the busiest visitor season between April and October.

Prior to the introduction of the service which began in May 2000, a new visitor centre with extensive parking provision was built at the entrance to the scenic drive, the old Zion Lodge visitor centre being converted into a museum. A total of 14 shuttle stop passenger shelters were provided and other new facilities included a paved cycle-hiking trail, new traffic and information signs and outdoor exhibits.

The total cost of the project topped US $28 million with almost US $11 million being spent on shuttle buses, trailer units and a bus maintenance building. Funding was sourced from congressional authorisation, through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century, supported by park
All aboard: early feedback suggests that visitors are happy to leave their cars behind.

revenues, the Zion Natural History Association and the National Park Service.

A five-year contract to operate the shuttle buses was awarded to a private operator, Parks Transportation Inc; a subsidiary of McDonald Transit of Fort Worth, Texas.

With a fleet of 30 propane-powered shuttle buses and accompanying trailers which can carry a maximum of 68 passengers — including visitors in wheelchairs — the service has created jobs for 63 people and runs from the town of Springdale, where there are six pick up/drop off stops and designated parking spaces for 1,000 cars.

There are further nine shuttle stops in the park including the new visitor centre, where 400 parking spaces have been provided.

Annual operating costs of the shuttle system are estimated at US $2.5m, which equates to around US $1 per visitor.

Benefits gained include a safer and more relaxing experience for visitors, less resource damage due to the elimination of private vehicles, more natural quiet in the canyon and less impact on wildlife populations.

The shuttle system is working very well. Feedback from the vast majority of visitors has been positive, with most expressing relief that they do not have to waste time circling parking areas searching for a vacant space.

When the shuttle system was instituted, the entrance fee to the park was increased with the extra revenue being used to fund the service for which we make no direct charge on users. Visitors can ride the shuttle as many times as they want.

We do not have a formal study of the results of the system on air pollution, but the shuttles have removed 5,000 vehicles a day from the scenic drive, so there has definitely been a significant reduction in vehicle emissions.

As for other parks which face similar traffic congestion problems, each park has a different set of conditions which must be carefully considered before deciding if a shuttle system will work in their given situation. If a shuttle system is instituted, the signage and instructions for using the system are crucial to its success.

Canada

REPTILES UNDER THREAT

by DARLENE UPTON, Georgian Bay Islands National Park, and CARRIE MacKINNON, University of Guelph

GEORGIAN Bay Islands National Park, established in 1929, is representative of the Central Great Lakes – St Lawrence Precambrian, and West St Lawrence Lowlands Canadian National Park Natural Regions.

Although the Ontario park is one of Canada’s smallest national parks, it is well known for its high level of diversity of breeding amphibians and reptiles. Situated along the southeastern shore of Georgian Bay on 59 dispersed islands and shoals, the total area of the park is 12.75 sq km/five square miles with the largest island — Beausoleil — extending over 10.9 sq km/4.2 square miles.

The park is the closest park to the highest number of people in Canada — a proximity to high population centres which results in a number of stresses (roads, boats and infrastructure) which act on species migrating to and from the park during various life stages. There is also a high demand for recreation activities in the area which brings people in and which requires infrastructure to support. The number of people living in and visiting the area has required the development of partnerships and communication methods to achieve ecological management and research goals.

New federal legislation for species at risk has increased the awareness of these species in Canada. On the eastern shores of Georgian Bay there are 11 reptile species currently at risk. In this area where development pressures are strong, conservationists require sound ecological knowledge about a species so mitigations, habitat restorations and even repatriations can be considered.

A significant challenge with respect to the reptile species has been the need to educate all residents about them. The eastern massasauga rattlesnake (Sistrurus catenatus), the eastern hognosed snake (Heterodon platirhinos) and the eastern foxsnake (Elaphe gloydi) are three threatened species in the area. Fear about the venomous massasauga, and the fact that all these species look alike, have increased the human persecution of all three snakes. Addressing this issue through landowner education programmes has been as important as gaining a more thorough understanding of each species ecology.

While the park has been engaged in education efforts for many years, the increased focus on species at risk has brought other organisations to help out. Parks Canada, the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Recovery Team (www.massasauga.ca), and the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources joined together to ensure that all landowners received one consistent message from all agencies.

NPIC August 2003
The foxsnake: a communal hibernator at particular risk from development which could destroy an over-wintering site.

The creation of the Greater Georgian Bay Reptile Awareness Programme by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources as an umbrella for all messaging and landowner education efforts has been highly successful. In its third year the programme now receives support from all agencies, federal funding from the Habitat Stewardship Programme, and provincial funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, but stands on its own, independent of government. Over 30 yearly education seminars are delivered to cottage associations, real estate agents and other targeted groups. A website was created (www.gbayreptiles.com) and species observations are solicited from landowners. An annual Reptile Awareness Day to raise awareness is hosted by all partners.

The programme has funding for two more years, at the end of which it is hoped the main education goals have been reached, and will be sustained by partner agencies. Parks Canada continues to have interpretive programmes on this issue, attend special events, and deliver talks with the reptile awareness programme and its consistent messages as a key theme.

Parks Canada staff chair the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake Recovery team and participate on recovery teams for the eastern hog-nosed snake and eastern foxsnake. All recovery teams are given the task of preparing and seeing to the implementation of recovery strategies for their species. These strategies involve identification of education needs, research goals and conservation priorities. All three species have been of interest to Georgian Bay Islands National Park for years. Within the park an opportunistic mark-recapture programme has been ongoing for over 20 years. The park works with visitors to report observations of these and other species at risk.

Two research projects are underway involving the massasauga and foxsnake. A partnership between Parks Canada, Environment Canada and Brock University is looking at data for the eastern massasauga rattlesnake and conducting a population viability study. The goal is to identify the most critical

Georgian Bay Islands National Park includes 59 dispersed islands and shoals in the Great Lakes.
life-cycle stages for mortality and develop stronger tools for protection. This theoretical research does not require landowner involvement and uses data collected over many years for modelling. The second project on the eastern foxsnake has required a complex strategy for its success.

The foxsnake, a communal hibernator, is at particular risk from development that could destroy an over-wintering site (hibernaculum) and subsequently upwards of 70 adult snakes. Seven years ago a hibernaculum was identified on the private lands of an island adjacent to the park. Staff worked with the cottage association representing the landowner and a binding agreement was drawn up to protect this critical site. In return for this protection the park provides information sessions, shares data and keeps an eye on the property during the year. Although this one area is protected there remained several questions about habitat preferences, species behaviour and other potential over-wintering sites.

Staff from the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Parks Canada who were familiar with the species and the area developed a research project proposal. Together with the University of Guelph, and World Wildlife Fund’s Endangered Species Recovery Fund, joint funding applications were successful in acquiring the support to move the project forward. The selected study method was implantation of radio transmitters which would allow the daily tracking of foxsnakes, assessment of habitat preferences, and hopeful identification of previously unknown hibernation areas.

Two study areas were identified and a University of Guelph graduate student leads the research in each area. The southern study area is adjacent to Georgian Bay Islands National Park and is characterised by complex landownership. There are permanent and seasonal residents located on islands necessitating water access. The land the park owns represents only a small portion of the study area and previous studies and observations suggested that snakes would not choose the easily accessible parkland for their lifecycle phases. The development of a strategy for gaining access to private land was the first priority for the study. In the summer of 2000 the park faced a similar need when ground-truthing habitat suitability models for the eastern massasauga rattlesnake. The contact strategy developed at that time resulted in successful access to over 70 private land properties and the participation of approximately 13 landowners in the research. A similar strategy was used for the foxsnake project.

High priority areas were identified within the study region through either observation records or traditional knowledge of the residents. The park’s geographic information specialist worked with the local municipality to identify and map landowner contact information in these areas. Concurrently, the park’s outreach specialist worked with the researcher to develop an initial contact letter. The letter contained information about the study and requested residents to call if they were willing to allow researchers access to their property.

Approximately 550 landowners received these letters and over 70 telephoned or e-mailed to allow access to their land. A database was created to house this information and a large wall map was colour coded to show where access had been granted. Within the first two months 10 snakes were implanted and moving through the landscape. Since movements are unpredictable, landowners were personally contacted onsite to gain access where permission had not previously been given. To date there has only been one refusal of access to private land.

Landowner involvement increases proportionally to the length of time the implanted snake stays in their area. Two basic types of landowners have been recognised through this study: those who support research because they like the snakes and want to participate in conserving them, and those who support the research because they hope researchers will move the snakes off their land.

Both have required communication efforts but to slightly different ends. Landowners who like and care about snakes have become stronger advocates as they have learned more about their local species. They share messages with other landowners and actively search for snakes, notifying the researcher by cell phone when they find one. Landowners in the other group who would prefer the snakes to be moved off their land have required time and patience to educate and help them be more accepting. A significant improvement in attitudes has been observed with many landowners.

One tool to engage and reward landowners who report a sighting has been allowing them to name the snake. By giving the snake a name rather than a number, landowners feel a real contribution. Enthusiasm for the project has spread throughout the region and beyond the 550 mail-outs which have been done. Regular updates are provided to all partners and interested landowners and the park is currently exploring options to recognise and reward landowners who have played a key role in the project this season.

The project will be completed in the spring of 2005 when radio transmitters are removed from the study snakes. It is hoped that the study will have identified more key over-wintering areas and given a better understanding of the species habitat preferences and movement patterns. The recovery team will use this information in the development of conservation goals and strategies.

The successes seen to date dealing with species at risk on eastern Georgian Bay have been — and will continue to be — through cooperation between land management agencies and the development of relationships with the many landowners who manage the majority of land in the area.
Secovlje Salina has been a salt-making centre since the 12th century.

slovenia

NEW LIFE FOR TRADITIONAL SALT LAGOONS

by STEWART BONNEY

SALT production is one of the oldest industries known to man, and of the thousands of traditional salinas (salt lagoons) once numerous throughout the Mediterranean region, few have survived.

The salinas are important wetland sites containing a unique variety of habitats, with shallow ponds offering bird feeding areas and nesting and resting sites on dykes and islands which are safe from predators. They host a very special biodiversity due to the hypersaline character of the salt basins which are maintained at constant water levels, proving to be ecologically invaluable during dry Mediterranean summers.

Located at the southern extremity of Slovenia's short 40 km/25 mile Adriatic coastline, the Secovlje Salina near Piran, the most northerly saltworks still functioning in the Mediterranean region, has been a salt-making centre since the 12th century. Its unique petola-based process of salt production has remained unchanged throughout the centuries.

At its peak, the salina gave employment to a 1,000-strong community of salters and their families, but as competition from cheaper mined salt from north Africa and eastern Europe grew, production was reduced, investment in maintaining the salt pans halted, and in 1967 the large salt-pan complex in the southern part of the salina was abandoned.

In recognition of the area's exceptionally rich natural and cultural heritage, Seeovlje Salinas Landscape Park was designated as a regional landscape park by Piran Council in 1990, and in 1993 it was listed as Slovenia's first Ramsar wetland site. Three years later the Slovenian Government assumed responsibility for nature conservation in the area and in 2002 it was officially designated as a State Landscape Park.

Now this 8.5 sq km/3.3 sq mile protected area, which occupies the delta of Slovenia's main river estuary and has a southern perimeter that overlaps the border with Croatia, is at the centre of a ground-breaking agreement that has resulted in the state authorities handing over the park's management last month to a telecommunications company which has contracted to invest substantial sums of money for the park's protection and conservation for up to 20 years.

The reasons for implementing this sponsorship strategy were outlined by Andrej Sovinc, who, in addition to his role as co-ordinator of the European IUCN Parks For Life Programme, is also employed by the company, Mobitel, as Head of the Seeovlje Salinas Landscape Park.

He said: "This area is an extremely important landscape in terms of both cultural and natural biodiversity. It is only as a result of its being a man-made and managed ecosystem that it supports such a rich diversity of flora and fauna, and continuing human interaction is necessary to preserve this area.
"We have to maintain the salt-making process to ensure the survival of this special wildlife habitat. Without it the area would return to natural succession and would quickly become overgrown and subject to flood, which would result in biodiversity loss and habitat deterioration.

Although it has had no previous involvement with nature conservation, Mobitel has agreed to commit a lot of money to this project. It is the first time that a commercial business has invested in a protected area in Slovenia.

Over the last 30 years there has been very little investment in the salina infrastructure and the company has undertaken to invest money in the park for at least some years. At that point they have the right to continue or withdraw, depending on an evaluation of progress made in a number of areas including income earned from tourism and salt production.

Following the restoration of a number of salt-making pans, a total of 18 men were employed in 2002, producing 100 tons of salt. This year a further 12 young unemployed men have been recruited and a new production target of 1,500 tons is confidently expected to be met.

As a result, one of the many challenges facing the new management team, led by Alojz Jurjec, is the task of finding a market for the salina’s growing salt harvest.

“Our goal” said Andrej Sovinc, “is both to protect nature and provide job opportunities, particularly for young local people. Salt-making is part of their cultural heritage and while our salters probably could earn more money working in the tourism industry, they are very enthusiastic and willing to work hard and for long hours here to build for the future and help the park survive.”

Alojz Jurjec said: “The revival of traditional salt-making here has created a lot of interest in the community and the media, but now we have to find the right niche markets for the salt being produced. We have applied for a geographical trademark label to encourage Slovenian hotels and restaurants and tourists to ‘buy local’.

“As our salt is produced in a traditional and labour-intensive way, it is more expensive than imported salt, so we have to convince people that it is worth the extra cost because it is sustainably produced, has a snow-white colour because it is free of impurities or additives, and that it tastes good and is excellent to use in cooking.”

A further management challenge to be tackled involves the several hundred abandoned and derelict two-storey, stone-built houses constructed around the saltpans in the 18th century to provide living accommodation for the salters and their families.

To date, two have been restored to house museums on salt-making and the area’s natural history and a third now provides hostel accommodation, but the question of what to do with the remainder is not straightforward.

Andrej said: “This is a big conservation problem. We would like to restore more of these buildings but that would involve major expenditure. To try to preserve them as ruins would also be very expensive, and as only one house still has its roof intact the risk of further structural collapse would remain.

“One possible long-term solution would be to allow people to buy and renovate these properties, but first we need to educate people to raise awareness about the special importance of the area, which would mean that anyone living there would have no car access or satellite TV dishes.”

INFRASTRUCTURE

A vital element in the protection of the park is the ongoing restoration of its infrastructure. European funding has been given for the maintenance of some embankments and dykes and for the renewal of a short section of the breakwater which protects this low-lying wetland from stormy seas, but money is urgently needed to upgrade a further 4.5 km/2.8 miles of this sea wall.

Another high priority is the provision of suitable access and facilities for visitors. A nature shop offering salt products and local arts and crafts is already open for business, a new multi-media visitor centre housed in a renovated saltworks building is set to open next spring and there are plans to create a new footpath and cycle route around the park perimeter.

“We need to earn money through nature-oriented tourism to spend on protecting the park,” Andrej explained, “but we also believe it is important to control visitor numbers. The park has about 20,000 visitors a year, but these are largely concentrated into the summer tourist season and we have to find a way to spread the visitor load more evenly throughout the year.

“We have quite ambitious plans because we know we will have to demonstrate to our sponsor that the park is achieving something positive while being sensitive to the views of the local community. With that in mind we have adopted a collaborative management approach which very much involves local people, NGOs such as birdwatching groups, and research institutions.
Above: Andrej Sovine, in charge of Seeovlje Salinas Landscape Park
Below: these two 18th century houses have been restored to house museums of salt-making and natural history.

"On occasions, however, we have to take measures which may at first be unpopular. Until recently people have been able to bring their cars into the park without charge but now, in order to manage visitor flow and earn income for road maintenance, we have introduced a small entrance charge and parking fee. In time we hope to provide an electric-powered shuttle bus to further reduce traffic flow.

"Another aim is to lower the number of coaches which bring the majority of visitors to the park, in order to reduce congestion and air pollution. We are hoping to interest local boat owners in operating a ferry service to bring visitors directly to the park by sea from the main holiday resorts of Piran and Portoroz."

MAKING SALT
The annual salt-making cycle begins in April when black mud containing beneficial mineral properties is spread in a thin layer over individual salt pans. Micro-organisms and algae are attracted to settle on this smooth surface and after three weeks, when a 1 cm/half-inch thick crust (petola) of micro-sediments and algae has formed, the salt-making process can begin. Every day fresh saltwater is fed into the pans, then drained off using hand-operated wooden sluices.

By late May, when there is a sufficiently high salinity concentration, the saltwater is left to evaporate, with lengthy periods of sunshine helping to accelerate the formation of salt crystals. During these busy summer months the salters frequently work up to 14 hours a day and when storms are forecast, and the concentrated saltwater has to be drained into storage reservoirs to prevent dilution, they may have to work through the night too.

A SAFE SANCTUARY
The combination of micro-climatic conditions found at Secovlje, and the fact that the shallow salt water in the southern part of the park which forms its core nature conservation zone does not freeze in winter, attracts large numbers of migrating waders and has made it one of the most important bird breeding sites in Slovenia.

Of the 270 bird species observed at this Ramsar site, 90 breed in and around the park, of which 25 are strictly salina breeding species. Among these are between 35 and 50 pairs of Kentish plover; 60 pairs of common tern; 15 pairs of little tern and a colony of black-winged stilt. The first breeding pair of this rare passage bird were observed in the park in 1990 and this year their numbers have increased to 60 breeding pairs.

Other notable passage birds that attract visiting birdwatchers include great white and little white egrets, avocet, various duck species (including wigeon, teal and mergansers), divers, grebes and many songbirds. 100 breeding pairs of yellow-legged gulls, not found breeding in any other part of Slovenia, find the shallow water in the old salinas a safe haven during their moulting phase, while the pollution risk to salt-making activities posed by the regular arrival in late summer of up to 15,000 other gulls has been overcome by setting aside an area of the abandoned salt-pans where they are now allowed to occupy.

The park's only unresolved bird-related problem is the fact that its southern boundary falls within a strip of land Croatian authorities claim to be under their jurisdiction. Although all hunting is banned within the park, winter bird shooting takes place in this disputed territory.

Accepting that this is an obstacle requiring time and patience to overcome, Andrej said: "We are trying to establish contacts with the Croatian authorities and hope one day we can set up a joint management regime. The future of transfrontier protected areas lies in co-operation from both sides for the benefits of nature and people."
Wollemi National Park is about 120 km/75 miles to the north-west of Sydney; just over an hour's drive. It is an area of protected wilderness in New South Wales covering about 500,000 hectares/1,930 sq miles and part of the recently-declared Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

Despite its proximity to the largest city in Australia, to universities and research institutes — not to mention hordes of visitors — the remote gorges and forests of Wollemi are still revealing natural and cultural heritage treasures of national, and even global significance.

In 1994, at the bottom of a 600 metre/1,970 feet deep gorge, a park ranger discovered a species of tree thought extinct for over 170 million years — the Wollemi pine. These were a remnant, a true living fossil, from the time of the dinosaurs known previously only from the fossil record. The exact location of the gorge remains a secret.

In June this year anthropologists from the Australian Museum announced what has been described as the most significant aboriginal rock art find in half a century. In 1995, in a remote location in the park, walkers came across a cave — measuring 12 metres/39 feet long by six metres/19 feet deep and nearly two metres/six feet high — adorned with a startling array of 200 aboriginal painted images. They alerted the museum on returning to Sydney, but not until earlier this year was an expedition able to confirm the find. A combination of droughts, bushfire risk and the rugged terrain conspired against the scientific team reaching the cave on three previous attempts.

Dr Paul Tacon, anthropologist at the museum, said the art dated back to around 4,000 years and "represents the culture and art of about 160 generations of aborigines". He described the paintings of animals, godlike composite figures and hunting scenes as "in pristine condition" and the cave "like a place that time forgot". As with the location of the prehistoric pine trees, the whereabouts of the site will remain undisclosed.

The paintings represent an exciting opportunity for anthropologists to gain an insight into the thoughts and lives of the indigenous Australian people of the area. It is thought the cave was a meeting place or a spiritually significant transient point for many tribes and is an important cultural discovery.

The find may prove, however, to be even more significant outside the worlds of archaeology and anthropology. The park is being lauded by environmentalists and politicians alike as an advert for why we should save our wild places. Speaking to the NSW parliament, Premier Bob Carr said: "It is eerie, exciting, this contact with a very old Australia, with the aboriginal people who have been expressing their spiritual views in this remote rock shelter deep in the wilderness for so long." He added that when the national park was set aside in 1979: "there was no suggestion of the Wollemi pine, no suggestion of rock art finds such as this. When you save wild places you never know what you're going to find. This is a big, big advertisement for national parks."
IT'S like a wave sweeping through wild and natural India, capitalising on the diversity and beauty of this country's rich and varied natural heritage.

It does not matter that our forests, grasslands, wetlands and rivers are the very basis of our life systems. Ecosystem services, water and clean air don't count. The payment has to be made in hard cash — better still if it's foreign exchange — and ecotourism seems to be the answer everyone has found.

The conditions are right, the atmosphere is right and so is the jargon. If it's ecotourism, anything goes. Literally. It's not what ecotourism is, or how it is defined. It is all about making use of the right terminology.

Across the length and breadth of this country, from Maharashtra to West Bengal, from Kerala to Uttaranchal, the ecotourism juggernaut is on the roll, particularly in those areas that are being protected and conserved for wildlife.

Ecotourism in protected areas and territorial forest divisions is one of the 15 thrust areas identified by the Ministry of Environment & Forests (MoEF) of the Government of India.

For the last few years I have been putting together and editing a small circulation, bi-monthly newsletter called the Protected Area Update. It carries news and information on wildlife sanctuaries and national parks from across the country, giving a good sense of what is happening in and what is happening to the exclusive four per cent of our landmass that we have set aside as protected areas. One of the most significant developments one sees over the last couple of years is the coming in, or rather bringing in of tourism, particularly under the banner of ecotourism.

It is the magnitude of this development, the universality of its acceptance and the overarching use of the term that is overwhelming. Everybody now is into ecotourism, be it State Forest Departments, State Tourism Development Corporations, State Forest Development Corporations, State Industrial Development Corporations, tour operators, the hospitality industry, big and bigger business houses, NGOs, local communities, foreign consultants, research and academic institutions; everybody is in the fray. Everybody seems to believe that ecotourism is a magic wand which will help get that piece of cake.

A very relevant articulation of this is seen in the recent draft paper on 'Biodiversity and Tourism' prepared by the Bangalore-based group Equations, which works on issues of tourism. Prepared as part of the ongoing National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP), the paper says: "The recent tendency to qualify tourism in ecologically sensitive areas, like the forests and the coast, as 'ecotourism' or 'nature tourism' is a terminology which is applied for the convenience of tourism service providers. The very reason why the tourism industry opted for this terminology was because wherever tourism is practised it has proven to be detrimental to the environment and the social fabric of local communities".

So, rather than changing what you are doing, the solution to the problem has been to simply change what you call it. Not tourism, but ecotourism!

Anything and everything is now being pushed through under this banner, and here's a sampling. In Andhra Pradesh the major players for ecotourism development are going to be the AP Tourism Development Corporation and the AP Forest Development Corporation. The Forest Corporation has been designated as the nodal agency for the implementation of tourism projects in 12 sanctuaries and three zoological parks in the state.

Last year, ironically, key wildlife posts in the state fell vacant and some protected areas were left headless because senior officers were transferred to the Forest Corporation for ecotourism projects. In Karnataka, a night safari project with a 300-room luxury 'international resort' in tow is being planned in the Bannerghatta National Park with the help of the Singapore Zoological Gardens. Funds for the wildlife wing of the Forest Department or for proper management of the park may be difficult to come by but the State Tourism Minister has no problem financing state participation in the project.

In Kerala, the Forest and Tourism Departments have just initiated a process by which all the 12 wildlife sanctuaries in the state will be opened for tourism. The Kerala Forest Research Institute (KFRI) meanwhile has initiated a World Bank-funded study aimed at selectively opening some wildlife areas that include the Eravikulam National Park and the Parambikulam and Neyyar Wildlife Sanctuaries.

In Maharashtra, the Forest Department has initiated a massive scheme for the promotion of ecotourism in forests across the state, and all its divisions have been issued instructions to identify tourist spots for the purpose.

In West Bengal, the Sahara group has proposed a mammoth project to develop ecotourism in the mangroves of the Sunderbans, with the state government slated to take up token equity participation through the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation. This will be five-star ecotourism which will include catamarans, luxury launches, houseboats, helicopters and even an exclusive jetty on the Hooghly in Calcutta for the esteemed ecotourists.

In the Andamans, the Forest Corporation, which has been asked by the Supreme Court to shut down, is trying hard to reinvent itself through the ecotourism
route. For more than three decades the Corporation did nothing but cut trees in the islands. Now suddenly, almost overnight, it has developed the skill and the expertise to start and sustain an ecotourism operation here! Forest Corporations across the country were created with the mandate of cutting forests and making timber available. Surprisingly now they all have the expertise for ecotourism as well.

The issue in the Nanda Devi National Park in Uttarakhand underlines another critical issue of our PA system. For almost two decades the park had been completely closed to any human intervention and activity on the grounds that it needed rest. Then suddenly, about a year ago, a cash-strapped (at least that's what they claim) state of Uttarakhand realised that money could be made from opening it up for tourism and mountaineering. It was made clear, however, that though tourism would be allowed, the ban on human activities which includes use of resources and grazing of livestock would remain. The State Forest Minister even said that the locals would be allowed to act as porters and guides when tourism starts, as if a big favour that the locals would be allowed to have.

Surprisingly now they all have the expertise for ecotourism as well.

The State Forest Minister even said that while only a little more than four per cent of the country has been set aside for wildlife as protected areas, this very land is home to thousands of tribal and rural communities who depend on them for their survival needs. At a conservative estimate anywhere between three and five million people live inside these protected areas, and several millions more around them. Many generations of these people have depended on these lands and these resources and they really have nowhere else to go. Wildlife conservation and protection policy in this country does not allow people to access these resources, even for their "bona fide" survival needs. Tourism, meanwhile, has managed to become a holy cow which can be let in anywhere.

In this (almost) mad rush to generate funds, we seem to neglect the fact that tourism can have a very serious and adverse impact on these areas. More importantly, we seem to have forgotten the very basic purpose of the creation of the protected area network of the country. It has to be conservation, not tourism promotion. It has to be primarily used to ensure the livelihood securities of the local communities and the environmental security of the country, not just as a cash cow which benefits the fortunate few.

The recent National Wildlife Action Plan (NWAP), too, clearly says that "tourism demands must be subservient to and in consonance with conservation interests of PAs and wildlife", that "maximisation of income must never become the main goal of tourism", and that "ecotourism must primarily involve and benefit local communities".

There certainly are examples where ecotourism is being attempted in ways that are both socially and ecologically sensitive. Attempts are also being made so that local communities can be involved in this process and to build their capacities to take responsibility. Systems and institutions are being created and efforts are being made. These, however, are more in the nature of exceptions, not the rule. Looking at many of the developments and proposals across the country it is difficult to feel confident that the ecotourism parameters will be met, or even attempted.

Meanwhile, there seems to be no stopping this juggernaut that has started to roll.

* The author is a member of the environmental action group, Kalpvriksh, and edits the group's Protected Area Update.

e-mail: kvrish@vsnl.com

UTTARANCHAL. A 9 km/five mile-long area in the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve is to be reopened for ecotourism. Four sites have been earmarked for "eco-hut" construction to provide overnight accommodation for tourists. The reserve was closed to visitors in 1982 when environmentalists expressed concern that the area's fragile ecology was being destroyed.

KARNATAKA. Environmental groups have expressed concern over the state government's plans to create a network of roads through parts of the Kudremukh National Park. Wildlife First and other NGOs are calling for the park to be declared India's first roadless wilderness area to protect grassland, rainforest and aquatic ecosystems.

Naturalists have also raised concerns about a proposed state government-financed tourism development in the village of Kokrebellur, where community efforts to conserve and protect nesting colonies of painted storks and pelicans have been highly praised. It is feared that the project, which will involve the construction of approach roads, an information centre and tourist facilities, would have a major adverse impact on the area's wildlife.

KERALA. Construction work is reported to have started on a luxury hotel development on Pathiramanal Island in the Vembanad Lake, one of only two Ramsar-listed sites in Kerala State. The 68 hectare/168 acre island is an important roosting place for cormorants, herons, bitterns and egrets and a favoured breeding ground of the Indian otter. A move by state authorities to hand over the island to a joint venture company formed by the Kerala Tourism Development Corporation and the Oberoi Hotels Group in 2000 was halted by the Kerala High Court following objections from conservationists, but this order was recently rescinded.

WEST BENGAL. The state government's Forest and Tourism departments are set to begin operating wildlife safaris in the Jaldhapara Wildlife Sanctuary later this year. Three-day tourist packages will include elephant rides, a vehicle safari and nature trails.

* Extracts of reports appearing in Protected Area Update, No.43
LOOKING AHEAD TO CONGRESS

(from Page Three)

marginalisation and deprivation that often affect indigenous communities; that Congress recommends governments, inter-governmental organisations, NGOs, local communities and civil society to: "Ensure that further work towards building comprehensive protected area systems takes full account of the rights, interests and aspirations of indigenous peoples, as well as of their desire to have their lands, territories and resources secured and protected for their own social and cultural survival." Also that they "adopt and promote policies and incentives to encourage effective involvement of indigenous peoples in decision-making and management of existing protected areas that overlap with their traditional lands and resources".

THE HOST COUNTRY

THE World Parks Congress is being held in Africa for the first time, and the protected areas of the host country, South Africa, have undergone a period of major change and adaptation following the country’s first democratic elections in 1994.

Since that year, the South African national park system has experienced unprecedented growth and expansion. Provincial protected areas in key biodiversity hotspots have been strengthened: five major transfrontier protected areas — involving Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and South Africa — are being actively developed, and two more are under consideration.

In recent years the focus of protected area expenditure by the South African national government has moved away from activities which are primarily related to protected area management towards the dual aim of alleviating poverty and involving disadvantaged people in conservation-related activities.

Conservation agencies are being funded to employ people on a wide scale to remove alien invasive plants, build infrastructure, and undertake land rehabilitation projects.

To meet the costs of developing and managing protected areas, the country’s conservation agencies are being encouraged to develop independence from government, and to explore alternative means of funding such as private public partnerships in ecotourism, and the sustainable use of resources from protected areas.

The venue for the Congress will be the Durban International Convention Centre in the centre of South Africa’s third largest city.

Before the final two day sessions of the Congress, participants will have the opportunity to take part in one of four field trips.

SACRED NATIONAL SITES

TRADITIONAL societies throughout the world have established sacred natural places and protected them from destruction from time immemorial. These true "protected areas" however are often not recognised and not protected under official conservation systems and are currently under threat in many places.

The need for action will be highlighted when 1992 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Rigoberta Menchu Tum, will speak on "Protected Areas and Indigenous Peoples: spiritual values of protected areas and partnerships for a sustainable future" at the opening ceremony of the World Parks Congress. A Mayan indigenous leader from Guatemala, she is the official spokesperson for the United Nations International Decade of Indigenous Peoples (1994-2003).

The Congress workshop "Building Cultural Support for Protected Areas" will discuss sacredness and protected areas with a particular focus on the vital role which sacred natural sites of indigenous and traditional peoples have for the vitality and survival of their cultures and for the contribution they make to biodiversity conservation.

In Guatemala, studies have shown that the best preserved forests are in the ancestral lands of the Mayan people, where there is a strong connection between spirituality, traditional institutions and communal forest management.

NEW AFRICAN ‘ROAD MAP’

A REVISED African Convention on the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources was approved by Heads of State attending the Assembly of the African Union in Maputo, Mozambique, last month.

This landmark treaty revises the 1968 African Convention by bringing it up to date with the latest developments in international law and the move towards sustainable development. It commits governments in particular to improving soil conservation and introducing sustainable farming practices at a time when desertification threatens more than one third of the continent’s land area.

Water resources are to be managed collaboratively by nations in the case of transboundary resources and ecosystems and will take into account ecological processes such as preventing excessive abstractions to the benefit of downstream communities and states.

The revised treaty, which will come into force once 15 African states have ratified it, also incorporates the IUCN Protected Areas Management Category system in its totality.

David Sheppard, Head of the IUCN Programme on Protected Areas and Secretary General of the 5th World Parks Congress, said: "The adoption of the new African Convention reflects IUCN’s vision for protected areas. The upcoming Congress will be a platform to put the Convention in the limelight and promote its ratification."

YOUTH VISION

TO help shape a youth vision for protected areas in the 21st century, students at Yale University’s School of Forestry and Environmental Studies recently sent a worldwide survey to conservationists under the age of 35 who had applied to attend the World Parks Congress.

Ideas and recommendations which emerged from this process will be distributed at the Congress and used as part of a scheduled discussion session on the visions of young professionals for protected areas of the future. The students, 12 of whom will be attending the Congress, hope that their findings will be incorporated in the Durban Accord and Action Plan.
RANGERS in protected areas across the world are calling for support from their governments to stop the pattern of violent attacks on colleagues by gangs of criminals.

In a paper to be presented at the World Parks Congress in Durban, Tim Snow of the Game Rangers Association of Africa, who is African Representative on the International Ranger Federation's Executive Council, highlighted the Federation's concern that the level of violence be clearly understood in order for effective and lasting solutions to be put into practice.

"Many rangers have been killed in the line of duty," he said. "They often have to face danger from the very animals they strive to protect, or because of the extreme conditions in which they work; especially in Africa and Asia. But the most dangerous adversary they face is the armed poacher, and this is a cause of concern because of the rapid escalation of this threat."

He drew attention to a recent IRF survey which focused on cases in 17 countries from 1998 to February 2003, but in which some previous cases were also mentioned.

Many forms of violence were reported, so to avoid misinterpretations only physical attacks — or attempts to attack — rangers, and deliberate damage to property and equipment were considered. The figures revealed a total of 31 rangers killed across six continents, and a further 32 injured.

The worst case occurred in June 2002 at Murchison Falls National Park in Uganda, when rebel soldiers killed seven rangers. Other countries in which rangers have been murdered since 1998 have included Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Portugal and South Africa. Attackers have ranged from off-road quad bikers and fishermen to bands of poachers, hunters and rebels.

Tim Snow said: "Despite the incompleteness of the survey, it is absolutely clear that rangers were killed in South America, North America, Europe and Africa, so casualties happen in countries of very different cultures, economies and protected area development."

"At the Fourth World Congress of the IRF in Australia in March, more violence and another attack was reported. Ironically, a memorial was dedicated at Wilsons Promontory National Park during this congress, to rangers who have lost their lives in the line of duty."

Mr Snow stated: "In the United States, it has been reported that attacks and threats to rangers increased from 10 to 104 cases (a 940% increase) in the period 2000-2. In the US National Parks Service rangers were the most assaulted of all federal law enforcement officers, according to the Department of Justice. US rangers' spokesman Randall Kendrick said: "The reason is that the National Parks Service allows amateurs to manage the law enforcement programme."

While there was a trend in all US protected areas of an increase in the number of visitors, it seemed that some parks would have less rangers than in the past, lack reliable radio communications and suffer from lack of management leadership.

Said Tim Snow: "The sources of violence are so different and diverse that it would be almost impossible to stop it. But common sense says that at least the probability of new cases would be reduced if all rangers could perform their activities being well trained in tactics, work with a companion, have good communications and be armed."

"It's clear that the possession of a weapon is not always a solution, because many of the rangers killed were armed at the time of their death. In one case, the ranger was killed with his own sidearm. In another, a ranger was shot despite wearing a bullet-proof vest and having a back-up."

The Game Rangers Association of Africa suggested at the IRF Congress that the solution lay with good governance at all levels of government.

Adds Mr Snow: "We urge employers to hire the appropriate number of rangers for every protected area, and to provide adequate equipment, training and motivation. In many cases good equipment and training goes a long way towards motivated staff."

"Many rangers have probably died while working in quite good conditions, but without proper equipment and support, or without adequate communication and back-up. Working in solitude, and without the possibility to respond to a gunshot or an armed attacker, are factors which count heavily against the ranger."

"Rangers also appeal for justice, because if the attackers are not properly punished the cycle of violence will be repeated. If rangers' working conditions are not improved, many more will be attacked and killed. A ranger's job is dangerous, and too many employers do not recognise this."

"Life cannot be bought again. Rangers deserve far better support than they receive."
ENDangered SPECIES LIST GROWS LONGER

A NEW endangered species assessment listing 395 animals as endangered to some degree has been released by the Brazilian government.

The last published assessment in 1989 listed 219 endangered species, of which the black caiman, wild cat and harpy eagle have been removed from the new list as their populations have recovered.

Species not considered at risk 14 years ago but which are now threatened include primates, many species of butterflies, insects, spiders and snakes. The new list records 160 birds, 69 mammals, 34 invertebrates, 20 reptiles and 16 amphibians as either endangered, threatened, at risk of extinction or already extinct.

Until further government studies are carried out, aquatic species are not included in the list, although it is thought some 166 fish and freshwater and marine invertebrates will eventually be listed.

Most of the endangered species are found in the more economically developed southern and southeastern regions of the country. The most threatened region is the Mata Atlantica, a tropical forest on Brazil's Atlantic coast which now covers only 7% of its original territory.

* A WWF Brazil video about an agro-forestry project involving landless workers in the buffer zone of the Una Biological Reserve, an Atlantic Forest remnant in Bahia, has won an international environmental film award.

Helena Maltez of WWF Brazil said: "The message of the film is that the Atlantic Forest conservation must take into account the life quality of those living in the biome". The project has involved the reintroduction of a traditional cocoa growing technique alongside the Atlantic Forest trees.

* 251 hectares/620 acres of land in one of the 15 highest priority Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the Atlantic Forest region has been jointly purchased by Birdlife International and a local NGO, Instituto de Estudos Socio-ambientais do Sul da Bahia.

World Birdwatch magazine reported that the land, in the Serra das Lontras mountains, is home to nine globally threatened bird species, two of them only recently described to science, the pin-legged graveteiro, and the Bahia tyrannulet.

In another initiative, the Birdlife Brazil programme is assisting Brazil's Federal Environment Agency (IBAMA) with a proposal to extend the boundaries of the 25,000 hectare/96 sq mile Saint Hilaire/Lange National Park in Parana state.

The new area to be protected, which contains mangroves, lowland forests and freshwater swamps, is home to two of the country's rarest endemic birds, the critically endangered marsh antwren and Kaempfer's tody-tyrant.

Neither species is currently protected in any federal conservation unit and some of their largest remaining habitats exist in this area, which is threatened by urban and tourist development.

PUBLIC BACKS CONSERVATION

A WWF-commissioned opinion survey carried out in Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Greece, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Turkey and the UK has shown there is strong social and cultural support for preserving Europe's natural heritage. 93% of respondents said the conservation of forests was important and 80% said they would welcome more protected forest areas in their country.

A vast majority of respondents said they visited protected forests for recreational purposes and were opposed to activities such as road building, infrastructure developments, hunting and logging which threatened the quality of these areas.
USA

SISTER PARKS CONNECT PEOPLE ACROSS BOUNDARIES

by JONATHAN PUTNAM, U.S. National Park Service, Office of International Affairs

IT is now widely accepted that most national parks and other protected areas are simply too small to fulfil their mission of preserving natural and cultural resources on their own.

Park managers know that to fulfil their mandate, they cannot manage a protected area as an isolated wild “island” surrounded by a sea of civilisation, but rather must seek opportunities to partner neighbouring land owners and the local community.

In a globalising world, this concept of connectivity can (and should) be taken one step further: national parks and other protected areas around the world are all ultimately linked together by a variety of natural and cultural phenomena. Migratory species such as birds, bats, butterflies, sea turtles, whales and other marine life which breed in parks in North America and Europe migrate through and spend the northern hemisphere winter in protected areas throughout Central and South America, Africa and Asia.

Air pollution created in one country causes environmental damage to parks in other countries hundreds and even thousands of miles away. Non-native invasive species (brought either intentionally or by accident from other parts of the world) wreak havoc on native flora and fauna. Diseases are transported around the world in a matter of hours.

Culture also connects parks around the globe. Many of the parks of the U.S. National Park System, for example, preserve and interpret important aspects of the cultural heritage of the various peoples who settled the United States from other parts of the world — Europeans, Africans and Asians in particular.

The exchange of ideas and experience among park managers can stimulate innovations in all aspects of park management. The U.S. National Park Service (NPS) has learned much by interacting with park agencies in other countries. Even that icon of the American national parks — the ranger naturalist or interpreter — was based on the Alpine guides of the Swiss National Park.

The NPS has also gained much knowledge on such wide-ranging topics as large mammal handling, bioprospecting, biodiversity inventories, invasive species management, and the Spanish missions of the southwest United States by working with international partners. Likewise, the NPS has been instrumental in the development of numerous park systems in dozens of countries.

A particularly useful way to exchange ideas and experience is to link individual parks with shared or similar resource concerns and issues. An example of this approach is the NPS “Sister Parks” initiative, in which U.S. national parks have partnered with parks around the world.

The Sister Parks initiative is decentralised and, while the NPS Office of International Affairs (OIA) will help facilitate these relationships when requested, the exact nature and extent of a particular Sister Parks relationship is up to the individual parks involved. This is critical since ultimately the success of the relationship will depend on the enthusiasm and commitment of the individual park managers.

There are currently over 20 NPS sites in active relationships with parks in other countries. Many of these are located along the U.S.-Mexican and U.S.-Canadian borders, where international co-operation is particularly important. For example, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument in southern Arizona has a successful relationship with the Pinacate and Alto de Golfo Biosphere Reserves in Mexico. The three protected areas co-operate in monitoring shared species, such as the Sonoran pronghorn, bats and reptiles, as well as monitoring joint air quality.

Just slightly further east, in the “sky islands” of southeastern Arizona and northern Sonora, the three NPS sites of Chiricahua National Monument, Fort Bowie National Historic Site and Coronado National Memorial work closely with Mexico’s Ajos-Bavispe Biosphere Reserve. These parks collaborate in variety of activities, including bird monitoring, research into the effects of different fire management practices, and training in

Glacier Waterton International Peace Park has linked Sister Parks in Canada and the USA since 1932.
search and rescue and environmental education techniques, among others.

Along the Rio Grande river in southwest Texas and northern Chihuahua and Coahuila states, Big Bend National Park has been working collaboratively with the Maderas del Carmen and Cañon de Santa Elena Flora and Fauna Protection Areas. The three protected areas co-operate in species monitoring, water quality monitoring, invasive species removal, and training in fire fighting and management.

On the U.S.-Canadian border, Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in Michigan and Pukaskwa National Park in Ontario, on opposite shores of Lake Superior, have co-operated since 1988 on a variety of visitor and ecosystem management issues. Since 1980 Perry’s Victory & International Peace Memorial, Ohio, and Fort Malden National Historical Park in Amherstburg, Ontario, have conducted an annual exchange of interpretive personnel. The objective is to present the opposing viewpoint of the Battle of Lake Erie and the War of 1812 to visitors at each site.

Perhaps the “ultimate” Sister Park relationship in the NPS system is that between Glacier National Park in Montana and Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta. In 1932 the two parks were designated by the governments of both countries as the Glacier Waterton International Peace Park, the first transfrontier park in the world. In 1995 the two parks were jointly designated as a World Heritage Site and are currently co-operating in completing a comprehensive site report on the status of the World Heritage Site.

In 1998, Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park in Alaska and the Chilkoot Trail National Historic Site in the Yukon were designated by both governments as the Klondike Gold Rush International Historical Park. Many other parks in Canada and the United States co-operate on the entire spectrum of park management.

While border parks may participate in the Sister Parks programme, there are quite a few relationships outside the immediate border region. Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado, helped develop a management plan for the Caracol Archaeological Reserve in Belize, while Chaco Culture National Historical Park, New Mexico, has provided similar management planning assistance to the Copan Archaeological Park in Honduras. All four sites have common concerns related to the management of archaeological resources.

The Midwest Region of the NPS has several important Sister Park relationships with park agencies in Europe. Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore in Indiana has a successful partnership with the Kampinos National Park in Poland. The two parks have collaborated in hydrological and geological studies, interpretive centre design, research techniques and environmental education methods, among much else. Badlands National Park, South Dakota, has been working closely with the Hortobágy National Park in Hungary (see NPIB, Issue 9) on fire management, interpretive material design and re-introduction of endangered species.

In some cases, the link between two Sister Parks is a prominent historical individual. The John Muir National Historic Site, California, for example, co-operates and shares information with the John Muir Birthplace in Dunbar, Scotland.

Other NPS sites have Sister Park relationships with parks in South Africa, Australia, Brazil, Russia, and Nepal. A list of the NPS Sister Parks can be found on the NPS Office of International Affairs website at: http://www.nps.gov/oia/topics/sister2.htm

To develop a Sister Park relationship, the park managers must first agree that they share a strong interest in and commitment to collaborating. This will be facilitated if the parks share similar resources or other management concerns. A formal written bilateral agreement is not usually required to initiate a Sister Park relationship. However, if a NPS unit decides to pursue a Sister Park relationship, it is strongly recommended that the NPS unit formalise its proposal through a letter spelling out some proposed terms and conditions and technical scope so that there will be less chance of misunderstandings.

A sister park relationship normally consists of exchanges of technical information and, if practicable, short-term personnel exchanges. Fax machines, E-mail and the Internet make electronic transfers of information very easy and relatively inexpensive. Personnel exchanges tend to be much more expensive, but may help to cultivate better staff-to-staff relationships and familiarity with each park’s resources and management challenges. How a sister park relationship is pursued largely depends on the resources available to the two parks to support it.

The NPS International Volunteer in Parks (IVIP) programme may be one way in which an NPS unit can bring staff from the Sister Park to the NPS unit for a training experience. For more information about the IVIP programme, see the OIA website at: http://www.nps.gov/oia/topics/ivip.htm

With the international protected area movement focused on “Benefits Beyond Boundaries”, the Sister Park initiative is an excellent example of how park managers at the field level can work together on management concerns which cross international boundaries.
NEW PATH HELPS PRESERVE ANCIENT WALL

by STEWART BONNEY

Paget Lazzari, Northumberland National Park Southern Area Senior Ranger, on the Hadrian's Wall Path at Sycamore Gap.

INSCRIBED as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987, Hadrian's Wall — the best surviving example of a Roman Empire frontier system — is a ruined but authentic structure which once stretched across northern England from the Cumbrian coast to the North Sea.

Built 1,900 years ago, the best preserved sections of Emperor Hadrian's Wall are found on the remote heather moors, hilltops and rocky crags close to the southern boundary of Northumberland National Park.

This dramatic and historic landscape contains many biological and geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area, countless scheduled Ancient Monuments and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, making it one of the most protected landscapes in the United Kingdom.

However, the one million annual visitors the area attracts has brought problems of overcrowding at certain popular sites, disturbance to farming, erosion to footpaths and buried archaeology, and the realisation that a coherent visitor management strategy was essential to help preserve this unique historical monument for future generations.

Formulating plans for such a strategy was undertaken by a consultative committee representing three county councils, 12 district local authorities, more than 50 special interest bodies and over 700 farmers and private landowners in whose hands 90% of the land within this World Heritage Site belongs.

In 1984 this committee published a single policy framework for the entire wall and recommended the creation of a single continuous coast-to-coast footpath which would run alongside the surviving lengths of this ancient structure and help spread visitor load away from pinch points and honeypot sites.

Funding for this new National Trail was provided by the UK's Countryside Agency, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, once government approval was given in 1994. This stressed the paramount importance of the wall's conservation and attached the condition that, wherever possible, the path should retain a natural grass surface to protect the setting of the wall and any buried archaeology.

Since work began in 1996, investment totalling £6.8 million
A stretch of Hadrian's Wall Path near Walltown, in Northumberland National Park.

has financed the creation of the 84-mile-long Hadrian’s Wall Path. When it was officially opened earlier this summer, the Countryside Agency’s Trail Development Officer, David McGlade, said: “We believe this is the only National Trail within a World Heritage Site. While work was in progress we had many international visitors from protected areas and from recreational and archaeological communities who were interested to see how we were developing the trail, the detailed planning involved and the long-term management implications.

“Every stage of work has been strictly supervised by archaeologists — even the placing of fence posts and direction signs. There are enormous riches just centimetres under the soil surface near the wall. Molehills have even uncovered Roman coins and shards of pottery.”

The team who carried out work in the National Park section of the trail, to ensure that the footpath would be robust enough to cope with day visitors and large numbers of long-distance walkers, was led by Paget Lazzari, the park’s Southern Area Senior Ranger.

This involved ensuring that on 28 km/17 miles of the path, a grass management programme was implemented involving spring and autumn applications of seed and fertiliser. Where heavy use by walkers could lead to compaction, aerating and re-seeding will be regularly undertaken.

The path builders’ unique challenge was to find a way of creating a sturdy natural surface in places where existing footpaths climbed up crags to exposed or buried sections of the wall.

Paget said: “In these places damage had been taking place. Grass could not stand up to the high foot traffic and an aggregate surface would just wash away, so the technique we have introduced is to use a series of pitched stone paths away from any known archaeology. We have done this by excavating a tray into which large stones are placed, similar to a dry-stone wall laid on its side. These lock together and stand slightly proud of the ground.

“We have used stone gathered locally from field clearances and, as grass grows between the stones, the surface looks quite natural. It is also a very hard-wearing path which, while not completely maintenance-free, is cost-effective and sustainable.”

A vital role in monitoring the state of the path will be played by a 40-strong team of National Trail volunteers who will assist park rangers by patrolling one-to-three mile sections on a monthly basis to check for signs of erosion or missing waymarks, remove litter and report on areas where vegetation control is required.

The opening of the Hadrian’s Wall Path interlocks with a new strategic approach to recreational use embodied in Northumberland National Park’s new 20-year management plan, and its impact on sustainable tourism and the local rural economy.

The park’s chief executive, Graham Taylor, said: “We are delighted to have been able to contribute to achieving such a long-standing goal.

“Managing protected landscapes represents quite different challenges from the management of truly natural ecosystems, and in this case the intensity of visitor use was a key issue.

“Our Senior Ranger (Paget) has developed a range of new techniques and this has been especially valuable.”

Catriona Mulligan, the park’s Director of Access and Communications, explained:

“Following extensive community consultations, our new policy puts the local economy and the community at the heart of the national park’s purposes.

“It is often a surprise to our visitors from overseas that Northumberland, like other national parks in the UK, is a cultural landscape where the land is in private ownership. We are not a reserve with entrance gates.

“We have decided that the only economic strategy which is going to work in a rural area like this will be based on its natural and cultural assets. So the way forward is to strengthen, encourage and assist the community to deliver national park purposes. The big change
Locally-gathered stone has been used to form a hard-wearing path which will stand up to high foot traffic.

and the bold policy of our new management plan is to say that we are now a mainstream player in tourism, and not just here to manage visitors when they arrive.

“The new trail offers greater access but will have no adverse effect on the outstanding stretch of Hadrian’s Wall lying within the park. By 2006 we expect 20,000 people a year to be walking the entire length of the trail, and it is estimated that they will spend £7 million locally and support 80 new jobs.

“Our key theme is accessibility. Through the management of footpaths and provision of car parks we already do a lot, but our goal is to ensure that the park is accessible to a wide range of audiences — particularly from urban areas — with a strong focus on young people and the disabled.”

The new National Trail has involved developing 30 miles of new rights of way, with many stretches accessible to disabled visitors. New bridges have been built across streams, and other large natural obstructions and — wherever possible — stiles have been replaced by wicket gates.

Walkers and cyclists are also being encouraged to reach starting points on the trail by using the Hadrian’s Wall bus service, which operates from towns and villages near the wall. New funding has also financed a new coast-to-coast Spartacus bus service which travels from end to end of the trail on Sundays and bank holidays.

HADRIAN’S WALL FACT FILE

BUILT to mark the northern limit of the “civilised world”, Hadrian’s Wall was constructed between AD122 and 130. An example of civil engineering on an imperial scale, this frontier boundary stood 4.5 metres/15 feet high, had a width of three metres/10 feet and was flanked on both sides by deep defensive ditches. A military highway, the Stanegate, was used by cavalry who were stationed at major forts around which civilian towns flourished.

The wall was abandoned by the Romans in the fifth century AD, and from the 12th century onwards it was used as a source of building stone for churches, farm buildings and field boundaries.

Countless Roman artefacts are on view at Housesteads — which contained a barracks for 1,000 infantrymen and is the most complete Roman fort in Britain, Chesters Cavalry Fort and a Roman Army museum on the western boundary of the national park.

At Vindolanda, a fort built in the third century, archaeological excavations are still in progress, and finds have included 1,800 writing tablets — the earliest written records of life in England — and first century leatherware and jewellery.

NEWS REVIEW

NPIB@powdene.com

kenya

WILD LIONS SLAUGHTERED

ALARMED conservationists have reported that wild African lions in Nairobi National Park are being systematically slaughtered by a group of young Masai.

The 100 sq km/40 sq mile park, which lies only 10 minutes’ drive to the southwest of the capital and its three million strong population, was founded in 1946. The presence of lion, rhino, leopard, zebra and buffalo in their natural habitat yet within sight of big city skyscrapers is considered to be globally unique.

In a spate of attacks in May and June this year, it was reported that eight adult lions and cubs had been speared to death and it is feared that the once 48-strong population of lions in the park has now fallen to between eight and 11, and that no adult breeding males have survived.

Past killing of lions in the park was seen as retaliation by Masai farmers for attacks on their cattle, but it now feared that the latest attacks are part of an orchestrated campaign to eradicate the lions completely.

One disturbing aspect of all the recent attacks is that all the speared animals have been skinned, their heads and paws have been cut off and internal organs removed.

norway

EUROPARC CONFERENCE

THE 2003 annual conference and general assembly of the Europarc Federation will be held later this month in Norway, hosted by the Municipality of Stryn and the Jostedalsbreen National Park. Attending the official conference opening will be HM Queen Sonja of Norway and Europarc president, Michael Starrett.
global canopy
PROJECT
WILL PROBE
TREE LIFE
GOVERNMENTS are being asked to give up to US $3 million a year to a Global Canopy Project involving universities and botanic gardens world-wide which seeks to probe inaccessible forest tree canopies using cranes, walkways and balloons and create a network of forest observatories.
Andrew Mitchell of the Global Canopy Programme based at Oxford, England, told Science magazine: "The amazing thing is that when you put traps up in the canopies, 70% to 80% of what you find appears to be new to science. That leads us to expect that up to half of all life on the surface of the Earth probably lives up there."
He added: "Pollinating insects, scavenging beetles, plant-composting microbes and nitrogen-fixing bacteria underwrite all human economies. Researchers have calculated that insects provide US farmers with US $12 billion in pollination services each year."

letters
PAR T NERS WANTED
Working Abroad is a UK-based organisation which aims to place volunteers where they are needed in areas relating to environmental conservation and restoration.
We send volunteers to various parts of the world to work in national parks, reserves, marine parks and so on. Currently we are looking for new partners, especially national parks and protected areas which are in need of volunteers and have an infrastructure to accommodate them and manage a volunteer programme.

Since January this year international groups of Working Abroad volunteers (above) have been working in the Caribbean on a number of projects in collaboration with the St Eustatius National Parks Foundation, in the Netherlands Antilles.

ECO-FRIENDLY PACKAGING
THE Netherlands Association of Processors of Residual Substances has tested and approved biodegradable plastics. In collaboration with this organisation, the packaging industry and the retail sector, many products will now be packaged in these plastics, particularly in the food industry.
Biodegradable plastic will be clearly labelled and can be disposed of in containers for biodegradable materials, along with vegetable and garden waste, to be processed for compost production.
An evaluation will take place after one year.
If this works it will be good news for protected areas, where garbage collection and disposal is becoming more and more costly. It may help if, in the future, packaging materials of most food items are biodegradable. In the general environmental context, this will be significant if it reduces accumulation of residual materials at landfills.
Perhaps no dramatic breakthrough, but it seems interesting enough to follow this experiment.
— Dr Ir. Daan Vreugdenhil, Director, World Institute for Conservation and Environment, Shepherdstown, West Virginia, USA.
National Parks and Protected Areas
International Bulletin

Published on a quarterly basis. Issue No. 11 will be posted to subscribers in November. Subscribers paying the Corporate rate will receive 2 copies of the magazine for the price of 1. Personal subscription rates are now 33% lower.

NEW VALUE-FOR-MONEY SUBSCRIPTION RATES
I wish to take out an annual subscription – starting with issue 11

UK: Corporate rate (2 copies) £15.00  Personal subscription £10.00
Europe: Corporate rate (2 copies) £17.00  Personal subscription £11.00
Rest of World: Corporate rate (2 copies) £18.00  Personal subscription £12.00

PAYMENT WITH ORDER

Please debit Visa  Mastercard  Other
Card no.  
Start date ........................................ Expiry date ........................................
I enclose an international money order in £ sterling for £........................................ made payable to publisher Powdene Publicity.
Name ................................................................................................................................
Address ................................................................................................................................
E-mail address ....................................................................................................................

ORDER TO BE INVOICED

Name ................................................................................................................................
Park or organisation ...........................................................................................................
Address ................................................................................................................................
Post/zip code ....................................................................................................................
Country ..............................................................................................................................

EASY ORDERING – just e-mail NPIB@powdene.com with your name, address and credit card details or a request for an invoice.

Please return to NPIB, Unit 17, St Peter's Wharf, Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 1TZ, United Kingdom.
Telephone (+44) 191 265 0040 or fax (+44) 191 275 2609
ISBN No. 0-9520226-5-6