The UNESCO World Heritage Committee met for its 41st Session in the historic city of Krakow, Poland in July 2017. 21 new inscriptions took place on the World Heritage List, including 18 Cultural and 3 Natural Sites. This brings to 1,073 the total number of sites on the World Heritage List belonging to 167 State Parties and demonstrating the universal commitment of the global community towards preserving these iconic areas of cultural and natural interest.

The UNESCO C2C at Wildlife Institute of India undertook its planned thematic training programmes, hosted important guest lectures and welcomed three new distinguished members for its Visiting Fellows Programme during 2017-18. The Centre was also consulted for advice in helping to set up UNESCO Centres in Zacatecas, Mexico and Jeju Island, Korea.

UNESCO Category 2 Centre for World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, India

The Natural Heritage Bulletin is a compilation of information on World Natural Heritage Sites in the Asia-Pacific Region which is obtained from free and publicly available sources such as the internet, newspapers and other publications. The publisher of this bulletin does not make any claim on the authenticity of the contents of the secondary sources of information. The information does not necessarily represent any official views of the publishing institution.
UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE NEWS

World Heritage Committee Session at Krakow, Poland

41st Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee was held at Krakow, Poland from 2nd to 12th July, 2017. There are now 254 sites from Asia-Pacific on the World Heritage List (178 Cultural, 64 Natural, 12 Mixed), with 5 Transboundary and 6 In Danger. 7 sites from the Asia-Pacific Region were inscribed on the World Heritage List which include:

**Natural Sites**
- Qinghai Hoh Xil (China)
- Landscapes of Dauria (Mongolia/Russian Federation)

**Cultural Sites**
- Temple Zone of Sambor Prei Kuk, Archaeological Site of Ancient Ishanapura (Cambodia)
- Kulangsu: a Historic International Settlement (China)
- Historic City of Ahmadabad (India)
- Historic City of Yazd (Islamic Republic of Iran)
- Sacred Island of Okinoshima and Associated Sites in the Munakata Region (Japan)

*Transboundary Property

World Heritage Partner’s Event at 41st Committee Session

A World Heritage partners event and panel discussion, sponsored by the Korean National Commission for UNESCO, took place on the 7th of July in Krakow on the occasion of the 41st session of the World Heritage Committee. The Partners' event, for the fourth consecutive year, provided a platform for discussing private sector partners’ contributions to World Heritage conservation and promotion activities. Private sector companies, foundations and institutional partners shared experiences and best practices in World Heritage conservation and sustainable development.


Pacific Heritage Workshop

A Pacific Heritage Workshop was organized in Koror, Palau from 30 August to 1 September 2017 by UNESCO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Community and Cultural Affairs of Palau. The objectives of this Workshop were to provide an opportunity to enhance the capacity of stakeholders through sharing information on progress in the implementation of the Pacific World Heritage Action Plan 2016–2020 and to gain a better understanding of the Hague Convention and the Underwater Cultural Heritage Convention, promoting an integrated approach to the safeguarding of land-based and underwater heritage in the Pacific.

Discussion on East Rennell World Heritage Site

Ministries and Customary Owners met in Honiara, Solomon Islands in August 2017, to discuss the future of the East Rennell World Heritage site. The Government, together with the customary owners, is currently striving toward the removal of the site from the List of World Heritage in Danger by 2021. This meeting was a first step to discuss the future work plan with heads of Ministries, local communities and international partners. The UNESCO World Heritage Centre is supporting this process. East Rennell was inscribed on the List of World Heritage in Danger in 2013 for threats to its Outstanding Universal Value posed by commercial logging of its forests and the introduction of invasive rats. The site also suffers from over-exploitation of its marine resources of which little is known to date.


‘Marketplace for World Heritage’ launched at 41st Committee Session

A new donor platform ‘Marketplace for World Heritage’ was launched at an event held during the 41st World Heritage Committee, Krakow, Poland. It went live on the World Heritage Centre website on 7th July, 2017. Participants attending the World Heritage Committee were invited to explore this innovative new platform, which showcases global priority projects and helps donors find relevant opportunities to target their funding and see real impacts. This donor-project ‘matching service’ fills a gap that has long existed between potential donors and projects seeking support. The World Heritage Centre takes this opportunity to call for strengthened support, not only from States Parties, but also from the private sector, civil society, charitable organisations and all those interested in joining the community of World Heritage partners and contributing to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention.


World Tourism Day Message

World Tourism Day on 27 September is an opportunity to recognize the importance of sustainable tourism as a tool for intercultural dialogue, peace building and economic development. The United Nations’ International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development 2017 has focused its efforts on promoting tourism as a catalyst for positive change. For UNESCO, tourism presents both opportunities and challenges. Tourism certainly has a significant role to play in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Visitor Ban on New World Heritage Site in Japan

Visitors will not be allowed to set foot on Japan’s newly inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site, Okinoshima, starting next year, as per official reports. Tiny Okinoshima, where women are banned and male visitors must bathe naked in the sea before visiting its shrine, allows only limited tourists to its island on the Sea of Japan. But Munakata Taisha, the shrine that owns Okinoshima, has decided to ban anyone except the priests next year to protect the island from being damaged from all of the publicity, a spokesman said. The island is permanently manned by a Shinto priest who prays to the island’s goddess, a tradition that has been practiced for centuries. Academics, however, will be allowed to enter the island for research and preservation purposes, he added.


Workshop on the South Asian Silk Roads Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination Process

Participants from China, Nepal, ICOMOS and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre participated in a Workshop on the South Asian Silk Roads Serial Transnational World Heritage Nomination Process, Xi’an, China, 5-7 September 2017 organised by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, State Administration of Cultural Heritage (SACH) of China, Xi’an Municipal People’s Government and the ICOMOS International Conservation Center-Xi’an (IICC Xi’an). This was a follow-up activity to the Kathmandu Action Plan, adopted in September 2014 during the first South Asian sub-regional Silk Roads meeting in Kathmandu (Nepal), and was in line with the Almaty Agreement adopted at the 4th Coordinating Committee Meeting of the Silk Roads World Heritage Serial Transnational Nomination, held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in November 2015.


Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) Status for Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park

The Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (Philippines) has been officially designated as a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA)—and an “area to be avoided”—by the International Maritime Organization. The endorsement is a major breakthrough, as it will require international vessels to avoid the World Heritage site, reducing the impact of noise and pollution, and decreasing the risk of future ship groundings. This is the result of years of collaboration between the IMO and the Government of the Philippines, with the support of UNESCO’s World Heritage Marine Programme.

WORLD HERITAGE OUTLOOK

The IUCN World Heritage Outlook is the first global assessment of all natural World Heritage sites and the action needed to achieve excellence in their conservation.

The assessments have classified the sites according to five rating categories namely, (i) Good; (ii) Good with some concern; (iii) Significant concern; (iv) Critical; and (v) Data Deficient.

This Conservation Outlook Gauge has been reproduced from: http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/web/iucn/understanding-ratings

Mount Huangshan (China)

(Inscribed in 1990), Criteria ii, vii, x
Conservation Outlook: Good

Huangshan, known as ‘the loveliest mountain of China’, was acclaimed through art and literature during a good part of Chinese history. Today it holds the same fascination for visitors, poets, painters and photographers who come on pilgrimage to the site, which is renowned for its magnificent scenery made up of many granite peaks and rocks emerging out of a sea of clouds. The outlook for maintaining the aesthetic and natural values of Huangshan mixed site looks promising with a core area largely uninhabited and a well-funded and well-staffed management system in place. The major threats of increasingly large numbers of visitors are being dealt with and prospects for continuing to control these threats are good.

Source: http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/26654?p_p_auth=VmE8clG0

Tongariro National Park (New Zealand)

(Inscribed in 1993), Criteria vi, vii, ix
Conservation Outlook: Good with some concerns

In 1993 Tongariro became the first property to be inscribed on the World Heritage List under the revised criteria describing cultural landscapes. The mountains at the heart of the park have cultural and religious significance for the Maori people and symbolize the spiritual links between this community and its environment. The park has active and extinct volcanoes, a diverse range of ecosystems and some spectacular landscapes. The conservation outlook for the site is good. The outstanding universal value of this property benefits from strong and effective legal, institutional and management regimes. There is close collaboration with local indigenous communities but increasing concern is being expressed by them that the management plan and its policies do not adequately protect their assessment of environmental and cultural values.

Source: http://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org/search-sites/-/wdpaid/en/26649?p_p_auth=VmE8clG0
Interaction with Indian World Heritage Site Park Managers

Dr. V. B. Mathur, Director, WII and UNESCO C2C staff had an interactive meeting with Site Managers/Representatives (Forest Officials) of Indian World Heritage Sites at WII, Dehradun on 13th July, 2017. The sites which were represented included Sundarbans Tiger Reserve, Keoladeo National Park, Great Himalayan National Park, Nanda Devi National Park, Western Ghats, Bhitarkanika, Keibul Lamjao National Park. The Director informed the members about the core mandate of WII and C2C to build capacity of Protected Area and WHS Staff. He said that this was also important for meeting the requirements and obligations of WHS to the UNESCO World Heritage Committee.

Sharing information for establishing UNESCO C2C in Zacatecas, Mexico

UNESCO C2C at Wildlife Institute of India received a request from the Embassy of Mexico to India in July 2017 seeking information on technical and procedural issues of UNESCO C2Cs with the purpose of setting up a Regional Institute of World Heritage in the State of Zacatecas, Mexico. The Centre provided all necessary information to the Embassy of Mexico and offered any further advice for this purpose.

Participation in WII Annual Research Seminar

Participation in Workshop on Internationally Designated Areas in Jeju, Korea

Dr. Manoj V Nair, Scientist-F, UNESCO C2C, WII attended the ‘International workshop on establishing a global research & training center on Internationally Designated Areas (IDAs)’ held from 15 - 16 September, 2017 in Jeju Island, Republic of Korea (ROK). The workshop which was organized by the Ministry of Environment and Jeju Provincial Government, ROK had the following objectives:

- discuss the detailed roles and functions, major programmes and operation of the proposed center in connection with the related programmes and needs of the concerned IDAs which include World Natural Heritage Sites (WNHs), Biosphere Reserves (BRs), Global Geoparks and Ramsar Sites.
- learn from the experiences of other related centers and explore mutual cooperation; and
- create a network among national and international organizations and individuals who can be involved in establishing and operating the proposed center.

Dr Nair delivered a talk on ‘Operation and activities of the UNESCO Category 2 Center on World Natural Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region, Wildlife Institute of India’ in the first technical session on ‘Cases on training and research on Internationally Designated Areas (IDAs)’ chaired by Mr Young-Bae Suh, President of the Korea National Committee for IUCN. He also participated actively in all the sessions wherein the potential for future collaboration between UNESCO C2C-WII and the upcoming centre at Jeju was explored in detail.

GreenHub Assam Internship Programme

UNESCO C2C at WII is supporting the internship programme of a community-based organization, GreenHub Assam, which provides training on nature documentation to youths. As a part of this year’s internship, two interns, namely Ms. Onam Perme and Mr. W Tamwang Konyak, have been engaged to document the Outstanding Universal Value of two World Heritage Sites viz. Great Himalayan National Park Conservation Area (GHNPCA), Himachal Pradesh and Keoladeo National Park, Rajasthan, through photography and videography. In the first phase presently, the interns are visiting GHNPCA field site for the requisite documentation.

Visiting Fellows Programme

UNESCO C2C at WII has introduced a Visiting Fellow Programme since last year to host scholars and practitioners working on subjects relevant to World Natural Heritage. The programme provides experts the opportunity to carry out substantive work for strengthening the capacity of management of such natural sites, in a stimulating intellectual environment. The programme is designed to accommodate a diversity of interests, knowledge and skills. Three Visiting Fellows have joined the Centre for the 2017-18 Session namely, (i) Dr. Shikha Jain, Director, DRONAH (Development and Research Organisation for Nature, Arts and Heritage), Coordinator, ICOFORT India, National Scientific Committee, ICOMOS India; (ii) Dr. Neel Kamal Chapagain, Associate Professor and Programme Chair, Masters in Heritage Management, Ahmedabad University; and (iii) Ms. Prerna Singh Bindra, Wildlife Conservationist and Writer.
GUEST TALK

Dr. Neel Kamal Chapagain, Associate Professor and Programme Chair of a new Masters Degree Programme in Heritage Management at Ahmedabad University, Ahmedabad, Gujarat and currently a visiting fellow at UNESCO C2C, delivered a talk at WII, Dehradun on 'Nature of Cultural Heritage' on 15 September, 2017.

Dr. Alexandra Coghlan, Associate Professor, Griffith Business School, Griffith University, Australia delivered a Guest Lecture on "Protecting an iconic tourism attraction through Virtual Reality and Games - The case of the Great Barrier Reef" on 27 September, 2017.

COLLABORATIONS

- Digital Globe: UNESCO C2C in collaboration with Digital Globe, a leading provider of high-resolution Earth imagery, data and analysis organised a three day course on ‘Application of Very High Resolution Satellite Data in Natural Heritage Sites Management’ at WII, Dehradun from 11th to 14th July, 2017.

- GreenHub, Assam: UNESCO C2C is supporting two interns from GreenHub Assam, a community-based video documentation centre, for documenting OUVs of GHNPCA, Himachal Pradesh and KNP, Rajasthan during the 2017-18 session.

ANNOUNCEMENT

International Training Workshop on “Pilot Testing of Management Effective Evaluation (MEE) Framework for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including Coastal and Marine World Heritage Sites of India” is being organised by UNESCO C2C - WII, Dehradun from 15th-17th November, 2017 at Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, India. The objective of the workshop is to standardise the protocol for the Assessment of Management Effective Evaluation (MEE) of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) including Coastal and Marine World Heritage Sites of India. The target group is field managers of these sites in the Asia-Pacific.