

IUCNWCPA BEST PRACTICE GUIDELINE ON GEOCONSERVATION IN PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREAS

This best practice guideline, number 31 in the series, is the first to address a fundamental part of nature - geodiversity and geoheritage and its protection and conservation following the broadening of the IUCN definition of a protected area to embrace all of nature.

Written by an international team of experts in easy to understand language, this guideline is principally for the use by protected area managers and staff and their advisors. It spells out why geoheritage conservation (geoconservation for short) is needed, contrary to the popular view that it is stable and cannot be damaged. It describes the commonly accepted values of geoconservation, including the all-important link with biodiversity conservation through ecosystem functionality. Nine fundamental principles of geoconservation are described and examples provided. The guideline focusses, in particular, on how to establish geoconservation protected and conserved areas alone or as an addition to existing systems for biodiversity and cultural diversity conservation for example. Much of the guideline focuses on setting up management systems, monitoring change, with examples provided from around the world on recent best practice. Specific attention is given to the management of threats from human activities, including climate change, and what steps should be taken to deal with them. Particular attention is given to four situations common around the world: cave and karst areas, glacial and periglacial areas, volcanic areas, and minerals and fossils. Best practice in educating the public completes the guideline.

The text is easy to select for the reader's particular interests and needs with a signposted chart and table in the first section. Twenty-two best practice guidelines are provided to help users in their work. Over 150 photographs and a dozen boxed examples provide information on situations from most continents. A comprehensive and up to date reference list is attached and is readily accessible through DOI. To ensure that the language and technical terms are easily understood by users, it uses relatively few in the text and provides, for the first time in IUCN, a comprehensive glossary of earth science terms.

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Launching the publication, the lead author and production manager Roger Crofts said "embracing all aspects of nature, recognising their interactions and ensuring conservation of features and processes is even more important now than ever before. I hope that this guideline, with the examples provided, will help managers, staff, and their partners recognise the importance of geoconservation and improve its achievement in practice."

Dr Kathy MacKinnon the WCPA Chair in her Foreword states "These guidelines are the result of an international cooperation within the recently formed WCPA Geoheritage Specialist Group. This group is expanding all of the time and has expertise and experience on all aspects of geoheritage and its conservation. Members are ready and willing to help protected and conserved area colleagues in their work. I commend these guidelines on geoheritage to all involved in the establishment and management of protected and conserved areas to ensure that we protect our geodiversity as well as biodiversity heritage."

The volume is dedicated to Dr Graeme Worboys, one of the authors and a global figure on geoconservation, who sadly died before its completion.

The document can be accessed at

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