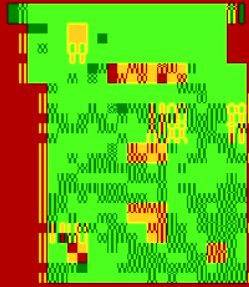


Survey Results and Discussion



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**Follow up to the IUCN World Parks Congress 2003:  
Survey Results and Discussion**

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## **Introduction**

On February 19th 2008 the following message was sent by e-mail to members of the

- Topics for the World Parks Congress in 2013.

Two hundred and forty four people responded. The following is a summary and interpretation of the results.

#### **Respondent Profile.**

Fifty three percent attended the 2003 Parks Congress and 82% were aware of the recommendations. Most respondents (31%) were affiliated with a parks organisation, followed by individual WCPA members (30%), academia (24%), NGOs (22%) and consultants (17%). As respondents could check more than one box this totals to more than 100%. Many respondents checked both an affiliation and also "individual WCPA member". However some who were members just indicated their affiliation making it difficult to establish with precision the proportion of respondents who were WCPA members. IUCN headquarters estimates that about 65% of respondents were probably WCPA members. The affiliations of respondents varies from WCPA membership where 31% are NGO/IGO, 25% Government and 21% academic.

#### **Results**

##### **Agreement with WPC Recommendations**

This question presented 18 statements derived from recommendations from the WPC and asked how much progress had been made (strongly agree, agree, disagree, strongly disagree, don't know). One hundred and sixty four people answered the question. Of the 18 topics, the ones with highest support (50% or higher) were:

- Increasing awareness of protected areas (88% agree)
- Progress in terrestrial protected area systems (82% agree)
- Addressing social issues (74% agree).

The items with the highest "strongly agree" rating were with awareness raising with regard to value of Protected Areas and benefits they provide to society, and that social issues were being better addressed in protected area establishment.

The ones with the lowest support (50% or less) were:

- Filling in gaps at seascape level (21% agree)
- Progress in long term stable funding (37 % agree)
- Ensuring equitable sharing of benefits (46% agree)

The items with the highest "strongly disagree" responses were that progress had been made on long term stable funding for PAs and progress had been made in seascape connectivity. Budgetary concerns were also the highest rated barrier to effective PA management in the survey undertaken at the 2003 Congress (Hockings et al 2005) and were also seen as the greatest challenge to PAs in the global PA governance assessment undertaken for the WPC (Dearden et al 2005).

There were some interesting differences amongst groups. For example, attendees of the

2003 Congress tended to indicate significantly more progress in four areas than non-attendees:

- 
- Equity issues addressed at institution or in my area of work
- 
- Addressing the impacts of climate change
- 
- Freshwater protected areas
- 
- Equitable sharing of benefits.

Stratification of the respondents in terms of

A third area related to policies and laws and this was answered by 61% of respondents and garnered a wide range of answers ranging from the very specific (“banning vehicles on beaches”) to the signing of international treaties, such as Australia signing the Kyoto protocol. Most however dealt with improvements in national and sub national (state, provincial) PA legislation and policy.

The fourth area asked respondents about PA systems and was answered by 74% of respondents that answered this question. Most respondents mentioned the establishment of new parks, but there was also mention of park establishment processes such as gap analysis and landscape-scale initiatives to develop linked conservation lands. Most comments were terrestrial but marine development was also noted. There was little explicit mention (1 response) of freshwater protection, despite it being explicitly mentioned in the question and the fact that it is an acknowledged gap for many protected area systems.

funding was being diverted to other sources such as private lands and local communities. Concerns were voiced about increasing reliance on user fees as a main source of revenue and the implications that declining visitation might have on park budgets. Related to the reported budget declines was declining political support mentioned by some respondents.

Some also drew attention to the lack of support for training.

Examples of negative trends in laws and policies were given by 53% of respondents who answered this question and covered a wide range of topics. For example, several respondents felt that national laws and policies were being weakened and allowing greater exploitation of PA resources. Some felt this had been facilitated by the last WPC and also mentioned a "downgrading" of PA categories as being partially responsible. In particular there was mention of greater access to PA lands by local communities and also threats felt from decentralisation. Others felt that national laws and policies had not kept pace with current conditions and were too dated. One comment from South Africa that was also mentioned by others was that the existing laws and policies are adequate but implementation is often weak.

Examples of negative trends in terms of PA systems elicited most comment on the lack of progress on the marine front, almost one quarter of the examples mentioned this, which is remarkable given the number of countries that may have no access to the coast. Some mentioned that even though PA systems had expanded, there was no concomitant improvement in the status of several key endangered species, such as the tiger. The difficulties under which some PA staff work under was exemplified in one comment that mentioned the difficulties in actually accessing the protected areas system due to the activities of violent militias.

The final area asking for examples of negative trends related to benefit sharing and equity and was answered by just over 40% of the respondents that answered this question. Indigenous concerns were mentioned by several respondents and these varied from a lack of adequate attention through to concerns that rights were being allocated without associated responsibilities. There were also comments that the hopes of local communities for benefits from parks had perhaps been raised too high and others worried that monitoring programmes were not in place to assess the impacts of equity programmes.

### **Agreement on Social Engagement and Participation Arising from the Durban Accord**

Respondents were asked for their degree of agreement with three statements related to social engagement:

- "A climate of humility, credibility and trust is being fostered globally;

- Open dialogue and collaboration is occurring globally; and

- All constituencies are being engaged and embraced."

They were subsequently asked to explain their response. The statement of agreement was answered by 174 of the 244 respondents. The explanation garnered a lower response rate with more skipping the question (139) than answering it (105). Furthermore since the explanation dealt with all three statements it was not always clear which one it specifically applied to. Nonetheless some interesting observations were forthcoming and

virtually all the explanatory comments related to negative observations.

Regarding the first statement outlined above, the majority response disagreed with this statement (46%), with 42.5% agreeing and a 20% "don't know" response. With a survey of this nature the relative positions of the agree and disagree positions are not really important, the main point is that there is significant disagreement on the issue. The second statement had the highest level of agreement of any of the statements (59.6%) with 33.5% disagreement. The third statement showed the highest level of disagreement (62.1%) with 31.8% in agreement.

Explanations tended to be lengthy and perhaps best summed up by one respondent "I don't even know where to start. The underlying reasons will be the same as the ones responsible for the conflicts, crises and the widespread poverty that still persists in so many parts of the world." This sentiment was



directly critical of WCPA 'Inability of WCPA to mobilise regional networks and support systems.' In contrast to the previous question which generated long paragraphs of response this question tended to be answered in very few words.

### **Role of Regional Networks**

Respondents were asked whether they felt that regional networks and meetings of practitioners could help advance effective establishment and management of PAs and were given four choices (very little, little, moderately, and a lot). Encouragingly over 60% of this well-answered question said "a lot" with another 30% saying "moderately." There is obviously keen interest in greater regional networking of practitioners, and this also came through in other questions, such as on ideas for the next WPC.

When asked whether they or their organisation could help over 50% said "a lot" and almost 40% said "moderately." Again this is a very positive show of support for this activity. A follow-up question asked in what capacity respondents could help facilitate such networking. A wide range of responses resulted ranging from just "attending" through to organising and hosting such regional networking. There was some commitment of resources mentioned from agencies, international donors (GEF) and etc

question of park categorisation and the increasing trends toward multiple use PAs and whether certification might be needed in the future to assess whether PA objectives were being met.

Habitat fragmentation was seen as an increasing problem and the need to link PAs through corridors and bioregional planning. Private PAs were mentioned by some respondents as an increasing trend in the future and the need to get the business community more involved with PAs. The problem of increasing numbers of invasive species was mentioned by several respondents.

There were a large number of diffuse comments related to governance. These ranged from encouraging local participation through to the establishment of more transboundary PAs. Conflicting trends were noted such as concern over the increasing influence of international NGOs by some, whereas others approved of greater power going to NGOs. There were some concerns raised about PA agency governance with comments indicating that greater emphasis was being put on appearance rather than substance.

Generating increased support for PAs was also addressed by many respondents. Some saw this as a technical question with a need to develop more effective means of evaluating ecosystem services and other values produced by PAs and communicating these to the right audiences. Others saw a lack of political will to establish more PAs in the future and advocated awareness programmes targeted specifically at politicians. There were a surprisingly high number of responses noting the growing alienation of urbanites from the natural world and the resulting difficulties in gaining support from these populations to protect wild biodiversity. To counteract this "public apathy" several

such as to restrict participant's choices for what sessions they should attend, with the idea that participants gravitate to the familiar whereas the Congress should be trying to broaden their perspective. Although not going quite so far, others did suggest that there be special sessions mainly for "non-PA" specialists that would differ in message and intent than the more focused sessions that were favoured by many.

One theme related to broadening that received wide support was for the inclusion of top decision-makers at the political level and the need for them to be engaged in the PA agenda if it is to move forward. Some were pessimistic on this front "Recognise that we are losing the battle" and one even suggested a theme for the Congress "Biodiversity and Humanity on the Edge: the Role of Protected Areas" In this regard there were suggestions for more open accountability in terms of management effectiveness with, for example, peer reviewed national statements on progress since 2003 as inputs leading to statements of national commitments as outputs from the Congress. This emphasises a theme that was commonly mentioned on "action not talk"

Another seeming dichotomy from the responses is between those who would like to see the Congress grounded and related more to practitioners with, for example, more sessions on training and articulation of best practices in PA management, compared to those who would like to see PAs set within the broader context of global issues such as climate change, poverty, equity and financial restructuring. A similar split characterised those who called for a stronger emphasis on biodiversity and conservation ("there should be room for ecology as well as sociology") and those who favoured a broader, more social agenda.

Other themes that were mentioned by several participants were the need to better engage business interests, develop better education and outreach programmes, address global financial deficiencies for PAs, relate more to international treaties, establishing clear targets as outputs, building partnerships, linking PAs more to human well being and more emphasis on MPAs. There was surprisingly low mention of aboriginal and local communities and none of tourism and visitor use.

Overall the picture that arises is of two different kinds of events. One vision is from those who see

## **Conclusions**

Obviously there are some limitations involved with trying to generalise from a survey with 244 respondents and 170 completed questionnaires that is sampling a total population of over 1500. In many cases individual questions garnered significantly lower number of responses than the 170 quoted above. However, the survey does provide useful additional insights into the response to the 2003 WPC and ideas for the future. Many of the findings, such as the challenge of obtaining adequate funding, echo the findings of other global surveys on PAs.

The main question to be decided regarding the next WPC is to ask what are the most important outcomes desired from the Congress. Another key question is to determine the main audience. Interestingly only one third of the respondents for the delegate survey for the 2003 WPC were members of the WCPA. Is a similar figure the target for the next