

Draft

**The Presidio Declaration**  
**US/ICOMOS Statement from the 2018 Symposium**  
***Forward Together: A Culture-Nature Journey***  
***Towards More Effective Conservation in a Changing World***  
13-14 November 2018  
The Presidio, San Francisco, California

**Introduction**

The *Forward Together* symposium was convened by US/ICOMOS in partnership with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, ICOMOS, IUCN, UNESCO World Heritage Centre, Presidio Trust, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Golden Gate Parks Conservancy, and U.S. National Park Service. This international symposium continued an exploration of the understanding that cultural and natural heritage are dynamic and inextricably linked in many landscapes and waterscapes and that effective and long-lasting conservation of these places depends on better integration of the ‘entangled dimensions’ of culture and nature.

The symposium built on the *Malama Honua* from the Nature-Culture Journey at the IUCN World Conservation Congress in Hawai’i (2016), the *Yatra aur Tammanah Statement of the Learnings & Commitments* from Culture-Nature Journey at the ICOMOS Triennial General Assembly in India (2017) and ICOMOS Resolution 19GA 2017/25 *Incorporating the Interconnectedness of Nature and Culture into Heritage Conservation*. Anticipating the upcoming General Assembly of ICOMOS and the IUCN World Conservation Congress, both slated for 2020, the *Forward Together* symposium sought to advance the evolving collaboration between these two international organizations in exploring the interconnections of cultural and natural heritage and ways to shape more sustainable conservation.

**Declaration**

Symposium participants from across the United States and from 15 other nations and six continents, gathered at the Presidio during 13-14 November 2018 to share their experience with culture-nature heritage conservation and insights from case studies and program strategies in accordance with the goals of the symposium.

Inspired and emboldened by this knowledge exchange and the vibrant energy among participants, this **Declaration** presents **key findings** of the symposium and proposes **next steps** for US/ICOMOS, in partnership with others, to advance integration of culture and nature for more effective conservation. US/ICOMOS invites all interested parties to join with us to continue this Culture-Nature Journey.

**Key Findings**

The many diverse case studies and programs shared at the symposium, further re-affirms that cultural and natural heritage are interconnected in many places and that effective and long-lasting conservation depends on better integration of culture and nature.

The presentations at the symposium illustrated the opportunities and challenges inherent in developing integrated approaches to conservation. Examples of key findings include:

- The overarching importance of **adopting a landscape approach** to the conservation of interlinked cultural and natural heritage across the full range of landscapes and waterscapes – from wilderness to rural to urban places. Symposium participants noted that heritage is dynamic and part of interconnected cultural, natural and social systems. It is crucial that conservation recognizes multiple values and operates at a landscape scale to effectively address the urgent issues facing communities, particularly in the face of climate change. Collaboration is critical to this approach.
- A growing recognition that **intangible heritage and diverse perspectives** are integral to successful conservation strategies. Taking a people-centered approach to stewardship of heritage involves honoring a diversity of world-views and incorporating different ways of knowing including traditional knowledge systems, belief systems, and governance practices. Recognizing, respecting and acknowledging the cultural and spiritual values makes management and governance more effective, sustainable and socially equitable.
- Appreciation of the potential for integrated culture-nature conservation approaches to enhance **resilience, adaptation and sustainability** for urban and rural landscapes. Participants' experience with locally-based initiatives to make communities and regions more resilient illustrated the value of traditional knowledge and practices in adapting to changing conditions. Participants called on their colleagues to join the global dialogue on achieving sustainability, as this can be empowering for local-level initiatives.
- Creation of a cohesive, unified narrative of **World Heritage** sites in the U.S. enhances public awareness and understanding of their benefits is essential to catalyzing broader public support. World Heritage sites offer exceptional potential to demonstrate the benefits of heritage conservation to local communities as well as to the general public. World Heritage designation also encourages sharing of innovations for effective conservation across the world.

### **Next Steps**

Time is of the essence. A vivid reminder of the urgency of the challenges facing our planet came during the week of the symposium, as the effects of unprecedented climate change-driven wildfires in nearby regions of California filled the air with particulates. The situation underscored the urgency of developing more effective and sustainable approaches to conservation.

Exploration of different areas of heritage practice during the symposium suggests some next steps to advance integration of culture and nature for more effective conservation.

In keeping with its mission to encourage knowledge exchange on current conservation practice between the U.S. and other countries, US/ICOMOS is well positioned to play an important role in the Culture-Nature Journey going forward.

#### **US/ICOMOS Mission Statement**

*To foster heritage conservation and historic preservation at the national and international level through education and training, international exchanges of people and information, technical assistance, documentation and advocacy. (Source: US/ICOMOS web page, informed by Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws).*

**Therefore, US/ICOMOS will:**

- **Share new ideas and insights from conservation practice** that demonstrate the effectiveness of recognizing the interconnections of culture-nature. Specifically, share best practices and lessons learned from the case studies and programs strategies presented at this symposium.
- **Continue to advance the Culture-Nature Journey in the U.S. building the capacity for new initiatives.** Reach out to partners such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, IUCN offices and programs in the U.S., and academic institutions with related programs as well as others who are working with social justice and the humanities. Continue to engage emerging professionals seeking opportunities and positions that contribute to the Culture-Nature Journey.
- **Contribute to the international Culture-Nature/Nature-Culture Journey** by encouraging related work of ICOMOS, IUCN, ICCROM, the UNESCO World Heritage Centre and other international organizations such as the ICOMOS-IUCN Connecting Practice project and ICCROM-IUCN World Heritage leadership program. Contribute to the 2019 ICOMOS Symposium on rural landscapes and planning for the Culture-Nature/Nature-Culture Journey in the lead up to the 2020 IUCN World Conservation Congress and the 2020 ICOMOS Triennial General Assembly and Scientific Symposium.
- **Call upon ICOMOS and IUCN to continue their joint work** under a collaborative framework and to engage members, committees and others to contribute.

The participants at ***Forward Together: A Culture-Nature Journey*** at the Presidio in San Francisco contributed their best ideas and their enthusiasm for advancing effective conservation through integrating culture and nature. The above findings and next steps will lead us *forward together* on this path. All are invited to join with us to continue journey.

**14 Jan. 2019**