

EUROPARC

CONFERENCE 2014

28th SEPTEMBER – 1st OCTOBER

KILLARNEY-IRELAND



UNDERSTANDING
THE VALUE OF
NATURE

Conference Report



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WELCOME FROM OUR HOSTS

In Autumn 2014, the Irish Ministry of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht hosted the Annual Conference and General Assembly of the EUROPARC Federation. The Ministry was delighted to welcome so many national and international delegates to Killarney, Ireland's most famous tourist destination and the home of Ireland's first and most popular National Park, and therefore a natural and very apt venue for delegates to explore and debate the conference theme – Understanding the value of nature.

Nature can often leave us with a sense of awe and a sense that its benefits are almost ethereal and intangible. Placing a true value on nature and measuring its benefits and worth to society poses particular challenges to the Natural Heritage community. The 2014 conference provided the Ministry and the Federation with a platform to showcase the economic and socio-economic potential of the natural heritage sector and improve our understanding of how economies, the natural environment, and well-being of societies are interlinked.

EUROPARC 2014 Killarney provided an excellent opportunity for natural heritage managers and others from the natural heritage sector to discuss and debate a variety of issues and topics, to share expertise and experiences, and to develop valuable

contacts with those involved in similar work and pursuits in other countries. The Conference theme was explored through thought provoking presentations, workshops and field trips that built on the natural heritage community's shared vision and commitment to the conservation and responsible promotion of Europe's natural inheritance, and based on delegate feedback, significantly enhanced their understanding of the value of nature.

The Ministry wishes to express its sincere gratitude to its conference partners – the EUROPARC Federation, the Heritage Council of Ireland, Coillte, Fáilte Ireland, Kerry County Council, the Killarney Chamber of Tourism and Commerce, the Trustees of Muckross House Ltd., the Irish Hotels Federation and MCI-Dublin – for their support and assistance during this very successful conference.

The success of EUROPARC 2014 (Killarney) demonstrates what can be achieved, even with a relatively short lead in, through good co-operation, communication, organisation, marshalling of resources, and most importantly the commitment of a dedicated hard working team. On behalf of the organising committee, the Ministry is pleased to present the report of the 2014 Annual Conference and General Assembly of the EUROPARC Federation.





WELCOME FROM MINISTER HEATHER HUMPHREYS

Heather Humphreys TD, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht welcomes EUROPARC delegates to Ireland.

'Welcome to Ireland, and to one of our most beautiful natural areas, Killarney. In Ireland we have 150 natural areas, 6 national parks and 78 nature reserves and we understand the value of cultural and natural heritage.

These parks and protected areas have their own inherent value. We need to watch over them, and we need to actively manage them. To do that we

need resources, from human resources to financial sources; we need to make the argument that these natural areas need protecting and I hope that this conference will give us the tools to make that case.

The survival of all economic sectors is dependent on the careful stewardship of our resources. Ireland is rightly famed for its green, attractive landscapes, and our agriculture sector depends on it. But green is more than a colour; our agriculture sector now realises that its long-term economic success is based on being able to show that 'green means sustainable'. This means valuing the ecosystem services that support it.

It is my belief that further significant conservation, social, health and economic benefits will come about if we continue to explore the true potential of our natural heritage. The challenge is to understand and harmonise the intrinsic values of nature and its harder, but often unseen, social and economic values.

I hope this conference provokes thought and debate and help develop policies and new ways of thinking, not just about the value of national parks, but of our wider natural heritage. I wish you well in your deliberations; I hope you enjoy the hospitality and the beauty of this magnificent corner of Ireland you are in today. Go raibh maith mile agat.'



PRESIDENT IGNACE SCHOPS

So, firstly, congratulations on being elected the new President – how are you feeling about your new role?

Excited, very excited. For the past three years I was a member of the council and standing for the Presidency really means something, but I am ready to bring EUROPARC to a higher level within the European Union and I hope we can extend from being the biggest network to also being acknowledged as the lead network in Europe.

What do you see as the challenges for EUROPARC over the next five years or so?

Well, on the one side there is the economic situation that is going on in Europe that affects all the organisations – not just the nature conservation organisations – on a European level. So having to deal with those external pressures and realities will be key to how we move forward in the future. On the other hand, I think there are so many opportunities to extend the membership of the EUROPARC Federation and use that stronger base to have a presence at the policy table because I think with the new Commissioners we have to be there from the very beginning to say who EUROPARC is, what we can do for them and how they can use us to the benefit of a greater Europe.

Do you feel that this lobbying at the Brussels level is where EUROPARC can have the greatest impact?

It is certainly a key part of the strategy outlined to the membership during the General Assembly. One major point is to become a better lobby party at European level to help create and implement policies for the wildlife and natural heritage in Europe.

And is there anything you as a President will do on a practical level to achieve that?

Yes, that's one of my personal goals. I would like to have in three years' time that we are acknowledged as the leading organisation in Europe; that we don't have to go all the time to them but that they also come to us. That's a huge step to make but I believe I have the network for that as I have worked on a global level for a number of years and I'm happy to do so for EUROPARC because that's where my heart is.

And are you happy with the strategy document that lays out the roadmap for the next five years?

Yes, I think it was a good result in the General Assembly (to approve the strategy) to help create that leading organisation we are all talking about and also give individual members



“If you look deep into the EUROPARC Federation you see already the integration that no other nature conservation organisation has at the moment.”

a voice in the global and European arena. It's also fantastic when you see the work that's done like here in Killarney where the economy is so closely linked to the National Park – so we are the future of the economy I think!

Speaking about Killarney, how have you found the whole experience of being down here?

First of all I want to congratulate the entire organising team. This has been perfect, really perfect, so congratulations for that. The atmosphere has been good, the venue was good, the workshops were good, and also the field trips were amazing. I did the Burren and I was really excited about what I saw.

What they say about Ireland is true; it's green, they are good people, they have good drinks and it's been fantastic.

About the programme this year, how do you feel it will impact delegates working lives when they return home?

Well I think the impact, both directly and indirectly, is often more than we think. It's that point in the year that we come together and see each other again eye-to-eye that is completely different than doing a Skype meeting, and so it is business and pleasure and everybody takes a lot of things home with them, on the one side about issues surrounding protected areas and management or tourism and trans-boundary issues, but at least I'm sure they bring home a new family.

In one of the workshops I was in this morning there were a couple of farmers who raised the notion of having a farmer as a member of the council, while the local park rangers also talked

about the issue that many of the people working within conservation are now working in offices far removed from the actual areas they are protecting... so do you feel EUROPARC has a role in bring that practical, on-the-ground management to the fore of policy implementation?

Well, I think therein lies an opportunity and, of course, we have to design some strategies about that. What is thought now on a global level is that there are two things that matter, implementation and integration of policies. If you look deep into the EUROPARC Federation you see already the integration that no other nature conservation organisation has at the moment.

We have farmers on the board of national protected areas and national parks, we have mayors included in the General Assembly of the EUROPARC Federation – the integration is happening already. And that is what Europe asks, so we have it already, but I don't know if they know it already. So that's one of the interesting things; how do you bring the farmers up to the General Assembly and to make them visible to our members and to the people we are trying to lobby? In the end, we have to make it happen because we have to save the earth, together.

Just in terms of the membership, during the General Assembly we were told that membership in EUROPARC has been decreasing slightly over the last few years but I can see the enthusiasm is going up, so how do you arrest that decline in membership and get people on board over the next couple of years?

Well firstly I think it was important that growing the membership was a central part of the EUROPARC strategy document, and I think we need an action plan for that. We have just had our first Council meeting and we tried to design an action plan, firstly to serve the members and then to extend the membership. And for me that is one of the key factors; if you can show to Europe that you are leading but also growing you can have real influence.

There are lots of possibilities to find new memberships so we have to find them and convince them to come into the family. And once they're here, it's easy I think. There is of course a big debate about resources and what the fees are applied to different countries with different economic situations is something we have to look into as a Council. It's not so easy for every country in Europe to pay the fees, for example if you are coming from the south of Europe, so let's think about that. We now have excellent Council members to create new strategies and we have 400 members to go to for their experience and they will guide us because I believe EUROPARCS is designed to be successful.

And finally, do you have a message to individual EUROPARC members?

Think globally, act locally and change personally.

Mr. President, thank you very much.

Thank you.



A LINK IN THE CHAIN

A long-standing attendee at the annual conference, the first speaker at EUROPARC, **Michael Starrett**, talks about how the friendships made at EUROPARC has real benefits and how the valuing of both natural and cultural heritage is inherently linked.

'I've seen a few rows in my time at EUROPARC' began Michael Starrett, CEO of the Heritage Council, Ireland 'but each time they have been resolved. And the reason they have been resolved is that each and every person in this room values our heritage, be that as part of our natural or cultural heritage. By meeting, discussing, learning together and by being exposed to each other's culture, we recognise that we have a shared goal. And it is through that inner recognition of a shared goal that we can begin to share our values with the world at large. We can begin truly communicating the value of nature.'

Asking the audience to stand up, shake the hand of the person next to them and introducing themselves, Michael got a response that demonstrated the friendships made at EUROPARC was alive and well with a bustling room that took some moments to return to 'lecture-mode'.

'That is what the EUROPARC conference is really about' observed Michael 'By meeting, discussing and being exposed to different areas of diversity we will continue to flourish and bring influence to bear for the decades to come.'

In his role as CEO of the Heritage Council in Ireland, Michael is responsible for some of Ireland's both remarkable natural and man-made sites. Showing a series of pictures of some of these areas he concluded with the question 'How do you value that?'

He dismissed that the only value you should put it is in economic terms, although he conceded that the economic language was one that we had to learn to speak more fluently. However it was the least significant part of our common language we have to learn. It is Michael's conviction that it is through recognising that nature and culture are inextricably linked and to use that natural partnership of ideas as a means of communicating the value of the things we hold most dear.

Another central thesis of Michael's talk was to 'de-expertise' protected areas in terms of decision making. Experts should not have the stranglehold over the decisions that are taken on those protected areas and the local community and other non-expert stakeholders should be involved in that decision making. Acknowledging the importance of the experts, include the economists, he concluded the point 'we are informed by our science, but led by our humanities'.

It is Michael's contention that the reason we do not know how to demonstrate the value of these protected areas because we are not led enough, and do not engage enough with, the local communities. 'We know what our heritage is costing, but we are nowhere near realising its true value to Ireland as a nation or to Europe as a continent' he said 'and these local communities that can tell us are clamouring for mechanisms to secure the benefits that can be derived from relatively small, on-going investment in their natural built and cultural heritage.'

Giving the example of National Heritage Week in Ireland, where a quarter of a million euro investment generates four times that for the economy, with little capital investment, Michael showed that this type of work can be done with small investments while generating big results. Even then, one of his big frustrations is the lack of 'reasonable resources' and having to say 'no' to so many worthwhile heritage initiatives.

It is about getting these resources from Governments and others to make those small but effective investments. It requires new investment, particularly in people, and evolving heritage away from experts and bringing it to the core of public policy. It is about communicating the message that these sorts of policy shifts will deliver value and, ultimately, jobs.

'The next decade must focus on maximising the support of those communities and making heritage work for every citizen and every community' he concluded 'We are getting our politicians to say the right things, but not to take the concrete actions to have real effects'.



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IT'S THE GREEN ECONOMY

What is the Green Economy and how do you build one? When **Patrick Ten Brink** heard others trying to define what the Green Economy means, he rarely heard the word 'nature'. He thought that was a problem...

An environmental economist, Patrick Ten Brink works as Senior Fellow and Head of the Institute for European Environmental Policy's (IEEP) Brussels office - with IEEP working closely with EU institutions, national governments, think tanks, NGOs and academics. His work on nature and its role in the green economy came about when Patrick attended a number of meetings about the green economy and it seemed whatever conversation he went to there was a different take on what the phrase actually meant.

'Everyone was talking about energy efficiency, innovation, climate change, but the word 'nature' rarely came into the conversation' he began 'So I thought 'hang on a second, I think we have a problem'. In parallel, we had been working on TEEB - The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity initiative - so we felt we had to bring these two concepts together to see what is the role of nature in the green economy.'

As a result, and in a contribution to Rio +20, IEEP produced 'Nature and its Role in the Transition the Green Economy: The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity', the basis of Patrick's plenary address. Its first key message to the EUROPARC audience was that working with nature should be at the heart of the transition to a green economy. Nature is essential to the health and growth of economies, societies and individuals through the provision of ecosystem services. However, the values of nature to economies and society have often been overlooked and not reflected in the decisions of policy makers, businesses, communities or citizens, contributing to the loss of biodiversity and subsequent impacts on people and the economy.

'I believe that the great part of miseries of mankind are brought upon them by false estimates they have made of the value of things' said Patrick, quoting Benjamin Franklin 'And this is true for the entire biodiversity discussion. Unfortunately the press wants to hear about the direct monetary value, where as we know that it is the qualitative areas where nature often delivers most of its economic value.'

Often, it is the monetary figures that are reported - number of visitors to a protected area, value of sustainable forestation - but it is through the fundamental benefits of nature - air and water purification, erosion control, pollination - that local communities benefit from mostly.

Harder to measure and more complex to define, these 'ecosystem services' are all included in Patrick's work when it comes to trying to define the green economy, and then to transition the existing economy towards a system that sustains and benefits from nature.

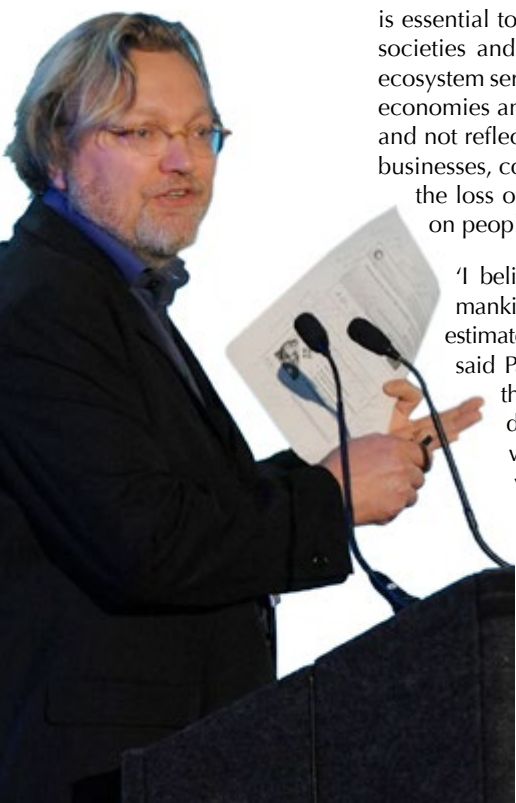
A key to understanding the green economy and communicating its benefits is to know that 'all sectors of the economy benefit directly or indirectly from nature and their engagement is required for the transition to the green economy in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication.' This is both in their self-interest (given their reliance on inputs from nature) and reflects their responsibilities (in terms of impacts, risks and liabilities). In other words, greening the "brown" economy is as important as developing green sectors or green niches.

One of the great misinterpretations of identifying the value of nature does not suggest that it should have a cost or a price or be traded in the market and therefore be commoditized. To go along with that, the market-based instruments that are used to measure value are not necessarily applicable to nature, and there are many other instruments that can be used to reflect the values of nature.

Using a study he took part in for the European Commission based on the EU's Natura 2000 Network, which analysed 26,000 sites across the EU to try to quantify their value, they found that for a funding cost of 5.8bn per year, those sites had an illustrative value of between €200 - €300 billion per year.

Patrick concluded that investments in nature today will save money and promote economic growth in the long term, with these investments often significantly more cost-effective than investments in other forms of capital or engineered solutions. 'There is a need to step-up the pace of change and move from discrete cases of green economy transition to a fundamental systemic transition warranted by scientific findings. It will take active engagement by government, business communities and citizens to realise its potential for improving human well-being and social equity'.

To download the 'Nature and its Role in the Transition the Green Economy: The Economics of Ecosystems & Biodiversity' visit http://www.ieep.eu/assets/951/TEEB_Nature_the_green_economy_Executive_Summary.pdf



THE ALMIGHTY EURO

'How do we illustrate the values of national parks? The euro is one of my favourite ways of doing this as it is so powerful.' Using the Finnish National Parks as an example, **Liisa Kajala** of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services, Finland, demonstrated how to measure and communicate the economic value of a National Park.

Managing areas with a combined size of over 7 million hectares, or 18% of Finland's entire surface area, the Finland National Heritage Service is ideally placed to measure the impact of protected areas on the wider economy. With over 2.3 million visitors a year to the national parks, there is an obvious benefit to the economy, but there are other ways that it delivers value.

'The major international attempt to capture and illustrate these values is through the anthropocentric concept of ecosystem services, i.e. the services that ecosystems provide to humans' said Liisa 'So with this terminology we can see protected areas providing supporting services such as soil formation and nutrient cycling; regulating services such as climate, water, and disease regulation as well as pollination; provisioning services or the provision of food, fresh water, fuel, fibre, and other goods; cultural services such as educational, aesthetic, and cultural heritage values as well as recreation and tourism.'

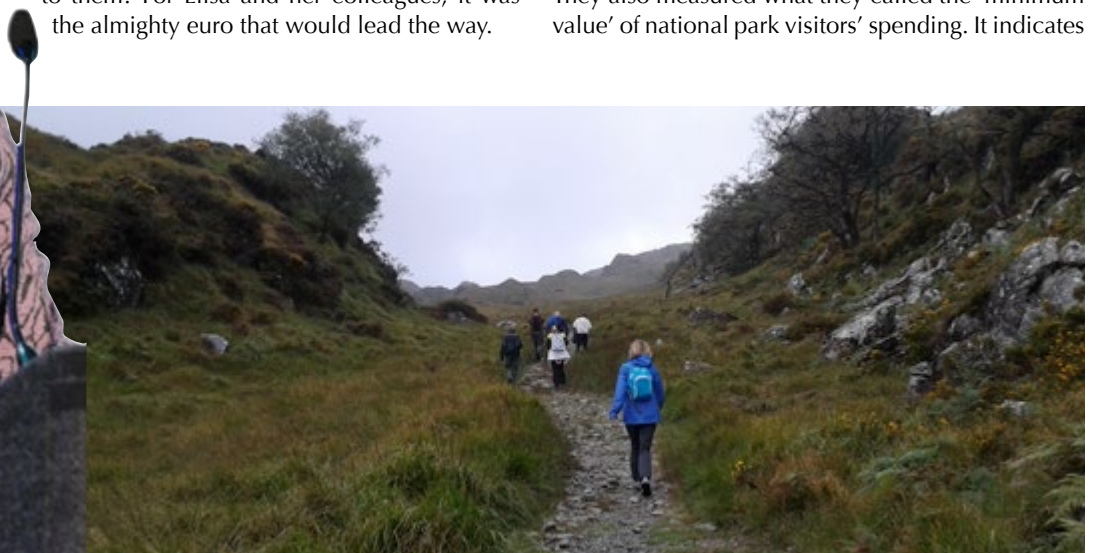
The fundamental question Liisa posed is that even though we know that protected areas provide these multiple socio-economic benefits, most of which are intuitively understandable, and people can and do experience many of them in person, how do we illustrate these values in a powerful way in order to draw decision makers and wider public's attention to them? For Liisa and her colleagues, it was the almighty euro that would lead the way.

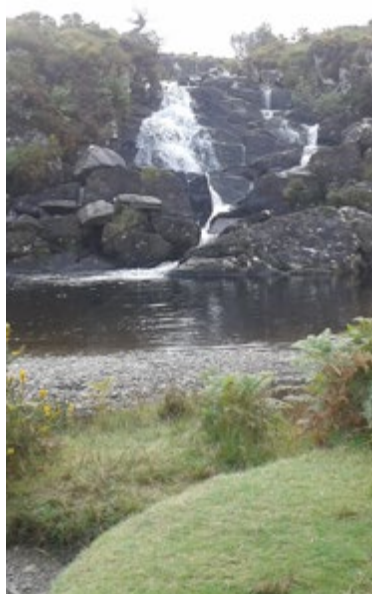
While knowing that the monetary values are only the tip of the iceberg, and only part of these monetary values have a direct market value, it is the measurement in euro that has the greatest impact on securing public funding. In 2009, the Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services (NHS) got together with the Finnish Forest Research Institute (Metla) to develop an application producing annual direct and total income and employment effects of national park visitors' spending.

The method is based on the MGM2 developed in the United States for the U.S. National Park Service by Michigan State University. It is a national, standardized, easy-to-use method for assessing the local economic impacts of visitors' spending of all national parks and other key state-owned protected areas in Finland on an annual basis.

'For five years now, we have been producing the local economic impact statistics with this application' said Liisa 'The total local economic impact of national park visitors' spending in Finland was 115.5 million euros, creating almost 1,500 full-time jobs. In addition to national parks, we measure the local economic impacts of visitors' spending in some other areas as well. For example, in national hiking areas the respective figures were 15.4 million euros and almost 200 jobs.'

They also measured what they called the 'minimum value' of national park visitors' spending. It indicates





‘It is a fact that, whether we want it or not, the politicians and decision-makers prefer numbers to support decision making.’

the economic impacts created by those visitors to whom the national park was the only or the most important reason for visit. These visitors would not have come if the national park wasn't there and, as the figures illustrated, the impact of these visitors is roughly half of the total value. What made this measurement policy was the implementation of a standardised visitor monitoring system which had been in place for 14 years. ‘We have found out that even though establishing and maintaining such a comprehensive national visitor monitoring and information system requires significant investment in time and resources, this investment pays back many times over.’

After measuring this value, the next challenge was to communicate this value to all stakeholders, including the public. An annual report is produced each year, which is then used as reference guide for institutions such as the press and government. As Liisa explained ‘It is a fact that, whether we want it or not, the politicians and decision-makers prefer numbers to support decision making.’

These figures have led to a number of concrete benefits towards the conservation of protected areas. Firstly, by making the economic benefits clear it has led to municipalities actually competing to become national parks, whereas in the past they often used to be against the establishment of national parks in their area to the perceived negative affect on the economy.

It has also allowed for making of the case for continued investment in protected areas, demonstrated the need for, and benefits of, in conservation efforts, the benchmarking of successful sustainable businesses which gives a roadmap for establishing new businesses and, ultimately, the measurement of economic effectiveness has now become a key indicator of performance in protected areas in all future plans.

‘During the economic crisis, the figures captured were vital in not cutting investments in the park, with tourism bodies making the case alongside the dedicated national park bodies’ Liisa concluded ‘It was by measuring the economic value of the National parks that we were able to save them.’

You can find the latest report on the economic impact of Finland's National Parks here - <http://www.metsa.fi/sivustot/metsa/en/Recreation/protectedareaslocaleconomyimpacts/Sivut/default.aspx>

YOU ARE NOT NORMAL

Are you a Homer or a Spock? Well, according to **Henry Hicks**, you're definitely more of a Homer. Also, you're not normal either.

Futerra is a sustainability communications agency; from green to ethical, climate change to corporate responsibility, they are marketing thinkers, creatives and sustainability gurus. Henry Hicks, Creative Director, talked to the EUROPARC audience on how to 'sell the sizzle, not the sausage'; in other words, how to communicate the value of nature and the threats to biodiversity by triggering human emotions in our promotional and advertising campaigns.

'You are not normal' stated Henry at the start of his talk 'you have knowledge that no everyday person has, or indeed should have, but you have to communicate this knowledge in a way that is understandable and produces a positive action. It's not enough to be right; you have to be good communicators.'

Through 3 'Power Tools' Henry explained how Futerra has designed and implemented campaigns for organisations involved in sustainable and green practices. Firstly though, we have to recognise our audience and what message works best with them. Dividing people into settlers (traditional values), prospectors (result orientated) and pioneers (innovators), Henry showed that even when people have the same opinions on an issue, they have very different ways of tackling it.

'Know your audience' said Henry 'and love your audience'.

In what was a common-theme throughout the day, it was positive messages that really get through to the audience. The extinction message that has been so prevalent over the last few decades should, in Henry's opinion, be killed. Instead we need to celebrate those moments of awe and connection with nature – even if that means anthropomorphising animals in advertisements to connect them with our audience.

There is a place for the cost/benefit message in communicating how important nature is, almost like you would a product, but these should be supporting messages rather than the main thrust.

'If we can show that other people like us are valuing nature than we can create a demand for it' concluded Henry, talking about a recent campaign with the UK Wildlife Trust where the theme was people and their personal connection with nature. 'We should always remember that stories beat statistics, love beats loss, simplicity beats complexity and emotion beats intellect.'

Power Tool 1 EMPATHY

Understanding and loving your audience. Finding out their needs and wants and help them meet them by adapting your message to the correct target audience.

Rational, cost-benefit communications are not effective in reaching people as they are so inundated with messages every day.

Power Tool 2 SIMPLICITY

Don't try and explain everything that you think that matters. Find a simple, positive human truth which appeals to emotions.

Power Tool 3 LOVE

- Showing nature at its most fundamental level, the way we are connected to nature in a positive message.
- Don't use threat and extinction messages
- Don't show nature as entirely separate
- Do put people at the heart.
- Love + Action = policy change



LEARNING FROM MR DISNEY

A visit to Disneyland brought a few home truths to **Tuija Seipell**, Consultant, Entrepreneur, Writer, and she shared how the lessons she learnt there can be applied to protected areas, including her beloved Pacific Rim National Park in Vancouver.

'We found ourselves mopping up coffee from a pavement like it was some sort of disaster. Why did we behave like this?'

Tuija goes regularly to Disneyland with her family. For a lover of nature, it could seem that Disneyland is an environment created entirely from a fabricated reality, but the way it treats its customers, and the way the customers react to that treatment, can have real applications in the way we manage our protected areas.

Before the famous 'Electric Parade', Tuija was sitting on the sidewalk with her family. Getting there early to get the best spot, a coffee was required to stay awake. Unfortunately, she accidentally spilled the coffee on the sidewalk. Normally, the reaction would be to pick up the cup and let the coffee seep through the cracks and dry in the California sun. But in Disneyland, where everything is immaculate, Tuija found herself and her fellow Disneyland guests, mopping up the coffee with paper napkins.

What happened was that they had been so conditioned by Disney, after only a few days, that everything there was immaculate and clean that they felt they had to keep it that way. Disney, by not negatively forcing people to behave but rather reinforcing positive actions, had made Tuija and her fellow guests honorary members of the cleaning staff.

'Maybe we should make our rules to meet with the needs for the people that are good, and not for the people that are bad' explains Tuija 'Instead of saying 'do not throw garbage' and put up an ugly sign somewhere, maybe we should create an environment where even dropping one piece of garbage would make people around turn around and tell you to pick it up.'

This approach works because it is applied at all levels. From the cleaning staff, to the security at the gate, the performers in the shows and the management of the park, they all work towards providing a positive customer experience where good behaviours are reinforced. As

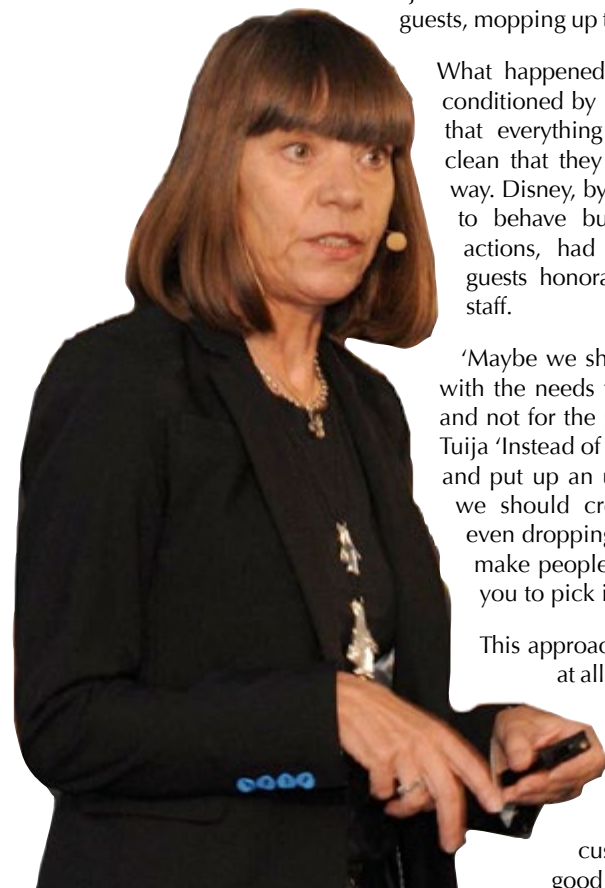
Tuija put it 'The female toilet attendant, who has to deal with harassed mothers, pregnant woman and screaming babies, is the best customer representative in the whole park'.

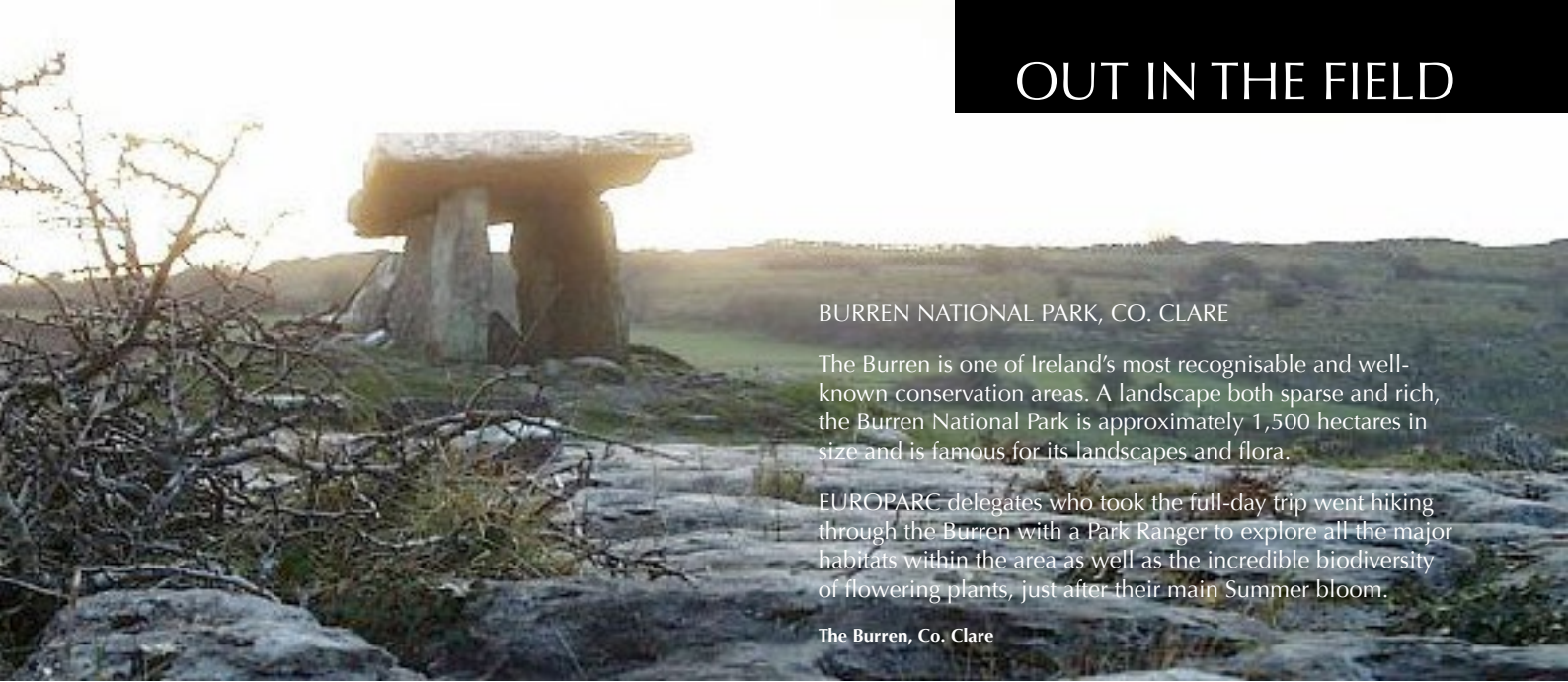
At the entrance of Disneyland there is a sign saying 'Here you leave today and enter the world of yesterday, tomorrow, and fantasy'. Tuija believes that the reason that millions of people go to Disneyland every year is not the marketing budget, it's that we get something more than we expected every single time, and this is something protected areas can also achieve. They enter a world different from their day-to-day lives, and it is the same when visiting National Parks.

It is an experience Tuija has every time she goes back to Pacific Rim National Park, Vancouver, where she spends weeks at a time. The smell in the air, the mist of the lake, the crunch of the ground underneath, they all transport her to somewhere outside her daily life, while being more 'real' than any normal experience. 'All your senses are heightened, nothing is there that doesn't belong there, everything that is there is meant to be there, and you are protected from your daily worries. You are allowed to feel good; you are allowed to feel alive.'

Disneyland is an illusory experience but grounded in a reality by the people that work there. Every National Park and protected area is a very real experience, which can be brought to life by people like EUROPARC members. Disneyland has spent millions, possibly billions, on making their park an experience that nature has provided us for free. For Tuija, it is up to us to communicate that message and to positively encourage people to see it as such, with the people that manage these protected areas vital to that message. Disney has taught us that every person has a role to play, and we should have as many staff personally communicating that message to the 'customer' arriving at the National Park.

'Focus on what is really important. When Pacific Rim National Park cut costs, they cut the Park Rangers, the front-line staff. They cut where they should not have cut' she said before concluding 'We should cancel all offices – there is nowhere to hide. As many as you as possible should be interacting with the public all the time. If you need the public vote, then you should be serving the public. When the public at large don't care the politicians won't care; and the politicians will only jump when the voters do.'





BURREN NATIONAL PARK, CO. CLARE

The Burren is one of Ireland's most recognisable and well-known conservation areas. A landscape both sparse and rich, the Burren National Park is approximately 1,500 hectares in size and is famous for its landscapes and flora.

EUROPARC delegates who took the full-day trip went hiking through the Burren with a Park Ranger to explore all the major habitats within the area as well as the incredible biodiversity of flowering plants, just after their main Summer bloom.

The Burren, Co. Clare

MOUNT BRANDON, CO. KERRY

Mount Brandon is a 952m (3,123 ft) mountain on the Dingle Peninsula in County Kerry, Ireland and includes an area designated as Special Area of Conservation. The field trip examined local habitat issues such as upland grazing, a Natterjack Toad scheme and sand dune management and invasive species such as the Sea Buckthorn.

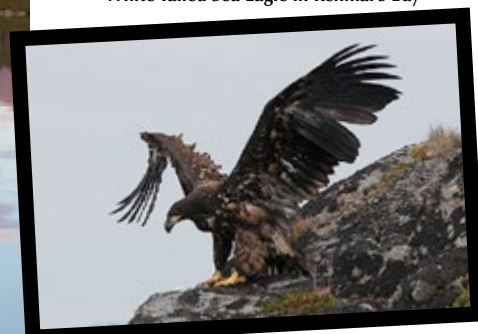


Mount Brandon, Pictures by Mat Roberts during EUROPARC Field Trip

KENMARE BAY, CO. KERRY

With amazingly tranquil waters, Kenmare Bay is the ideal place to take a boat and explore the prolific wildlife in the area including one of Ireland's largest seal colonies as well as White-Tailed Sea Eagles, which have recently been re-introduced into Kerry. EUROPARC delegates did just that, covering issues such as Marine tourism and Aquaculture with their local guides.

White Tailed Sea Eagle in Kenmare Bay





OLD KENMARE ROAD

The Old Kenmare Road runs along the edge of Killarney National Park, taking you through stunning valleys, misty mountains, lush green plant-life and over rivers that cut through the landscape. Escorted by our two local park ranger guides, the dozen EUROPARC delegates were treated to an in-depth exploration of how Killarney National Park is managed and the challenges the rangers face.

Immediately having left the road a sign warning of rutting deer and not to leave the path during the season greets you. Stopping, our guide explains how the surrounding trees are made up of native vs non-native trees, with the non-native trees having been planted by the private landowners that once owned the land. An on-going debate surrounds what will happen to these trees, halting due to the lack of resources available to the rangers even if the will was in place to remove them. With no real commercial value, it's likely they will stay rooted to the ground for many years.

After breaking through the woods into the open landscape we were greeted by the early morning mist sweeping over the mountains and the sound of rutting deer in the distance. We were told how the deer was also made up of two distinct breeds of native vs non-native – Red Deer vs Sika Deer. The non-native deer were introduced to Ireland from Japan and have gradually gained a steady foothold. Although the deer were high on the mountain, two delegates were lucky enough to spot a stag with their binoculars.



Interestingly, one of the biggest problems the rangers faced was the grazing of the landscape by sheep. Once, sheep covered the hills due to EU subsidies that made sheep rearing a highly profitable business in Ireland in past decades. This led to dangerous overgrazing, although once those EU subsidies were withdrawn the landscape reversed to being undergrazed. There is no single solution to this, although sometimes fire is used to manage the landscape, but again a significant lack of on-the-ground resources have meant that it's difficult to do this in a coherent manner.

This lack of resources was a common theme throughout the field-trip, with the rangers explaining that the areas that they need to control were growing larger as their numbers were growing smaller. The recent trend of allocating resources into middle-management located far away from the protected areas and away from the people actively managing the area was the biggest concern for the local field-staff, and a problem shared by many of the EUROPARC delegates on the field trip.



Once we had left the Kenmare Road we took a bus to the middle lake walk. By this stage, the sun had broken out and we could experience the Park in all its glory. Over the next few hours we circled the lake, stopping at the 'Meeting of the Waters' bridge. As the name implies the Meeting of the waters is where Killarney's famous lakes converge. The Upper lake, Middle Lake (also known as Muckcross Lake) and Lower Lake (Lough Leane) all come together at this beautiful spot.

Once you near the house the nearby lake glistens so brightly that it nearly blinds you, and the jaunting cars continue that other-worldly feel. As two American cyclists passing by said 'around every corner is just next-level pretty'.

variety of new and environmentally friendly control methods for Rhododendron with volunteers and students playing a particularly important role.

Once we had made our way through the National Park we started along the road to Muckross House. The trees on the way down the old driveway are spectacular in their stillness and power, giving you the distinct knowledge that they were here long before you, and will be there long after you have gone. Once you near the house the nearby lake glistens so brightly that it nearly blinds you, and the jaunting cars continue that other-worldly feel. As two American cyclists passing by said 'around every corner is just next-level pretty'.

Thanking our guides for their invaluable expertise and time we all explored Muckross House. Beside from the house itself, the ground contained fabulous gardens - the Sunken Garden, Rock Garden and the Stream Garden, which were all developed around the mid-19th century. Ending our day we visited the Muckross Traditional Farms which allows visitors to step into the past and experience Ireland as it was in the 1930s.

Here we learned of the biggest problem facing the rangers; the Rhododendron. Hundreds of thousands of euro are spent each year in the effort to eradicate the highly invasive and destructive Rhododendron ponticum in Killarney National Park. It is a native of the Black Sea Region and Iberian peninsula. It was introduced into Ireland in the early 19th century and planted in gardens and woodland as an ornament and game cover. In recent times the Killarney National Park has been examining a



GLANTEENASSIG

Glanteenassig is a 450 ha. Area of goodland, mountain, lake and peatland nestling in a sheltered valley among the Slieve Mish Mountains. During the fieldtrip, EUROPARC delegates learned how the area was being rewilded and were given lessons on how to map out an area for wilderness and how to manage and promote areas like Glanteenassig in Europe.



EUROPARC delegates learning about re-wilding wilderness from their field trip leader



INISHFALLEN ISLAND AND TOMIES WOOD

A boat trip to Inishfallen Island in the Lakes of Killarney. The Island itself is rich in history, with a monastery found there that dates back to the 7th Century. It was said to be founded by St. Finian the Leper, and was occupied for approximately 700 years. During that time, the 'Annals of Inisfallen' were written, which chronicle the early history of Ireland and the original copy is now kept in a controlled atmosphere in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The monastery is also thought to have given rise to the name Lough Léin, which means "Lake of Learning".

Alongside the monastery remains of an extensive 12th century Augustinian priory and a small 11th – 12th century Romanesque church. This monastery was founded in the 7th century by St. Finian the Leper, and was occupied for approximately 700 years. After the boat trip to the Island, delegates visited Tomies Wood to learn about managing the Oak woodlands, the use of the park for recreation and the project to reintroduce the White-tailed Sea eagle.



MUCKROSS & DINIS

A circuitous walk around Muckross Lake, which is located within Killarney National Park, the EUROPARC delegates crossed the geological divide that runs through the park, from limestone to old red sandstone, with the soil types resulting in fascinating biodiversity. The walk took in the Reenadinna wood, 25 hectares of yew woodland on carboniferous limestone reef and pavements. Reenadinna is the only significant yew woodland in Ireland and indeed in Western Europe.

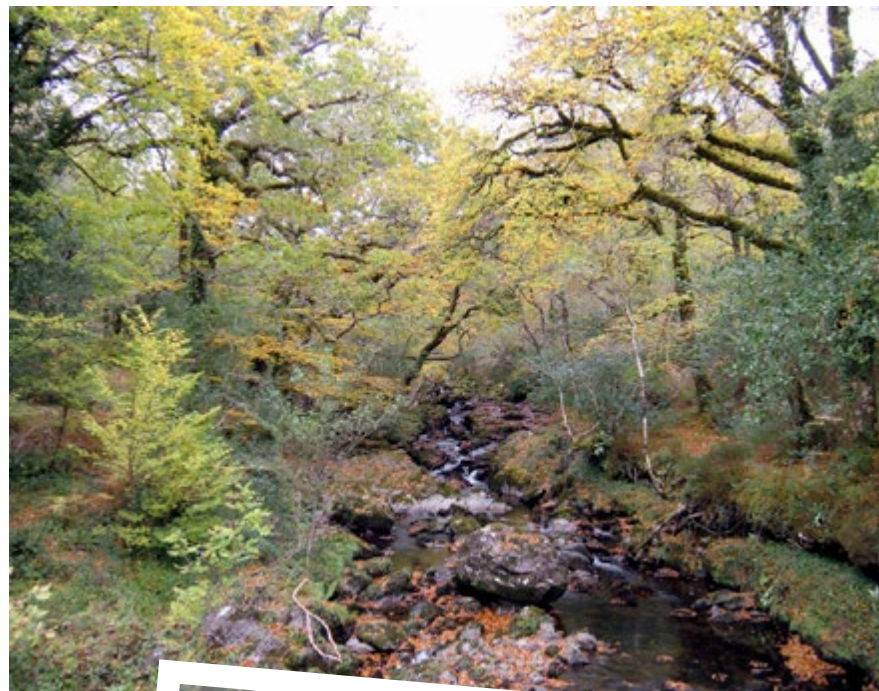
The walk also tackled the impact that *Rhododendron ponticum* has had on the oak woodlands and the measures implemented by the Park management to stop the spread of this invasive species.



BOAT TRIP AND JAUNTING CAR

One of the field trips that took a boat trip around the Lakes of Killarney, here delegates were able to follow that with a jaunting car through the Gap of Dunloe. Covering sustainable tourism and freshwater ecology and threats, they were able to reach the Gap of Dunloe more easily in the jaunting car than with a larger vehicle.

Excavated by forging ice flows during the last ice age the Gap of Dunloe is a wild and rugged landscape. It runs just outside the western perimeter of the National Park and is one of Ireland's most popular natural landscapes to visit. And, as the EUROPARC delegates discovered, the jaunting car driver, known, as a "jarvey" is both a guide and a storyteller - and that in this part of the world there are many stories to tell!



GLENGARRIFF WOODS NATURE RESERVE

A nature reserve of over 300ha in extent, Glengarriff Woods is an old oak woodland where the woods are coastal and hyper-oceanic in nature. The field trip delegates were brought along the woodland trails by local Conservation Ranger, Clare Heardman, and learnt about many species of interest including the humble local Kerry slug.



GARNISH ISLAND

The field trip then went to Garnish Island which features Italianate gardens and wilder areas of planting, with exotic shrubs and trees dotted around the 15ha landscape. With a Martello tower on the island, the Head Gardener, Finbarr O'Sullivan, had plenty of history and ecology knowledge to impart with the EUROPARC delegates on the field trip.

WORKING TOGETHER

On the final full day of the conference, delegates came together to work on some of the most pressing issues of the day. With 14 workshops and dedicated leaders in each one, some of the finest minds in conservation worked on the problems together.

WORKSHOP 1

The Value of involving young adults in Protected Areas discussed how young adults can be excellent advocates for protected areas and the wider European N2000 system. We learnt from the experience of Cairngorms National Park in Scotland how they moved the successful Junior Ranger programme forward during 2013.

WORKSHOP 2

The Economic Value of Protected Areas. It's all about the money, right? This workshop focussed on the studies that have shown protected areas and N2000 sites have been shown to be net stimulators in a local economy and when investing in such studies is beneficial. Our keynote speaker, Liisa Kajala from Finland and Tegryn Jones of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in Wales were on hand to discuss how the economic studies done in Finland and Wales could be replicated in other parts of Europe.

WORKSHOP 3

Valuable Funding for Protected Areas took a look at the critical levels of public agency funding all over Europe and the WECAN project which develops the role parks play with the private sector through environmental sponsorship as a mechanism to deliver food business and biodiversity. The workshop explored the lessons learned from the project and attempted to identify priorities and potential partnerships that would enable parks across Europe to establish positive relationships with the corporate sector.

WORKSHOP 4

The Value of Research examined how we need to fill the gaps in our knowledge to truly identify action orientated answers and build learning landscapes. The workshop leader, Dr. Zsolt Vegari, Hortobagy National Park, discussed how we can identify research priorities and what the role of parks should be both as living laboratories as well as a place to gain new knowledge and techniques to effectively manage the parks and N2000 sites.

WORKSHOP 5

The Value of Good Connectivity in Nature explored the issues surrounding what role protected areas in wider landscape planning. Workshop leaders Gerry Clabby from Fingal County Council and Magnus Wessel, Bund, looked at transboundary examples with Magnus presenting the Green Belt Initiative and the way it has contributed to implementing the Green Infrastructure strategy.

WORKSHOP 6

The Value of Healthy Nature for Healthy People highlighted the need to promote protected areas and N2000 sites as having clear benefits to human health and how to provide clear health orientated services and access. Ron Jules, National Trust, gave the example of an innovative project with Sports England showing how two previous, disparate partners came together using protected areas as the focus of health benefiting activities and how to build evidence based case studies from across Europe to demonstrate the benefits of these partnerships.



WORKSHOP 7

The Value of Integrated Management of Protected Areas for Biodiversity examined the 'bigger picture' of conservation. The fact that protected areas and N2000 sites cross-borders means the integrated management of biodiversity is vital. Emma Salizzonie, Polytechnic of Turin, European Documentation Centre on Nature Park Planning presented on the relationship between EUROPARC members and N2000 sites while Neil McIntosh, ECNC, looked at the management issues in N2000 sites and at initiatives to encourage cooperation for better management.

WORKSHOP 8

The Value of Protected Areas for Climate Change and Renewable Energy examined how protected areas are a key natural solution to climate change and need to be seen as a part of the actions governments can take to both mitigate and adapt to climate change. Michael O'Briain, EU Commission, DG Environment highlighted the EC guidelines on N2000 and climate change while Diego Mattioli, showed how he aims to develop an efficient and sustainable biomass supply chain in 5 European Nature Parks through the BioEUParks project.

WORKSHOP 9

Community Values in Protected Areas. How do you involve the community in protected areas, and how can they become part of the management

process? This workshop, using the Biosphere Reserve Model as a focus, tried to answer that question. Brigid Barry of the Burrenbeo Trust highlighted the pioneering work of a charity based in the Burren, Ireland, with over a decade of experience in empowering local communities to become active leaders in the conservation of their local protected area.

WORKSHOP 10

Landscape Values. Since the European Landscape Convention – which promotes the protection, management and planning of European landscapes and organises European co-operation on landscape issues – was ratified, different countries have used different strategies to implement it. William Cumming of Arnside and Silverdale AONB (UK), looked at the genesis of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland and explored what the Landscape Convention has meant for the management of protected areas.

WORKSHOP 11

The Value of Marine Protected Areas discussed the planning of 'no take zones' together with the fishery sector. The discussion revolved around the inherently complicated nature of marine protected areas and the need to combine the needs of local businesses while at the same time preserving the natural local resources.

WORKSHOP 12

Agricultural Values in Protected Areas examined how can protected areas and N2000 sites promote initiatives that support food protection that retain high nature conservation values and how should protected areas work with the new CAP and agro-environmental measures to develop new partnerships in integrated management. Through the input of workshop leaders from Slow Food, PNR Massif des Bauges and Burren Farming for Conservation Programme, the workshop looked at practical examples of how working with local producers helped gain a better understanding of what mutual benefits we can achieve through aligning conservation and agriculture in a protected area.

WORKSHOP 13

The Value of Protected Areas as Sustainable Tourism Destinations. Josep Maria Prats, Parc Natural de la Zona Volcanica de la Garrotxa, presented an economic study of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism on Tourism Garroxta during 2001 – 2010. To complement this, Amanda Guzman, Manager of TUREBE – ECOtourism in Spain Club presented a case study about cooperation between local businesses and protected areas. Through these examples, delegates were shown what practical activities can be undertaken in their own area and how economic and social studies can be used to provide new evidence on the value of sustainable tourism.

WORKSHOP 14

The Wilderness Value in Protected Areas discussed the value of wilderness thinking and how to balance the commercial "selling" of wilderness as an experience or if it should remain as a strict non-intervention protection area. Bill Murphy, Coillte (IE) looked at some of the models they have employed to assess wild landscapes while the Laponia World Heritage Site, Swedish EPA (SE) examined a living wilderness combining traditional land use and expanding visitation.

WORKSHOP 15

Communicating the Value of Nature saw ProPark (Romania) presenting the current findings from the project 'Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura 2000 Network' which showcased new training materials and case studies from around Europe. With communicating the value of nature the core thrust of the EUROPARC Conference, this workshop looked to gather new ideas of communicating this value to the wider world.



T Tuija Seipell @TuijaSeipell Follow

I have fallen in love with Ireland. Thank you @EUROPARC & Killarney & the incredibly friendly people!



Guardian Environment follows
Goldman Prize @goldmanprize · Sep 30
 RT @EUROPARC: Warm welcome to our new president @ISchops and new council #EUROPARC2014



EUROPARC Federation @EUROPARC Follow

On the way to Killarney for the big conference. EUROPARC now in Dublin. Beautiful sunny day! #EUROPARC2014



harrymgee follows
Dorothy-Ellen White @dorollwhite · Sep 30
 Magnificent Oaks in Tomies woods, Killarney National Park @NativeWoodTrust #europarc2014 #trees



Kilian Kelly @kellylad · Sep 30
 @EUROPARC delegates warming up at Brandon pier after a very wet morning on the hill #EUROPARC2014



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Great opening ceremony. Thank you Kerry and Killarney for having us here @ the #EUROPARC2014



The Malton Hotel and 1 other retweeted
Exp. Gaelic Games @expgaelicgames · Sep 29
 Paella & Gaelic games was it not always this way? @thamaltonhotel1 Killarney #EUROPARC2014 @tourismireland



Mat Roberts @matroberts · Sep 30
 @EUROPARC #EUROPARC2014 trip 2 drying out at a day in liquid sunshine #greatday



Mat Roberts @matroberts - Oct 1
 @matroberts: #EUROPARC2014 #montbrandon after a hike up in liquid sunshine the clouds clear #greatday



Wicklow Uplands @WicklowUplands - Oct 6
 Killarney National Park, #europarc14 fieldtrip on @EUROPARC conference last week



patrick boucneau @pboucneau - Oct 1
 Proficiat @ISchops met je voorzitterschap van @EUROPARC: #EUROPARC2014 #limburgerenwereldburger #LimburgBe



Egbert Beens @DeBoswachter - Oct 2
 Terug uit Ierland #europarc2014 conference met leerzame workshops en prachtige natuur. Killarney National Park



Tuija Seipell @TuijaSeipell - Oct 1
 Beauty beyond description at Killarney National Park. Thank you @EUROPARC



EUROPARC Federation @EUROPARC Follow

Toad hunters in castlegregory. great field trip @EUROPARC #EUROPARC2014

Reply Retweet Favorite More



Leave No Trace @leavenotrace - Oct 1
 Understanding the value of nature @CollieOutdoors at the #EUROPARC2014 conference workshop on #leavenotrace



Padraic Gilligan and 1 other follow
Exp. Gaelic Games @expgaelicgames - Sep 30
 Congrats to Emma our female home winner in Kilkarney at 85kph - fair play #EUROPARC2014



A WORD FROM OUR DELEGATES

The Views of EUROPARC Delegates...



Gillian Conroy, Ireland, Coillte

It's been fantastic so far; really great discussions and engagement from everyone. Talking to people, we've all had great experiences on the field-trips with the amazing scenery that surrounds us here. In the workshops this morning I heard a great deal about others around Europe are viewing wilderness and are 're-wilding' areas and the techniques they've used – that's something that we're really going to have a debate about within Coillte to see how we can come up with some positive changes, particularly in relation to the Wilderness Project in the Nephin Beg (Mayo, Ireland) area and also the Glentanassig area, which was one of the field trips yesterday.

Carles Castell, Spain, Provincial Government of Barcelona

Yes, it has been marvellous. The field-trip was wonderful - we went to Kenmare Bay. We went around the harbour in the boat and a lovely walk around the lake in Killarney. The area has really surprised me in how the tourism works really well with the National Park. And today was the workshops which we had fantastic discussions and really good outcomes. I'll be having a meeting with all my staff when I go home to transfer the information I've learned here to them.



Matti Hovi, Finland, Metsähallitus, Natural Heritage Services

It's been fantastic so far, I've been really enjoying Killarney. It's very different from the region I come from, it's so green and natural looking.

The keynote sessions were excellent, with Tuija really standing out. It's not so much the practical information that I got from the sessions but they helped reinforced the emotional side and feelings about what we are doing, which helps reassure us that we are doing things right. Also, the dinner last night was great – I love Irish music!



Erika Klavina, Latvia, Nature Conservation Agency

I have been to many EUROPARC conferences before and it's always interesting and fun to meet all the friends and gain the experience of what is happening in other areas. The plenary sessions were really interesting in how we communicate the value of nature to society and today we discussed in the workshops how we need to explain ecology functions so people understand why a habitat or species is protected and why protection is not just putting a fence around an area or species but actively managing the whole ecosystem.

I loved the Irish night – I poured my own pint of Guinness and I liked it! The area of Killarney is beautiful, all mountains and lakes, and I even enjoyed the train journey from Dublin as I could see the landscape change as the train travelled across the country.

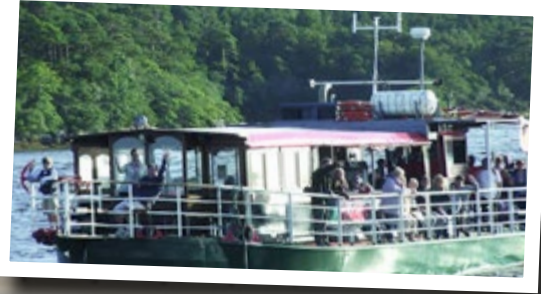


Desmond Patterson, United Kingdom, Mourne Heritage Trust

This is the first time I've been to EUROPARC and, as a Chairman of the Mourne Heritage Trust, I was invited down and I'm delighted I did. I've really enjoyed the social programme – the food was great and I was even able to do a bit of dancing!

As a person who works on a full-time farm, it's very interesting to see where the environmentalists are coming from. There's an awful lot of work to be done as there is still a lot of suspicion on the side of the farmer towards the environmentalist, but I do believe that once we sit down and talk we'll find that we are both trying to do the same things; the environment won't work without the cooperation with the farmer.

Out on our walks in the National Parks I came across a couple of new ideas that I'll be implementing as soon as we get back to the Mourne's.



Steven Verdrengh, Belgium, natuurpunt

This is my second time at EUROPARC and I've really enjoyed it. The presentations were excellent, especially Tuija - it was the best! The Irish Night was excellent, being able to meet other people from around Europe and share information is really important.



Sean Fitzpatrick, United Kingdom, Mourne Heritage Trust

I have enjoyed it very, very much. I'm delighted that I came here and have met some wonderful people and gotten some wonderful ideas that we will be able to put in practice back on the Mourne's. As a farmer, all the conversations have been really interesting to me and I think, in a lot of cases, I think they may be learning more from us than we are from them!

Helena Fitzgerald, Ireland, Blackstairs Farming for Conservation Group

The first day presentations were fantastic, really inspiring. All of the presentations were excellent in their way but for me, who works in communication and represent a community group that actively tries to engage the local population in conservation efforts, all the thoughts of the presenters really reassured me that we are doing things right.

I must say that I felt isolated here as someone from a community group and I do believe that the future of a lot of protected areas, particularly those areas not designated as national parks, will be done by these community, volunteer-led groups. I'd like to see something on the programme about this issue of area/land stewardship, especially those areas with hundreds of stakeholders – especially those areas where people that live within the conservation area.

The social events? The Irish Night was probably my favourite, but the field trips were excellent too, even if we got a little wet!



The EUROPARC delegates were able to sample the best of Ireland during their stay...



Traditional Irish food..



Irish Music and Dancing...



Irish Storytellers...



Learning how to pour a pint of Guinness ...



and Traditional Irish games



EUROPARC STRATEGY PLAN

EUROPARC Strategy 2015-2021

The General Assembly has officially endorsed the new strategy of the Federation, which sets the ambitions and main priorities of the network for the next six years. The new strategy is the result of a successful participatory process which has seen the active involvement of the members together with all the different organs of the organisation.

Solidly anchored on the values of the Federation (fun, respect, cooperation, sharing, learning and sustainability) the strategy identifies EUROPARC aspirations for the upcoming years:

- Build a strong, united voice for Europe's natural heritage, and be the voice for all nature and landscape Protected Areas;
- Realise a stronger, unifying, European network organisation that is better placed to respond to current and future challenges facing Europe's nature;
- Underpin the continued development of the EUROPARC Federation as the network for Europe's natural and cultural heritage.

The core of the strategy are the vision: "Sustainable Nature, valued by people" together with the new mission: "EUROPARC works for our natural and cultural heritage, to improve and champion the policy and practice of Protected Area management, in order to deliver sustainable nature, valued by people."

Through the implementation of this strategy, EUROPARC will further seek to improve its governance, effectively address expectations on protected areas management and align both the work of the Federation and that of its members to European and international policy. In particular, to support the realisation of the EU 7EAP and to support the N2000 network by increasing awareness of the importance and role of Protected Area.

EUROPARC: The Years Ahead

Four main STRATEGIC THEMES of work will guide the organisation to successfully implement the new strategy:

WORKING FOR NATURE

Managing, conserving, protecting and communicating about nature are important themes for all our members, and continuing to ensure the effective management of the protected areas, including the N2000 network, across EU is essential. EUROPARC has therefore identified a number of areas of work, where sharing of expertise, learning new ways of working, understanding and implementing policy and developing communications and tools to support Protected Areas are included.

HELPING PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONS LEARN

No improvement in policy implementation will be achieved without adequate investment in developing capacity within the Protected Area management community to deliver more effectively managed and conserved protected natural heritage. Networking is the key to sharing and expanding knowledge. Practical information, expertise and ideas will be harvested and shared to produce real, innovative learning opportunities, essential for up-scaling operations, delivering greater efficiency and optimising impacts. Delivering inspiring and motivational services for people will be a key goal, building on current, strong methods, such as workshops, seminars and conferences.

PROMOTING SUSTAINABILITY: Role of Protected Areas in Sustainable Development

EUROPARC seeks to mainstream Protected Areas as models for sustainable development, to deliver social, economic and environmental benefits, with stakeholders across relevant sectors. EUROPARC will further develop its experience in bringing business to be involved in Protected Areas, and will highlight the role, and examine the policy effectiveness of N2000 sites and Protected Areas to safeguard the Union's citizens from environment-related pressures and risks to health and wellbeing.

WORKING TOGETHER: Building our Organisation

The EUROPARC Federation is built on the principle that Europe's natural heritage is better conserved and managed through international cooperation and so we seek to increase opportunities for networking, exchange and collaboration in all areas of our work. Furthermore, being aware that the operational context of organisations with responsibilities for nature protection are changing, and resources for nature conservation are likely to be under increasing pressure, EUROPARC will work to be an effective and efficient network looking for continual development and improvement of the organisation.



NEW COUNCIL ELECTED

The 2014-2017 Council Members are:

IGNACE SCHOPS (BE), President

Ignace Schops believes that the EUROPARC Federation has a high potential to influence the future of Europe and increase the awareness for our precious heritage. Together with the valuable work of the membership and EUROPARC sections he is eager to do his best in order to “help EUROPARC become the biggest, strongest and most friendly umbrella network in Europe and a standard for the European policy”.

KAJA LOTMAN (EE)

With more than 20 years of experience in nature conservation, Kaja Lotman was educated as a biologist and is currently working for the Environmental Board of Estonia. She is the President of the EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section and was also chosen to represent all the sections within the EUROPARC Council in 2014.

OLAF OSTERMANN (DE)

Born in Hamburg, Germany, Olaf Ostermann has been involved in nature conservation since the age of 14. Since 1991, he has been working as a public employee for nature conservation in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, northeast Germany, mainly for “Large Protected Areas” (National Parks, Biosphere Reserves, Nature Parks). He was appointed Council Member of the EUROPARC Federation in 2005-2008 and was the Lead-Partner of the Interreg-project PARKS&BENEFITS, which promoted EUROPARC’s Sustainable Tourism Charter in the Baltic Sea Region.

MICHAEL HOSEK (CZ)

Michael Hošek has recently been appointed as the coordinator of the Czech Section of the EUROPARC Federation. With a M.Sc. Degree in Landscape Ecology and Management he is currently a member of the International Union for Conservation of Nature - IUCN Council (representing East Europe, North and Central Asia in 2012 – 2016 period).

PAULO CASTRO (PT)

Paulo Castro is currently the Treasurer of the EUROPARC Federation a co-opted EUROPARC Council member for the area of the Sustainable Tourism/European Charter since 2012. He comes from Portugal and for the last 30 years, he has mainly worked in mountain rural areas with participatory methodologies trying to put sustainable development into the agenda of the other stakeholders. Paulo has valuable experience in project development - e.g. concept and management with EU and non EU funding (Interreg, Life, Equal, EEAG, ESF, RDEF, etc.).

VITTORIO ALESSANDRO (IT)

Vittorio Alessandro is the President of Cinque Terre National Park in Italy – UNESCO World Heritage and a member of the Directorate of Federparchi – EUROPARC Italian section. His professional experience has mainly been focused on the strategy and ways to protect the most inhabited Italian parks, but also on the Marine areas and important presence of biodiversity.

DOMINIQUE LEVEQUE (FR)

Dominique remains on the Council. His term ends in Oct 2015.

The section representative for this period was **KAJA LOTMAN**, President of the Nordic-Baltic Section. She was replaced by **OLAF HOLM (FR)** for the next council period.

The new internal auditor is **ROGER DE FREITAS**.



AWARD WINNERS



European Day of Parks 2014 winner
Anne-Marie Austad from Malta, representing
Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park

ALFRED TOEPFER NATURAL HERITAGE SCHOLARSHIPS 2014

Each year the EUROPARC Federation, with support from the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S., awards three Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships to young conservationists, who are committed to working for the benefit of Protected Areas. The aim of the scholarships is to enhance international cooperation and to advance the quality, innovation and European dimension of Protected Area management.

The €3000 scholarship enables the successful applicants to go abroad where they can undertake a study trip and learn from the European-wide network of EUROPARC. After the trip the scholars are expected to present the Federation with their findings and a report. This year, the three successful conservationists awarded by the EUROPARC Federation are Joss Rattcliff (UK), Milene Matos (PT) and Natalya Yakusheva (SE). More information about the 2014 winners can be found on the EUROPARC website: <http://europarc.org/what-we-do/alfred-toepfer-natur/previous-scholarship/>



Transboundary Award - Ecoregion Julian Alps
Prealpi Giulie Nature Park and Triglav National Park

EUROPEAN DAY OF PARKS 2014 CONTEST WINNER

The EUROPARC Federation has always been committed to promoting young people as ambassadors that are able to speak on nature's behalf. This year, at the EUROPARC Conference in Ireland, we were truly delighted to welcome on stage our 2014 European Day of Parks winner, Anne-Marie Austad from Malta, representing Il-Majjistral Nature and History Park.

To get an insight into EUROPARC's campaign on the European Day of Parks, watch the video on YouTube here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4WGDESXxSsQ> or simply search 'European Day of Parks 2014 video'

TRANSBOUNDARY AWARD

Five years after the first evaluation in 2009, Prealpi Giulie Nature Park (IT) and Triglav National Park (SI) forming the Ecoregion Julian Alps, rightfully saw the renewal of the EUROPARC Transboundary Award at the EUROPARC Conference in Killarney, Ireland. Both parks proved to have strengthened their cooperation and proudly took home the accolade, congratulations and recommendations on their common work. A common application for the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas is the planned next step in their collaborative work. This would make the Ecoregion Julian Alps the first transboundary protected area applying for that process.



Alfred Toepfer Natural Heritage Scholarships 2014
Milene Matos, Joss Rattcliffe, Natalya Yakusheva

NEXT YEAR EUROPARC in 2015

With its new strategy in place and its implementation ahead, EUROPARC is excited about the activities in the coming year. The Federation will continue with the successful programmes and corresponding events which we have been running: the Charter for Sustainable Tourism and Charter network meeting, the Transboundary Parks Programme and TransParcNet meeting and the Junior Ranger Programme with its international camp.

Projects started in 2014 and in previous years will be continued. LIFE EME on effective N2000 communication, DBU developing online training for protected area professionals (both in partnership with ProPark (RO)) and BioEUParks on use of solid biomasses in Protected Areas, are enabling EUROPARC to gain knowledge in new topics and

foster experience exchange among the members. EUROPARC also awaits feedback on project applications handed in which, in successful cases, will start off new fields of work.

Better sharing of knowledge and ideas lead to better nature conservation, therefore the communication and experience exchange with members, national and European authorities as well as the wider public will continue to be a key element of the Federation's work. EUROPARC reaches these aims through a number of means and channels: production of bi-monthly eNews and annual magazine PA-Insight, use of social media, promotion of European Day of Parks and many more. A highlight in the 2015 communication of the Federation will be the launch of a new website, making communication much easier and effective.

Also next year EUROPARC will promote and organise dedicated events for protected areas: the EUROPARC Conference 2015 "Protected Areas in a Changing World" with a parallel Youth Conference "Be a Positive Change for Nature" will be held in Regensburg. A sustainable tourism conference in Portugal will bring business and protected area managers together to see how environmentally responsible business practices can be expanded and contribute to secure investments and incentives to protect the environment. The Siggen seminar 2015 will look at effective management and monitoring for N2000 and multi designated sites.

EUROPARC as a Pan European NGO will seek to create a more effective protected area network, with a clear vision and strategy to further meet the needs of N2000 and protected areas managers to accomplish the visions of a greener more sustainable Europe.

For more info, contact us through the following ways.

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/europarc>

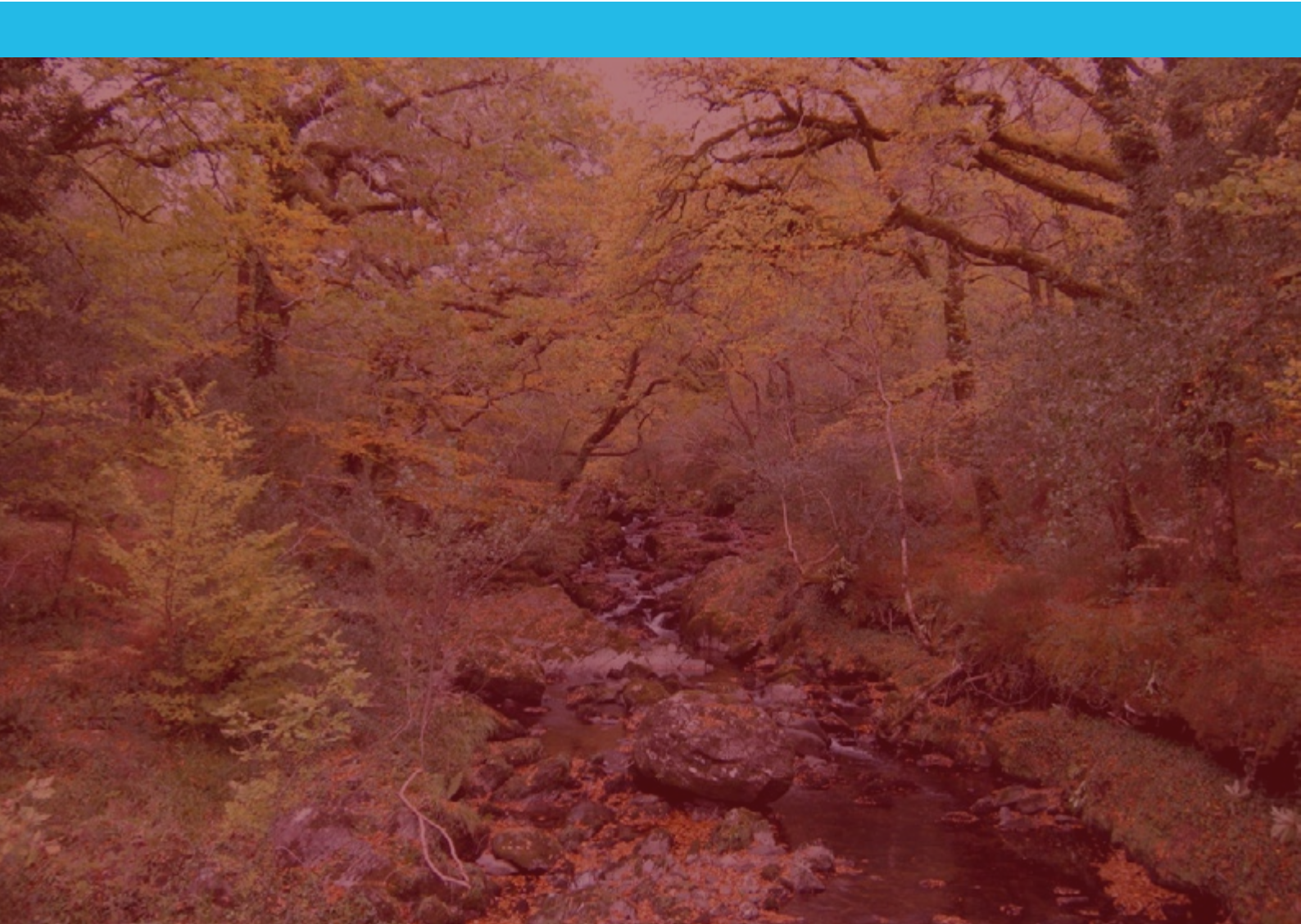
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EUROPARC>

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EUROPARC
CONFERENCE 2014
28th SEPTEMBER – 1st OCTOBER
KILLARNEY-IRELAND



An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreacht agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht



An Chomhairle Oidhreacht
The Heritage Council



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