



The Urban Imperative: Urban outreach strategies for protected area agencies

The disconnections between cities and protected area systems are part of a bigger problem. What is needed first and foremost is an ecosystem approach to policy-making and policy implementation that recognizes the interdependence of cities and the larger environment.

Source: [UICN/WCPA](#)

The message of this book is that conservationists will be a lot more effective if they take cities and the people who live in them much more seriously. The book is directed primarily to people whose main focus is on conservation of hinterlands, or large-scale ecosystems that include cities.

Cities have a bad name in many quarters of the conservation community, even though conservationists live in cities for the most part and depend on urban people for political and financial support. Conversely, the conservation movement has a bad name among many who work on urban problems, even though protected areas safeguard the larger ecosystems on which cities depend. The truth is that protecting nature and improving city life are interdependent goals. Conservation and urban leaders are natural allies. The challenge is in making the right connections.

Cities are on the agendas of national conservation organizations in some countries, and they are certainly given priority by many local conservation organizations, but we could not remember any major international conservation conference where urban issues had a prominent place on the program. It identifies two critical trends: A rapidly urbanizing world and Separation of people from nature

From this premises, the book analyses how cities depend on protected areas and how Protected Areas depend on cities, to move forward to identifying strategies for linking Cities and Protected Areas, based on nine case studies of innovative approaches.

The innovative programs exist in a number of countries, but little has been done to exchange experience and ideas. The workshop on which this book is based was a small step in that direction and emphasizes on Making Partnerships Work, focuses on five models of partnerships that connect protected area agencies with urban institutions and people.

The book identifies two fundamental policy changes that are needed to meet the needs of city dwellers and build stronger urban constituencies for nature conservation. These are: adopting an ecosystem approach to managing cities and their surroundings, and making a serious commitment to provide ways for urban people to gain access to nature.

A task force is drawing up a strategy that will likely include both IUCN activities and projects implemented by coalitions of IUCN members and other organizations. Its progress can be followed at www.InterEnvironment.org/pa.

To read the on-line version visit:

<http://www.interenvironment.org/pa/papers2.htm>