



Support for
A Handbook on International Wilderness Law and Policy

Russell A. Mittermeier, President, Conservation International

Wilderness is a critically important concept in global efforts to maintain intact, top priority natural areas, and to stem the impending biodiversity extinction crisis. The laws creating wilderness protected area categories are a very important and much underused tool in this effort and need greater attention. I hope that the cutting edge information in this book will help introduce new countries to this important legislative tool, and bring about further understanding and use of the wilderness concept.

Terry Tanner, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

The Mission Mountains will always be here, and so will future generations of tribal peoples. Our youth have it in them today to carry forth the protections that our tribal council began in 1982 with the creation of the Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness. A few years ago, my trail crew of tribal youth ran into a grizzly bear on the trail. Running into the grizzly shortened our work day, but it brought one very important lesson home for those kids: that what we have created through our Mission Mountains Tribal Wilderness allows us to have a once in a lifetime experience, and gives us the satisfaction that we gave that animal and others their right to exist peacefully. Those kids still talk about that bear today.”

**Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, Regional Vice-President, México y Centroamérica,
Former Minister of the Environment, Costa Rica**

Wilderness areas are the highest expression of conservation. In wilderness we see the great attributes of nature in their purest and most pristine forms. We see the scenic beauty and the biological wealth that motivate people and nations to protect wilderness areas. We also see our roots – the thousands of years during which we lived in wilderness – and we feel the moral obligation to protect these wild places.

We now know that wilderness areas are also great producers of environmental services at a global scale, and that natural systems, such as climate or hydrology, depend on intact wild areas. Until recently, these services were invisible to national governments and their economies. But they have a fundamental strategic importance to the many nations whose prosperity is directly related to the amount and quality of these environmental services. To secure the protection of these services – and the health of our planet – we must

educate decision makers not only about the moral obligation to protect wilderness, but also about the economic value of wilderness areas and the benefits they provide to all of human kind.

William H. Meadows, President, The Wilderness Society

Legendary conservation leaders in the United States, especially Howard Zahniser, pioneered one of the most powerful and effective land conservation measures ever with the Wilderness Act of 1964. Since the Act was signed into law, over 107 million acres of public land in the United States have been protected for their wilderness values. The effort to protect each acre in the National Wilderness Preservation System has come with support and leadership from local communities that recognize the symbiotic relationship between protecting natural values and maintaining the social, cultural and economic strength of their communities, and the role of the Wilderness Act in allowing both to thrive.

Bittu Sahgal, Editor, Sanctuary Asia magazine

All human art, culture, music, dance, religions and philosophies were originally inspired by the wilderness. Laws that protect wildernesses are laws that protect all life. So what is it that future generations will best remember us for? The nuclear reactors, highways, bridges, monuments and industrial enterprises we bequeath to them... or a functioning planet, with a stable climate, clean air, water and soils, sparkling rivers, lakes and coasts and verdant forests and mountains to renew their spirit? How we answer that question, or, more accurately, how we encourage our politicians, policy makers, businessmen, land managers, and judges – to answer that question will determine our place in history.