

1.44 Public Access to Land and Water

RECOGNIZING that the opportunity to enjoy contact with nature, landscape and the natural environment in general is an essential ingredient in the development of every citizen;

RECOGNIZING that such contact helps to encourage environmental awareness and sensitive attitudes towards use of the natural environment;

NOTING that such factors as the spread of urbanization, modern lifestyles, poverty and changing patterns in the use and ownership of land and sea are restricting the ability of many citizens to have contact with the natural world;

RECOGNIZING that appropriate access to land and water is often a basic requirement for achieving contact with the natural world;

NOTING that in many countries privatization may lead to land ownership patterns which restrict or inhibit public access to land and water;

ACCEPTING that the needs of conservation, management, ownership, safety and security may well require some limits on public access to land;

NOTING the concerns expressed by IUCN members on the final draft of the Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, including aspects of the Strategy which could lead to unreasonable restrictions on public access to land;

RECOGNIZING that IUCN staff at present do not have a sufficiently clear mandate to ensure that public access to land and water is taken into full account when promoting policies and practices which affect the use of land and water resources;

The World Conservation Congress at its 1st Session in Montreal, Canada, 14–23 October 1996:

1. CALLS UPON all IUCN members to recognize the principle of the citizen's need to have access to land and water for the appreciation of nature and scenery but subject to reasonable conservation, management, land ownership, safety and security needs;
2. REQUESTS the Director General:
 - a) to take account of this principle in the formulation of IUCN policies and in the way that IUCN contributes to the programmes of other organizations;
 - b) to examine whether the IUCN Programme should take more account of this aspect of the citizen's relationship to their environment and if so to make appropriate modifications.