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## The Globalization of Parks -- Public Trust Resource Protection Worldwide

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### Introduction

The idea of state and national park systems is a civilizational movement with a long history to protect and preserve those natural assets that belong to all of the people in a state or country.

As the former Chief of Law Enforcement for the California State Parks Department, I have been involved in environmental enforcement and protection since the late 1970s in California, as well as with sister parks and protected areas around the world. Two of the most interesting are the parks of Israel and Mongolia. Mongolia is, surprisingly, one of the first countries to have a national protected area and home of California's first official Sister Park.

This paper provides a comparison of California State Parks with those of Israel and Mongolia; how the public trust resources are protected; and what this means to the resources themselves, the people, and the economy.

### Dispelling Myths

Americans often think that they introduced the idea of national and state parks to the world, but this is not so. Mongolia can lay claim to the oldest national park in the world, and the very first formally protected landscape, called the *Bogdkhan Uul*, just outside of Ulaanbaatar, the capital city. It was originally protected for its beauty and sacred nature by the Ming Dynasty in the 1500s and was formally established by their government in 1778. Regulations, dating back as far as the "Secret History of the Mongols" from the year 1240, safeguarded the land, plants, animals and water sources, and punished or killed those who would do them harm.<sup>1</sup>

Parks and public lands are maintained and protected not only to provide places for residents and visitors to enjoy, but to also to preserve critical elements of our heritage and ecosystems in addition to the economic benefits of doing so. The public trust resources are an integral part of what makes a place special in which to live, work, visit and recreate. They help define who we are.

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<sup>1</sup> Mongolian Buddhists Protecting Nature by Chimedsegee, Cripps, Finlay, Verboom, Batchuluun, Kunkhur: January 2009

## A Focused Type of Enforcement

Worldwide, the history of providing formal protection for natural features, cultural resources and the environment varies. What does not vary is that people, civilization(s) and the environment are inter-dependent. To what extent people are able to enjoy, rely on, and give to the environment will require attention and the evolution of behavior and awareness. According to scientists such as Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer, we are already living in the age of the Anthropocene or the recent Age of Man.<sup>2</sup> Our interaction with the environment on a global scale will influence the outcome of both (the environment and man).

With increasing new threats to public lands, just how our public trust resources are managed worldwide can provide three important things: *protection* of natural and cultural resources and people; *value*, which ensures appreciation for the resources, enhances quality of life, and provides for current and future generations and civilizations; and *social and economic* benefits, which are generated with the increased sense of security, protection, economic growth, and investment. A type of enforcement and protection whose primary focus is in this area has been called “Inspired Policing” -- inspired because those who have responsibility to do this work are usually inspired to do it.

Rangers, resource managers, maintenance workers, and other specialists are the first line of defense in protecting everything from deserts, woodlands, wetlands, oceans, threatened species, and cultural sites (important to native people), historic artifacts, and archaeological sites, both on land and underwater. In addition, they protect and manage traditional and historic buildings, infrastructure, and other facilities.

## Enforcement Systems

### California

In addition to the resources, rangers also protect the millions of people who visit parks and protected areas each year. In California, the history of formal park protection dates back to 1866, when Galen Clark was named Guardian of Yosemite. “Yosemite became the first large natural area, state or national, to be established for such park purposes.”<sup>3</sup> In 1864 Abraham Lincoln signed federal legislation into law that granted the Yosemite Valley and the Mariposa Grove to the State of California with the “express condition that the premises shall be held for the public use, resort and recreation...inalienable for all time.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Welcome to the Anthropocene and A Man Made World: The Economist May 2011

<sup>3</sup> California State Park Rangers: Michael G. Lynch 2009

<sup>4</sup> California State Park Rangers: Michael G. Lynch 2009

Galen Clark was the beginning of what is now the modern “ranger.” Today’s rangers are considered experts in handling resource crime as well as crimes against people. In California, no other state officer, local police officer, or deputy sheriff is charged with enforcing such a broad spectrum of criminal codes or performing as broad a range of law enforcement, resource protection, facility operation and public education duties. California State Park Rangers have full law enforcement authority and carry firearms.

In Israel and Mongolia they have similar and equally diverse overall responsibilities.

## **Israel**

The relatively new country of Israel (established in 1948) only began formally protecting its environment in the last 25 years or so.<sup>5</sup> The enforcement system in Israel includes rangers who have policing powers and work under a specific legal department. Israel also has what is called the Green Patrol, a special unit that helps to prevent illegal takeover of public lands and open space. The rangers also have the authority to issue citations and charge those who damage nature and heritage assets in the national parks and nature reserves.

The Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) has many tools for protecting nature and the country’s heritage. Enforcement of environmental legislation in Israel is a top priority alongside environmental education from kindergarten to university. The public takes part in environmental law enforcement as anti-litter trustees and animal welfare trustees and is empowered to report on violations of the respective laws. Economic tools are increasingly used to promote environmental improvement, both in the form of financial grants to industries that invest in pollution prevention and in the form of taxes and levies on polluters. In line with the principles of sustainable development, efforts are directed at resource conservation and prevention of pollution in all economic sectors<sup>6</sup>.

## **Mongolia**

Environmental protection in Mongolia is another story. The Bogdkhan Uul, Mongolia’s first formally protected area, originally had 23 full-time park rangers. Today it has only five, and it is facing serious threats from mining and changes to historic nomadic grazing patterns. Therein rests a tale of the traditional conservation ethic, marginalized by modern pressures and politics.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> D’vora Ben-Shaul PhD. University of Texas retrieved from <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

<sup>6</sup> Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs: The Land, Environmental Protection 2010

<sup>7</sup> The World’s Oldest National Park: Cool Green Science Conservation Blog: Charles Bedford November 10, 2009

Mongolians have traditionally lived as nomads in concert with nature in a symbiotic way. Their Ministry of Nature, Environment, and Tourism and Department of Special Protected Areas oversees Mongolia's protected areas and approximately 600 park rangers who have very limited enforcement authority.

Mongolians traditionally have strong respect for the laws providing protection for their land. Laws such as the Mongolian Great State Law Ikh Zasag and the Yassa, which date back to Chinggis Khaan (who some say was the world's first conservationist), included the protection of sacred places and nature reserves.<sup>8</sup> The Ikh Zasag Law reportedly designated the world's first conservation areas and imposed fines for logging, grazing, or cultivating these places, according to Persian historian Rushd Ad Din in his *Summary of Chronicles*.<sup>9</sup> The Ikh Zasag Law laid down strict punishment for the slightest environmental infraction, including the death penalty for anyone who urinated at a water source or started a forest fire.

Mongolia has the lowest human population density on earth, yet one of the highest proportions of land area that is classified as protected. This is in contrast to California or Israel. Both are facing rapidly increasing population growth and immediately threatened natural and cultural sites.

With few human resources and very large areas to manage, Mongolia's park rangers and others there have brought about a community-based natural resources management (CBNRM) arrangement. It is a new approach in Mongolian resource protection, along with decentralization and privatization. Activities on empowering communities involve three significant research issues that land managers are dealing with: pasture and natural resources co-management; improvement of livelihoods; and policy/legal changes. These issues are related to i) *social*, ii) *economic*, and iii) *ecological* improvements. They are the very goals of public trust resource protection efforts of Inspired Policing -- protection, value, and social and economic benefits.

To maintain a high level of expertise, the Inspired Policing, resource-focused approach requires continual training. Important outcomes of recent training in California include development of a new chapter on cultural resource crimes for the manual of *Environmental Crimes* used by the California Assistant District Attorney's Association and development of a new certified course by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training for environmental crimes. There are similar outcomes in Israel and Mongolia.

## Trends, Trust, and Impacts

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<sup>8</sup> Mongolian Tradition at a Glance: Ts. Dashdondov 2009

<sup>9</sup> Indiana Report on the Ikh Zasag Law:

[http://www.indiana.edu/~workshoop/seminars/papers/y673\\_spring\\_2003khamaganova.pdf](http://www.indiana.edu/~workshoop/seminars/papers/y673_spring_2003khamaganova.pdf)

Trends show that visitation, crimes and incidents in state parks and open space are increasing.<sup>10</sup> (See Table A: Changes in Population, Acreage, Visitation and Staffing)

Visitors to California State Parks	Crimes Reported	Overall Incidents Reported
1998: 61 million	1998: 23,134	1998: 32,440
2008: 77 million	2008: 86,178	2008: 136,000
2009: 70 million	2009: 73,475	2009: 171,569

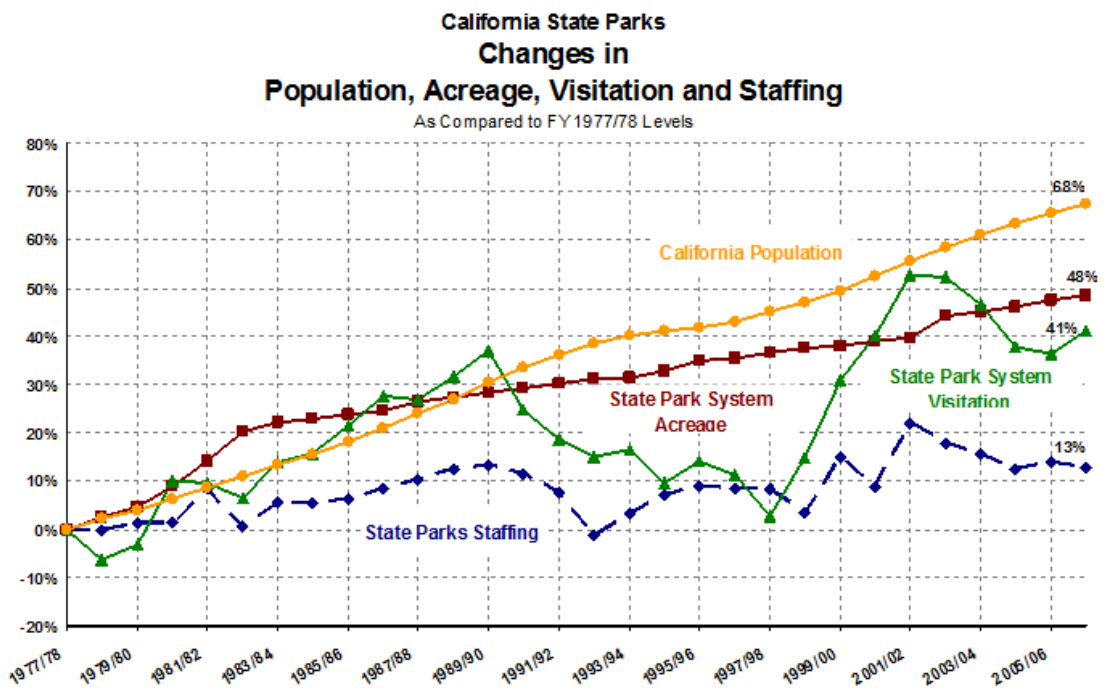


Table A: Examples of trends and stress placed upon the California State Parks system over time. Courtesy California State Parks

Population growth continues, and importantly, we know that competing demands for public lands have become acute. The facts must be studied, understood and responded to appropriately.

In both Mongolia and Israel, like California, population growth and areas needing protection are also trending upward with cumulative impacts to staffing and to the

<sup>10</sup> Courtesy of California State Park System

resources themselves. Since its establishment in 1948, Israel's population has increased nearly eight-fold. Tourism to Israel and Mongolia is increasing at rapid rates. A total of 222,000 tourists visited Israel in February of 2010 alone; this was a 46% increase from February 2009 and a 12% growth from 2008. The 2010 figures set a new all-time record.

Focused efforts on visitor safety in Israel encourage visits to Israel's protected areas. "There were a total of over 2.7 million visitors to Israel in 2009<sup>11</sup> and they generated over 3.3 billion dollars to Israel's economy".<sup>12</sup>

By comparison, in the late 1980s there were only about 10,000 foreign visitors to Mongolia. New changes in tourism took place in 2002 when laws were put into place to improve and create opportunities for visitors to tour the vast areas of untouched nature, magnificent wildlife, ancient history and unique nomadic traditions. Now about 350,000 people visit Mongolia each year with a 10% annual growth rate.<sup>13</sup> The population has more than doubled since 1993. The tourist industry in 2006 accounted for 18% of GDP according to the Mongolian Embassy.

Already, 190 nature reserves and 66 national parks have been officially opened in Israel, covering approximately 20% of the entire land mass. As with similar trends in California, more than 200 additional sites are being proposed. In Mongolia the cumulative increases in protected areas from 1992-2007 have grown from fewer than 20 to over 850.

## Economic Study

In addition to the inherent benefits, focusing on public trust resource protection can also help to create and sustain jobs and local economies when done in a non-exploitative manner, while at the same time, protecting those very resources for future generations. These efforts balance the authority under which park systems were created and, in addition, retain the *trust* of the people, *protect* their resources, and handle *political pressures* in doing so. Park rangers and other stewards worldwide have a long heritage of providing this fragile, value-based protection.

In 1995 a study was commissioned to determine the economic benefits to local communities arising from visitors of California's state parks.<sup>14</sup> The goal was to

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<sup>11</sup> Jerusalem Post August 10, 2010

<sup>12</sup> Journey to Jerusalem: Christian Pilgrims Boost Israeli Tourism

<sup>13</sup> New World Encyclopedia [org/entry/Mongolia](http://org/entry/Mongolia)

<sup>14</sup> 1995 study Impact on Local Economies of Spending by Visitors to California State Parks *with updated visitation reports* and October 25 2001 CA State Parks News Release California Economy Given Boost by State Parks Attendance Increase

estimate the total economic impact generated by spending and re-spending of visitor dollars in communities. The amount has been adjusted for inflation over time.

### **Economic Benefits to Local Economies by Visitors to California State Parks:**

2000: Over 5 billion dollars

2008: Over 7 billion dollars

2009: Just under 7 billion dollars

## **Resources and Society**

### **Crime**

In addition to providing targeted protection there must also be a continual awareness of the relationships between the resources to be protected and societal and economic impacts. One example is an incident that occurred in January of 2005, when intricately woven baskets from the collections of California State Parks, on loan from the Cabazon Band of Mission Indians, were stolen from the Cultural Museum. They were stolen by a man who simply wanted to sell them to buy methamphetamine.

This type of crime demonstrates that methamphetamine harms environmental resources. In addition, methamphetamine provides incentive for other crimes that directly impact formally protected areas and other public lands. This kind of adverse social impact is constantly evolving and land managers worldwide must deal with new strategies to understand and to mitigate or eliminate these threats.

### **Fire**

The role of fire in parks is another example of natural and societal impacts upon public lands. The family campfire can be a wonderful recreational experience whereas wildfire is often looked at as dangerous, destructive, and out of control. Some wildfires are caused by humans---the unattended campfire or arson; some are caused by nature. One of the recent fires in November 2010 at the Segev Forest in the Western Galilee was thought to have been caused by someone burning pruned olive tree branches. Another in the Golan Heights was reportedly due to a participant with good intentions, at the Rainbow Festival, who burned her toilet paper so as not to litter. Another of these fires was thought to have been caused by metal thieves in the area of the Eliad Junction.<sup>15</sup> These fires caused tremendous damage to the reserves and to such habitats as those of the Griffon vultures in the Gamla Nature Reserve.

A lightning fire in 2008 at California's Big Sur State Park and surrounding area was one of the largest fires in the United States, burning over 162,818 acres and at a cost

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<sup>15</sup> The Jerusalem Post November 21, 2010



to taxpayers of over \$77 million. Fighting the fire required over 1,400 personnel. Fire management and then restoration efforts must be well planned for and coordinated in advance. Rangers and resource stewards work closely with overall command centers, externally and internally, so that key resources are given maximum protection whenever possible. Coordinated protective efforts help ensure quick suppression and thoughtful, not destructive, restoration so that the areas can once again be safe and supportive for wildlife, plant life and visitors. After-action plans and remediation for such large fires are complex and expensive and require strategic contributions from all stakeholders.

### **Vandalism**

Increasingly, vandalism is impacting cultural sites around the world. Thus, vandalism in Israel's Avdat National Park in 2009 called attention to the Nature and National Parks Service's struggle against destruction of other heritage sites. Damage from a single act of vandalism to this World Heritage Site was estimated at over \$2 million. Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov said that "Every 100,000 tourists create 4,000 new jobs and generate \$53 million every year in revenue. It is the most lucrative industry the state can have." He reinforced the need for an increase in Park Rangers. Vandalism to the ancient Broken Monastery in the Ikh Nart Nature Reserve in Mongolia led a team in 2010 to coordinate the first cultural resource protection project for the Reserve.



Damage to Israel's Advat National Park  
Photo: Stas Misezhnikov Keneset website



Mongolia's Ikh Nart Nature Reserve  
cultural project work

### **Education and Security Contribute to Resource Stability and a Healthy Economy**

When targeted public trust resource protection is a priority and education is coordinated, crimes can be minimized. In fact, a major means of addressing these issues is through education. The park systems of Mongolia, Israel, and California all provide education to the public through a variety of methods; community outreach programs, volunteer training, school courses, brochures, news releases, media events,

and other outreach. California State Parks has specialized programs for young people called Junior Rangers and Junior Trades and Trails programs. Not only is the Junior Trades and Trails program being used in California State Parks but a version of it is being explored by the Asia Foundation in Mongolia. In 2009/2010 approximately 371,000 school children attended formal interpretive programs in California's state parks.<sup>16</sup>

Schools in Mongolia involve their students in study of natural areas as part of their science, math, geography, history and geology curricula. Grammar school children in the area of Dalangargalan Soum have illustrated a calendar featuring wildlife, plants and geological features of the Ikh Nart Nature Reserve, California's Sister Park. A group of women from neighboring herder families have formed a collective to create and sell hand-crafted items made from local, natural materials to tourists visiting camping facilities within and near the Reserve. All of these activities lead to a healthier, stable environment and economy.

The Israel Nature and Parks Authority, INPA, has established 15 education centers in which each year some 200,000 children from all backgrounds receive instruction. The main activities are geared toward school children and youth as well as teachers and principals, field education coordinators, Israel Defense Forces, field educators and cadets in command courses. This creates agents of change and transmitters of the message.<sup>17</sup>

### **Value of Shared Expertise**

The value of providing this focused type of public trust resource protection has positive local and global impacts.

In Mongolia, home of California State Parks official Sister Park, the Ikh Nart Nature Reserve, representatives of the two countries complete meaningful project work for the resources, facilities and visitors each year. This coordination has led to formal participation with local officials, a funded UNDP project, and formal training and planning between the two countries.

In Israel, project work and coordination includes sharing knowledge with environmental experts in nature reserves, symposiums and colleges, the Israel Leadership Academy, the Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange (GILEE), law enforcement and military personnel.

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<sup>16</sup> California State Parks Quick Facts: June 15, 2011

<sup>17</sup> Israel Nature and Parks Authority: The Spirit of the Land Conservation of Nature, Landscape, and Heritage in Israel

In a world with increasing population, increasing development, evolving recreational demands, and future unknown challenges, we must be creative and resourceful. The ability to do so will help ensure that resources will be available and protected today and for future generations and civilizations.

People the world over are looking for problem solvers. How these challenges are met will be evaluated and perhaps emulated where they prove successful.

## Conclusions

**Natural and Cultural Resource Protection** using a model of *Inspired Policing* of Public Trust Resources helps to provide three important things:

- **Protection** of natural and cultural resources and people.
- **Enhanced Value**, which ensures appreciation for natural resources, improves the quality of life for all and provides for current and future generations and civilizations *in situ*.
- **Social and Economic Benefits**, generated with an increased sense of safety and security for all visitors, economic growth, and investment.

Our public trust resources help to sustain and give meaning to people. Protection of them is something that provides us with a common denominator and healthy future for all civilizations.



Photo: Courtesy of Rain Greenslate