

1997

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Recommended Citation

Ramierz, Jose Miguel (1997) "Corporacion Nacional Forestal-Rapa Nui National Park Proposal for an International Scientific Advisory Board," *Rapa Nui Journal: Journal of the Easter Island Foundation*: Vol. 11 : Iss. 3 , Article 8.
Available at: <https://kahualike.manoa.hawaii.edu/rnj/vol11/iss3/8>

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Corporación Nacional Forestal-Rapa Nui National Park Proposal for an International Scientific Advisory Board

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The Chilean Forest Service Corporación Nacional Forestal (CONAF) is the Chilean Government Agency whose mandate includes the management of National Parks. The Rapa Nui National Park was established in 1935, its 6.7 hectares covers about 42 % of the total area of Easter Island, including all its major archaeological monuments.

The basic aim of the Park is the protection and conservation of its cultural heritage, fastening also an appropriate management of its natural resources and the environment, in order to provide a sound and sustainable base for the development of the Rapa Nui community.

As to effectively succeed with such wide and complex goals, according to the new Management Plan designed for the next ten years, the creation of an International Scientific Advisory Board has been suggested.

The objective of this Board deals with the assessment and promotion of all specific projects derived from any area of the Management Plan, to cooperate with proposal development, to help in securing funds and to oversee their operational phase on the island.

The aim of the Advisory Board should be to help coordinate, at the request of Park Management, the international efforts from different Institutions involved with the Rapa Nui natural and cultural heritage, for more coherent, effective and efficient work on the island.

Rapa Nui National Park Management Plan 1993-2003

The National Forestry Corporation (CONAF) is the Chilean State institution in charge by law of the administration and management of the Rapa Nui National Park.

The origins of the Park go back to 1935, when the whole island was declared a National Park. In the same year, the island was also declared National Historic Monument. CONAF received the responsibility of its administration by the Supreme Decree of Dec. 20, 1973. Between 1960 and 1984, the limits of the Park have grown to its present surface area of 6.7 hectares, which is about 42 % of the total surface of the island and roughly follows the coast except for the Poike peninsula and the coastline by Hanga Roa. It contains most of the monumental archaeological heritage within its boundaries.

Since the Rapa Nui National Park is such a singular case of concentration of a unique cultural patrimony included in a very fragile environment, its management requires special care.

The Role of CONAF

Aware of the accelerated processes of deterioration and alteration shown on the archaeological monuments of the Park, caused by natural agents such as rain, wind, the action of

micro-organisms, chemical corrosion and human causes, and of the importance of preserving this heritage because of its universal value, CONAF has sponsored and given impetus to a plan of special activities for the administration and perpetuation of that heritage. At the beginning of CONAF's administration, its work was concentrated on the development of programs of erosion control through reforestation with exotic species, particularly eucalyptus, managing of the existing forests and diffusion of norms for the use of fire and the control of its application. With regard to the services of interpretation, control and protection of the archaeological patrimony, the principal activities were carried out in the Rano Kau sector, although in general there was a very poor level of activity in the entire unit at that time. Starting in 1976, the fulfillment of those objectives was strengthened through a management plan which defined the general goals of conservation, protection and interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of the unit: it provided a proposal of programs and activities and divided the Park into zones with different categories of management.

From 1980 onwards, the unit has continued to perform the traditional functions in the sphere of forestry, but has strengthened the activities in the field of protection of the archaeological patrimony, through different measures of a physical, educational, and interpretative nature, as well as a greater presence of personnel in the different sectors of the Park. With the incorporation of the Program for the Management of Cultural Resources in Protected Wildlife Areas, since 1988, the strategies for the conservation of the archaeological patrimony of the Park have been given a new impulse.

In 1988, CONAF subscribed a cooperation agreement with the World Monuments Fund in order to evaluate the state of conservation of the archaeological resources of the park and obtained financial contributions for the re-planning of the Park. Then, a small International Meeting was called by CONAF, the Dirección de Bibliotecas, Archivos y Museos (DIBAM), the International Center for the Study of the Preservation and the Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) and with the sponsorship of WMF, to survey the conservation needs for the preservation of the heritage of Easter Island.

Following these conclusions, the International Meeting on Lavas and Volcanic Tuffs was held on Easter Island in 1990. It was organized by DIBAM, CONAF, ICCROM and WMF, and new recommendations were made in regard of the preservation of this patrimony.

The New Management Plan

In the new version of the Management Plan for the Park, a special program has been designed for the conservation and management of the archaeological heritage. This general ob-

jective has led to a number of tasks, in the specific sphere of conservation as well as, for example, the determination of the general problems of conservation and protection of the archaeological sites; and also in the area of the administrative and interpretative management of the Park.

These tasks have led to different activities, many of which have been already performed while others are under way. Among the former is the execution of protection plans for sector park, with greater control and vigilance of the archaeological sites and structures; educational activities for the protection of the environment, periodic radio broadcasting and the production of videos for the local TV; promotion of campaigns for the sanitation of sites with the participation of the local community.

Among the tasks under way are the final edition of the new Management Plan, the analysis of the cultural resources of the Park, the preparation of site plans and means for interpretation for the principal sites, construction of new bathrooms for Anakena, and a complex of *manavai* at the tree nursery in Mataverí for native vegetation, with the double purpose of preservation and ecological and cultural interpretation; different projects with some institutions and foundations for specific programs of archaeological research, conservation, academic exchange and training of personnel.

Present Situation of the Park

The means provided to fulfill such wide aims for the Rapa Nui National Park have always been insufficient, but recent important changes in the central administration will improve this situation in a consistent and permanent way. In fact, during this year the administration of the Park was given more autonomy, with a direct relation with the central direction in Santiago, and it is the first National Park which receives 60 % of the income produced locally, for its budget of the following year. For the first time, an archaeologist held the position of Provincial Director and Administrator of the Park.

Special projects allowed the contract of a professional anthropologist this year and three park guards for six months, the new construction mentioned above, some repairs of the

guard houses in Anakena, Orongo and Rano Raraku, training for park guards on the mainland, and some equipment, such as a computer, two motorbikes and five bicycles, besides items for the production and diffusion of publications.

However, the personnel, equipment, and general budget is still very poor. At the moment we have one truck (a second truck is to come in the near future), and there is only one power saw and two hand-held grass mowers. The permanent personnel includes the Provincial Director, Chief Park Guard, the archaeologist in charge of cultural resources, a person in charge of diffusion, another for the plant nursery, three for administration, three for maintenance and eight park guards.

In spite of the limitations, there is a good basis for a long term and effective fulfillment of the various objectives of the Management Plan for the Rapa Nui National Park.

CONAF has made a great deal of effort in improvement of its activities on the island. Since the cultural patrimony represents not only the past but also the present and the future of the Rapa Nui people, our efforts are directed to strengthening their cultural identity and contributing to their social welfare and economic progress.

The latter considerations are not merely poetics, as the Management Plan encourages a more direct participation of the Rapa Nui community through different means, in order to consider not only their options but also their feelings and advice on the technical and cultural matters about their heritage.

As to effectively succeed with such wide and complex goals, according to the new Management Plan designed for the next ten years, the creation of an International Scientific Advisory Board has been suggested.

The objective of this Board deals with the assessment and promotion of all specific projects derived from any area of the Management Plan, to cooperate with proposal development, to help in securing funds and to oversee their operational phase on the island. What the Advisory Board should aim for is to help coordinate, at the request of Park management, the international efforts from different institutions involved with the Rapa Nui natural and cultural heritage, for more coherent, effective, and efficient work on the island.