Cultural Landscapes

Lecture by:
Pam Smith
Culture:

- The spiritual, emotional and intellectual qualities of a group of people and their physical manifestations
- A common language is central to the expression of a culture
Cultural Landscape:

- A cultural landscape is fashioned out of a natural landscape by a culture group. Culture is the agent, the natural area is the medium, the cultural landscape is the result.
  - Carl Sauer, 1929
A cultural landscape is complex and dynamic

Most landscapes consist of both natural and cultural elements

We cannot understand and manage the ‘natural’ environment unless we understand the nature of the culture that shapes the landscape
Tongariro, New Zealand
A World Heritage cultural landscape

Source: http://www.unesco.org/mab
Recognition and protection of cultural landscapes

- 1992 - cultural landscapes were recognized by the UNESCO Heritage Convention (the 7th session of the World Heritage Committee)

- 1995 - ICOMOS developed guidelines for the interpretation of cultural landscapes. The Saville meeting

- Biosphere Reserves – Terms of reference changed
World Network of Biosphere Reserves

- Fosters exchanges between biosphere reserves
- Facilitates co-operative activities, including scientific research and monitoring, environmental education and training.
- Serves as a tool for conservation of biodiversity and sustainable use of biological resources.
Biosphere Reserves - How are they organized?

- These functions are associated through a zonation system including:
  - Core area(s)
  - Buffer zone(s)
  - Transition area(s)

This schema can be adapted to various ecological, socio-cultural and legal contexts.
ICOMOS = International Charter on Monuments and Sites
(The name reflects the earlier perception of heritage as being only monuments and sites).

ICOMOS is an NGO
NGO = Non-government Organisation.

The role of ICOMOS is to evaluate landscapes, sites, monuments nominated for World Heritage listing and to make recommendations to UNESCO.
ULURU – KATA TJUTA: A Biosphere Reserve
Uluru - Kata Tjuta was listed first as a World Heritage area in 1987, based on two criteria:

- An outstanding example representing significant ongoing geological processes, biological evolution and man’s interaction with his natural environment.

- Contains unique, rare or superlative natural phenomena, formations or features or areas of exceptional natural beauty such as superlative examples of a most important ecosystem to man, natural features, sweeping vistas covered by natural vegetation and exceptional combinations of natural or cultural elements.
In 1994 Uluru Kata Tjuta National Park’s heritage status was re-assessed and it became the second property in the world to be listed as a Biosphere Reserve, a cultural landscape category, based on new criteria. These criteria are:

• A cultural landscape representing the combined work of nature and of man, manifesting the interaction between human kind and its natural environment.

• An associative landscape having powerful religious, artistic and cultural associations of the natural element.
Summary: Perceptions of ‘Heritage’ evolved during the 1970s and 1980s. Prior to this, heritage referred to monuments, sites and structures. In the 1990s this changed and ‘heritage’ was re-interpreted as whole dynamic landscapes resulting in:

- A revised perception of nature/culture as two entities, to an integration of the two interacting with each other though human intervention.

- A change in the values used to assess heritage: from objective heritage assessments to subjective heritage assessments that include people.
Thank you