The making of doctrinal texts and universal guidelines: what value?

Steve Brown
Abstract

At the 2017 ICOMOS General Assembly in Delhi, India, two doctrinal texts developed by the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes were adopted. These texts, which concern rural landscapes and historic urban public parks, were developed over six and nine years respectively and required lengthy discussion and continuous revision. In both instances, a key issue was composing principles concerning particular heritage categories—largely Western in their construction—that are relevant to all, or at least most, parts of the globe. In this paper, I examine the work and value of developing these texts. I also consider the development of current guidelines—one on designed landscapes (ICOMOS) and one on cultural and spiritual values of protected areas (IUCN). I argue that all such universalising heritage canons can have real-world benefits because, first, the process is in itself valuable for encouraging dialogue between different nations and individuals—that is, it is as much the journey as the output. Second, universal texts—which will always be time-specific and never intended as absolute or able to cover all circumstances—act as ‘anchor points’ or ‘reference points’ which can serve to document on-going approaches to and ideas concerning heritage conservation.

Happiness

It was both an exciting moment and a great sense of relief when, during the morning of Friday 15 December 2017, the General Assembly of ICOMOS unanimously approved Resolution 19GA 2017/16 – Adoption of the ICOMOS-IFLA ‘Principles concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage’ and Resolution 19GA 2017/17 – Adoption of the ICOMOS-IFLA ‘Document on Historic Urban Public Parks’ (ICOMOS 2017a, pp. 8-9).¹ I had been at a working group meeting until just before these resolutions were put to the assembled members and was, thankfully (given my three-year engagement with progressing these texts), in the room when they were adopted—and resolved without comment or discussion. On the adoption of Resolution 19GA 2017/16 I looked across the vast seating configuration of the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium Weightlifting Auditorium and locked eyes with Mónica Luengo, a colleague and past-President (2008-2014) of the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes (ISCCCL). Our momentary looks of relief, then delight, and then ecstasy were intense and we soon burst into impassioned applause (and a slightly embarrassing “hoorah” on my part). It was during our times as presidents that the ISCCCL had conceived and developed the doctrinal texts on rural landscapes and historic urban public parks. Hence, our relief, delight, and happiness on this milestone occasion.
Doctrine and critical heritage studies

For my part, and on becoming President of the ISCCL in November 2014, I had proposed and encouraged the progression of the two documents as ICOMOS doctrinal texts. It is worth acknowledging that I had some reservations about the usefulness and value of creating new doctrinal texts at that time since I generally agreed with critiques—prevalent in the field of critical heritage studies—of doctrine framed as authoritative, universal, and incontrovertibly true (Waterton, Smith & Campbell 2006, for example).2 The idea of heritage had considerably expanded from a Western construct of ‘cultural heritage’ (monuments, groups of buildings, and sites) and ‘natural heritage’ (natural features, geological and physiographical formations, and natural sites) as articulated, for example, in the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (The World Heritage Convention; UNESCO 1972). By the second decade of the 21st century, there was recognition within the interdisciplinary field of heritage studies that heritage is everywhere (Harrison 2013: 1-12, for example) and that all heritage places, including their intangible associations, can be attributed heritage values. I like to think this is self-evident in the case of Australia, for example, where all parts of the landscape and associated seascapes belong to the Indigenous Country of one or more groups—and therefore all parts of the continent will have social value in the Burra Charter sense (Australia ICOMOS 2013) for the many and diverse Indigenous communities.

A second point about ‘new heritage’ (Holtorf & Fairclough 2013; see also Brown 2015, p. 65) is that it is now widely viewed as a ‘cultural or social process’ (Smith 2006) and as ‘social/cultural action’ (Byrne 2008). As Laurajane Smith has famously stated—though in ways that are in equal measure provocative and qualified—’There is, really, no such thing as heritage’ (Smith 2006, p.11) and ‘all heritage is intangible’ (Smith 2006, p.3). For Smith, heritage is a cultural and social process, ‘which engages with acts of remembering that work to create ways to understand and engage with the present’ (Smith 2006, pp.2, 44). For Denis Byrne:

Heritage is the very stuff of social identity and to this extent can be regarded as a form of social action. The implication is that we all—people in communities as well as heritage practitioners—are ‘heritage workers’. We are all engaged in the work of signifying places, deciding what should be done with them, deploying them as identity markers. (Byrne 2008, p.169)

Thus ideas of contemporary heritage consider that the subject is less concerned with the material per se but rather with the assemblage of processes (agency, attachment, place-making, and identity-building, for example), methods and practices (archival research, field survey, and in situ conservation work, for example), and administrative frameworks (legislative regimes, registers, and permits, as well as doctrinal texts, for example) that are constructed as part of the work of curating the past in the present.
Given these more recent perspectives on the nature of heritage, I was therefore hesitant in 2014 to progress forms of universal doctrine at a time when the concept of heritage was becoming increasingly broad, as touched on above, and also culturally specific—as well as cognisant of particular situational and relational contexts. Nevertheless, my reasons for pursuing doctrinal texts via the ISCCL were largely pragmatic. It seemed that the development of doctrinal texts for rural landscapes and historic urban public parks was an achievable goal for the ISCCL and a way of focusing the work of the Committee’s members on achieving outputs and outcomes within a single ICOMOS triennium. In addition, doctrinal texts were a way of making the work of the Committee available to a wide audience.

The process for having doctrinal texts adopted is a three year affair (ICOMOS 2017b, articles 8-10) and required on-going attention from the ISCCL Bureau and two ISCCL working groups: Working Group on the World Rural Landscapes Initiative; and Working Group on Historic Urban Public Parks. Updates on the work on preparing the two texts were presented at the ICOMOS Scientific Council meetings during the ICOMOS ‘Annual’ General Assemblies in Fukuoka, Japan (October 2015), and in Istanbul, Turkey (October 2016), with the final versions of the texts (in English and French) finalised and submitted in October 2017 for consideration by the ICOMOS ‘Triennial’ General Assembly in Delhi. The documents had also been formulated, discussed, revised, and reported on at three ISCCL annual meetings: Jeju Island, Republic of Korea (November 2015); Bath, United Kingdom (September 2016); and Delhi, India (December 2017).

### Doctrinal Texts

A doctrinal text is a group of ideas which are affirmed to be true and by which one claims to furnish an interpretation of facts in order to direct action. ICOMOS, at the international level, develops a corpus of doctrinal texts as a necessary basis for conservation policies. (ICOMOS 2017b, article 8)

The above definition of a doctrinal text was created in 1984 when the ICOMOS Executive initially adopted directives for the development of doctrine. I suggest that the use of the words ‘truth’ and ‘facts’ are now out-dated since such terms are increasingly resisted in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences (on the latter, see: Barad 2007; Latour 2005, for example) and there is widespread recognition that all knowledge is constructed and relational. My preference is to think of doctrine as a position statement, a set of beliefs or actions, or good practice guidance advocated by a knowledgeable group (governments or non-government organisations, for example). The difference between the two meanings is that the ICOMOS definition emphasises stasis (that is, knowledge is fixed through facts and truth) and the latter stresses dynamism (knowledge as fluid—with regard to managing change, for example).

The development of doctrinal texts—encompassing charters, principles, guidelines, and documents as described in the ICOMOS Rules of Procedure (ICOMOS 2017b, articles 8-10)—is a core activity of ICOMOS (Table 1). Indeed, the organisation was founded on a doctrinal text—International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites (The Venice Charter 1964 [ICOMOS 1964]; see: Goetcheus & Mitchell 2014). The 1984 directives for the production of doctrinal texts were amended, expanded, and re-adopted in 2011, 2014, and 2017. Currently there are 31 ICOMOS doctrinal texts, which comprise a mix of charters (10), declarations 6 (11), principles (5), documents (2), guidelines (1), and resolutions (2).7

### Work of the ISCCL

The ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes (ISCCL) is a joint or ‘hybrid’ committee of ICOMOS and IFLA (International Federation of Landscape Architects). It is one of 28 International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS and had been established in 1971 as the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee on Historic Gardens (a group best known for its development of the Florence Charter on Historic Gardens adopted by ICOMOS in 1982). In 1999, the committee expanded its focus from gardens to the broader concept of cultural landscapes—a term introduced as a category of cultural site by the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in 1992 (see UNESCO 2017, paragraph 47, Annex 3). An aim of the ISCCL is to:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document type</th>
<th>Charter</th>
<th>Principles</th>
<th>Guidelines</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adopted by</td>
<td>ICOMOS General Assembly</td>
<td>ICOMOS General Assembly; ICOMOS International Scientific Committees; Various regional ICOMOS meetings</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Variable, usually 5 to 7 pages</td>
<td>A few pages, up to 12</td>
<td>Detailed text. Flexible according to needs. Up to 12 pages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Formal structure with preamble, aims, rules, and methods</td>
<td>Should have a formal structure</td>
<td>Flexible according to needs</td>
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<td>Aim</td>
<td>Standard setting texts formulating policy and practices relevant to heritage and conservation in general or a specific type of heritage</td>
<td>Texts formulating principles for policy and practices regarding a specific type of heritage or activity related to heritage and conservation</td>
<td>Operational texts formulating: approaches contained in Charters; detailed information which concerns procedures; good practice; requirements for implementation</td>
<td>Aims to be specified in the texts themselves. Information texts formulating explanatory notes. Illustration and presentation of good practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing relevance</td>
<td>Charters containing place names remain unaltered. A Charter which is deemed to be out of date should carry a new name after revision</td>
<td>Principles containing place names remain unaltered. Others can be amended, updated, replaced etc. Revised Principles will carry a new name</td>
<td>Guidelines containing place names remain unaltered. Others can be amended and updated</td>
<td>Documents containing place names remain unaltered. Others can be amended, updated, replaced etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchy / importance</td>
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Table 1: Characteristics of ICOMOS international doctrinal texts (Source: ICOMOS 2017b, article 9 [with minor word changes by the author]).
... promote understanding, conservation and wise use of landscape heritage for public and private benefit, and with the general purpose of sustaining and improving the quality of life. (ISCCL Tokyo Statutes 2009, article 3)

This statement captures well the sense of heritage, resilience, sustainability, rights, and personal wellbeing that informs the ISCCL’s concern with the historical, social, and natural dimensions of landscapes and in promoting an integrated and holistic approach towards conceptual thinking and practical, on-ground management. The Committee uses the word ‘landscape’ to mean landscapes of all kinds—inclusive of both their tangible (material) and intangible (non-material and associative) attributes and values—including, for example: Indigenous and local community landscapes; cultivated rural landscapes; urban and industrial landscapes; maritime land/seascapes; designed parks and gardens; and the settings of buildings, structures, monuments, city centres, towns and villages, and archaeological sites. The ISCCL advises ICOMOS on matters relating to the identification, documentation, assessment, conservation, and presentation of cultural landscapes, including those that are nominated or designated as World Heritage sites. The Committee operates through: working groups on specialised topics; online discussions; annual meetings; publications and communications; and the organisation of conferences, workshops, and site visits. Currently (October 2018) the ISCCL has 170 members representing more than 50 countries. The ISCCL has one Institutional member—La Bibliothèque René Pechère, Belgium, which maintains the Committee’s archives.

**ICOMOS-IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage**

The World Rural Landscapes Initiative is a project of the ISCCL. It was initiated in 2011 and is led by architect Lionella Scazzosi of the Politechno de Milano, Italy. In Australia, Jane Lennon is the representative for and national coordinator of work on this project.

The initiative is concerned with the heritage of World Rural Landscapes and their role in the production and use of food and other renewable natural resources, via agriculture, animal husbandry, pastoralism, fishing and aquaculture, forestry, wild food gathering, hunting, and extraction of resources, such as salt. The project recognises the multiple economic and social benefits, diversity of functions, cultural and ecosystem services to human societies, and the threats, risks, and challenges arising for the protection of rural landscapes. It is a project that aims to foster international dialogue and cooperative actions on the economic, social, ecological, and heritage aspects, attributes, and values of rural landscapes.

The World Rural Landscapes Initiative has four component parts (Figure 2). First, there is the Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage. Second, there is an attempt to create broad landscape systems classifications for rural landscapes. Third, there are case studies that illustrate the different forms of rural landscape systems, highlighting knowledge and practices associated with them and risks and threats to their longevity. Finally, there is a multilingual glossary. The glossary recognises and compares the very different terms and meanings used to describe and discuss rural landscape heritage. For example, the words ‘rural’ and ‘landscape’ are words with different meanings within the English speaking world, and more so amongst different languages and local usages. The three latter components are still in development with information gradually being added to a website hosted by the Politechno de Milano.¹⁰

![Figure 2: ISCCL World Rural Landscapes Initiative: four component parts](image-url)
The Principles, as adopted by ICOMOS in 2017, commence with a typical and lengthy ICOMOS-style Preamble, which states an aim and situates the text in relation to other documents, both ICOMOS and non-ICOMOS. It also commits ICOMOS and IFLA (since the Principles have been adopted by both organisations) to:

…expand their cooperative actions by adopting and promoting the dissemination and use of the following principles in order to assist in the understanding, effective protection, sustainable transformation, and transmission and appreciation of rural landscape heritage as part of human societies and cultures and as a crucial resource across the world. (ICOMOS 2017c)

The document then presents working definitions of ‘rural landscape’ and ‘rural landscape heritage’ and a series of statements on the importance, threats, challenges, benefits, and sustainability of rural landscapes. Next the document sets out 21 principles under four separate headings: A. Understand rural landscapes and their heritage values; B. Protect rural landscapes and their heritage values; C. Sustainably manage rural landscapes and their heritage values: and D. Communicate and transmit the heritage and values of rural landscapes. The text is a little over six pages in length.

Appendix 1 provides a summary of the progression of the Principles over the period 2014 until their adoption by IFLA in October 2017 and by ICOMOS in December 2017. There are four points I make here about the process. First, the document was largely drafted in the period from November 2015 to September 2016. This was achieved via the ISCCL Working Group on World Rural Landscapes—working via email—and involved up to 25 contributors from the different regions of the world. Lionella Scazzosi and I spent a day together revising the draft text in June 2016 in Florence, Italy. In September 2016, a complete final text was presented to the ISCCL Annual Meeting in Bath, United Kingdom, and circulated to all ISCCL members. Over the following five months, the process was one of review and refinement, after which time the draft document was submitted to the International ICOMOS Board for their approval.

Second, and following the ISCCL 2016 Annual Meeting in Bath and the ICOMOS Annual General Assembly in Istanbul, Turkey, the draft Principles document was circulated to the 110 National Committees and 28 International Scientific Committees of ICOMOS (in order to reach over 10,000 individual members world-wide), as well as various cultural organisations with an interest in rural landscapes (for example, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)). The draft text was also made available to members of the International Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN) as part of a ‘knowledge café’ session10 held during the Nature-Culture Journey at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (Hawaii, USA; September 2016). Given this level of distribution, one might have expected a considerable level of feedback and commentary. However, relative to the scale of distribution, written comments were received from only two ICOMOS National Committees (New Zealand and Philippines), two ICOMOS International Scientific Committees (the International Committee for Archaeological Heritage Management and Vernacular Architecture), and two cultural organisations (FAO’s Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems;11 and EUCLAND—European Culture expressed in Agricultural Landscapes12). The feedback from these groups was strongly supportive of the Principles and provided commentary that was beneficial in finalising the draft text.

A third point regarding the Principles is that they needed to navigate two non-government organisations—that is, IFLA and ICOMOS (since the ISCCL’s membership is drawn from both organisations). While ICOMOS has a mandated procedure for the development and adoption of doctrinal texts, IFLA does not (or at least not that I was able to ascertain). Nevertheless, IFLA members have been responsible for the development of a number of regional landscape documents, including the IFLA Asia-Pacific Region Landscape Charter, for example.13 In the case of ICOMOS-IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage, the process of adoption by the World Council of IFLA (IFLA’s governing body) in Montreal, Canada, on 16 October 2017 was facilitated by IFLA President Kathryn Moore and supported through the IFLA Cultural Landscape Working Group. Having been adopted by IFLA prior to the ICOMOS General Assembly, I had some anxiety concerning any word changes that might arise from the
A final point regarding the Principles concerns their implementation, monitoring, and future revision. The resolution adopted by the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly included the following statements:

**Recommends** that the Principles be subject to review and revision after a period of five years from December 2017, and

**Welcomes** the proposal by the ICOMOS-IFLA International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes (ISCL) to work to promote and monitor implementation of these Principles. (ICOMOS 2017a, p. 8)

I contend that both commitments will be a challenge for the ISCL in particular and ICOMOS in general. The key reason is that all such work relies on voluntary participation and time is a scarce resource for many ISCL members already overcommitted to the Committee’s many work projects. Nevertheless, some progress has been made. For example, a session held at the Culture-Nature Journey at the ICOMOS Scientific Symposium (titled: ‘ICOMOS – IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage: How can they be applied in the work of ICOMOS and IUCN?’) was well-attended and generated lively and engaged discussion. Furthermore, the Principles have now been translated into Chinese (thanks to the work of ISCL member Rouran Zhang), the topic ‘Rural Heritage’ will be the focus for the ICOMOS 2019 Annual General Assembly Scientific Symposium (scheduled to take place in Morocco), and ‘Rural Landscapes’ is the proposed theme for the International Monuments and Sites Day, 18 April 2019.

**ICOMOS-IFLA Document on Historic Urban Public Parks**

On 29 October 2013, the ISCL Annual Meeting held in Canberra, Australia, adopted the ISCL **Canberra Declaration for Historic Urban Public Parks**. The declaration, which was specific to the work of the ISCL, had been a long time in the making. It had been proposed in 2008 with an initial draft document prepared by Eeva Ruoff (Finland), Stéphanie de Courtois (France) and Sonia Berjman (Argentina) presented to the ISCL 2009 Annual Meeting (Tokyo, Japan). Subsequent revisions, coordinated by Eeva Ruoff, were presented to the ISCL annual meetings in Istanbul, Turkey (2010), Paris, France (2011), and Hangzhou, China (2012).

The purpose of the Declaration is to emphasise, and provide guidance on, the safeguarding of historic urban public parks – a sub-category of designed cultural landscapes (UNESCO 2017, Annex 3) – as heritage places created or adapted for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. This concern arose because it was the experience of many ISCL members (many of whom are landscape architects) that rapidly growing and changing urban landscapes were increasingly eroding the amenity of and access to public parks. In particular, the concern was with the impacts of incremental change on the heritage values of such places (Ruoff 2018).

A key point of discussion in developing the Declaration was the concept of an ‘historic urban public park’ and its cross-cultural meanings in a global context. That is, what is meant by ‘historic’, by ‘urban’, by ‘public’ and by ‘park’ and how are these terms relevant and applicable in different cultural contexts—including those of Indigenous nations? For the ISCL representatives of non-European countries, and countries not previously colonised by European nations (China and Japan, for example), these terms are problematic and their framing Eurocentric. There was, I think, no satisfactory resolution to this matter, except to recognise the issue and to propose that ISCL members using the document define concepts in culturally relevant ways in footnotes to the Declaration. Nevertheless, the coverages were invaluable because they enabled different disciplinary, national, and individual perspectives to be shared, scrutinised, and discussed.

The journey from the Canberra Declaration to the ICOMOS-IFLA Document on Historic Urban Public Parks (the Document) began by using the text of the Declaration. The process of revising, progressing, and finally adopting the Document by IFLA and ICOMOS largely mirrored that
for the Principles (described above and in Appendix 1). One minor difference was that the Document went through two rounds of requests for comments (August 2015 and January 2016) from ICOMOS National Committees and International Scientific Committees. This occurred because there were few responses to the first request. Ultimately, comments were received from seven National Committees (Belgium, Canada, China, Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland and Spain), as well as from two individuals.

The final version of the document is short (less than four pages) and is comprised of a Preamble and five sub-headings with a total of 21 articles. The sub-headings are: Historic Urban Public Parks – Definitions (articles 1-5); Historic Urban Public Parks – Values (article 7); Special Character-Defining Elements of Historic Urban Public Parks (articles 8-16); Historic Study, Preservation, and Management (articles 17-20); and Universally Accessible Design Adaptations (article 21).

It is fair to say that there was much discussion within the ISCCL on the value of focussing on the specific category of historic urban public park rather than on designed landscapes more broadly. For some ISCCL members, designed landscapes could encompass a wide range of heritage places (private gardens, public parks, cemeteries, urban green spaces, etc.), many of which faced the same issues and challenges encountered in historic urban public parks. However, for Eeva Rouff, the initiator and force behind the document, the specific focus was essential because it was her experience that historic urban public parks in Europe and other regions (the Americas and Australia, for example) faced increasing pressures and threats to their original design intent and public amenity resulting from cumulative change. The point here is that passion and commitment – either via an individual (such as Eeva Rouff) or a small group – can be a powerful force driving the multi-year and arduous administrative and consultative process of creating universal heritage doctrine. In the instance of the ICOMOS-IFLA Document on Historic Urban Public Parks, I applaud Eeva Rouff for her dedication and persistence.

Guidelines

I turn now from approved doctrinal texts to briefly consider two sets of guidelines that are currently in development. The reason for doing so is to describe and discuss this form of doctrine (Table 1). Although typically framed as ‘best practice’, I prefer the term ‘good practice’ in relation to guidelines since the former implies a universally agreed upon ‘best’ or pre-eminent, while ‘good’ acknowledges that views can be diverse with respect to the application of any one treatment – conservation, maintenance, preservation, repair, restoration, reconstruction, adaptation, new work, and managing change, for example. As noted in Table 1, guidelines are operational texts that aim to develop and implement on-ground approaches and procedures for heritage conservation practice, while principles provide higher level policy statements that generalise across a wide field and documents aim to explain, illustrate, and present good practice.

ISCCL Guidelines on Designed Landscapes with Heritage Values

The Florence Charter on Historic Gardens (Florence Charter; ICOMOS 1982), which was developed by the ICOMOS-IFLA International Committee for Historic Gardens, was the second doctrinal text adopted by ICOMOS after the Venice Charter. The Florence Charter emphasised the need to identify historic gardens, and provided philosophical guidance on conservation, restoration, and management. It is recognised as innovative for: extending the meaning of monument to include historic gardens as a ‘living monument’; for its broadening of the concept of cultural heritage to include landscape (article 6; Goetcheus and Mitchell 2014); for its recognition that ‘vegetal compositions’ are living, as well as ‘perishable and renewable’ (article 2); and for its reference to associative (or intangible) values, including association with myths and artworks (article 8) and the ability of historic gardens to express and represent different world views demonstrating the interconnectedness between humans and nature (article 5).

On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Florence Charter in 2011, the ISCCL recognised the globally valuable contribution that application of the Florence Charter had made over a long period, but also that heritage concepts had changed and that in some instances the precepts of the Florence Charter did not match contemporary perspectives on good practice.
The ISCCL considered that the Charter required updating. Following conversations over the following years, an ISCCL Working Group on the Florence Charter, chaired by Mónica Luengo, was established.

The Working Group organised three international workshops. The first workshop—titled ‘The Florence Charter on Historic Gardens revisited: long term experience and new approaches’—was hosted by the Fondazione Romualdo Del Bianco and took place in Florence, Italy, in June 2016. An output from this workshop was a ‘Statement’ which established that the Florence Charter would remain unaltered (that is, acknowledged as an historical document of its time); committed the ISCCL to develop an evaluation of the Florence Charter (that is, to recognise the changing theory and practices of heritage in relation to historic gardens and to identify those articles of the Charter that continue to have currency); and expressed a preference to develop a guideline providing conservation principles and guidance for designed landscapes (that is, broader than but inclusive of historic gardens and parks) and which should draw on a values-based approach to heritage conservation.

The second ‘Florence Charter’ workshop took place in Bavaria, Germany, in September 2017, and was coordinated by ISCCL Vice-President Europe and landscape architect Jochen Martz (Austria). The workshop developed an initial draft document on principles for the management of designed cultural landscapes. For the purpose of that document, designed cultural landscapes referred to parks and gardens (both public and private), avenues of trees, cemeteries, and green urban systems including civic spaces, community gardens, and green corridors.

The most recent workshop took place in Annevoie, Belgium (June 2018), and was coordinated by ISCCL member and landscape historian Nathalie de Harlez. At this workshop the participants developed a structure, reworked the draft principles and guidelines developed at the second workshop, and adopted the working title: ‘ISCCL Guidance on Designed Landscapes with Heritage Value’. The structure of the document was influenced by the format of recent IUCN best practice guidelines (discussed below) as well as the form of practice notes—in particular the ‘common issues’ section—developed by Australia ICOMOS. The main sections of the document comprise: Introduction; Background and context; Principles; Guidelines; Common issues; and Appendices (Glossary/Thesaurus and Resources). A draft of this document is currently in development and will be presented to the ISCCL (December) 2018 Annual Meeting in Mendoza, Argentina, for review and discussion.

To my mind, the value of the new guideline will be to shift the management approach advocated in the Florence Charter from a prescriptive set of statements to a concern with responsible stewardship – however the latter is defined in different cultural contexts. An additional key strength of the guideline will be to recognise the skills, knowledge, and craftsmanship of gardeners and horticulturists alongside those specialists that design and manage designed landscapes, and thus recognise the way in which expertise is distributed across a number of communities of practice.

**IUCN Best Practice Guidelines on the Cultural and Spiritual Significance of Nature in Protected Areas**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has produced best practice guidelines for protected area practitioners and managers since 1998. Currently there are 26 such documents with several more in development. One of the latter is: *Cultural and spiritual significance of nature: guidance for its role in protected and conserved area governance and management* (the Guidelines; Verschuuren et al. in press). The development of the Guidelines is notable in the context of this paper for two reasons. First, it has received funding – from IUCN’s World Commission on Protected Areas, the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz, BfN), and The Christensen Fund. This funding has supported two international workshops (in 2016 and 2017, Germany) and makes a financial contribution toward the coordination and preparation of the Guideline by the lead author – anthropologist and environmental scientist Bas Verschuuren. Nevertheless, voluntary and in-kind contributions provide a significant level of input into the development of the Guideline.
The second point about the Guideline is that it is one component of five interrelated outputs (Figure 3), which together work to:

- present research and thinking on concepts of the ‘cultural and spiritual significance of nature’ (Verschuuren & Brown 2018);
- provide guidance to protected area managers (the Guideline);
- and illustrate real-world opportunities and challenges in governance and management (web-based case examples). To my mind, this multiple component approach, which is evident in the ISCCL world rural landscapes initiative (Figure 2), provides a useful model that could be taken up by ICOMOS in its work to develop doctrinal texts. I suggest such a multi-component approach would be beneficial in relation to the work on both historic urban public parks (that is, linking the ICOMOS-IFLA Document on Historic Urban Public Parks with published case studies and developing a network of park managers, for example) and on designed cultural landscapes more generally (that is, connecting the ISCCL Guidelines on Designed Landscapes with Heritage Values with case examples and academic research).

Figure 3: The Guideline is one of five outputs being developed by IUCN’s Specialist Group on the Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas (CSVPA). (photo: Bas Verschuuren [Brown & Verschuuren 2018: 2])

What value doctrinal texts and universal guidelines?

In this paper I have set out some approaches to developing universalising heritage canons and will now argue that such standards (including charters, principles, guidelines, and documents produced by ICOMOS) can have real-world benefits. I discuss two such benefits here. First, the process is in itself valuable for encouraging dialogue that shares different collective and individual perspectives – that is, it is as much the journey as the output. The development of the ICOMOS-IFLA Document on Historic Urban Public Parks evidences this point. For example, there were on-going discussions concerning the meaning, and thus translation into non-English languages, of ‘historic urban public park’ in different cultural contexts. In the case of Indigenous languages, the whole concept has little or no meaning. In Chinese, for example, there is no direct translation of ‘historic urban public park’, though “历史性城镇公园” is the preferred translation, and, for example, ‘public park’ is repetitive and better suited to a single Chinese word (公园) (email, Rouran Zhang, Nankai University). Doctrinal texts also necessitate conversations to understand different heritage approaches and treatments in diverse cultural contexts, as well as dissimilar worldviews and cosmologies (concerning culture/nature as separable or interconnected, for example). Some of these differences can never be fully overcome – and neither is it necessary that they should be – but rather it is the understanding of different cultural and disciplinary perspectives that can enable fruitful and respectful discussions concerning alternate and complementary heritage practices.

Second, universal texts – which will always be time-specific and never intended as absolute or able to cover all circumstances – act as ‘anchor points’ or ‘reference points’ which can serve to document on-going approaches to and ideas concerning heritage conservation. That is, the creation of universalising texts is both situational and relational. In the case of the ICOMOS-IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage, for example, no one would say that this document is the final word on recognising, safeguarding, and presenting principles concerning the heritage of the world’s rural landscapes. Rather, the text provides the most important points and principles that the ISCCL (drawing on some 150 members across more than 50
countries) and ICOMOS (through its Board and Scientific Council as well as those seven national committees that provided comments on the Principles) could produce in the period 2015-2017. The need to update the text is a matter recognised in the call for this document to be refined and revised in 2022 (ICOMOS 2017a, p. 8). A related point for doctrinal texts – and one made by Cari Goecheus and Nora Mitchell (2014) – is that they provide an archive of changing thinking on the idea of heritage and on the valuing and safeguarding of heritage items over time. In fact, many scholars use these documents (typically commencing with the 1931 Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments; see: Fredheim & Khalaf 2016; Harrison 2013, pp. 56-67, for example) to track changing ideas of and the changing approaches to conserving heritage places and landscapes.

Despite what I see as the benefits of doctrinal texts for heritage, there are significant challenges in creating and updating them. As evidenced above, this can relate to the different meanings of heritage and heritage terms in different cultural contexts, ensuring broad geographic coverage in creating such doctrine, and even settling on final wording appropriately expressed in, for example, English, French and Spanish. A further challenge is gaining wide engagement in the processes of reviewing draft texts. Eeva Ruoff, for example, found it difficult within the ISCCL to gain broad and comprehensive feedback on the historic urban public parks document from the Committee’s members in the period 2012-2014. Even at the stage of seeking comments from ICOMOS national committees and international scientific committees on the rural landscapes and historic urban public parks texts, there was limited feedback in relation to the number of groups approached. And finally, there are challenges in having ICOMOS doctrinal texts translated into non-English, non-French, and non-Spanish languages, in monitoring the uptake and use of the doctrinal texts, and in updating such texts – for example, updating of the approaches advocated in the Florence Charter are only now, 37 years since its creation, being considered. The Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter (with substantive revisions adopted in 1999 and 2013) provides an excellent model in regard to the latter point; as does the document titled: Approaches for the Conservation of Twentieth-Century Cultural Heritage, which initially focused on architectural heritage and was expanded in 2017 to include other heritage typologies of the twentieth century such as cultural landscapes, industrial sites, and urban areas.22

End

So if anyone or a group is thinking of developing a new doctrinal text or revising an existing version, I say “go for it” … with eyes wide open. The process is similar to renovating a house: at first it is an exciting idea and full of excitement for the perceived potential benefits. Then the actual undertaking can be an arduous journey requiring stamina, continuous collaboration, and adherence to external milestones and deadlines. But this can also be an incredibly rewarding time when understanding of and approaches to the topic are discussed in cross-cultural and cross-disciplinary settings. The adoption of the doctrinal text – if one gets to that point – is an incredible achievement and one worthy of celebration. However, it is not the end point because adopted doctrinal texts require considerable work in making them globally available (through producing different language versions, for example), promoting dialogue with regard to their use (conference sessions, on-going research outputs, and relevant training, for example), and monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of their implementation. Nevertheless, it is the ongoing dialogue and collaboration required that can make such work truly rewarding and beneficial to the work of heritage conservation.

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considered comments on the manuscript. Finally, I thank the editors of this volume—Kristal Buckley and Gabrielle Harrington—for their support in developing this contribution.

References


### Endnotes

1 The English and French versions of these charters can be viewed at, <https://www.icomos.org/en/charters-and-other-doctrinal-texts>. Versions in Chinese have also been prepared.


3 The Co-Chairs of the ISCCL Working Group on Historic Urban Public Parks were Herman van den Bossche (Belgium) and John Zvonar (Canada).

4 ICOMOS ‘triennial’ general assemblies take place every three years, while the ‘annual’ general assemblies take place in each of the two years between the triennial events.

5 Text presented at the 31st session of the Executive Committee in May 1984 and approved after review at the 33rd session of the Executive Committee in November 1984 in Paris.

6 Declarations are texts that are the outputs of ICOMOS General Assembly scientific symposia.


8 ICOMOS. List of International Scientific Committees. <https://www.icomos.org/en/about-icomos/committees/scientific-committees/list-and-goals-of-is>. Together the chairs of these committees make up the ICOMOS Scientific Council, which in turn advises the ICOMOS Advisory Board and Executive on technical matters concerning the conservation of cultural heritage.


10 Knowledge café organisers: Nora Mitchell, ISCCL Member, and Delia Clark, IUCN Commission on Education and Communication


12 EUCALAND is an expert network that deals with the cultural and agricultural landscapes of Europe for promoting their consideration and use among their people for preserving their cultural heritage. See, <http://www.eucaland.net>.


14 Convened by Nora Mitchell and Steve Brown.

More technically, the Florence Charter was registered by ICOMOS on 15 December 1982 as an addendum to the Venice Charter.

The Florence Charter was finalised in 1981 and subsequently adopted by ICOMOS in 1982.


For example, see Feng Han 2012 on the ways in which the idea of cultural landscapes has impacted on the concept of harmony in Chinese cosmologies.

Appendix 1: Key dates and actions in the progression of the *ICOMOS-IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date / Place</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 2014 / Florence, Italy</td>
<td>ICOMOS ‘Resolution 18GA 2014/35 – World Rural Landscape Initiative’ welcomed the project and encouraged the participation of National and International Scientific Committees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 2015 / Jeju Island, Republic of Korea</td>
<td>The ISCL 2015 Annual Meeting commences work on draft principles concerning rural landscapes as heritage.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2016 / Hawaii, USA</td>
<td>Draft Principles circulated and discussed at the IUCN World Conservation Congress as part of a session in the NatureCulture Journey titled: ‘Advancing sustainable agriculture at the nexus of nature and culture’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 2016 / Bath, United Kingdom</td>
<td>The ISCL 2016 Annual Meeting endorsed draft <em>ICOMOS and IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage</em> (the Principles) and supported the progress of the Principles as a doctrinal text at the ICOMOS 2017 General Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2016 / Istanbul, Turkey</td>
<td>Meetings of the ICOMOS Scientific Council and Advisory Committee agreed to the circulation for comment of the Principles to National and International Scientific Committees, as well as other international cultural organisations; and to progress the Principles to the status of an international doctrinal text at the ICOMOS 2017 Triennial General Assembly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2016</td>
<td>Draft Principles circulated to National and International Scientific Committees with request for responses within six weeks. Comments received from two National Committees (New Zealand, Philippines) and two ISCs (ICAHM and CIAV), as well as from two cultural organisations (GIAHS and EUCALAND). The Principles were revised to incorporate comments and responses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2017 / Paris, France</td>
<td>Revised Principles submitted to the ICOMOS Board Meeting. Board approved the Principles to go forward to the 19th ICOMOS General Assembly for adoption.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2017 / Montreal, Canada</td>
<td><em>ICOMOS-IFLA Principles Concerning Rural Landscapes as Heritage</em> adopted by IFLA as a doctrinal text.</td>
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