

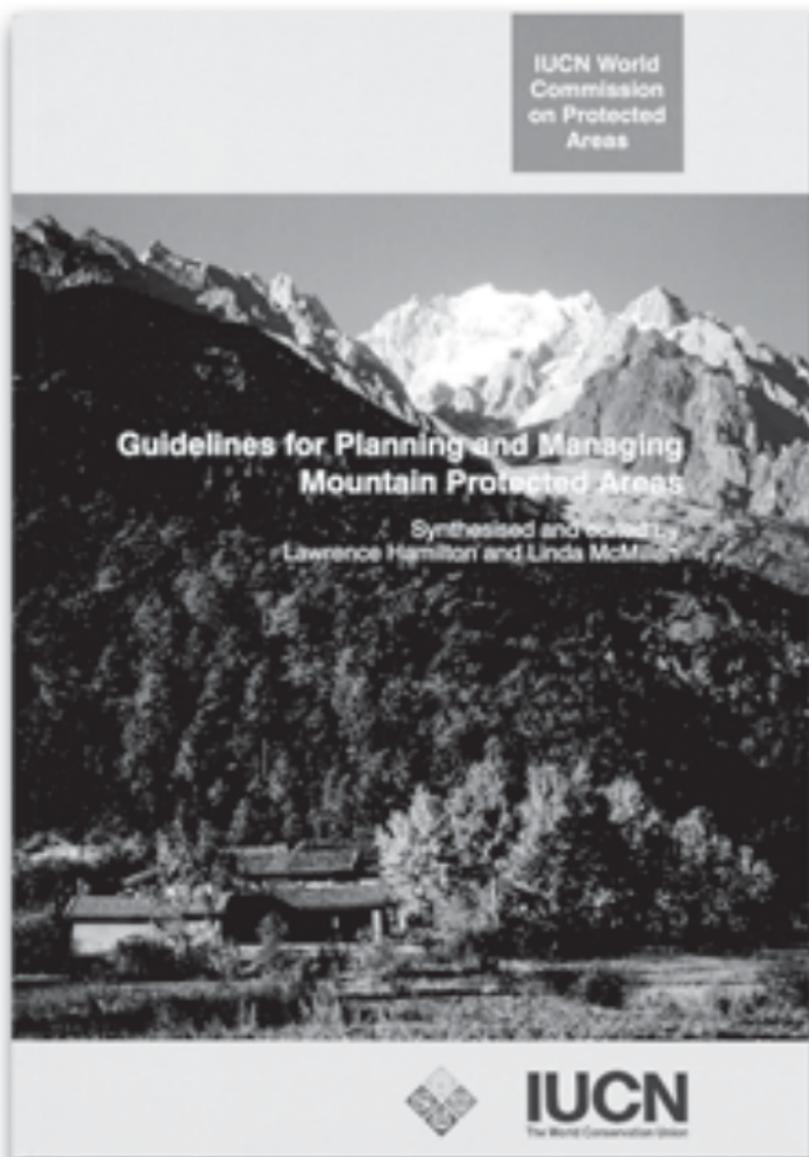
WORLD CONSERVATION UNION— AN INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE

The World Conservation Union is a source of information and guidance for conservation efforts around the globe. Formerly known as the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), the organization is the world's largest conservation network, according to its Web site (<http://iucn.org>). Its mission is to “influence, encourage, and assist societies throughout the world to conserve the integrity and diversity of nature and to ensure that any use of natural resources is equitable and ecologically sustainable.” The IUCN brings together 82 states, 111 government agencies, more than 800 nongovernmental organizations, and 10,000 scientists and experts from 181 countries in a worldwide partnership.

The IUCN's activities are carried out by six commissions:

- Ecosystem Management—Guiding the management of natural and modified ecosystems
- Education and Communication—Promoting sustainability through education and communication
- Environmental, Economic, and Social Policy—Advising on economic and social factors that affect natural resources
- Environmental Law—Advancing environmental laws and their application
- Protected Areas—Advising and promoting terrestrial and marine reserves, parks, and protected areas
- Species Survival—Supporting species conservation and protecting endangered species

Experts in these fields from all over the world share their experience with local problems and their vision for global solutions. Thus, the organization produces publications reflecting an international perspective on the conservation issues that concern natural resource managers worldwide. One relatively recent example is *Guidelines*



WORLD CONSERVATION UNION/IUCN

for Planning and Managing Mountain Protected Areas (see photo), an updated handbook that was the product of a workshop convened just before the World Parks Congress of 2003 held in South Africa. The handbook was synthesized and edited by Lawrence Hamilton, vice-chair for Mountains, World Commission on Protected Areas, IUCN; and Linda McMillan, Access and Conservation Commission of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (known as UIAA, Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme).

The book describes the special features of mountain environments and offers guidelines for designing protected areas in these steep and remote places where conditions vary greatly with altitude. Such places are reservoirs of rich biodiversity because of their isolation, variations of physical geography, and unstable terrain. The handbook offers guidelines on the management of biodiversity within these regions, and also treats conditions other than those of natural resources that may affect the protected areas. Mountains are often the boundaries between political entities, presenting a special set of challenges for protected areas along borders. One guideline for a protected area where a watershed is shared, for example, encourages managers to engage in cross-boundary dialogue about effective watershed management.

The guidelines consider the management of mountainous parks or preserves that straddle international

borders, called “transboundary protected areas.” Managing these areas can be especially complex because the surrounding political units may have differing laws and customs; therefore, management practices need to be acceptable to each adjacent entity and to the traditions of indigenous peoples. (An example of a transboundary protected area familiar to many *Park Science* readers is the Waterton/Glacier International Peace Park on the Canada-United States border.) The handbook also devotes much attention to respecting the “sacred, spiritual, and cultural significance” of mountains, and to the visitor experience where both the mountain and the visitor require protection.

The World Conservation Union Web site features a very large catalog of publications that may be of interest to natural resource managers (<http://www.iucn.org/bookstore>).