

## **EAI Seminar Series**

## **Spring seminar report**

Europarc Atlantic Isles Section of the Europarc Federation Embracing Iceland, the Republic of Ireland and the UK

# **Beyond boundaries – protected landscapes, cities and the European Landscape Convention**



Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, Holborn, London

27 January 2009 (Study visit 26 January)



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## This report features edited highlights of the presentations. To see the full powerpoints please go to www.europarc-ai.org

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# Introduction: A chance to widen the scope of landscape working



Martin Lane
Chair,
EUROPARC Atlantic Isles

Welcome to the report of the recent seminar exploring the application of the European Landscape Convention. Our geographical focus was south east England, where peri-urban and protected landscapes are neighbours.

These proceedings build upon the seminar held in December 2006 at Losehill Hall in the Peak District, which coincided with the UK government's endorsement and subsequent signing of the convention.

In the intervening two years the UK has struggled to embrace, and our protected landscape organisations have struggled to fully work with, the convention.

This seminar provided an ideal opportunity to explore progress. The seminar was supported by a series of site visits to the Kent Downs AONB and the Thames Gateway. Speakers from the UK and Europe provided a wealth of information, experience and an introduction to a series of new networks focused on the convention.

Our sincere thanks to all those who contributed to the seminar; our hosts for the site visits, speakers, session chairmen, summarisers and last but not least our delegates. Everyone played their part in delivering a highly successful, interesting and stimulating seminar.

## **Key conclusions**

- There is a need to raise awareness of the usefulness of the convention, especially across government departments and agencies.
- A medium to long-term programme of action is needed to ensure that the convention becomes part of everyday debate within land use planning, from the local to the regional level.
- The community-led approach enshrined in the convention is correct, but it requires close collaboration and adequate resources.
- Expanding the role the convention plays in the UK and Ireland will require further enhanced partnerships with projects and networks elsewhere in Europe.

Some practical steps were formulated to address these conclusions (see pages 14 and 15). EUROPARC Atlantic Isles will report these conclusions to the 5th Conference on the European Landscape Convention, to be held in Strasbourg at the end of March 2009.





# Implementing the European Landscape Convention – what's happening, and where?



Richard Partington
Senior specialist, landscape
and nature conservation
policy, Natural England

## **Overview**

The presentation outlined the UK's approach to the first international treaty on landscape, an international law with the backing of 35 countries, which defines landscape as: 'an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.'

## **Key points**

- The convention is a positive instrument which is democratic, participatory, inclusive, realistic and forward-looking.
- Its main requirements are to recognise landscapes in law, establish and implement policies for landscape protection, management and planning, establish procedures for public participation in defining and implementing landscape policies and integrate landscape into planning and other policies.
- In Scotland actions include Living
   Landscapes report, gap analysis, statement of principles and priorities for landscape.
- In Wales actions include landscape character map, methodology and map of seascape units, landscape forum and supporting action plan.

 In England actions include national guidance workshops, action plan guidelines in development, landscape conferences, regional partnerships and a fund.

#### Conclusion

Natural England is working closely with other organisations in the sector to develop collective thinking and produce a live, updatable action plan which will be the key to implementing the convention. It is also setting up nine regional landscape and geodiversity partnerships, and a regional project challenge fund.

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'Landscape is an area as perceived by people' is the definition at the heart of the convention.

'The government sees the convention as a way to strengthen performance around landscape across as wide a sector as possible.'





# The European Landscape Convention: a challenge to universities?



Bas Pedroli
Associate Professor
Wageningen University
Director UNISCAPE



The charter is a chance to create effective approaches for integrated landscapes: migratory geese feed less than five kilometres from Amsterdam.

'Landscape is a mirror of our innermost selves.'

## **Overview**

UNISCAPE, a new network of universities for the European Landscape Convention, was introduced. The application of scientific knowledge in the protection, management and planning of landscapes in the interface between cities and protected areas was illustrated with examples from Amsterdam, Copenhagen and others.

## **Key points**

- The study of landscape can only fully be achieved when integrating various scientific disciplines.
- The role of universities in this task is more innovative than breaking landscape down to its constituent elements.
- The urban fringe is a key area for the understanding of people's commitment to landscape quality in modern Europe.
- Protected areas near cities improve the quality of life of urban citizens.
- Increasing knowledge of landscapes in co-operation with citizens (including children and students) is a prerequisite for sustainable management of those landscapes.

## **Conclusion**

The knowledge of processes improving the sound interaction of all citizens and institutions active in the care of landscape quality should be enhanced. University staff are invited to join a scientific community of practice to this purpose, for which UNISCAPE is open.

#### **Contact**

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Useful web links
www.uniscape.org (Universities and ELC)
www.recep-enelc.net (Authorities and ELC)
www.civilscape.org (NGOs and ELC)
www.landscape-europe.net

### **Further reading**

Wascher, D. & B. Pedroli (2008): Blueprint for EUROSCAPE 2020. Reframing the future of the European landscape. – Policy visions and research support. Landscape Europe, Wageningen. 48 p. www.landscape-europe.net/BlueprintLowRes.pdf

Pedroli, B., A. Van Doorn, G. De Blust, M.L. Paracchini, D. Wascher & F. Bunce (Eds., 2007): Europe's living landscapes. Essays exploring our identity in the countryside. Landscape Europe, Wageningen / KNNV Publishing, Zeist. 432 p. http://www.landscape-europe.net/ELL.html

Pedroli, G.B.M., Th. Van Elsen & J.D. Van Mansvelt (2007): Values of rural land-scapes in Europe. Inspiration or by-product. NJAS – Wageningen Journal of Life Sciences 54 (4): 431-447.

Pedroli B., T. Pinto Correia & P. Cornish (2006): Landscape – what's in it? Trends in European landscape science and priority themes for concerted research. Landscape Ecology 21 (3): 421–430.

Buijs, A.E., B. Pedroli & Y. Luginbühl (2006): From hiking through farmland to farming in a leisure landscape. Changing social perceptions of the European landscape. Landscape Ecology 21 (3): 375–389.



# Local and regional authorities and the European Landscape Convention



Riccardo Priore
Council of Europe officer\*
Director of the European
Network of Local and

Network of Local and
Regional Authorities for the
implementation of the
European Landscape
Convention (RECEP-ENELC)

## **Overview**

The ELC provisions relating to the division of public responsibilities make an explicit reference to the principle of subsidiarity and local self-government (Article 4). This provision is prompting local and regional authorities throughout Europe to strengthen their institutional commitment to landscape. The presentation provided concrete examples.

## **Key points**

- The ELC is an international legal framework for a political project aimed at sharing and consolidating a new approach to landscape issues continent-wide.
- It sets forth principles committing the contracting states to adopt policies and measures aimed at enhancing the quality of landscapes throughout the entire national territory, involving the people concerned in the relevant public decision-making processes.
- Bearing in mind the principles of subsidiarity and self-government (ELC - Article 4), the ELC cannot be correctly implemented without a systematic involvement of local / regional authorities.
- Such involvement should refer to the establishment and the implementation of

landscape policies (ELC - Article 5.b), the landscapes identification / assessment procedures (ELC - Article 6.C), the definition of quality objectives (Article 6.D) and the interventions in the areas concerned (Article 6.E).

## Conclusion

Local and regional authorities should be supported in their efforts to implement ELC principles at national level. This support should also refer to their international co-operation.

The co-operation of local and regional authorities at European level (RECEP-ENELC) should be interlinked with other forms of international co-operation regarding the Convention [intergovernmental co-operation of the States within the Council of Europe; NGOs – CIVILSCAPE; universities – UNISCAPE].

Other forms of co-operation could be usefully promoted (e.g. professionals).

## Contact

www.coe.int www.eurolandscape.net www.recep-enelc.net



Leading co-operation: all are welcome to visit RECEP ENELC at their headquarters, the Villa medicea di Careggi, Florence, Italy.

'All is landscape; landscape is all.'

<sup>\* (</sup>currently in a 'leave of absence' period)



# Management of the landscape vs. landscape of the management: some experiences from protected areas in the Barcelona region



Carles Castell
Head of the Land Planning
and Analysis Office,
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(Provincial Government of
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### **Overview**

The Natural Areas Service of the Province of Barcelona has been managing a network of protected areas (currently 12 natural parks covering 100,000 ha) for more than 30 years in the Metropolitan Region of Barcelona. We present our experience in planning and managing protected landscapes very close to densely populated areas.

## **Key points**

- 'Everything is landscape'. Not only beautiful or protected landscapes, but any piece of land.
- Landscape is the result of the interaction of many natural and human factors, not the result of a project.
- Thus, landscape planning and management should act through arrangement of human activities taking place on the territory.
- And thus, landscape policies should be transversal (this is, involving all the policies influencing land use and changes), not independent and isolated initiatives.
- Living landscapes, where human activities are very dynamic but well planned and arranged (making compatible development and conservation), are also beautiful, valuable and appreciable landscapes.

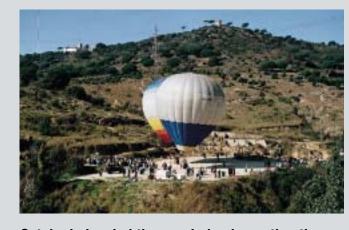
## Conclusion

In metropolitan regions, natural landscapes must be appreciated as a whole, and should be planned and managed in order to provide their very important natural benefits and services to the citizens. To do this, a wide approach, involving all public administrations and private stakeholders, is needed.

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Catalonia has led the way in implementing the convention. Now landscape is becoming more and more important there, and the idea that pleasant landscape increases quality of life is growing.

'Landscape is more an indicator of satisfactory land planning and management than a project in itself.'



# 'Parklands': a vision for the Thames Gateway



Eugene Dreyer
Urban Design Director
Terry Farrell Partnership
London



Landscape of opportunity – the Thames Gateway, former 'engine room' of the UK's south east, helped establish the world's first global city. Today its natural features are the foundation of its regeneration.

'Landscapes are the foundation for regeneration, not a by-product.'

## **Overview**

Farrells were tasked by government to produce a 'highly visual Parklands spatial framework', setting the overarching vision for the Thames Gateway. This is the culmination of work that Farrells initiated voluntarily five years ago, when it first promoted the idea that regeneration should be based on the creation of a continuous, large scale landscape.

## **Key points of the Parklands vision**

**Water Parklands:** to reveal lost tributaries, improve wetlands, revive underused docks, canals, piers, promenades and waterfronts, and provide new river connections.

**Community Parklands:** to improve access to green and open spaces in the Thames Estuary and to open spaces to connect communities together. This could include creating pedestrian and cycle links, and setting aside areas for cultural and sporting activities.

**Urban Parklands:** to improve the public realm and create public spaces in urban areas, such as promenades, river walkways, squares, play areas and "urban beaches".

**Parklands Historic Environment:** to regenerate historical and cultural sites to help give a clear identity to each community in the Thames estuary region.

A Connected Parklands Landscape: to connect open and green spaces together to create a continuous green link based on plans for Green Grids through East London, South Essex and North Kent, and to connect communities to each other and open spaces. This will include further development of the Thames Estuary Path.

**Agriculture as Parklands:** to appreciate agricultural landscapes, enhance biodiversity and provide opportunities for local food production.

**Parklands and the eco-region:** to use Parklands to help the Gateway become the UK's first eco-region by encouraging local food and material production, natural drainage, reduced car use and sustainable transport links.

### Conclusion

The Parklands Vision has been developed in close collaboration with local organisations and partners, and it reveals a commitment throughout the region to working with the environment and taking a respectful approach to nature. Farrells have come up with a spatial framework that can be implemented by local people and organisations over time and in any sequence.

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# Making the connections in the Kent Downs



Nick Johannsen Director, Kent Downs AONB Unit, England



A sustainable landscape? Boundaries contain growth, but not the effects of growth.137,000 new homes are planned in Kent, to add to the million people already living within a kilometer of the boundary of the Kent Downs area of outstanding natural beauty (pictured at Elmsted).

## **Overview**

This presentation considered the qualities and unique position of the Kent Downs area of outstanding natural beauty, as well as opportunities and threats presented by its proximity to Greater London and areas of major urban growth.

## **Key points**

- There are opportunities as well as threats to protected areas from rapid urban growth.
- There is a need to seek evidence-based approaches and to look beyond boundaries to make the most of the opportunities and to develop clear strategies to manage the threats.
- The ELC provides an excellent basis to take this approach forward particularly with its focus on the needs and perceptions of the communities involved.
- There is a clear need to learn from successes elsewhere.
- There is a real opportunity as a result of this seminar for a collaborative approach to seek Interreg 4b funding to take forward this work.

## **Conclusion**

There is a good opportunity for both the new communities and the protected landscape from growth, but a protected landscape management team or partnership cannot secure this alone. There needs to be buy in, understanding and support from a wide range of partners: from the government departments promoting growth to the local authorities; from the developers to the existing and new communities.

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'The whole-landscape approach is a lever to help achieve our ambition for excellence in urban green infrastructure as well as protecting existing quality landscapes.'





# Planning North Kent's Green Infrastructure - without boundaries



Martin Hall Director, Greening the Gateway Kent and Medway (GGKM)



Change is going to come: computer-generated image to show how green infrastructure could be included in development around the River Thames and Ebbsfleet Valley.

## **Overview**

An outline of the work of GGKM in preparing North Kent for green infrastructure investment looking at growth area work, area-based cluster studies and delivering Thames Gateway Parklands.

## **Key points**

- Functioning and informed partnerships are essential to effective delivery of green infrastructure.
- Joining up work areas and funding is difficult and time consuming.
- The implications associated with local politics, partner aspirations, ever changing initiatives and fluctuations in funding all complicate planning and delivery.
- The level of experience and resources within planning and delivery organisations has the most significant impact on delivery - more than money.
- Need to balance long-term vision with short-term delivery.

## **Conclusion**

As with all business you need to have a product that works and people understand, value and want to buy. GGKM is working towards this goal through its work on positive spatial planning combined with securing inward investment.

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'This is about a radical transformation in the urban environment, not park benches and leaflets.'



# Snapshots from the study visit: a day in the Gateway

The visit examined the context of the growing urban communities in the Thames Gateway, part of Europe's largest economic development area, and nearby countryside, and was led by Nick Johannsen, director, Kent Downs AONB unit and David Standen. consultant and former programme director, Cobham Heritage Project.

The day started in **Gravesend**, where the view from Carl Eckmann House (below left) said it all about the huge scale of development about to take place: 22,000 new properties in the next 20 years are planned within sight. 'There

is no overall masterplan for green infrastructure,' said David Standen. 'There is an overall strategy, but defining that on the ground just isn't happening. Everyone goes out to the Kent Downs - but they go in their cars. There is little pedestrian access across the A2 and none planned.'

Part of managing the Kent Downs was getting the development and management of this urban area right, said Nick Johannsen: 'We want to see superb green infrastructure here. The Kent Downs is surrounded by four growth areas; by 2006 there's going to be a total of 137,000 new households. Managing the

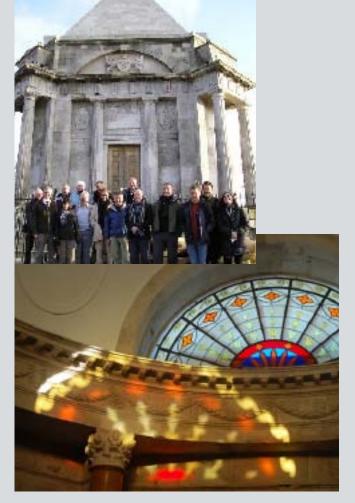
relationship between the area and its surroundings is a big challenge. We need investment in both. Influence does not stop at boundaries, and funding should not either. We need to understand the impacts of growth there is a risk of siege mentality.'

Next, participants visited a potential linear 'urban fringe park' (below right) on the site of the old A2 road featuring cycle/bridle/walkways through a 'Teletubby landscape' of low grassy hillocks (thanks to zero spoil roadbuilding policy), next to the high-speed link and new eight-lane A2.









There is 'enormous severance' between urban and rural areas, said Nick Johannsen: 'There is a need to make links which are meaningful and necessary for people. Nearby are fantastic quintessential pieces of English landscape a key issue is making them easy to access by bicycle, and creating areas that are useful for dog walking, running - everyday life activities.'

A stop at the recently created Jeskyns Farm, managed by the Forestry Commission, showed how greenspace is being provided and protected through an opportunistic and piecemeal rather than strategic approach, with a patchwork of country parks. 'We're at the stage where we need to pull this together there's an opportunity to make it work coherently,' said Nick Johannsen.

Dog walking was the most popular activity at Jeskyns - but David Standen explained how, unmanaged, the urban/rural interface could face intractable problems, illustrated by the next stop, Cobham Park, where the Darnley Mausoleum had been 'under siege' in the latter half of the twentieth century. Long-running vandalism in the unmanaged parkland brought the Grade I listed, two hundred year old building to ruin. Now restored outside and in (above left), the building is proving a focus for community engagement with the landscape.

Finally, Rick Bain, project manager explained how the innovative approach of the Valley of Visions landscape partnership scheme, funded through a Heritage Lottery grant, was aiming to secure and transform the future of the Medway

Gap (below right). Led by the AONB unit, the scheme typifies a landscape-scale approach, as it focuses on an area outside AONB boundaries – a positive end to a fascinating day.





# Some key thoughts from the discussions - responses and actions from participants

## Responses - workshop one Chaired by Colin Murphy, (EUROPARC Atlantic Isles), Paul Walshe (ICOMOS).

Edited highlights of conversation, which centred around three key areas:

Scope – 'The ELC applies to all landscapes... It's brown (urban), green (rural) and blue (rivers and marine)'; 'I was struck that we placed less emphasis on protected areas'; 'The English national park concept is old-fashioned and not well suited to change like ELC'; 'It's a powerful and difficult challenge to act and think horizontally and vertically'; 'It relates rural landscape policies to economic activity.'

Engagement – 'Substitute 'landscape' with 'place'; people understand 'place''; 'Most of us are urban (even if we live in the countryside)'; 'There is a lot to do to sell convention as a vision, but Thames Parklands a good way to do so'; 'Sell it to communities as the convention is about people – not for us to tell them what landscape is – they tell us'; 'Share it with those who make decisions and allocate funding'; 'Talk about health and what green landscapes can do for our wellbeing.'

**Approach** – 'The lack of involvement in the ELC debate by local public representatives really strikes me. Are English local authorities

ready to get involved?'; 'Does the UK share this vision with the European mainland? If not, it should do'; 'It's impressive that Catalonia is putting serious money into its delivery of ELC principles'; 'Gaps at regional level are a problem, ELC is not currently informing work'; 'Learn from how Biodiversity Action Plan framework uses targets and responsibilities'; 'Use European allies, make linkages'; 'Use the economic downturn to re-connect with the whole landscape'; 'Sell it by making it useful at different levels – bring it as a solution, not a problem'; 'Please don't be pessimistic about ELC. Act locally whilst others think globally.'

## **Actions - workshop two**

Dan Bloomfield (EUROPARC Atlantic Isles), Peter Rawcliffe (Scottish Natural Heritage)

Actions proposed by individual organisations National and local government

- Continue to raise awareness of the ELC with relevant Government departments e.g.
   Communities and Housing – work across departments
- Inform development of a management plan for West Pennine Moors peri-urban area with examples discussed today

Protected landscape managers

- Discuss ELC landscape agenda with members – distribute copies!
- Write to partner local authorities/other bodies to raise awareness of the ELC and ask how these organisations are actively contributing to its implementation
- Learn from what's happening follow-up projects and initiatives discussed today
- Undertake economic value study of AONBs
- Consider scope for involvement in regional planning approaches; publicise in planning journals; be part of landscape award nomination process
- Engage in debate on agriculture and forestry policy – seek to maximise future functionality of landscapes in terms of local food and fuel production

## NGOs and communities

- Promote better awareness of ELC among relevant networks in England, UK and Europe
- Reactivate local communities initiative
- Investigate potential of local landscapes week
- Use the ELC to challenge local planning issues

(continued over)



## Actions proposed for us collectively/EAI/EF

- Demonstrate impact of EU policies and funding on landscape and seek greater action on landscape from the EU
- Encourage/Challenge local authorities to consider ELC within planning policy and development control decisions
- Seek funding match NE challenge fund to HLF/Interreg application
- Landscape and health develop and promote the evidence base and its implications
- Publish booklet demonstrating good practice examples of landscape 'adding value' for communities
- Develop EUROPARC working group to share knowledge and promote good practice
- Develop set of practical actions and/or charter for communities to take action to implement the ELC
- Increase awareness of the ELC among local councillors, MPs etc
- Develop a roving roadshow to bring the ELC to local authorities, local communities and other groups and organisations
- Promote importance of protected areas (e.g. SPAs, SACs) and other important landscapes outside protected landscapes (NPs, AONBs)

## In conclusion...

Our sincere thanks to speakers and participants at this lively seminar. This is very important work. The European Landscape Convention has acted as a strategic framework to put landscape to the top of the agenda. There are concerns that economic activity will overpower places, but examples show that landscapes have economic power too.

The discussions showed how the ELC recognises the value of all of our landscapes. Protected areas are now part of a bigger agenda, and need to be outwardly focused, better at engagement and communication, and part of the debate. We need to bring the agendas together, network and share. EUROPARC Atlantic Isles allows us to do this across Europe.

More work is needed. We should emphasise the social and economic value of landscape to join up the approaches and focus on urban areas and populations.

#### **Martin Beaton**

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