



Organized on

04th-05th July 2022

Organized by

Wildlife Institute of India-Category 2 Centre for World Heritage Management and Training for Asia and the Pacific Region under the auspicious of UNESCO

Day One: 04th July 2022 (Monday)

Inaugural Session

The program started with the opening remarks by **Dr. Gautam Talukdar**, Scientist & Faculty in-charge of the Wildlife Institute of India-Category 2 Centre, Dehradun. He extended a warm welcome to all the site managers, highlighted the objectives, and gave an overview of the workshop. He also requested everyone to actively take part in the meeting to share their experiences/knowledge from field, brainstorm new ideas and make the program interactive.

The welcome address was given by **Dr. Ruchi Badola**, Registrar & Scientist-G, Wildlife Institute of India. She briefly spoke about the benefits of getting a site nominated as World Heritage Property. She emphasized on the importance of everybody's roles, responsibilities and how it can be useful while reporting or managing a World Heritage Site.

A total of 12 participants including site managers from five Natural World Heritage Sites and officials of WII & WII-Category 2 Centre attended the workshop.

Technical Session-I

The context of the first technical session was set by an introductory presentation “**WII-Category 2 Centre- Mandate & Functions**” by Dr. Gautam Talukdar. He provided background and an introduction to the WII-Category 2 Centre, starting from its establishment in the Wildlife Institute of India campus, its mission, mandates, governance, and functions. He further explained various activities in which WII-C2C is currently involved including Nomination and Inscriptions of new World Heritage Sites (WHS), Reporting & Monitoring for Natural WHS, and other Advisory services. He also mentioned this year India is elected to be a member of the executive committee at the World Heritage Centre for the next 3 years, and how it might create several opportunities and help the Category 2 Centre. He also emphasized how other countries use this convention and the platform as soft diplomacy in International Politics.

After the presentation Mr. Saket Badola, Field Director- Nanda Devi & Valley of Flowers National Park enquired about, how much global & regional footprint the WII-C2C has; Is it preparing nomination dossiers, Periodic Reporting for only Indian WHS and/or the regional & global sites are also covered? Dr. Gautam answered all the questions.

The second presentation of this session was “**Overview of World Heritage System, Current World Heritage Sites in India**” by **Mr. Niraj Kakati**, Technical Officer, WII-C2C. He provided detailed history and background of The World Heritage Convention and how it came into being in Post-World War era with the collaboration of three major international institution UNESCO, IUCN, and the United States of America. He explained about the World Heritage Committee, which is composed of 21 members elected by the States Parties, and the

Operational Guidelines developed by the Committee to facilitate the implementation of the World Heritage Convention. He further described the Outstanding Universal Value, the criteria and categories required to nominate a property as a WHS along with the timeline & process required for nomination. He also provided the details of the present WHS in India and properties which are in the tentative list.

The last presentation of this session was about “**India’s Role in World Heritage Committee, and Other International Obligations**” by Mr. Niraj Kakati. He mentioned India was Originally signatory to the Convention in 1972, ratified later in 1977 and the first site was nominated in 1983 under cultural category. He further explained a case study of Manas Wildlife Sanctuary, a natural property being in the list of “Sites in Danger” and its recovery from it. His talk emphasized on the World Heritage Administration in India, its National focal points and Nodal Agency of natural/cultural sites, the representatives and finally the permanent delegation to UNESCO World Heritage Centre. He also mentioned how India influenced structural changes in the World Heritage process and framework, and its responsibilities as an elected state party.

Technical Session-II

In this session “**Updates on Periodic Reporting Exercise/State of Conservation (SoC) for World Heritage Sites**” was explained by Mr. Niraj Kakati. He provided detailed information about, why the reporting & monitoring of the WHS required, how the reporting issues determined and what are the mechanisms for it. He explained the State Parties have an obligation to regularly prepare reports about the state of conservation and the various protection measures put in place at their sites. He mentioned “**World Heritage State of Conservation Information System**” - one of the most comprehensive monitoring systems of any international conventions. He also talked about Periodic Reporting, six yearly cycle, and detailed questionnaires the site manager has to fill up, that helps in understanding the site’s protection and management over the years. He then provided information about Reactive Monitoring, done by the World Heritage Centre and the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Committee on the state of conservation of specific World Heritage properties that are under threat.

He also talked about the Conservation Outlook Assessment; an independent monitoring of sites conducted by the advisory body IUCN for natural sites. It fills the information gap on the remaining sites through proactive and more regular monitoring of WHS beyond the UNESCO process. The **first global assessment** of the conservation prospects for natural World Heritage was in 2014, followed by 2017 & 2020.

Next in the session was “**Presentation by Site Managers**” from all 5 WHS in India present in the workshop.

The first presentation was by Mr. Tapas Das, Field Director **Sundarban National Park**. He explained the OUV and criteria under which the site was nominated. He pointed out the challenges the property is facing at present, some of them are climate change, frequent cyclonic storms, increased dominance of salt loving mangroves, lack of livelihood opportunities for locals etc. He also talked about the potential opportunities ahead *viz.* research activities & conservation of the ecosystem through scientific management, exploring alternative income sources, regulated eco-tourism, and trans-boundary research on Royal Bengal Tigers.

The next presentation was by Ms. Meera Sharma, CCF & Director **Great Himalayan National Park**. She explained in detail the geography, floral & faunal diversity which contributes to the site's OUV and briefed about the administration of the park. She also explained the activities the park management conducts to aware the local people about the heritage site and mentioned recent celebration of the inscription day as the World Heritage Day or Viswa Dharohar Diwas. The remote location of GHNP gave maximum protection to the site, and the people themselves have adopted eco-tourism models now and decided not to build bigger hotels especially in Tirthan valley.

The Director, **Khangchendzonga National Park** Sikkim, Ms. Sonam Choden Bhutia, explained the OUV of KNP and current management issues the site is facing. Frequent pressure from the Army to build infrastructure around KNP, stating the matter as a national security interest. The Chief Minister of the state of Sikkim also conveyed his comments through a video message.

The DCF (Wildlife), **Keoladeo National Park**, Mr. Mohit Gupta, gave a brief presentation on the challenges the WHS is facing at present, major issue being the water unavailability. He talked about efforts made by the Forest Department, municipality, and the residents to mitigate the issue. One day in every week the local people restrict their water related activity so that the water can be transferred to the park.

The Field Director- **Nanda Devi & Valley of Flowers National Park**, Mr. Saket Badola, delivered an informative talk about the site. He explained the site's geography, OUV, flora, fauna and shared knowledge from the decadal expeditions conducted to monitor the parks status. He further mentioned the site's challenges as it is in a strategically crucial area, its disaster proneness and climate change impacts. He also suggested a way forward by generating awareness among the local people.

At the end of the first day workshop participants were taken to experience the Ganga Aarti.

Day Two: 05th July 2022 (Tuesday)

Early morning next day the participants were taken for field trip in Neelkanth, Rishikesh. Neelkanth Mahadev Temple is one of the famous devotional places dedicated to Lord Shiva in Rishikesh. Dense woodlands surround the temple with beguiling views of the mountain ranges of Garhwal. The Neelkanth Mandir is associated with a famous Hindu mythology. It narrates the story behind the temple's unique name. According to the Hindu legend, the Neelkanth Mahadev Temple stands at the same place where Lord Shiva consumed the poison at the time of Samudra Manthan or churning of the oceans by *Devtas* (gods) and *Asuras* (demons).

Shiva stopped the poison in his throat to enter his body due to which his throat turned blue. Therefore, Shiva got the name "Neelkanth" meaning "The one having a blue throat". To commemorate Shiva's sacrifice for mankind, devotees built this temple at the same spot where this event took place. The phallic form of Shivalingam placed inside the sanctum sanctorum of the temple.

The mythology of Hinduism is an attribute of our Heritage. The participants visited the temple and poured water on the Shivalinga, experiencing the spiritual journey together.

Discussion on Potential World Heritage Collaborations & Way Forward

Post-breakfast all the participants had an interactive discussion on management issues, various challenges, and possible suggestions to deal with the same.

In the last segment of the workshop all the site managers and WII-C2C officials had a brainstorming session where ideas of potential collaboration with forest departments/site managers were discussed.

- ✓ **Mr. Tapas Das**, Sundarban NP field director expressed his interest to conduct an awareness program at his site and emphasized on the fact, that the awareness should happen at all levels, from the local communities, frontline staffs to the highest authority.
- ✓ **Ms. Sonam**, Director KNP, also reiterated and agreed to conduct a capacity building program of frontline staff in Sikkim FD and also for the senior govt. officials to make them aware of the heritage perspectives of Khangchendzonga NP. This idea was supported by Keoladeo NP, DCF, **Mr Mohit**.
- ✓ A lesson from the GHNP site management was celebrating heritage site inscription day as festival to deeply engage the local people. **Mr. Tapas** of Sundarban NP encouraged and concurred to celebrate the inscription day of Sundarban as Heritage Day. He further mentioned a full-scale celebration could also be planned with the collaboration of the tourism department, the forest department, and irrigation department as "Sundarban Festival" where various activities such as "boat race", "skits" or "Bonbibi Pala" could be conducted for local people, which will show a nature-culture linkage including celebration of local food.
- ✓ **Ms Meera** suggested, a World Heritage Mela can be organized involving heritage officers, communities and the WII-C2C.

- ✓ **Mr. Mohit**, suggested hotels near WHS can learn and implement good practices and get certified as the “Green Standards for hotels” to attract more tourists. These places could be exemplar of eco-tourism/sustainable tourism.
- ✓ All the site managers agreed there should a compilation of photos and videos from each WHS which can be stored as a repository in the WH-C2C. Short films on each site can also be made using these materials which may be used without copyright issues in various programmes.

The workshop concluded followed by lunch and departure of participants.

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# Workshop Agenda



## WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGERS MEETING ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND PARTNERSHIP RISHIKESH - UTTARAKHAND 4-5 JULY, 2022

|                                    |                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                    | <b>3rd July, Arrival at Rishikesh (Uttarakhand)</b>                                         |
| <b>4<sup>th</sup> July 2022</b>    | <b>Day-1</b>                                                                                |
| 1030h-1045h                        | Inaugural & Welcome Address                                                                 |
| 1045h – 1100h                      | Address by Dr Ruchi Badola Registrar, Wildlife Institute of India                           |
| <b>1100h-1130h</b>                 | <b>Group Photo Followed by Coffee/ Refreshments</b>                                         |
| 1130h -1145h                       | Context Setting                                                                             |
| 1145h- 1215h                       | WII-Category 2 Centre – Mandate & Functions                                                 |
| 1215h – 1245h                      | Overview of World Heritage System, Current World Heritage Sites in India                    |
| 1245h- 1300 h                      | India's Role in World Heritage Committee, and Other International Obligations               |
| <b>1300h-1400h</b>                 | <b>Lunch Break</b>                                                                          |
| 1400h-1500 h                       | Updates on Periodic Reporting Exercise/State of Conservation (SoC) for World Heritage Sites |
| <b>1500h-1515h</b>                 | <b>Coffee Break</b>                                                                         |
| <b>1515h-1630h</b>                 | <b>Presentation By Site Managers</b>                                                        |
| 1630-1700h                         | Discussion on Potential World Heritage Collaborations with Forest and Other Department      |
| 1700h-1730h                        | Concluding Remarks/ Way Ahead                                                               |
| 1800h                              | Ganga Aarti/ Darshan                                                                        |
| <b>Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July</b> | <b>Day - 2</b>                                                                              |
| <b>700h -1300h</b>                 | <b>Field Activity</b>                                                                       |
| <b>1300h</b>                       | <b>Lunch</b>                                                                                |
|                                    | <b>Departures - Afternoon</b>                                                               |

WORLD HERITAGE SITE MANAGERS MEETING: ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES  
AND PARTNERSHIP

4-5 JULY 2022  
RISHIKESH, UTTARAKHAND

**PARTICIPANT LIST**

| S. No | Name              | Designation                                     | Email/ Phone No                     | Signature |
|-------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1.    | TAPAS DAS         | CCF & FD STR<br>SINHALESI TIGER RESERVE         | tapasdasifs@gmail.com<br>9933366629 |           |
| 2.    | MEERA SHAEMA      | CCF - cum - Director<br>Great Himalayan N.P.    | clirgshnp@gmail.com<br>9816251166   |           |
| 3.    | Mohit Gupta       | DCF (WL), Bharatpur<br>[Keoladeo National Park] | 9899716890                          |           |
| 4.    | Saur Choudhury    | Director (Chandrapur<br>Wakar Park)             | 8637378919                          |           |
| 5.    | Rajni Bhandari    | Additional Director<br>KNP.                     | 9434088878                          |           |
| 6.    | Saket Badola      | FD, Nandadevi<br>BR                             | 9720007663                          |           |
| 7.    | Anindita Debnath  | Administrative<br>Assistant, WII-C2E            | 7830677166                          |           |
| 8.    | Srishti Badola    | Project Assistant<br>Namami Gange               | 8279746982                          |           |
| 9.    | Smriti Badola     | Sc-Cr Registrar<br>WII                          | 9412055986                          |           |
| 10.   | Shantanu Talukdar | Sci. Jst W II                                   | 9456178597                          |           |
| 11.   | Niraj Kakati      | Tech off., WII-C2E                              | 9435048834                          |           |
| 12.   | BHUMESH SINGH     | TECH. OFFICER WII-C2E                           | 9456103455                          |           |
| 13.   |                   |                                                 |                                     |           |

## Glimpses of the workshop

