

## Parks for Peace or Peace for Parks? Issues in Practice and Policy *A Forthcoming Publication From ECSP*

### Introduction

In 2001, Nelson Mandela said, “I know of no political movement, no philosophy, no ideology, which does not agree with the peace parks concept as we see it going into fruition today. It is a concept that can be embraced by all.”<sup>1</sup> Parks for peace—transboundary conservation areas dedicated to the promotion of peace and cooperation—hold great promise and appeal, but have they lived up to this promise? Some say yes, others respectfully disagree with the former South African President’s assertion.

Even the definition of peace parks—sometimes called “transboundary natural resource management” (TBNRM) or “transboundary conservation” initiatives—is subject to debate. The lack of a consistent and agreed-upon typology often leads to confusion and hinders international discussions and legal agreements. Other problems have emerged in practice; for example, the implementation of some TBNRM initiatives in southern Africa engendered conflict when the new parks evicted or excluded residents. Proposals for future parks offer innovative approaches to resolving decades-long conflicts, but some doubt the chances that such environmental conservation initiatives can help create peace.

An upcoming ECSP publication—based on a conference held in September 2005 at the Wilson Center<sup>2</sup>—will explore the rhetoric

and reality of peace parks, including their goals and the factors that determine their success or failure. Drawing on future plans and successful projects in southern Africa, Kashmir, and South America, the authors debate whether peace parks can protect the environment and promote conflict resolution. *ECSP Report* presents excerpts from five of the conference papers as a preview of the publication forthcoming in 2006; complete versions are available on ECSP’s website at [www.wilsoncenter.org/ecsp](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/ecsp).

While the debate over peace parks and transboundary areas will continue for some time, Dorothy Zbicz, an international conservation policy consultant who attended the September conference, provided an example of how transboundary resource management can lead to grand results. Resting on the Virginia and Maryland sides of the Potomac River, Great Falls Park is the historic site where two states built a canal around the region’s impassable waterfalls and rapids. This early act of American cooperation is noted on the park’s plaque: “The agreement that was developed between Maryland and Virginia to share the river for their common purpose led to further meetings—Annapolis 1786 and Philadelphia 1787 and to drafting of the United States Constitution.” Today, while Great Falls Park is no longer building democracy, it stands as a memorial to the power of managing environmental resources for peace.

## Notes

1. The full text of Nelson Mandela's October 21, 2001, speech is available online at [http://www.gamerrangers.com/left\\_frameset/05\\_nieuws/01\\_natuur/sub2\\_frameset\\_bestanden/natuur.html#speech](http://www.gamerrangers.com/left_frameset/05_nieuws/01_natuur/sub2_frameset_bestanden/natuur.html#speech)

2. A summary of the September 12, 2005, conference is available on ECSP's website at [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1413&fuseaction=topics.event\\_summary&event\\_id=146506](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1413&fuseaction=topics.event_summary&event_id=146506)

# Conservation and Conflict Resolution: Crossing the Policy Frontier

By Saleem H. Ali

International conservation efforts are generally relegated to specific government agencies and scientists, and are not linked to issues of regional cooperation between adversarial states or communities. Thus, a “policy frontier” separates conservation initiatives from foreign policy or intra-state community relations. While environmental security theorists have tried over the years to inject the importance of resource scarcity and quality into defense circles, the empirical focus on conflict causality has led to the decline of this influence.

Instead of trying to tease out environmental causality in conflicts and thereby accentuate the importance of conservation, we could also look at how environmental issues play a role in cooperation—regardless of whether they were part of the original conflict. Scholars have only recently begun to examine the utility of this approach, which is termed “environmental peacemaking” (Conca & Dabelko, 2002). The main premise of environmental peacemaking holds that certain key attributes of environmental concerns could lead acrimonious parties to consider them as a means of cooperation.

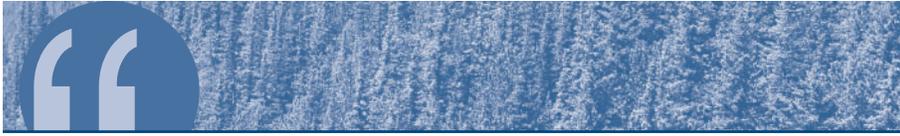
Using conservation as a direct means of conflict resolution challenges conventional assumptions about the secondary role of environmental issues in conflict resolution. For example, peace parks are being actively pursued in Korea and Kashmir, two high-conflict areas. Since 1986, the Siachen glacier in Kashmir has served as a battleground for India and Pakistan. More than

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100 million people depend on the meltwater of the Himalayan glaciers, increasing the human security dimensions of this issue in both adversarial countries (Ali, 2005). Anticipating water shortages requires studying the glaciers' retreat in the face of climatic changes. Given the importance of this work, the Kashmir park planners have focused on using science as a peacebuilding tool.

Geologists and hydrologists from India and Pakistan, with help from colleagues at the National Science Foundation in the United States and Italy, have appealed to the governments to give them access to this region. Environmentalists and mountaineers have joined forces to use this opportunity to establish a conservation zone. The Indian prime minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, gave the idea its most significant political support during his visit to Siachen in June 2005, during which he publicly remarked that the territory could become a “peace mountain.” Strategies for



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de-escalating the Siachen conflict continue, including a project supported by Sandia National Labs in New Mexico involving Pakistani and Indian military officials.

In the Korean case, the demilitarized zone (DMZ) has become a default sanctuary for wildlife since conflict has prevented the area's development.<sup>1</sup> Several conservation biologists have suggested using the region's high biodiversity to develop a conflict resolution strategy between the two countries. An organization called the DMZ Forum, established in the United States in 1998, has lobbied for this proposal's inclusion in the six-party talks. Media magnate Ted Turner has popularized this effort, most recently during his visit to both North and South Korea in August 2005.

### Recommendations

For proper implementation, the peace park effort must first undergo a phase of local review and transparency. A clear process is particularly important in conflict settings to avoid the spread of conspiracy theories that can lead to suspicion and rumor-mongering, which often spoil even the most sincere efforts.

In addition, the military should be considered a facilitator rather than a hindrance. Demilitarization might not be the first step, but transforming the military into a ranger force could assuage security and employment con-

cerns while accomplishing conservation tasks. If the conflict has caused environmental damage, the military can certainly play an important role in the clean-up effort.

The positive economic impact of peace park formulation is often quantifiable, based on the potential for increased tourism as well as the willingness of donors to invest in such a program. Integrated planning for peace parks must include a clear assessment of livelihoods and how those would be made sustainable by the development of a peace park. The incorporation of conservation provisions and access to peace park areas through visa waivers or on-site processing of visas for the conservation zones can also be proposed.

As with many complex interactions of human behavior and the environment, we must not expect instant solutions. Peace parks constitute a new vision for addressing global conflicts and hence will suffer growing pains before reaching cognitive acceptance and practical results. However, there is substantive theoretical backing for their efficacy as well as emerging examples of their success, which we should view with optimism.

### Note

1. Ke Chung Kim, professor of entomology at Pennsylvania State University, discussed the DMZ peace park proposal at the ECSP conference. His presentation, "Biodiversity and Barbed Wire: Exploring Joint Conservation in the Korea DMZ," is available on ECSP's website at [http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic\\_id=1413&fuseaction=topics.event\\_summary&event\\_id=146506](http://www.wilsoncenter.org/index.cfm?topic_id=1413&fuseaction=topics.event_summary&event_id=146506)

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# Trade-offs Among Multiple Goals for Transboundary Conservation

By Trevor Sandwith and Charles Besançon

During the past 50-80 years, the number and complexity of formalized transboundary natural resource management arrangements and agreements between countries have increased, particularly for key shared resources such as water and fisheries.

Such arrangements have also grown where protected areas are adjacent and cross an international boundary. At least 188 transboundary conservation areas, spanning the borders of 122 countries, have followed the declaration of the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in 1932 (Besançon & Savy, 2005). This grand-scale experiment reflects a range of methods of implementation, expression, and objectives. This makes it difficult to define “transboundary conservation” precisely, and identify how best to undertake it.

We propose the following typology as an organizing framework for transboundary conservation and development initiatives.

**1. Transboundary protected areas:** A transboundary protected area is an area of land and/or sea that straddles one or more borders between states, sub-national units such as provinces and regions, autonomous areas, and/or areas beyond the limit of national sovereignty or jurisdiction, whose constituent parts are especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and managed cooperatively through legal or other effective means (Sandwith et al., 2001).

**Examples:** La Amistad International Park between Costa Rica and Panama; Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park between Botswana and South Africa; and Neusiedler See/Seewinkel - Fertő Hanság Transfrontier Park between Austria and Hungary.

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**2. Transboundary conservation and development areas:** Transboundary conservation (and development) areas are areas of land and/or sea that straddle one or more borders between states, sub-national units such as provinces and regions, autonomous areas, and/or areas beyond the limit of national sovereignty or jurisdiction, *whose constituent parts form a matrix* that contributes to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, *as well as the promotion of social and economic development*, and which are managed cooperatively through legal or other effective means.

**Examples:** Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Area (Lesotho-South Africa); the Palatinate Forest Nature Park–Northern Vosges Regional Natural Park (Germany-France); and Sungai Kayan Nature Reserve and the proposed Pulong Tau National Park (Indonesia-Malaysia).

**3. Parks for Peace:** Parks for Peace are transboundary protected areas that are formally dedicated to the protection and maintenance of



While some dismiss this as an unnecessary exercise in “splitting hairs,” the continued use of a range of terms could engender an uncooperative response to transboundary conservation.

biological diversity, and of natural and associated cultural resources, and to the promotion of peace and cooperation (Sandwith et al., 2001).

**Examples:** Si-a-Paz project (Costa Rica–Nicaragua); the Cordillera del Cóndor projects in Ecuador and Peru; and Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park (Canada–USA).

#### 4. Transboundary migratory corridors:

Transboundary migratory corridors are areas of land and/or sea in two or more countries that are not necessarily contiguous, but are required to sustain a biological migratory pathway, and where cooperative management has been secured through legal or other effective means.

**Examples:** Palearctic Flyway (Siberia to Senegal); European Green Belt; and the Mesoamerican Corridor.

### Recommendations

Transboundary conservation initiatives have captured the imagination of many. They represent an ideal whereby conservation can deliver

more than simply biodiversity, species, and habitat protection, but also sustainable development and the promotion of a culture of peace and cooperation. But the question remains whether this assertion is valid, whether the methods currently being employed are optimal in relation to the investment and transaction costs of such initiatives, and whether the enthusiasm for implementation overlooks the emergent and unforeseen consequences. We call for a more deliberate process of reflection and analysis that disaggregates objectives, methods, and impacts.

In particular, we draw your attention to the need to standardize terminology as an aid for comparative analysis and to apply innovative methods to measure impacts of different types. While some dismiss this as an unnecessary exercise in “splitting hairs,” the continued use of a range of terms could engender an uncooperative response to transboundary conservation. These suggestions from the IUCN/WCPA Transboundary Conservation Task Force are consequently offered as a way to clarify the issues and circumstances in an effort to encourage cooperation.

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# Peace Parks in the Cordillera del Cóndor Mountain Range and Biodiversity Conservation Corridor

By *Martín Alcalde, Carlos F. Ponce, and Yanitza Curonisy*

For more than 150 years after independence from Spanish rule, the border of Perú and Ecuador witnessed territorial conflict initiated by both countries. In 1998, after intense negotiation and the intervention of other countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States), a final agreement—the Acta Presidencial de Brasilia—was signed, finally resolving the border conflicts between the two countries. The agreement recognized the need to update and improve existing mechanisms to promote bilateral cooperation and integration between Perú and Ecuador. Likewise, it emphasized that such mechanisms must lead to economic and social development and strengthen the cultural identity of native populations, as well as aid the conservation of biological biodiversity and the sustainable use of the ecosystems of the common border.

There have been several attempts by the conservation community to find ways to preserve the exceptional biodiversity of the Cordillera del Cóndor, a relatively isolated mountain range that straddles the Perú-Ecuador border. The cordillera lies in a highly significant global conservation zone: thanks to an abundance of water throughout the year, the region hosts the world's most diverse plant communities and serves as a key element in the great hydrological cycle linking the Andes with the Amazon.

However, only the Acta Presidencial de Brasilia brought bilateral cooperation and a peaceful environment for conservation to both countries. The Peace Agreement officially established two protected zones governed by the same treaty. These new Ecological Protection Areas include the 2,540-hectare “El Cóndor” in Ecuador. In Perú, in addition to the 5,440-hectare Ecological Protection Area, the Peruvian government established the Santiago-Comaina Reserved Area, with a surface area of 1,642,570 hectares.

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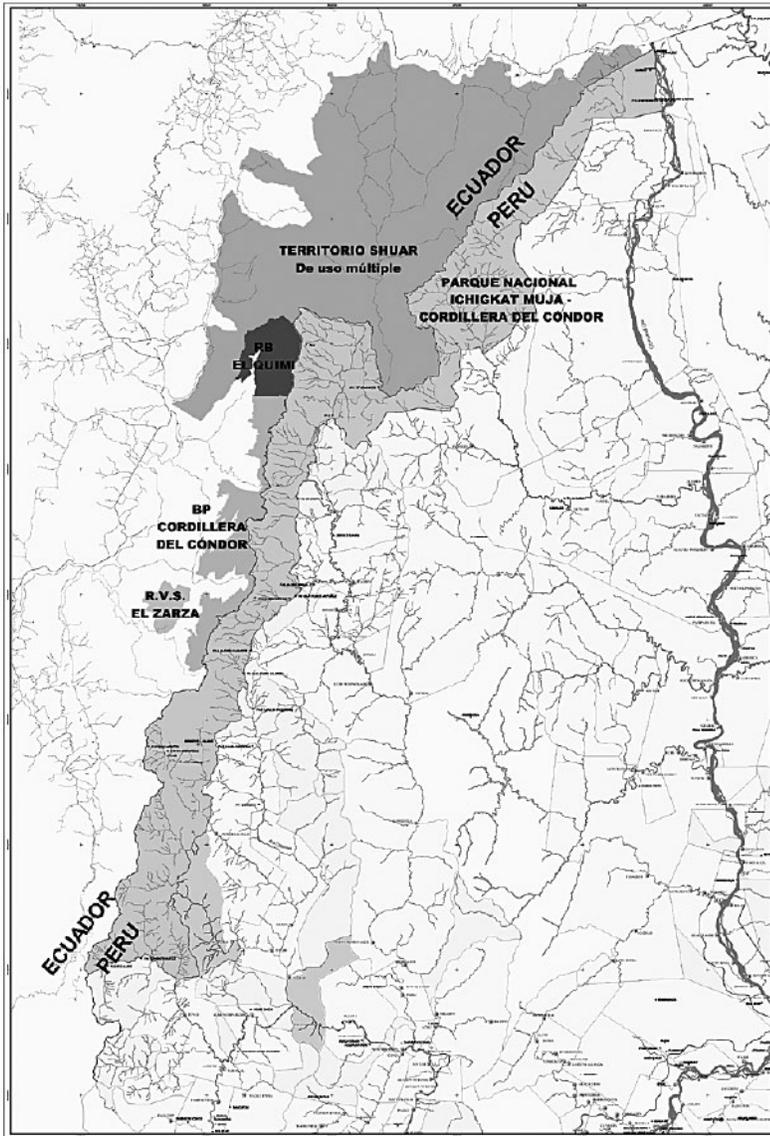
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These actions created a space for cooperation between both countries. For the “Peace and Bi-national Conservation in the Cordillera del Cóndor, Ecuador-Perú” project, between 2002 and 2004, a group of Peruvian and Ecuadorian specialists jointly prepared proposals and designed a planning and implementing process. Both countries formulated proposals for the establishment of Bordering Protected Areas on either side the border. And together, Peruvian and Ecuadorian experts helped identify the threats to conservation on both sides of the border. Management plans included actions necessary to mitigate such threats, emphasizing the continuous, coordinated management of bordering protected areas; joint investigation proposals; knowledge exchange among protected area managers; and coordinated monitoring of the biodiversity in both countries (Sandwith et al., 2001).

The peace agreement and the conservation efforts to date have helped create an environment for long-lasting peace in the region. The agreement has helped reestablish centuries-old relationships among the indigenous populations living in the zone, and improved relationships between the states and between the professionals from both countries who work together to conserve this exceptional biological richness.

The protected areas—those already established and those yet to be created—on both sides of the Peruvian-Ecuadorian border help conserve the ecosystems shared by the countries. The

## Protected Areas and Ecological Protection Zones in the Cordillera del Cóndor Region



Source: Conservación Internacional, CI - Perú 2005.

successful coordination and cooperation that takes place beyond the frontiers highlight how border protected areas act as real “links” connecting peace and conservation.

### Recommendations

These efforts have set the stage for progress in the development of the Cóndor-Kutukú Conservation Corridor (part of a Conservation

### Ecuador

Protected Areas (proposed):

- Ecological Reserve: “El Quimi” (9,266 hectares)
- Wildlife Shelter: “El Zarza” (3,743 hectares)

Ecological Protection Zone:

- “Parque El Cóndor” (approx. 2,540 hectares)

### Peru

Protected Areas (proposed):

- National Park Ichigkat Muja: Cordillera del Cóndor (approx. 150,000 hectares)

Ecological Protection Zone:

- (approx. 5,440 hectares)

International initiative to link protected areas in the Tropical Andes hotspot). For this to be successful, we believe it is necessary to:

- Strengthen the planning processes and consolidate a bi-national vision;
- Promote a bi-national information network between protected areas within the Cóndor-Kutukú Conservation Corridor;
- Generate social, economic, and biodiversity data to help prioritize conservation actions and sustainable development; and
- Encourage a participatory process for the Cóndor-Kutukú Conservation Corridor, to spread the concept of conservation corridors and promote the development of a planning process for a bi-national strategy.

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# Peace Parks in Southern Africa

by Larry A. Swatuk

Transboundary Natural Resource Management (TBNRM) initiatives, such as “peace parks,” abound throughout southern and eastern Africa. Although a good idea in theory, TBNRM in general—and peace parks in particular—must reflexively consider their motives, methods, and hypothesized outcomes to be successful. Failure to do so will result in limited buy-in at all levels of stakeholder involvement.

## Issues to Consider

**1. Peace parks must be set within local political ecology:** At a theoretical level, peace parks are an indisputably good idea. But at the level of implementation, one must be willing to adapt a generic model to highly specific local and regional political ecologies—perhaps even to recognize that the peace park approach will not work. As physical symbols of land alienation and exclusion, national parks have long been an object of derision by the majority of Africa’s rural people (Grove, 1997; Koch, 1998). Linking them together by obtaining more land will surely result in political difficulties; land claims lodged by South African communities forcibly removed from Kruger and Richtersveld National Parks are the examples cited most often (Fig, 1991; Swatuk, 2005a; *Umhlaba Wethu*, 2005; Wolmer, 2003).

**2. Peace parks cannot be considered separately from other conservation activities and their results:** Various INGOs have undertaken the responsibility of preserving biodiversity and empowering communities through the establishment of Community-Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) projects (Fabricius & Koch, 2005). Many have deliberately attempted to begin at the village level and only involve the state when necessary and/or unavoidable. However, where

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projects involve state-owned resources such as wildlife, challenge existing forms of land tenure, or could truly empower local people (such that they are no longer dependent on central government for survival), the state invariably gets involved, often in an obstructive way (Swatuk, 2005a). Simply because it is easier to deal with educated elites at a high level of government does not mean that the outcome—peace park establishment—will be any less fraught with conflict and failure than other attempts at linking conservation to rural development. Thus, one (TBNRM) is not a substitute for the other (CBNRM).

**3. Peace parks cannot be de-linked from national/regional development strategies/priorities:** Those interested in biodiversity preservation must recognize that southern African leaders’ support for TBNRM initiatives may have different roots and goals, such as achieving economies of scale and global advantage in megafauna-based tourism to generate revenue and economic development. These goals may only tangentially relate to perceived global environmental goods.

## Recommendations

Five suggestions may help lead the way over the hurdles facing peace parks:

**1. Assess what has been achieved thus far.** An accurate assessment will only emerge where we dispense with naïve or arrogant approaches to conservation and biodiversity preservation. However, as Chapin (2004)



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suggests, humility is in short supply among the global purveyors of “conservation.”

**2. Put people first:** Following Child (2004), the goals of TBNRM must be set and aligned with those of national parks, game reserves, and other forms of protected area in southern Africa. This means putting people first and making social/economic benefits the primary motivating factor in TBNRM processes and establishment—and putting conservation second. This, too, may be a pill too bitter for conservationists to swallow.

**3. Get local level buy-in:** TBNRM by definition privileges the central state and its machinery in the negotiation and management process. While it may be easier to deal with centralized agencies, supporters of TBNRM must press for subsidiarity. Without local level buy-in, TBNRM will fail.

**4. Monitor and benchmark:** As highlighted by Murphree (2004), the potential benefits from parks are numerous, and cut across economic, ecological, political, and socio-cultural lines. But there has been little systematic information gathered on the performance of protected areas of all kinds. If stakeholders across the spectrum are expected to buy into it, TBNRM must build in mechanisms for monitoring (e.g., biodiversity preservation, economic development, and gender empowerment) and benchmarking (e.g., “by this point we will have created X number of jobs”), as

well as the financial means to do so. Claims of “numerous” benefits are not enough.

**5. Do not exaggerate achievements.** Many claims regarding the achievements of TBNRM projects in southern Africa are not true. States are very good at signing, and even ratifying into law, a wide variety of documents; implementation, however, is another matter altogether. Evidence from river basin committee development in southern Africa suggests that where states have rushed ahead with donors’ good ideas, little has been achieved; but where communities have been involved from the start, where government has been brought in as a key stakeholder, and where timelines are medium-term, new, sustainable, and meaningful institutions may emerge (Swatuk, 2005b; Manning & Seely, 2005). This is an appropriate lesson for supporters of peace parks—a good idea whose time may yet still come.

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## Global Politics and Peace Parks

by Rosaleen Duffy

Nowhere is the need for transnational forms of management more apparent than in the realm of the environment. Natural resources—such as marine life, wildlife, the atmosphere, and the ozone layer—are not bounded by national borders, and thus, effective conservation requires international cooperation. The growing interest in peace parks reflects this need. Briefly defined, peace parks are conservation areas that cross one or more international borders and use common management practices to conserve a single transnational ecosystem. Peace parks are not simply neutral, technical policies, however. They have not developed in a social, political, and economic vacuum; instead, they reflect wider changes in the global system since the end of the Cold War. Increasing levels of globalization have led to growing global regulation, which is often referred to as "global governance."

I suggest that peace parks, like global governance, do not represent a radical new departure for conservation; instead, peace parks operate within the existing framework of political and economic liberalization, and, as such, they do not challenge it. Furthermore, if we regard the expansion of neoliberalism as causing or contributing to global environmental degradation, then peace parks cannot

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"save" the environment. Instead, peace parks can only hope to achieve small successes in the realm of environmental conservation and peacebuilding that impose costs for some and bring benefits for others.

Ecosystems have often been separated by "artificial" national political boundaries, and peace parks seek to restore ecosystem connections through common management policies. However, Neumann (2000) argues that such scientific justifications for global conservation strategies tend to gloss over the magnitude of political change involved, and instead invest international conservation groups and states with increased authority over resources and, often, over local communities. The failure to recognize the level of political change required and to anticipate community responses to new forms of control over natural resources by external agencies (e.g., NGOs, IFIs, transnational management authorities) can affect the long-term implementation of peace parks.

Peace park supporters have consistently argued that they have a neoliberal, market-



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oriented economic rationale in the form of tourism (especially ecotourism). However, the promotion of tourism as a way to financially sustain conservation is a misplaced effort (Duffy, 2005). For example, local communities that subsist on the resources held within the new peace parks may be asked to relinquish such user rights in return for promises that tourism will bring more revenue. Yet, new tourism ventures often take a number of years to become financially viable, and this is simply too long for many poor communities to wait. In addition, the revenues, profits, and employment opportunities from such ventures are not always clearly earmarked for local community use, but instead often end up in the hands of external (and wealthy) tour operators (see Mowforth & Munt, 1998).

Supporters of peace parks see communities as vitally important actors in ensuring that the schemes are socially as well as environmentally sustainable (see Hulme & Murphree, 2001). However, local participation is far from politically neutral and has often helped the dominant economic, political, and social groups within communities further their interests at the expense of others. Furthermore, presenting communities as single units with common

interests that support peace parks is a clear oversimplification.

As part of peace park proposals, local communities are expected to enter into complex relations with external agencies, such as local and global NGOs, donors, and IFIs (e.g., the World Bank). Peace parks have attracted enthusiastic financial backing from such organizations. On one hand, the bargaining power of communities can be significantly enhanced through their relationships with international NGOs. On the other hand, the needs and political power of communities can be severely undermined through their participation in transboundary conservation schemes that incorporate a number of globally powerful actors.

Supporters of peace parks have used arguments about national security, environmental security, and conflict resolution to justify these schemes. The World Bank and the Peace Parks Foundation argue that transfrontier conservation encourages regional integration and fosters peaceful cooperation between countries that have been—or may be—engaged in conflict with one another. Peace parks are promoted as a way to reduce or eliminate conflict over natural resources and to cooperatively encourage sustainable economic development. The assumption that peace parks reduce competition over scarce resources, however, needs more refined analysis of peace parks in practice.

Furthermore, peace parks are already “transnationalized” by illicit networks. Peace parks are often proposed for areas that provide key resources for those illegally harvesting flora and fauna for local use or international trade. It is clear that networks utilize weakly enforced borders to traffic arms, drugs, stolen cars, and people, as well as to illegally trade endangered species of plants and animals, such as ivory, rhino horn, rare orchids, furs, and tiger bone. These border regions are often where environmental NGOs, state governments, and local communities look to establish peace parks (Duffy, 2005, in press).

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