

Proposal: a Joint Session by ICOMOS Japan, ICTC, ISCCL and ICOFORT

Title: Heritage Ecosystems: Possibilities and Potentials for an Inclusive Systems Approach

Abstract:

Over the sixty years since the founding of ICOMOS, the research and practical work concerning the protection of cultural heritage have evolved considerably. Heritage studies have advanced through specialization within distinct fields, but this compartmentalization has limited cross-disciplinary collaboration. While particularly the challenges of disasters and the necessity of enhancing resilience are widely acknowledged, the significance of linking the different components of the heritage ecosystem within and across related disciplines has not yet been pursued to its full potential.

These components include tangible and intangible, cultural and natural forms of heritage and their rights-holders (e.g. animals, vegetation, rivers, and all future generations). By building on the diversity of existing and inclusive conceptualisations of heritage, this session will focus on opportunities to strengthen frameworks that integrate the diversity of heritage as ecosystem components that continuously interact and interconnect.

This ICOMOS session is hosted by three scientific committees (ISCCL, ICOFORT and ICTC) and one national committee (ICOMOS Japan). Our aim is to address and enhance both theory and practice across local and global levels. Building on the reflections and contributions of the Gunma Declaration, this work advocates for a heritage ecosystem approach (<https://icomosjapan.org/ennews/>). The Declaration commits us to an integrative approach to heritage ecosystems that connects diverse worldviews and knowledge domains to broaden perspectives.

1. Chair

Patricia O'Donnell (ISCCL and ICTC)

2. Keynote speakers

ICOMOS Japan: Toshiyuki Kono, chair of the HE committee, ICOMOS Japan; Honorary president of ICOMOS

ISCCL: Elizabeth Brabec, President ISCCL

ICTC: Ivan Anthony Henares, President ICTC

ICOFORT: Milagros Flores Roman, President ICOFORT

3. **Members of the Scientific Committee** (in charge of selecting abstracts)

ICOMOS Japan

1. Toshiyuki Kono, Japan
2. Junko Mukai, Japan

ICTC

1. Celia Martínez Yáñez, Spain
2. Cecilie Smith-Christensen, Norway
3. Jim Donovan, USA

ISCCL

1. Maya Ishizawa Escudero, Peru
2. Betina Adams, Brazil
3. Marike Franklin, South Africa

ICOFORT

1. names will be added

Design of the joint session [one half-day]

Part I (2 hrs)

- Key notes and discussion (60 minutes)
- Theories and practices addressing diverse heritage, going beyond professional disciplines or conventional boundaries, to present opportunities and challenges from various perspectives
- Abstracts discussing the Heritage Ecosystem concept and Gunma Declaration from different perspectives (5 papers + QA) (60 minutes)

Break (30 minutes)

- A Poster Session will be held during this period with authors answering questions from participants.

Part II (2 hrs)

- – Round tables on Reflections on opportunities and barriers – cases, applications, etc. from all disciplines (60 minutes)
- open, moderated discussions at the Plenary (30 minutes)
- Wrap-up and a way forward by four keynote speakers (30 minutes)

For submitted abstracts and our symposium dialogues we ask that you consider the following questions. We welcome your engagement.

1. **How can heritage professionals move beyond disciplinary and institutional boundaries to embrace an ecosystem approach that values interconnections between cultural, natural, tangible, and intangible heritage?**

- a. How does your work relate to the heritage ecosystem approach?
 - b. Which opportunities do you see emerging from working with a heritage ecosystems approach?

2. **How might frameworks like the Gunma Declaration inspire new forms of collaboration and governance that respect diverse worldviews while strengthening local-to-global continuity in heritage practice?**
 - a. What benefits do you see to communities with a heritage ecosystem approach?
 - b. How does the heritage ecosystem approach advance understanding of heritage authenticity?
 - c.

3. ***A way forward***
 - a. In what ways can rights-holders beyond humans—such as animals, rivers, and future generations—be acknowledged and represented in decision-making processes concerning heritage conservation?

Jointly signed and submitted by:



Elizabeth Brabec, President



Milagros Flores Roman, President



Ivan Anthony Henares, President