Chapter 14
Managing Natural Heritage Resources and Tourism in Campeche, Mexico

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ABSTRACT
Natural heritage sites and natural protected areas (NPAs) attract tourism. However, positive/negative connotations correlate visitors with such places. While they may represent benefits and opportunities for the conservation and wellbeing of local communities, they also can produce direct and indirect adverse impacts that alter and destroy ecosystems and natural resources. This collateral damage affects all parties and natural and biocultural contexts involved. Through case studies in Campeche and Mexico’s southern states region, the authors argue that drafting precise management schemes for these natural heritage sites and NPAs are key factors to promoting sustainability, particularly by adding community input and true ecotourism activities into their planning strategies.

INTRODUCTION
The United Nations World Heritage Centre defines natural heritage resources as those “natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of particular value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view; geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of species of animals and plants, valuable or threatened, of particular value from the point of view of science or conservation; natural sites or strictly delineated natural areas of particular value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty, or

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in their relation to the combined work of man and of nature.” (UNESCO, 1972). A number of those sites are given protection by local or central governments under a Natural Protected Area (NPA) figure. On the other hand, and according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN, 2008), nearly 10 percent of the areas within the NPA are considered as part of the natural heritage list. This small percentage comprises the current natural heritage of future generations, and those NPA are under major threats when considering climate change, human impact, and tourism. Therefore, countries with NPAs and natural heritage sites should enforce the United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2009; UNESCO-ICCROM-ICOMOS-IUCN, 2012) decree by achieving effective integrative management of all sites.

Through adequate management mechanisms that comply with the World Heritage Convention, natural heritage sites (NHS) management provides benchmarks for all activities in which any NPA would be involved, including tourism. According to Minoo and Albrecht (2018), the new paradigm for protected areas emphasizes communities and their cultural assets including intangible cultural heritage, as critical and inseparable parts of these areas. This integration is an innovative approach that this chapter is providing. In addition, since tourism can be a significant factor in the local economy of NPAs, the linkages with closed-by communities to NPAs and natural heritage sites can have important implications. NPA are created to preserve and conserve the endemic features, cultural heritage, and ambience of a specified area for the enjoyment of both present and future generations. The World Tourism Organization’s principles and now the guidelines of the ISO/TC228, states that NPA and NHS authorities are responsible for ensuring the efficient and sustainable planning and development of tourist services conforming to legal requirements. Management assessments promote the safety of the visitor and quality assessment of services mitigates impacts upon NPA-NHS’s wildlife, flora, fauna, and communities. When appropriately managed, tourist activities in NPA and NHS allow visitors to experience the natural environment and to learn about the importance of nature conservation at the same time.

For a rationale for the management approach selected, NPAs and NHS, environmental impact assessments, and any governmental intervention is based on a single issue/sector approach leaving out either environment, people, culture, or socioeconomic issues; all of which has proven to be poorly efficient in addressing complex and dynamic problems that NPAs and NHSs face while dealing with tourism. It is important to consider the environmental, legal, economic, political and practical aspects of NPAs and NHSs. The integrated management contribution is that considers the design, management and sustainable use of these sites; including the theory and practice of designation; community-based conservation and the concept of sustainability; and identifying priorities for management. The emphasis throughout is on the importance of an interdisciplinary approach to planning and the active involvement of all users and actors in decision-making processes as a means of ensuring long-term sustainability.

Therefore, integrated management plans for NPA-NHS stress critical advantages, such as fomenting local support for national and international programs to enhance credibility for a notion of natural heritage by highlighting each site’s importance. Two critical components can be highlighted: 1) a successful integral administrative policy should promote a clear and concise mandate about the how and why the value and integrity of a site would be safeguarded, managed, and improved; and 2) a five to ten-year framework design that contemplates all possible NPA activities nested within a twenty- to thirty-year long term objective. All potential users involved in the natural heritage site and NPA must embrace the same goals and understand their roles in maintaining environmental and cultural integrity and global status. Therefore, strengthening local institutional capacity is a key to ensuring consistency and continuity for management and operation. Users and policy planners’ co-participation in the decision-making