

CUEVA DE LAS MANOS, RÍO PINTURAS. PROVINCIA DE SANTA CRUZ, ARGENTINA

BEST PRACTICE IN MANAGEMENT OF WORLD HERITAGE PROPERTIES

INSITUTO NACIONAL DE ANTROPOLOGÍA Y PENSAMIENTO LATINOAMERICANO.

Dir: Dra. Diana Rolandi

Proyecto: “ Conservación y Gestión Sostenible del Patrimonio Cultural. Cueva de las Manos: 10.000 años de Historia en la Patagonia”.

Coordinadora científica: María Onetto

Investigadoras: María Luz Funes, Andrea Murgo.

Recognizing and rewarding best practice in management of World Heritage properties

State Party: [name] **ARGENTINA**

Title proposed World Heritage property: [title] **CUEVA DE LAS MANOS, RÍO PINTURAS**

Brief description of the property: [you may use the Brief description provided through <http://whc.unesco.org>]

The Cueva de las Manos, Río Pinturas, contains an exceptional assemblage of cave art, executed between 10,000 and 1,300 years ago. It takes its name (Cave of the Hands) from the stencilled outlines of human hands in the cave, but there are also many depictions of animals, such as guanacos (*Lama guanicoe*), still commonly found in the region, as well as hunting scenes. The people responsible for the paintings were the first communities of hunter-gatherers of Patagonia. At present, there is no reliable evidence for considering them the ancestors of the historic hunter-gatherer groups found by European settlers in the 19th century.

The human colonisation of the uttermost south end of the Americas has always held particular fascination for prehistorians. Viewed from a global perspective, this was the last major continental land mass to be occupied by human beings. The archaeological evidence shows that about 11.000-10.000 BP there is unequivocal evidence to support the presence of humans in Patagonia. This southern land has always been dominated by hunting-gathering economies.

Criterion (iii): The Cueva de las Manos contains an outstanding collection of prehistoric rock art which bears witness to the culture of the earliest human societies in South America.

Please answer the questions below demonstrating the successful management and sustainable development of the World Heritage property and why it is an example of a best practice.

<p>Topics for demonstrating best management practice:</p>	<p>Please indicate in this column why your World Heritage property is a best practice in relation to the topic:</p>
<p>1. Conservation: <i>What innovative management practices or strategies are being applied in order to ensure the conservation of the Outstanding Universal Value (OUV) of the property (e.g. better resource management, restoration and rehabilitation, addressing various man-made or natural threats and challenges, etc.)?</i></p>	<p>The present situation is completely different from the one we faced when we started our work. At that time, Cueva de las Manos was practically neglected, or at least, very poorly attended. There was just one person in charge of the site and only during summer months. Visitors were free to hang around and, even if there were wire fences in front of the paintings, it was very common to see them trespassing them, provoking damage in some cases, such as graffiti or any other kind of harm.</p> <p>In 1995, a rock-art conservation research project was initiated to protect the site of Cueva de las Manos by the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano (INAPL), Secretaría de Cultura de la Nación (PROGRAM OF DOCUMENTATION AND PRESERVATION OF ROCK ART IN ARGENTINA). This cultural resource management program, known as DOPRARA, aimed to investigate deterioration of rock paintings and develop strategies for recording, conserving and managing this cultural resource. The nomination and the site on the World Heritage List in 1999 reflects National and international recognition of its outstanding value.</p> <p>It is important to emphasise that this is the first case of international scientific cooperation for a rock art site, carried on in our country. The Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) of Ottawa provided counselling regarding preservation conditions of the paintings as well as the rock surfaces. The Canadian Conservation Institute (Department of Canadian Heritage) collaborated with the program, providing advice on conservation and undertaking analytical studies of materials such as rock-painting pigments and mineral accretions.</p> <p>All kinds of actions regarding documentation and preservation were taken at Cueva de las Manos: photographic and video documentation, data base on natural and cultural damage and permanent monitoring of the site. This showed that the worst damage undergone at the</p>

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	<p>place had been produced by human actions. Preservation and protection works have been carried out for more than 17 years at the archaeological site.</p> <p>The following site management measures have been implemented in order to protect the site:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent protection of the site; • Strict control of the access to the site; • Strict control of tourists' behaviour; • Timetable for guided tours; • Provision of local tourist guides previously trained; • Lodging facilities for guides; • Boardwalks next to the paintings. • Interpretation Center with accurate information; <p>The general conservation strategies in this area have been focused on systematic monitoring and evaluation of the state of both natural and cultural damage of rock art in the various sectors of the site.</p> <p>Measures to improve and control the access to the archaeological area were implemented. Small groups of visitors are allways escorted by a guide with one assistant to help prevent damage.</p> <p>The following actions were taken to protect the natural environment of the site: a) a detailed diagnosis of the conditions of the environment and the potential causes that may alter its integrity; b) a geological study on the properties of the rock, its mechanics, stability of the slope and sedimentological characteristics was carried out in order to set forth a management plan (installation of boardwalks, slope control, fracture analysis from a geotectonic point of view).</p>

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2.	<p>Local People:</p> <p><i>What exemplary practices are you using in order to effectively address the needs of local stakeholders within the management system for the property, and enable their full and active participation?</i></p>	<p>One of the main goals when the site was proposed in 1999 was to empower the local community to play a leading role in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage. Collaboration and cooperation between site managers and the local community have been established on a permanent basis.</p> <p>-<u>Involvement of local community</u>. From February 1999 onwards, representatives of the Argentina National Commission to UNESCO (CONAPLU) and of the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano (INAPL) held out conversations with the authorities and the people of Perito Moreno, the nearest town to the site. This meeting intended to encourage local people to take part in the preservation of Cueva de las Manos, and become aware of the value of the site.</p> <p>At that moment Cueva de las Manos was not a frequent destination place to go for local people. After the first photographic documentation, it was possible to have a collection of rock art photographs for researchers and to show to the public. This made possible to organize a itinerant exhibition that was presented in various places in our country, as well as in the Rock Art International Congress held out in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 1997.</p> <p>Nowadays after many years of permanent contact with the local community we found out a strong commitment from the Perito Moreno community. We think that the strategies taken at the different levels in the community reinforced this.</p> <p>Conferences and workshops on archaeology, rock art and patrimony were given to the local community, stressing on the subject of caring for heritage.</p> <p>In this respect, it is unavoidable to mention the active participation of Asociación Identidad, a local group of neighbors committed with the history of the area and interested in spreading the importance of natural and cultural heritage. The INAPL collaborates with this group and works together in some projects. They organize various cultural events that aim to promote awareness and participation not only on the local community but also in the nearest towns in the province of Santa Cruz. They also have a strong impact in the participation of students from different educational levels in activities related to archaeological, paleontological, rural and urban heritage. They provide information to teachers and support to organize activities with their students.</p>

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	<p>- <u>Training courses for local guides</u>: The Secretary of Tourism of the Province of Santa Cruz organised several training courses for local guides. INAPL was responsible for the archaeological content.</p> <p>- <u>Cultural exhibition</u>: a two-week photograph exhibition of Cueva de las Manos' rock art was held in Perito Moreno, organized by the INAPL.</p> <p>In December 2008, the AECID (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo) awarded the INAPL with a financial assistance to the project "<i>Conservation and Sustainable Management of Cultural Heritage. Cueva de Las Manos: 10,000 years of history in Patagonia</i> ", directed by archaeologist María Onetto. Ever since the AECID Project was initiated, local guides work together with archaeologists in different tasks related to the management of the site, such as monitoring the state of rock art as well as the state of the site as a whole. Their permanent collaboration is extremely important to INAPL researchers, so as to keep an eye on the proper conservation and management of the site.</p> <p><u>Workshops</u>: A numbers of workshops are currently being locally held related to the increasing flow of visitors and the way to minimize their impact on natural and cultural patrimony.</p> <p>Since 2004, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología y Pensamiento Latinoamericano works together with Asociación Identidad of Perito Moreno. This enabled us to organise training workshops for the community, press conferences to raise local awareness. They also collaborated with the setting up of the Interpretation Center in Cueva de las Manos.</p>
<p>3. Legal framework:</p> <p><i>What special measures have you taken to ensure that the legal framework for the World Heritage site is effective in maintaining the OUV of the property?</i></p>	<p>Cueva de las Manos and other archaeological and natural sites in this area are protected by federal and provincial laws, and administered by the Government of the Province of Santa Cruz through the Municipality of Perito Moreno. They are the following:</p> <p>- GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF SANTA CRUZ - Provincial Law: Decree Nº 133 - Date: May, 13th, 1981. The Government of the Province of Santa Cruz declares the town of Perito Moreno as the "ARCHAEOLOGICAL CAPITAL OF SANTA CRUZ", because of the importance of the archaeological site of Cueva de las Manos.</p> <p>- NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC - National Law Nº 24.255 -</p>

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	<p>Date: May 11th, 1993. The Commission on Government and Justice declared the Area “Cañadón de las Cuevas, Provincia de Santa Cruz, Argentina” a National Historic Monument.</p> <p>- GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF SANTA CRUZ - Provincial Law: Decree N° 491 – Date: 1999. Cultural and Natural Heritage of the Province of Santa Cruz.</p> <p>- NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE ARGENTINE REPUBLIC - National Law N° 25.743- Decree N° 1022/2004. Date: 2004 – National Law of Archaeological and Paleontological Protection. This represents a step forward in the matter of preservation, protection and safeguard of Archaeological Heritage all over the national territory, promoting investigation and diffusion.</p> <p>- GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF SANTA CRUZ - Decree N° 3182/2008. The provincial government created a Provincial Executive Assembly (UEP) for the site of Cueva de las Manos. Its main objective is to fulfill UNESCO’s regulations and requirements in order to maintain its category of “Cultural World Heritage site”.</p> <p>- GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVINCE OF SANTA CRUZ - Provincial Law 3138/2010 – Protection of the Cultural Archaeological and Paleontological Heritage of the Province of Santa Cruz.</p>
<p>4. Boundaries:</p> <p><i>What innovative ways of dealing with the boundaries of the property, including for management of the buffer zone do you have in place, to effectively to manage the site and protect its OUV?</i></p>	<p>When the site was nominated as a World Heritage Property by UNESCO, both the nuclear area and the buffer zone had not been measured accurately. The surfaces had been estimated on a topographic charter,</p> <p>In 2009 the nuclear area was delimited and landmarked, and the same happened with the buffer area towards the end of 2011 (GPS GARMING WA 84)</p> <p>These measures are extremely important for the effective management of the property and for the protection of its OUV.</p>

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<p>5. Sustainable finance:</p> <p><i>What effective strategies have you developed and implemented to assure adequate and sustainable financial resources for implementing the management measures required to maintain the site's OUV?</i></p>	<p>NATIONAL ESTATE :</p> <p>From 2004 to 2007 the DNA (Dirección Nacional de Arquitectura) contributed with financial resources for implementing the necessary infrastructure for the protection of the site: a parking lot, a house and offices for the staff, enlargement of the keeper's house for the installation of an Interpretation Centre, walkways and decks with low visual impact on the tourist circuit of the paintings, informative signposting, wind power, water provision for the infrastructure of the site.</p> <p>Besides, there is a permanent contribution of the National Estate (by National Secretary of Culture) in concepts of tickets, lodgings, travel expenses and contracts for researchers.</p> <p>In December 2008, the AECID (Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo) awarded the INAPL with a financial assistance to the project "<i>Conservation and Sustainable Management of Cultural Heritage. Cueva de Las Manos: 10,000 years of history in Patagonia</i> ", directed by archaeologist María Onetto. The AECID subsidy was mainly assigned for building partly "Carlos Gradin Archaeological Museum" in Perito Moreno including a research laboratory (town about 160 km from Cueva de las Manos), the Interpretation Centre at the site and for the construction of a bridge over the Pinturas River. This subsidy was also used for improving the visitors' access to the site, to update the information signage, to purchase a vehicle for the use of researchers and staff working at the site and for processing and editing a handbook for schools and provincial educational institutions.</p> <p>The main objective of the project was to raise awareness about preservation of cultural and natural heritage. We found a clear interest and a strong commitment from the community of Perito Moreno. Objectives and possibilities of this new stage of work in the area were presented in March 2009 in a press conference for general public and a workshop on archaeology, rock art and patrimony was given, stressing on the subject of caring for heritage and also on the public use of the site. On the other hand, there were several field works, during which monitoring the conservation state of rock art was held and geological evaluation related to stability of the rock for the installation of infrastructure in the tourist circuit.</p>

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<p>6. Staffing training and development:</p> <p><i>What approaches and strategies have you developed and implemented to assure that the human resources are adequate to manage the World Heritage property?</i></p>	<p>In 1980 the main sectors with paintings on the rock surfaces were enclosed with chain link fencing to control visitors' access. Since the INAPL began with the conservation program and a management plan in 1995 researchers keep a permanent contact with the local staff to see what the needs that come up are. At that moment there was only one person in charge of the stewardship of the site. After UNESCO's nomination in 1999 it was necessary to have a permanent custody as well as tourist guides posted at the site. So one of the main objectives of the management plan was to build lodging facilities for them all. With the intervention of the Dirección Nacional de Arquitectura this was accomplished. A new and comfortable house was built (among other facilities) for the permanent staff. Nowadays, there are two teams working at the site in fortnight shifts.</p> <p>One of the first activities related to the staffing training following the management plan was to assess local authorities with the organization of Training Courses for local guides. In the last couple of years workshops for the community and the site staff were organized. These activities were of great help when taking decisions concerning the best strategies to set forth at the site, like control of visitors' flow, development of resources to use with visitors before and during the guided tours, and how to work together the guided visit script with</p>

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		<p>the information exposed at the Interpretation Center. Timetable for guided tours; The guides were trained to be always attentive of the state of the site, monitoring rock art and the conditions of the pathways. With the help of the local guides, INAPL researches keep an eye on the site regarding its conservation.</p>
7.	<p>Sustainable development:</p> <p><i>What are the effective mechanisms in place to ensure that resource use permitted in and around the World Heritage site is sustainable and does not impact negatively on OUV?</i></p>	<p>Some of the strategies stated at the management plan, apart from the restricted access to the site, were to establish a carrying capacity of no more than 20 people allowed to be at the same time on the boardwalks. These boardwalks are wooden platforms or decks with handrails built by the Direccion Nacional de Arquitectura; they enabled a safer situation for visitors and facilitated the access to all kind of public. A geological impact study was necessary to evaluate the stability of the rock for the installation of infrastructure in the pathway. All the energy used at the site is renewable. Windmills and solar batteries are used to collect and distribute energy.</p>
8.	<p>Education and interpretation programmes:</p> <p><i>How do the education, interpretation and</i></p>	<p>One of the main goals when the site was proposed in 1999 was to empower the local community to play a leading role in the protection of the cultural and natural heritage. At that moment Cueva de las Manos wasn't a common destination place to go for local inhabitants. After the first photographic documentation, it was possible to have a collection of</p>

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<p><i>awareness programmes you have developed and implemented significantly enhance the understanding of OUV of the site among stakeholders?</i></p>	<p>rock art photographs not only for researchers but also for the public. This enabled to organize an itinerant exhibition that was presented in various places in our country, as well as in the Rock Art International Congress held out in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 1997. Nowadays after many years (about 17) of permanent contact with the local community we find out a strong commitment from the community of Perito Moreno. We are sure that the strategies implemented at the different levels of the local community reinforced this aspect. Conferences and workshops on archaeology, rock art and patrimony were given for the local community stressing on the subject of caring for heritage. In this respect it is unavoidable to mention the active participation of Asociación Identidad, a local group of neighbours committed to the history of the area and concerned in promoting the interest on cultural and natural heritage.</p> <p>The INAPL collaborates with this group and works together in some projects. They organize various cultural events that aim to promote consciousness and participation not only on the local community but also on the nearest towns in the province of Santa Cruz. They also have a strong impact on the participation of students from different educational levels in activities related with archaeological, paleontological, rural and urban heritage. These contribute with information for teachers and support the organization of activities with their pairs.</p> <p>In order to sustain such activities, our research team worked out didactic resources, such as puzzles and memory test games with the motifs of Cueva de las Manos' rock art. All these experiences with the community and the local educational institutions led to the achievement of a handbook. "En tus Manos ...Cueva de las Manos" (which means, "<i>In your hands... Cave of the Hands</i>") is a handbook containing information about archaeology (basically the Río Pinturas Area), cultural and natural heritage and identity. It is accessible for everybody and it offers activities to work in the classroom.</p>

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9.	<p>Tourism and interpretation:</p> <p><i>What innovative plans have you designed and successfully implemented to ensure that visitor management does not negatively impact on the maintenance of the property's OUV?</i></p>	<p>Visitors to Cueva de las Manos have increased a great deal in the course of the last decades. The region of Patagonia as a whole has become an attraction for all sorts of tourists, either native or foreign; it is growing in importance day by day. Cueva de las Manos is included in almost every tour that visits the southern part of that territory. The month with most important amount of visitors is January (summer holidays in the southern hemisphere). In Cueva de las Manos, during the 1992-1993 season only 438 tourists visited the site, but in the 1995-1996 season the number of tourists increased to 4445 and in 2007 the number duplicated</p> <p>Since UNESCO nomination the number of visitors increasingly grew up. The statistics show that until 2001 the site received an average of 2.580 visitors per season (from September to April). This number had increased in the last decade to an average of 9.150 visitors, considering the last season. This figures not only mark the increasing amount of visitors to the site, but they also show the great socio-economic impact on the region. Considering that 66% of the visitors are native from Argentina and the rest 34% are foreign tourists, this also reflects a high income for the country.</p> <p>Undoubtedly the best contribution for the site interpretation was the opening of the Interpretation Center on April 2010. It allows to provide a comprehensive and integral information about the area, thus being an important complement for the script of guided</p>

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	<p>tours helping to minimize the impact on public capacity at the site during high season. The Interpretation Center has been provided with brochures for site visitors and also with new signage.</p> <p>There was an old bridge across the Pinturas river for visitors to cross when walking in by the opposite side of the site. This bridge had to be rebuilt every summer as it was permanently destroyed by the snowbreak of spring. So it was necessary to change it for a new one. A new bridge, strong enough to prevent destruction by ice and snow melting was built across the river.</p>
Additional comments:	
<p>During one of the sessions of the 23 Bureau of the World Heritage Commission (Paris, July 1999) the ICOMOS representative Henry Cleere pointed out the importance of Cueva de las Manos as an outstanding group of paintings for its antiquity and permanence throughout time. He stressed the beauty and the state of conservation of the paintings, the magnificence of the assemblage of hand prints and the hunting scenes. He enhanced as well the beauty of the scenery that surrounds the site and forms part of the cultural value of the place itself (UNESCO 1999). UNESCO included Cueva de las Manos on the List as a Cultural property. The declaration pointed out the relevance of the</p>	

site mainly by its cultural values but kept the possibility to enlarge this proposal in the future including the natural criteria. Outstanding universal values of Cueva de las Manos are fully contained both in the nuclear area and in the buffer zone which were included in the nomination dossier. The habitat surrounding the archaeological site remains intact and contains the same animal species represented in rock art about 10,000 years ago.

Researchers have undergone professional training in conservation and management of rock art sites, including training courses and seminars. A collection of photographs of the rock art sites, including digitalized images (“Los Antiguos Cazadores en el Arte Rupestre”: “Ancient Hunters in Rock Art”) has been exhibited in various places in our country as well as in the Rock Art International Congress held out in Cochabamba, Bolivia, in April 1997.

Education of the public at large is considered very important. National and local governments should work together making an effort in spreading information so that people become aware of the importance of preserving our archaeological heritage.

Even though our work as archaeologists is basically focused on the past in order to learn about peoples’ lifestyle, our commitment in Cueva de las Manos not only represents a bond with those remote times but it also allows us to understand who we are today.

Brief description/ summary of the best practice, including a statement on how it can be useful for other sites (max.600 words)

We consider best practices always to have in mind for researchers handling a World Heritage property as the following:

- Involvement with local community;
- Education and diffusion;
- Permanent conservation training for researchers;
- Permanent contact and control with the staff of the property;
- Investments in infrastructure such as information centres, museums, public installations, signposting, brochures, etc.
- Joint work between researchers, local, national and provincial authorities in order to reach consensus regarding main problems related with site management;
- Control of visitors’ behaviour and public capacity at the site;

- Interpretation courses for guides;
- Appropriate legal framework;
- Appropriate and permanent interaction with all the sectors involved in the property's management.
- The management plan must be flexible enough to adapt it to oncoming changes.

Finally, please provide us, if possible, with up to ten images of the concerned World Heritage property that can be used free of rights in UNESCO publications (commercial and/or non-commercial), and on the UNESCO website. Please provide the name of the photographer and the caption along with the images (he/she will be credited for any use of the images).