

WORLD HERITAGE NOMINATION – IUCN COMMENTS TO ICOMOS

WEST LAKE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF HANGZHOU (CHINA) – ID No. 1334

IUCN undertook a desk review of this cultural landscape nomination, and provided additional input to ICOMOS in relation to questions raised at the ICOMOS World Heritage Panel, which IUCN attended.

IUCN notes that whilst the nomination includes areas with a high degree of intervention in the natural landscape, the natural hills and waters and their natural and semi-natural systems, and wild species of fauna and flora are integral components of the West Lake Landscape, providing the “canvas” on which has been superimposed the designed landscape including elements, such as causeways, islands, bridges, pavilions, terraces, and distinctive flora were added as the culture of the area evolved. IUCN notes the documentation of the evolution of this landscape that is presented in the nomination including records in literature and poetry, and the explanation of its cultural meaning.

The natural aspects of the landscape that are most critical in relation to its protection and conservation relate to protection of vegetation and the management of water as key components of the visual quality of the property. One significant challenge is likely to be in relation to the protection of water quality considering the large and growing urban area that abuts part of the property and the other land-uses that take place in the catchment of the lake. IUCN welcomes the adoption of regulations to adopt electric motored boats for use on the lake which address one particular source of pollution. IUCN recommends that any plans for urban development in areas surrounding the property and its buffer zone, include very careful attention is paid to the management of urban drainage and the management of waste water, in order to maintain and enhance the water quality of West Lake. This should include the management of surface water runoff, including that which arises in storm conditions. IUCN recommends that ICOMOS clarify the water quality status of West Lake, the means of its long-term protection and the likelihood of increases in its quality, as this information is not fully documented in the nomination.