

1.0 Introduction

The World Heritage Convention, to which New Zealand is a signatory, provides for the protection of properties or places of outstanding universal value. The Convention requires that each country prepare a 'tentative list' of sites which it believes could meet the criteria for nomination as World Heritage sites. Preparation of this listing assists the World Heritage Committee in assessing the wide-ranging nominations received internationally.

The World Heritage List, established in accordance with the Convention, consists of those cultural and natural heritage properties considered by the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO to be of outstanding universal value. As of July 2006, there were 830 listed World Heritage Sites: 644 cultural, 162 natural and 24 mixed natural / cultural.

In December 2004, the New Zealand public were invited to comment on the illustrative list of sites published in a discussion document entitled 'Our World Heritage. Discussion Document: Towards a New Zealand Tentative List' (Department of Conservation, 2004), and to suggest other sites that may be suitable for World Heritage nomination. In order to assess sites for tentative listing under the **Cultural Heritage** and **Natural Heritage** criteria, two Advisory Groups of suitably qualified persons (listed in Appendix 1) were convened to recommend the best cultural and natural heritage candidates, especially those identified through the public response to the discussion document (which resulted in a response of 304 submissions).

Cultural Heritage: refers to monuments, groups of buildings and sites with historical, aesthetic, archaeological, scientific, ethnological or anthropological value. Well known listed cultural properties include: the Acropolis (Greece), the Great Wall of China, the Historic Centre of Florence (Italy), the Taj Mahal (India) and Angkor Wat (Cambodia).

Natural Heritage: refers to outstanding physical, biological and geological formations, habitats of threatened species of animals and plants and areas with outstanding scientific conservation or aesthetic values. Natural heritage can be either terrestrial or marine. Existing natural World Heritage sites include: Yellowstone National Park (USA), Sagarmatha National Park (Nepal), the Great Barrier Reef (Australia), the Three Parallel Rivers of Yunnan (China), and Te Wahipounamu (South West New Zealand).

Mixed Cultural and Natural Heritage: refers to sites satisfying part or whole of the definitions of both Cultural and Natural Heritage.

1.1 EVALUATION PROCESS

To be included on the World Heritage List a site must be assessed as being of '**outstanding universal value**' in terms of one or more of the following criteria, as set out in the UNESCO 'Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention'. The latest guidelines (February 2005) are available to view at: <http://www.unesco.org/en/guidelines> and the relevant text (sections 77-78) is reproduced below.

77. The Committee considers a property as having outstanding universal value...if the property meets one or more of the following criteria. Nominated properties shall therefore:

- (i) represent a masterpiece of human creative genius;
- (ii) exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design;
- (iii) bear a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared;
- (iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history;
- (v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change;
- (vi) be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance. The Committee considers that this criterion should preferably be used in conjunction with other criteria;
- (vii) contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance;
- (viii) be outstanding examples representing major stages of the earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features;
- (ix) be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution of terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems and communities of plants and animals; and
- (x) contain the most important and significant natural habitats for conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation.

78. To be deemed of outstanding universal value, a property must also meet conditions of integrity, authenticity, adequate management and legal protection.

After considering the comments made in each submission, the two New Zealand Advisory Groups assessed the outstanding universal value of each candidate site against the criteria, appraised its integrity, legal protection, conservation management, and whether listing posed risks or added value to the site. This systematic assessment of the values of each site is presented in a framework for cultural sites in Appendix 2 and natural sites in Appendix 3. On the basis of this comprehensive evaluation, the Advisory Groups make the following recommendations for tentative listing of sites within the Cultural Heritage, Natural Heritage or Mixed Cultural and Natural Heritage categories.

If accepted, these sites would replace the one site on the existing New Zealand tentative list, Cape Reinga and the Three Kings Islands/Manawatawhi, which would be subsumed in the larger Whakarua Moutere (or North-East Islands) proposal (see section 4.3).

1.2 SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

A total of eleven sites are recommended for inclusion on New Zealand's tentative list for World Heritage status. These are made up of: three cultural sites, seven natural sites (one of which is an addition to an existing listed natural site), and one mixed cultural/natural site.

Cultural Heritage Sites

Three sites are considered to meet all or most cultural criteria for outstanding universal value and to satisfy integrity, legal and management requirements to such a high level that they should be an immediate priority for placement on the New Zealand tentative list. They are:

- **Kerikeri Basin historic precinct**
- **Napier Art Deco historic precinct**
- **Waitangi Treaty Grounds historic precinct**

Nine further sites put forward in public submissions were considered as Cultural Heritage Site candidates. Some of these are likely to have the potential to meet the criteria to some degree. However, they would require further work to reach the stage where they could be considered for tentative list status. In some cases integrity, management and community and stakeholder issues would need to be further addressed before placing them on the tentative list. These sites included:

- **Central Otago goldfields**
- **Christchurch cultural precinct**
- **Denniston**
- **First Church of Otago, Dunedin**
- **Historic Oamaru**
- **Kaikoura**
- **Papamoa pa complex**
- **Totaranui/outer Queen Charlotte Sound**
- **West Coast mining landscape and remnants**

Natural Heritage Sites

A total of seven natural sites are recommended for placement on the New Zealand tentative list. Three sites are considered to meet all four natural criteria for outstanding universal value and satisfy integrity, legal and management requirements to such a high level that they should be an immediate priority for placement on the New Zealand tentative list. They are:

- **Kahurangi National Park, Farewell Spit, and the Canaan karst system**
- **Kermadec Islands and Kermadec Islands Marine Reserve** (and volcanic landforms along the Kermadec Ridge)
- **'Whakarua Moutere', or the 'North-East Islands'**

Three further sites are considered likely to meet two or more natural criteria and should be placed on the tentative list. However, they are of less immediate priority because certain integrity, legal, management or site ownership issues need to be clarified before advancing them to site nomination. They are:

- **Canterbury high country braided rivers and lakes**
- **Rotorua geyser fields and geothermal sites**
- **Stewart Island / Rakiura archipelago**

A seventh site meets all four natural criteria and is proposed for listing as an addition to the existing Te Wahipounamu (South West New Zealand) World Heritage Area as a matter of high priority, namely:

- **The waters and seabed of the fiords of Fiordland (Te Moana o Atawhenua)**

Two other sites are likely to meet one or more criteria but are not of immediate priority because the first requires much more work to define the site and confer legal protection and the second site would require the full agreement and support of its private owners. However, the Natural Heritage Advisory Group considers that both sites are definite candidates for future listing. They should be kept under active review and considered again at the next revision of the tentative list. They are:

- **Kaikoura underwater canyon and mountains**
- **Lake Taupo**

Some of the above Natural Heritage sites may also meet the cultural criteria, but this analysis would need to be done closer to the process of nomination.

Mixed Cultural and Natural Heritage Site

One site is proposed as a mixed cultural/natural serial site, having primarily cultural values but also outstanding geological values. It is:

- **Auckland Volcanic Field**

1.3 FUTURE REVISION OF THE TENTATIVE LIST

The New Zealand tentative list should be revised at intervals, as provided for in the UNESCO guidelines. The revision process would enable further sites which might qualify for World Heritage status to be identified and fully researched to the required standard.

1.4 DESCRIPTION OF CANDIDATE SITES

Sections 2, 4, and 6 provide detailed descriptions and discussion of the values, integrity, risk and management issues for each of the cultural, natural, and mixed cultural/natural candidate sites. Sites rejected for inclusion in the tentative list, or deferred at this stage, are discussed in less detail in sections 3 and 5.