The 5th World Congress of Biosphere Reserves
Side-event

Enhancing the Management Synergy between Biosphere Reserves and Other International Designations in MIDAs

24 September 2025, 13:15~14:45
Hangzhou International Expo Center, 1F Room5

Hosted by

The Global Research and Training Centre for Internationally Designated Areas (**GCIDA**),
The MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea (**MAB-ROK**),
and The United States Biosphere Network (**USBN**)

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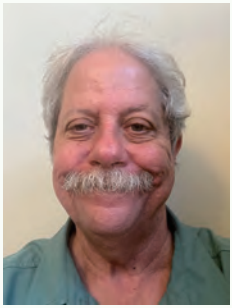
Dr. Suk-Kyung Shim

Suk-Kyung Shim has extensive experience in policy analysis and development, multilateral cooperation, and independent research in the fields of nature conservation, sustainable development, and internationally designated areas. She is currently Chair of the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves, Vice Chair of the MAB National Committee of the Republic of Korea, and a member of the Governing Boards of UNESCO Category 2 Centers: Global Research and Training Center for Internationally Designated Areas and Biosphere Reserves Institute. She has worked at the Korean National Commission for UNESCO and the National Institute of Ecology, in addition to lecturing at universities. She received a PhD in geography from Humboldt University, Germany.

Dr. Chris Groves, Mr. Cliff McCreedy, Mr. Jonathan Putnam, and Ms. Sarah Gaines



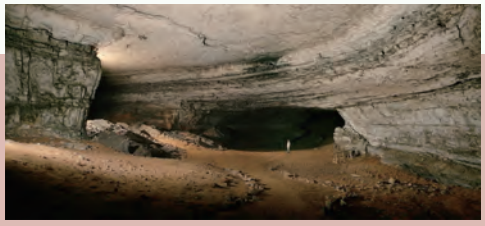
Chris Groves is University Distinguished Professor of Hydrogeology at Western Kentucky University and is a member of the Mammoth Cave Biosphere Region Advisory Council. He has worked with UNESCO Scientific and Conservation Programs for 30 years. Cliff McCreedy is Senior Strategic Advisor for the USBN and Jon Putnam is Vice Chair of Operations for the USBN. Mr. McCreedy and Mr. Putnam both serve on the USBN Steering committee and for many years were leaders of the US UNESCO conservation community through US National Park Service. Sarah Gaines is an Earth scientist based at the Coastal Resources Center of the University of Rhode Island has contributed to advisory groups in the US on both Global Geoparks and Biosphere Reserves; she now serves on the International Advisory Council in Biosphere Reserves.

Multidesignated UNESCO Properties in the US Biosphere Network

UNESCO conservation programs (Man and the Biosphere, World Heritage Convention, Global Geoparks, and the Ramsar Convention) codify designations of the world's most special places. Sites that have been designated by more than one program—MIDAS, or "Multi-Internationally Designated Areas" could be considered to be the "best of the best."

The US Biosphere Network (USBN) includes 28 sites across the continental United States, Puerto Rico, Alaska, and Hawai'i. Their beauty and value stand out in national parks, state parks, national forests, marine sanctuaries, and communities where people live and work to advance positive relationships between people and nature.

Issues and challenges surrounding management of MIDAS sites are particularly relevant to the U.S. where eight U.S. properties have been inscribed as both Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites, including Crown of the Continent (Glacier), Yellowstone – Grand Teton, Everglades/Dry Tortugas, Olympic, Hawaiian Islands (Hawaii Volcanoes), Mammoth Cave, Southern Appalachians (Great Smoky Mountains), and Glacier Bay–Admiralty Island. Three sites, including the Everglades, Golden Gate (Bolinas Lagoon), and Congaree National Park are both Biosphere Reserves and Ramsar wetlands.



Mammoth Cave, United States

Ms. Runze Chen

Runze Chen, Master in Monumental Heritage, is a Landscape Architecture Engineer at the Geopark Office, Huangshan Scenic Area/Geopark Administrative Committee, and an evaluator for UNESCO Global Geoparks. She has been involved in the integrated management of UNESCO multi-designations in Huangshan in recent years. From 2020 to 2022, she organized and led online UNESCO MIDAs forums, supported by Global Geoparks including Shennongjia (China), Jeju Island (South Korea), Cilento (Italy), Azores (Portugal), Bergstrasse-Odenwald (Germany), Ngorongoro Lengai (Tanzania), and Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve (Czech Republic). The forums facilitated experience sharing and best-practice exchange in MIDAs management.

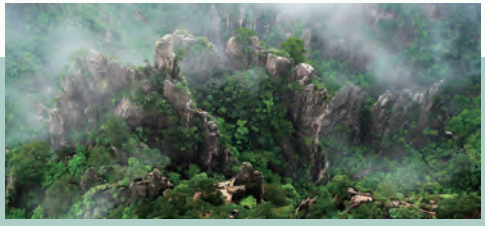
Huangshan Scenic Area

Huangshan Scenic Area in Huangshan City, Anhui Province, China, is a UNESCO World Mixed Heritage site, Global Geopark, Biosphere Reserve, and listed on the IUCN Green List.

Huangshan is known for its granite peak forest landforms, with the highest peak, Lotus Peak (1,864.8 m). It preserves Mesozoic magmatic activity records and shows Cenozoic crustal uplift and quaternary glacial events, making it a prime area for studying granite landscape formation.

The region has rich biodiversity: included in IUCN's 108 global biodiversity centers and China's 35 biodiversity priority areas, with the highest irreplaceability index in East China, marking it as a key biodiversity hotspot.

Culturally, Huangshan has a long heritage, inspiring the Huangshan School of Painting—the only Chinese painting school named after a mountain. Alongside the Yangtze River, Great Wall, and Yellow River, it exemplifies China's magnificent landscapes and cultural legacy.



Huangshan, China

Dr. Jong-Kab Kim

Jong-Kab Kim is a field researcher at the World Heritage Office of Jeju Special Self-Governing Province, focusing on the conservation of Hallasan Mountain and Jeju's native plants. His work includes monitoring woody plants such as the Korean fir (Abies koreana) in the subalpine zone of Hallasan, which are increasingly threatened by climate change. He has also published research on endangered species, including Compressed michelia (Magnolia compressa), contributing to the protection of Jeju's natural heritage.

Jeju Island

Jeju Island is one of Korea's most prominent Multi-Internationally Designated Areas, embracing several UNESCO designations within a single region. Centered around Hallasan Mountain, the island was recognized for its outstanding natural landscapes and ecological value and designated as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in 2002.

In 2007, the Hallasan Natural Reserve, Seongsan Ilchulbong Tuff Cone, and the Geomunoreum Lava Tube System were inscribed on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List, acknowledging Jeju's exceptional geological significance. In 2010, the entire island was certified as a UNESCO Global Geopark, highlighting its unique volcanic landforms, often described as a "vast natural volcanic museum." Jeju's key wetlands have also been recognized for their ecological importance and have been protected as Ramsar Sites since 2006. With these designations, Jeju stands as a treasure trove of natural heritage, encompassing all three UNESCO designations as well as Ramsar wetlands.

Beyond its natural heritage, Jeju also embodies cultural and historical value. The "Culture of Jeju Haenyeo (women divers)" has been inscribed on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list, and the "Revealing Truth: Jeju 4.3 Archives" has been listed as UNESCO Memory of the World. These recognitions elevate Jeju as a city of heritage, where nature, culture and history are all intertwined. Altogether, they demonstrate that Jeju is far more than a beautiful tourist destination—it is a place of universal value to be cherished and preserved.

Jeju Island, Republic of Korea