

***Montesquiu Declaration
on land stewardship***

Castell de Montesquiu (Osona)

11 november 2000

Montesquiu Declaration on land stewardship in Catalonia

The attendants to the International workshop on land stewardship held at Castell de Montesquiu from 9 to 12 November 2000: members of public and private institutions and organisations from the rural, naturalistic, land stewardship, official and research areas, and individual people interested in managing and conservation of the land, landscape and habitats in Catalunya, together with the representative speakers from Canada, France, Italy and USA,

have adopted the following *Declaration*:

Land stewardship is defined as the various strategies (educational, management, community development...) aimed to support and make possible the landowners and land users responsibility on conservation and the sustainable use of the terrestrial, river and marine environments and their natural resources, by the owners and users of these environments, and it is mainly addressed to private property.

We acknowledge **the value and the opportunity** land stewardship has for Catalonia, considering that:

- In Catalonia, about 90% of the rural and natural areas is in private property.
- The countryside has been subject to several impairment processes through history, but in general it has been under management practices that can be considered as land stewardship. Time has come to find new management directions to preserve these areas in the future.
- The protected natural areas often are isolated and cannot assure the ecological process of the whole landscape.
- Public management and legislation on natural resources (water, coasts, urbanism and land planning, rural and natural areas, hunting, fishing, etc.) can use land stewardship as a complementary tool for their action. Thus, land stewardship needs of the actual public action and support and does not want to replace it in any case.
- Land stewardship is based on the voluntary basis for all parts implied in its implementation: property, civil society and government.
- This volunteer feature is strengthened with education, information, participation, decision making and the partnership work between the parts.
- Land stewardship has proved and still does its efficiency in the management and sound use of land in countries with varied social, economic and legal models, such as Brazil, Canada, Costa Rica, New Zealand, Tchech Republic, the United Kingdom or the USA.
- Several catalan NGOs and private foundations are already responsible of some natural areas, with different kinds of ownership and management

agreements.

The legislative and land-planning context in **Catalonia** contain useful **tools** for the implementation of land stewardship, some of which are already in use, such as:

- Opportunities for landowners to declare natural parks and preserves, as well as for local administrations with urbanistic responsibilities, and the possibility to define forest areas with non extensive forest species, all described in Act 12/1985 for Natural areas.
- Private properties declared as wildlife preserve, as described in Act 3/1988 for wildlife protection.
- Tax implications on conveyance of rural properties included in protected areas, and of the rural forest properties with approved plans (land tax, sales tax, inheritance and donation taxes, personal tax)
- The co-operation agreements established by some protected areas, by which the private property assigns the total or partial management of their lands for conservation for a period of time.
- Urban management and planning of protected lands, where development is not allowed, that some town councils have initiated.
- Different protection methods for landscape and ecological areas and of natural spaces with local, regional or national interest, such as special plans, partnerships, agreements or the protection strategic frames.
- The instruments that give support to the sustainable use of the land under the frame of the European program on rural development.
- The committees and instruments of the public administration participated by the private property.

Land stewardship, as a group of tools to propitiate private sector implication in land conservation, has the following **main goals**:

- A tax and legislative frame that enable the establishment of land stewardship initiatives in community and private properties, in accordance with the principle of less tax burden for the generation of more environmental services and benefits.
- Creation of partnerships between public and private sector and non-official institutions based on reliance and co-operation.
- Education, training and participation of all people involved in land stewardship, specially addressed to: landowners, people with knowledge on countryside, landscape and marine environments, NGOs and stewardship professionals, government employees, political representatives and to all the people.
- Availability of economic and tax resources needed to consolidate land

stewardship.

Consequently, and in order to **progress** in land stewardship in Catalonia it is **convenient** to:

- Start trial land stewardship programs based in such mechanisms as Landowner contacts directed to reach verbal agreements or the Co-operation covenants, a more formal procedure, with contracts between private property and a second part (organism, government, etc.)
- Closely study of the existing legislative frame and propose legal reforms that facilitate the land stewardship tools regarding the possible incentives for property and for developing stewardship organisations.
- Maintain an up-to-date- catalogue of the incentives (economic, material, social) for land conservation in private properties.
- Establish an up-to-date catalogue of the existing leaderships on land stewardship and knowing the social attitude they induce, in a parallel process of education of the people and of improving the efficiency of the leaderships.
- Start a Catalan net of land stewardship, based in brochures addressed to different group action, web sites and electronic lists, publications, workshops, discussions and other appropriate tools.
- Have constant exchange of information with experts from other countries where land stewardship is already established (Australia, North America, United Kingdom...) or is developing (Eastern Europe, Latin America).
- Reach consensus on a working strategy between the different public and private organisations to reach the former objectives.

The signing organisations, and others willing to join, will promote the development of the *Xarxa Catalana de Custòdia del Territori* (Catalan net on land stewardship).

The promoters will watch over the development of the *Xarxa Catalana de Custòdia del Territori* and the edition of incentives and leaderships on land stewardship.

The Council of nature protection, as a consulting body to the Catalan administration and the Parliament in nature protection matters, will be able to make use of its functions in consulting and promoting land stewardship.

The attendants to The International Workshop on land stewardship give our approval to this *Declaració de Montesquiú* and commit us to circulate it among our daily work and relationship and to watch over its establishment.

The promoters of the *Xarxa Catalana de Custòdia del Territori* commit ourselves to

circulate this *Declaració de Montesquiú* and to ask the government institutions and public responsible to subscribe it, as well as promoting other close geographical areas to adopt similar declarations.

Castell de Montesquiú, 11 november 2000

Signing organisations (updated to July 2002)

Ajuntament del Bruc
Ajuntament de Cerdanyola del Vallès
Ajuntament de Mollet del Vallès
Ajuntament de Salou
Associació Balear d'Amics dels Parcs
Associació Catalana de Ciències Ambientals
Associació Hàbitats, Projecte Rius
Associació de Naturalistes de Girona
Centre d'Estudis dels Rius Mediterranis
Centre d'Història Natural de la Conca de Barberà
Centre de la Propietat Forestal
Centre for Land & Water Stewardship (Canadà)
Centre Tecnològic i Forestal de Catalunya
Col·lectiu Ecologista l'Alzina
Consell Insular de Menorca
Conservatoire du Littoral (França)
Consorci el Far – Centre dels treballs del mar
Consorci Forestal de Catalunya
Coordinadora per a la Salvaguarda del Montseny
DEPANA
Departament de Geografia, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Diputació de Barcelona, Àrea d'Espais Naturals
Els Verds d'Ei vissa
Escola Superior d'Enginyeria Forestal, Universitat de Lleida
Essex County Greenbelt Association (EUA)
Estació Biològica de l'Aiguabarreig
Estudi DTUM
Federació Catalana de Pesca Esportiva i Càsting
Fundació Natura
Fundació Territori i Paisatge
Fundación Naturaleza y Hombre (Cantabria)
Generalitat de Catalunya, Departament de Medi Ambient
GEPEC
Govern Balear, Conselleria de Medi Ambient
Grup Balear d'Ornitologia i Defensa de la Natura
Grup d'Estudis de l'Aiguabarreig
Grup de natura Freixe
Iniciativa per Catalunya-Verds
Institució Catalana d'Història Natural
IPCENA
Land Trust Alliance (EUA)
La Banqueta, ADPN
La Bassa Roja, Amics de la Natura
LA VOLA
NEREO
Pla estratègic de la Vall del Ges, Orís i Bisaura
QLF/Atlantic Center for the Environment (EUA)
SEO/Birdlife
Societat Catalana d'Ordenació del Territori
Unió de Pagesos
Unitat d'Agricultura, Departament de Ciència Animals i dels Aliments, Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
WWF Programa Mediterrani

The Parliament of Catalonia accorded to support the *“promotion of land stewardship (...) by means of different strategies, such as legislative and tax measures, capacity building and budget availability, amongst others”* by means of *Motion 112/VI of the Parliament of Catalonia on management of natural areas*, approved with the positive vote of all political groups in Session number 39, on the 28.06.2001.

Attendants to the International workshop on Land stewardship

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