

# Charles Besancon

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## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

### Owner, Global Park Solutions

May 2020 – present

Consulting for government agencies, NGOs and others on protected area policy, finance, management planning, transboundary conservation, fundraising, project design, training and capacity building, institutional strengthening and partnership development. Current and most recent projects include:

- 1) Post-2020 Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Roadmap. Specific role is as lead consultant to MedPAN, the [Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Network](#), WWF, and the [Barcelona Convention's Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas](#) (SPA/RAC) to conduct stakeholder engagement, facilitate numerous online and in-person meetings including the Virtual Forum Sessions and the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Forum held in Monaco. The MPA Roadmap is an 8-year implementation plan for the Mediterranean to achieve targets and goals of the CBD Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and the Post-2020 Regional Strategy for MCPAs and OECMs in the Mediterranean, developed by SPA/RAC in the framework of the Barcelona Convention and the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. Active contract.
- 2) Developing a vision for Marshall Mountain. Specific role is to conduct stakeholder consultations with numerous groups in the Missoula Montana area to define a vision for parcels of land on Marshall Mountain, to inform a future planning effort. Client is the Missoula Montana Parks and Recreation Department. Active contract.
- 3) Business Planning and fundraising options for the [Mediterranean Protected Areas Network](#) (MedPAN), based in Marseilles France. Active contract
- 4) 3-year Ocean Governance project in Southeast Asia and the Atlantic for the European Union's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. Specific role is to develop a global study on transboundary conservation and to facilitate negotiations among governments and NGOs in Southeast Asia for the development of transboundary marine protected areas and organize and facilitate technical workshops. Contract is through GOPA consultants. Active contract.
- 5) Strategic planning for Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Specific role was to work with the park's leadership team to develop goals, objectives and actions and a timeline for implementation of a strategic plan for the USA's most visited national Park. This work was done in partnership with New Line Consulting. Contract finalized.
- 6) Project development consultancy to develop finance options for a Transatlantic Marine Protected Area Manager's Network. The client is the French Biodiversity Agency. Contract finalized

- 7) Project with Great Smoky Mountains National Park to advise on visitor use and congestion management. Specific role is to develop content and present in public meetings, develop a feasibility assessment for selected actions to relieve visitor congestion in the park and to facilitate internal Strategic Operations Planning for the park. The contract is in partnership with New Line Consultants. Contract finalized
- 8) Annual Meeting Facilitation for the [US Forest Service National Technology Development Program](#). Contract finalized.
- 9) Strategic Planning Readiness Training for the [Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute](#), based in Missoula, Montana USA. Contract finalized.
- 10) Project with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) to update selected UNESCO World Heritage Sites for the forthcoming [World Heritage Conservation Outlook](#). Contract finalized.

### **Protected areas policy, management, planning, and finance consultant**

July 2016 – May 2020

The following consulting projects began before the establishment of Global Park Solutions:

- 1) Quality Assurance Consultant: Study on Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas financial needs assessment & management effectiveness monitoring. This consultancy is with [Baastel](#) and the client was the MedFund. The role as Quality Assurance consultant was to assist with the development of financial tools to assess financial needs of 20 MPAs in target countries Albania, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Montenegro and Turkey.
- 2) Consultancy to develop a sustainable development policy for the protected area network of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.
- 3) Instructor for the Protected Areas Management by Distance Education Programme at the University of Montana's College of Forestry and Conservation, where I am a Faculty Affiliate.
- 4) Trainer in National Park Visitor Use Management Planning for Great Smoky Mountains National Park.
- 5) Facilitated workshop for the US Forest Service on Sustainable Recreation Planning. Workshop participants included most of the Forest Service national and regional recreation planners.
- 6) Protected areas management planning training consultant in the transboundary landscape of the Tatra Mountains International Biosphere Reserve. Completed two management planning trainings in Poland in April 2018 for Polish and Slovakian protected area managers.
- 7) World Heritage Evaluator. Completed a World Heritage evaluation of Chiribiquete National Park in the Colombian Amazon on behalf of IUCN and UNESCO in October 2017.
- 8) Protected areas management planning training consultant - supported the government of Seychelles through the GOS/UNDP/GEF-Programme Coordination Unit to train protected area managers from government and staff of NGOs in

management planning techniques and approaches.

- 9) Strategic planning consultant - as a Board Member of the [Montana Environmental Information Center](#) (MEIC), I am the chair of the Planning Subcommittee and led the development of a 5-year Strategic Plan for MEIC.
- 10) Protected areas management planning training consultant - supported the government of Croatia through training protected area managers in protected area management planning with focus on Plitvice Lakes National Park. Provided long-term support through development of research and monitoring protocol to supplement ongoing management planning in Plitvice Lakes National Park and through expert review of draft management plan as it was developed.

### **LifeWeb Initiative Coordinator**

August 2012 – May 2016

[Secretariat, Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD), United Nations Environment Programme, Montreal Canada

In this role I assisted developing countries in their funding needs to achieve globally agreed Convention on Biological Diversity goals and targets for protected areas and other area-based conservation including threatened and endangered species management, connectivity conservation, livelihoods and food security, ecosystem restoration and invasive alien species management in terrestrial and marine biomes. I provided technical input to the development of project proposals and worked with government and non-government donors, including private philanthropy through donor roundtables and targeted meetings to fund the projects. In my 4 years leading the [LifeWeb Initiative](#), 193 million US dollars was provided to developing countries through LifeWeb for nature conservation.

### **Head of the Protected Areas Programme**

(February 2006 – July 2012)

[United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre](#) (UNEP-WCMC), Cambridge, England

As Programme Head, I was responsible for the full cycle of staff management from hiring and performance management. I led the team in strategy development, project development and fundraising and I represented the multi-disciplinary and cross-cultural team across the world at numerous congresses, conferences and technical workshops in more than 30 countries. I developed the [Protected Planet](#) Initiative and the [Protected Planet Report](#) series that measure progress toward internationally agreed goals from the UN Convention on Biological Diversity

### **Management Planning Consultant (2002 – 2004)**

Louis Berger Group on behalf of the United States National Park Service, Washington DC and Gustavus, Alaska, USA

Contributed to management planning for Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve in Alaska through two consultancies; first for the “2003 Vessel Quotas and Operating Requirements for Glacier National Park and Preserve EIS”, and for the proposed “Falls Creek Hydroelectric Project and Land Exchange”. Developed methodologies for determining impairment to

protected area resources and visitor experience.

**Founder, Wilderness Information Network (1996 – 2003)**

[Wilderness Institute](#), University of Montana, Missoula Montana

Developed and managed the Wilderness Information Network ([www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net)); a clearinghouse of wilderness information to support the National Wilderness Preservation System. This position was developed in the early days of the internet and the web to bring together wilderness information in one centralized location from the US Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and the Fish and Wildlife Service.

## EDUCATION

**1999 Master of Science**, University of Montana. College of Forestry and Conservation: Recreation Resource Management. Specialised in conservation area planning approaches and techniques.

**1989 Bachelor of Arts**, State University of New York at Plattsburgh. Major in Anthropology with focus on social anthropology.

## LANGUAGES

**English:** mother tongue

**Spanish:** intermediate

**French:** basic+

## PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- Strategic planning, business planning, strategic operations planning
- Training for all of the above
- Development and facilitation of capacity development training programs and workshops
- Facilitating the development of programme and project strategies
- Fundraising
- World Heritage technical review of nominations
- World Heritage assessment
- Designing effective and participatory approaches to protected areas management planning and monitoring
- Ecosystem-based adaptation
- Landscape level approaches to conservation including through the development of transboundary conservation and biodiversity corridors
- Designing and monitoring conflict-sensitive approaches to conservation
- Partnership and collaboration building between and among governments, non-profits and the private sector to support conservation
- Facilitating intergovernmental negotiation for conservation and development

## PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

- Co-Chair of the Sustainable Finance Specialist Group – IUCN World Commission on

#### Protected Areas

- Chair of the Protected Area Working Group Finance - Conservation Finance Alliance
- Member of the Executive Committee of the Conservation Finance Alliance
- Senior Advisor and member of the Executive Committee for the Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas
- Member, IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group
- Member, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas
- Member, IUCN Species Survival Commission
- Member, IUCN Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy
- Member of City of Missoula Open Space Advisory Committee

#### Past

- Board member, Montana State Parks Foundation
- Ex officio member of Steering Committee, IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (2006-2014)
- Member of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) Task Force on Capacity Building
- Co-chair of Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group of IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (2003-2008)
- Ex officio Member of the IUCN World Heritage Panel (2006-2012)
- Member of Technical Advisory Group for the IUCN Save Our Species (SOS) Fund
- Nominator, Feyerabend Foundation
- Board member of the International Peace Parks Expeditions NGO (2010-2013)
- Fellow, Center for Natural Resources and Environmental Policy, University of Montana

#### **OTHER INTERESTS**

- Landscape and wildlife photography
- Backpacking
- Fly fishing
- Canoeing
- Skiing

#### **PUBLICATIONS**

##### Books, book chapters

McCool, Stephen F., Paul FJ Eagles, Ognjen Skunca, Vesna Vukadin, Charles Besancon, and Andjelko Novosel. *Integrating Marketing and Management Planning for Outstanding Visitor Experiences in a Turbulent Era: The Case of Plitvice Lakes National Park*. In *Mediterranean Protected Areas in the Era of Overtourism*, pp. 221-240. Springer, Cham, 2021.

Kemsey, J., Ravilious, C., Corrigan, C., Besançon, C., Burgess, N., Bertzky, B., & Kenney, S. (2012). *Protected Plant Report 2012: Tracking progress towards global targets for protected areas*. UNEP-WCMC and IUCN.

Sandwith, T., & Besançon, C. (2010). Making peace: protected areas contributing to conflict

resolution. *Arguments for Protected Areas: Multiple Benefits for Conservation and Use*, 225-234.

Hammill, A., & Besançon, C. (2007). Measuring Peace Park Performance: Definitions and Experiences. In S. H. Ali (Ed.), *Peace parks: conservation and conflict resolution* (pp. 23): Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press.

Mittermeier, R. A., Kormos, C. F., Mittermeier, C. G., Gil, P. R., Sandwith, T., & Besançon, C. (2005). *Transboundary Conservation: A New Vision for Protected Areas*. Mexico: CEMEX-Agrupacion Sierra Madre-Conservation International.

Besançon, C., & Savy, C. (2005). Global list of internationally adjoining protected areas and other transboundary conservation initiatives. In R. A. Mittermeier, C. F. Kormos, C. G. Mittermeier, P. R. Gil, T. Sandwith, & C. Besançon (Eds.), *Transboundary Conservation: A New Vision for Protected Areas* (pp. 372). Mexico: CEMEX-Agrupacion Sierra Madre-Conservation International.

#### Journal articles and other publications

Di Marco, M., Chapman, S., Althor, G., Kearney, S., Besançon, C., Butt, N., . . . Venter, O. (2017). Changing trends and persisting biases in three decades of conservation science. *Global Ecology and Conservation*, 10, 32-42.

Butchart, S. H., Scharlemann, J. P., Evans, M. I., Quader, S., Arico, S., Arinaitwe, J., . . . Besançon, C. (2012). Protecting important sites for biodiversity contributes to meeting global conservation targets. *PloS one*, 7(3), e32529.

Coad, L., Burgess, N. D., Loucks, C., Fish, L., Scharlemann, J. P., Duarte, L., & Besançon, C. (2010). Reply to Jenkins and Joppa—Expansion of the global terrestrial protected area system. *Biological Conservation*, 143(1), 5-6.

Coad, L., Burgess, N. D., Fish, L., Ravillious, C., Corrigan, C., Pavese, H., . . . Besançon, C. (2010). Progress towards the Convention on Biological Diversity terrestrial 2010 and marine 2012 targets for protected area coverage. *Parks Durban+ 5 the International Journal for Protected Area Managers*.

Walpole, M., Almond, R. E., Besançon, C., Butchart, S. H., Campbell-Lendrum, D., Carr, G. M., . . . Dulloo, E. (2009). Tracking progress toward the 2010 biodiversity target and beyond. *Science*, 325(5947), 1503-1504.

Schmitt, C. B., Burgess, N. D., Coad, L., Belokurov, A., Besançon, C., Boisrobert, L., . . . Humphries, K. (2009). Global analysis of the protection status of the world's forests. *Biological Conservation*, 142(10), 2122-2130.

Coad, L., Burgess, N. D., Loucks, C., Fish, L., Scharlemann, J. P., Duarte, L., & Besançon, C. (2009). The ecological representativeness of the global protected areas estate in 2009: progress towards the CBD 2010 target.

Coad, L., Burgess, N. D., Bomhard, B., & Besançon, C. (2009). Progress towards the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2010 and 2012 targets for protected area coverage. *Parks: The*

- Belokurov, A., Besançon, C., Pavese, H., Burgess, N. D., Dudley, N., Stolton, S., . . . Whitten, T. (2009). New resources for assessing the effectiveness of management in protected areas. *Oryx*, 43(1), 14-14.
- Hammill, A., Crawford, A., & Besançon, C. (2008). *Gorillas in the midst: Assessing the peace and conflict impacts of International Gorilla Conservation Programme (IGCP) activities*: International Institute for Sustainable Development= Institut international du développement durable.
- Lysenko, I., Besançon, C., & Savy, C. (2007). UNEP-WCMC Global List of Transboundary Protected Areas *UN Environment Programme–World Conservation Monitoring Centre, Cambridge, UK*.
- Herkenrath, P., Lysenko, I., Besançon, C., Renders, L., & Burgess, N. (2007). *The relevance of the World Database on Protected Areas for a network of forest protected areas under the Convention on Biological Diversity*: Institut für forst-und umweltpolitik.
- McManus, E., Besançon, C., & Johnson, T. (2006). How protected are coral reefs? *Science*, 314(58000), 757.
- Sandwith, T., & Besançon, C. (2005). Trade-offs among multiple goals for transboundary conservation. *Cape Town, South Africa*.
- Hammill, A., & Besançon, C. (2003). *Promoting conflict sensitivity in transboundary protected areas: A role for peace and conflict impact assessments*. Paper presented at the Workshop on Transboundary Protected Areas in the Governance Stream of the 5th World Parks Congress, Durban, South Africa.
- Besançon, C., & Freimund, W. (2003). Where in the World Wide Web is Wilderness? In A. Watson & J. Sproull (Eds.), *Seventh World Wilderness Congress symposium: science and stewardship to protect and sustain wilderness values; 2001 November 2-8; Port Elizabeth, South Africa. Proc. Rocky Mountain Research Station - P-27. Ogden, UT: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station*.
- Besancon, C., & Freimund, W. (2002). International Wilderness-Related Websites. *International Journal of Wilderness*, 8(2), 26.
- McCool, S. F., Besancon, C., & Nickerson, N. (1998). *Toward a Sustainable Tourism and Recreation Industry in Montana: An Examination of Concepts and Industry Perceptions*. Missoula, Montana: Institute of Tourism and Recreation Research, The University of Montana.