

Ethical motives for private land conservation

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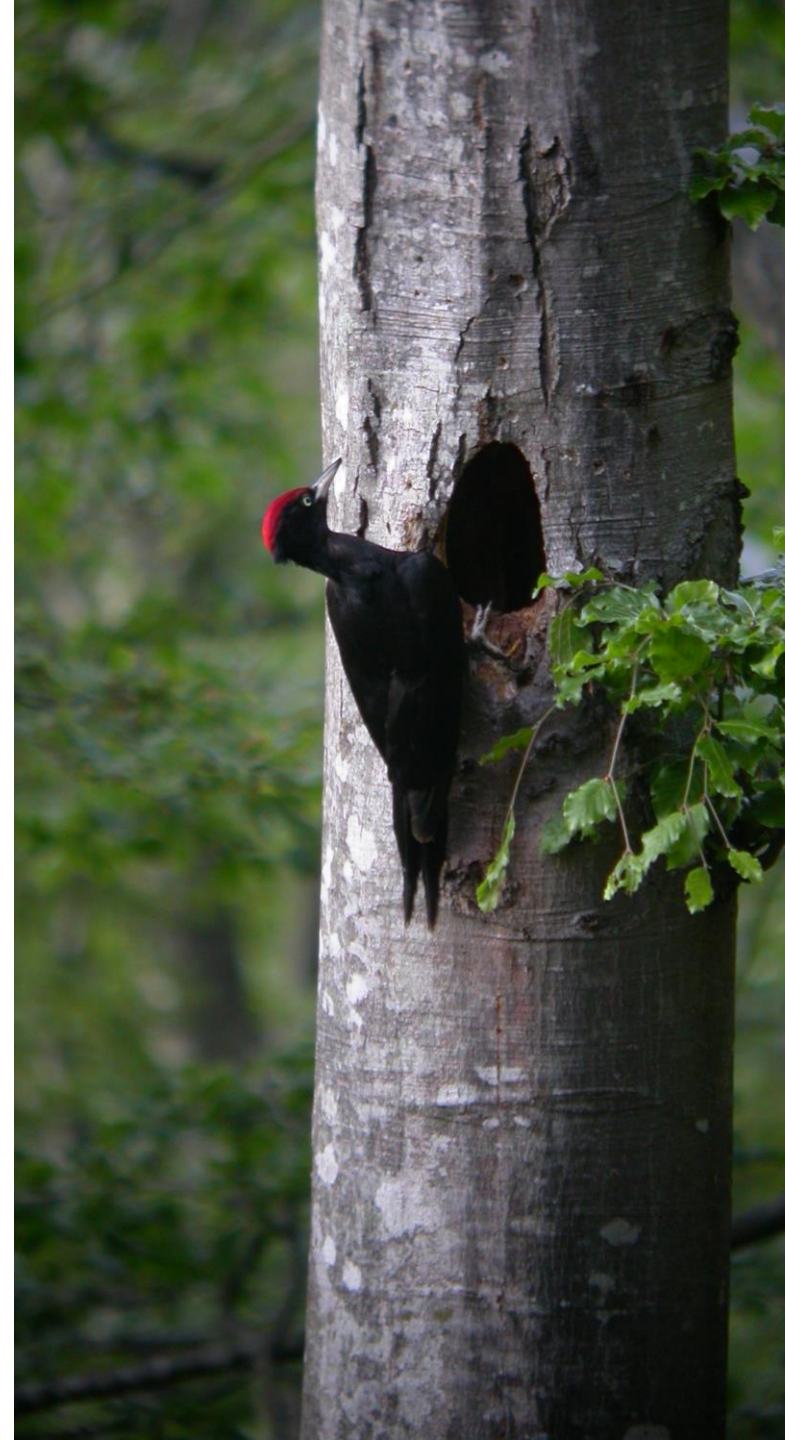
Ethics, private property & conservation

- Nature conservation is ethically important because human life and human wellbeing depend on nature integrity and health.
- In many European countries, including Spain, most land is privately owned
- Depending on the European countries, most / many protected areas are privately owned (+50% Natura 2000 network).
- The role of private landowners is crucial for securing the effectiveness of most conservation policies.



European context

- Category V- Protected Landscapes includes about two third of existing Protected Areas of Europe.
- Mediterranean basin, category V: 80% of protected areas.
- Spain: category V: 70% of all protected area systems.
- IUCN Category V - Protected landscapes are mostly of private property in Europe.
- Exponential growth of protected areas, uneven / low effectiveness.



New Paradigm for Protected Areas

Separate units or islands > interconnected networks

Reactive management > adaptive management

Preservation and scenic protection > conservation, socio economic, ecosystems services, cultural objectives

Focusing on wild natural heritage > including domesticated diversity, cultural and spiritual heritage.

Control of local people > managed with or by local people

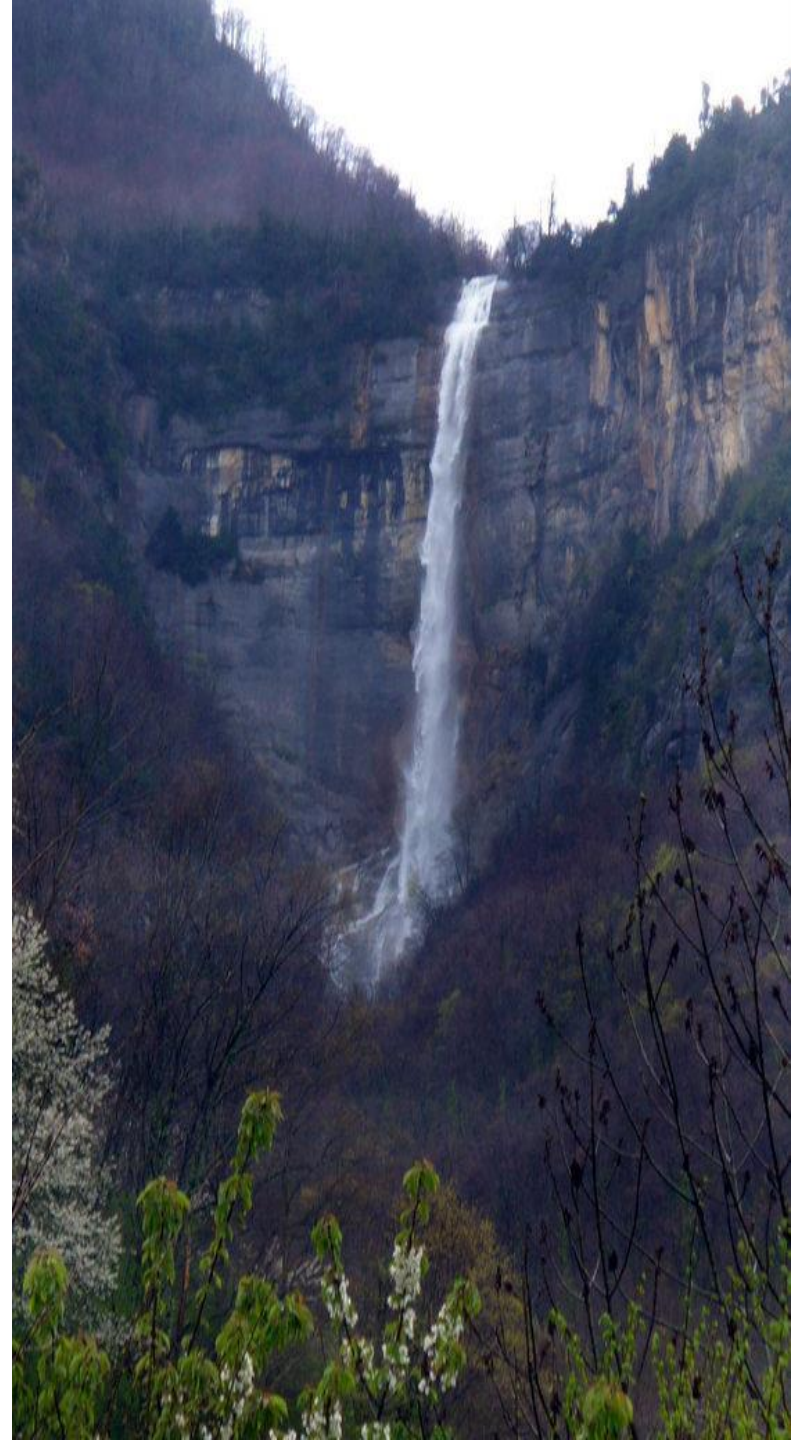
Run by governmental agencies > run locally by many partners

Paid for by taxpayers > diverse funding

Benefit visitors > benefiting owners, local communities

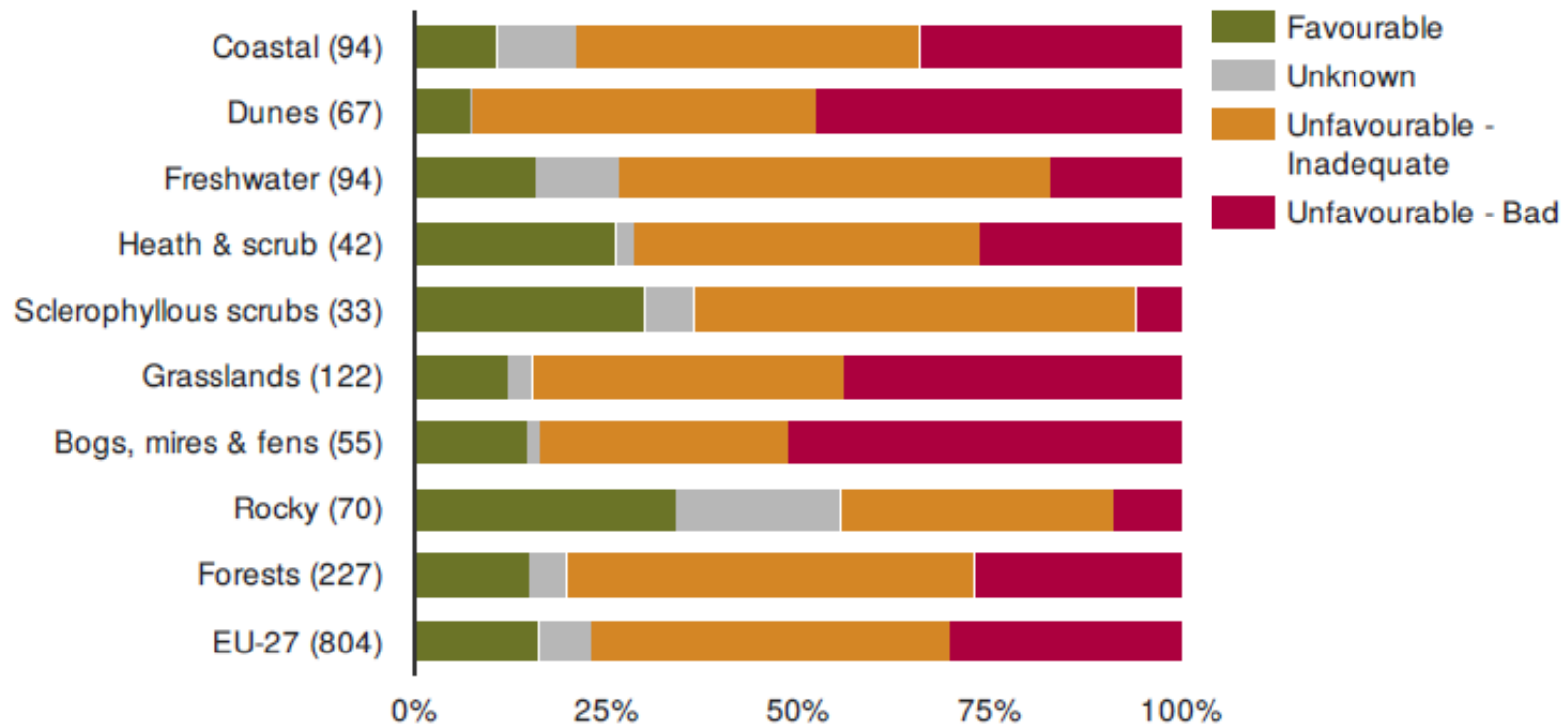
Technocratic approaches > multi and social skills, revitalising good governance.

(Adapted from Adrian Phillips, 2003)



European context: Despite (i) EU Ministers commitment to halt biodiversity losses in 2010 (later 2020); (ii), exponential growth of protected areas (most with governmental governance), and (iii) high ecological footprint > negatively impacting other regions of the world...

Conservation status of habitats of European interest^[13]



Sources: EEA. Conservation status of habitat types and species (Article 17, Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC)

Private property law

- One should acknowledge that private ownership entails responsibility, i.e. belonging to a community and abiding by its norms, that it requires us to conserve nature, improving the health of the land that sustains our societies.
- Since the law plays a central role in dispensing communal wisdom and educating people about right and wrong conduct, law of private property should convey messages that charge us to act ethically.
- Private ownership norms should provide the structural framework; incorporating a land ethic based on the durable wisdom of ecology / ecosophy.

(adapted from Eric T. Freyfogle, 1996)



Need for ethical development

- Private property law can never be detailed enough to direct owners how to use their particular lands in healthy ways.
- As wise stewards know from experience to use a piece of land properly requires intimate knowledge of it and long-term commitment to it - things distant lawmakers can never have.
- There will thus always be a vital need for responsible, ethical landowners, to promote local wisdom, and to share this wisdom with their neighbours.

(Eric T. Freyfogle, 1996)



Ethics of conservation

Ethics is the domain of inquiry that examines claims about what is right or wrong, just or unjust, obligatory or non-obligatory.

Ethics is the foundation for the rule of law, or the body of rules, policies, and programmes that guide and govern a society to best protect that society, and allow society to flourish.

Understanding that all life is interconnected, ethics has to include our obligations to nature, for the sustainability and flourishing of the entire community of life.

Adapted from IUCN Ethical Specialist Group 2018



How should we live our lives?

- We are living an unprecedented time for humanity, with more challenges and opportunities than any other previous generation.
- We are part of the wealthy part of the wealthiest countries (aprox.20% of humanity) and have more responsibilities and opportunities than the remaining 80%
- Most affluent societies suffer from growing unhappiness, mental illnesses, depressions, existential void...
- We cannot go on believing that selfishness and greed eventually contribute to the common good
- To fill the existential void and tend towards self-realization we need to act in accordance with intrinsic, ethic motivations.
- Deep (spiritual) reconnection with nature is an important part for landowners intrinsic motivation.



What ethical motivations?

Ethical motivations oppose short term self centered or interested considerations by long term stewardship to land and water, which includes responsibilities based on:

- **Moral duty** (to humanity, to Life, to the spiritual realm, to Divinity, ...)
- **Moral virtue** (best practices, good deeds, excellence...)
- **Benefits for the future** (pay-of for future generations, species or habitats future...)

Duties, virtues and pay-offs may work independently or be combined in different ways among landowners, and along the life of a single land owner

(Paul Thompson, 2011)

Motivations of philanthropists



Hansjörg Wyss, a philanthropist born in Switzerland, founded the medical device company Synthes, He is a conservationist, hiker and nature lover

“We have to save the Planet.

So I’m donating \$1 Billion. I will give this sum over the next decade to help accelerate land and ocean conservation around the world. ...

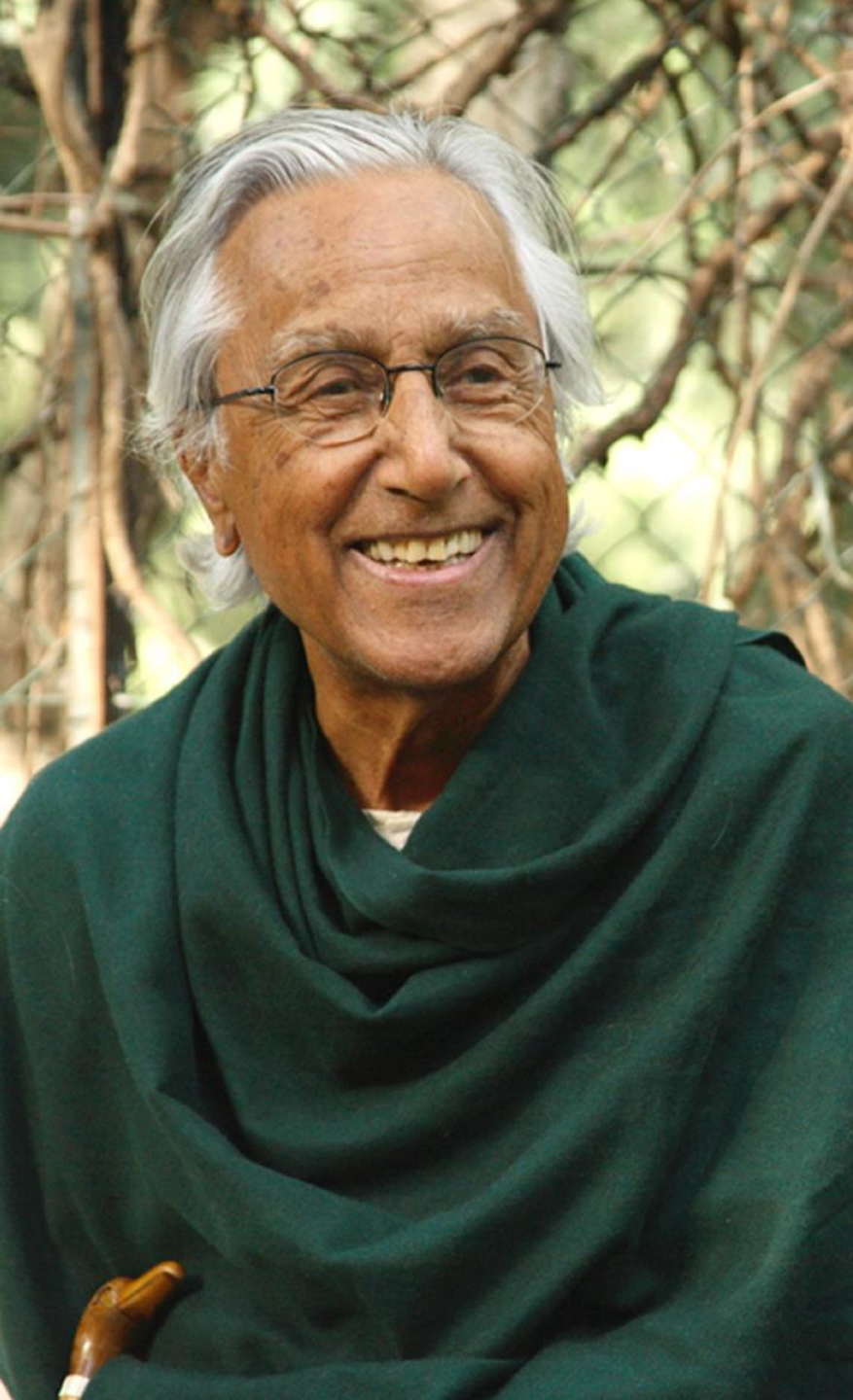
For the sake of all living things, let’s see to it that far more of our planet is protected by the people, for the people and for all time”.

Hansjörg Wyss

The New York Times,
28 October 2018

What moral foundations?

- Material / Science: ecological, psychological principles, intergenerational scope, i.e. E. Wilson (biophyllia), R. Margalef,...
- Religious: traditional moral codes as reinterpreted by contemporary leaders i.e. P. Bartholomew I, P. Francis, S.H. Nasr, Thich nhat hanh, Dalai Lama, etc
- Spiritual: ecosophy (A. Naess and R. Panikkar, 1971), ecophilosophy (H.Skolimowsky, 1981), The Earth Charter (UNESCO 2000) often resulting from engagements with nature...



What is ecosophy?

Ecosophy is our knowledge from the Earth and the knowledge of the Earth herself, that we should try to listen and share.

Ecosophy wants to honor the growing ecological awareness and to enlarge it from an intercultural perspective.

Ecosophyy proposes a radical change in the perception of the Earth and human beings...

considering our duties towards the Earth as a living being.

(Raimon Panikkar in J. Pigem, *El Temps* 100, 2005)



Cultivating a culture of conservation by linking Spirituality, Culture and Conservation

Faith traditions are a major source of our ethical values and provide insights into ways of valuing nature

Solutions: To create a stronger culture of conservation, we need to look beyond mere technical means. The values and wisdom of indigenous peoples, Elders, and the world's rich faith and spiritual communities offer a deeper understanding of our connections with nature, and help inform the necessary transformational changes in the financial, technological, industrial, governance and regulatory systems of our societies. To incorporate such insights, spiritual leaders and the conservation community need to come together to share the values that connect us. Artists, educators and innovators all can contribute to this expanded vision.

In the Anthropocene acceleration,
with growing uncertainties...

Ethical motivations inspired in shared
values (humanistic, religious, spiritual)

that support diverse knowledge systems
(scientific + traditional)

and deliver rights-based and equitable
conservation outcomes,

for improved governance and benefits
for local livelihoods,

provide the soundest base for private
conservation, as well as for reforming
economic and sectoral policies who
continue creating negative side effects.

