



Tom Tidwell, Chief, USDA Forest Service

20 April 2012, Győr, Hungary

Subject: Nomination of International Year of Wilderness  
Reference: 011/2012

Dear Mr. Tidwell,

On behalf of PAN Parks Foundation, I am addressing this letter to you in order to ask your support for **nominating 2014 as the INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF WILDERNESS!**

PAN Parks, the European wilderness protection organisation, represents a network of 20 European protected areas and over 100 entrepreneurs involved in nature-based tourism. The Million Project, which our organisation launched in September 2011, aims at securing the guaranteed protection of at least 1 million hectares of Europe's wilderness by 2015. This ambitious goal of The Million Project got supported by various national NGOs throughout Europe and beyond. Our foundation is also actively involved in the organisation of the 10<sup>th</sup> World Wilderness Congress (WILD10, Salamanca, Spain, October 2013) and in the European Habitat Forum, which is a forum of 27 European NGOs.

There are several reasons supporting the idea of nominating 2014 as the International Year of Wilderness. First of all the UN Decade on Biodiversity between 2011 and 2020 (<http://www.cbd.int/2011-2020/>) provides an excellent framework to develop a global strategy towards enhancing wilderness protection. Secondly such a nomination will help to get the necessary public attention and support, which wilderness protection deserves! Since the adoption of the special report on wilderness by the European Parliament (3 February 2009), there has been increasing support for wilderness in Europe, and a global campaign can help to further advance this support in our continent and beyond.

If 2014 is nominated as the International Year of Wilderness, it will provide an excellent opportunity to commemorate two remarkable milestones of the global wilderness movement: the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the US Wilderness Act and the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the European Parliament's special report on wilderness, which received an overwhelming support of the Members of the European Parliament. The remaining 1,5 year between May 2012 and January 2014 gives a good run-up to develop a coordinated global strategy for celebrating the International Year of Wilderness.



Therefore I sincerely hope we will be able to secure your support for this nomination. I hope you will be able to promote the International Year of Wilderness at the necessary policy forums. I would also like to inform you that a letter with the same request was addressed to the following people representing important conservation organisations:

- Jon Jarvis, CEO, US National Park Service
- Janez Potocnik, EC Commissionaire, DG Environment
- Alan Latourelle, CEO, Parks Canada
- Braulio F. de Souza Dias, Executive Secretary, CBD Secretariat
- Eladio Fernandez-Galiano, Council of Europe, Biodiversity section
- Bob Abbey, Bureau of Land Management, USDA
- Daniel M. Ashe, Fish and Wildlife Service, US
- Rauno Vaisanen, CEO, Metsahallitus, Natural Heritage Service

PAN Parks Foundation also developed an online application entitled The One Million Tweets <http://onemilliontweets.panparks.org/> which we will use to collect one million tweets for supporting the idea of the International Year of Wilderness. This application will be actively promoted after 1 May 2012.

We will be also contacting various civil society and for-profit organisations to call for their support for the idea of the International Year of Wilderness. By the end of May 2012, you will receive a follow up letter from us, which will represent the support received from the non-profit and for-profit sectors.

I am looking forward to receiving your reply and further discuss with you how we will be able to proceed with the suggested nomination of the International Year of Wilderness!

Sincerely yours,

Zoltán Kun, Executive Director <https://twitter.com/zkun1971>

cc: Ralph Swain, Leanne Marten Forest Service and Alan Watson, Aldo Leopold Institute