A Memorandum of Understanding between the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research and the International Polar Heritage Committee
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Information Paper submitted by SCAR

Summary

The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), International Polar Heritage Committee (IPHC) have recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The MoU recognises the central role of SCAR in advising the Antarctic Treaty System on scientific matters and acknowledges the expertise and experience of the IPHC and its role in offering independent expert advice on Antarctic heritage matters.

Introduction

The IPHC, founded in 2000 by Dr Susan Barr and Mr Paul Chaplin (Norway. CEP IV IP38 Antarctic historic resources), has members from 15 Antarctic nations whose specialities include Antarctic heritage governance and policy, history, archaeology, historic sites and monument cultural resource management, artefacts conservation and interpretation. The objectives of the IPHC are to:

- a) ‘promote international co-operation in the protection and conservation of nonindigenous heritage in the Arctic and Antarctic;
- b) consult and co-operate with Arctic indigenous peoples regarding heritage of cross-cultural significance;
- c) provide a forum for interchange of experience, ideas, knowledge, and the results of research between administrators, archaeologists, conservators, historians, legislators and other professionals;
- d) promote international studies and projects;

The IPHC holds most of its meetings in conjunction with major conferences, e.g. POLAR 2018 and the upcoming SCAR 2020, and utilises video conferencing. In this way, the IPHC minimises its carbon footprint and remains informed of developments within the Antarctic research community.

Most recently, the IPHC provided advice in the drafting of the Guidelines for the Assessment of Heritage in Antarctica (ATCM XLI, Resolution 2).

Established in 1958, SCAR is an Interdisciplinary Body of the International Science Council. SCAR’s mission is to initiate, develop, and coordinate high-quality international scientific research in the Antarctic region and on the role of the Antarctic region in the Earth system. In addition, it provides objective and independent scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings and other organizations on issues of science and conservation affecting the management of Antarctica.

Synergies exist between the research objectives of the IPHC and those of SCAR’s Standing Committee on Humanities and Social Sciences (SC-HASS), and these are drawn on in the IPHC’s formulation of conservation and management advice. SC-HASS can also offer advice concerning Antarctic humanities and social science more broadly.

1 https://www.scar.org/scar-library/search/partners/agreements/5266-mou-scar-iphc/
Memorandum of Understanding

As identified in the MoU, SCAR and the IPHC share a strong commitment to excellence in the field of Antarctic polar heritage, to the pursuit of scientific advances, public awareness and advice to policymakers as well as professional development of young researchers. Consequently, SCAR and IPHC have agreed to coordinate their efforts in Antarctic polar heritage to raise the level of impact of both organizations.

The MoU allows the IPHC, through SCAR, to offer objective and independent scientific advice to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings on issues of science, conservation and related management affecting Antarctic human heritage.

Current Project

An example of the ongoing work of the IPHC is the current development of the Antarctic Archaeology Guidelines, which provide guidance and support in the interpretation of the principles and practice of archaeology in Antarctica, based upon the core principles of the Treaty that positions Antarctica as a continent of peace and science, and recognise the unique environmental, governance and logistical context of the continent. A draft version of the guidelines is currently being circulated to the Antarctic nations for review and comment. The MoU has informed the guidelines’ alignment with SCAR’s remit to provide expert advice to the Antarctic Treaty System and enhance Antarctic science.

Future Endeavours

The MoU establishes a framework for SCAR to offer expert information and opinions, informed by the IPHC, on matters related to Antarctic heritage values, definitions and categorisations, Environmental Impact Assessments, management plans and other associated issues that arise within the Antarctic Treaty System.

Parties are invited to contact the IPHC regarding Antarctic heritage identification, conservation and management matters.

International Polar Heritage Committee contacts:

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