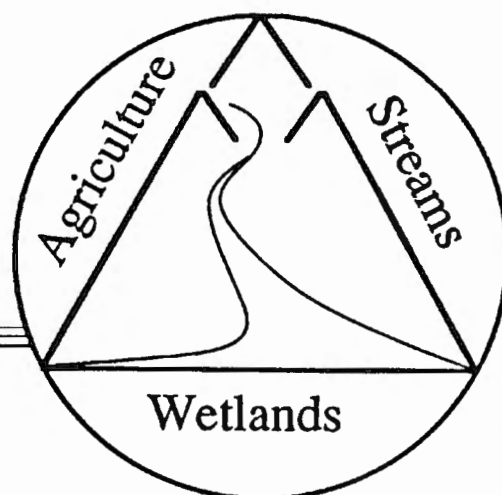


ATTUALITA'

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CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

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There seems to be a disagreement or slight confusion over the use of the term *conservation*, as in to conserve nature. For some, the term *conservation* implies resource management in a dynamic sense. For others, the term *conservation* implies management in a static sense. This difference may have some importance in how we view the goals of our working group and, therefore, we should examine this term and its different subtleties of meanings, especially since we are a multi-lingual group.

In both the Oxford English Dictionary and Webster's Dictionary, one of the definitions of *conservation* is the planned management of a natural resource to prevent exploitation, destruction, or neglect. In English usage then, the word *conserve* tends to be used in a dynamic sense, as in managing a resource. In comparison the term *preserve* in English implies pro-

tection in a static sense and is used to imply restricting a change in state, as when protecting foods by canning or pickling. Rare species may be preserved in zoos or in protected habitats but nature in a broader sense should be conserved.

However, in other European languages there are terms which sound similar to the English term *conserve*, but really mean the more restricted term *preserve*, as when making pickles or jams. In Swedish, the verb *konservera* means to protect foods from spoiling. If one wishes to manage a resource the verb *bevara* is sometimes used. In German when one cans or pickles foods one uses the verb *konservieren*. If a resource is to be managed for future use then one uses the verb *erhalten*. In French the differences in language usage between the verbs *conserver* and *préservier* are slight, but tend to follow the English usage, with *conserver* implying to keep in good shape in the dynamic sense, while *préservier* implies to protect in the static sense.

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In other words, if someone from Germany or Sweden hears someone from the UK or France use the term *conserve*, there could be the misunderstanding that those from the UK or France want to preserve in the static sense as opposed to conserve in a more dynamic sense.

When the name of our working group was first discussed there was the thought that the term *conservation* implied a too heavy emphasis on maintaining the current condition of a river and not allowing it to vary as a system. We intended the name of the group to have a dynamic sense and added the term *management* to strengthen the dynamic aspect of the term *conserve*. Based on language usage, this strengthening seems to be a good idea.

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In the last issue of *Meanders*, I wrote a short editorial on the use of the terms *conservation* and *preservation* and how these terms are used and interpreted in different languages. I felt that since our working group name used the term *conservation* we should consider how this term is used in different languages. I also mentioned that when we discussed the group name in Munich there was a concern that *conservation* may imply restricted action. We added the term *management* to strengthen the idea of a dynamic process. In the last issue I discussed the use of the terms *conservation* and *preservation* in English, Swedish, German and French. Several colleagues have contributed the following observations for Spanish and Italian.

Narcis Prat, Department of Ecology, University of Barcelona, observes that «... in Spanish *conservar* is also a restricted term, equivalent to *preservar* so it was a good idea to include *management* in the working group name. It is difficult to translate management to Spanish with the English idea, but many people can understand the significance. The literal translation is *manejar* but this word implies considerable changes of the original system, the best translation should be *gestión*, which denotes

the interest in the dynamic situation you mention in your editorial. The translation to Spanish of the SIL working group should be *Conservación y gestión de los ríos*».

Irene Wais, Natural Council for Scientific and Technical Research, Buenos Aires, writes that in Spanish the terms *conservation* and *preservation* are sometimes used indiscriminately when in fact they have different meanings in Spanish. According to the Dictionary of the Royal Academy of Spain, *to conserve* means «... to keep something and to care of its permanence, to continue practicing something, to keep very carefully something or to make preserves (ref. food)» ... and ... *to preserve* means «to avoid in advance some damage or danger for a person or thing». Dr. Wais continues and observes that «... both words derive from Latin and I think it is important to consider the etymology of them. *To conserve* come from *conservare* from “cum” (with) and “servare” (to keep) and *preserve* comes from *praeservare* from “prae” (before, in advance) and “servare” (to keep)».

Maurizio Battagazzore, University of Parma, writes that *conservation* involves the combination of the natural evolution of an ecosystem and its management, while *preservation* implies the protection of a certain environment in a static sense and also involve management. However, «... among Italian scientists the English terms *conservation* and *preservation* would be translated as *conservazione*, having the word *preservazione* a meaning used in reference to monuments or human artifacts in general. This is supported by the most important Italian dictionary, the “Devoto-Oli”, according to which *conservazione* means «keeping in a state of efficiency, in a suitable condition», while the verb *preservare* is given a more static meaning, «keeping something in such a way as to avoid its alteration». Regarding the term *management* there is no doubt that the most appropriate translation is the word *gestione*».