

219 Tunbridge Road
Baltimore, MD 21211, U.S.A.
11 September 2012

Mr. Payson R. Stevens
Friends of GHNP
P.O. Box 810
Del Mar, CA 92014

Dear Payson:

I strongly support the proposed designation of the Great Himalayan National Park as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

I write from my perspective as a newly retired member of the Senior Executive Service after having served 40 years in a number of positions in the U.S. Government, most recently with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) – the U.S. agency responsible for observing, understanding, and forecasting conditions in the oceans and atmosphere, as well as conserving and protecting their associated natural resources. Most relevant to this letter, I served for five years as NOAA’s Assistant Administrator for the National Ocean Service, where I was responsible for managing nine existing, as well as establishing four new National Marine Sanctuaries; these are trustees for our nation’s legally mandated system of marine protected areas, to conserve, protect, and enhance their biodiversity, ecological integrity and cultural legacy.

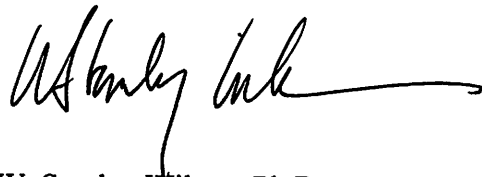
My contributions have been recognized through receipt of the U.S. Navy Superior Civilian Service Award, NASA Exceptional Scientific Achievement Medal and two Group Achievement Awards, American Geophysical Union Ocean Sciences Award, Compass Distinguished Achievement Award, Remote Sensing Society Award, French Space Agency Medal, Portuguese Naval Cross, Australian Antarctic Division Medal, and Department of Commerce Gold Medal.

Given this perspective, I am motivated to write this letter of support because I was fortunate to have personally been able to participate in a five-day trek during April of 2003 in the Great Himalayan National Park (GHNP) accompanied by its then Director, Mr. Sanjeeva Pandey. That trek had been organized by the *Friends of GHNP*, a small group of Americans and Europeans who are volunteering to advance awareness of the Park, working with a local ecotourism group of village men. Mr. Pandey had facilitated the establishment of the *Friends of GHNP*, which have been working through local tour operators to spread the word for sustainable eco-tourism activities. As a consequence of that remarkable experience, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you several of my impressions.

The GHNP is an area of exceptional natural beauty and has a wonderfully rich biodiversity. This is exemplified by the western tragopan, musk deer, snow leopard, serow, and brown bear, as well as the magnificent deodar, fir, spruce, yew, and oak forests. India has indeed given the world a wonderful gift through the establishment of this National Park in the western Himalaya. While the remote and inaccessible location of the GHNP certainly assists in protecting its wonderful biodiversity, looking well into the future, this remarkable Park needs to benefit from further protection through its designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, especially in a country like India where so much development is happening.

This remarkable Park is pristine now. But it needs to remain pristine for generations to come. Groups such as the *Friends of the GHNP* need every assistance possible to help ensure that the GHNP will remain a legacy for our successors in the future. I believe that designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site will help ensure that this happens, and I urge you to do everything possible to support this designation.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Stanley Wilson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

W. Stanley Wilson, Ph.D.