

# Establishing a Cultural Red Book for Endangered Cultures, NOW

Dear colleagues,

Are centuries of accumulated human wisdom really less important than beetles or weeds? Are we going to stand by and let human heritage and diversity disappear?

At the current rate of language extinction extrapolated to cultures, the world is losing some 30 cultures *per year*. Every month we wait, two to three cultures are lost. That isn't just the death of cultural diversity. It is also the death of the profession of anthropologists and cultural experts.

Biologists and ecologists have presented their concerns in a scientific way through their use of a tool – the Red Book for Endangered Species – and by creating a quasi-international organization – the International Union for the Conservation of Nature – that is part civil society, part government, to promote it.

In an article now appearing jointly in *Practicing Anthropology* (vol. 32, no. 4, Fall 2010) in a short form, and in a long piece for rights practitioners in the *International Journal of Minority and Group Rights*, (no. 17, Fall/Winter 2010), as well as on the web, <http://david.dracula0.googlepages.com/home>, I have outlined the steps that we can take using new technologies like that of Wikipedia, to make a Red Book effort for endangered cultures a success.

I invite other colleagues to join and be part of leading this initiative that is central to our profession. Isn't this what you entered the field of anthropology to do?

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