

Name of Organization: International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)  
Name of Presenter: Meisha Hunter, FAAR, AICP  
Title of Presenter: President, International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage

Dear Excellencies,

My name is Meisha Hunter, President of the International Scientific Committee on Water and Heritage (aka ISC Water). On behalf of ICOMOS I will share on the topic of water-related heritage. Water-related heritage merits public awareness and protection as living assets which can assist in meeting water-related challenges for today and tomorrow, and aid in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

For over fifty years, ICOMOS has supported the implementation of the World Heritage Convention's cultural mandate; and provided advice to the World Heritage Committee. Established in 2024, ISC Water is dedicated to the research, protection and promotion of water-related heritage, both tangible and intangible; communicating the significance of this heritage; catalyzing cross-disciplinary and cross-institutional collaboration within ICOMOS and the water sector; and encouraging stewardship best practices. ICOMOS' recently published *Ouro Preto Symposium Proceedings* features an article by ISC Water on water-related heritage for the future.

At the 2026 Conference, we aim to:

- **Launch an International Platform.** In 2023, ISC Water co-hosted a formal Side Event at the UN Water Conference, prepared a Statement acknowledging the significance of water-related heritage and petitioned the UN to create an International Water and Cultural Heritage Platform to empower dialogues and partnership between water management and historic preservation practitioners. To mobilize this effort, ISC Water has initiated contacts within ICOMOS such as the SDG and Indigenous Heritage Working Groups, with the UN and with other NGOs.
- **Promote stewardship of Traditional Water-Management Systems.** These systems, rooted in traditional wisdom, understanding of local ecosystems and sustainable practices, sustain the livelihoods of farming communities worldwide. The Global Commission on the Economics of Water's inaugural report affirmed the potential relevance of restoring traditional water systems to mitigate both water and climate change crises. Water-related heritage can help to advance SDG-6 to ensure universal availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation.
- **Increase Public Awareness and Education** of water-related heritage, including UNESCO World Heritage sites and sites that may not easily receive heritage status or protection.

We look forward to working with you to include water-related heritage in the 2026 UN Water conference agenda.

Thank you.