Nature, Culture, and Indigenous Peoples: Fleshing Out the Framework for Protection
Article II, Sec. 22, Constitution

The State recognizes and promotes the rights of indigenous cultural communities within the framework of national unity and development.
Article XII, Sec. 5, Constitution

The State, subject to the provisions of this Constitution and national development policies and programs, shall protect the rights of indigenous cultural communities to their ancestral lands to ensure their economic, social, and cultural well-being.
“These used to be our rice fields.”
“Once upon a time, we could get gold as big as pebbles just by panning.”

Agno River, Itogon, Benguet
“Our river used to be green.”

Agno River, Itogon, Benguet
“When Congress enacted the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act (IPRA), it introduced radical concepts into the Philippine legal system which appear to collide with settled constitutional and jural precepts on state ownership of land and other natural resources. The sense and subtleties of this law cannot be appreciated without considering its distinct sociology and the labyrinths of its history. This Opinion attempts to interpret IPRA by discovering its soul shrouded by the mist of our history. After all, the IPRA was enacted by Congress not only to fulfill the constitutional mandate of protecting the indigenous cultural communities' right to their ancestral land but more importantly, to correct a grave historical injustice to our indigenous people.”

SECTION 56, IPRA: Existing Property Rights Regimes

Property rights within the ancestral domains already existing and/or vested upon effectivity of this Act, shall be recognized and respected.
“This mountain is sacred.”

Mt. Kalatungan Range Natural Park
Thank you very much.

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