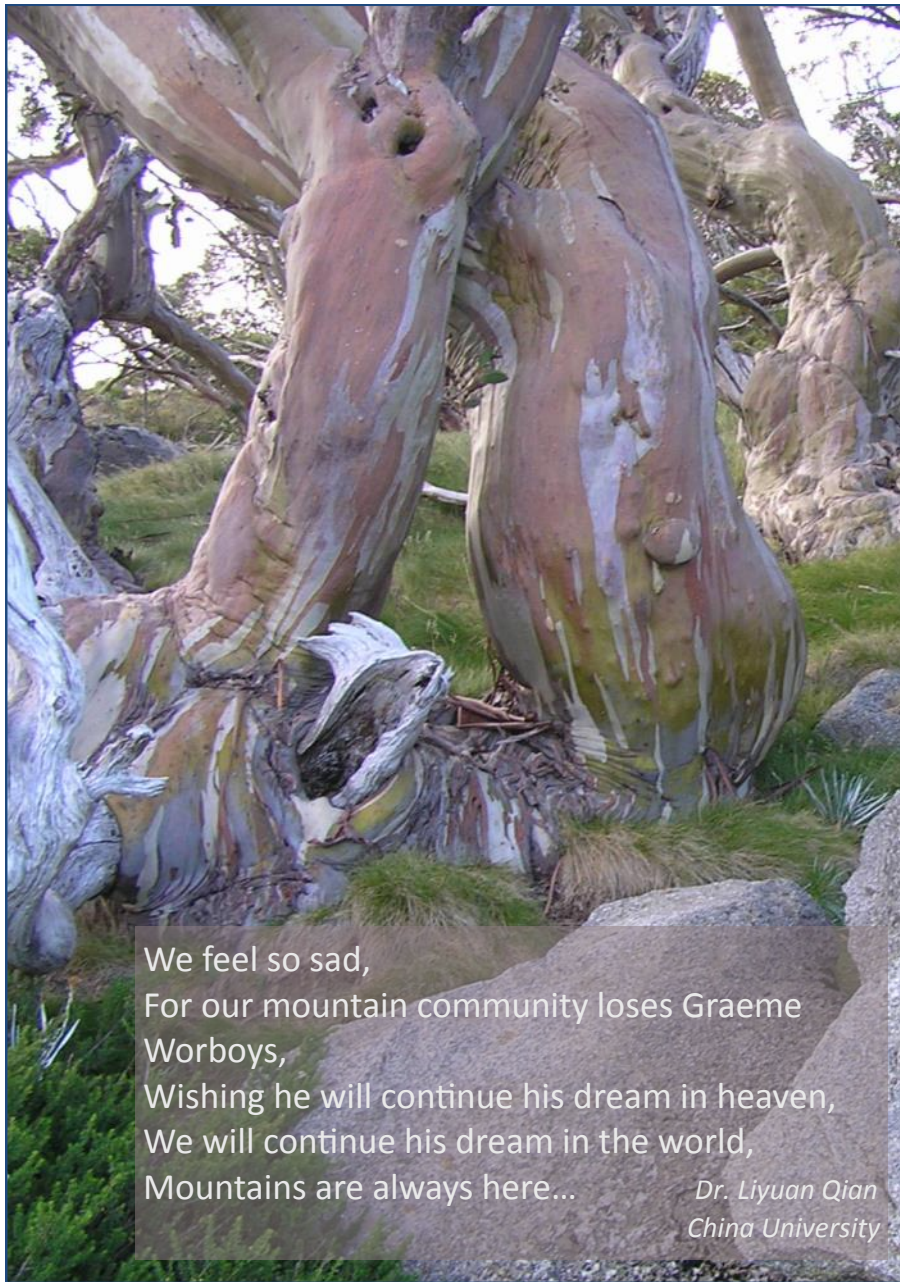


Mountain Protected Areas

UPDATE

December 2020 # 108



We feel so sad,
For our mountain community loses Graeme
Worboys,
Wishing he will continue his dream in heaven,
We will continue his dream in the world,
Mountains are always here...
*Dr. Liyuan Qian
China University*

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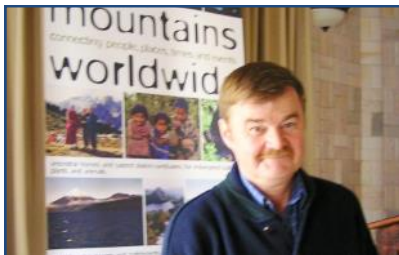
December 11 2020 – *International Mountain Day* - and again we find the Mountain Network and indeed the conservation world in general celebrating the life and work of (yet) another great and tireless man of the mountains—*Dr Graeme Worboys*. As this edition is dedicated to Graeme scattered throughout are a selection of reflections from friends and colleagues— *good on you* Graeme for all that you did, you will be missed but your enormous legacy will continue to inspire.

Friend and colleague *Penny Figgis* has gathered many heartfelt tributes to Graeme into a small pdf publication for family, friends and colleagues. This can be viewed on IUCN web at: [Dr Graeme Worboys memoriam](#), so I have not reproduced them all here in the UPDATE.

From *People and Mountains* around the world: Global

Dr Graeme Worboys

From Peter Jacobs Chair WCPA
Mountains Specialist Group



So much has been written about Graeme. This edition celebrates his leadership and inspiration particularly for the WCPA Mountains Specialist Group. Following on from his wonderful legacy, we will continue to strive for the protection and conservation of mountains around the world.

Personally, it was such a delight to know Graeme. He has shown us all how his determination albeit with humility and graciousness, has won us all over. I often reflect on these great personal values.

From Linda S. Hamilton, Larry Hamilton's wife and professional partner until his death in 2016.



...After investing more than 12 years in developing mountain conservation leadership within WCPA, Larry was able to hand that torch to Graeme in 2003 with total confidence that Graeme would respect the past it was built on and carry it forward with creative energy. And indeed he did. Larry had great admiration and respect for Graeme's work and him as a person, seeing the integrity of both what he did and how he did it.

Larry often referred to Graeme fondly as "Young Worboys", reflecting how Graeme's passionate approach to his work and in fact his whole life, was one of youthful high-spiritedness. He was exuberant! He was also one of the most genuine and energetic Nature advocates I have ever had the privilege to know.

We all go back to being stardust eventually, but I think surely Graeme's stardust will have some extra sparkle.

World's nations get failing grades in state of biodiversity report

Taken from Science September Read [whole article](#)

The **United Nations Global Biodiversity Outlook 5**, released in September, concludes that the world has not met ambitious targets set 10 years ago to protect nature.

The new assessment finds some bright spots... the extent of protected areas has risen substantially to 15% of land and 7% (2.5% highly protected) of the ocean, but those figures are still short of the targets of 17% and 10%, respectively.

Only six targets have been even partially reached and some indicators are headed the wrong way. For example, while global pesticide use has been relatively flat, many nations have increased their use of chemicals that harm pollinators. In general, progress is being swamped by growing consumption of energy and materials, and the destruction of habitat by new farms, roads, logging and dams.

In 2010, the 196 nations that belong to the U.N. Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) agreed to 20 goals for preserving flora and fauna, known as the Aichi biodiversity targets.

Every few years, CBD has evaluated progress, based on national reports and other sources. Hopefully countries will be motivated to press for more progress and higher goals when they meet in May 2021 to set new CBD targets for 2030. One draft proposal calls for protecting 30% of land and marine habitat, up from 10% today.



Tasmania's (Australia) mountain forests are home to some of the tallest, most beautiful trees in the world. They provide a habitat for many species, from black cockatoos and masked owls to the critically endangered swift parrot. But these old, giant trees are being logged at alarming rates, despite their enormous ecological and heritage value. Many were also destroyed in Tasmania's early 2019 fires. From The Conversation September / University of Tasmania

America-south

Colombia and the IUCN Green List

From **Protecting the Planet IUCN October newsletter & Mongabay**

With **Chingaza National Park**, Colombia becomes the country of Latin America with the most protected areas on the IUCN Green List, home to five of the 11 Green List areas in the region.

The park has more than 66 local ventures, eight community ecotourism organisations, 35 agreements with communities to strengthen ecological connectivity and is integrated with the development plans of 11 municipalities. 98% of the area is well preserved and its biological corridors are home to 1,200 species of plants, 49 amphibians, 32 reptiles, 531 birds, and 164 mammals.

Chingaza NP was declared in 1977, is located in the center of Colombia and covers elevations ranging from 800 to 4020 meters above sea level. Some of its main functions are to ensure the continuity of Andean-Orinoceans ecosystems, improve the ecological connectivity of water sources and protect high mountain ecosystems: Andean forest, Andean high forest, subparamo and paramo.



Chingaza NP photo: Chingaza Day Hikes

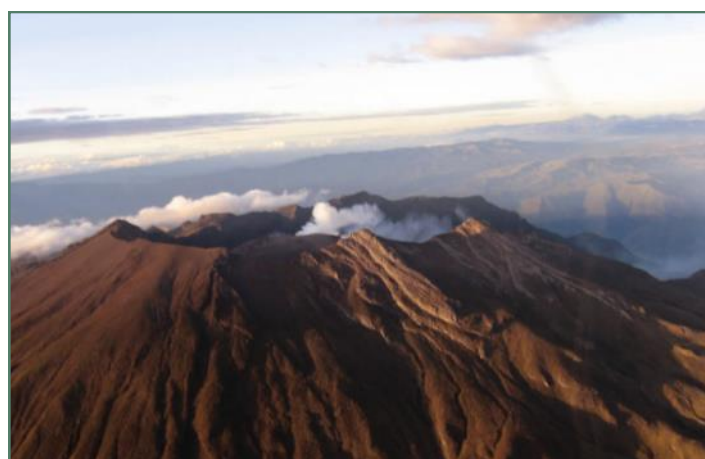
IUCN Green List

At the heart of the IUCN Green List Programme is a **globally applicable Standard**. It provides an international benchmark for quality that motivates improved performance and achievement of conservation objectives. By committing to meet the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas Global Standard, site managers seek to demonstrate and maintain performance and deliver real nature conservation results.

... Book of Management of Protected Areas, a very ambitious dream, was another opportunity to learn from Graeme, his academic rigor, his capacity to convince many people to write and his determination to finish it successfully. The book is now in the hands of thousands of people that work for the protected areas around the world!

...I miss his intelligent and interesting conversation, his inspiring love and enthusiasm for nature and for the knowledge behind every natural phenomenon because he loved to know, to do the research and find the cause of the many and diverse subjects that interested him; and his discipline to study and write.

**From Julia Miranda Directora General
Parques Nacionales Naturales de Colombia
Deputy Vice Chair WCPA**



Galeras Flora and Fauna Sanctuary (Colombia) is undergoing the renewal of its IUCN Green List Certification. The Galeras volcano is one of the most active in the continent. Its wealth is reflected in the great variety of flora and fauna found in the Páramo and high Andean forests. IUCN Green List web site

America—south

International Vulture Awareness Day (3 September)



From WCS News Release September La Paz, Bolivia

[International Vulture Awareness Day News \(English and Spanish\)](#)

Arriving in time for World Vulture Day was a new scientific book: “Saving the Symbol of the Andes: A Range Wide Conservation Priority Setting Exercise for the Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*).” The book is by 38 experts from seven countries and is the results of studies carried out on the distribution, ecology and conservation status of the species along the **Andean mountain range**, from Venezuela to Argentina and Chile. Its objective is to promote a conservation strategy at a continental level that ensures healthy populations of condors.

Ensuring the permanence of the Andean Condor is of vital importance for the conservation of wildlife and the appreciation of the cultural traditions of the Andean region. Its ecological importance is related to the environmental services it provides, particularly in relation to its behavior as a scavenger. By disposing of carcasses naturally, it helps to maintain adequate health levels in the environment, controlling the potential spread of disease. [Full Article](#)

The wildlife symbol of the Andes, the cultural importance of the Andean condor is expressed in its recognition as the national bird of Bolivia, Ecuador, Colombia (coat of arms depicts Andean Condor as symbol of freedom) and Chile, and in its significance as an important figure in the iconography and rituals of the cultures that developed in the Andean region.



Researchers identified 21 priority Andean condor conservation units, 7 of which are transboundary. The vast dry steppe of Patagonia with the Andes mountains in the distance. *Photo: Alexandr Vorobev / shutterstock*

And a bit more information from [The Conversation July 2020 Emily Shepard](#)

We tagged Andean condors to find out how huge birds fly without flapping...

...results showed that on average, condors fly for 3 hours a day, but they flap for less than 2 minutes of this – just 1% of their flight time. One bird even flew for more than 5 hours without a single flap, covering 172km.

The main cost for large fliers in general seems to be the energy required for take-off. In our study, 75% of the flapping observed in foraging flights was related to take-off. This highlights the importance of decisions about when and where to land.

Condors are big by today’s standards, but 6 million years ago *Argentavis magnificens*, a bird with twice the condors’ wingspan dominated the Argentinian skies. It has always been assumed that these and other aerial giants used air currents to fly without flapping. The new data from the condors supports this hypothesis and shows just how far terrestrial birds can fly without needing to turn their engines on.



America-north

Renaming a mountain

From Sierra Magazine October

It was in November 1864 when the Third Colorado Cavalry advanced on a peaceful encampment of Cheyenne and Arapaho Native Americans in south-eastern Colorado at dawn. Most of the men were out hunting. As the cavalry approached, the camp's leader waved an American flag with a white flag beneath it, to indicate that they were peaceful.

Still, the cavalry advanced and slaughtered at least 130 people, mostly women and children.

Then-governor Evans wasn't present at the Sand Creek Massacre, nor did he order the attack, but it still led to his eventual resignation. More than a century later, a collaborative investigation between historians at the University of Denver and North-western University—both of which Evans helped found—concluded that while the governor didn't directly order the massacre, he created the conditions that led to it.

So far, only one tribal government has responded to requests to review the name **Mt Evans** —the *Cheyenne and Arapaho* tribes suggested Mt. Blue Sky.

According to the Denver American Indian Commission, which was consulted by the naming board and supports renaming the mountain, all tribes with a connection with the mountain should be consulted in order to determine whether there were any other historic names that may predate the official ones.

Ed Note: with North American environmental and (Trump) public land deregulations, climate fires and COVID, a slightly more positive article was needed for the USA in the UPDATE—another renaming story from Australian is below, but we have a long way to go.



Mount Evans (4,350m) is the highest peak in the namesake Mount Evans Wilderness in the Front Range, Rocky Mountains of North America (USA).

Photo: Visit Colorado

Oceania—Australia

Renamed—King Leopold Mountains, Australia

From Media Statement Government of Western Australia

An iconic mountain range in northern Western Australia (WA) will be renamed to remove the link to a former "tyrant" monarch responsible for the deaths of millions of people in Africa: the **King Leopold Ranges** in the Kimberley region has now been officially renamed **Wunaamin Miliwundi Ranges**.

The Ranges were named by Alexander Forrest in 1879 in honour of Belgian King Leopold II who was responsible for grievous atrocities, brutal oppression and the enslavement of African people. The former kings violent reign of the Congo Free State led to up to 10 million deaths.

The Ranges are nearly 600 kilometres long and cross several native title areas with each language group referring to the range by a different name. After consultation with the Wilinggin Aboriginal Corporation and Bunuba Native Title Corporation, the name Wunaamin Miliwundi Ranges was chosen.



With respect and acknowledgement to the native title holders, the former King Leopold Ranges Conservation Park has officially been renamed with the Aboriginal name for the area. As the park crosses over lands of both Bunuba and Wilinggin people, the park has been divided into two conservation parks.

Oceania—Australia (cont.)

the story behind 2007 photo of the 4 wise men...

From Gill Anderson (Mountain Update Editor)

I first really got to know *Dr Graeme Worboys* when in 2004 I became Program Manager for the **Australian Alps** National Parks Cooperative Management Program. As many of you would expect Graeme approached me (or rather the Alps Program) with a proposition, a partnership with the IUCN WCPA Mountains (& Connectivity) Specialist Group to run annual **Science – Management Forums** - the aim being to bring alpine ecologists and scientists together with managers and rangers from across the **Australian Alps**.

So 2004 began a tradition of science – management forums covering a range of important topics such as fire and fire recovery, invasive species, threatened species, visitor data and surveys, alpine rehabilitation, alpine bogs and wetlands, effective management, climate futures...the list goes on!

But one of the earliest and most ground breaking was the **2007 Australian Alps Climate Change Science-Management Forum** (photo), held over 13 years ago at Falls Creek in the Victorian Alps (Alpine National Park).

Thank you Graeme for your guidance and perseverance! Your insight is as relevant today as ever...

Kosciuszko National Park: feral horse update

*Feral horse impacts are pushing 34 threatened native plant and animal species closer to extinction. Horse numbers in **Kosciuszko National Park** (KNP) are increasing by over 20% per year. Sensitive waterways and ecosystems are being continually degraded while the (NSW) Government continues to delay to act.*

From Reclaim Kosci & Invasive Species Council October

An update on the post-bushfire emergency trapping program of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park targeting three sensitive conservation areas is out. Over two months 193 horses were removed from the park. The passive feral horse trapping program will continue for the remainder of the year but it is clear that trapping alone is unable to reduce the horse population significantly. This spring, the 20,000-strong horse population will increase by the addition of several thousand foals. Preventing horse numbers from continuing to rise will depend on whether a new and more effective horse management plan is adopted.

The Invasive Species Council has released a new report [Bushfire Impacts on Feral Horse Populations](#) that revealed that most of the areas with feral horses escaped the fires. To be specific, 70% of "horse habitat" was unburnt, with only 16% severely burnt. This analysis refutes claims by horse advocates that many horses died in the fires and that plans to reduce the number of horses in KNP are no longer necessary.



L-R Bruce Leaver, Andy Spate, Roger Good & Graeme Worboys 2007 Climate Change Forum

Graeme strongly believed that the Alps needed to move from a 20th century model to 21st century approach which institutionalised science and management working together. An effective partnership between researchers and land managers was needed to inform decisions concerning significant management issues and support on ground programs in the Alps.



The **Australian Alps** and in particular Graeme Worboys much beloved **Kosciuszko National Park** continues to be under threat from feral horses. This was a constant source of frustration and anxiety for Graeme.

In 2018 Graeme co-convoked the Kosciuszko Science Conference, highlighting the scientific evidence of the threat of horses in protected areas. And just this year, published 'Kosciuszko: A Great National Park' with co-author Deirdre Slattery which celebrates the formation of Kosciuszko. Chapter 11 tells of the ongoing battle to protect Kosciuszko from feral horses. We will be forever grateful for the kindness and dedication Graeme showed to the mountains and to all he encountered. From Reclaim Kosci tribute to Graeme

Great Eastern Ranges: bushfire response update



From Great Eastern Ranges Initiative (GER) News October

GER's post-fire efforts with partners to restore and relink habitat and assist wildlife across eastern Australia has made significant progress over the past several months. Our partnership with [WWF-Australia](#) is supporting community-led projects in ten priority areas across the ranges, resulting in large-scale efforts to restore fire-affected habitat for koalas, gliding possums and other forest dependent wildlife.

GER is also supporting a large-scale fire mapping and research effort led by Griffith University to provide a science-informed bushfire response that optimises wildlife and ecosystem recovery.



So many thoughts flood to mind when thinking about the life and extraordinary achievements of Honorary Associate Professor Graeme Worboys— or “Worbs” as he was widely known. He created a prodigious legacy of achievements both in Australia and internationally. Graeme’s humbleness, integrity, sparkling smile, energy, sheer determination and life-long commitment to protecting nature inspired his many colleagues, students and friends to do better wherever he worked.

Ian Pulsford, GER Board Member (close friend and colleague for 35 years)

Graeme was among the first to spawn the idea over 40 years ago of an interconnected string of national parks stretching from the Blue Mountains 600 km south along the Great Escarpment and Great Dividing Range into Victoria ... that kernel of an idea grew into what became the Great Eastern Ranges Initiative.

From GER Tribute to Graeme

Oceania—New Zealand

\$1.3 billion Jobs for Nature Program

The NZ Government's Jobs for Nature provides nature-based employment to revitalise communities impacted by COVID-19, while controlling pests and weeds, restoring wetlands and returning native bush, rivers and streams to health. Amongst other projects **Jobs for Nature** will allow the Backcountry Trust to build on its successful volunteer programme by contracting skilled workers to carry out specialised work such as building and track cutting alongside Trust volunteers.

In addition to **Jobs for Nature** funding additional money has been allocated from the DOC Community Fund for the Kea Conservation Trust to support kea conservation across the South Island.

Kea, a national kaitiaki and taonga

Kea are a unique and endangered parrot (psittacine) endemic to the **Southern Alps** of New Zealand. They are one of three parrot species which evolved in isolation over millions of years, playing an important role as alpine seed distributors and ‘cleaners’ and are highly valued as one of the most intelligent bird species in the world.

To ensure that kea are optimally managed and protected it is necessary to understand the species natural habitat, lifecycle and behaviour in the wild, their interactions with people and the range of threats impacting on them. Additionally, understanding best practice management of kea in captivity is also necessary to ensure the captive population provides positive education and encounter opportunities to inspire new generations to care for kea in the wild.



*Many people have provided inspiration to me during my career but none more so than Graeme (Worboys). I tried hard to convince him to come on a trek to **Sagarmatha NP** after a workshop in Kathmandu a few years ago and still regret that we weren't able to share that experience. His work takes pride of place on my bookshelves – what a LEGACY Graeme left for us to follow. He was definitely a leader and friend of the highest order.*

A message from your NZ Friends and colleagues (L)

Bruce Jeffries, WCPA Mountains, NZ

Maybe the most dangerous volcano in world?

From Science October Roland Pease

In 2002, the last time **Nyiragongo volcano** erupted, lava raced down its flanks into the crowded city of Goma, on the border between the **Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda**. About 250 people died, 20% of the city was destroyed, and hundreds of thousands fled. Since then, the at-risk population living in the shadow of the 3470-meter-tall volcano has more than doubled to 1.5 million.

Now, conditions are ripe for another disaster, says Dario Tedesco, a volcanologist at the Luigi Vanvitelli University of Campania, who earlier this year led a campaign into the volcano's roiling crater.

He and his colleagues found the lava lake there filling at an alarming rate, raising the risk that the molten rock could burst through the crater walls once again.

Their analysis suggests peak hazard will arrive in 4 years, although they believe an earthquake could trigger a crisis earlier. Adding to the concerns, the Goma Volcano Observatory (GVO), the only monitoring station in the region, is losing its financial support from the World Bank.

Tedesco's assessment is blunt. "This is the most dangerous volcano in the world!"



Tourists visit Nyiragongo volcano *photo: National Geographic*



In a 2002 eruption, a lava lake within the crater of **Nyiragongo volcano** drained in hours. (photo L: National Geographic)

A lava lake forms as magma from deep in the Earth wells up and collects in a crater or vent.

Mount Nyiragongo is an active stratovolcano with an elevation of 3,470 m in the Virunga Mountains associated with the Albertine Rift. It is located inside **Virunga National Park**, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, about 20 km north of the town of Goma and Lake Kivu and just west of the border with Rwanda



Fire on slopes Africa's tallest mountain

BBC News October

Tanzanian authorities say 500 volunteers; Tanzania National Parks Authority (Tanapa) and local people, struggled to put out a fire on **Mount Kilimanjaro**, Africa's tallest peak. Their efforts were hampered by the altitude as well as strong winds and dry weather which caused the fire to spread fast. There is speculation that the flames could have spread from a fire used to prepare food at a rest centre for tourists using two of the several routes up the mountain.

Tanapa tweeted pictures (above) which give a sense of the extent of the fire and its aftermath.

Central Asia—Himalayas

(ambitious & impressive) Protected Areas Initiative, Pakistan

From *Ashiq Ahmad Khan Mountain SG*

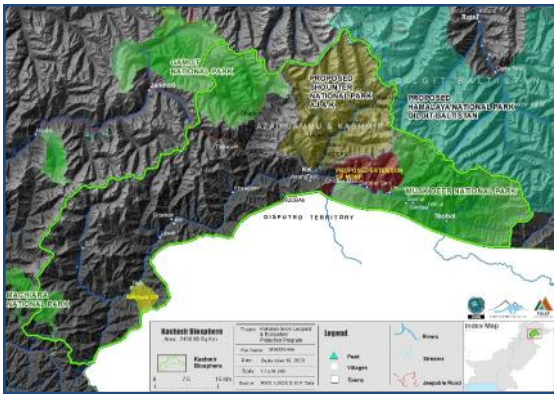
The overall objective of Protected Areas component under the Ten Billion Tree Tsunami Programme (TBTP) is to improve the conservation of the existing Protected Areas; encourage eco-tourism, community engagement and job creation. Additionally the programme will improve quality and sustainable management of these areas for conservation and strengthening biodiversity and ecosystems.

The Government further plans to expand the Protected Areas cover by adding new areas for conservation of natural flora and fauna (13% to 15% by 2023).

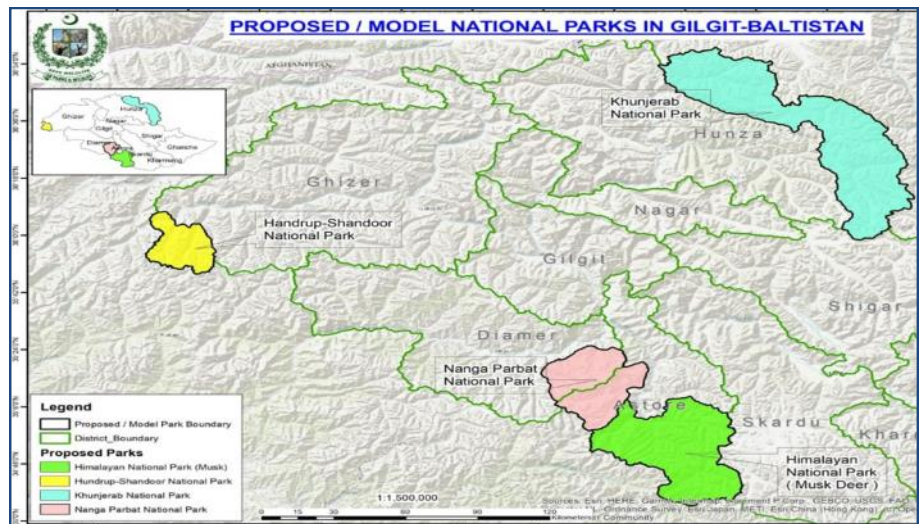
The Initiative aims to develop 15 model Protected Areas across country under TBTP to:

- Conserve over 7295.549 square km of land across the country
- Develop management plans for sustainability through community engagement
- Quality enhancement of PA's through;
 - Development of National Park Service
 - Promotion of eco- tourism with standardized infrastructure
- Facilitate conservation; enrichment of biodiversity; create cultural and social capital, all towards meeting challenges of Climate Change
- Global Recognition through IUCN Green Listing
- Green Stimulus creation of over 5,500 jobs and strong community engagement

The Kashmir Biosphere and proposed and existing protected areas of the Gilgit Balistan are of particular interest to the mountain community.



Kashmir Biosphere: Snow Leopard & Ecosystem Protection Project



*I was just going to give Graeme (Worboys) the good news about protecting a splendid chunk of Eastern Himalaya in the form of **Neelum Biosphere Reserve** in Pakistan that he was always keen to hear. Proud to have sweet memories of my long friendship with him, that started first with a brief workshop in Kathmandu on connectivity conservation, a legacy that I carry along and did try recently by proposing a big chunk of the mountains connecting **Karakoram and Himalayas in the Gilgit-Baltistan as connectivity zone** for future management. Graeme knew about it! He shall be missed whenever we talk of the Mountains. May his soul rest in peace. **Ashiq Ahmad Khan***



Central Asia— China

Amur leopards increasing on China's Loess Plateau



From Treehugger November 2020

The Amur leopard looks and acts like most other leopards. However, unlike many of its big cat counterparts, a new study finds this leopard isn't facing critical population declines. Researchers suspect there are several factors that contribute to the leopard's population rise.

In 2015 the Chinese government worked with scientists to put a plan in place to restore biodiversity to the area. Supported by government and researches forests and habitat recovered, smaller animals returned the prey species of the leopard and then the top predator came back, the North Chinese leopard.

All subspecies of leopards have decreased fast for the past few decades. The North Chinese leopard is not an exception, having disappeared from most of their historical ranges. Researchers were quite surprised that the number of leopards has increased, because their populations are declining in many other places.

Such a strong rebound in Amur leopard numbers is further proof that even the most critically endangered big cats can recover if we protect their habitat and work together on conservation efforts. WWF & Bing Xie from University of Copenhagen's Department of Biology.



Loess Plateau (before & after) where much leopard survey work took place is an example of massive land/habitat regeneration Photo: World Bank



Native to the Russian Far East and Northern China, Amur leopard has a distinctive spotted coat, runs incredibly fast, and leads a mostly solitary life.

Challenge of Loess Plateau, northern China

Around 3,000 years ago, farmers settled on the fertile **Loess Plateau** a region about the size of France. Centuries of overuse and overgrazing led to one of the highest erosion rates in the world and widespread poverty. Still home to more than 50 million people, the Loess Plateau (1,250–2,000m) takes its name from the dry powdery wind-blown soil.

Several projects set out to restore China's heavily degraded **Loess Plateau** through one of the world's largest erosion control programs with the goal of returning this poor part of China to an area of sustainable agricultural production.

China Danxia: WHA

(photo: Peter Howard)

*I met Graeme Worboys when I carried out the IUCN field evaluation for **China Danxia** in 2009. We really had a wonderful time together and a close relationship since...He helped me very much to initiate the **Geoheritage Specialist Group** in IUCN WCPA and proposed the idea of a new potential IUCN programme 'Key Geoheritage Area'. What a wonderful gentleman! **From Kyung Sik Woo***



Asia

Hungary Black Bears, Ōu Mountains, northern Japan

From The Guardian October

A spate of bear attacks in Japan has prompted calls to improve their habitat, as experts warned of more potentially dangerous encounters with the animals as they venture into populated areas in search of food.

The attacks are being attributed to a shortage of acorns in the bears' natural habitat. Black bears, which can grow up to 1.5m (5ft) in height and weigh more than 100kg, eat the highly calorific and nutritious nuts to fatten up before they begin hibernating in November.

"There is less to eat in the mountains and that is why they are coming down into villages," said Yuko Murotani, president of the [Japan Bear and Forest Society](#).

Rural depopulation and the resulting abandonment of farmland is also a factor, as it has blurred the once-distinct borders between mountain forests and villages.

Excessive hunting, in some cases to extract bile from the animal's gall bladder for use in traditional Chinese medicine, coupled with the degradation of their forest habitat has hit Japan's bear population, which comprises Ussuri brown bears on Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's four main islands, and smaller Asian black bears on the biggest island, Honshu.



The highest point in the range is Mount Iwate, 2,038 metres.

Located on Japan's Pacific Ocean coast, **Iwate Prefecture** features the easternmost point of Honshu and shares the highest peaks of the **Ōu Mountains** (奥羽山脈, *Ōu-sanmyaku*) - the longest range in Japan. They stretch 500 km (311 mi) south from Natsudomari Peninsula to the [Nasu](#) volcanoes. Though long, the range is only about 35 kilometres (22 mi) wide.

Europe

Struggle for Sinjajevina (update)

From Holly Jonas Global Coordinator, [ICCA Consortium Territories of Life](#) Holly contacted the UPDATE about the urgent situation in Sinjajevina, the highlands of Montenegro, where local communities are peacefully resisting NATO activities that are damaging their traditional pastoral lands, culture and globally relevant biodiversity.

This concerning issue was also featured in September UPDATE #107.

The top-line points are:

- Hundreds of NATO soldiers returned to the **Montenegrin mountains** to bomb and fire weapons in the **Sinjajevina pastures** and prohibit access of the local population. Sinjajevina is the largest grasslands in the Balkans and the second largest in Europe, part of a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve and important watershed for thousands of people in the lowlands.
- About 150 activists and local community members have blocked the access to pastures as human shields, camping in freezing temperatures at nearly 2000m. Consequently, they managed to postpone military trainings for more than two weeks. The activists' goal was to resist until 11 November, when the new government was set to form, but the latter was then postponed to 2 December. In addition to frigid weather conditions, they are facing growing pressure from police and military presence.
- At the same time, farmers from Sinjajevina and local activists demonstrate at the doors of the Montenegrin parliament to urge the EU Commissioner, Olivér Várhelyi, to suspend EU membership talks with Montenegro until it stops militarizing Sinjajevina.



More information: "The Struggle for Sinjajevina" Ecologist 11 November: [struggle-sinjajevina](#)

Maritime-Mercantour world heritage bid



The entity formed by the Mercantour National Park (FR) and the Alpi Marittime Natural Park, on the Franco-Italian border, represents a territory of 96,500 ha (68,500 ha in France and 28,000 ha in Italy). The two natural areas share a common border of nearly 33km. Forming a coherent geographical unit, the parks cover the two sides of the **Argentera-Mercantour mountain range**, which is the southernmost chain within the French and Italian Alps.

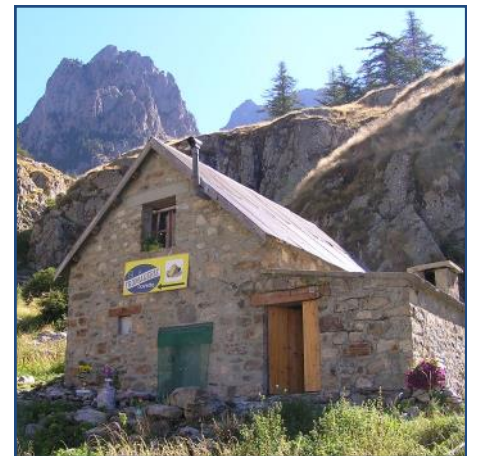
The especially advanced cooperation between the two parks involves many fields: sustainable tourism, cross-border trails, common signage and communication, education and training, scientific cooperation, etc. The introduction of the “Plans Intégrés Transfrontaliers” (Integrated Cross-border Plans) in the 2007-2013 Alcotra operational programme and of the “Plans Intégrés Thématiques (PITEM) et Territoriaux (PITER)” has enabled the intensification and strengthening of this cooperation. In order to provide a stable legal framework for these activities, the two parks formed a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) in 2013.

Cross-border bid to become a UNESCO world heritage site

The bid by the French-Italian cross-border area “Maritime-Mercantour” to be included on UNESCO’s World Heritage List was made in November 2013 and got officially submitted in February 2018. An area of 200,000 hectares could therefore be protected by this global recognition which would make it possible to “further promote the protection of the cross-border ecosystem”.

Mercantour NP (National Geographic)

Marking its 40th anniversary last year, Mercantour is one of France’s 10 national parks. “[Its] geography is extraordinary and represents 300 million years of history,” says park director Christophe Viret. “If this park hadn’t been created, it’s likely these wild mountains would’ve been converted into ski resorts,” says Viret. “Today, everyone realizes [the park] is a very good thing, because of the development of high-quality ecotourism, which benefits the park’s inhabitants.”



Cheese making near Madone de Fenestre (1903 m) **Mercantour NP**



*I met Graeme for the first time in Melbourne in 1995, together with my "twin colleague" from **Mercantour** Marie Odile Guth, at the occasion of a meeting on transboundary parks organised by Larry Hamilton, so we became members of the great "mountain family".*
*Later, when he came to Italy for an IUCN expertise, he went to visit **Alpi Marittime** nature park, and it was a pleasure to show him my region and to present him our achievements, receiving congratulations and advice.*
*I would like to express my deepest condolences to his family and to all those who like me have had the privilege to know him and to share with him a piece of his life journey. **From Patrizia Rossi Mountain SG – Italy, Europe***
Alpi marittime NP photo:peopleinature

Scree and Talus

Where does Wilderness exist in Switzerland? [European Wilderness Society \(EWS\) November](#)

The last two years brought important steps for the Wilderness movement in Switzerland. In 2019, the first Wilderness inventory of Switzerland was released. It identified Wilderness areas on impressive 17% of Switzerland. At the same time, it emphasized the pressure on these areas. Agriculture, tourism, energy production and the lack of acceptance all threaten remaining Wilderness areas.

Surveyors climb Mt Everest: so just how high is it?

A group of eight researchers from China finally summited Mount Everest in late May. One of only two climbing teams on the mountain this year, they were there for a very specific purpose—to take the most accurate measurement to date of the world’s tallest point.

The COVID-19 pandemic nixed the spring climbing season before it got started. China cancelled foreign climbing permits from the Tibet side of the mountain in March, and Nepal followed suit for the south side of the peak a day later. However, as China began to control the spread of the disease, the government allowed two groups to make the climb: the surveyors and a commercial expedition run by Chinese outfitter.



Vjosa National Park, Albania [European Wilderness Society \(EWS\) October](#)

The last European wild rivers are under increasing threat, due to inadequate or complete lack of protection, traditional use or the pressure to produce green energy. However, September 25 marks a day of success for one of the last pristine rivers in the Balkans. The President of Albania, officially spoke up to promote the establishment of a national park along the Vjosa river, one of the last wild rivers in Europe. The Prime Minister also announced to the media his support to the **Vjosa National Park** and that the Kalivaç hydropower plans (large dam project with a 50m dam) have been officially rejected by the Minister for Environment.



President Trump’s parting gestures! [From The Guardian November](#)

For years, Native American tribes in Arizona have sought to block a new copper mine on land they consider sacred. They now fear they are losing the struggle in the last months of the Trump administration. Officials have embarked on a rushed effort to transfer ownership of **Oak Flat** to a mining company with ties to the destruction of an Aboriginal site in Australia. Reporter, Annette McGivney, saw records indicating that the directive came from the “highest level” of a key federal agency.

As the Trump era comes to a close, officials are attempting to finalize a range of environmentally destructive projects, including opening the Arctic national wildlife refuge to oil and gas drilling and rolling back protections on endangered gray wolves.

Action for Snow Leopards

The number of snow leopards in the wild is decreasing mostly due to habitat loss, poaching, and the impacts of climate change. Due to unsustainable forms of hunting, it is losing its main prey – ungulates, such as Siberian Ibex or Argali. At the same time, the human-wildlife conflict is intensifying. Increased community engagement in the conservation of snow leopards might result in an increase in their safety and numbers. [Learn more](#) about the IUCN Save Our Species snow leopard conservation activities in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan.



Back from the dead: race to save 65 million-year-old fish [From Calin Dejeu WCPA CCSG](#)

On a tiny stretch of the fast-flowing Valsan river in mountains of Romania lives one of the rarest fish in Europe, and quite possibly the world. It was only recently proved that the fish *Romanichthys valsanicola* still exists, but remains on the brink of extinction. The main threat is a dam upstream, representing a secondary water intake for a hydropower plant. Unfortunately the Romanian authorities will not consider stopping the water intake at this dam on Vâlsan River. Read whole article [Ancient Fish BBC News](#)

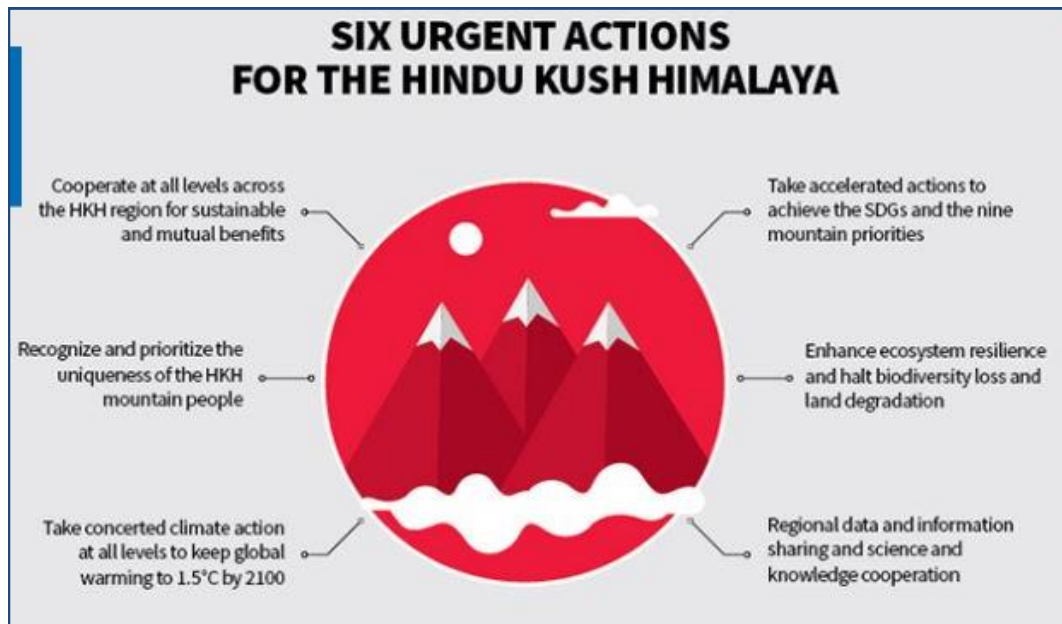


Scree and Talus cont.

ICIMODs new Director General & Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) Ministerial Mountain Summit 2020

From ICIMOD November

Dr Gyamtsho is the first Director General of ICIMOD who hails from the region. He brings to the position a deep passion for the people of the HKH and a commitment to help address the challenges across the diversity of the region's mountain environments...he seeks to build on the institution's strengths and successes in its role as a convener and facilitator for regional cooperation. To this end, the timing of the start of his tenure during the recent HKH **Ministerial Mountain Summit** bringing together Ministers from all eight of the HKH countries is significant. Having signed a joint ministerial declaration, the Ministers agreed to promote a united voice for the region, to strengthen regional cooperation, to enhance uptake of scientific evidence, and to explore the potential for a high-level institutional mechanism.



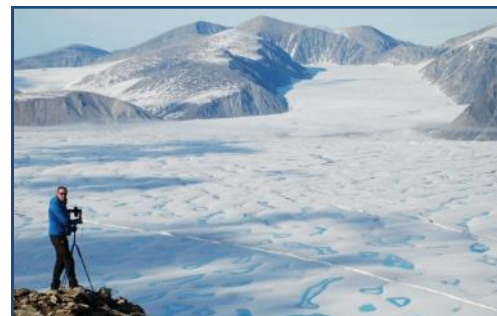
Dr Gyamtsho is eager to move forward the HKH Call to Action which was at the heart of the ministerial declaration. The Call to Action is a culmination of a series of science-policy dialogues where policymakers in all eight HKH countries discussed the findings of the recently released comprehensive assessment, the Hindu Kush Himalaya assessment: mountains, climate change, sustainability and people.

Milne ice shelf, Canada

From Guardian Canada September

In August, Adrienne White – an ice analyst at the Canadian Ice Service who monitors the Canadian Arctic for changes in sea ice – was reviewing satellite imagery when she spotted something remarkable. The enormous Milne ice shelf was dissolving. Milne ice shelf was the last intact ice shelf in Canada and which White had studied closely before as a PhD student.

A huge chunk, roughly 43% of the shelf, broke off in one piece. And as it collapsed into the ocean, it took with it much of the equipment her former colleagues had left there.



Taking a photo of fractures in the Milne ice shelf. Photo: Adrienne White

1.5 degree warming limit by 2024

The Conversation September 2020

One of the rare upsides to the COVID-19 pandemic has been a dramatic fall in carbon dioxide emissions, as billions of people stayed at home and economies slowed. Was this, some people wondered, the turning point on climate action the world desperately needs?

Unfortunately, the answer is clearly no. In fact, as CSIRO's Pep Canadell and Stanford University's Rob Jackson write today, Earth may temporarily hit the dangerous 1.5°C warming limit by 2024, according to a major new report by the World Meteorological Organisation.

Scree and Talus cont.

Mountain flower evolved to be less visible—to humans!

From The Guardian November

For thousands of years, the dainty *Fritillaria delavayi* has grown slowly on the rocky slopes of the **Hengduan mountains**, China, producing a bright green flower after its fifth year.

But the conspicuous small plant has one deadly enemy: people, who harvest the flower for traditional Chinese medicine.

As commercial harvesting has intensified, *Fritillaria delavayi* has vanished – by rapidly evolving to produce grey and brown leaves and flowers that cannot be so easily seen by pickers.

Many plants seem to use camouflage to hide from herbivores that may eat them – but here we see camouflage evolving in response to human collectors.



Fritillaria delavayi in a population with low (left) and high harvest pressure photo: Yang Niu

Mount Everest: littered with oxygen canisters, bodies and microplastics

ABC Science news November

Scientists studying plastic pollution on Mount Everest have discovered microplastics as high as 8,440 m, just 400m below the peak. This is the first time researchers have looked at microplastics on the mountain, and they were surprised to find them at such high altitudes. The results of their study are published in [One Earth](#).

Because of the types of materials found, the researchers suspect the sources are the clothing and equipment of the climbers. However, because microplastics are able to be carried on the wind and in the atmosphere, this also can't be ruled out as a source.

The issue with microplastics is that they are typically more difficult to remove from the environment than larger scale waste. Although individually small in size, they undergo what is called bioaccumulation (contaminant builds up over time in an organism) in the environment — especially in aquatic animals that accidentally eat them. Where microplastics are present in snowmelt, they're likely to enter freshwater river systems and Mount Everest is the source of [a lot of] freshwater downstream. It would be interesting to know how far down the river this travels.

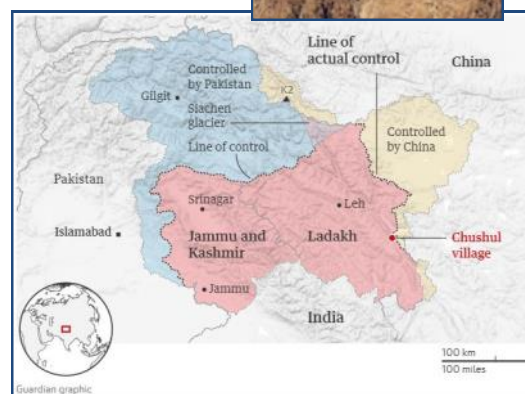
Villagers help Indian troops face Chinese forces in Himalayas

From The Guardian September

At an altitude of almost 3,000m the villagers make their way across the bleak and unforgiving territory of the Indian state of **Ladakh**. With unwieldy and overstuffed duffel bags, rice sacks, heavy fuel cans and bamboo canes strapped to their backs, they trudge upwards to a Himalayan mountain peak known as Black Top, where hundreds of Indian army tents are stationed on the horizon.

Since May, Indian and Chinese troops have been engaged in an increasingly aggressive dispute over their poorly demarcated Himalayan boundary, known as the line of actual control (LAC). In June, the situation escalated into a violent, high-altitude clash between the two sides, the worst for more than four decades.

At a Moscow meeting in September, the defence ministers of India and China released a joint statement agreeing to “disengage as soon as possible” along their border. It followed many rounds of high-level military negotiations but, according to the villagers, there is little evidence of disengagement on the ground.



New Zealand's Southern Alps glacier melt has doubled Science Reports University of Leeds August

Glaciers in the Southern Alps of New Zealand have lost more ice mass since pre-industrial times than remains today, according to a new study. The study mapped Southern Alps ice loss from the end of the Little Ice Age -- roughly 400 years ago -- to 2019. It found that relative to recent decades, the Southern Alps lost up to 77% of their total Little Ice Age glacier volume.

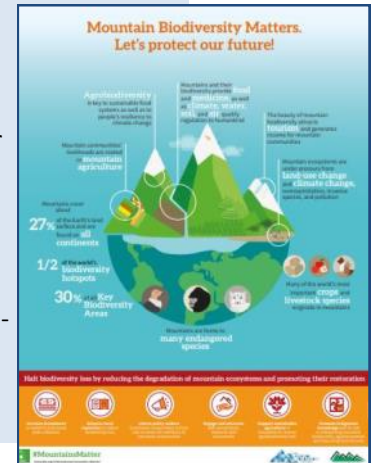
Tools, Publications and other Media

International Mountain Day 11 December

Did you know that half of the world's biodiversity hotspots are found in mountains?

Mountains are home to an extraordinary range of plants and animals, from endangered mountain gorillas, snow leopards and condors to rare and strikingly beautiful plants such as orchids and lobelias. Many of the world's most important crops and livestock species also originate in mountains, including potatoes, apples, tomatoes, alpacas, yaks and goats. At the same time, mountain ecosystems and their biodiversity provide us with many goods and services, such as food and medicine, climate and air quality regulation, and attractive landscapes for tourism.

'**Mountain Biodiversity Matters**' will promote dialogue and cooperation on solutions for halting the loss of mountain biodiversity, protecting mountain ecosystems and improving the livelihoods of mountain peoples around the world. Mountain Partnership members around the world, including high-level speakers, youth, environmental experts, celebrities and mountain communities will share what they are doing to ensure that mountain communities are not left behind in the spirit of the UN 2030 Agenda. [Mountain Partnership Events](#)



Download [GMBA infographic](#)

A couple of important surveys:

1. The [Adaptation at Altitude programme](#) has launched a survey to collect solutions and highlight efforts on climate change adaptation in mountain environments.

The survey and database will capture and showcase key details of projects and experiences with climate change adaptation in mountains so that this work can be better replicated, scaled and built upon for the benefit of mountain communities and those affected by climate change impacts on mountain environments.

If you have solutions to share click on [Climate Change Adaptation in Mountains theme](#) on weADAPT. The first round of solutions will be collected by the end of the year 2020.

2. From [Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment \(GMBA\)](#)

Do you live or work in mountains and work on regional or sustainable development? Colleagues at the University of Bern invite you to participate in an online survey about sustainable development in mountain regions. The survey applies the Q methodology to collect stakeholder perspectives on which Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) should be prioritized to successfully implement the full SDG agenda in mountains and investigates the role of protected and conserved areas for sustainable development. Take the survey until 15 December in [English](#), [French](#), [German](#), [Spanish](#), [Arabic](#), [Russian](#), or [Chinese](#).

Several interesting conference / workshop reports:

One Health From World Conservation Society (WCS)

In late November the German Federal Foreign Office & WCS co-hosted "*One Planet, One Health, One Future: Moving forward in a post-COVID19 world.*" The One Health approach acknowledges the interconnectedness of human, animal, and ecosystem health. COVID-19 provides an unfortunate but essential opportunity to demonstrate the fundamental importance of the One Health approach, and make connections with important biodiversity targets. WCS issued a report on [ONE HEALTH IN ACTION](#).



From WCPA Connectivity Conservation SG

Nearly one year ago, the specialist group partnered with the BearConnect Project Research Consortium and the Center for Large Landscape Conservation to convene the **Connectivity Conservation Workshop: Guiding the Carpathian Region** in Romania. On behalf of all partners and participants, we are happy to announce that the [final report is now available online](#).

From Nukal Chettri ICIMOD

[Global Landscape Forum Biodiversity Digital Conference on 'One World One Health' and 'The Hindu Kush Himalayan Call for Action: Maintaining the 'Pulse of the Planet'](#) The first Hindu Kush Himalaya Ministerial Mountain Summit 15 October 2020

Sparking change in mountain biodiversity through youth From Peak to Peak October

A panel of seven youth mountain champions from around the world addressed sustainable mountain development and biodiversity conservation during a web dialogue organised by the Mountain Partnership. Each coming from different sectors and backgrounds, the panellists shared their unique experiences and innovative solutions [Read more](#)

From European Wilderness Society

The first *International Wilderness Week* was a success. In addition to almost 100 presenters from 30 countries from all continents more than to 300 active wilderness advocates participated in person, reaching thousands of people on social media and our website. [Read the Recap of the 1st International Wilderness Week](#)

Tools, Publications and other Media

The International Land Conservation Network (a project of the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy) - United Nations Development Programme has published a report entitled, "International Outlook for Privately Protected Areas." <https://www.landconservationnetwork.org/summary-report>



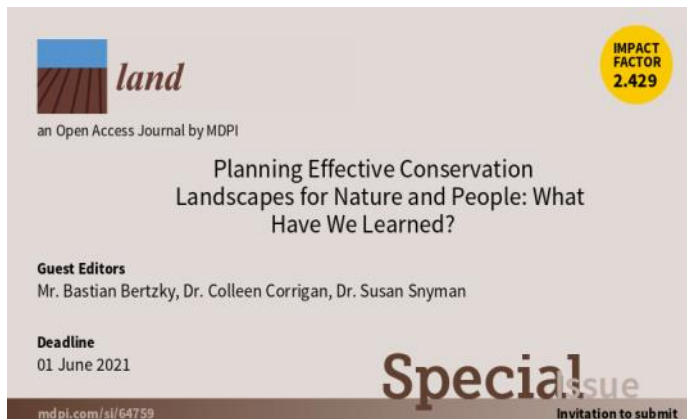
The latest issue of the *International Journal of Geoheritage and Parks* has a series of excellent articles on geological heritage and its management including an article by Graeme Worboys and his Korean colleague Kyung-Sik Woo on monitoring geo sites. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/international-journal-of-geoheritage-and-parks/vol/7/issue/4>

Management of Conservation Areas: Your Career for Our Future

The demand for highly-skilled conservation experts is growing. The international master programme, Management of Conservation Areas, promotes biodiversity conservation and regional sustainable development in Europe and worldwide by educating and training (future) managers of conservation areas. The master programme is part of the UNESCO Chair for the Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas (MCA). Further information: www.cuas.at/mca



The Carinthia University of Applied Sciences and E.C.O. Institute of Ecology



This special issue aims to review what has and hasn't worked in planning, implementing, and financing functioning conservation landscapes that deliver both measurable conservation outcomes and critical goods and services for the local people that depend on them. This provides an opportunity to IUCN WCPA members to share relevant experiences in the use of a wide range of instruments.

Mapping human wildlife conflict hotspots in a transboundary landscape, Eastern Himalaya. *Global Ecology and Conservation*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gecco.2020.e01284> The significance of the paper is ICIMOD have 15 co-authors representing partners from Bhutan, India and Nepal along with team from ICIMOD.

3 Wilderness documentaries recommended EWS International Wilderness Week

"The Wolf Mountains" produced by the Arolla Film company is depicting the most undisturbed natural places of Slovakia.
"The Ancient Woods" produced by Mindaugas Survila is capturing life in one of the last remaining old growth forests in Lithuania.
"The Meaning of Wild" is a beautiful Wilderness documentary taking its viewers to one of the wildest landscapes of our planet – Tongass National Forest of Alaska. This half-hour documentary follows wildlife movie maker Ben Hamilton through his wild adventure.

WCS News "Saving the Symbol of the Andes: A Range Wide Conservation Priority Setting Exercise for the Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*)."
[Read the Publication](#)

[11 December | Mountains High - Adventure for Climate Action!](#)

How do mountains inspire climate action? On International Mountain Day 2020, join this inspiring virtual conversation that brings together outdoor and nature enthusiasts with experts from the UN and science to discuss the effects of climate change on mountains and the power of sports for climate action.



Looking for more Mountain Research? Try [Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment \(GMBA\)](#), [Mountain Research Initiative](#), [ICIMOD](#) and [Mountain Partnership](#)—to mention a few!

Important links

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas for an outline of the role of Mountain Specialist Group [IUCN WCPA Mountains](#) and [Mountain UPDATE](#)

Protected Area Governance and Management (book) [Management Book ANU Press](#)

The Mountain Partnership is a United Nations voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain peoples and protecting mountain environments around the world. [Mountain Partnership](#)

WCPA Mountain Specialist Group Committee		
Executive Committee	Name	Email
Chair	Peter Jacobs	Buffalo_springs@bigpond.com
	Patrizia Rossi	patriziarossi.rossi@gmail.com
	Mike Tollefson	miketollefson1@gmail.com
	Fausto Sarmiento	fsarmien@uga.edu
Editor Mountain Update	Gillian Anderson	peopleinnature@bigpond.com
WCPA Regional Representatives	Name	Email
Southern Africa (Eastern & Southern)	Clinton Carbutt	Clinton.Carbutt@kznwildlife.com
West and Central Africa	Sonigitu Ekpe	sonigitu.ekpe@graduateinstitute.ch
North Africa, West Asia & Middle East	Dawud M.H. Al-Eisawi	aleisawi.d@gmail.com
East Asia	Chaozhi Zhang	zhchzhi@mail.sysu.edu.cn
North Eurasia (Central Asia)	Marc Foggin	marc.foggin@gmail.com
Oceania	Shane Orchard	orchard.dse@gmail.com
South America	Matias Ayarragaray	matiasayarra@gmail.com
South Asia (Pakistan)	Ashiq Ahmad Khan	ashiqahmad@gmail.com
South Asia	Pradeep Mehta	pmehtanainital@gmail.com
South Asia	Ruchi Badola	ruchi@wii.gov.in
Europe (Austria)	Michael Jungmeier	jungmeier@e-c-o.at
Europe (eastern)	Oğuz Kurdoğlu	oguzkurdoglu@gmail.com
North America	Erik Beever	ebeever10@gmail.com
Central America—Caribbean	Rolando Ramirez	rolandorami2010@gmail.com
Young Professional Group	Shailyn Drukis	shailyn.drukis@gmail.com

While Mountain Network members can choose not to be WCPA members and still be involved and receive the Mountain UPDATE, the WCPA Chair Dr Kathy MacKinnon, and Mountain Specialist Group Executive would like to encourage all to become WCPA members. This helps to secure good governance and management of the WCPA and the Mountains Group and enlightens all members to the wider activities of the WCPA.

To learn more about WCPA membership go to: [Get involved - World Commission on Protected Areas | IUCN www.iucn.org > commissions > get-involved](#)

For any relevant mountain protected area news, please email me (Gill) on peopleinnature@bigpond.com

I look forward to hearing from you soon!