

Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE

No. 93 March 2017



New Zealand Southern Alps – Julie Hollow 2017

Note from the editor

Welcome everyone to the 2017 March issue of the Mountains UPDATE.

As the last UPDATE was completely dedicated to Larry Hamilton, his life and mountain conservation work, this edition is going to be a bit of a 'catch up'.

We will look at some events of the last 6 months and of course a range of other interesting articles submitted by various Mountain enthusiasts and experts.

And again the recurring theme of the importance of sustainable mountain development and the necessity to work closely with indigenous and local communities on co-management of protected areas to ensure the best chance of successful outcomes.

*water is the driving
force of all nature*

Leonardo da Vinci

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WCPA Mountain Specialist Group Committee:

- Peter Jacobs (Chair)
- Patrizia Rossi
- Fausto Sarmiento
- Mike Tollefson
- Linda McMillan
- Gill Anderson (Mountain UPDATE Editor)

WCPA Mountains Senior Advisor:

- Graeme Worboys

**Mountain UPDATE is a quarterly newsletter
distributed to members of our Mountain
Protected Areas Network**

New Members

Welcome to a number of new members starting with a group of dedicated individuals from around the world and various backgrounds and organisations that attended IUCN WCC and/or the Mountains Knowledge Café.

Allison Pritchard, Brendan Mackey, Rene Beyers, Brian MacSharry, Ferdosusi Begum, Doug Humann, Rishi Shah, Irina Onufrenya, Ken Cline, Mead Krosby, Nasser Al Zawideh, Phil Pegler, Sanjeev Poudel, Saurav Shrestha, Shalini Dhyani, Sebastian Herzog, Stuart Butchart, Susan Poats, Toni Lyn Morelli, Tatiana Akimova, Sonam Wangchuk, and Masahito Yoshida.

Ricardo Fahrig from Albania (and Germany) a great mountain and transboundary enthusiast

I have attempted to put Network *member names* in italics throughout the UPDATE.

From *People and Mountains* around the World:

Global

Where to from here? A note on Mountains at the IUCN World Conservation Congress (WCC) Hawai'i

From *Peter Jacobs*: Chair: IUCN/WCPA Mountains Specialist Group

The “**Mountains Protected Areas: Leadership for adapting to a changing world**” Knowledge Café was held at the WCC in September 2016 and although now many months ago the outcomes are ongoing.

The session was extremely well attended to the point it overcrowded the space available. Nevertheless the conversation was lively and informative and could have continued for longer.

The first part of the session presented and discussed global maps of Key Biodiversity Areas in Mountains that are not formally protected and how they may be prioritised for action. Based on that discussion, the next step for the **WCPA Mountains Specialist Group** is to draft a set of criteria and a process to strategically prioritise the KBA's, to produce a smaller list realistic for onground validation by regional experts. The second part of the session discussed climate change in the Alpine Belt. The connection of resistance, resilience and adapting to climate futures in alpine areas to the importance of refugia and mountain protected areas was re-enforced. The connection between these two projects emerged strongly.

The collaboration so far with UNEP WCMC has been tremendous and I hope we can keep up that momentum. They look forward to seeing some onground expert validation supporting their data, which hopefully the Mountains Specialist Group can facilitate through the network. We also had some fruitful discussions with the FAO Mountains Partnership and others. I hope everyone who participated in the Knowledge Café will continue to contribute to this project as well as other interested members of the Mountains network, I will send drafts for comment as they are developed.

The Mountains Dinner at the WCC was well attended with about 30 gathering in a lovely setting on the waterfront at Waikiki. *Jim Juvik* kindly hosted it. There were tributes to both the late Larry Hamilton and *Graeme Worboys* and of course the Mountains Quiz, developed by Larry and added to by Jim and won by *Harvey Locke*.

The WCPA Mountains Specialist Group is looking at expanding the committee to have representatives from each WCPA region, which will also help greatly with the mountain protected areas project. We will call for EOI's in 2017, however in the meantime if you are interested please contact Peter on buffalo_springs@bigpond.com



Peter Jacobs at WCC Hawai'i – talking mountains

World Mountain Forum call to action – “don’t leave mountains behind”

From Mountain Partnership News - Catherine Benson, International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD) October 2016

The 2016 World Mountain Forum (WMF) provided a platform to discuss sustainable mountain development (SMD) in the context of the Paris Agreement on climate change and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Over 250 participants attended the WMF, which took place from 17-20 October 2016, in Mbale, Uganda, under the theme ‘Mountains for our Future.’ The Forum was preceded by A Special Africa Mountains Event, which highlighted key issues affecting mountain ecosystems and communities in Africa, including poverty, climate change, food insecurity and land degradation.

On mountain communities and livelihoods, participants observed that mountain regions “fare very badly” in relation to priority SDGs concerning ending poverty and hunger, and highlighted that mountain regions suffer a backlog in development, yet face increasing demands for their ecosystem goods and services, including water, minerals, biodiversity and scenic value for tourism.

On mountains and climate change, participants addressed how to, inter alia: cope with extreme weather impacts; establish proactive early-warning systems; and strengthen indigenous mountain community voices at local, national and international levels.

On mountain ecosystem services, participants described various ecosystem functions, including regulatory and provisional ecosystem services, and called for payments for ecosystem services (PES) to reach local communities.

On sustainable mountain agriculture, participants commented on the importance of: plant diversity in mountain agriculture due to the risks posed by climate change to monocultures; and strong institutions to maintaining traditional knowledge on agriculture in indigenous communities.

Summary report: go to <http://wmf.mtnforum.org/uploads/WMF16>

Hands Across Borders...at the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park

Andrew Nixon, past Australian Alps national parks Program Manager (2013-2016) attended the Hands Across Borders - International Workshop on Transboundary Conservation, September 2016 at Glacier National Park - Montana, USA and provided the following insights.

The workshop was a gathering of protected area agency managers, researchers and academics that collectively come together as the WCPA’s Transboundary Specialist Group. This WCPA group has worked cooperatively for many years in support of trans-boundary initiatives. The geographic coverage of the group had its genesis around the mountain borders of neighbour nations but now covers a significant array of border landscape types (even marine borders!). Its work has included expert advice, guidance, and the development of tools for in-country use and application. The workshop was arranged to be a celebration of the United States National Parks Service centenary 1916-2016; the anniversary of the first International Peace Park establishment - Glacier NP (USA) and Waterton Lakes NP (Canada); and the launch of the Trans-Boundary specialist group’s new publication ‘Transboundary Conservation: A Systematic Approach’.



Hiking Glacier NP (Photo: B Hamilton)

A few key points were:

- The workshop demonstrated the values in a strongly engaged network of stakeholder organisations supporting the objectives of the trans-boundary principles and actions;
- Challenging as it may be the global trans-boundary evidence of working with indigenous communities / traditional owners is an essential part of the success of a TBC program;
- Financial sustainability is an ever present challenge. The importance of financial commitment made by regional partnerships and institutions is common to successful TBC programs; and

- The engagement of young people in TB conservation is now and will into the future be vital for continued success.

All the workshop materials are now ready for downloading, including the final report, presentations, profiles of transboundary initiatives etc. Please take a look at the news here <http://www.tbpa.net/news> and follow the provided link from there.

International Sustainable Summits 2016

From **Dave Bamford** Conference co - coordinator

In August 2016 New Zealand hosted a successful international Sustainable Summits conference at **Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park**. (<http://sustainable-summits.com/>). The conference built on the successful previous Sustainable Summits conferences in the USA in 2009 and 2014, which were led by the US Park Service and Alpine Club.

The next conference is to be hosted in Chamonix, France in June 2018.

The conference focused on practical solutions around the core themes:

- **Environmental Impacts** - human waste, water contamination, noise from helicopters and other machines, tracks and erosion, huts, bridges and tracks – visual impacts
- **Natural Hazards** - large rockfall (e.g. South Face of Aoraki / Mount Cook 2014), ice recession and unstable geology, avalanches, adverse weather conditions, floods, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions
- **Social Impacts / Cultural Values** - pressures on popular mountain routes – increasing numbers, out-of-season use of tracks, hut and track development, commercialism in the mountains, influences of social media, cultural awareness and visitor implications, Tōpuni areas (sacred), water protection.



Conference field trip (photo: D Bamford)

30 speakers from Borneo, Europe, USA, Nepal, Canada, Australia and New Zealand focused on the themes via presentations, panel discussions and field trips, sharing practical insights into the core issues.

The conference was fully subscribed with over 100 attendees from a wide range of organisations. There were 24 international representatives from Asia, Australia, America and Europe.

Big take home messages from the conference included:

- the increasing importance of the mountains to iwi (maori) and mountain users from a spiritual perspective;
- the long-term negative environmental impacts of human waste in the mountains – faeces lives for years – even in glaciers;
- the Southern Alps land forms are collapsing, and the glaciers are retreating and these factors significantly impact on the future management of the mountains. This issue is particularly relevant to the NZ Alpine National Parks;
- climate change, geological change, earthquake risks and rockfall hazards are affecting the viability of mountain hut sites and it is likely to get worse. Portable huts may need to be considered;
- the significance of mass tourism and its effects on mountain lands and the need for proactive management. i.e. Tongariro Alpine Crossing North Island NZ

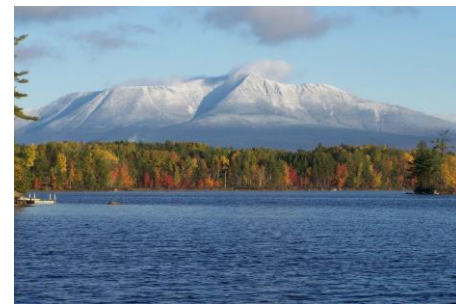


Tongariro Crossing – Tongariro NP, NZ

America

New Mountain National Monument in Maine, USA

Last August President Obama declared 87,500 acres (35,500 ha) of land donated by the Roxanne Quimby family as **Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument**. This large parcel nestles close to Maine's iconic **Mount Katahdin** (1,605 m), one time terminus for the well-known and used Appalachian Trail (now extended north and across Canadian border to Gaspé).



Mount Katahdin (Photo: Wikipedia)

For several years Ms Quimby has offered to give land to create a Maine Woods National Park but this would take an act of Congress, and they are uninterested. This monument increases the effective size of the adjoining Baxter State Park, established in 1931, which includes Mount Katahdin in its more than 209,000 acres.

In addition, the Quimby family donated roughly 100 acres (41 ha) of key private lands to be added to Acadia National Park. All of this is a great legacy to give to the American people and to visitors from all over the world.

A backdown...but what is in store under President Trump?

Recently Republican congressmen from Utah have been fighting to open Ute tribal land, currently partially protected by the **Bears Ears National Monument**, to drilling. This is despite the tribe's opposition and sustained protests from conservationists.

Devaluing federal land has involved introducing legislation against national lands and proposals to eliminate the 1906 Antiquities Act.

A change of heart though has occurred due mainly to the opposition from hunting and fishing groups.

A Field Guide answering simple but relevant questions...in the páramo

From MRI blog posted by Giova Mosquera, February 2 2017

In the field guide you will be taken through two Ecohydrological Observatories in the páramo, where enthusiastic and motivated young researchers have overcome the struggles of the environmental conditions in these sites located at the top of the **Andean mountain range** to discover its most hidden secrets.

How much does it rain in the páramo? How does elevation influence climate in the Andean Highlands? How much do soils and vegetation evapotranspire? What is the origin, age and fate of water in the páramo? And more.

Read through the guide and be transported to magical sites. Keep following the work conducted in these two observatories at the top of the Andes; as knowledge that allows further understanding of the secrets of this ecosystem towards its improved management and conservation is produced.

This guide was built and provided to the attendees of an AGU Chapman Conference focused on "Emerging Issues in Tropical Ecohydrology", held in Cuenca, Ecuador in June 2016.

Download the [Field guide](#) here, Visit the [iDRHICA research gate](#)

Under the *Antiquities Act* many conservation-minded Presidents have circumvented Congress by declaring an area a National Monument, many of which subsequently became National Parks. This has allowed presidents since Theodore Roosevelt to designate 129 national monuments.



Field visit to the grasslands of the Zuruca River (Photo credit: iDRHICA)

Africa

Christmas in the Congo – a new protected area

More important news from Network member **Andrew Plumptre** of Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) Albertine Rift Program - taken from WCS News article

Kabobo Natural Reserve, established in December 2016, conserves 1,477 square kilometres of montane rainforest and biodiverse savanna woodland. Together with the adjacent **Ngandja Reserve**, which was established in June 2016, these protected areas conserve the largest forest and water catchment on Lake Tanganyika.

Unique animal and plant species

The forest with the adjacent Ngandja Reserve and Luama Katanga Reserve is estimated to contain at least 2,500 chimpanzees as well as hippopotamus, elephants, and lions.

“There are at least 34 globally threatened species and 110 species endemic to the Albertine Rift region, Africa’s most biodiverse ecoregion on the border of DRC, Tanzania, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda,” stated Dr *Andy Plumptre*, WCS Senior Scientist who was involved with the surveys of Kabobo.

“This site conserves a critical part of the Albertine Rift region and forms one of the most biodiverse and important areas for conservation in Africa” – Andy Plumptre, WCS Senior Scientist

Unique co-management approach

The options for conserving the massif were presented to elders from every village including indigenous people such as the Batwa pygmies, during which it was agreed that protected areas would be established in South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces to ensure the conservation of the massif.

Participatory mapping processes were subsequently made with each village to agree on where the limits of a protected area should be established and these have subsequently been protected by these people as the long process for formal establishment of a protected area took place.

Today, these communities and local government structures have formed a governance committee to participate in the co-management of the new reserve. This co-management will help ensure sustainable resource use and community participation in conservation.

Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)

MISSION: WCS saves wildlife and wild places worldwide through science, conservation action, education, and inspiring people to value nature. WCS, based at the Bronx Zoo, harnesses the power of its Global Conservation Program in nearly 60 nations and in all the world’s oceans and its five wildlife parks in New York City. WCS combines its expertise in the field, zoos, and aquarium to achieve its conservation mission. Visit: www.newsroom.wcs.org



New Zealand

Tongariro National Park Defined By Maori Sacred Markers

From THE IUCN WCPA OCEANIA Newsletter No. 6 2016

The boundaries of New Zealand's oldest national park, **Tongariro National Park** in the Central North Island are being marked with traditional Maori symbols in what is being described as an historic moment for Maoridom.

The area of the park was given to the people of New Zealand in 1887 by then paramount Ngati, Tuwharetoa chief Te Heuheu Tukino IV.

Soon the park will feature two **pou whenua** at each of its five entrances and two at the entrance to Whakapapa Village. Pou whenua are carved wooden posts used by Maori to mark territorial boundaries or places of significance. They are generally artistically and elaborately carved and can be found throughout New Zealand.

A newly opened cultural hub featuring carvers and other artists will be a place for visitors to learn and hear about the significance of the area while also offering them the chance to buy locally made art pieces.

The move follows over 20 years of planning by Whakapapa Village's Shane Isherwood who, upon seeing the lack of respect some visitors show for the area, knew something had to be done. He wanted visitors to understand they were in this sacred area.



Tongariro National Park, New Zealand

Central Asia – Himalayas

Congratulations to Ashiq Ahmad Khan!

At the IUCN Congress in Hawaii Network member *Ashiq Ahmad Khan* received the Kenton Miller Award.

Ashiq Ahmad Khan received the Kenton Miller Award for Innovation in Protected Area Management for achieving a more secure and sustainable management of **Khunjerab National Park** in Pakistan.

Ashiq was one of the first protected area managers in the region to promote co-management with local communities.

Sharing the responsibility with local stakeholders, *Ashiq Ahmad Khan* has succeeded to conserve wildlife and ecosystems, within and beyond the Park. His success has led other park managers to replicate this co-management model, which has become a key component of Pakistan's national strategy for conserving biodiversity.

Read the article: <https://www.iucn.org/news/ashiq-ahmad-khan-wins-kenton-miller-award-2016>



Kenton Miller Award Programme

This program recognizes and promotes innovative approaches to conservation and ecosystem protection. Named for the late Dr Kenton R. Miller, an outstanding global leader in protected area conservation and management.

Minglig Sar, Khunjerab NP & Marco Polo Sheep...

In early February 2017 new Network member *Ricardo* returned from a trip to Pakistan and the first successful international winter ascent to Minglig Sar (6050m). So as editor I thought it worthy of investigating the mountain a little further...and found the mountain must be in the Khunjerab National Park.

Located at a height of over 4000m and along the famous Karakoram Highway (KKH) and near the Kunjrab Pass, **Khunjerab National Park** is Pakistan's third largest National Park.

The Park consists of three different valleys: Khunjerab (through which the KKH passes), Ghujerab and the remote Shimshal valley where Minglig Sar is located.

At 3,000m the village of Shimshal is the highest settlement in Hunza Valley of Pakistan. The valley is situated in one of the remotest part of North Pakistan Karakorum Range. Shimshal Lake sits at the base of the mountain near the historical Shimshal Pass (4735m) the route of Hunza raiders on trade caravans traveling over the Karakoram Pass between China and India in ancient times.

Khunjerab National Park was declared in 1975 predominantly to protect the Marco Polo sheep from summer grazing disturbance by domestic livestock and hunting. However imposing strict rules and banning grazing without the support of local communities created serious conflict between park management and local people.

Thanks to the work of *Ashiq Ahmad Khan* and others, visitors can now view plenty of wildlife from the main KKH. Ibex can easily be seen grazing on distant ridges, Golden Marmots play alongside the road and sometimes even a brown bear can be spotted.

Treks may reward visitors with a close-up view of a herd of Marco Polo Sheep. Estimates indicate there are around 1000 Ibex, 300 Blue Sheep, 60 Marco Polo Sheep, and a handful of Brown bears and Snow Leopards (which have been spotted) living in the park. Since these animals tend to migrate across the border, these numbers are not accurate.



The Marco Polo Sheep's "trophy" sells for as much as \$60,000 and this rare animal was hunted to near extinction. The building of the KKH also disturbed wildlife and opened access to hunting.

Marco Polo Sheep is recognized by the very long outward curving horns, developed in the mature males. An aged ram is very impressive and majestic, mainly because of massive spiralling horns which can span a man's outstretched arms and almost twice the height and size of most other wild or domestic sheep.



The Khunjerab National Park has the potential to develop into one of the world's foremost national parks. There is a plan to turn it into an 'International Peace Park' with conserved areas on both sides of the border. (maybe it already is?)
From Pakistan Tourism (National Parks of Pakistan)

Land Use and Land Cover Change in Sagarmatha National Park, a World Heritage Site in the Himalayas of Eastern Nepal

From Network member *Rodney Garrard*

The paper by *Rodney Garrard*, Thomas Kohler, *Martin F. Price*, Alton C. Byers, *Ang Rita Sherpa*, and Gyanu Raja Maharjan explores climate change, glacial recession, perceptions, and mountain protected areas through a mix of satellite image analysis and local observations. Importantly, it outlines improved management that could aid local conservation and development in the Khumbu.

Study participants were asked about land use and land cover (LULC) changes that occurred during 1992–2011 in **Sagarmatha National Park**, the causes of each change, and the likely duration of its effects. This information was used to produce high-resolution maps of local perceptions of LULC change.

Satellite image analysis revealed that above 6000m there has been a **decrease** in the area covered by snow and ice and a consequent expansion of glacial lakes and areas covered by rock and soil. Between 3000 and 6000m, forest and farmland are decreasing, and areas under grazing, settlement, and shrubland are increasing.

Such LULC changes within the protected area clearly indicate the prevailing danger of land degradation. Results from the interviews and workshops suggest that people tended to detect LULC change that was acute and direct, but were less aware of slower changes that could be identified by satellite imagery analysis. Most study participants said that land use changes were a result of **rapid economic development** and the consequent pressure on natural resources, especially in the tourism industry and especially below 6000m elevation, as well as limitations to protected area management and a period of civil war.

Human influence coupled with climate change may explain the changes at higher elevations, whereas anthropogenic activities are solely responsible in lower areas.

Although much of the LULC change in SNPBZ is in the realm of nonproductive land and is affected by global factors that cannot be mitigated or influenced locally, many of the local drivers of LULC change identified in this paper—ineffective park management, insufficient limits on forest use, overgrazing, and rapid tourism development—can be addressed concretely by improved management in the park and by regional development planning involving stakeholders. The kind of integrated information presented in this paper is critical if we are to improve park management and regional planning for development.

Read the whole paper in Mountain Research & Development <http://www.bioone.org/doi/full/10.1659/MRD-JOURNAL-D-15-00005.1>

North Eurasia

A few paragraphs taken from an article by Elena Nikolaeva, WCPA Regional Vice Chair for North Eurasia. *Protecting the Planet* July 2016

North Eurasia covers very different countries – from southern Tajikistan to Russia with its eleven time zones. In general it includes countries of the former Soviet Union. The region has a diverse range of habitats, various cultural traditions, and very different conservation challenges and opportunities.

In addition to the lack of support, currently there is less than 12% of the region is protected, and PAs are distributed rather unevenly. Many fragile and valuable ecosystems still do not have a special protected status.

Another big threat is the extraction of mineral resources, oil and gas. North Eurasia countries are rich in these resources, and the conflicts of interests are rather common. Construction of pipelines often poses a threat to the integrity of protected areas. Another current challenge for mountainous PAs is the construction of ski resorts that happen in some national parks, including those that are UNESCO Heritage sites.

Hindu Kush Himalaya – adaptation in one of the fastest warming & most vulnerable regions on Earth to climate change

From ICIMOD News Kathmandu, Nepal February 2017

As the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) is one of the fastest warming and most vulnerable regions on Earth to climate change, implementing adaptation measures that target these mountains and downstream areas is crucial.

But to what extent are existing national and sectoral adaptation policies relevant to the HKH, and where can they be strengthened?

ICIMOD Workshop - 'Regional Policy Workshop on Adaptation Outlook for the Hindu Kush Himalaya,'

The workshop focused on building a foundation for assessing region-wide risk and vulnerability to climate hazards, and examining the existing adaptation policies and measures. By identifying policy gaps as well as opportunities, the findings of the workshop will provide decision makers with much-needed knowledge to meet current and future challenges from climate change and other drivers.

The ICIMOD-led assessment for the eight HKH countries focuses on the mountain range shared by over 1.3 billion people from Afghanistan to Myanmar. This assessment is the sixth in the series of Regional Mountain Adaptation Outlooks under development by UN Environment, GRID-Arendal and other regional mountain centres of excellence.

The Adaptation Outlook series uses a common methodology across global mountain regions to facilitate comparison and knowledge exchange among these groups.

The Outlook on Climate Change Adaptation in the Hindu Kush Himalaya, is proposed to launch at the 23rd session of the Conference of the Parties ([COP 23](#)) at the UN Convention on Climate Change ([UNFCCC](#)) in Bonn, Germany.

[Read more](#)

Europe

Wilderness in Europe, 2017

From *Zoltan Kun* some of European Wilderness Society key plans for 2017:

- In cooperation with Wildland Research Institute, work on advocating for the European Wilderness Convention (Resolution 17 of WILD10). We secured the support of the European Youth Centre and the Commissionaire for Educational Rights in Hungary to:
 - a) organise a special wilderness session with various European youth organisations in Hungary, and
 - b) approach the Council of Europe to discuss about the text of the European Wilderness Convention
- European Wilderness Society has started lobby work on a special European Parliament Pilot Project on wilderness. It is hoped that funding for the pilot project will be secured in the 2018 budget of the EC;
- European Wilderness Society will organise its next Wilderness Academy Days in May 2017; and
- Submit an ERASMUS+ educational proposal to the EC in aiming at developing a special wilderness curricula for current and future Natura 2000 managers in Europe.

In conclusion *Zultan* hopes they have some great achievements on wilderness issues in Europe by Wild 11 in China in 2018 – and of course so does the Mountain Network.

A boost to cross-border conservation between Albania and Montenegro

From *Aleksandra Nikodinovic*, IUCN Regional Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

National Agency for Protected Areas of Albania and Public Enterprise National Parks of Montenegro signed a cooperation agreement in December 2016 in Podgorica, deciding to enhance the cross-border cooperation in nature protection. Only the wise use of the biodiversity will guarantee the preservation of natural resources for the benefit of people in both countries.

The General Director of the National Agency of Protected Areas of Albania, Mr. Zamir Dedej emphasized that this was a positive step in the cooperation between the protected areas institutions. “There have been several attempts to increase the collaboration between two countries in the environmental field so far. We think it is time to connect the signed agreements with concrete joint action plan, that would include important stakeholders in the area, aiming to increase the results of the cooperation for the nature conservation in Shkodra/Skadar Lake and Buna/Bojana River, as well as in the mountain areas,” said Mr Dedej. [Read more](#)



Mountains of Montenegro



Mountains of Albania

And still in the Balkans...Prespa transboundary park finally ratified!

The area of **Prespa** is shared by three countries, Greece, Albania and FYROM, and the Greek part is located in Western Macedonia. Two lakes lie at an altitude of around 853m, though many of the surrounding peaks are more than 2000m.

Lake Mikri Prespa belongs to Greece, except for its southernmost tip which lies in Albania. Lake Megali Prespa is shared by the three countries, with the largest extent belonging to FYROM.

In 2000, with a joint Declaration by the Prime Ministers of the three countries, the Transboundary Prespa Park was created but not actually ratified until just recently in 2017.

The Park aims to protect the ecological values of the area through collaboration between the three states, and also to promote the economic prosperity of the local communities in the three countries.

The impression a first-time visitor gets from Prespa is of a remote, isolated place, lost in the mountains, a place at the end of the world. But Prespa is not at the end of the world, merely at the end of Greece, and actually in the heart of the Balkans.



European mountain regions face climate change

From **FAO Mountain Partnerships News 03.02.2017**

Europe's regions are facing rising sea levels and more extreme weather, such as more frequent and more intense heatwaves, flooding, droughts and storms due to climate change, according to a European Environment Agency (EEA) report published in January 2017.

Detailed in several sections are the impacts of climate change on ecosystems and communities in European mountain regions, including the Alps, the Carpathians and the Pyrenees.

The report states, "Many mountain regions are experiencing a particularly large increase in temperature, as well as reduced snow cover, loss of glacier mass, thawing of permafrost and changing precipitation patterns, including less precipitation falling as snow."

However, the impacts of climate change on mountain regions do not stop there. Loss of biodiversity, adversely affected water resources, reduced potential for winter tourism, and increased risks to infrastructure and settlements from floods, landslides and rock falls are some of the topics further discussed within these sections.

The report also highlights positive impacts of climate change: "Hydropower potential is projected to change, with positive impacts in some regions (e.g. Scandinavia) and negative impacts in others (e.g. the Alps)." Although some regions may experience some positive impacts, most regions and sectors will be negatively affected.

"Climate change will continue for many decades to come. The scale of future climate change and its impacts will depend on the effectiveness of implementing our global agreements to cut greenhouse gas emissions, but also ensuring that we have the right adaptation strategies and policies in place to reduce the risks from current and projected climate extreme." Hans Bruyninckx

The report was presented to policymakers, the press and the wider public on 24 January 2017 jointly by Hans Bruyninckx, EEA Executive Director, and Jos Delbeke, Director General for Climate Action of the European Commission.

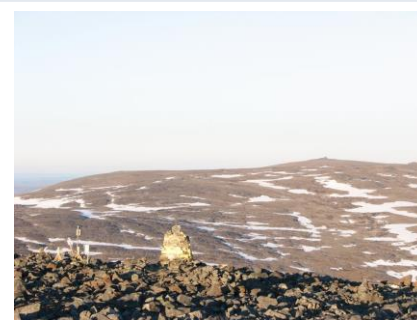
See [further information](#) on the key findings of the report "Climate Change, Impacts and Vulnerability in Europe 2016".

Norway Wants to Give Finland a Mountain

This article was provided by *Jim Thorsell* with the note “I like this idea: maybe New Zealand could give Oz (Australia) one for its next birthday”. But the editor thinks it is time Jim revisited the beautiful Australian Alps...

In 2017, Finland will celebrate 100 years of independence from Russian and Swedish rule. To honour the momentous occasion, Norway, is considering giving the country a gift just as grand—the top of a mountain.

Currently, Finland’s highest point isn’t a mountain—but the side of a mountain named Halti. Halti straddles the border between Finland and Norway, with the peak right on the Norwegian side of the border. That border point is Finland’s highest spot at 4,334 feet, but the peak doesn’t even make Norway’s top 200. Since it’s already blessed with mountainous bounty, the proposal is to move Norway’s border about 490 feet north and 600 feet east, placing Halti’s peak firmly on the Finnish side. Then Finland would have a mountain peak—and Norway would have endless goodwill with the country.



Highest point in Finland and the border with Norway

Despite what seems like overwhelming support for the proposal, not everyone agrees that the move is appropriate. While no one lives on the small section of land to be gifted, the Sami (a people indigenous to the Arctic Circle) let their reindeer freely cross the border—and that community thinks that if anyone is recognized as the owner of the mountain, it should be them.

“I think it represents a colonial understanding, a conqueror mentality that I oppose,” Aili Keskitalo, president of the Sami Parliament of Norway, “I think it is absurd to think that you can give away something you don’t own.”

Read the whole article by Jennifer Billock: http://www.smithsonianmag.com/travel/norway-finland-mountain-180960235/?utm_source=twitter.com&no-ist

Scree and Talus

A century of Zapovedniks...but what are they?

Zapovedniks are highly protected conservation areas in Russia – in fact some of the most highly protected in the world with an IUCN category rating of ‘1a’ restricting visitation.

Read the interesting National Geographic article [Look Inside Russia's Wildest Nature Reserves—Now Turning 100](#), National Geographic, January 2017

“Good Steward” Award for WCPA's Julia Miranda Londoño

Julia Miranda Londoño, Deputy Chair of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, was presented with the International Conservation Caucus Foundation’s (ICCF) “Good Steward” Award for her work as Director General of National Natural Parks of Colombia. The Colombian National Park System constitutes 59 parks, which cover 11% of the continental territory and 8.9% of the marine area. [Read more](#)



A proud Russian ‘mountain ranger’ at WCC Hawai’i



Graeme Worboys, Cathy McKinnon, Trevor Sandwith & Julia Miranda Londoño at WCC Hawai’i

And catching up on some 2016 awards...

Graeme Worboys (Mountains Specialist Group Senior Advisor) was honoured at the WCC by receiving the WCPA Fred Packard award for outstanding service to the WCPA – along with *Roger Crofts*, *Nik Lopoukhine*, *Sonam Wangchuk* and *Jon Jarvis*, *Georgina Bustamente*, and *Alessandra Vanzell-Khoury*. *Penny Figgis* received the WCPA Chair award along with *Andrej Sovinc*. Congratulations to all!

Online mountain assessment tool launched

News by *Davnah Payne*, Science Officer of the Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment Program, February 2016

The [Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment](#) (GMBA) Program of [Future Earth](#) launched a new version of the GMBA Mountain Portal on 11 December, International Mountain Day, along with the GMBA mountain inventory. The GMBA Mountain Portal is a resource developed by [Map of Life](#) that facilitates international and cross-disciplinary collaboration on the assessment, conservation and sustainable use of mountain biodiversity. It is an open source tool for all types of users, including policy makers and stakeholders as well as citizen scientists, researchers and practitioners.

The new version of the GMBA Mountain Portal allows users to explore a variety of biodiversity, topographic and bioclimatic data, and features two main tabs: a mountain explorer and a biodiversity explorer.

With just a few clicks, users can explore and download lists of mountain ranges and expected species. Downloaded data can then be used for diverse projects, ranging from mechanistic studies on the evolution and ecological drivers of mountain biodiversity to the development of indicators in sustainability research and in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) monitoring process. View the [GMBA Mountain Portal](#)

A new food label for sustainable mountain products

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) Mountain Partnership and Slow Food have introduced a voluntary product label that aims to improve market access for small, highland producers and create a premium to reward their efforts in biodiversity conservation.

<http://sd.iisd.org/news/fao-slow-food-launch-label-for-sustainable-mountain-products/>



The label provides a distinguishable brand for mountain products, such as fruit, coffee, tea and spices, from developing countries and identifies them as distinct and sustainably produced goods.

We missed it...but

A Conference took place in late February 2017 in Moshi, Tanzania. The Conference themes were "African mountain ecosystems under global change. Linking biodiversity, biotic interactions and biogeochemical ecosystem processes."

If you want to follow up contact Dr Sue Taylor, AfroMont Programme Coordinator, staylor@zoology.up.ac.za, <http://mri.scnatweb.ch/en/networks/mri-africa> or Dr Claudia Hemp, Mt Kilimanjaro project, Moshe, Tanzania, claudia.hemp@uni-wuerzburg.de

Large dam projects acknowledged as a major threat to World Heritage sites

Under the advice of IUCN, the Committee urged governments to consider such developments as incompatible with World Heritage status. <https://www.iucn.org/news/worldheritage-status-not-sparing-iconic-natural-sites-mining-and-dams>

Mountain research in Portuguese-speaking countries

Through the LuMont network, the 1st International Conference on Research for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions placed mountains and mountain research in Portuguese-speaking countries within the international research community. This was a strong contribution of the conference to the international mountain research arena since countries like Portugal, Brazil, Angola, Cape Verde or Mozambique have not traditionally been involved in international initiatives on mountain research.

As part of a broader mountain network ([the Mountain Research Initiative](#)), LuMont (Lusophony Mountain Research Network) will be directly connected to the entire mountain community, which allows for endless possibilities for cooperation in science, education and development, as well as for active participation in the definition of research and political agendas in mountain socio-ecological systems.

New MRI director

From Prof. Dr Rolf Weingartner & Prof. Dr Jörg Balsiger

Over the years many research articles and stories have come from the Mountain Research Institute (MRI) based in Switzerland – so the UPDATE would like to extend a warm welcome to their new director Dr Carolina Adler who will take office in May 2017.

Carolina's research interests and activities centre on problems of policy relevance, focusing on the effects and challenges of global change in society. Other interests include: the role of public opinion in shaping policy processes, adaptive governance, decision-making under uncertainty, systemic reviews/assessments/evaluations, adventure tourism and recreation in mountain regions, and inter- transdisciplinary collaborations.

Of interest to Network members might include her work as current President of the Mountain Protection Commission of the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (the UIAA), also based in Bern Switzerland.

Carolina earned her PhD at Monash University (Australia), focusing on climate impacts, values, vulnerability, and adaptation using policy sciences.

(UPDATE editor also attended Monash University (Australia) – about 30 years earlier!)

Call for funding proposals: Transformations to Sustainability (€13 million available for social science-led research)

From The Mountain Research Initiative (MRI)

Climate change, environmental degradation and resource pressures have created unprecedented situations for societies worldwide. What's more, low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are likely to be disproportionately affected. The slow progress on the many pressing challenges of global environmental change and global development has led to increasing emphasis, both in research and policy, on the need to go beyond the study and encouragement of incremental change.

There is a need for more fundamental transformations in the way societies interact with each other and with the natural environment. What's needed is a comprehensive and concerted research initiative that can boost research on transformations to sustainability, and catalyse new kinds of solutions to environmental and social challenges.

Outline Proposals are invited by 5 April 2017. <http://mri.scnatweb.ch> [More information](#)

New Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Ecological Monitoring

These Protected Areas Management in Africa free online courses have started but enrolments may still be possible and/or the web site of interest.

The second step of the free online training on protected areas on ecological monitoring will start in February 2017. This MOOC will be completely free (including the certificate). Following this four-module MOOC, you will acquire a good basis on what monitoring is and how it should be conducted. You can also register for the new session of the **protected area management MOOC** starting in January 2017 [here](#).

And <https://www.ualberta.ca/courses/mountains-101>

New MOOC was recently launched by Parks Canada and the University of Alberta.

From strength to strength, THE BOOK downloads continue...

From Graeme Worboys

Statistics for the IUCN Protected Area Governance and Management book have arrived from ANU Press. There have been a steady 800 to 1000 downloads per month throughout 2016, with a total of 12,008 downloads up until December 2016. When added to the 2015 figures, this means a total of 26,377 downloads since the book's launch in April 2015!

Also the first of the French translated PAGM chapters are planned to be posted on the ANU website in early 2017; Julia Miranda is organising for the PAGM book to be translated to Spanish commencing this year, and Trevor Sandwith is discussing the book's translation to Korean with the Korean Government.

From the editor; many Mountain Protected Area network members contributed to this splendid publication, so well done!

Download at <http://press.anu.edu.au/?p=312491>

Chile's public consultation on mountain policy

From FAO Mountain Partnerships news January 2017

Chile will be the first country in South America to have a national public policy on sustainable mountain development. To decide the final policy, Chile launched a public consultation process, encouraging Chilean citizens to make suggestions and help shape the government's priorities, both online and in person.

The consultation is just the first step in bringing together the multiple actors, cultures and economic activities who are stakeholders in sustainable mountain development. [Read more](#) See the [online consultation](#)

Ecosystem Engineers

From Dr Susanna Venn Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

After the **Australian Alps** Science Management Forum, Susanna was inspired to contribute a 'Hot Topic' to the Ecological Society of Australia, along with co-authors Adrienne Nicotra, James Camac and Isla Myers-Smith.

The hot topic "Climate Change: Alpine Shrubs as Ecosystem Engineers" has been published on the ESA website:

<http://www.ecolosc.org.au/hot-topics/climate-change-alpine-shrubs-ecosystem-engineers>

All current World Commission of Protected Areas (WCPA) members should have been contacted and asked to reconfirm their membership after the IUCN Congress in Hawai'i last year. It is vital if you wish to be a member in the 2017-20 quadrennial that you take this step.

It is also a good time for members of Mountain Protected Areas Network that are not WCPA members to join via their respective regions.

Some Recent Publications/Multi Media of Interest

new IUCN booklet Solutions in focus: Transboundary Protected Area Solutions

From Maja Vasiljević Co-Chair, Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group

This booklet is the first in a series compiles PANORAMA solution case studies on a defined topic.

“Solutions in Focus” zooms in on a topic of interest covered by PANORAMA, allowing exploration of common elements and shared lessons learnt across success stories. This edition provides a snapshot of Transboundary Protected Area Solutions in the PANORAMA portfolio at the time of the latest PANORAMA webinar held in December 2016. [Read more](#)

Growing mountains of waste

Posted by [BAlfthan](#) (MRI blog December 2016)

Over the past year, I have been working with colleagues from the [United Nations Environment Programme](#), the International Environmental Technology Centre ([IETC](#)), the International Solid Waste Association ([ISWA](#)) and individual experts from around the world to determine the extent of the problem of solid waste in mountain regions and what the solutions are. You can find the report and the official press release [here](#).

Waste from mountaineering and trekking is by no means the only challenge facing mountain regions. The report also focuses on the waste issues facing remote communities, large mountain cities (mostly in South America and Asia), as well as the effects of mining at high altitudes. The report touches upon plastic pollution and its impact on freshwater ecosystems, illegal dumping, and the issues around natural disasters and how they affected waste.



Be Part of the World's Greatest Love Story

From IUCN Protecting the Planet Newsletter February 2017

Join #NatureForAll - a global movement founded on the knowledge that the more people experience, connect with, and share their love for nature, the more support and action there will be for its conservation.

What part will you play in this unfolding story? Become a #NatureForAll partner. Engage your network. Encourage others to join. [Read more](#)

IUCN'S #NatureForAll won an [IndieFEST Film Award](#) for its film 'IMAGINE'. It received the Award of Excellence Special Mention: Use of Film / Video for Social Change, and Nature / Environment / Wildlife. In case you missed it, view the video here: in [English](#), en [français](#) en [español](#)



UNESCO, No. 82 - December 2016

This issue focuses on the heritage of Africa and its sustainable development. The diversity and wealth of African heritage is extraordinary, from its large-scale ecosystems to modern architecture; from the memory of slavery and colonial heritage to cultural landscapes and sacred sites. [Read more](#)

The Youth Solutions Report

In 2015, 17 Sustainable Development Goals were agreed by 193 UN Member States to shape the global agenda for sustainable development in the next 15 years and beyond. Achieving these goals will require an unprecedented mobilization of the energy and skills of young people, and recognition of their significant role in promoting them. The Youth Solutions Report features 50 game-changing projects led by young people, allowing them to showcase their work, and presenting them with opportunities to draw interest from potential supporters. PANORAMA is a partner. [Read more](#)



Secrets of the Sky Tombs

A team of scientists hunts for clues as to how ancient peoples settled in the Himalayas and adapted to survive at high altitudes. [Watch](#)

Some forthcoming meetings and events of interest

George Wright Society Conference (19th) 2 -7 April 2017, Norfolk, Virginia, USA

Theme: **Connections Across People, Place, and Time: Advancing Thought and Practice in Parks, Protected Areas and Cultural Sites.**

[Biodiversity and Health in the Face of Climate Change](#): Challenges, opportunities and evidence gaps. 27-29 June 2017, Bonn/Germany

The [International Innovation Scientific and Technological Centre "Sustainable Development of Mountain Territories"](#) (IISTC) is holding a series of events for the implementation of the main conclusions of "Synthesis report of the Secretary General on the post 2015 sustainable development agenda" of the UN, dated 4 December 2014, and in preparation and to carry out the Year of Ecology (2017), proclaimed by the Government of the Russian Federation.

IISTC invites scientists and specialists within the Mountain Partnership network to participate in the scientific forums. The IX International Scientific and Practical Conference "**Mountain Ecosystems: Priority Focus Areas of Environmental Development**" September – October 2017

II Conference of the Programme on Ecosystem Change and Society (PECS) Oaxaca City, Mexico 7-10 November 2017. The organisers opened a second call for summaries of accepted symposia and workshops and oral sessions or posters on 1 February with a deadline of 30 March. [More information](#)

EUROPARC Conference 2017: 6-10 September, Magic Mountains, Portugal

Important Links

IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas for an outline of the role of Mountain Specialist Group
www.iucn.org/protected-areas/world-commission-protected-areas/wcpa/what-we-do/mountains

IUCN World Conservation Congress www.iucnworldconservationcongress.org

Protected Area Governance and Management (book) <http://press.anu.edu.au/?p=312491>

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. www.mountainpartnership.org

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

I look forward to hearing from you soon.



Snow Gum Australian Alps national parks