

Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE

No. 97 March 2018



San rock art – Giants Castle Reserve - Maloti-Drakensberg WHA - South Africa

Africa's rock art is the common heritage of all Africans, but it is more than that.

It is the common heritage of humanity.

President Nelson Mandela

In this issue:

People and Mountains around the world:

Global
America
Africa
Asia
Australia & New Zealand
Europe
Scree and Talus
Recent Publications of Interest
Meetings and Events / Links

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 the Mountain Protected Areas Network

The views expressed in this UPDATE are not necessarily those of the IUCN WCPA.

Note from the editor

Mountain protected areas, along with the local communities, play a vital role in preserving our cultural heritage through rock art...ancient (and not so ancient) artists recounting the world as they saw it. This is certainly the case in the **Maloti-Drakensberg** mountains, a rugged 3000m escarpment along the South African / Lesotho border.

And what a stunningly beautiful wild stormy place it is!

Read on for an article by a retired 'Berg' park manager and many other interesting stories by network members and mountain enthusiasts.

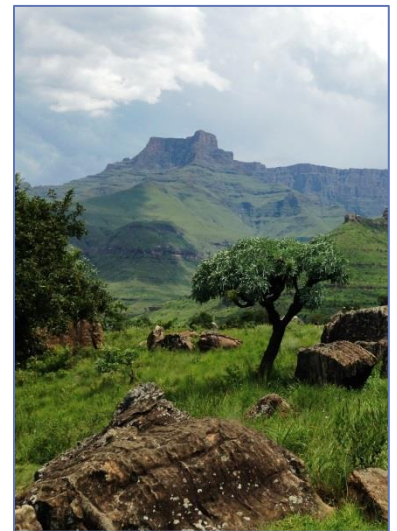
From *People and Mountains* around the World:

Global

Protecting Mountains – region by region

News from *Peter Jacobs*, Chair WCPA Mountain Specialist Group

A key event for the WCPA Mountains Specialist Group was a workshop in South Africa's uKhahlamba-Drakensberg Mountains in September 2003, prior to the World Parks Congress. The outcome of the workshop was a publication: *Guidelines for Planning and Managing Mountain Protected Areas*. This is still a seminal document for those involved in managing mountains and available by link on the WCPA Mountains webpage. I was privileged recently to be able to visit these magnificent World Heritage Mountains in KwaZulu-Natal and reflect on those that contributed to these guidelines.



As reported before, the Committee of the Mountains Specialist Group is seeking to expand to include a representative from each of the WCPA regions. This will give us much wider representation and bring new ideas and issues to the group. A larger committee will also facilitate progress of our main project around identifying key mountain areas that are currently unprotected and determine priorities for advocacy and action. To action this, an Expression of Interest was recently sent out to all WCPA Mountains SG members. The response so far has been very encouraging. If you have missed this call for interest in representing a region, please email me at buffalo_springs@bigpond.com and I will ensure you receive it. The Committee will consider all Expressions of Interest with the aim of establishing the new committee in July 2018.

Big Cats: Predators Under Threat - World Wildlife Day 2018

Although not restricted to mountains the plight of our big cats is always of concern to mountain protected area managers. Article below taken from CITES and DOC web sites.

Every year on World Wildlife Day governmental and non-governmental agencies work together to promote awareness and education about the plight of the world's endangered species. This awareness and education extends to the habitats of these endangered species and the risk of them being wiped off the planet through unsustainable trade and illegal exploitation.

Trade and Wildlife agencies around the world unite to play their part to ensure the survival of our precious endangered species through regulating and monitoring trade between countries and educating people about the role these species play to ensure a healthy and diverse global ecosystem.

Even in New Zealand CITES Rangers deal with a variety of specimens at the border, including those derived from some of the world's big cats. Between 2013-17 DOC's CITES Rangers dealt with 69 Felidae (cat) seizures and surrenders, 58 of those being from lion, panther, tiger and leopard. Specimens included medicines (most prevalent), skins, teeth, and claws.



Jaguar skin bracelet

About CITES

CITES stands for **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora**.

With 183 Parties (182 countries and the European Union), the Convention remains today one of the world's most powerful tools for wildlife conservation.

CITES regulates international trade in over 35,000 species of plants and animals, including their parts and derivatives, to ensure their survival in the wild with benefits for the livelihoods of rural communities and the global environment.

Learn more about CITES www.cites.org



There is an illegal trade in Snow leopard parts
photo: ABC News Getty Images

America (south & north)

Good news for connectivity and mountain protection in Ecuador

Taken from Nature and Culture International (NCI) press release Feb 1 2018

Ecuador has declared **Río Negro – Sopladora National Park**, Ecuador’s first national park in nearly a decade. Río Negro will eliminate a significant unprotected gap in the Sangay – Podocarpus Corridor, a 100-mile bridge of highly diverse and protected mountain ecosystems connecting **Sangay** and **Podocarpus national parks**.

Río Negro’s new protections will establish uninterrupted habitat connectivity that is essential for the long-term survival of species as the spectacled bear (globally threatened), Andean tapir (critically endangered within Ecuador) and Andean condor (critically endangered within Ecuador).

The park’s remarkably pristine ecosystems remain almost entirely intact and free from human intervention.

Nature and Culture International (NCI) provided a leading role throughout the seven-year process of establishing **Río Negro – Sopladora National Park**. NCI worked with municipal governments, the Ministry of Environment, and local communities to secure community and political support.

NCI also carried out a Rapid Biological Assessment showing this 75,654-acre region of páramo and cloud forest ecosystems to be unique for its biodiversity and endemism, and also for having dramatic altitude changes over short distances. These dramatic altitude gradients encourage the evolution of diverse species and provide what some have called a critical “escape valve” for climate change an upward migration path to cooler temperatures.

Founded in 1997, Nature and Culture International (NCI) conserves biological and cultural diversity in some of the world’s most diverse ecosystems, primarily in the Andes and Amazon of South America.

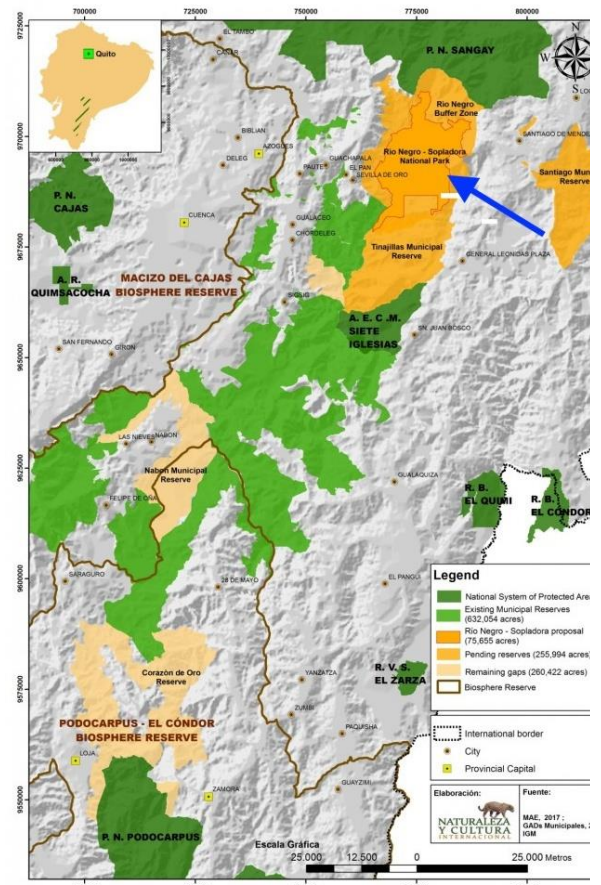
Our Wild America

Taken from the Sierra Club (USA) web site

The Sierra Club work reaches from the most untouched national forests and vast western landscapes to the urban parks just down the street. *Our Wild America* carries on the Sierra Club's long legacy of protecting America's public lands and special places.

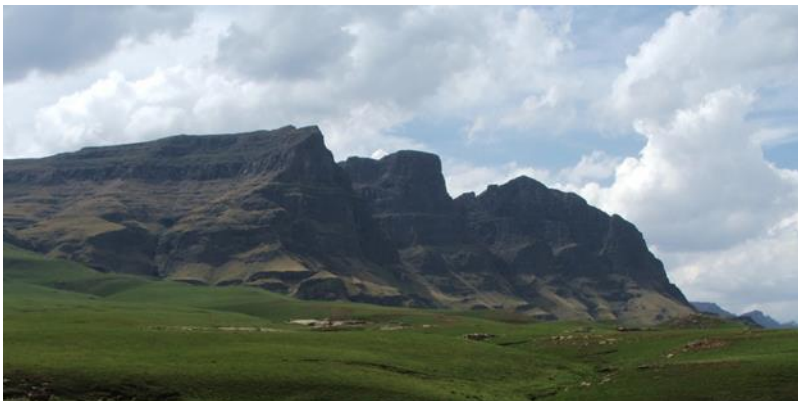
With the *Our Wild America* campaign, the Sierra Club is doubling down in the fight to preserve our wild heritage in the face of threats from fossil fuel extraction and climate disruption. *Our Wild America* embodies the Sierra Club’s motto of “explore, enjoy and protect,” **working to increase access to the outdoors; to protect our lands, water and wildlife; and to keep fossil fuels in the ground.**

The Sierra Club is currently fighting to stop President Trump undertaking an illegal plan to shrink **Bears Ears** and **Grand Staircase Escalante**. [Take Action](#) [Send a message](#)



Africa

Maloti Drakensberg World Heritage Site – some challenges



The Maloti-Drakensberg Mountains form a steep escarpment along South Africa's border with the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. It is one of the five world heritage sites in Africa that satisfy the Convention's natural and cultural criteria.

From *John Crowson*, former Conservation Manager, Southern section of the Maloti Drakensberg Park, Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife.

Photo: The Devil's Knuckles viewed from Sehlabathebe National Park, Lesotho John Crowson

Managing a World Heritage Site (WHS) has many challenges that require a manager to tackle in a systemic and responsible manner, in order to maintain the integrity of the Park.

The **Maloti Drakensberg Park** is a transboundary World Heritage Site which incorporates the **uKhahlamba Drakensberg Park** (242 813 ha) and **Sehlabathebe National Park** (6 500 ha) in Lesotho. The Park is divided into 15 Management Units, which allow the public to access the Park and its facilities. Park Management interacts with its neighbouring communities and stakeholders on a daily basis. Neighbours consist of various user groups, commercial and subsistence farmers, tourism, schools as well as government departments. The interaction with communities and stakeholders forms an important part of the day-to-day management of the Park.

Regular liaison meetings are set up with stakeholders and communities to keep them informed of management issues and to address any issues that may arise. To address illegal activities, such as arson fires and poaching occurring in the Park, a Security Liaison Working Group was established.

Over the years, local communities had been expecting tangible benefits to come from the Park. This has, however, led to disappointment and frustration. To address these frustrations the formation of the Connecting Practice and COMPACT (Community Management of Protected Areas for Conservation) programmes were initiated.

This will help to promote nature-based revenue, generating development and economic activities outside of the Park, which would be financially viable and in harmony with the objectives of the Park.

The introduction of these programmes to assist communities is presently being initiated by management. The outcome will hopefully create greater community support as they see the values of the Park and what it has to offer.

Photo: Hodgson's Peak, Cobham, Southern section of the MDP WHS John Crowson



Australia



Graeme Worboys on 'The Snowy'

Dr *Graeme Worboys*, Honorary Associate Professor of the Fenner School of Environment and Society, Australian National University and long standing WCPA champion is a particular expert on the Alpine areas of Australia.

He has written a recent blog entitled About Snowy water, catchment restoration, Snowy 2.0 and jobs. He writes “Australians are familiar with the high quality waters that flow from the Australian Alps catchments, their contribution to hydro-power generation and the delivery of irrigation water for the Murray-Darling Basin. The Alps provide a staggering 29 per cent of the annual average water flows of the Basin Rivers. This water is used for domestic consumption, agriculture and the environmental flow of the Murray River and is forecast to benefit the Snowy 2 Scheme”.

Graeme argues that the Snowy 2.0 project, if it is to realise its contribution to lowering carbon emissions, should proceed hand in hand with a program of environmental restoration of alpine ecosystems which have not recovered from past and present alpine grazing and which, as a result of global warming, will have less water yield for downstream users, including Snowy 2.0.

Read Graeme’s complete blog: [about snow water catchment restoration snowy-2 jobs](#)

Critical levels of feral horses in the Australian Alps...the discussion continues

Adapted from Parks Victoria and NSW National Parks & Wildlife web sites

Parks Victoria (PV) has been working to develop the *Protection of the Alpine National Park - Feral Horse Strategic Action Plan 2018-2020*. The plan outlines where and how feral horses will be managed and proposes a three-year program to reduce the impacts on natural and cultural values in the **Alpine National Park**. The plan will also help support Parks Victoria meet the obligations of the *National Parks Act 1975* and *Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988*. Read the plan: [Protection of Alpine NP - Strategic Action Plan 2018-2020 Draft](#)

The hard hooves of feral horses cause serious damage to the sensitive alpine environment. Without intervention, their impacts will cause severe long-term harm to the park’s endangered alpine wildlife and plant species. Submissions to the plan (recently closed) and results of the Engage Victoria survey will be reviewed (due to sensitivities around the issue) by an independent assessor. After the assessment, Park Victoria will finalise the plan ready for review and approval by the Minister for Energy, Environment, and Climate Change.

NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) have also sought comments on its **Kosciuszko National Park** Draft Wild Horse Management Plan. The draft plan sets out the vision, objectives and recommended strategies and actions for the future management of wild horses in the park.

As with the **Alpine National Park** (managed by PV) NPWS has a legal duty to protect the range of natural and cultural values within the park, and a responsibility to minimise the impact of introduced species, including those of wild horses. However, the issue of wild horse management within **Kosciuszko National Park** is often highly contentious and emotive. There is a diverse range of views in the general community and deeply polarised views between major stakeholder groups about if, and how, wild horses in the park should be managed. **The discussion continues...**

Asia

Connecting transboundary complex through regional tourism in the Kangchenjunga Landscape

From *Nakul Chettri and Tashi Dorji* International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)

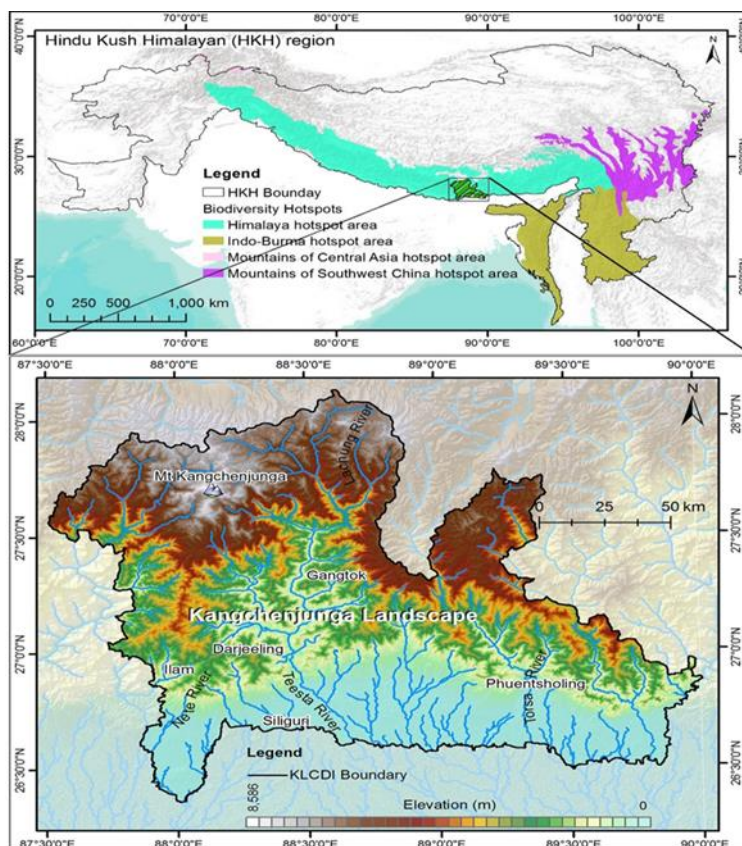
The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) and its partners have identified six transboundary landscapes representing different areas in the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH). The **Kangchenjunga Landscape (KL)**, one of these six landscapes, is shared by three of ICIMOD's member countries – Bhutan, India, and Nepal (Figure 1) and has a total area of 25,086 km² – 5,834 km² in Bhutan; 14,127 km² in India; and 5,125 km² in Nepal.

Tourism is an important economic sector in these countries contributing the total GDP of all three countries (6.5% of India and 4% in Nepal), while also supporting employment both directly and indirectly (almost one million total jobs in Nepal and more than 37 million jobs in India). In Sikkim, the contribution of tourism to the State GDP is 8%, with an annual growth rate of 16%.

The diversity of nature and cultural heritage sites occurring within the Kangchenjunga Landscape has immense value to the large number of tourists visiting from the region and elsewhere.

While tourism plays a significant role in the economic development, the strength of sustainable tourism is yet to be fully harnessed.

To identify potentials for tourism as an important connecting link between the three participating countries, ICIMOD in collaboration with Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan organize a policy dialogue on Shared Natural and Cultural Heritage for Sustainable Tourism in Kanchenjunga Transboundary Landscape during 1-5 May 2017 in Thimphu, Bhutan.



The high level participation took stock of the tourism enterprises and identified the opportunities with short, medium and long term action points.

short term actions: mapping existing and potential tourism products and infrastructure, identifying common existing and required infrastructure, capacity building of entrepreneurs, waste management and development of regional promotional materials

medium term action points: development of institutional mechanism for regional tourism promotion, improved infrastructure and common immigration procedure for tourist movement, revival of heritage routes and trail, development of regional tourism packages and branding, and engaging private sector have been identified

long term action points: envisaged to harmonize policies related to tourism, linking with existing regional initiatives such as South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and development and promotion of regional packages considering nature and culture tourism.

More detail information could be accessed in the following links: <http://www.icimod.org>

The mountain Kingdom of Bhutan – a world leader in protected area connectivity

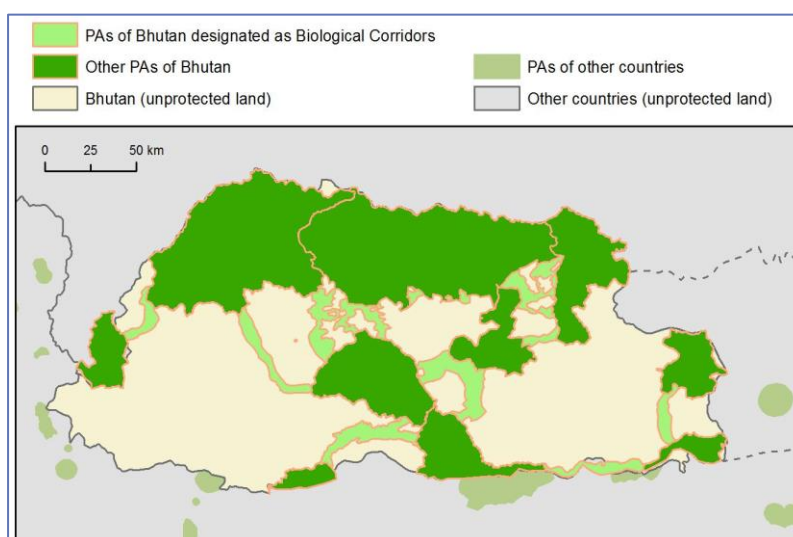
From network member *Bastian Bertzky* (Project Officer - Biodiversity and Protected Areas, BIOPAMA Point of Contact for Southern Africa) and WCPA member Santiago Saura

Paper: [Protected area connectivity: Shortfalls in global targets and country-level priorities](#)

According to a new study, only about one-third of the world's countries currently meet global targets when it comes to the connectivity of their protected areas (PAs). While close to 15% of the global land area is covered by PAs, only about half of this (7.5% of the global land area) is covered by PAs that are connected, thus falling short of the CBD Aichi Target 11 for 2020 of having 17% of the land covered by well-connected PA systems.

The [first global assessment of the connectivity of national PA systems](#), conducted by the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, further makes specific recommendations for national authorities worldwide on how to improve or sustain connectivity of their PA systems.

And it turns out that the world has a lot to learn from the **Kingdom of Bhutan** when it comes to PA connectivity: Over 50% of the country is covered by PAs, and – amazingly – all the PAs in Bhutan are connected to each other (see map), so that species movements between all PAs are in theory possible without the need to cross any unprotected lands. Thus, Bhutan has not only a high PA coverage but also an optimum design of the PA system regarding connectivity, which could act as a model for all those countries that still need to designate new PAs in strategic locations for connectivity so that they can function as corridors or stepping stones between other PAs.



Eight of the Bhutan's 20 PAs recorded in the World Database on Protected Areas were deliberately designated as Biological Corridors in 1999, recognizing that even though the individual PAs were important there was a need to consider them as "building blocks" of the overall conservation landscape rather than as independent conservation units (S. Wangchuck, 2007, *Trop. Ecol.* 48, 176-187). The corridors are critical for several animal species, in particular large mammals such as tigers, leopards and takins. In combination with the other PAs in the country (National Parks, Wildlife Reserves, etc.), the Biological Corridors form the Bhutan Biological Conservation Complex (B2C2), providing one of the most remarkable country examples of how to create a well-connected PA system. Another example with very high PA connectivity is the mountain country of **Slovenia** in Central Europe.

The study also highlights mountainous countries for which PA connectivity depends a lot on transboundary linkages with PAs in other countries. This is the case, for example, in **Nepal, Peru, Portugal and the Czech Republic**, the four countries of the world in which the PA system primarily needs transnational coordination of the efforts to promote and manage connectivity.

Khumbu Since 1950

From a review of Alton Byers new book *Khumbu Since 1950*. To read the review and see some great photographs please visit [Nepali Times review](#)

A photograph captures an instant. But we can represent time and the change it brings by repeat photography. Pictures taken decades, or even a century apart, show us how the world has changed and is changing.

Nowhere is before-and-after photography as dramatic as in portraying climate change, urbanisation and the rapid transformation of a culture.

Alton Byers is a mountain geographer, conservationist and climber specialising on the impact of climate change in high altitude areas. He did his PhD on the changes of vegetation in the Khumbu, and knows the area well, both the good and bad of how the region has been transformed by tourism, rising living standards and, lately, global warming.



Photo: Pheriche 1956 Fritz Muller

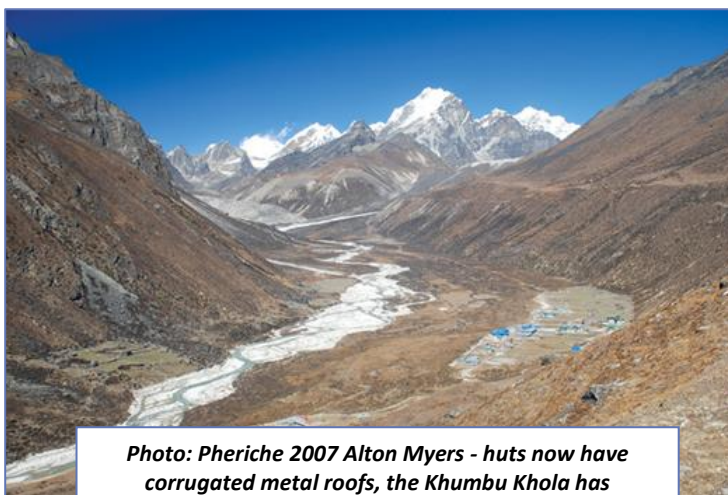


Photo: Pheriche 2007 Alton Myers - huts now have corrugated metal roofs, the Khumbu Khola has expanded due to the floods from melting glacier upstream, and there is less ice on the surrounding peaks

Europe

Hohe Tauern Wilderness

From European Wilderness Society (January 2018)

During December 2017 a workshop was held about developing a Wilderness Management Plan in the **Hohe Tauern National Park** (Austria). The goal of this workshop was to collect the unique characteristics of the **Hohe Tauern Wilderness**.

The discussed topics were:

- naturalness of the Wilderness and the dynamic processes that form the landscape;
- “undevelopedness”;
- possibilities to experience Wilderness and Wilderness related feelings such as solitude;
- other values, such as historical and cultural qualities of the area, and monitoring the above points.

IUCN Category Ib: Wilderness Area

Protected areas that are usually large unmodified or slightly modified areas, retaining their natural character and influence, without permanent or significant human habitation, which are protected and managed so as to preserve their natural condition.

The Wilderness Management Plan will be finished in March 2018. It will also include the recommendations of the European Wilderness Quality Standard and Audit Report.

Since the last Wilderness Audit visit to the **Hohe Tauern Wilderness**, some changes happened such as a reduction of the areas size to 6,720ha with the objective to guarantee a high quality of the Wilderness as well as the purchase of land to guarantee a long term protection of the Untersulzbachtal.

One aim of the Wilderness Management Plan is recognition of the Hohe Tauern Wilderness by IUCN category 1b area. An IUCN assessment is currently planned for the summer of 2018. [Read more...](#)

Have your say on the future of mountain pastoralism!

From MRI Global Newsletter February

Euromontana is undertaking a survey on pastoralism and permanent grasslands in the European mountains in order to compare sustainable management practices.

Pastoralism - the raising of livestock - is an agricultural practice prevalent in mountainous areas. The continuation of pastoral activities faces several challenges however.

These include difficulties linked to the economic context, climate change, land use pressure, and the challenge of organising grazing herds in the context of seasonal territory use.



The online questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes, and is comprised of three parts:

- The first section focuses on the most important functions of grasslands, the current challenges they face, the best ways to valorize grassland production, and useful conservation measures;
- The second section aims to identify the most important policy measures for pastoral activity on EU / regional and local level;
- The final section deals with large carnivores.

If you are willing to contribute your opinion, public data sources, and examples of the diversity of pasturelands and management systems in your area, please [fill in the questionnaire](#) before 31 March 2018.



Photo: Grazing pressure on alpine pastures Swiss Alps 2015 peopleinnature

Editors NB - Hiking through the European Alps has at times revealed to me many seriously degraded alpine meadows – and although I appreciate the role of livestock in maintaining alpine landscapes in Europe - to the casual observer over stocking seems to be a very real environmental issue. If you know anything about pastoral activities in the European Alps you should have a look at this survey!

Mountain Safety

Mountain Specialist Group Network member *Juraj Svajda* has raised the issue of visitor safety in the **Tatra Mountains**, particularly in winter given the spate of recent deaths. Juraj is seeking advice and some good examples of how safety issues in mountain protected areas have been successfully addressed, principally around education and prevention of accidents in winter. If members have any advice they would like to share with Juraj please email directly juraj.svajda@gmail.com.

Scree and Talus

The role of women in climate science

From ICIMOD / the third pole.net

On International Women's Day two leading scientists involved in the work of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, talk about their work, the importance of diversity, challenges, and motivations.

Ko Barrett (Vice Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC))

"...only 2% of authors were women in the first assessment report. Compare this to 38% for the Special Report on the impacts of 1.5 degrees of warming. It is progress, albeit slower than we would like. One thing I would like to highlight is that the value of having diverse perspectives cannot be overstated: IPCC reports become more robust and less biased with more scientists from the global south and with woman authors."

There are two really interesting interviews – read them here [role-of-women-in-climate-science](#)

Protecting Leadbeater's possum critical montane habitat

Taken from Guardian and Victorian Govt. (Australia) web sites

There are currently more than 1,800 threatened species in Australia and the main driver of species extinction is habitat loss – yet there are just five locations currently recorded on the federal critical habitat register.

Environment groups are calling for the critical habitat register to be strengthened so that the penalty for harming critical habitat applies to state and privately owned land as much as it does to commonwealth (federal) land.

The endangered Leadbeater's Possum is Victoria's faunal emblem. This tiny hand-full of an animal lives primarily in the ash forests and sub-alpine woodlands of **Victoria's central highlands.**

Guardian Australia sought correspondence and briefs relating to the designation of critical habitat for the Leadbeater's possum and found the federal [conservation advice](#) for the species identifies habitat loss and ongoing deterioration of habitat caused by fire and logging in **Victoria's montane ash forests** as the primary threat to the species' survival.

And if you are wondering what all the fuss is about: [zoos victoria leadbeaters possum](#)

Conflict resolution strategy for Kahuzi-Biega NP, DRC

From Protecting the Planet February 2018 and WCS

Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DCR) is one of the most challenging places on the planet, with over 20 years of civil unrest and displacement. WCS, GRASP and IISD developed a Conflict Sensitive Conservation methodology with national park managers, focusing on analysis of key themes of conflict, analysing their causes and effects, identifying and mapping of stakeholders and how they affect and are affected by conflicts, and development of conflict resolution strategy. [Read more](#)

The issue

Leadbeater's Possum habitat is largely found on state-owned land in Victoria, and in a very small number of cases on private land. It is listed as Critically Endangered and Threatened under Commonwealth and State law, but it is only an offence to deliberately damage it's habitat on Commonwealth land, not on state or private land.

The independent Leadbeater's Possum Advisory Group made recommendations to support the recovery of the possum, while maintaining a sustainable timber industry.

Kahuzi-Biega National Park

A vast area of primary tropical forest dominated by two spectacular extinct volcanoes, Kahuzi and Biega, the park has a diverse and abundant fauna. One of the last groups of eastern lowland (graueri) gorillas (consisting of only some 250 individuals) lives at between 2,100 and 2,400 m above sea-level.

Sierra De Las Nieves to become National Park

The **Sierra de las Nieves**, in Malaga, is one step closer to becoming a National Park, after the proposal of declaration was approved by the Governing Council of the Board this week.

Located in the hills behind Marbella the area will soon join **Sevilla's Doñana** and the **Sierra Nevada** parks in Andalucia. The park is home to the largest population of Spanish firs in Andalucia and more than 150 species of birds. It also includes several caves including Gesm, which is the third deepest in the world standing at 1,100 metres.

The Tree On Top Of The World

From MRI blog - Ian Ramsey and Heidi Asbjornsen

Polylepis trees grow on higher altitudes than any others in the world. *The Páramo* – a high elevation tropical ecosystem – looks like a cross between the highlands of Scotland, central Wyoming and Arctic Alaska. Big, open, lonesome, barren, rolling mountains. Windy, cold, yellow grasslands where the ground is etched with uneven peaty lumps under the wind-swayed ankle-high grass. It's almost like walking on the semi-frozen tussocks of the Arctic, but instead you're on the equator where the sun crackles with intensity, peeling skin and bleaching concrete, even when it's cloudy. **Read the beautifully descriptive blog [The Tree On Top Of The World](#)**



Pikas – helping to understand behavioural flexibility as a mechanism for coping with climate change

Editors NB - There is literally a mountain of research going on around the world and the Mountain UPDATE receives notification about many research papers! All interesting - some of greater relevance to mountain protected area managers. Four papers received from Dr Erik Beever (Research Ecologist Northern Rocky Mountain Science Center) fall into that category – please go to [USGS Beever](#) for more information or copies of the research.

From one of the 'Pika' papers

Broad-scale information on status and abundance determinants of montane mammals, especially for remote protected areas, is crucial for land and wildlife resource managers trying to anticipate mammalian responses to climate change.

Behavioural changes may allow animals to cope with rapid climate change; however, the ecological contexts in which animals can exhibit behavioural flexibility remain poorly understood:

- Research to date has focused on a fairly limited suite of taxa, behaviours, ecological contexts, and climatic stimuli
- Shifts in behaviour may be observed before shifts in demography or distribution, allowing for climate-change impacts on species to be more quickly detected
- Understanding the fitness implications, demographic effects, and limitations of behavioural flexibility is essential if behaviour is to be integrated into management decisions
- Quantifying connections between climate variability and animal behaviour will improve conservation initiatives

Researchers criticise the liaison between Politics and Science

From European Wilderness News Feb 2018

A recently published study by Dr. Chris Darimont from the Geography department of the University of Victoria, Canada, and his international team, points out inadequate wildlife management of governments around world, but in particular, that management measures are justified with scientific data that is flawed, unfit, outdated or out of context. Such a misuse of scientific data not only diminishes the public trust in scientific research. It also destroys the trust in government actions.

“Stop the destruction of mountain forests in the Western Carpathians!”

The appeal of the Slovak Assembly of Conservationists and other organizations and individuals - appeal and the list of the supporters is available online in [English](#) or [Slovak](#).

Virunga National Park

Founded in 1925 during Belgian colonisation, **Virunga National Park**, a World Heritage site, is Africa’s oldest park. It stretches along the borders of Rwanda and Uganda. It has a unique biodiversity due to its exceptional geography. Located in the Great Rift Valley, the park offers a wide variety of habitats ranging from the **Rwenzori Mountains** at an altitude of over 5000 metres – Africa’s largest glacial region – to swamps and steppes, and across tropical forests, savannah, wetlands and two active volcanoes – the Nyiragongo and Nyamuragira with its spectacular lava lake.

In 2017 two Congolese men were named Heritage Heroes for fighting to preserve the natural richness of **Virunga National Park**. The IUCN Heritage Hero award is recognition of their commitment in one of the most dangerous regions in the world.

Massif Svydovets – ski resort or protected area?

From European Wilderness News [Scientific ecological assessment of the Svydovets Massif, Ukrainian Carpathians](#)

In Austria the plan to develop hydropower plans across the whole alps was the starting point of the creation of the largest **Austrian National Park Hohe Tauern**. The idea to build a mega ski resort in the Ukrainian Carpathians could be the trigger to establish the “**Central Svydovets Massif**” Nature Protected Area of national importance which would protect the natural environment and biodiversity on the planned for future generations.

On 7 of February, 2018 the Scientific council of the Institute of Ecology of the Carpathians made the decision to submit an official request to the Ministry of Ecology and Natural resources of Ukraine regarding creation of the Protected Areas on the territory of **Massif Svydovets**.

The #MountainsMatter video contest

Received over 40 videos from 22 countries. Click here to watch the winning videos from Nurlan Anarbaev of Kyrgyzstan in the [professional category](#) and Jaya Setiawan Gulo of Indonesia in the [general category](#).

Mountain Partnership

Special thanks were given to outgoing Coordinator of the Mountain Partnership Secretariat Thomas Hofer, who has moved to Thailand as a Senior Forestry Officer of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The work he has done over the past five years has enabled the Mountain Partnership to grow to the high point we reached today.

Mountain Tweet

Chair of the Mountain Partnership Steering Committee, Grammenos Mastrojeni, is promoting a global communication campaign on mountains. As the first step a **Twitter account has been launched in the name of the [@MPChair](#)**.

Mountain Partnership is calling on you to help grow the Twitter by following these three easy steps:

- **Follow the Twitter account** at <https://twitter.com/MPChair>;
- **Retweet** - spread the word about the @MPChair Twitter by retweeting it; and
- **#MountainsMatter** - Use the official hashtag in all mountain-related tweets.

UIAA Mountain Protection Award

From International Climbing and Mountaineering Federation (UIAA) web site

Healing the human impact on Everest was the 2017 UIAA mountain protection award winner. The United States-based project is a volunteer-run, non-profit organization that has designed an environmentally sustainable solution to the impact of human waste on Mt. Everest and other high altitude locations. The Mount Everest Biogas Project (MEBP) is the fifth winner of the annual Award joining projects from Ethiopia, Tajikistan, Nepal and France.

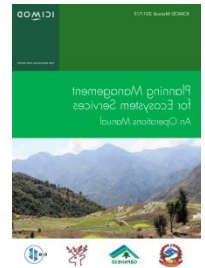


Since 2013, over 80 projects from 37 countries have been showcased as part of the UIAA Mountain Protection Award platform.

Application for the 2018 UIAA Mountain Protection Award opens in March 2018 [Mountain Protection Award](#)

Some Recent Publications of interest

Planning Management for Ecosystem Services: An Operations Manual (2017) This ICIMOD Operations Manual provides a practical method for including ecosystem management in sustainable development planning and implementation at the site and landscape levels and present's six steps for planning management for ecosystem services.



Promoting Innovative Livelihoods Ecotourism and Value Chains for Sustainable Landscape Management Trainer's Manual. ICIMOD Manual 2017/12 This Manual based on the training approach and field-testing is particularly timely, as it is designed to deliver action-oriented learning in an effective manner.

The Chronology of Reindeer Hunting on Norway's Highest Ice Patches This article published in Royal Society Open Science illustrates how glacial archaeology is uncovering unprecedented historical data on high-elevation human activity as a result of melting perennial ice.

Khumbu Since 1950: Cultural, Landscape, and Climate Change in the Sagarmatha (Mt. Everest) National Park, Khumbu, Nepal by *Alton Byers* More information or to purchase the new book go to: [pilgrims online shop](#)

Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission has just published a global assessment of protected area (PA) connectivity and identified broad priorities for each country to improve connectivity. [Global Assessment](#)

Two books reviewed by Mountain Research and Development 37(4):513-513. Filippo Favilli & Fernando Valladares

Wolves, Courts, and Public Policy: The Children of the Night Return to the Northern Rocky Mountains Edward A. Fitzgerald. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015. The author enables the reader to understand the many steps that were needed to reintroduce wolves into one of their natural environments, as well as the reactions this prompted in US society

Global Change Impacts in Sierra Nevada: Challenges for Conservation Sevilla, Spain: Department Environment and Urban Planning, Junta de Andalucía, 2016. Free download at [Global-Change-Impacts-Sierra-Nevada](#) This beautifully illustrated book addresses the challenges for conservation imposed by global change in the Sierra Nevada region of Southern Spain.

Films

Film Festival Kathmandu [At the Crossroads](#) The film depicts the struggles of rural mountain life in a village in India when a paved road is promised to the village. ICIMOD praises this film for its visuals, its pacing, but mostly for its storytelling, which is simple and caring.

An intimate journey with wildlife photographer Michel d'Oultremont as he searches for the recently introduced wild bison of Romania. Directed by D Hayes; produced by H S Mclean. <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/short-film>

Some forthcoming events and meetings of interest

21- 23 March: Escaldes-Engordany, Andorra 10th World Congress on Snow and Mountain Tourism [World Tourism Organization](#) (UNWTO) and [Government of Andorra](#)

22 March: Canberra, Australia. Meeting of Australian members (others if happen to be in the country) WCPA Conservation Connectivity Specialist Group. Contact Gary Tabor or Grace Stonecipher grace@largelandscapes.org

24 May: **European Day of Parks** Every year, hundreds of protected areas organise activities to celebrate the European Day of Parks, in and around the 24th of May. In 2018, Europarc challenge Protected Areas to highlight the link between our cultural identity, our natural heritage and landscape use.

28-30 May: Halifax, Canada IUCN "**Communities, Conservation and Livelihoods**". The IUCN in conjunction with 2 other international organisations will be presenting a highly-participatory gathering to explore the crucial role of local communities, around the world, in conserving local environments and at the same time supporting local economies and livelihoods. Conference [website](#)

04-08 June, Kunming, Yunnan, China The Centre for Mountain Ecosystem Studies (CMES), together with the Kunming Institute of Botany, Chinese Academy of Sciences, and World Agroforestry Centre (ICRAF) 2nd International Conference on Mountain Futures, with a focus on "**Ecosystem Rhythms, Land Systems, and Sustainable Livelihoods**". [Conference website](#)

5 – 8 June TransParcNet Meeting, Retz, Austria The annual meeting of EUROPARC network of Transboundary Parks (the TransParcNet) "**River Landscape Area Protection**" More information soon on EUROPARC website.

12 – 14 June Chamonix France **Sustainable Summits Conference** [Call for Posters | Mountain tourism and human impacts - Sustainable Mountains Summit 2018](#) MSc and PhD students conducting thesis research work on mountain tourism and recreation are invited to submit poster proposals. Conference themes 1) Role of high mountains in today's societies; 2) Climate change: high mountains on the front line; or 3) Human activities in the high mountains: impacts and solutions.



2-5 October: Banff, Alberta, Canada. Interdisciplinary Summit, "**Thinking Mountains 2018**" will bring researchers, students, and teachers from across the scholarly disciplines into dialogue with activists, artists, Indigenous leaders, and community members, all of whom share a commitment to global mountain sustainability, and to the betterment of mountain peoples, places, and activities. <http://www.thinkingmountains.ca>

14-17 October [2018 International Parks Congress](#), Melbourne, Australia, by Parks and Leisure Australia

14-18 October Eger, Hungary **Forum Carpathicum 2018** Scientific Steering Committee (SSC) of S4C. An event that will highlight science in the Carpathian ecological region.

11-15 December: Nova Friburgo, Brazil. **Mountains 2018** second in a series of international conferences that will bring together scholars, professionals, policy-makers and other stakeholders from the mountain world. The conference seeks to stimulate discussion and disseminate knowledge about mountains, based on lessons learned from scientific research and practical experiences related to the use of mountain territories and the challenges of promoting sustainable development. This will include reflecting on how mountains can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. See the official [Mountains 2018 Facebook page](#) Learn more about [LuMont](#) Read about [Mountains 2016](#)

Colorado State University: short courses on protected area management and sustainable tourism

[Vlth Mobile Seminar on Tourism in Protected Areas](#) (given in English), September 6-22, 2018. Apply by 11 May, 2018.

[XXVIII Curso Internacional de Manejo de Áreas Protegidas](#) (dado en español), 3 de julio al 4 de agosto, 2018. La fecha límite para postularse es el 2 de febrero de 2018.

To apply and for more information visit [Colorado State University](#)

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

While Mountain Network members can choose not to be WCPA members and still be involved and receive the Mountain News UPDATE, the WCPA Chair Dr Kathy MacKinnon, and Mountain Specialist Group Executive and 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: [WCPA membership](#)

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

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

[And the last word goes to the bison!](#)

From European Wilderness Society – exclusive interview with a European Bison

...Are you hiding from us then?

I've heard you call us a 'refuge-species' sometimes. I like to be both in the forest and the open field actually. Sometimes I end up at those delicious farmlands, eating crops and haystacks. But I guess it's human responsibility to fence their land properly, not mine.

Anything else you like to say?

I've got to go actually, I see our herd is moving. Our alpha female found a good spot where we can spend the afternoon. She's a great leader, I have much respect for her. Let me tell you a quick joke about her. You know what she said to her son, when he left our herd in search of another girl?

I've got no idea...

Bison!

Curious to read more? Click on the interview with the [brown bear](#), [wolverine](#), [wolf](#), [lynx](#) and [golden jackal](#)!