

# Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE

March 2026 # 128



*Rwenzori Mountains National Park is also known as “Mountains of the Moon” due to the snowcapped peaks that are seen glittering and glimmering in the moonlight. It was named so by an ancient geographer called Ptolemy who believed that River Nile originated from these mountains and the moon was the source of the river’s waters.*

*Image: Rwenzori Mountains National Park (Uganda Tourism)*

## A note from the editor

Welcome to the 128th Mountain UPDATE.

This Update is heavily weighted with stories about melting glaciers but the contrast between them seems huge—from European Alps to Hindu Kush Himalaya to Africa to New Zealand - same phenomena, different outcomes and ability to respond.

But the situation with massive landslides and floods in mountains is not surprising, the World Meteorological Organization reported last week that the last 11 years have been the hottest on record...so temperatures continue to rise, ice continues to melt, and weather becomes more extreme.

As always though the UPDATE has some good news stories about the fantastic work many people and organisations are doing!

*Happy reading 30 March 2026*

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### Scree and Talus

Mountain Update is a quarterly newsletter distributed to members of the Mountain Protected Areas Network.

The Mountain Group acknowledges the First Peoples and Nations of the lands and waters where we live and work and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge and respect the deep spiritual connection and the relationship they have to Country.

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

IUCN WCPA Mountain UPDATE # 128 Editor: Gillian Anderson [peopleinnature@bigpond.com](mailto:peopleinnature@bigpond.com)

## From People and Mountains around the world:

### Global

#### WCPA Mountain Group—exciting new leadership arrangement

**From Peter Jacobs, past Chair Mountain Protected Area SG & Gabriel Oppler Executive Officer, Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group at Center for Large Landscape Conservation**

We are pleased to announce that the Mountain Protected Areas Specialist Group will be integrated into the Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group (CCSG) as a Mountains Working Group (MWG).

**This new arrangement will allow closer collaboration between the mountains and connectivity conservation communities and increase the support and capacity for the Mountains Group.**

We are grateful to the CCSG Co-Chairs, Aaron Laur, Jordan Reeves, and Zhicong Zhao, for welcoming the Mountains Working Group (MWG) into the fold. To learn more about CCSG, visit [www.conservationcorridor.org/ccsg](http://www.conservationcorridor.org/ccsg).

We are also grateful to **Ulysse Robach** (image right), who has volunteered to lead as incoming Co-Chair of Mountains Working Group (MWG). Ulysse is a graduate in Environmental Policy from Sciences Po Paris, an alumni of the Youth Parliament of the Alpine Convention, and International Federation of Mountain Guides Associations (IFMGA) guide currently living between Chamonix Mont-Blanc and Geneva. Having previously worked as Specialist Environment & Marketing at the outdoor clothing and gear company Patagonia, he advocated for ensuring more resilient mountain ecosystems across various communities and contributed to build partnerships with a number of environmental organisations.

Please note that no action is required to transfer to being a member of the MWG. All current members of the Mountains Specialist Group will be automatically transferred into the membership list of the CCSG and coordinated via the MWG.

We are excited for this new chapter of the mountain and connectivity conservation communities and look forward to working together!



**Ulysse Robach**, climbing at Half Dome in Yosemite Valley, Yosemite NP. 2025.

Ulysse is interested to share the new leadership role; if you would like to serve as an MWG Co-Chair, please contact him at [ulyссе.robach@gmail.com](mailto:ulyссе.robach@gmail.com).

#### Important links

IUCN WCPA <https://iucn.org/our-union/commissions/iucn-world-commission-protected-areas-2021-2025>

WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group [www.conservationcorridor.org/ccsg](http://www.conservationcorridor.org/ccsg).

Looking for **Mountain Research** and many other excellent tools and publications? The Mountain Update has only a very tiny selection! Try [Mountain Research and Development](#), [Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment \(GMBA\)](#), [Mountain Research Initiative](#), [ICIMOD](#), and [Mountain Partnership](#)—to mention a just few great sources of mountain information!

Also please go to [https://youtu.be/\\_NuY89TWscl](https://youtu.be/_NuY89TWscl) a short video of Protecting Mountains IUCN WCC presentation by *Peter Jacobs* (past Chair Mountain Specialist Group).

[Events - MRI - Mountain Research Initiative](#) and Mountain Partnerships Events [Here](#)

While [Mountain Network members](#) can choose not to be WCPA members and still be involved and receive the Mountain UPDATE, the WCPA Chair, and Mountain Group 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 Get Involved](#)

The Mountain UPDATE will continue for now, so if you have any relevant mountain protected area news, please email me (Gill) at [peopleinnature@bigpond.com](mailto:peopleinnature@bigpond.com). I look forward to hearing from you!

# Africa

## Community—led restoration Rwenzori Mountains: Uganda



**Morgan Long** has shared a short story from the **Rwenzori Mountains** of western Uganda — specifically, how mountain communities living along steep slopes and river corridors are adapting to increasing flood and landslide risks.

The Nyamwamba River drains straight from the high Rwenzori range, carrying water, debris, and sediment from the mountain slopes down into the foothill towns. Since the major 2013 flood, repeated mountain-driven hazards have reshaped life, infrastructure, and livelihoods in Kilembe and surrounding communities.

A few highlights:

- In June 2025, 1,500+ trees were planted and geotagged along the Nyamwamba, one of the Rwenzori’s key mountain drainages.
- Plantings use native montane species and clumping bamboo selected for erosion control and slope stabilization.
- A community-facing monitoring app tracks plantings from the high foothills down through the river corridor.
- Students from Makerere and Penn State contribute to monitoring, household surveys, and school outreach as part of a mountain restoration training program



Scenes from after the 2013 flood  
Image: Carol Allen-Storey (2015 Lens Culture)

The Rwenzori Mountains, often called the “Mountains of the Moon,” are a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for their extraordinary biodiversity and dramatic landscapes. Spanning five distinct ecological zones—from lush grasslands and montane forests to bamboo, heather, and afro-alpine regions—these mountains serve as a crossroads for African mountain species and are home to numerous endemic plants and animals.

**Once, the Rwenzori glaciers were a vital water source for surrounding communities, but today they are rapidly melting, contributing only about 2% of local floodwaters, with predictions that the glaciers could vanish entirely by 2030.**

This environmental change has profound local impacts: the region attracts fewer tourists compared to Mount Kilimanjaro, and the loss of glaciers threatens both income and environmental stability. As deforestation for agriculture increases, the area faces more frequent mudslides and a hotter, dustier climate, further endangering the livelihoods and natural heritage of those who call the Rwenzoris home.

The Ski Club Uganda — a nonprofit that Morgan Long co-founded — is working with Rwenzori Trekking Services guides, volunteers from around the world, Makerere University, and Penn State partners on community-led mountain restoration focused on stabilizing slopes, restoring riparian corridors, and strengthening resilience within this unique mountain landscape.



Welcome to [Ski Club Uganda](#)

Nestled in the heart of the Rwenzori Mountains, our organization preserves this stunning landscape through eco-tourism and conservation.

Join us in celebrating adventure, community, and environmental stewardship—where skiing meets sustainability.

Explore our projects, become a partner, or support our mission to protect these unique alpine ecosystems for future generations.

We’re planning our trip for June 2026!

More info: [morgan@skiclubuganda.org](mailto:morgan@skiclubuganda.org)

# Oceania—New Zealand

## Park Access before & after extreme events: New Zealand Alps



From *Dr Shane Orchard* Oceania Regional Chair, [Commission on Ecosystem Management](#), IUCN

Identifying changes to public access is an important but often overlooked dimension of natural resource management.

Our new study just published in the journal *GeoHazards* maps changes to public access and examines the nature of human responses in parks and reserves using case studies from **Aoraki Mount Cook** and **Westland Tai Poutini national parks**. These case studies trace the evolution of changes to historical access routes using high resolution digital elevation models (DEM) and satellite imagery from before and after extreme events with a focus on major flooding and erosion from heavy rainfall.

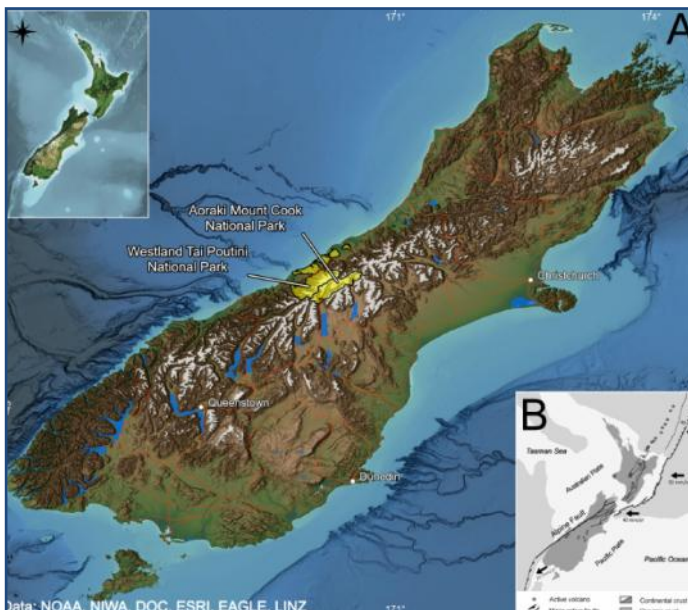
Improved attention to the role of access is essential for effective climate change adaptation in parks and reserves. The paper highlights the varied nature of human responses to hazard events over temporary and longer-term term timelines and identifies key intersections with social factors including technology developments, public perceptions and popularisation trends.

We also identify three essential principles for managing public access in changing landscapes which are becoming the norm in many areas due to climate change. These are:

- providing access that supports the core functions of protected areas;
- evaluating the impacts of both physical changes and human responses to them; and
- managing tensions between stakeholder preferences.

Although these principles are especially evident in fast eroding landscapes where existing infrastructure is more frequently lost or damaged, they are widely transferable to all types of protected areas both in NZ and elsewhere.

Download a free copy of the paper [here](#)



*Image above: Ball Pass Crossing* is a demanding 2 - 3 day alpine route, crossing the Mount Cook Range between the Hooker and Tasman Valleys. Ball Pass Crossing can't be completed while Hooker Valley Track is closed at the second swing bridge. Foot access is still possible to the Mueller Lake Lookout just before the first bridge.  
From current NZ Park web site [www.doc.govt.nz/](http://www.doc.govt.nz/)

The paper is published open access so please feel welcome to circulate the following summary around your networks and download a copy etc.

Also feel welcome to drop me a line anytime if you have questions or are interested in similar management themes!

Dr Shane Orchard

Conservation Scientist / Spatial Ecologist  
[shane.orchard@canterbury.ac.nz](mailto:shane.orchard@canterbury.ac.nz)

# Oceania—Australia

## *The damage is done by their feet-feral horses: Australian Alps*

Taken from *The Conversation* January 2026 Read whole article [1000's of feral hoses gone](#)

**In Kosciuszko National Park in Australia's alpine region, the landscape is slowly changing. Patches of native vegetation cropped bald by horses are regrowing. Some long-eroded creek banks look less compacted along the edges. Visitors come across fewer horses standing on the roads, a real traffic hazard.**

In 2023, New South Wales authorised the aerial shooting of feral horses in Kosciuszko National Park. And in late November, the government passed a bill to repeal the law that recognised feral horses as having "heritage status" in the park.

This change removed the legal protections on horses in Kosciuszko that had set them apart from other introduced species such as deer, pigs, foxes and rabbits. Now horses will be treated the same way as other invasive species across Australia, restoring consistency to managing their impact on the landscape.

The latest survey estimates around 3,000 horses remain in Kosciuszko National Park, down from roughly 17,000 a year ago. More than 9,000 horses have been culled since 2021. The current management plan is designed to retain 3,000 horses – a compromise between ecological protection and perceived heritage values. It will remain in place until mid-2027.

For decades, feral horses have been a major source of ecological damage in Kosciuszko's alpine landscapes. Their impacts have been especially pronounced in the past decade, as horse numbers within the fragile high country grew largely unchecked.

Empirical studies and analyses of satellite imagery show horses reduce vegetation cover, break down soil structure, and damage streambanks, peat beds and alpine bogs – carbon-rich soils built over tens of thousands of years.

Alpine ecosystems heal slowly, and decades of damage can't be undone overnight. Short growing seasons mean plants return gradually, not in sudden flushes. Many slopes and creeklines still show the scars of cattle grazing more than 60 years after livestock were removed. Disturbance lingers here for generations.

Lower horse numbers are only a beginning, but they're the essential first step. And now — with fewer horses on the ground and the legal barriers removed — Kosciuszko finally has a realistic path to recovery.

## *Strange but true: another story from Australian Alps*

From ABC News March 2026

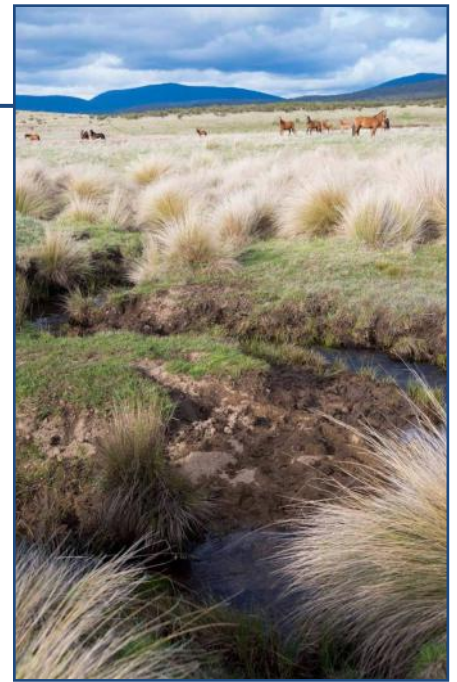
"There's nothing quite like sitting on the top of Mount Kosciuszko at sunset, then suddenly 5 million, 10 million — who knows how many — bogong moths just emerge out of the rocks all around you. It's the most underrated wildlife experience in Australia," Dr Kate Umbers said. "It's truly amazing, and we don't know why they're doing it."

In an Australian first, a team of researchers from Western Sydney University and volunteers from the self-titled "bug nerd network" have just tagged more than 10,000 bogong moths to find out where billions of them go when they leave the mountains.

She said the success of the project largely relied on someone spotting a distinct white dot on a wing of an already distinctly marked but very small moth.

Researchers are trialling two different tagging techniques to see which works better. One is a small piece of paper with an individual code on it, and the other is a white "splodge" from a non-toxic white paint marker.

Read the fascinating Bogong Moth story here: [tagging-bogong-moths-to-solve-mystery](#)



Feral horses walk up to 50 kilometres a day, and their hard hooves collapse the sphagnum moss layers and compact the deep peat soils. These plants and soils normally act like slow-release water sponges, storing snowmelt and feeding streams throughout summer. And unlike wombats, kangaroos and other native wildlife, feral horses follow each other in single file, making deep walking paths that crisscross alpine meadows, draining them dry.

Image: An alpine creek bank, its peaty soil eroded from horse tracks. Author supplied, [CC BY-ND](#)



"We cool the moths down on ice, and then we give them a couple of puffs of CO<sub>2</sub> ... and that just knocks them out for a couple of minutes so we can gently remove a couple of scales, and glue a little piece of paper with some eyelash glue onto their wing," Dr Umbers said.

## America—north

### National Parks face uncertain future: USA

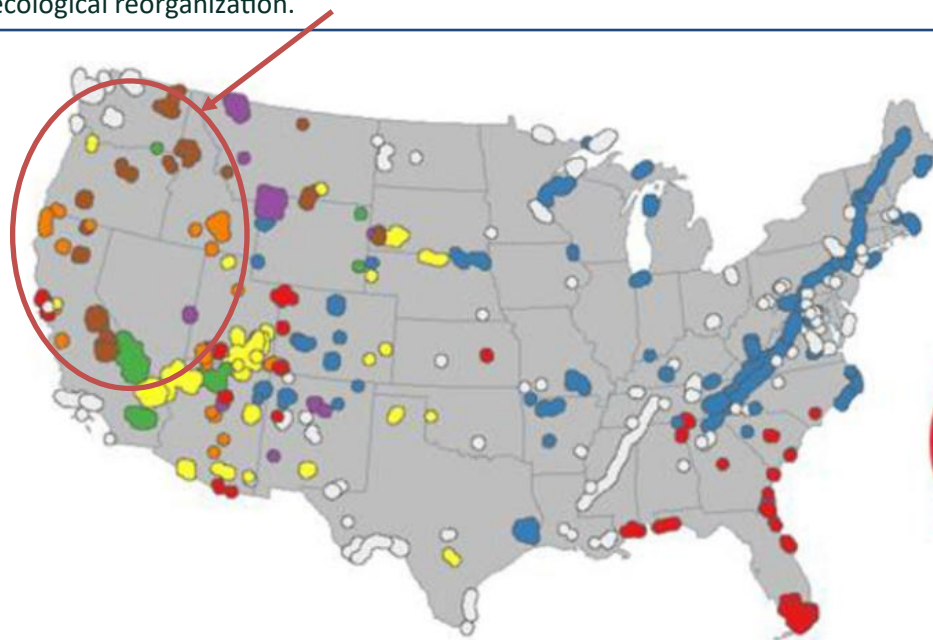
From Mongabay March 2026 Rhett Ayers Butler America Founder's briefs

- A nationwide analysis finds most U.S. national parks are highly vulnerable to climate change, with many facing risks of irreversible ecological transformation rather than gradual decline. Wildfire, drought, pests, and sea-level rise are converging to reshape landscapes the parks were created to preserve.
- Vulnerability is uneven: parks in the Midwest and eastern United States tend to face the greatest cumulative risk due to fragmented habitats, pollution, invasive species, and limited capacity for ecosystems to adapt. Many western parks appear more resilient but are exposed to multiple severe disturbances at once.
- Coastal parks are threatened by rising seas and storm surge, while inland forests face compound stresses that can trigger long-term shifts from forest to shrubland or grassland. Once such transitions occur, returning to previous ecological conditions may be impossible.

Western parks, often appear less vulnerable in aggregate analyses. Their rugged terrain creates microclimates that can serve as refuges. Elevation gradients allow species to move upslope rather than across developed land. Lower surrounding human density also helps.

**Yet this apparent resilience is misleading. Many western parks are exposed to multiple “transformational” disturbances simultaneously, particularly fire, prolonged drought, and insect outbreaks.**

The interaction among these disturbances is crucial. Severe drought weakens forests, making them more susceptible to bark beetles; beetle-killed trees increase fuel loads; fires burn hotter and more extensively; post-fire recovery may fail altogether. In some places, forests are already converting to shrubland or grassland. Such shifts are not temporary damage but ecological reorganization.



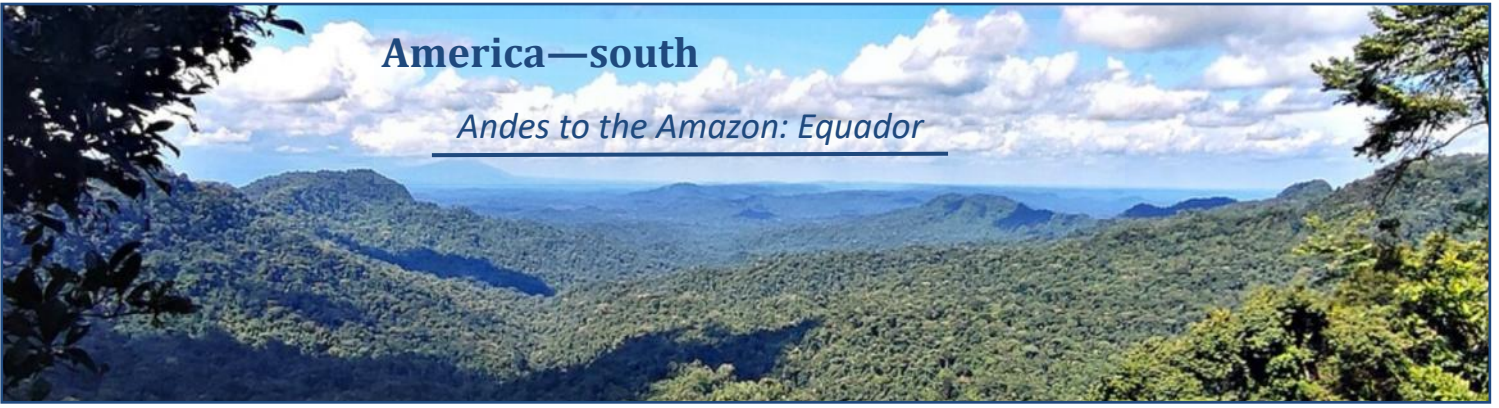
SOURCE: Michalak et al (2026)  
DOI: 10.1111/con4.70020

Parks most at risk of potentially transformational impacts associated with fire, drought, and/or forest pest or disease. Parks that exceeded thresholds were deemed most vulnerable to these high-impact, transformational vulnerabilities. Parks in light gray did not exceed any thresholds for these transformational impacts. Caption and image from Michalak et al (2026).

**As climate pressures intensify and policy responses weaken, park managers are shifting from preserving historical conditions to managing ongoing transformation. America’s parks may increasingly serve less as static sanctuaries and more as living records of how nature reorganizes under accelerating change.**

## America—south

### Andes to the Amazon: Ecuador



Llanganates–Yasuní Connectivity Corridor. Experts say some species could start to move between the ecosystems in response to climate change and habitat loss. Image: by Victor Utreras/WCS

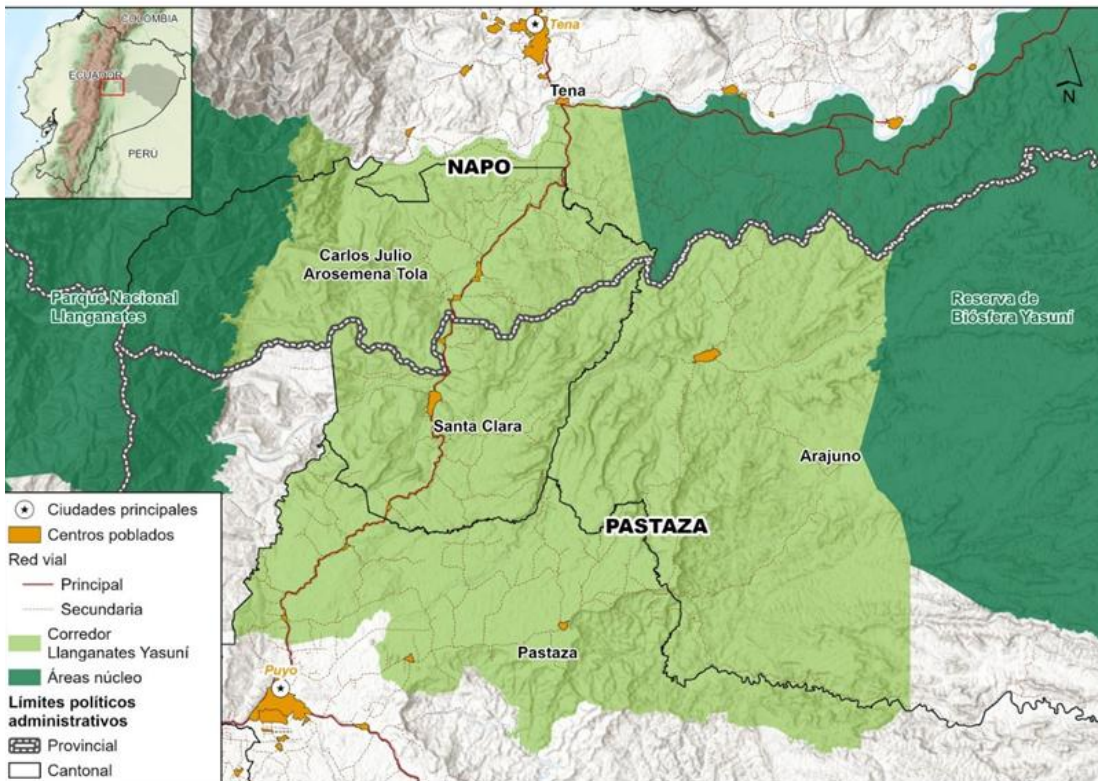
From Mongabay March 2026

**Ecuador has announced the creation of a new biological corridor designed to connect the eastern ranges of the Andes with the Amazon Rainforest, part of a larger initiative to strengthen ecological connectivity and protect biodiversity.**

The Llanganates–Yasuní Connectivity Corridor, spans 2,159 square kilometres across two provinces, connecting Llanganates National Park with Yasuní Biosphere Reserve. It's one of several projects in the country aiming to preserve ecological connectivity between the Andes and Amazon, a transition zone vital for species adaptation as climate change and human pressure reshape habitats.

“By securing ecological connectivity between the Andes and the Amazon, we are helping safeguard biodiversity, strengthen climate resilience, and support local communities whose livelihoods depend on healthy ecosystems,” WCS Ecuador country director Sebastian Valdivieso said in a [press release](#). “This corridor reflects the power of collaboration between national authorities, local governments, civil society and international partners.”

**Yasuní Biosphere Reserve** covers 27,564 km<sup>2</sup> of Amazon Rainforest, while **Llanganates National Park** covers 2,197 km<sup>2</sup> (848 mi<sup>2</sup>) of high-elevation ecosystems in the Andes. The two protected areas appear close on a map but are actually separated by significant elevation differences, with parts of Llanganates reaching around 4,000 meters above sea level.



Part of the work involved making sure that communities continue sustainable economic practices and recognize the importance of habitats in the area, according to Diana Paredes, coordinator for WCS's Conservation Area Strategy.

“We're not only protecting species, habitats and ecosystems, we're also ensuring clean water, food for the people who live here and depend on the corridor, and also dignified living conditions for the communities,” she told Mongabay.

## Europe

### The Great Olympic lie: Italy



Adapted from *The Guardian* February 2026 (Andy Bull, Cortina)

Sustainability is the great lie of these Games. It was written all through the bid document and the International Olympic Committee slapped it across all manner of promotional literature.

Most existing Olympic venues had to be demolished and rebuilt with larger footprints; new facilities were constructed, sometimes duplicating what's already available or cutting down forests, leaving behind steel and concrete.

The climate crisis has raised February temperatures in Cortina by 3.6C since the last Olympics, reduced snow depth by 15cm over 50 years, and required artificial reservoirs to supply snow, often using water pumped from drought-affected rivers.

Only 13% of spending on 98 projects was essential for the Games; the rest went to infrastructure that won't be finished until after the Olympics. The government skipped Environmental Impact Assessments for most projects, despite the area being a UNESCO site and a fragile ecosystem.

Image above: Venetian cellist Mario Brunello played Camille Saint-Saëns's *The Swan* among the fallen boughs.



*The Cortina locals knew it mostly as the place where the old wooden bobsleigh run was, where you went on your walks in summer or autumn. They called it the **Bosco di Ronco** and it isn't there any more.*

*Image captured by a drone that shows the devastating open-air construction site in Cortina for the construction of the new bobsleigh track for the 2026 Winter Olympics—proof that this was not a simple renovation, which does not alter the environment.*

From <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/>



Four new high altitude reservoirs had to be constructed to provide water to create the 2.3 million cubic metres of artificial snow needed at the Games. Photograph: Alexis Boichard/Agence Zoom/Getty Images



The controversial Socrepes cable car was built 'on a moving landslide'. Photograph: Guglielmo Mangiapane/Reuters

# Europe

## Switzerland's Crumbling Giants

One of the world's richest nations is asking what price it's willing to pay to preserve a way of life in the face of climate change. ABC

From Foreign Correspondent ABC News February 2026 Read whole article: [Climate Change in the Swiss Alps](#)

The landslide that buried Blatten, a village in the Swiss Alps, under 20 million tons of rock and ice was a shocking spectacle, even if it had been predicted almost to the day. For more than a week, rocks from a crumbling peak of the Kleines Nesthorn mountain had been tumbling down onto the ancient glacier perched above the town.

The ice groaned and cracked under the weight. Then on Wednesday, May 28, 2025 the Birch Glacier finally collapsed, sending a torrent of debris thundering down the mountainside.

But what Blatten has exposed is the precarious future facing Switzerland's alpine villages, as climate change transforms the country's picturesque mountains into an increasingly hostile abode.

Climate scientists warn the Swiss Alps are warming at twice the global average, with temperatures already climbing 2.9 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times.

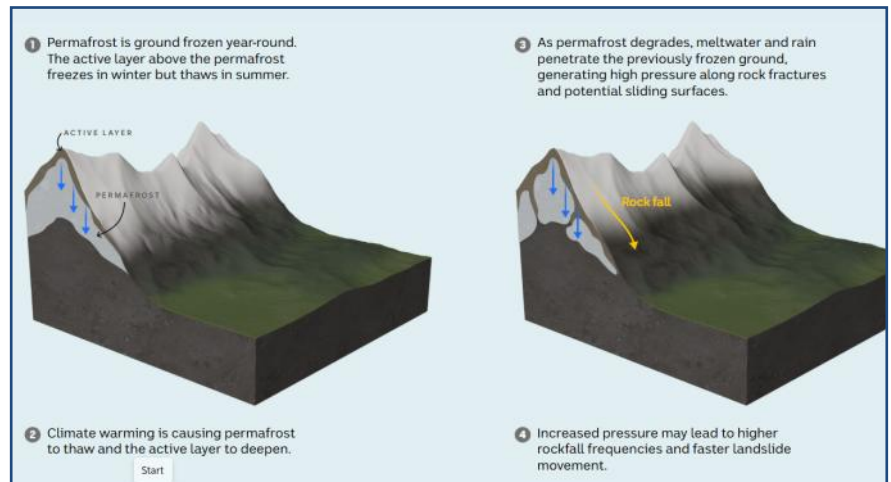
**Melting glaciers and thawing permafrost are destabilising the mountain range, making catastrophic landslides like the one that wiped out Blatten likely to be more frequent in the future.**

"I feel we're at the point where we can see clear evidence that climate change is affecting the stability of the Alps overall." said a Batton resident

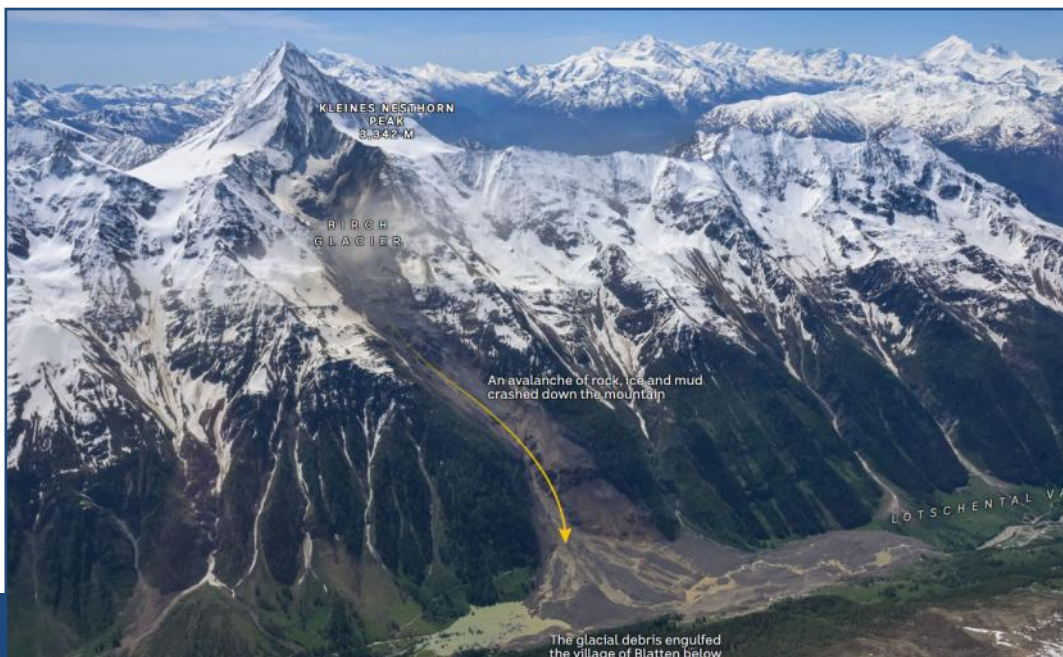
But even wealthy Switzerland can't hold back the seismic forces shaking the Alps to their core.

Zurich-based climate scientist Reto Knutti believes Switzerland is yet to fully accept the Alps have changed.

**"When the mountain falls down, there's nothing you can do. The country is now facing a question with a troubling emotional dimension — what price is it willing to pay to preserve the alpine life that's shaped its national identity?"** Reto says.



While retreating glaciers might be the most visible sign of warming in the Alps, what's happening beneath the surface is just as alarming. ABC News



# Himalayas—Central Asia

## *Glaciers at a crossroads: new evidence on rapid ice loss: HKH*



Image: Changri Pokalde Khumbu Area, Nepal P Wagnon ICIMOD

From ICIMOD Kathmandu, March 2026

Glaciers across the Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) are melting at an accelerating rate, with **ice loss rates doubling since the year 2000**, according to two new landmark reports released on 21 March 2026 by the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) to mark World Day for Glaciers.

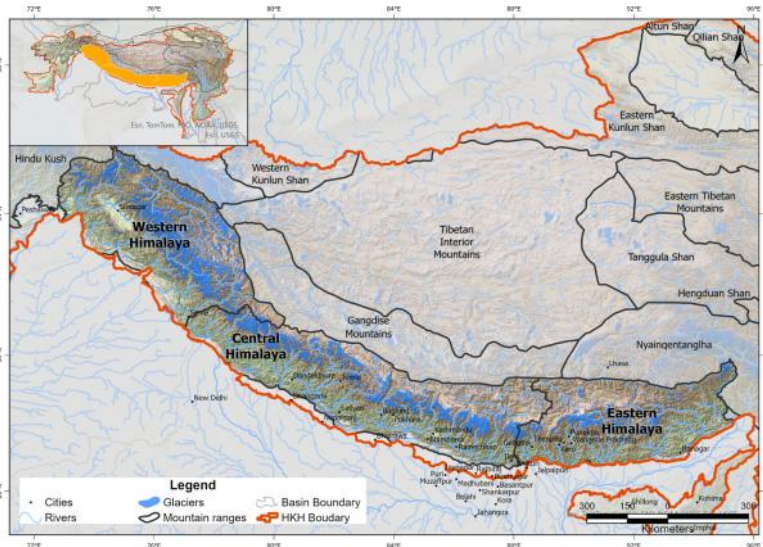
The reports, [Changing Dynamics of Glaciers in the Hindu Kush Himalaya Region from 1990 to 2020](#) and [HKH Glacier Outlook 2026: Insights from 50 Years of Himalayan Glacier Monitoring](#), provide the most comprehensive evidence yet of glacier change in the region. They reveal a total loss of up to 27 metres of ice thickness since 1975, sounding an alarm for the nearly two billion people downstream who depend on meltwater from the 'Water Towers of Asia'.

HKH holds the largest volume of ice outside the poles, with an inventory of over 63,700 glaciers covering nearly 55,782 square kilometres. These glaciers are the source of at least ten major Asian river systems, supporting the food, water, energy, and livelihood security of billions. However, around 78% of this glacier area, located between 4,500 and 6,000 metres above sea level is highly exposed to elevation-dependent warming.

**"This isn't a distant problem; it's a crisis unfolding in real-time, with new disasters every summer and monsoon.**

**The fact that ice loss rates have doubled this century should shock us all into action,"** said Pema Gyamtsho, Director General of ICIMOD. **"The Hindu Kush Himalaya is at a crossroads. The rapidly escalating impacts we're seeing from water uncertainty to catastrophic floods underscore that we are in a critical decade for the cryosphere.**

**We must scale up monitoring and invest in adaptation now. These aren't blind spots becoming surprises anymore; they are our new reality."**



The reports highlight that glacier losses are spatially skewed, with the highest percentage of area loss in the eastern Hengduan Shan mountains, where some areas lost up to 33% of their glacier area in just three decades. However, the largest absolute area losses are concentrated in the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra basins, where over 74% of the region's glaciers are found, underlining their critical vulnerability.

The larger glaciers above 10 km<sup>2</sup> hold nearly 40% of the region's natural water reserves. The heavily glaciated Karakoram range, home to 18 of the 25 largest glaciers, remains highly vulnerable to long-term water, food, and disaster risks with ramifications for the entire region.

### **About International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD)**

The Hindu Kush Himalaya (HKH) region stretches 3,500km across Asia, spanning eight countries – Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, and Pakistan. Encompassing high-altitude mountain ranges, mid-hills, and plains, the zone is vital for the food, water, and energy security of up to two billion people and is a habitat for countless irreplaceable species. It is also acutely fragile, and vulnerable to the impacts of the triple planetary crisis of climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

For more information, read [Strategy 2030](#) and explore [website](#).

## Scree and Talus



**Plateau Perspectives: 25 Years in High Asia:** From Marc Foggin December 2025 Image above: Marc Foggin

Partnering with mountain communities for conservation and sustainable development in the mountains of Central Asia, Plateau Perspectives have developed this excellent Story Map [StoryMap Plateau Perspectives](#).

Plateau Perspectives works across high mountain areas of Asia—especially the Tibetan Plateau, Himalayas, Tianshan, and Pamir mountains. Known collectively as the “Third Pole,” these vast uplands contain the largest reserve of glaciers and ice outside the Arctic and Antarctic, shaping water security across much of Asia.

**Conserving mountain landscapes safeguards global freshwater supplies, biodiversity, and carbon stores. It also protects our living cultures, languages, and traditional governance and management systems that embody resilience.**

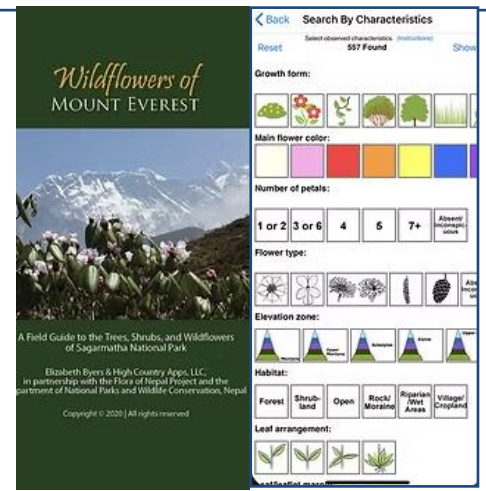
From Elizabeth A. Byers, Vegetation Ecologist [Appalachian.Ecology@gmail.com](mailto:Appalachian.Ecology@gmail.com)

**"Wildflowers of Mount Everest" app** is now available as a free download for both Apple and Android mobile devices. Please encourage your friends, colleagues, and students to download it. Once installed, it does not require an internet connection, so it is perfect for identifying flowers and learning about flower lore while trekking.

Please find "Wildflowers of Mount Everest" on the Apple Store, Google Play, or at:

<https://www.highcountryapps.com/flora-apps/wildflowers-of-mount-everest>

Elizabeth's next project is a collaboration with the Nepal Department of Plant Resources on an illustrated guide to the flowers of Kanchenjunga Conservation Area. They are hoping for completion within the next year.



## **Mainstreaming Ecological Connectivity in Spatial Planning Systems of the Alpine Space** From Alparc news or <https://alparc.org/>

Alpine biodiversity faces growing threats from urbanization, infrastructure development, intensive agriculture, and climate change, leading to habitat fragmentation and barriers to species movement. The [PlanToConnect](#) project has delivered different results to integrate ecological connectivity into spatial planning. Some of the main project results include:

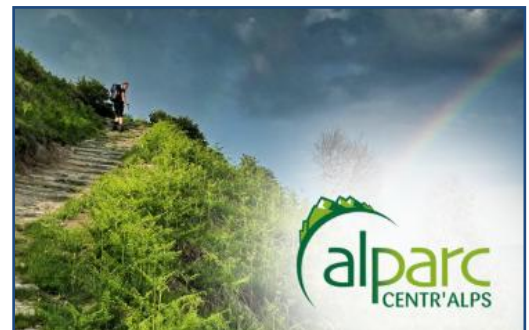
- Ecological network mapping, available in [Jecami](#) and [storymaps](#)
- Technical reports on physical barriers, strategic challenges, and renewable energy impacts
- Guidance documents for planners to implement connectivity measures
- A strategic framework and communication tools to raise awareness and build capacity

## **Three-Country Peace Park** From Alparc news

In September, the [National Park Triglav](#), the [Julian Prealps Nature Park](#), and the [Dobratsch Nature Park](#) formally agreed to strengthen their close cross-border cooperation. This marks the beginning of an even deeper partnership between Slovenia, Italy and Austria, aiming to jointly implement projects in biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, and environmental education.

Located in the heart of Europe, the area covered by the three parks unites not only major cultural and linguistic regions – the Slavic, Romance, and Germanic – but also significant Alpine ranges such as the Julian and Carnic Alps, the Karavanks, and the Gailtal Alps.

**The Three-Country Peace Park aims to extend its impact far beyond the region itself – serving as a model for sustainable development, a bridge between cultures, and a symbol of a united Europe.**



Through mapping analyses, spatial planning tools, and cross borders analyses, the project aims to analyze and assess the current state of ecological connectivity in the Alps, as well as propose measures to strengthen the ecological network, supporting the COP15 30by30 goal.

## Scree and Talus cont.

### [Transnational cooperation in the European Alps](#)



ALPARC begins the year 2026 with two new members joining the network. The Swiss [Nature Park Gruyère Pays-d'Enhaut](#) and the Italian [National Park Dolomiti Bellunesi](#) are now part of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas.

**With the accession of National Park Dolomiti Bellunesi, all Alpine national parks are now united within the ALPARC network!**

ALPARC is also pleased to announce its upcoming international event **TOGETHER for the ALPS**, taking place from 15-18 September 2026 in Matrei in Osttirol (Austria), hosted by the National Park Hohe Tauern Tyrol. In the heart of the Alps, this event will bring together the ALPARC working groups and partners to connect, exchange experiences and strengthen our cooperation.

The [Japan Mountain Day Foundation](#), a member of the Mountain Partnership, has launched the [English version](#) of its official website celebrating Japan Mountain Day (Yama no Hi), the national holiday dedicated specifically to mountains, celebrated on 11 August. Mountains cover approximately 70 percent of Japan's land area and are central to Japan's identity, shaping its geography, culture and livelihoods. Japan Mountain Day draws attention to the vital role of mountains as sources of water, biodiversity, cultural heritage and community life.

The [Beyond Ice Futures](#) project, funded as a synthesis activity by the Mountain Research Initiative, brings together scientific, stakeholder and practitioner perspectives to identify key knowledge gaps and nature's contributions to people (NCPs) in recently deglaciated landscapes, and to develop positive narratives and guidance for "beyond ice" futures. *From Mountain Partnership February 2026*

### [Mountain Future Award From Mountain Partnership IMD 2025](#)

Around 350 submissions were received from 78 countries for the [Mountain Future Award](#) 2025. The award recognized three transformative projects that aim to protect mountain ecosystems and build resilience to glacier-related impacts. The three winners are: [Internet Society Kyrgyzstan Chapter](#) from Kyrgyzstan for innovation, [Cumbres Blancas](#) from Colombia for adaptation, and [The Gulmit Educational and Social Welfare Society](#) for youth.

Doing research in recently deglaciated landscapes? Let us know your key research needs and visions to achieve 'positive futures' when the ice is gone.

Participate in our BeyondIceFutures Project Global Survey!

[https://www.socisurvey.de/beyond\\_icefutures/](https://www.socisurvey.de/beyond_icefutures/)

Participants in the survey can apply to join for our in-person follow-up workshop in Autumn 2026 in the Austrian Alps!

Project lead: Jana Fichel, Anja Zimmer, Arnaud Terme and Michele Freppaz. Funded by the MHI.

### [Mountain Research and Development Vol 46, No 1: Mountain Tourism—Trends and Transformations Toward Sustainability and Resilience](#)

How can tourism contribute to sustainable development in mountains? This focus issue brings together insights from the European Alps, the Himalaya, the Pyrenees, and the Canadian Rockies on efforts to adapt mountain tourism to climate change and to transform the sector for greater sustainability, equity, and resilience. All six contributions emphasize the close interconnection between climate change, local communities, and governance. <https://www.mrd-journal.org/>

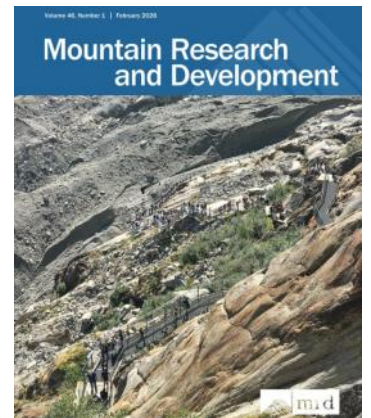
### [Sustainable mountain development: Resolution adopted by the General Assembly](#)

The United Nations general assembly resolution A/RES/80/144 reaffirms the international commitment to addressing the challenges faced by mountain regions around the world. The resolution highlights the fundamental role that mountain ecosystems play in achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and... [Read more](#)

**From Gabriel Oppler**, IUCN WCPA Connectivity Conservation Specialist Group at Center for Large Landscape Conservation:

At the World Conservation Congress in October, around 50 people from 20 countries participated in the Forum Session "Transboundary Conservation Around the World: Ecologically and Culturally Well-connected Landscapes and Seascapes."

The CCSG Secretariat organized the event with the WCPA Transboundary Conservation Specialist Group; this was a chance to bring the two groups' agendas closer together in pursuit of well-connected transboundary landscapes and seascapes.



A final report from the session is now available [HERE](#)