



The Covid-19 pandemic is a human tragedy which has changed life for everybody. In our last editorial, Matej Gabrovec wrote about the impact of Covid-19 on the protected area near his home, where many local people were enjoying nature thanks to lockdown. During the summer months, restrictions on the mobility of people in Central Europe were eased, but many states have now reinstated the restrictions due to rising numbers of Covid-19 infections. These restrictions had and still have far-reaching consequences not only on our daily lives and the economy, but also on biodiversity, climate change and human wellbeing. Some conservationists have already written about the impact the pandemic is having on protected areas. Corlett et al. (2020) state that the first concern must be human health and the containment of the pandemic, but that we also need to be thinking ahead to the resumption of conservation practice and education. Hockings et al. (2020) argue that protected areas will have an important role in

a resilient planetary recovery from Covid-19, advancing human and economic health and wellbeing. Concerns about Covid-19 are also present in this issue of the journal, where Martha E. Apple describes the impact of coronavirus restrictions on alpine field work in the state of Montana in the US.

Other articles in this issue deal with various concerns relating to mountain protected areas. Discussions of biodiversity, conservation conflicts, and various aspects of tourism take readers to protected areas in Malaysia, Turkey, Kosovo, Poland, Slovakia, the USA and Chile. The study by Azlan Abas & Laily Din explores lichen diversity, composition and distribution along elevational gradients in the tropical mountain forest of Gunung Nuang, Malaysia. Some species are threatened by the loss of forest and by human activities and need to be protected and managed to ensure their survival. Schabetsberger et al. present a preliminary limnological characterization of two neighbouring alpine lakes, Leqinat and Drelaj, in the Bjeshkët e Nemuna National Park (Kosovo). The lakes differ in their hydrology and species assemblages in the open water. Fish introduction poses a threat to the lakes and could alter the community of prey organisms very significantly. García et al. introduce the reader to the mountain ecosystems of the Southern Central Andes where tensions between traditional herding practices and conservation policies are evident. The herding practices have existed since pre-Hispanic times and have contributed to the production of particular ecosystems, yet official conservation policies create conflicts and affect the herders' territorial rights. The study by Drage et al. takes us to the String and Leigh Lakes area in the Grand Teton National Park, in the Rocky Mountains in the US. The area is a favoured alpine destination for numerous day-trippers and an important starting point for backcountry and overnight recreational users. The results show that overnight recreational users gain more positive experiences within the Recommended Wilderness, away from high-density, trailhead-proximate areas. A case study from the Tatra National Parks in Poland and Slovakia by Hibner et al. reveals skiers' expectations as a challenge for managers of protected areas. In looking at skiers' opinions and complaints regarding the resorts, the authors found that there was a high level of acceptance of further development by the respondents to their survey, who didn't perceive the skiing infrastructure as a factor that decreased the landscape value. The implementation of further restrictions in the functioning of the ski resort, although a reasonable management strategy concerning environmental factors, is unlikely owing to political and economic pressure. Finally, Turgut et al. introduce a case study in Hatila Valley National Park, Turkey in which indicators for natural characteristics and landscape values were used to identify mountain forest roads as potential hiking routes.

Time will tell whether Covid-19 will be reflected in future articles in *eco.mont*, but after the virus has cut so deeply into our lives, we can assume that this will be the case. The ubiquitous impact of the pandemic on all aspects of human society offers has given rise to unforeseen research opportunities. The long-term impact of the pandemic on socio-ecological systems cannot be predicted, but systems studied before the pandemic will be closely monitored during and after it. Studies presented in the current issue of *eco.mont* may well lead to new insights and knowledge about human-nature interaction viewed through the lens of the pandemic.

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