

Editorial by Leopold Füreder



It is a great pleasure for me to welcome the readers of this issue of *eco.mont*! Indeed, as you would expect, this issue again offers a well-balanced range of research articles and management and policy issues.

The current edition of *eco.mont* covers studies from protected mountain areas in the Alps, Romania, Turkey, China and Africa. The articles of this issue deal with human perceptions on landscapes, indigenous ecological knowledge, conservation conflicts, backpacker tourism, effects of climate change, local development and scientific councils, thus mirroring the wide variety of influence people have on protected areas. Protected areas only work well if the management and the people living around them work together effectively and if decision-making is a joint process.

While the content of *eco.mont* in general is always of great interest for scientists and practitioners, the article about the scientific councils in protected areas caught my particular attention. As the chair of the scientific board of Hohe Tauern National Park, I have gathered experience in this area over the last five years. A council that helps to develop and foster an active network with scientists is highly recommended. Protected areas can provide valuable infrastructure and important ground to undertake innovative and state-of-the-art research as well as benefit from the various interests, results and recommendations produced within and by scientific projects. A scientific council can fulfil many roles and activities to overcome problems and deficits. Although the funding and support of research is expressly mentioned in most working programmes and treaties of national parks, the actual research budget often barely comes to a few percent of the whole. Investing in this issue is certainly a win-win situation.

Science and management have moved closer as several challenges have emerged in mountain regions and in the Alps in particular. Climate change, the ever increasing demand for land and resources, as well as other, sometimes barely recognized, challenges like demographic change are raising current and future management issues. In my new role as President of ISCAR, I feel strongly that scientific issues need to be linked with political, administrative and social demands. ISCAR is an observer of the Alpine Convention (AC), a role that I find very important and provoking. Moreover, I would like to have ISCAR actively involved in ongoing processes and planning strategies. ISCAR will continue to send delegates into most platforms and working groups of the AC. So far we have been active in the Natural Hazard Platform, the Ecological Network Platform, the Water Management Platform in the Alps and the Mountain Farming Platform, as well as the Working Groups Macro-regional strategy for the Alps and Sustainable Tourism.

Together with the ISCAR members I also feel responsible for the thematic involvement of ISCAR over the next four years. As a freshwater ecologist, I see “*Freshwaters in the Alps*” arising as a major issue. Challenges emerge across the entire Alps, from the headwaters, where quite a number of impacts and modifications have altered their structure and functions, to the main valley rivers as the recipients of various waters, solids and solutes – almost all processes end in the discharging rivers or lakes in the lower areas. Besides providing input to issues like flood protection, sediment transport, water and disaster management, with the key topic “*Freshwaters in the Alps*” we will contribute actively and strongly to the major activities within the AC. These include issues identified as important for its MAP (Multi-Annual Program), such as climate change, biodiversity and the conservation of natural resources. Freshwaters are also ideal and obvious models to address and conceptualize the important concept and strategy of ecological connectivity in the Alps.

Within my period as ISCAR President the major goals and activities will be to i) identify and promote future research on the above mentioned topics and address emerging issues to the AC, ii) provide scientific support to pan-Alpine and interdisciplinary initiatives and networks, and iii) act as an interface between science and the AC. Last but not least, an ongoing important aim is to address and integrate young scientists. A major milestone in outreach and networking activities will be sessions or workshops at the AlpWeek in 2016, a workshop in 2017 and the organization of the ForumAlpinum in 2018 with “*Water and water use in the Alps*” as a general topic.

ISCAR will also continue to work closely with the Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC). In 2006 we established a joint working group called ISCAR-P, where we provide scientific support to research activities within ALPARC, such as the four-yearly Hohe Tauern National Park research symposium, the Mountain Pool database on research projects and the journal *eco.mont*.

Being an active scientific commission along with developing and implementing the European Strategy for the Alpine Region (EUSALP) and the Multi-Annual Program of the AC will certainly be a challenge. You are welcome to support and contribute to our activities at the various conferences, workshops and themed meetings.

Now enjoy this issue of *eco.mont*.

Leopold Füreder

Related projects according to the **European Mountain Pool**

At the editorial office of eco.mont, we maintain the **European Mountain Pool** on research in European protected mountain areas. http://4dweb.proclim.ch/4dcgi/ProtAreas/en/BuildSearch_ProtArea

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Trail use and perception of a diverse mountain farming landscape by hikers in the protected area Allgäuer Hochalpen in the German Alps by Gerd Lupp, Markus Feuerstein, Linda Heuchele & Werner Konold

Environmental and management issues associated with backpacker tourism in mountainous protected areas, China by Jing Wu, Jinyu Shen, Yilei Hou & Yali Wen

Social science and indigenous ecological knowledge in Kakamega Forest, Western Kenya by Oscar Kambona Ouma, Christoph Stadel & Benjamin Okalo

Conservation conflicts in nature conservation: the example of Kastamonu-Bartın Kure Mountains National Park by Sevgi Görmüş

Indicators of climate: Ecrins National Park participates in long-term monitoring to help determine the effects of climate change by Richard Bonet, Fabien Arnaud, Xavier Bodin, Michel Bouche, Isabelle Boulangeat, Philippe Bourdeau, Martial Bouvier, Laurent Cavalli, Philippe Choler, Anne Delestrade, Cédric Dentant, Dominique Dumas, Laurent Fouinat, Marie Gardent, Sébastien Lavergne, Emmanuel Naffrechoux, Yann Nellier, Marie-Elodie Perga, Clotilde Sagot, Olivier Senn & Wilfried Thuiller

Opportunities to leverage World Heritage Sites for local development in the Alps by Engelbert Ruoss

Recommendations for establishing or renewing scientific councils in protected areas by Isabelle Arpin, Astrid Wallner, Thomas Scheurer & Valerie Braun

Related projects in the **European Mountain Pool**

Arne Arnberger: Exploring differences in mountain landscape preferences and perceptions between Austrian and United States protected area visitors CH-5406

Svajda Juraj: Threats related to tourism and recreation in Natura 2000 areas. CH-5413

Marianna Elmi: Challenges for sustainable tourism management in a UNESCO serial World Heritage Site. The case of the Dolomites. CH-5081

Voll Frieder: A systemic perspective on sustainable governance of protected areas. CH-5393

Scharr Kurt: Sochi 2014 – Potential for conflict around the XXIIth Winter Olympics. CH-5460

Catalan Jordi: Climate history as recorded by ecologically sensitive arctic and alpine lakes in Europe during the last 10 000 years; a multi-proxy approach (CHILL 10 000). CH-1604

Kraller Gabi: Climate impact research in Berchtesgaden National Park Reflections on a workshop held on 18 and 19 February 2010. CH-5475

Reitner Jürgen: The effect of Climate Change during the Lateglacial in the Hohen Tauern. CH-5571

Gasser Judith: The state of this World Heritage region as a starting point for regional monitoring. CH-5458

Conradin Katharina: World Natural Heritage sites and regional development – the cases of Mt Kenya and Mt Kilimanjaro. CH-5396

Bocca Massimo: Mont Avic Natural Park – Management Supported by Scientific Research and EMS. CH-5504