

MOUNTAIN PROTECTED AREAS UPDATE

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To fully perceive a mountain is to be assailed by contrasting and competing thoughts and emotions, some with roots in the deep past and some of relatively recent origin. For as far as it can be seen, the Majella (Massif) exerts a strong influence on the Abbruzzesi surrounding it - at once protectively welcoming and also ominously threatening them. With good reason they can be commonly heard to exclaim "Managgia alla Majella!" ("Damn the Majella!") for the mountain, like a deity, is simultaneously capable of phenomenal beauty and severe destruction.

~ Patrick Barron

from *Mountain Research and Development*, November 2006

World Mountain Day

As designated by the UN General Assembly, starting in 2003, December 11 is World Mountain Day. The theme for this year is Managing Mountain Biodiversity for Better Lives. Mountain Day offers a good opportunity for raising awareness of the public as to the values in maintaining mountain biodiversity, as a function of MtPAs. So go out, climb, or be inspired by a mountain! For a few minutes, "think like a mountain". It is our day!

Wilburforce Foundation

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Tragedy in Nepal

Most readers of UPDATE are aware of, and keenly feel the loss suffered by the Mountain Protected Areas community in the helicopter crash of September 23, when 24

¹ Names of Mountain Protected Areas Network members appear in italics.

persons lost their lives. Several of these were colleagues and friends to many of you. Of particular tragedy to our network and the WCPA Mountain Biome were the deaths of two extremely active members: *Chandra Gurung* and *Mingma Sherpa*. Tributes to them and their work were immediately posted on a new page put up by *Linda McMillan* on our web page <mountains-wcpa.org/InMemorium.htm>.

In this issue of UPDATE, it is fitting that we remember and honor our two friends and colleagues, who were returning from a mission involving the wonderful Kanchenjunga Conservation Area. From many sad messages sent by others, I have extracted a few lines that I found particularly comforting.

Kanchenjunga itself will stand a little bit higher as a memorial, I suspect. (Stephan Fuller).

Seek the treasure you value most dearly: if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain. (Bruce Jefferies, from a Maori saying)

The outstanding contributions of these individuals stand as tall as the sacred Himalaya they worked so hard to document, conserve and celebrate. Many of them were born of these mountains, sons and daughters of this soil. Others came to join in helping mountain peoples improve their lives and nurture their magnificent landscapes, plants and animals. (Gabriel Campbell)

Mountains have inspired men and women throughout the ages, perhaps because their challenge is so unpredictable. All of us, including the 24 men and women who so tragically lost their lives last week in eastern Nepal, know there are risks involved when we venture into the heights, but we also know that the professional and personal inspiration we seek in the mountains is worth the risk. I hope that all people who love the mountains will join us in dedicating our future activities to the memory of these friends, colleagues and their families. We must ensure that the mountains of the world, especially those in eastern Nepal, continue to inspire future generations so that the sacrifice of our friends and colleagues will not have been in vain. (Edward Wilson)

I worked with and know most of the Nepalese who lost their lives on that fateful helicopter accident. They were fellow travelers on a journey towards a common goal, which is to make the earth a better place to live. Each of us takes our own little steps, by contributing individual energy and initiatives, and occasionally, we link hands to get over an obstacle which leads us closer to our collective destination. All of a sudden we have lost some fellow travelers. But, the remaining travelers must work harder to make up for the loss by converting the sorrows into positive energy and continue the journey until we too are no longer able. (Lhakpa Sherpa)

And finally, because it gives a context to the tragedy and is a wonderful personal tribute, we reprint a portion of a tribute sent by *Stan Stevens*:

The helicopter crash in a mountain gorge in northeast Nepal took the lives of many of Nepal's leading conservationists and WWF staff from the UK and USA. They had

traveled together to a remote Sherpa village to be on hand for a historic handover of protected area management responsibility of Kanchenjunga Conservation Area to resident Sherpas and other peoples, the first time the management of a Nepal protected area has been transferred to indigenous peoples. Among those who celebrated this achievement were two long-time friends of mine, Mingma Norbu Sherpa and Chandra Gurung.

Mingma Norbu Sherpa and Chandra Gurung were born in the mountain villages of two of the Himalaya's most renowned indigenous peoples and in the heart of two of the most famous mountain regions in Nepal - Mingma in Khunde village in the Sherpa homeland of Khumbu within what is now Sagarmatha (Chomolunga/Mt. Everest) National Park, and Chandra in Sikles, the largest Gurung village in what is now Annapurna Conservation Area. They went on to storied conservation careers that inspired many people in Nepal and around the world. They shared common convictions in conservation, protected areas, and the importance of recognition of the potentially crucial contributions of indigenous peoples and other local communities to protected areas established in their homelands.

Mingma and Chandra were central to the development of the conservation area concept in Nepal. In 1985 they were members of the team that proposed and planned the establishment of Annapurna Conservation Area, Nepal's first experiment with co-managed conservation. During the next half-dozen years they implemented that vision on the ground as the first two directors of the renowned Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP).

What Mingma and Chandra, together with Gurung and other Annapurna region peoples, helped create through ACAP was revolutionary for Nepal protected area conservation and drew worldwide attention. They, however, saw Annapurna Conservation Area as a beginning and felt that the conservation area approach would not reach its full potential until local residents assumed full responsibility for management. That has not yet come to pass in Annapurna, but it now has in Kanchenjunga Conservation Area -in not small part thanks to WWF efforts. It was very fitting that Mingma and Chandra had traveled to Ghunsa to participate in that historic event as WWF's Managing Director for the Eastern Himalaya and as WWF's Country Representative for Nepal.

I am glad that Mingma and Chandra lived to see the handover of Kanchenjunga Conservation Area management to local indigenous communities. On that final rainy, foggy monsoon morning they spent together in a high mountain village, gathered with Ghunsa Sherpa residents, government officials, and WWF colleagues to enact and celebrate a historic moment in Himalayan conservation, I hope that they took some satisfaction in their roles in creating the conservation area concept in Nepal and in WWF's important contribution in working with the Nepal government to establish Kanchenjunga Conservation Area and in assisting local indigenous communities in taking up administrative authority over the new protected area. In preparing and delivering their speeches that day both Mingma and Chandra must have thought back two decades to the birth of the Annapurna Conservation Area and reflected on how that day's ceremonies in Kanchenjunga Conservation Area continued and extended that legacy. Mingma Norbu Sherpa and

Chandra Gurung have set an example and left us legacies which deserve to be long remembered and cherished.

It is proposed to establish a memorial education and training fund for young Nepalis, as a tribute. This will be done jointly between WCPA and WWF, with *Larry Hamilton* and *Linda McMillan* coordinating for WCPA.

Elk Overpopulation in Rocky Mountain NP (USA)

About 100 years ago, elk had nearly vanished from the region that includes Rocky Mountain National Park. Wolves and grizzlies had been eliminated. In 1913 elk were reintroduced to their region of Colorado, largely for sport hunting. Two years later in 1915 Rocky Mountain NP was created, and the "no hunting" policy therein quickly reestablished a healthy population. By 1943 however, numbers had become excessive, so that a culling program was instituted, which continued until 1968.

Over the ensuing years, housing and other development outside the park consumed good elk habitat, and pushed numbers in the park even higher. Today, more than 4,000 elk may be found in and around the park, in an area that is estimated to be able to support only 2,500 individuals. They are almost becoming "pests", and are decimating the area's famous aspen stands (noted for golden color in the autumn amid the dark conifer cover). Note: This same problem is improving in the Yellowstone NP area where wolves have been successfully reintroduced.) Public comments are being received on alternative solutions (birth control, wolf reintroduction, government culling, and public hunting). To permit public hunting in a National Park would take an act of Congress, and there is a visitor safety problem. And, whatever the Park Service does cannot be done without taking into account the surrounding lands, as the National Parks Conservation Association points out in comments. "No park is a biological island".

Western Ghats (India)

We receive very little news from one of the world's most interesting mountain ranges, --India's Western Ghats. The range is roughly 1,400 km in length, spaced over 0.14 million km² in five states. While average heights of the Ghats is less than 1,500 m, southern summits range up to 2,500 m. Here in this rugged terrain reside many micro-cultures, ranging from negrito groups to the Toda pastoral people whose origins remain obscure. In this least trammled bioregion of Southern India is found the greatest treasurehouse of native, wild biodiversity. Much of this is protected in numerous sacred forests of these varied tribes. Most of these are in the States of Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Madhav Gadgil has been the most avid chronicler of these revered groves

and temple forests. In addition, with various levels of secular protection are a multitude of national parks and wildlife sanctuaries. Together these areas offer the possibility of a nature-friendly connected corridor the length of the Western Ghats.

Most advanced implementation of connectivity seems to be in Kerala, with numerous sacred groves and three National Parks and 12 Sanctuaries. Fostering this concept has been Sathis Nair of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage. The latest (and last, --see Publications section) issue of *Plant Talk* has a fine feature article on the botanical richness of Kerala's Toda Landscapes of the Nilgiri Hills. The Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, the first in India, has a core area of two NPs (Mukarti and Mudumalai) as well as the Silent Valley Reserve, and covers 5,000 km². The Toda's culture is closely tied to their continual, sustainable use of the rich flora. Their homeland contains 90 endemic plant species and varieties, and some of the plants are basically Himalayan species, including *Rhododendron* (a sacred tree to Todas), *Ilex* and *Berberis*. Even the Nilgiri tahr and marten are essentially Himalayan species. No wonder the Western Ghats is a global biodiversity hotspot.

New IUCN Director General Appointed

The IUCN Council has appointed Julia Marton-Lefèvre as the new Director General of the World Conservation Union. Ms. Marton-Lefèvre is skilled in international relations and development, and has an extensive network in the environmental and governmental communities. She has been a member of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication, and was Executive Director of LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development) International, a program established by the Rockefeller Foundation to bring together and train mid-career leaders from around the world in improving their leadership skills around the issues of sustainable development. She has served as Executive Director of the Paris-based International Council for Science, a program specializing in environmental education under a joint UNESCO-UNEP program. And as a Peace Corps Volunteer, she taught at university level in Thailand. Ms. Marton-Lefèvre joins IUCN in January 1007, from her current position at the University of Peace in Costa Rica.

Sierra del Divisor Natural Reserve (Perú)

A large 1.5 million ha natural reserve has been created in Perú, extending from the Andes into the Amazon. It abuts Brasil's Serra do Divisor NP. It is considered to be one of the few remaining mountain complexes still forest covered inside Perú's borders. It contains the largest number of primates in the entire Neotropics and has many endemic species of flora and fauna. Its declaration as a reserve will also shield the Isconahua indigenous peoples from colonization and illegal logging. The establishment of this reserve

was assisted by The Nature Conservancy, which will help with the transborder cooperation which is now possible, between Brasil and Perú for an 8 million ha complex of important Amazon Basin forest. The eastern slope of the Andes toward the Amazon has always been recognized as one of the prime biodiversity hot spots.

Palm Trees and Transborder Cooperation

Adapted from ITTO's Tropical Forest Update

Perú's Tambopata National Reserve Area and Bolivia's Madidi National Park and Integrated Management Area are an Andean Transborder complex and important stepping stone in a conservation corridor of the Andes. Conservation International has been working herein for many years with the respective protected area agencies of the two countries. In addition to the local communities (Tacana and Leco), a fourth partner, International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) has entered the picture, in promoting conservation with support of livelihoods of the local communities by bringing about the sustainable management of two palm tree species.

Palms can supply many useful products for both subsistence and commercial use. These include: oils, flours, extracts, juices (including a fermented beverage) and building materials. Using traditional knowledge from the local communities, a project has been developed focused on two palms, the *majo* and *palmiche*. From the former, oil and sap will be produced, and from the latter, palmiche leaf transformed into roof building material. Management and utilization (including marketing) plans have been developed that strengthen local organizations, and build support for the two protected areas.

ISCAR and Mt PAs

A spin-off from the (European) Alpine Convention resulted in 1994 with the establishment of the Forum Alpinum. This forum essays to bring scientists together from the Convention Countries (Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Switzerland, Lichtenstein and Monaco) for collaborative research on common mountain issues. It resulted in the establishment in 1999 of ISCAR, the International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps.

In 2002, together with the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) it joined in the WWF Alpine Ecoregions program in identifying 23 priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the Alps; and it is focusing on connectivity of these with PA systems. Two years later, again with CIPRA and also the Network of Alpine Protected Areas (*Guido Plassmann*) the concept of AlpWeek was developed. This provides opportunity for discussion and debate among scientists, politicians, administrators, NGOs and other stakeholders (*e.g.* farmers). The next AlpWeek will be in France in 2008.

European Alps - Recent Action Items

Wolfgang Burhenne, Environmental Law Programme

- The Swiss Parliament decided on October 6 on the revisions of the Nature Conservation Act making it possible to declare new national and/or nature parks. The categories National Park, Regional Nature Park, and Natural Recreation Park have now been defined under the law as Natural and Cultural Landscapes paving the way for increased protection of larger areas of significance. At the moment, 30 new park projects are under consideration.
- The Gran Paradiso National Park has received the European Certification of Protected Area from the Council of Europe. This recognition is only bestowed upon protected areas with Europe-wide importance for the protection of biological, geological, or landscape diversity and can be renewed or withdrawn every 5 years. One of the conditions of this recognition is that it must strive to achieve the protection and sustainable development of the area.
- The European Community signed the Transport Protocol of the Alpine Convention of October 12. This is a legally-binding international instrument which still requires ratification by the European Parliament. One of the main aspects of the Protocol is the moratorium of construction of any new highways across the Alps. The European Community is the last of the 9 contracting parties to sign the Transport Protocol.

Jamaica Debt-for-Nature Swap

Jamaica's Blue and John Crow Mountains Forest Reserve and National Park, and its rugged, largely inaccessible Cockpit Country will benefit from a US\$16.5 million Forest Conservation Fund set up by the Jamaican Government. These areas and the Negril Protected Area and Dolphin Head Mountains are key watershed headwaters from two-thirds of Jamaica's freshwater. There are important cloud forests in these mountains. This fund is the result of a 2004 negotiated debt-for-nature swap agreement through The Nature Conservancy between the USA (debt forgiver) and the island's Government. It will assist in protecting these upper watershed forest reserves and parks from bauxite and limestone mining, logging and agricultural encroachment or unsustainable practices. This is one of the early areas selected in USAID's Parks in Peril Program. A Nature Conservancy project under Director *Terry Williams* is partnering with the Jamaica Forestry Department, South Trelawny Environmental Agency and the Windsor Research Centre.

Cultural Landscape Conservation Measures in Sagarmatha NP (Nepal)

Stan Stevens, University of Massachusetts, USA

Local and international concern over the impacts of regional economic and cultural change on the celebrated Khumbu Sherpa cultural landscapes of the Mt. Everest region

has long sparked rebuilding and renovating regional monasteries, temples, and shrines but has had little effect on settlement architecture or the "working landscapes" of forest and pastures. That may change with innovative measure proposed in the new Sagarmatha NP (SNP) and Buffer Zone Management Plan 2006-11 (written by a team headed by Mt PA Network member *Lhakpa Norbu Sherpa* and now under Nepal government review). The plan calls for renewed discussion of the possible nomination of Sagarmatha NP for World Heritage Site "joint property" status to recognize its cultural landscapes as well as its physical features, zoning to create Community Resource Areas in most of the national park including rangelands and much forest (which Sherpas would help manage); and the designation of Heritage Settlements. Communities choosing one of three types of Heritage Settlements will receive financial and other assistance supporting varying degrees of architectural preservation, use of "traditional" design features in new construction, and continued practice of organic agriculture and transhumant herding.

Meanwhile, one aspect of the visual landscape of Khunde and Khumjung villages was recently improved when local residents answered a call from Ang Rita Sherpa (of The Mountain Institute) to paint green the many blue and red metal roofs which have become increasingly common replacements for customary wood shingle and slate roofs. The cost of painting was subsidized by The Mountain Institute's Sacred Sites Project, WWF-Nepal, and The Himalayan Trust.

Conservation Connectivity in Mountain Corridors

We do not usually include accounts of past meetings, but this important one which took place November 13-17 in Ecuador, warrants a note. It was organized by your Mountains Biome Executive Committee under the enthusiastic leadership of *Graeme Worboys*. Supporters were IUCN South American Office, The Nature Conservancy Ecuador, World Bank and Wilburforce Foundation. It brought together some 40 members who had written case studies, a few synthesizers and editors, to produce a detailed outline for two chapters in a resulting book on Conservation Connectivity to be published by the end of 2007. The chapters are: "Lessons Learned" (from the case studies), and "Challenges for the Future." Another output was a "Papallacta Declaration" (Papallacta being the meeting site.) The group agreed after much discussion facilitated by *Martin Price*, that: *The maintenance and restoration of ecosystem integrity requires landscape-scale conservation. This can be achieved through systems of core protected areas that are functionally linked and buffered in ways that maintain ecological processes and allow species to survive and move, thus ensuring that populations are viable and that ecosystems are people are able to adapt to land transformation and climate change. We call this proactive, holistic, and long-term approach connectivity conservation.* It was emphasized that mountains and mountain ranges offer key opportunities for the corridors (summits to lowlands, and along the range) that will most easily achieve these objectives.

Fausto Sarmiento was indefatigable in leading informative walks and field trips. *Linda McMillan* worked tirelessly with camera and computer to present and record significant happenings. Our other deputy Vice-Chair, the late *Minga Sherpa* was sorely missed. Tributes to *Mingma*, to *Chandra Gurung* and *Narayan Poudel* were included in the meeting. *David Sheppard*, Protected Areas Program Officer from Gland, participated and did his usual formidable job of summarizing the meeting results. *Elizabeth Fox* did an heroic job with the media, and *Paulina Arroyo* of TNC ably did much of the local organizing with *Robert Hofstede* of IUCN SUR. *Linda McMillan* has already posted much information and illustrations on the MtPA website www.mountains-wcpa.org. It's worth a look.

Mountain (and other) Corridors in South America

Connected PAs, to provide "bridges for nature and people" have received a great deal of attention in South America since the last Latin American Parks Congress in Santa Marta Colombia. Due to the Andean Cordillera and the Atlantic Forest mountains, a great deal of the focus is on mountain corridors. IUCN SUR has been playing a key role in this emphasis. A regional workshop in 2004 in Quito has produced a workshop report entitled "Aplicación del Enfoque Ecosistémico a la Gestión de Corredores en América del Sur", which has only now come to my attention. Network members participating were *Marina Cracco*, *Victor Inchausty* and *Luis Suárez*. It emphasized establishment issues, and management. It contained a preliminary listing of some 16 corridors in Argentina, Bolivia and Brasil. Subsequently, last year, IUCN SUR produced a list for all countries, that includes 58 National Corridors and 19 Transfrontier Corridors, including the famous "Corridor of the Americas" from Tierra del Fuego to the Bering Sea. Most of these are in the concept stage, but "the vision" is the first step. At least 65% of these are mountains. The booklet is entitled "Corredores y Enfoque Ecosistémico". www.sur.iucn.org.

Forest Conservation Initiatives in Sagarmatha (Chomolungma/Mt. Everest)

National Park and Buffer Zone (Nepal)

Stan Stevens, University of Massachusetts

The declaration in 2002 of a buffer zone for Sagarmatha NP has given a considerable boost to conservation, development and Sherpa self-determination. The buffer zone includes all of the more than 100 permanent and seasonal Khumbu Sherpa settlement enclaves with SNP and another 30 settlements together with extensive forests and alpine areas in the Sherpa-inhabited Pharak region which borders SNP on the south. Buffer Zone management is carried out by local and regional committees and a 5-member Buffer Zone Management Council which has 3 Sherpa members. Locally-conceived and implemented conservation and development programs in the buffer zone are funded in part by the provision of 50% of the revenue from SNP entrance fee (currently more than

US\$130,000 a year from 20,000 visitors). Local and regional buffer zone committees and the Buffer Zone Management Council have used the new authority and money to strengthen forest conservation. Particular stress has been placed on the implementation of new firewood gathering regulations within the park, suppression of illegal commercial logging in Pharak, and the development of alternative energy (particularly small-scale hydroelectricity but also kerosene and propane).

Sherpa Buffer zone leaders currently administer a system which limits firewood gathering within the park to 2 2-week seasons and during these periods restricts each household to gathering 2 loads (27 kg each) per day. Families that use their homes as inns or who own both houses and inns receive no additional firewood allowance. This has led to increased use of alternative energy. Alternative energy provision, especially from micro-hydroelectric projects, is the foremost buffer zone priority and expenditure. In some areas the use of dried yak dung as fuel has also increased. Together these measures have reduced household and tourism-related firewood demand within the park by 50% or more. With enforcement and legal support from SNP, Pharak communities in the buffer zone to the south of the park have meanwhile virtually eliminated previously widespread (and often illegal) felling of trees for timber export. Current Pharak community forest-user group management planning restricts felling to village use and limits the amount of wood that can be obtained.

During the first years of buffer zone operation the combination of alternative energy provision, new forest regulations, and strengthened enforcement of community forest regulations in the Pharak community, have greatly defused a formerly serious forest degradation situation in northern Pharak and reduced pressure on Khumbu forests. The new firewood use policies may also have reduced the use of alpine shrubs and plants by tourist inns for firewood since 2002, since many inn owners prefer to use the firewood harvesting periods to obtain stocks of temperate forest firewood. The firewood regulations adopted in 2002 and modified in 2004/2006, have not been uncontroversial. However, there has been a real turn-about in the attitudes of a number of Sherpas who were quite opposed initially; and now some of the local leaders who were complaining in 2004, strongly support the regulations. The visible change in the level of forest use is part of this attitude change, and the increasing availability of alternative energy is also a factor. The decrease in additional firewood use by tourist inns is especially striking.

Bits and Pieces

The current governor of the Altai Republic proposed to change the status of the **Altaysky Zapovednik** (strict protection) to National Park with degree of use to be determined by the governor. After an inspection mission from the Ministry of Natural Resources in Moscow, the Deputy Minister called for this well-known PA to remain a

Zapovednik. The PA Director, *Vycheslav (Slava) Trigubovich* was praised in the press as a "radical ecologist" for upholding the integrity of the area. The Altai Conservancy (a support group) is located in Woodstock, Vermont USA. (www.altaiconservancy.org). Dr. Rodney Jackson, one of the world's leading experts on snow leopards has just become Advisor to the Board.

The UIAA (International Mountaineering and Climbing Association) at its annual meeting in Banff, Canada on October 14, dealt with the topic of the implications of climate change for mountaineering. *Linda McMillan* gave a presentation of our WCPA Mountain Biome initiative "**Melting Glaciers Project**". The IUAA Mountain Protection Commission, under President *Dave Morris* indicated support (including some cost-sharing) of this project, and its launching. The General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the development of an organization policy statement on climate change, and endorsing joint activity on the Melting Glaciers Project. Kudos to Linda and Dave for getting this on the agenda of this very influential organization.

It's true! *James Warwick (Muddy Boots) Thorsell* was recognized by his undergraduate school, the University of Alberta, with a Distinguished Alumni Award. This happened at a ceremony in Edmonton on September 28, too late for mention in our September 1 issue of UPDATE. Jim, your many friends, colleagues and victims salute you.

Per Wallston, after many years of fine service in the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, is to become Manager of Tyresta NP, operating out of Naninge.

Pursuant to our notes about the competition as to which was the first "National Park" to be declared, we received an interesting note from *Floyd Homer*, the WCPA Vice-Chair for the Caribbean which leads us to throw out the challenge of **earliest wild mountain protected area to be set aside** (royal hunting preserves do not qualify). Floyd offers the Main Ridge Forest Reserve in Tobago, a mountain PA of 5,665 ha set aside in 1776 by the legislature for "the protection of the rains." Any other offers?

Alton Byers (The Mountain Institute) received the Sir Edmund Hillary Mountain Legacy Award in November in recognition of the successful Khumbu alpine conservation project that he heads. He travels to Australia later this year for the ceremony. For the same project, last February, he received the David Brower Conservation Award. *Ang Rita Sherpa* of The Mountain Institute in Kathmandu is another key player in this project, which was kicked off by a grant from the American Alpine Club in 2004. Now they hope to turn their attention from Sagarmatha to Mera Peak region in Makalu-Barun NP.

And, we have heard that **Sire Edmund Hillary** has become concerned enough about unrestricted tourism impacts on the routes to the summit of Everest, that he has called

for giving the mountain a rest for a few years. If implemented this could have a significant negative impact on Sherpa guides and local food and accommodation providers.

Martin Price has recently been appointed to UNESCO's Advisory Committee on Biosphere Reserves. He joins *Yuri Badenkov* on this body. Martin says that "mountains" are well represented in this group since there are two other "mountain men", one from Poland and one from Kenya.

Engelbert Ruoss has left his beloved Entlebuch Biosphere Reserve in Switzerland to become director General of UNESCO's Bureau of Science and Culture in Europe. He makes his headquarters in Venice, Italy, and says that much of his activity will focus on the Balkans. We hope to get more Mt PA news from this part of the world.

Sequoia NP, home of the giant Sequoia trees, in the Sierra Nevada Mountains (USA) is now engaged in a "sister park" relationship with Cambodia's Samlaut NP, which was a mountainous Khmer Rouge stronghold only 10 years ago. Today it is faced with poachers, loggers and public indifference, and Sequoia personnel will help with these threats.

Tom Moritz, formerly with The American Museum of Natural History, has become Associate Director and Chief of Knowledge Management at the Getty Research Institute, exchanging New York City for Los Angeles. Tom is WCPA Co-Chair of the Information Management Group.

As well as being subject to increasing build-up of Persistent Organic Pesticides (POPs), through the "**cold condensation process**", high latitude areas of North America are receiving increasing deposition of toxic mercury due to global warming. This is due to increased wildfire frequency associated with climate change. In this scenario (*Geophysical Research Letters* 33:46403), mercury stored in soils and peats in Western Canada is being released, putting these mercury compounds back into the air. They are carried by wind, and "precipitating" out in arctic ecosystems which have already adversely affected people, plants and wildlife due to POPs. Mercury levels have increased in birds in the mountain areas of the Northeastern USA, including our Green Mountains here in Vermont. This appears to be caused by deposition from coal-burning power plants to our west.

At the end of October, President George Bush signed authorization to construct **700 miles of fence** along the US/Mexican border. What a great "gift" to transborder cooperation, wildlife movement, connectivity! Communication with National Park Service at Organ Pipe Cactus indicates that in at least a few places, special barriers will prevent illegal vehicular border crossing, but still permit wildlife to migrate or range where they have traditionally. "Homeland security" and preventing illegal immigration are important components of the present US Administration's domestic policies. These seem to be going

to extremes which have serious negative impacts on conservation, and transborder cooperation in PA management.

The **Great Baikal Trail** (Lake Baikal World Heritage Site) was initiated in 2002. By 2020 it is hoped to complete a 2,000 km circumnavigation of the famous lake. In the first 3 years some 1,085 foreign, Russian and local volunteers have built 385 km of trail. Funding support is from USAID and the US Forest Service. Three NGOs have become partners: Earth Island Institute and Earth Corps in USA and the Baikal Plan in Germany. They are training and helping to develop a volunteer service ethic. www.greatbaikaltrail.ru.

Job opportunity? Executive Director of Mountain Culture at the Banff Center is being sought, to replace Network member *Bernadette McDonald*. The focus will shift slightly in the position from the cultural side to the environment side. *Leslie Taylor* encourages members to see the job posting at www.banffcentre.ca/careers/careers/positions/mc/executive_director.asp. Closing date for applications is December 15.

A partnership has recently been developed between **Gran Paradiso NP** in Italy and **Sagarmatha NP and WH Site** in Nepal. At a meeting in Torino and Cogne, Italy, park representatives in October, agreed to a program of technical exchange and training. This was done under the umbrella of The Mountain Partnership. Further information from piercarlo.sandel@eurac.edu (European Academy).

Elizabeth Fox has left her position in Cinque Terra NP in Italy, and is now Program Assistant/Information Services for The Mountain Forum based at ICIMOD in Kathmandu. Mountain news can be posted in the Forum bulletin through her: Elizabeth@mtnforum.org.

In October, Congress in the USA passed the **Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act**. It permanently protects some 110,000 ha of coastal and coastal range public lands and 33 km of rivers in the northwest part of California.

A threat to China's **Three Parallel Rivers NP World Heritage Site** has been reduced and possibly eliminated. The Chinese Minister of Water Resources gave a black eye to the proposal to construct 13 hydropower dams on the Nu (Salween) River in Yunnan due to concerns about the World Heritage Site and downstream national interests. He said that one or two "uncontroversial" dams might be built. He also dismissed the idea of diverting water from the upstream Brahmaputra in Tibet into the Yellow River, a proposal that caused much alarm in India and Bangladesh. This is not to be confused with the huge Three Gorges development, which is nearing completion.

Correction: In the last issue, I wrote of Toubkal NP, and identified the highest peak in it as Djebel Mountain. An attentive reader pointed out that "Djebel" in Arabic means "mountain". So it should have read Djebel Toubkal, not "Mountain Mountain".

Much of the wild, **roadless area** of the US National Forests (Category VI) is in the mountains of both eastern and western USA. In a huge victory for America's last wild forests, a federal judge has reinstated the 2001 "roadless rule" that was meant to protect 58 million acres of national forests from roadbuilding, logging and other development. The roadless policy was supported by millions of Americans. The court sided with several states and environmental groups in ruling that the Bush administration violated the law in revoking the wild forest protection.

Bits and Pieces has gradually become the largest section of UPDATE. I would be glad to have opinions as to whether these short snippets of information continue to be of interest, and/or if they are too numerous.

Some Publications of Interest

Illustrated Atlas of the Himalaya. 2006 by David Zurich and Julsun Pacheco. 211 pp. University Press of Kentucky, Lexington. US\$50. www.kentuckypress.com.

Perhaps it is also worth noting, two publications that have just terminated printing...

National Parks International Bulletin is no more. Editor *Stewart Bonney* has been unable to continue subsidizing this fine publication out of his personal funds. A sad day, after 5 years of effort by Stewart.

Plant Talk, one of the few magazines that I read cover to cover is discontinuing its printed version and will come out as an on-line publication. Another sad day, for Editor *Hugh Synge*. (And for me, given my aversion to on-line publications.) It will go on the internet in early 2007. Information at www.plant-talk.org.

Global Change in Mountain Regions. 2006 Edited by *Martin Price*. Sapiens Publishing, Scotland. 375 pp. Consists of 200 extended abstracts. US\$58 plus \$12 shipping or £30 in UK. www.sapienspublishing.com.

Conflict Over Natural Resources at the Community Level in Nepal. 2006 by *Jim Schweithelm*, Ramzy Kansan and *Pralad Yonzon*. Associates in Rural development (Burlington, Vermont USA) and USAID (Washington, DC). We do not usually list country-specific reports of this nature, but because of its two Network member authors, and its unusual and pertinent topic, we do so. This deals with the Mao insurgency which occurred

from 1996 until early 2006, and its effect on conservation of forests, water, wildlife and protected areas, and conflict resolution over natural resources. www.usaid.gov.

National Geographic. October 2006. The theme for this issue of this popular magazine was "Places We Must Save". While much of it deals with the USA (National Parks in Peril, Threatened Sanctuaries and City Parks), the first two sections of 26 pages cover "Hallowed Ground" (a photo essay of some of the world's great protected areas, and "An Endangered Idea" an illustrated essay on the current controversy on whether protecting nature is inimical to the welfare of people, by the writer David Quammen. This issue also features a 6 page interview with Network member *George Schaller* on his work and philosophy. This is truly a fine issue.

WCPA Task Force on Cultural and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas has a new website www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/theme/values/values.html. For further information on the Task Force contact *Allen Putney* allen.putney@att.net.

Himalaya: Personal Stories of Grandeur, Challenge and Hope. 2006. Editors Richard C. Blum, Erice Stone and *Broughton (Brot) Coburn*. National Geographic Books, US\$35 www.himalayan-foundation.org. Forty distinguished writers focus world attention on the pressing humanitarian and environmental concerns of the "Roof of the World." These include: the Dalai Lama, Sir Edmund Hillary, President Jimmy Carter, *George Schaller*, *Hemanta Mishra*, and Maurice Herzog. Images by more than 50 acclaimed photographers show the beauty and variety of the place and its people. This great book is a collaboration between the American-Himalayan Foundation and the National Geographic Society. It may be ordered direct from hotbook@himalayan-foundation.org. Also see www.himalayan-foundation.org. Price US\$35.

Mont Blanc. 2006. Assembled and edited by *Barbara Ehringhaus* of proMont-Blanc, www.pro-mont-blanc.org. this beautifully illustrated, succinct booklet makes a case for "a wonderful treasure that is vulnerable and unprotected." Barbara and her organization have been working for over a decade to get three-country protected designation for this European icon. This booklet should help. info@pro-mont-blanc.org.

Some Upcoming Meetings of Interest

Rethinking Protected Areas in a Changing World. April 16-20, 2007 in St. Paul, Minnesota, USA. George Wright Society Biennial Conference. 6 plenary sessions, over 100 concurrent sessions, 3-day poster session, field trips. Abstracts were due by October 6, 2006. www.georgewright.org/2007.html. *David Harmon* is Executive Director.

Society of Conservation Biology Annual Meeting. July 1-5, 2007 in Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, South Africa. www.conbio.org/2007.

Parks, Peace and Partnerships Conference. September 9-12, 2007 in Waterton Park, Alberta, Canada. 75th anniversary of first International Peace Park. Deadline for submissions was September 15, 2006 to maddy@rockies.ca.

Nature - A Bridge Over Borders. EUROPARC 2007. September 26-30, 2007 in Cesky Krumlov, a World Heritage city in Czech Republic. www.europarc2007.com.

II Latin American Protected Areas Congress. September 30 - October 6, 2007 in Bariloche, Argentina. Co-sponsored by IUCN, this is held every 10 years. The four themes are: Protected areas and biodiversity conservation; Advances and challenges in knowledge and information about PA management; Strengthening management capacity and support for PAs; Governance, equity and quality of life issues. For information contact *Carmen Miranda* cmiranda@ibsasbolivia.com.

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