

## **Mountain Protected Areas Update - June 15, 1995**

### **MOUNTAIN PROTECTED AREAS UPDATE**

Lawrence S. Hamilton, Vice-Chair for Mountains  
Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas/IUCN  
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#### **Hill or Mountain?**

A British film with the ungainly but intriguing title "The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain" is currently playing theaters in the USA. If it comes your way, we heartily recommend that you see it. The plot concerns the emotional impact and subsequent actions of Welsh villagers when their cherished local "mountain" is threatened with demotion to "hill" status because it falls 15 feet (4.5 m) short of the official survey agency requirement that mountains be at least 1,000 feet (305 m) in height. This is slightly reminiscent of the feeling of outrage shown by many Australian and Scottish protected areas managers when Jim Thorsell and Jeremy Harrison prepared their global assessment of mountain protected areas for the Parks, Peaks and People Consultation in 1991, and set a standard for inclusion of a minimum relative relief of 1,500 m. The question of how high must a landform be to be classified as a mountain raises its head periodically, and has no easy answer. Sometimes I think that the only answer is in the eye and mind of the beholder when one sees a steep elevational land mass of major conspicuity, if it is characterized by two or more biotic altitudinal belts. In the flat state of Kansas (USA) there is a so-called Mount Sunflower which towers 160 m over surrounding countryside (although it is 1,210 m high above sea level). On the other hand there are the Black Hills of South Dakota which are approximately 280 m taller than Mount Washington, the highest summit in the White Mountains of the Eastern USA. Many geographers suggest a 700 m relative relief distance as the minimum to constitute a mountain. If any readers have some good and widely accepted definitions, they would be gladly received.

In presenting their assessment, Thorsell and Harrison were in part setting standards that permitted manageability of the data in the World Conservation Monitoring Centre data bank. Using 1,500 m difference, minimum size and for only IUCN Categories I-IV, they found 442 mountain protected areas, totaling 243,159,476 ha. Had they lowered the minimum relief to 1,000 m, the list would have expanded by 200 additional sites. So, although neither the splendid mountains of northwestern Scotland, the Scots' beloved Cairngorms, nor the Welsh Mount Snowdon show up on this global inventory, and the Australians have to be content with only Australian Alps, Bellenden Ker and Tasmania Wilderness in this listing, --who can deny the worth of many summits which by tradition or local consensus are labeled mountains, and are in protected areas? "The Englishman Who Went Up a Hill But Came Down a Mountain" has relevance on this point and does it with humor and charm.

#### **Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE**

In the previous issue of UPDATE (March 1995), we requested that those network members wishing to stay on the mailing list return by May 15 the brief questionnaire that was included. We were disappointed not to hear from several of you whom are known personally and have indicated previously that you appreciated receiving the UPDATE. Despite this, however, we have not dropped you from the network. Many thanks to those of you who did respond, with not only indications on how best to distribute UPDATE and what kinds of things to include, but also for your comments on its usefulness to yourself and others. The positive comments received are very gratifying and encourage us to continue the newsletter, which at this point is the primary means of linking members loosely together.

Although some network members have access to electronic mail, 90% of respondents prefer to receive UPDATE in hard copy. Most (78%) circulate it to others (in several cases to more than 10 colleagues); one puts MtPA UPDATE in the library; and one extracts items for a national newsletter. Those of you who indicated a desire for a directory of MtPA Network members, will find that enclosed with this issue. (This is a simple print-out of contact information, which will be sent to others on request.) A solid majority favored continuing all of the current generalized "topics" of the newsletter, including some news of individual members.

### **Mountain Protected Areas Network**

The usefulness of a MtPA Network was recently confirmed in practical terms by the taking of preliminary steps toward a park partnership, Europe/South America. This exciting idea came to Patrizia Rossi, Director of Argentera National Park (Italy's Maritime Alps) after reading the article on Huascarán National Park (Peru's Cordillera Blanca) in MtPA UPDATE. She has now begun to develop an agreement, under the umbrella of the Partnership and Exchange Program of the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe.

#### **Andean Mountains**

Mountain protected areas were the major focus of an April symposium in Huarina (Lake Titicaca) Bolivia on Sustainable Mountain Development: Managing Fragile Ecosystems in the Andes. Seventeen members of the MtPA Network participated in this fine meeting. An opportunity was provided to discuss the concept of a cordillera-long protected area corridor for the Andes, an idea being advanced by a group of IUCN South American members through Danilo Silva and José Pedro de Oliveira Costa and the "mountain team" of Thorsell and Hamilton. The concept found much support both at this symposium, and at a concurrent FAO protected area network workshop being held at nearby Huarinilla. It is incorporated in a Lake Titicaca Declaration issued by the scientists and managers who formally are now constituted as an Andean Mountain Association (President is Dr. Máximo Liberman, Director of the Institute of Ecology in La Paz, a network member),

#### **Dream Corridors**

Mountain man Jim Thorsell refuses to be content with moving toward an Andean-long corridor, but dreams of linking it to the existing Paseo Pantera in Central America, and a tie to the United States Great Divide and Pacific Coast Trails which link two networks of protected areas, needing considerable action in Mexico however to achieve linkage. His "corridor of the Americas" would then capture the series of Canadian Rocky Mountain protected areas, and into Alaska with the St. Elias World Heritage System. In a brief "think piece" he has a dream of a green corridor that crosses Beringea (agreed to in principle already by the US and Russia), through Siberia, Mongolia and Northern China, picks up the Silk Route (being promoted by UNESCO) to Venice. Corridors in the Appenines (see Green Europe proposal of Franco Tassi centered on Abruzzo National Park) and through the Alps could end close to Thorsell's desk in Gland, and have branches through the border parks of Eastern Europe and points north. Anyone interested in financing such an Inter-Hemisphere Conservation Corridor (or even a modest feasibility study) is invited to send their cash to J. Thorsell.

#### **Carpathian Association of National Parks and Protected Areas**

In one of the first issues of UPDATE, we carried an item about the founding of this Association, and asked readers for any ideas for financial support. The Association has continued its activity, under Ivan' Voloscuk, and has been able to produce a quarterly newsletter called CARPATHI. It is in Slovak and English and is produced at Tart National Park. The address is c/a Tart National Park, 05960 Tatranska Lomnica, Slovak Republic. It is a fine periodical for news of the Carpathians.

#### **Air Tour Flights and MtPAs**

The spirit and mind uplifting qualities of Machu Pichu Historic Sanctuary and World Heritage Site face the threat of tour overflights. We recently stood in awe in the mists and silence in that magic place and would have been devastated by rotor assault. NGO opposition has apparently been sufficient to cause officials to allow this on a trial basis only. Noise pollution from air tourism is a problem in many MtPAs worldwide. While some progress has been made in the USA, with the passage of a National Overflights Act in 1987, giving a modicum

of protection to Grand Canyon, Yosemite and Haleakala National Parks, the eardrum assault continues at other mountain sanctuaries of silence. Haleakala's sister park, Hawaii Volcanoes has a continual problem with air tour operators. Miquel Rafa of the Union Internationale des Associations d'Alpinisme has sent us a copy of the resolution approved by the UIAA General Assembly in Istanbul, requesting governments and authorities responsible for air traffic regulation to eliminate tourism flights in high mountain regions. Protected area managers facing this problem may wish to be in touch with the Mountain Protection Commission of UIAA. Miquel, a network member, is also on the Mountain Protection Commission, and can be contacted at Providencia 42, 08024 Barcelona, Spain..

### **Virunga National Park -- Danger List**

In the December 1994 issue, UPDATE carried a brief article provided by Jim Thorsell about the damage being done to Virunga National Park on both the Rwanda and Zaire sides of this World Heritage Site. At its December meeting, the World Heritage Committee inscribed it on the Danger List. Thanks to an emergency fund established in 1993 to help ameliorate disasters or natural calamities, funds have been made available to help re-establish a management presence in the park. While in most cases the emergency funds are used for Cultural Heritage Sites damaged by such calamities as earthquakes or floods, Natural Sites have also benefited following fires, drought or human action.

### **New Parks for Pakistan**

Not content to stop with the new Central Karakoram National Park (previously reported on) the Government of Pakistan has over the last 18 months established three other high mountain national parks in the Northern Areas, according to HIMAL magazine. Shandur-Hundrup National Park is the site of the annual famous polo tournament where over 50,000 tourists and tribals converge on a high meadow for "the game". The establishment of Fairy Meadows National Park now protects a wonderful alpine area from a proposed Shangrila Resort (which will now have to be located outside the park). The Deosai Plateau Park is a 3,464 km<sup>2</sup> area bordering on Indian Kashmir and has the largest brown bear population in Pakistan. This timely action is designed to afford protection against pressures on natural heritage that have increased markedly since the opening of the extension of the Karakoram Highway into China.

### **Keeping Mountains Clean**

The problem of litter in MtPAs and favorite climbing peaks is getting encouraging and needed attention in some places. Park management in Nepal, especially at Sagarmatha is trying a reward/penalty system in the license fee to promote pack-it-in/pack-it-out. The Everest Environmental Project (headed by network member Bob McConnell (USA) helped to implement a "buy back" program for used oxygen bottles and trash by the 1994 Sagarmatha Environmental Expedition. Over 250 oxygen bottles were brought down from the South Col and 5,000 pounds of trash from the mountain were hauled by yaks into Namche Bazaar for disposal and recycling. The project is promoting and test-installing solar toilets and has a video available on these toilets. The project also is cooperating with The Mountain Institute, Tibet Development Fund and Hand Papermaking Inc. in promoting hand papermaking in the Qomolangma Nature Reserve, using paper recycled from tourists' and climbers' trash.

Meanwhile in Pakistan on Nanga Parbat the Green Earth Organization based in Lahore organized a clean-up of the south face. GEO is also identifying "Green Guardians" for the climbing faces of Nanga Parbat and Rakaposhi to enforce the Ministry of Tourism's adequate but ignored rules and regulations for mountaineers. If the scheme is successful here, it will be extended to other areas.

### **The Mountain Institute in Perú**

The Mountain Institute (USA) has begun implementation of a multi-faceted program to support Huascarán National Park, World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve (see March 1995 UPDATE article on Huascarán). Over a two year period, the program will assess and try to address key professional development needs of park staff and NGOs which work closely with the park, especially in the areas of participatory rural appraisal (PRA),

natural resource management, ecotourism, income-generating opportunities, community grants, gender awareness, financial management, project monitoring, conservation education, and English language training. An operational workplan will be developed, based on the current management.. The Mountain Institute will provide technical advisory support and backstopping, including facilitation of exchanges with existing programs in Nepal and Tibet, and help develop strategies for financial sustainability for the Park. Intensive English language training has recently begun with Park technical staff and Park Guards, and other activity will follow as soon as a USAID matching grant has final approval.

### **Action at ICIMOD**

The International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development was awarded a three-year grant for an Eastern Himalayan Programme for Collaboration in Biodiversity for 1995-97. This program was designed in response to needs for improved management of biodiversity expressed in a meeting sponsored by the MacArthur Foundation and ICIMOD in April 1994. Regional collaboration and field level activities are proposed to strengthen organizations at all levels, from local communities inhabiting buffer zone areas to national government departments and NGOs. The program will support the exchanges of biodiversity managers from countries in the eastern Himalayan region to promote interaction amongst scientists, development workers, and managers of plant and wildlife resources. Training on research methods to integrate indigenous knowledge with scientific knowledge for biodiversity management will be a component of the program. Methods of incorporating cultural/social components into participatory research methods will also be developed and taught.

In addition to the regional training and exchange program, action research activities will be conducted in three buffer zone areas in eastern Nepal, southwest China, and Myanmar to document indigenous knowledge systems for biodiversity management, and there will be support training on agroforestry-related and organizational strengthening topics.

### **Conference on Alpine Protected Areas -- Europe**

At a ministerial conference of countries in the Alps held last December, the French Minister for the Environment proposed a meeting of those responsible for protected areas in the Alps, leading toward greater cooperation, especially in view of the Alpine Convention. This meeting will take place October 5-6 at Ecrins National Park in Gap, Hautes Alpes. Dr. Wolfgang Burhenne of the Commission on Environmental law has been representing IUCN in the negotiations for a workable Alpine Convention. Someone from CNPPA will be present at this important meeting for the Alpine arc in addition to Hans Bibelriether of the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe.

### **Mountain Agenda Meetings**

A reminder that as part of the continuing Mountain Agenda, a series of regional intergovernmental meetings are planned. For Latin America the meeting will occur in Lima, Perú in July at the International Potato Center. The European meeting, which is being organized by the IUCN European Program and ICALPE for late 1995, may occur in two phases in Scotland and in Italy; details should be available in time for the September issue of UPDATE. Regional meetings are in the wind for Africa and North America, but not confirmed as yet. Reports are available from ICIMOD for the Asian meeting held in December 1994 (GPO Box 3226, Kathmandu, Nepal), and from The Mountain Institute for the global NGO meeting held in Perú in late February (P O Box 907, Franklin, West Virginia 26807 USA).

### **European Economic Group - EEIG**

The International Centre for Alpine Environments (ICALPE) has joined with the Centre of Alpine Ecology (CAE) to form a joint research center, a "European Economic Grouping", as provided for under the European Union. As well as the office in France at Le Bourget du Lac, a major center now exists at CAE. The address is 1-38040 Viote di Monte Bondone, Italy.

### **Miscellaneous News of Members**

Ing Ivan Voloscuk, Director of Tart National Park and President of the Carpathian Association of National Parks and Protected Areas received a Gold Medal from The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), in recognition of his pioneering work in establishing protected areas and in initiating the Association. This item is somewhat out-of-date since it was awarded at the end of 1993 in Vienna, but it has only now come to our attention.

More current is the award of the 1995 Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism to Dr. Edgar Waybarn, the Honorary President of the Sierra Club (USA). CNPPA has previously recognized Ed Wayburn's achievements by honoring him the Fred Packard Award. At age 88, he continues to provide leadership in protecting wild lands in the USA and internationally, with a special focus on mountain areas.

Stanley Stevens is in Nepal for a year as a Fulbright Research Professor working on environmental and economic change in areas adjacent to Sagarmatha National Park. He has left his position at Louisiana State University, and will shift to the University of Massachusetts at the conclusion of his work in Nepal. He is also editing a book entitled "Conservation Through Cultural Survival: Indigenous Peoples and Protected Areas". He seeks good concrete case studies from South America and Africa on co-management or an unusual degree of cooperation or consultation between indigenous peoples and protected area management and policy staff. Any readers with good case studies can contact Dr. Stevens c/a US Educational Foundation, P O Box 380, Kathmandu, Nepal; fax 977 1 41 08 81.

Our immediate past Chair, Bing Lucas (aka Silver Fox II) is now CNPPA Vice-Chair for World Heritage. He is currently on an assignment to look at protected area management/ecotourism potential in the Hanas lake area of the Altai Mountains as part of Agenda 21 developments in China.

Alton Byers finished his two years as Co-Manager of the Makalu-Barum Conservation Area in Nepal for The Mountain Institute, and is now operating out of their headquarters in Franklin West Virginia USA as Protected Area Specialist. He is directing his energies to the development of projects in Perú and Bolivia, and in establishing a mountain research station at the Institutes 162 ha Spruce Knob Mountain Center. He will return to Nepal briefly in October under a National Geographic Society grant for on-going work on applications of repeat ground photography (1955-95) in Sagarmatha National park.

### **Oreades**

The early Greeks believed that mountain nymphs, called Oreades, lingered in mountain solitudes, and guided weary travelers safely through their rocky mazes. We hope there are many lovely Oreades on your path. Not to be confused with Yeti.

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