

# Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE



Number 58 - June 2008



Mountains are crucially important to societies as sources of fresh water, health and recreation, challenge, beauty, and inspiration.

The Eastern Alps of Tibet, Yunnan Province, China. Photo courtesy of Jack Ives

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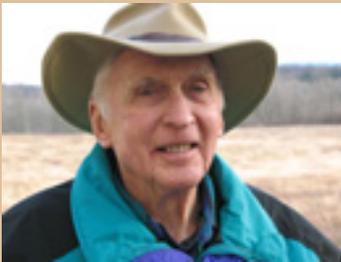
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Many thanks to  
[Wilburforce Foundation](#)  
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**UPDATE Newsletter  
Editor**



[Dr. Larry Hamilton](#)

*The Mountain Protected Areas UPDATE is a quarterly newsletter edited Dr. Lawrence Hamilton and distributed to members of our Mountain Protected Areas Network*

Note: Names of Network Members appear in *bold italics* in our Newsletter

## From *The Way of the White Clouds*

*Mountains grow and decay, they breathe and pulsate with life.  
They attract and collect invisible energies from their surroundings:  
the forces of the air, of the water, of electricity and magnetism.  
They create winds, clouds, thunderstorms, rains, waterfalls and rivers.  
They fill their surroundings with active life and give shelter and  
food to innumerable beings. Such is the greatness of mighty mountains.*

~ Lama Govinda 1898-1986

## Greetings

From the WCPA Mountains Biome Executive Team of Graeme, Linda, Fausto, and Larry.

## Check Out the Change

Our **newly-revised website** is now up and running with a variety of new public features such as Blogs, plus some "Members Only" features that include a Discussion Board, and "Drop Box" for sharing files. In the next few days you will receive an email invitation with instructions on how to log on to this site as a Member. The URL of the site has not changed, only the site design: <http://mountains-wcpa.org>

## Many thanks!

Once again, we are all indebted to **The Wilburforce Foundation** of Bozeman, Montana, who have provided one of their small grants that will enable us to meet the costs of producing and getting to you, this Newsletter, for at least the next year. Our personal thanks to **Jennifer Miller, Program Officer** who generously negotiated this. We also are grateful to **IUCN/US**, who arranged the transfer. Onward!

## Connectivity in Ecuador: The Condor Bioreserve

From **Silvia Benítez**, The Nature Conservancy (Ecuador)

NOTE: A detailed map of the Condor Bioreserve can be downloaded (216k.pdf file) at: <http://www.mountains-wcpa.org/links/>

The Condor Bioreserve (CBR) covers more than 21,000 km<sup>2</sup> and is located between 400 and 5,810 m in the northeastern Andes of Ecuador. Sixteen different vegetation types, more than 760 bird species, 150 mammal species, and 110 amphibian species have been recorded. The area is a very critical habitat for several threatened species, such as the Andean bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) and the mountain or woolly tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*), which require extensive intact habitats for survival. The functional landscape concept is implemented through an innovative conservation approach that seeks to link 6 protected areas and their buffer zones under one management unit. This concept goes beyond the borders of protected areas to capture biodiversity patterns. The areas under this unit comprise the upper watershed of the Napo River, one of the main tributaries of the Amazon. The intervening land that links these protected areas could constitute natural corridors that maintain connectivity of large mammal umbrella species.

[Dr. Graeme Worboys](#)

A message from E-News  
Production Editor  
[Linda McMillan](#)

To prevent problems for our text-only recipients, URLs are NOT hyper-linked in our newsletter. This prevents the newsletter software from inserting its link-tracking coding, which excessively expands the URLs in links.

You can highlight and copy the non-hyperlinked URLs shown in the text; paste them into your web browser to view links.

To increase font size while you read this with your browser just click on the "View" tab at the top of your browser window, scroll down to "Text Size" and choose "Increase". This change can be reversed using the same path.

The human population ranges from the peasant communities on the highlands to two ancestral communities (Oyacachi and Sinangoé), whose territory is within one of the protected areas of the CBR and colonos living in the lower part of the CBR. In the land between the protected areas, several towns, villages, and small communities are found, comprising approximately 120,000 people. In addition to the people living inside the CBR, about 20% of the population of the country (2 million) depend on environmental services and natural resources from this area, which makes it important to the welfare of the people and the economic development of the country. Although the CBR still has large tracts of natural habitat, it faces significant threats. Chief among these are habitat conversion to agriculture or pastures, infrastructure projects being built inside the protected areas (especially water extraction projects and roads), logging, hunting, and fire.



The CBR has been designated as a "Park in Peril" site, as part of a conservation program supported by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Under this program, TNC and its local partners have defined a common goal for this area for 5 years, in close collaboration with the Ministry of the Environment: To achieve a biodiversity conservation model based upon participatory strategies that promote the sustainable development of the human population.

TNC analysis showed that they needed to identify key areas as part of the planning process where conservation impacts must occur to maintain the functionality of the entire area. In this way, they prioritized the focus on local action. The criteria used to identify key areas were based on; environmental gradients that included different vegetation types; large tracts of natural habitat; existing protected areas; and areas important for connectivity, using landscape-level species (e.g. the Andean bear) as indicators. In addition to these criteria, threats and institutional presence were taken as criteria of selection between two areas of similar importance. Different areas were delineated using a watershed approach. The CBR was divided into 29 watersheds, of which 11 were chosen as key sites for the project to focus its impact.

It is in the CBR that the innovative program has been implemented of having a payment-for-water-services charge on water bills in Quito, going into a water fund for conservation action in Antisana and Cayambe Coca Ecological Reserves. The 1.2 million people of Quito get 60% of their water from these two watersheds. TNC and its partners have learned much from the experience of several years of work in this area, which have been difficult and full of challenges but also rewarding. TNC believes they are making important advances in biodiversity conservation, by proposing work through functional landscapes.



**"Freedom to Roam" Initiative Launched in North America**

**Bruce Hamilton**, Deputy Executive Director, The Sierra Club

Outdoor clothing manufacturer Patagonia has taken the lead in pulling together nongovernmental conservation groups in North America to launch a new continental scale land protection program to address climate change and its impacts on natural systems. It is called "Freedom to Roam".

Conservation groups in the United States including the Sierra Club, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlands Project, Natural Resources Defense Council, Trust for Public Lands, The Nature Conservancy, The Wilderness Society, Appalachian Trail Conservancy are all involved in the planning. The initiative extends from Mexico to the Arctic, so Naturalia (Mexico), Mountain Equipment Co-op (Canada), the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, Sierra Club of Canada, and Yellowstone to Yukon are also involved.

The goal of the Freedom to Roam campaign is to connect North America's critical habitats to ensure the survival of large mammals threatened by climate change and habitat destruction. In the face of global warming, the need for animals to migrate between shifting habitats is all the more urgent. The difference between migrating and remaining within fixed boundaries is the difference between life and extinction. Myriad environmental and conservation groups have worked on corridor protection efforts for over twenty years-Freedom to Roam brings these efforts together with a common voice.

Freedom to Roam will work from the grassroots level through educating and engaging the public, and from the top through direct engagement with members of Congress and Western Governors. Freedom to Roam will bring awareness and inspire action to the public through "Bearing Witness Trips", targeted media campaigns, television and radio programs, and through its coalition of conservation and environmental organizations.

In June 2008, Freedom to Roam will concentrate on a major event around the Western Governors' Association meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, which is scheduled to consider adoption of a major West-wide initiative on establishing wildlife corridors. In 2009, Freedom to Roam will work with National Geographic, Sierra Club Outings and others to sponsor a series of "Bearing Witness Trips" to bring journalists, scientists, politicians, environmental thought leaders, and citizens, into the wild places that must be safeguarded.

The "Bearing Witness Trips" will take different forms depending on their participants. For those who are scientifically inclined and want to participate in the scientific understanding of these wild places, there will be "Bearing Witness Trips" that will allow participants to experience the wild areas through a scientific lens. These scientific trips will focus on transect research and data gathering.

For those who wish to experience the natural beauty of the places and observe them through writing poems or essays, taking photographs, painting, making videos, etc. there will be "storytelling" trips that will focus on expressing the narrative of Freedom to Roam in more human terms. For the "Bearing Witness Trips", Freedom to Roam will seek to gain a large cross section of society that will be able to bring the message back to their own communities. In addition to focusing on thought-leaders such as journalists, politicians, environmentalists, and religious leaders, Freedom to Roam will seek to bring school groups, boy scouts, church groups, and others into wild areas to demonstrate the need for their protection and linkage.

All of the "Bearing Witness Trips" will focus on reaching not just those who are able to travel on one, but on characterizing the experience to a broader audience. The "Bearing Witness Trips" will be extensively filmed, photographed, and chronicled. This will allow information about the trips to be reproduced on websites, in newsletters, blogs, podcasts, interviews, photography shows, documentaries, and more.

The ultimate goal is to build a public and political consensus for protecting large core areas of wild land, connective migration corridors, and easements across private lands to allow species to survive expected climate change. For more information contact the Freedom to Roam coordinator, Jason Kibbey at [jkibbey@freedomtoroam.org](mailto:jkibbey@freedomtoroam.org)

## Mount Kabogo Forest (Democratic Republic of the Congo)

A recent (2007) biodiversity survey of this largely intact forest block of 1,000 km<sup>2</sup> in the DRC portion of the Albertine Rift Conservation Corridor has been reported on by **Andrew Plumptre** of the Wildlife Conservation Society in the December issue of *Backbone*, the newsletter of the Albertine Rift Conservation Society. This area, between 770 and 2,750 m in elevation, had for many years been off limits to researchers, so little was known about the current status of its biodiversity. It had been classified as an Important Bird Area due to the occurrence of a rare endemic species, the Kabogo Apalis, and this survey confirmed its importance, and not only for birds.

Survey estimates show: 71 species of mammals (including 10-11 primate species); 21 species of small mammals (4 of which were new to science); 40 reptiles (2 new to science); 20 amphibians (2 new to science and 7 endemics); 305 species of birds (22 endemics). The large number of plant species collected have not been classified, but it can be said that the experts were unable to identify 10% of the collection, which may represent new species.

## Recovery and Reintroductions Update -- USA

Olympic National Park, after an 80-year absence, is experiencing a reintroduced population of fisher (a mink-like predator sometimes erroneously called the fisher cat). This is *Martes pennanti*, the same keystone carnivore we have in Vermont (also successfully reintroduced decades ago). They are one of the very few predators that tackle porcupine and keep them in check. Fur trapping and hunting greatly reduced their populations throughout North America, extirpating them in some states, and putting them on the threatened or endangered list in others. Over the next three years, it is hoped these new immigrants from British Columbia, will be a "founder" population of 100 in the Park. Now, the only native predator missing in Olympic is the gray wolf, but that will be a future issue, when public opinion climate has altered somewhat.



But on the US southern border with Mexico, the once-extirpated jaguar which reintroduced itself from a Mexican population, is faced with a new problem, US Homeland Security. It had been considered extinct in the US, but in 1996 a verified sighting occurred in Arizona, and the jaguar has been making a comeback. Now this wide-ranging carnivore, and other species such as ocelot, black bear is faced with construction of double and triple layer fencing and walls, being rapidly constructed piecemeal along the 5,050 km (1,950 mi) border from California to Texas. A small population, if isolated, lacks genetic diversity. Though many Americans believe that walls and fences will not stop illegal immigration, the impact on border-crossing wildlife is deadly.

The Transborder PA complexes along both sides of the border such as Cabeza Prieta Wildlife Refuge, Organ Pipe Cactus National Monument have been providing intact ecosystems of protection for these and other species. The fence is a sad development for wildlife! But, the good news is the recent acquisition of 14,000 ha of prime jaguar habitat in Sonora, Mexico by Naturalea AC, assisted by the Wildlands Project. This builds on a previous 4,000 ha Northern Jaguar Preserve. The Preserve is a source of the populations moving across the borders into Arizona and New Mexico. There is a bill in the US Congress, HR2593 Borderlands Conservation and Security Act, which would require a full environmental impact assessment of all border security activities. Another bill however, HR4987, the "Fence By Date Certain Act" would require 700 miles of double-layered fencing no later than June 2009. We will have to see how these play out.

As for the welfare of the recovery of the Mexican gray wolf, Kim Vicariu of the Wildlands Project reports that greater effort is needed to secure the welfare of the population of 52 in the Blue Range Recovery Area, which had a goal of 100 by 2006. Poaching, vehicular collisions and killing of animals ranging out of the too-small recovery area, have been problems.

Back again to the US/Canadian border, this news just in from Yellowstone-to-Yukon (Y2Y). A grizzly bear (400 pound, 4-6 year old male) traveled some 140 miles (225 km) from the British Columbian Selkirk Range to the Bitterroot Mountains in Montana. Grizzlies have not been here since 1946. It crossed two major highways and is the longest distance recorded for this species. Sad to say, it was shot by a hunter, searching for black bear and not expecting to encounter a grizzly. The good news is the demonstration that connectivity works.

## Inspired Skiing

The Sacred Mountains Program of The Mountain Institute has been the subject of several articles in UPDATE. In particular, the work of Program Head **Edwin Bernbaum** in working in several MtPAs to assist them in interpreting the cultural and spiritual values of Parks such as Mount Rainier, Great Smoky Mountains, Hawai'i Volcanoes, and Rocky Mountain NPs. In March **Linda McMillan**, **Ed** and **Dr. Jeremy Spoon** travelled to Mount Rainier National Park for a multi-day workshop to develop curriculum for the Mount Rainier-Mount Fuji Sister Mountain Curriculum Project and Teacher Exchange.  
<http://www.nps.gov/mora/forteachers/professionaldevelopment.htm>

An interesting Sacred Mountains Program offshoot is **Inspired Skiing**, which is working with ski areas to promote greater awareness of the cultural values associated with the mountain area itself. In this, it enhances the image of the ski resort as an environmentally/culturally sensitive enterprise. For example, it helps to create:

- Wayside displays directing skiers' attention to the spiritual and cultural dimensions of the mountain environment they are experiencing;
- Custom signage on ski trails featuring inspirational quotes and images of mountain landscapes, as well as text adding evocative impact to existing trail signage describing mountain features;
- Brochures emphasizing the connections between mountain areas across cultures and regions; and
- Visual imagery and text highlighting our responsibility to preserve natural resources and cultural heritage, and to develop sensitivity to mountain environments.

**Jonah Steinberg** of the Sacred Mountain Program is implementing the project in my State of Vermont, working with my favorite, nature-friendly area, Smuggler's Notch. The CEO and Manager of this area is currently Chairman of the Vermont Nature Conservancy on whose Board of Trustees I have been serving for many years. More information at [www.mountain.org](http://www.mountain.org).



## Eco-Everest Expedition (Sagarmatha National Park, Nepal)

Dawa Steven Sherpa, the very capable son of **Ang Tshering Sherpa**, led a climbing team to the summits of **both** *Lhotse* (8516 m) on May 21st and its taller sister peak *Chomolungma* (Mount Everest-8848m) five days later this climbing season. But they also pursued another set of lofty objectives to occupy it during their almost two months on the Everest massif. Dawa and his team promoted and engaged in an environmental clean-up campaign at Everest base camp and the higher elevation camps leading to the summit. It also set up receiving and sorting

centers at Khumjung and Everest base camp and offer cash incentives to High Altitude Sherpas for bags of garbage and debris brought down from the mountain slopes. They also fielded test the "Clean Mountain Can" human waste management system developed in Denali NP (Alaska) on Mount McKinley by Ranger Roger Robinson and The American Alpine Club. For years this system has been mandatory for all climbers attempting the most popular route on Denali, the West Buttress.

The Code of Conduct of the Eco-Everest Expedition includes not only use of the Clean Mountain Can, but: using lights with rechargeable batteries; cooking with solar oven, parabolic solar cooker and hot case; debris and garbage collection and removal; document any observed eco-sensitive practices of locals or other expeditions; share information and make recommendations to other expeditions, trekkers and locals.

A charge of US\$2,000 per climber (10 climbers) was put into an Eco-Everest Trust Fund held by ICIMOD. This fund will be used for further research in the Khumbu region on climber safety and glacial outburst flood hazard studies. This whole campaign is organized by Asian Trekking (P) Ltd. of which Ang Tshering is Chairman. The expedition terminated on May 30. For more info and images see: [www.ecoeverest.net.np](http://www.ecoeverest.net.np).

## The Ecological Continuum Project

The Ecological Continuum Project was started in June 2007 by ALPARC (Alpine Network of Protected Areas), CIPRA (International Commission for the Protection of the Alps), ISCAR (International Scientific Committee for Alpine Research) and the European Alpine Programme of the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) with the aim of maintaining or restoring ecological connectivity between important areas for nature conservation in the Alps. The project is financed by the Swiss MAVA Foundation for Nature Conservation.

The project will issue a regular newsletter in English. Renate Biedermann of ALPARC has just sent out the first of these, March 2008, on behalf of the Task Force on Protected Areas ([info@alparc.com](mailto:info@alparc.com)). Ultimately the Project will provide the framework for the work of the Platform "Ecological Network" of the Alpine Convention. One assessment workshop was recently held to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of 4 methodological approaches to establish ecological networks. The results are available at [www.alpine-ecological-network.org](http://www.alpine-ecological-network.org).

The Project has identified 4 pilot regions:

1. Bershtesgaden-Salzburg cross-boundary region;
2. French Department Isère (Rhone-Alps);
3. Eastern Austrian Region (around Kalkalpen and Gesause NPs); and
4. Engadin-Alto Adige-Valle dell'Adige (including Swiss NP, Stelvio NP to connect to Tyrol Division of Hohe Tauern NP).

## Serpentine Protected Areas?

Drawn from Harrison and Kruckeberg, Natural History 117(4):40-44.

We have previously included some relevant articles concerning GeoHeritage and GeoParks. Many of these are located in mountains. One of the most interesting types of landscapes, replete with high levels of plant endemism results from the occurrence of the greenish bedrock known as serpentine. Serpentine weathers to ultramafic soils, composed to a large extent of iron magnesium silicate. They are low in calcium, and the abundance of magnesium interferes with uptake of what calcium there is. They usually have high levels of heavy metals nickel, chromium and cobalt. No wonder the plants growing here are unusual both in species and growth form. Leaves of plants are often small, thick, grayish, hairy, wax-coated or spiny (minimizing nutrient and water loss), and plants are often stunted and sparse. Some types of dwarf cloud forests may be on ultramafic soils.

They call out for protection due to the high endemism. In California, for instance, 12.5% of the state's 2,000 endemic species are restricted to the relatively few areas of serpentine. New Caledonia and Cuba each have more than 900 known serpentine endemics, --world champions, yet there are few PAs to protect these rare species. In Eastern North America, the only major preserved area is Gaspé Provincial Park in Québec. There are a handful spread about in Britain, Switzerland, Italy and Cuba. There are none in serpentine-rich New Caledonia.

## Monarch Butterflies

One of the most interesting long-distance animal migrations is that of the seemingly delicate monarch butterfly. From summer range in Canada and northern USA, monarchs fly as far as 4800km (3000 miles) to a winter haven in Mexico's southern mountain fir forests. Here they receive some protection from habitat destruction in the 56,250 ha Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve (Sierra Chincua in the Sierra Madre Oriental).



Logging in the peripheral zone and illegal logging even in the core zone has been severely damaging or destroying habitat, though it is increasingly coming under control. Just announced by President Felipe Calderón is an additional \$US4.6 million to improve management effectiveness. Also just announced is a North American Monarch Butterfly Conservation Plan, by the Commission on Environmental Cooperation and WWF, which is assessing the needs for protection of migratory stops along its long migration pathways. Those willing to respond to a questionnaire collecting migration information may go on [www.wwf.org.mx/wwfmex/cuestionario\\_monarch](http://www.wwf.org.mx/wwfmex/cuestionario_monarch)



## Vatnajökull National Park (Iceland)

On June 8th, an area encompassing 13 per cent of Iceland's landmass with unparalleled geographical diversity will become the largest protected wilderness in Europe. Volcanoes, lava flows, vast glaciers, waterfalls, canyons and calderas, sand flats, rivers, lakes and lush vegetation are just some of the natural wonders contained within Vatnajökull National Park's 13,000 square kilometers. The park's boundaries will incorporate previously unprotected land as well the existing Skaftafell and

Jökulsárgljúfur national parks, the most powerful waterfall in Europe, Dettifoss and the entire Vatnajökull glacier (Europe's largest). The Icelandic government is initially investing around £8 million in a network of visitor centers and park rangers' work stations, due to be completed in 2012. An existing visitor center at Skaftafell will be joined by five new facilities, including one currently under construction at Ásbyrgi. Ranger stations will also increase from four to 11. Due to the size of the area, traditional farming and hunting will be allowed in designated areas. The issue of allowing snowmobiles access to the glaciers in the South has not yet been resolved., and jeep access and air tour problems have some conservation-minded landowners worried. **Jack Ives** has a close association with protected areas in Iceland, especially Skaftafell, and keeps us informed on things Icelandic.

# Bristlecone Pine No Longer World's Oldest

Until this year, the Bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata* var. *longaeva*), was deemed to have the oldest trees in the world. Many of these ancient treeline specimens in California's White Mountains (shown below) were dated at from 4,000 to 5,000 years of age. They bore such individual names as Matriarch and Methuselah. They were given special Protected Grove status in the National Forest.

Now, however, Swedish scientists have discovered a group of Norway spruce (*Picea abies*) in the mountains of western Sweden, next to the Norwegian border that have been carbon dated to about 8,800 years. These were apparently about the first trees to colonize as the Pleistocene glaciers receded from the area.

Fortunately, these trees are protected in Sweden's Drevfjället Nature Reserve part of Fulufjällets National Park (Fulu Mountain). This 385 square km mountain park was created in 2002, and Network member Per Wallsten played a key role in its establishment when he was with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. Local opposition to its creation had stopped action for several years. Per brought to our 2003 MtPA South African workshop the case study account of how participatory planning resulted in acceptance, and the establishment of the park. His study, *The Inside-Out Process: a Key Approach for Establishing Fulufjället National Park in Sweden*, was printed in the resulting Harmon/Worboys book: [Managing Mountain Protected Areas: Challenges and Responses for the 21st Century](#).



## Bits and Pieces

### Congratulations

**Bruno Messerli**, Professor Emeritus of Mountain Geography at the University of Bern, Switzerland, was recently nominated "Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science" (WAAS). He was also nominated Honorary Member of the British "Alpine Club". The world's oldest Alpine club celebrated 150 years of existence and honored Bruno for his outstanding and long lasting work on high mountain environments. The MT PA Network congratulates Bruno Messerli on these nominations! He has been an active member since the inception of our Network and Mountain Theme/Biome in WCPA.

IUCN, which for many years now has had the name **World Conservation Union**, has returned to its former name of **International Union for Conservation of Nature**. Now the initials, logo (see the new one in our newsletter banner above) and name become again congruent, and best of all, "Nature" is back!

A "quiet" active volcano has been erupting for over two decades in **Hawai'i Volcanoes NP**, providing visitors with a truly memorable experience. In April however, the crater Halemaumau opened a new vent, producing high sulfur dioxide levels that due to wind shifting, caused evacuation of all visitors, park staff and the lodge for several days. Madame Pele, the Goddess who resides in the volcano is indeed a force to be reckoned with, not only from lava, but toxic fumes.

Meanwhile, at New Zealand's **Tongariro NP** (another volcano PA), an unusually high flash flood killed 6 teenaged students and a teacher who were canyoning in an isolated gorge in the Park. Four other students and the instructor managed to survive.

The **WCPA PALNeT website for Protected Areas** now has more than 1,300 members registered. It has more than 500 documents uploaded. You can register as a member at [www.parksnet.org](http://www.parksnet.org).

The **Hindu Kush/Karakoram/Himalaya (HKKH) Partnership** about which we have often written is enriched by having a new Project Officer for Communications and Outreach. **Elizabeth Fox** has joined HKKH in this position as of end of April, and will be based in the IUCN Nepal office in Kathmandu. She had been working it ICIMOD on an Afghan mountain development resource book, and in Bhutan on a human/wildlife interface project. The Partnership is funded by the Italian Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Japan's National Parks (mainly mountainous), were presented visually to the Perthshire (Scotland) Society of Natural Science last February, by longtime Network member **Malcolm Payne**. While he was tramping about Japan's mountains he became friends with former WCPA Vice-Chair for East Asia **Kunio Kikuchi**. Small world!

The **Wilderness Leadership School** has celebrated its 50th anniversary. It was founded by Ian Player of South Africa, to confirm the value of wild nature to human society. The School has conducted wilderness trails experiences for over 40,000 hikers, into

Africa's wildest places, many of them mountains.

In the December 2007 issue of UPDATE, we reported on a **Rapid Assessment Visual Expedition (RAVE)** conducted in April 2007 in El Triunfo Biosphere Reserve (Mexico), a key reserve of montane cloud forest. An article in the current (April) International Journal of Wilderness reports on this in detail, and reports on some results. Out of the 30,000 photos and 30 hours of video have come articles, a calendar, a TV documentary and a fund-raising event for El Triunfo. So far roughly US\$500,000 has been raised and is being channeled through the El Triunfo Conservation Fund ([www.fondoeltriunfo.org](http://www.fondoeltriunfo.org)). RAVE seems to be a new tool for conserving wild nature, a model that can be replicated elsewhere on the planet. It was implemented by the International League of Conservation Photographers.

We have repeatedly brought before you, items concerned with noise pollution and the attempts to protect **natural soundscapes in PAs**. We have reported on the 15-year work of Bernie Krause who travels the world trying to capture the pristine sounds of nature, free from human-produced sound such as aircraft, motor vehicles, chain saws and radios. Finding it difficult to find a site in the continental US producing only natural sound for an extended period, he is currently probing in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and Katmai National Park in Alaska. He has been able to collect 3,000 hours of natural sound in the Amazon, Costa Rica, Borneo, Rwanda, and a few other places. Krause feels that what we hear is a better indicator of the health of the environment than what we see.

A **Memorial Park** has been established at Badalkot Hills, 13 km west of Kathmandu as homage to the 24 conservationists who lost their lives in the tragic helicopter accident on returning from dedicating the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area in September 2006. A community forest in the Terai Arc Landscape in Nepal has been named in honor of our late fine colleague: the **Dr. Chandra Prasad Gurung Community Forest**. **Chandra** was a key figure in conceiving and promoting this important corridor for migrating wildlife between Western Nepal and Dudhuwa NP in India.

The Spring 2008 issue of The Nature Conservancy journal carries an article reporting on a study carried out by **Bob Moseley** and a colleague on repeat photo comparisons of glacial retreat in China's Yunnan mountains. It contains a striking pair of photos showing Mingyong glacier in 1923 and 2003 on **Mount Khawa Karpo**. This mountain is one of Tibetan Buddhism's 8 sacred mountains. In that time it had retreated one-third of a mile, making it currently one of the world's fastest retreating glaciers.

**PAN Parks Foundation** and IUCN/WCPA are collaborating in an assessment of the **Central Balkans NP (Bulgaria)**, which is up for re-certification by PAN Parks (for their Quality Brand). The IUCN Categories Assessment will be applied to see if it also is verifiable for a particular PA Management Category under the most recent standards.

Deep within a remote mountain in the Norwegian Archipelago of Svalbard, Norway has established the **Svalbard Global Seed Vault**. Most other seed banks are more vulnerable to catastrophes such as war or flooding, but this one deep in the permafrost was built to be safe from these, plus earthquakes and nuclear strikes. This Noah's Ark for conserving biodiversity, especially for food crops, is available to all countries. They can deposit seeds without charge and withdraw them on need. Now, if we could just assure the survival of Svalbard's polar bears in the face of global warming!?

**Invasive alien species** are an increasing problem as climate changes. **Kathy MacKinnon** reports that the World Bank is embarking on a new initiative with the Global Invasive Species Programme, focusing particularly on the least developed countries and small island developing States. The adverse economic impact of invasive aliens in the USA alone is estimated at US\$140 billion annually.

During the last few Australian summers (dry seasons), the **Australian Alps NPs** have experienced serious fires, which were almost catastrophic one year. We have reported on these periodically. **Peter Jacobs** indicates that this past fire season there have been no serious conflagrations. A happy change for Aus Alps!

Conservation International has announced the discovery of a new, as yet unnamed species of large vegetarian rat in the remote **Foja Mountains of Indonesia's Papua**. It is about 5-6 times larger than the Norway rat, has long, soft fur, hairless tail and sharp claws. In addition, in the same Foja Mountains, scientists have found more than 40 new plant and animal species. It is protected as a Game Reserve. And, in **Mount Pulag NP in the Philippines**, a scientific team has just re-discovered a dwarf cloud rat, not seen since first reported 112 years ago by a British scientist. It inhabits the mossy cloud forest that characterizes Mount Pulag.

MtPAs are often the last, best refuge for the top predators whose function in regulating ecosystem health is currently being emphasized. PA connectivity initiatives are often using one or more **iconic carnivores or omnivores as flagship species** in promoting corridors for gene and species migration, e.g. the grizzly bear in Yellowstone-to-Yukon, the panther in the original Paseo Pantera in Central America, and the Andean spectacled bear in Venezuela. In recognition of their importance, and their endangerment, the US Congress is currently considering a **Great Cats and Rare Canids Act**, which, if enacted, might set a pattern for protection throughout the world. Eighty-three members of the House and 5 Senators are co-sponsoring this bill. American members of the MtPA Network are urged to support this effort at [www.wcs.org/takeaction](http://www.wcs.org/takeaction) else it get lost in the morass of the Iraq

insurgency, the economy and energy.

Sacred sites, very many of them in mountains, and hopefully in MtPAs, are increasingly becoming "**faith tourism**" destinations. According to the World Religious Travel Association, some 300 million travellers/pilgrims are producing an estimated US\$18 billion per year. According to **Ed Bernbaum**, Mount Kailas in Tibet is the world's most sacred site, --revered by all Buddhists, Hindus and Jains (more than a billion persons). Not visited by many tourists, thanks goodness.

Our good friend **Ed (Sacred Mountains) Bernbaum** is one of 8 mountaineers featured in the new Bradford Washburn American Mountaineering Museum. This museum was established by the American Alpine Club and National Geographic, and the exhibit is entitled "**Beyond the Mountaintop: Extraordinary Mountaineers, Extraordinary People.**" The 8 include Sir Edmund Hillary and Tenzeng Norgay, so Ed is in good company. Congratulations, Edwin.

Bhutan has 677 glaciers and 2,674 glacial lakes of which 25 pose particularly high risk of **glacial lake outburst floods**. Thorthormi and Raphstreng lakes pose a serious and imminent threat of outburst floods, which endanger life and infrastructure in downstream communities. About 10% of Bhutan's population resides in the two valleys below these lakes. Global warming is aggravating the situation, according to Resources Himalaya Foundation.

**Vilcanota Spiritual Park** which includes the sacred Apu, the 6,372 m peak Ausangate, has been declared in Perú, on behalf of the nearby Kechua communities, as a Community Conservation Area. This Apu is the site of an annual pilgrimage of more than 50,000 people from the Peruvian Andes for the festival of Q'olloyriti. This site, near Cuzco, is the first Natural Sacred Site in Perú.

The **Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Pfalzerwald (Germany) - Vosges du Nord (France)** will be the first to undergo a joint review by the respective National Man and the Biosphere Committees of the two countries, assisted by UNESCO/MAB. Here will be developed the guidelines for procedures in periodic reviews of all Transboundary Biosphere Reserves. Member **Roland Stein** is the Coordinator for this special place, and he also chairs the WCPA European Expert Group on Transboundary PAs.

Our Production Editor, **Linda McMillan**, has recently been nominated as President of the Mountain Protection Commission of the UIAA (International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation), taking over from her friend Dave Morris of Scotland.

## Some Recent Publications of Interest

**Highest Heritage - The Mount Everest Region and Sagarmatha National Park: A Definitive Guide to the Sagarmatha National Park** by Margaret Jefferies (wife and partner of **Bruce Jefferies**). Pilgrims Publishing, Veranasi, India. 211 pages. 615 Rupees. [www.pilgrimsbooks.com](http://www.pilgrimsbooks.com).

**Protected Landscapes and Agrobiodiversity Values**. Vol. 1 in Series: Values of Protected Landscapes and Seascapes Eds. Thora Amend, **Jessica Brown**, **Ashish Kothari**, **Adrian Phillips** and **Sue Stolton**. IUCN and GTZ, Kasperek Verlag, Heidelberg. This is a new series with 4 of the 5 editors being members of the Mt PA Network. This first one contains a key article by Mountain Biome Deputy Vice-Chair **Fausto Sarmiento**, a good overview article by Adrian and Sue, an article by Jessica and a contribution by **Josep Mallarach**. Available through [www.kasperek-verlag.de](http://www.kasperek-verlag.de). Note: The article by Fausto has a photo of our Mt. Biome workshop in Papallacta, Ecuador.

**Estado del Sistema Centroamericano de Áreas Protegidas**, Informe de Síntesis Regional 2003. Ronald MacCarthy, Alberto Salas, Juan Carlos Godoy, Lenin Corrales y Lorenzo Cardenal. Comisión Centroamericana de Ambiente y Desarrollo. [www.ccad-ws/documentos/SICAPestado.pdf](http://www.ccad-ws/documentos/SICAPestado.pdf).

**State of the Wild: A Global Portrait of Wildlife, Wildlands and Oceans**. Wildlife Conservation Society 2008-09 Edition. Island Press. Paperback \$30. [www.islandpress.org](http://www.islandpress.org).

**A Handbook on International Wilderness Law and Policy**. The WILD Foundation and Fulcrum Publishing (Boulder and Golden, Colorado respectively). In addition to case studies of wilderness laws and policies by leading conservationists from 12 countries and one indigenous group, the book offers a matrix of different "wilderness" definitions around the world. A detailed "how to" guide for developing new wilderness laws or policies. [www.wild.org/store/publications/Int\\_Wilderness\\_Law\\_Policy.htm](http://www.wild.org/store/publications/Int_Wilderness_Law_Policy.htm).

**A Primer of Conservation Biology** (Fourth Edition) by Richard B. Primock. An up-to-date perspective on many high profile issues in conservation biology, and available in 14 languages. In the 9 sections of basic material are two which deal with Protected Areas and Conservation Outside Protected Areas. As well as being available in the usual languages, it comes in Chinese, Indonesian, Korean, Russian, Romanian, Mongolian and Vietnamese. Sinauer Associates, Inc. 292 pages, 123 illustrations, US\$50. [www.sinauer.com](http://www.sinauer.com).

## Useful Links

**UPDATE Archive** Past editions, hosted by The Mountain Forum: <http://www.mtnforum.org/rs/ol/periodicals.cfm?periodid=30>

**IUCN-WCPA Mountains Biome** website: <http://mountains-wcpa.org/>

**Connectivity Conservation** website: <http://conservationconnectivity.org/>

## Upcoming Meetings and Events of Interest

**Albertine Rift Regional Conservation Forum.** June 10-13, 2008; Kampala, Uganda. Organized by ARCOS, the Albertine Rift Conservation Society. Among the 8 themes are: Regional Networking and Transboundary Collaboration; Protected Areas Management; Climate Change; and Conflicts (War, Guerilla Activity *etc.*) and Environment. [www.arcosnetwork.org](http://www.arcosnetwork.org).

**Alpine Week, 2008 - Breaking New Ground in the Alps.** June 11-14, 2008; in L'Argentière-La-Besseé, France. Organized/ sponsored by: Alpine Arc Club, Alpine Network of Protected Areas, Communities Alliance of the Alps, International Committee for Protection of the Alps, and International Committee for Alpine Research. Contact: [organization@alpweek.org](mailto:organization@alpweek.org). Info at [www.alpweek.org](http://www.alpweek.org).

**Society for Conservation Biology Annual Meeting (North American section: USA, Canada, Mexico, Greenland).** July 13-17, 2008; Chattanooga, Tennessee. The title is one we well know: "From Mountains to the Sea". More info at The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) website: <http://www.conbio.org/>

**IUCN World Conservation Congress.** October 5-14, 2008; Barcelona, Spain. Invitations were extended to organize events in the World Conservation Forum October 6-10. The 3 streams are: A New Climate for Change; Healthy Environments - Healthy People; Safeguarding the Diversity of Life. **Graeme Worboys** is organizing a workshop on Protected Areas and Connectivity Conservation. Registration began January 2008. More info at the IUCN website: <http://iucn.org/congress/2008/>.

**Living in the Alps - the New Challenges.** October 8-10, 2008; Triglav National Park, Slovenia. See website: <http://cipra.4teamwork.ch/en/alpmedia/events/1650>

**VI General Assembly and International Conference of Alpine Protected Areas Network (ALPARC).** For more information contact the ALPARC organizers: <http://www.alparc.org/>

**Wosgau Border Forum: Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation Under the Impact of Climate Change and Global Warming.** October 21-22, 2008; Organized by **Roland Stein** at the Pfalzenwald-Vosges du Nord Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, Fischbach bei Dahn (German/French border village). Participants from Germany and France. [R.stein.nothweiler@t-online.de](mailto:R.stein.nothweiler@t-online.de).

**Mountain Transboundary Protected Areas and Connectivity Conservation Workshop.** November 11-14, 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Organized by WCPA Mountain Biome, Transboundary Task Force and ICIMOD. By invitation only due to working nature of the meeting. Contact **Rod Atkins**: [rod.atkins@act.gov.au](mailto:rod.atkins@act.gov.au).

**Biodiversity and Land Use, Biosphere Reserves and Transboundary Parks under Natural and Human Pressures of Global Change.** November 16-18, 2008 in Kathmandu, Nepal. Organized by ICIMOD, also in response to the Convention on Biological Diversity Program of Work on Mountain Biodiversity, aimed at COP.10 in 2010. Contact **Nakul Chettri** at [nchettri@icimod.org](mailto:nchettri@icimod.org).

**George Wright Society Conference.** March 2-6, 2009 in Portland, Oregon USA. This meeting will institute many energy-conserving factors such as having it located at a no-styrofoam, comprehensive-composting, full-recycling, energy-aware hotel on Portland's light rail system, eliminating the need for automobiles for participants flying in. With majordomo **Dave Harmon** being the

key figure, these international PA conferences are always winners. Deadline for proposals is October 3, 2008. See [www.georgewright.org/gws2009.html](http://www.georgewright.org/gws2009.html).

**9<sup>th</sup> World Wilderness Congress "Feel, Think, Act (Siente, Piensa, Actua)!"** November 2009 in Mexico. An early heads-up about this important event, organized by the WILD Foundation and Unidos para la Conservación (UPC). Details as available will be posted on [www.wild9.org](http://www.wild9.org).

## Mountains Biome E-News Production

News Flash / UPDATE Production Editor

Linda McMillan

Deputy Vice-Chairman, Communications

WCPA Mountains Biome

Llamas enjoy the restored páramo grasslands near Chimborazo in Ecuador

