



The Alps should become a model climate region

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Conference proceedings on “Exploring the Nature of Management”

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(21.09.2006) CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, is calling for an Alpine Convention (AC) action plan on climate protection. CIPRA has sent a letter to this effect to the Environment Ministers of the Alpine countries and the EU, who are meeting in Alpbach/A on 8 and 9 November for the 9th Alpine Conference.

In the case of the Alps the climate changes that have been forecast, i.e. the rise in average temperatures or the increase in extremes of weather, will affect a region that is particularly sensitive. The impact on the environment, society and the economy can already be seen. And still climate protection does not feature in any way in the AC, and of the Implementing Protocols only the Energy Protocol mentions climate change and the relevant precautionary measures.

According to CIPRA the proposed action plan should include not just avoidance strategies but also adaptation strategies and be endowed with concrete measures and binding timelines. CIPRA believes that the Alps with their resources of timber, water, sun, wind and geothermal energy have the potential of becoming a model region for climate protection that easily outperforms the targets set out by the Kyoto Protocol. It also believes that the vast existing potential should be used to save energy. This requires financial policy measures at the national and European level such as the consistent incorporation of external costs in energy costs, which also include the consequential costs of climate change, regulatory provisions such as the stipulation of minimum standards, and support programmes.

CIPRA believes that there is potential for adaptation strategies in the re-examination and compilation of hazard area maps for natural hazards and in the examination of all medium and long-term tourist investments from the point of view of climate change.

At the 33rd Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Alpine Convention held in Innsbruck/A in September the representatives of the AC's contracting parties proved very receptive to the idea of a climate action plan. CIPRA's demands are set out in the form of a resolution, which can be downloaded from <http://www.cipra.org> (de/fr/it/sl/en).

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Fertilizer use causes long-term disruption to alpine eco-systems

(21.09.2006) A study by the Swiss national research programme on "Landscapes and Habitats of the Alp" supports the assumption that alpine eco-systems do not react particularly flexibly to human intervention. The studies looked at the vegetation and soils on the *Schynigen Platte* near Grindelwald/CH. In the 1930s the botanist Werner Lüdi conducted a number of experiments in the area using fertilizers and lime treatment to increase productivity in high-altitude pastures. It now appears that these measures were enough to perturb the chemical and microbial soil properties and the diversity of vegetation species over several treatment-free decades.

The areas treated with lime differ significantly from those that were fertilized without it. The differences are due to the fact that the fertilizer is leached out more quickly.

By contrast the calcium content and pH value of the areas treated with lime remain higher to this day, promoting the growth of plants that require nutrients. These findings are of particular relevance since considerable amounts of fertilizer now enter the natural cycle through air pollution and have an impact on biodiversity.

Bibliography: Spiegelberger, T. et al (2006): Long-term effects of short-term perturbation in a subalpine grassland. In *Ecology*: Vol. 87, No. 8, pages 1939–1944. Source: <http://www.presseportal.ch/de/story.htx?nr=100515903> (de/fr)

It takes alpine eco-systems a very long time to re-establish their original balance once they have been disrupted in any way.



Priska Ketterer © nfp48

Festival of occupational diversity in mountain regions

(21.09.2006) This year's international festival of "mountain professions" (*Métiers de Montagne*) is being held in Chambéry/F from 23 to 26 November. The event aims to mobilise as many people employed in mountain regions as possible. Young people on the one hand are able to meet representatives of different professions and everyone benefits from this forum for mutual exchange of information and experience. There are information events focusing on individual professional fields: aspects of tourism, prospects for the provision of medical welfare in mountain regions, and even the use of avalanche search dogs. Crossover topics such as the concerns of seasonal workers and gender-specific issues are also to be discussed at length. Large exhibition grounds, an entertaining supporting programme and two public debates round off the event. The Festival is held each year, alternating between Chambéry and another town in a mountain area outside France. Some 7,000 visitors attended the first ever edition of the Festival, with the 2005 Festival attracting no fewer than 25,000 visitors.

For information and registration: <http://www.metiersmontagne.org> (fr)

Know-how transfer within the Alps and beyond

(02.11.2006) CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, is organising an international workshop series under the motto of "Circulating Knowledge – Networking People". Its aim is to help people living in disadvantaged regions far from urban areas to help themselves; regional players are invited to pass on their knowledge and benefit from the experience of others.

The programme is offering a mix of specialist contributions from speakers from different countries and excursions to successful examples on site. Topics range from nature conservation to mobility and the exchange of know-how with the mountain regions of eastern Europe and social issues. They are the result of an in-depth search for knowledge carried out as part of the Future in the Alps Project. The transfer of know-how from the Alps to the mountain regions of eastern Europe will be the topic of a workshop to be held in Budapest/Hungary on 22 and 23 January 2007. Information on all the scheduled workshops can be found at <http://www.cipra.org> (de/fr/it/sl/en).

Trends in the mountain regions of Switzerland – the view of the locals on DVD

(02.11.2006) Two new ethnographic films have been released as part of the Swiss National Fund Programme on "Landscapes and Habitats in the Alps". Today the lifestyle of people living in the Upper Valais is hardly any different from that of people living around Berne or Zurich. In interviews in the film *Im Lauf der Zeiten* [In the Course of Time] older inhabitants of the Upper Valais talk about their experiences and memories, and how they view the changes in society of the past few decades. Like many other mountain villages, Hinterrhein, a hamlet of 80 inhabitants some 1600 metres above sea level in the Grisons Canton, is struggling against its population exodus and the chill wind that now blows in the lives of mountain farmers. The film *Hinterrhein* retraces developments in the mountain village and lets the locals put across their view of things.

Bibliographies: Risi, M. (2006): *Im Lauf der Zeiten: Oberwalliser Lebenswelten*. DVD, 65 mins, in dialect with German, French and English subtitles, CHF 29.80. ISBN 978-3-03919-028-7

Röösli, L. (2005): *Hinterrhein: Umbruch im Bergdorf*. DVD, 82 mins, in dialect with German, French, Italian and English subtitles, CHF 29.80. ISBN 978-3-03919-002-7. For information and orders: <http://www.hierundjetzt.ch> (de)

Conference proceedings on “Exploring the Nature of Management”

(21.09.2006) The conference proceedings for the 3rd International Conference on the Monitoring and Management of Visitors Flows in Recreational and Protected Areas have just been published. The Conference held in Rapperswil/CH looked at the challenges faced by these areas in coping with ever increasing visitor numbers. More than 130 speakers from over thirty countries reported on the wide array of results from worldwide research and their experiences with practical implementation. The transfer of findings from different countries is an important objective.

The extensive conference proceedings, which are published in English, include the papers as well as poster presentations. The contributions are grouped into four main issues: The impact of tourism on recreational and protected areas; the landscape and nature images that provide the basis for the use and management of protected areas; the requirements for regional development and nature tourism in protected areas; and the role of research in the management of protected areas.

Bibliography: Siegrist, D. et al (publisher), 2006: Exploring the Nature of Management. Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Monitoring and Management of Visitor Flows in Recreational Areas. Rapperswil. 523 pages. ISBN 3-033-00935-2. Information: <http://www.wsl.ch/mmv-3> (en)

In many places visitor flows in protected areas are on the increase.



© <http://www.nationalpark-bayerischer-wald.de>

Synthesis report: Utilising the value of Alpine landscapes

(02.11.2006) The Swiss National Fund Programme on “Landscapes and Habitats of the Alps” recently published its synthesis report (de/fr) on the research focus entitled “Land Use and Adding Values”. It reviewed more than a dozen research projects, and the key issue in each of them focused on questions relating to the value of Alpine landscapes and how to capitalise on it to create revenue.

The synthesis provides an overview of the opportunities of different development strategies in the Alpine region and includes recommendations for decision makers. It shows that landscape preservation also opens up economic opportunities for the Alps and that there is still plenty of untapped potential in Alpine regions. They include optimised market economy strategies in tourism, utilising renewable energies, and the more intensive marketing of products from mountain farming. The studies also show that the consistency of different strategies (regional policy, promotion of tourism, provision of basic services) can be improved further with regard to landscape aspects and regional development. In the case of Alpine regions with limited potential it also raises the question of support and the ability to survive.

Bibliography: Simmen, H.; Walter, F. and Marti, M.: *Den Wert der Alpenlandschaften nutzen*. Theme-based synthesis on research focus IV “Land Use and Adding Values” of NFP 48. Altdorf/Berne, 2006. ISBN: 3-7281-3080-x.

Information : <http://www.nfp48.ch> (de/fr/en)

Ecological wood-welding technology with a future

(21.09.2006) Scientists from Switzerland and France have now developed a new joinery method called wood welding. This technology, also known as eco-welding, could help to reduce drastically the ecologically harmful use of synthetic wood glues. More than three million tonnes of these glues are used every year in Europe alone.

In wood welding, temperatures of between 180 and 230 °C cause the lignin resin, which is wood's stabilising material, to melt. The liquid lignin penetrates into the underlying parts of the wood that are not heated, causing it surfacing bonding after cooling. High-strength joints can be created in a matter of seconds in this way. Eco-welding was originated by researchers at Berne's University of Architecture, Wood and Civil Engineering, and their French partners at the University of Nancy and the French National Institute for Agricultural Research (INRA).

Source and information: http://www.hsb.bfh.ch/hsb/de/direktion/presse/pressitem/eco_welding.htm (de/fr)

Climate-neutral winter holidays in Arosa

(05.10.2006) In co-operation with the company ClimatePartner the holiday region of Arosa/CH is the first resort in the Alps to offer climate-neutral winter holidays. Greenhouse gas emissions are to be calculated individually based on the information provided by holiday guests regarding the distance they travelled and the mode of transport they used to reach the destination, their choice of hotel, and their holiday activities. Choosing environmentally friendly means of transport and various energy saving measures are to keep emissions as low as possible. Investments in a climate protection project make up for unavoidable greenhouse gas emissions. To ensure that the marketing aspect is as successful as possible, no additional costs are yet to be levied in the 2006/07 winter for tourists who opt for the offer.

Source and information: <http://www.arosa.ch/klimaneutral> (de)

Miscellaneous

Results of the IPAM Project now published

(21.09.2006) The IPAM (Integrative Protected Area Management) Project co-financed by the EU focused on the exchange of experience and on methods and instruments of planning and management in protected areas. The findings gained from the Project are now available in print and on CD, and can also be viewed on the homepage. Nine regional projects from Austria, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovenia and Croatia were used as practical examples for the implementation of new instruments and have been documented accordingly. IPAM was completed in March 2006.

Source and information: <http://www.ipam.info> (en)

Rainfall can trigger earthquakes

(02.11.2006) A new study shows causal links between rainfall and earth tremors. Geologists from Germany observed seismic activities under the Hochstaufen, a 1775 m mountain in the Alps, and noted a marked increase in seismic movements after heavy rain compared with drier periods of weather. They believe that the rise in water pressure in the rock pores caused by seeping water is responsible for the seismic activity after rainfall. The October 20 issue of *Nature* magazine reports on this findings in its online service.

Source: <http://www.wissenschaft.de/wissen/news/271139.html> (de)

Environmental management at campsites in South Tyrol

(05.10.2006) Twelve campsite operators in South Tyrol are planning to introduce an environmental management system as part of the Eco-camping Project. The aim is to improve environmental protection and nature conservation, safety and quality at their sites as a result. The campsite operators are to acquire the necessary information at six workshops held over the next twelve months and through individual advisory sessions. The workshops are to address such topics as waste, energy, water and traffic. After conducting an environmental analysis of his site each campsite operator then defines his key objectives with regard to environmental protection and decides on the concrete measures needed to achieve those aims. An environmental statement with data on energy and water consumption at the campsite provides the basis for evaluating the effect of the environmental measures.

Source: <http://www.ecocamping.net> (de)

Agenda

European Alps Ecoregion Workshop for the 2012 Protected Areas Programme; 12-13.11.2006, Zurich/CH; language: English; organisers: WWF EALPS;

Information: aleandro.zaccheo@wwf.ch, <http://www.panda.org/alps> (en)

International Conference: **Changing Alps: New People, Cultures and Landscapes**; 16-17.11.2006, Tolmezzo/I; conference languages: English, Italian, German; organisers: Rete Montagna;

Information: Belluno@AlpineNetwork.org

International Conference: **Biodiversity Conservation – From Genes To Habitats**; 23-24.11.2006, Davos/CH; conference language: English; organisers: Swiss Federal Research Institute WSL;

Information: <http://www.wsl.ch/intrabiodiv> (en)

American Geophysical Union, Meeting Session: **Elevational Gradients and Mountain Climates, Resources, and Ecosystems**; 11-15.12.2006, San Francisco/USA; conference language: English; organisers: American Geophysical Union;

Information: <http://www.agu.org/meetings/fm06/review> (en)

International Conference: **Environment: Survival and Sustainability**; 19-24.02.2007, Nicosia/Northern Cyprus; conference language: English; organisers: Near East University; Information: <http://www.neuconference.org/> (en)

Fifth European Conference on Sustainable Cities & Towns - **Taking the Commitments to the Streets**; 21-25.03.2006, Seville/Spain; conference languages: English, French, Italian, Spanish; organisers: The City of Seville, ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability;

Information: <http://www.sevilla2007.org> (en/fr/it/es)

Oh!

... the criminal potential of nettle manure must now be made known beyond the borders of France. Gardeners and farmers in the Alps have also been using these natural products for a long time, but they are now worried about their good reputation. The French framework law on agriculture 2006 prohibits the use of non-approved products. So to protect people and the environment the use of nettle manure has just been banned. The well-intended requirement of official approval de facto acts as a licence for synthetic products while suppressing the use of natural products.

Source: <http://www.terran.fr> (fr)