alpMedia Newsletter

A CIPRA information service – 10.11.2008, summary 18/08-21/08
www.cipra.org/alpmedia

€100,000 for exemplary climate protection in the Alps

(6.11.2008) At a ceremony held in Bern/CH on 6 November, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps (CIPRA) awarded prizes for outstanding climate protection to seven municipalities, businesses and organisations, the winners of its cc.alps competition held across the Alps. Weather expert Thomas Bucheli and CIPRA President Dominik Siegrist presented the prizes worth a total of €100,000.

The wide range of activities rewarded proves that, when it comes to climate change, there are no more lazy excuses.

Three competition contributions from the German-speaking region of the Alps received main prizes worth €20,000 each for their exemplary services across the Alps. The Allgäu municipality of Wildpoldsried/D is particularly active in the areas of energy, wood and water. The municipality of Mäder in Vorarlberg/A is not only promoting energy efficiency, it is also motivating its population and its neighbouring communities to take an active part in climate protection. The environmental organisation Bund Naturschutz Bayern/D is working to restore moors to their near-natural conditions as moors help to protect people against floods and also act as a CO_2 sink. "The winners of the cc.alps competition have shown in a most impressive way how we can counter the impact of climate change in the Alpine region with comprehensive measures," said Dominik Siegrist at the award ceremony. The award winners have managed to achieve a balance between climate protection, the environment, society and the economy.

CIPRA also recognised four climate projects from Switzerland, Italy, France and Slovenia with prizes of €10,000 each. The Alpine Bus community of interests (Switzerland), the KlimaHaus Agentur (South Tyrol/I), the company STMicroelectronics (Grenoble/F) and the Snovik spa resort (SI) have made some outstanding achievements, particularly when compared nationally. The Jury also selected six other contributions worthy of special mention from Germany and Austria for the final round out of a total of 160 submissions. The 14th autumn seminar of the *Hausbau- und Energiemesse* [housing construction and energy trade fair] provided a fitting setting for the prize-giving.

The competition is part of the CIPRA project "cc.alps – climate change: thinking one step further". cc.alps is financed by Switzerland's MAVA Foundation for Nature.

More information on the award-winning contributions and the other submissions can be found at www.cipra.org/cc.alps (de/fr/it/sl/en).

Contents

Headlines:

Page 2: Protected areas in the EU lacking in quality

According to a report by the European Environment Agency (EEA) more than half of the protected species and habitats in the EU are under pressure.

Page 3: Early warning system for water scarcity in the Alps

The kick-off for the cross-border project "ALP-WATER-SCARCE: Water Management Strategies against Water Scarcity in the Alps" took place in Annecy/F in mid-October as part of the INTERREG Alpine Space Programme.

Protected areas in the EU lacking in quality

Protected areas under pressure: the High Tatras in Slovakia.

© Christoph Lenart / PIXELIO

(23.10.2008) According to a report by the European Environment Agency (EEA) more than half of the protected species and habitats in the EU are under pressure. Worldwide, just under 17,000 species are on the Red List, i.e. threatened by extinction. The situation is particularly poor in habitats such as wetlands, dunes and open grasslands. According to the EEA the picture is slightly better when it comes to conservation efforts in Alpine and Mediterranean regions. The primary problem does not appear to be the number of protected areas, but their lack of quality and status. That is why the report believes special emphasis has to be placed on the management and evaluation of existing protected areas in order to put a halt to the slow deterioration of the habitats.

Unfortunately current developments in Slovakia's High Tatras National Park would appear to confirm the EEA's assessment. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is viewing with some concern the massive expansion of infrastructure in the protected area. It believes that the High Tatras run the risk of being reclassified from a national park to a protected landscape.

Sources and information: http://www.eea.europa.eu/highlights/europe-is-losing-biodiversity-2013-even-in-protected-areas (en), http://www.spectator.sk/articles/view/33047/3/tatras_under_scrutiny.html (en)

New hypothesis on deep erosion in high mountain regions

Glacier dynamics delay erosion in high mountain regions

© CIPRA International

(06.11.2008) Researchers in the south-east of the Tibetan plateau have found that the moraine dams created during glacier fluctuations have over the millennia helped to slow down the erosion effect of large rivers known as downcutting. This new hypothesis, which has just been published in the science magazine *Nature*, is founded on the notion that tectonic lift alone is not solely responsible – as has previously been assumed – for ensuring that the Tibetan plateau has been preserved to this day. Glacier fluctuations also slow down the erosion process. After a glacier has receded, moraines can obstruct the course of rivers. Often a natural dammed lake then forms between the moraine and the glacier, storing up rubble and containing deep erosion. At the same time the lack of rubble discharge in the river courses situated below the plateau means that the downcutting effect is amplified there.

Given this new hypothesis researchers believe that moraine dams will also limit downcutting in the upper courses of mountain streams in the Alps.

Source: http://www.wsl.ch/news/ (de/fr); Bibliografie: Korup, O., Montgomery, D. R. (2008): Tibetan plateau river incision inhibited by glacial stabilization of the Tsangpo gorge. In: Nature Volume 455 Number 7214. Pages 786-789

ECONNECT: Nature without limits

(06.11.2008) The kick-off for the EU project "ECONNECT – Restoring the web of life" took place in Vienna/A on 4 and 5 November. Over the next three years sixteen partners and four observers from all the Alpine States will be working to implement an ecological network across state borders and the confines of protected areas. Their aim is to contribute towards preserving Europe's unique biodiversity in the Alpine region, which is under threat from climate change and the fragmentation and destruction of habitats.

Partners from various disciplines and different levels are taking on the challenge of overcoming the barriers in people's minds: they include administrations, scientists, and representatives of NGOs and protected areas. One particular emphasis is on the implementation of measures in six pilot regions. Measures such the alpine-wide analysis of statutory and ecological barriers are to provide a contextual framework. The four alpine-wide networks ALPARC, CIPRA, ISCAR and WWF have been the driving force behind ECONNECT and are also project partners. ECONNECT is co-financed by the EU as part of its Alpine Space Programme.

Information: http://www.econnectproject.eu (en)

Mountain Research Initiative launches new Newsletter

(25.09.2008) The first issue of MRI NEWS has just been published. The Mountain Research Initiative (MRI) newsletter will be sent out by e-mail in English twice a year and is entirely given over to research on Global Change in mountain areas. MRI NEWS also provides information from regional networks, but unlike the already well established two-monthly regional Newsflash, NEWS takes a more in-depth look at various topics, with features covering 30 to 40 pages. For instance MRI's activities as initiator and sponsor of inter- and transdisciplinary research is to be showcased. The Science Peaks item features research work from different fields, in a compact and easily understandable format. A summary of relevant publications is also provided, along with news of forthcoming events.

MRI is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNF). It is hosted at the Institute of Geography of the University of Bern/CH.

Information and to order the Newsletter: http://mri.scnatweb.ch (en)

Early warning system for water scarcity in the Alps

Water management issues and the protection of alpine water resources are addressed by various INTERREG projects in a cross-border approach.

© Klaus / PIXELIO

(23.10.2008) The kick-off for the cross-border project “ALP-WATER-SCARCE: Water Management Strategies against Water Scarcity in the Alps” took place in Annecy/F in mid-October as part of the INTERREG Alpine Space Programme.
The Alps are often referred to as Europe’s water reservoir. However, according to Carmen De Jong of the Mountain Institute at the University of Savoy/F there is a noticeable trend towards scarcer water reserves. There are tensions in a number of Alpine regions, especially in regions where different users such as tourism, farming and settlements compete for access to water resources. The objective of ALP-WATER-SCARCE is to create an early warning system for water scarcity in the Alps, based on modelling and long-term monitoring as well as a stakeholder forum. The monitoring is to focus on 28 pilot regions in the project countries. The findings are to lead to improved short- and long-term water management in the Alpine region. The lead partner for the three-year project is the Mountain Institute; the 17 project partners come from Austria, France, Italy, Slovenia and Switzerland.
The ALPLAKES project was also conducted as part of the Alpine Space Programme and completed in 2008. ALPLAKES established an international network aimed at promoting sustainable protection for lakes and lake-side areas and also for developing ecotourism. Among other results the project produced a publication entitled “Alpine lakes. A common approach to the characterisation of lakes and their catchment area”. This extensive volume summarises the results of ALPLAKES and features 18 lakes in the Alpine region. The English publication is available both in print and as a PDF file.
Information:
ALP-WATER-SCARCE: http://www.alpwaterscarce.eu (en), http://www.institut-montagne.org (fr),
http://www.enviscope.com/15816-penurie-eau-Alpes-recherche.html (fr)
ALP LAKES: http://www.alpinespace.org/alplakes.html (en), Publication: http://www.irealp.it/346,Projects.html (en)

The Andes and the Alps on a single rope team

Huaraz is a mountaineer’s paradise in the Peruvian Andes.

© rebel / PIXELIO

(25.09.2008) This year mountain guides from Peru are carrying out part of their training in the Alps at the invitation of their Swiss counterparts. Already back in the early 1980s, the Swiss Mountain Guide Association initiated a professional mountain guide training course in Peru. The aim is not only to guarantee quality for mountaineers from abroad but also to establish co-operation as an important link in the regional value-added chain: whenever tourists are accompanied by Peruvian mountain guides, the domestic population and the regional service providers also stand to benefit.
The current venture is part of the *Cooperación Alpinista Suiza – Peru* and its scope is to be expanded further. In a later stage the initiators of the transfer project, Dorothe Fierz (Cantonal Councillor for Zurich/CH) and Elizabeth Astete (Peru’s Ambassador in Bern/CH), are planning to improve the tourist facilities of the Huaraz mountaineering centre in Peru’s Cordillera Blanca.
Source: http://www.nzz.ch/magazin/reisen/eine_seilschaft_zwischen_alpen_und_anden_1.828641.html (de)

Latest issue of the *Journal of Alpine Research*

(23.10.2008) The latest publication in the bilingual series *Journal of Alpine Research* comprises four specialist articles on different topical issues. The first feature deals with the rivalry for public commodities, illustrated with the specific example of an irrigation system in northern Italy. The second article looks at regional development in sensitive landscapes and cites a number of current examples from the mountains of Lombardy. The wildlife management of “problem species” is addressed in the third article, asking “How are people in France dealing with the rapidly multiplying numbers of wild boar and wolves?” The last specialist article focuses on the issue of neglected landscapes. It analyses various methods of countryside conservation designed to protect meadows and pastures from becoming overgrown with bushes.
Bibliography: La revue de géographie alpine/Journal of alpine research, Vol. 96, No. 3, September 2008, Mélanges 2008/Miscellaneous articles 2008, Grenoble, ISBN 978-2-200-92502-4, 112 pages,
To order: http://iga.ujf-grenoble.fr/territoires/accueil/editions.htm (fr)

Miscellaneous

Solar thermal power plant in the French Hautes-Alpes

(09.10.2008) The energy companies Dalkia and Solar Euromed have joined forces and plan to build the first solar thermal power plant in France. The plant is to be built in Chevalet d'Aspres sur Buech and will generate some 60,000 megawatt-hours of electricity. Its commissioning is scheduled for 2010. In a solar thermal power plant the sun's rays are bundled onto a focal point to heat up a liquid to over 400 °C. The heat is then transferred to water, creating water vapour, which in turn drives a turbine. Solar power plants are used above all in regions which get a lot of sunshine, such as the desert areas of north Africa.

Source: http://www.ddmagazine.com/20080917682/Actus/Une-centrale-solaire-thermique-dans-les-Hautes-Alpes.html (fr)

Rhône Glacier to melt away by 2100

(06.11.2008) Scientists at the Écoles Polytechniques Fédérales de Lausanne/CH and Zurich/CH have used complex computer simulations to predict that the Rhône Glacier in the Canton of Valais/CH will have disappeared by 2100. And depending on assumptions for future climate trends, this may happen even sooner. The new computer is said to enable much more accurate forecasts than previous estimates, which were more qualitative. Climate data and the Glacier's mass balance since 1874 were analysed for the simulation, with the results then projected into the future.

Source: http://actualites.epfl.ch/presseinfo-com?id=609 (de/fr/en)

Cashmere goats for the Aosta Valley

(25.09.2008) Italy's Aosta Valley is to introduce cashmere goats in a bid to start a breeding project. The regional office for agriculture states that the goats can be kept outdoors all year round and are happy to graze even on difficult terrain. The goats feed on a diet of plants that other species reject; in doing so, they help prevent areas from becoming overgrown. Cashmere goats not only produce high-quality wool, for which they are famous worldwide, they also have a great ability to adapt to different climatic and environmental conditions in mountain areas.

Source: http://www.montagna.tv/?q=node/8555 (it) 19.9.2008

Agenda

International Mountain and Outdoor Sports Conference. Outdoor Activities in Educational and Recreational Programmes; 20-23.11.2008, Hrubá Skála/CZ; language: en; organisers: Naturfreunde Internationale (NFI) and International Young Nature Friends (IYNF).
Information: http://www.imosc.org/ (en)

Conference: **International Dimensions of Climate Policies**; 21-23.01.2009, Bern/CH; language: en; organiser: NCCR Climate.
Information: http://www.nccr-climate.unibe.ch/conferences/climate_policies/ (en)

CEP® CLEAN ENERGY POWER; 29-31.01.2009, Hamburg/D; language: de, en; organisers: Landesmesse Stuttgart.
Information: http://www.cep-expo.de/index.php?id=7&L=1 (de/en)

International Congress: **Climat Change**; 10-12.03.2009, Copenhagen / Denmark; language: en; organiser: University of Copenhagen.
Information: http://climate.ku.dk/congress/ (en)

International climate-conference; 03-04.04.20089, Bolzano/I; languages: de, fr, it, sl; organisers: Association "Alpine town of the year".
Information:
http://www.cipra.org/en/cc.alps/cc.alps/?set_language=en
(de/en/fr/it/sl)

Strange but true!

…It's not just on mountain passes that the Alps are being conquered with the aid of performance-enhancing substances. This year the first doped athlete was caught during the legendary Swiss ski tour race known as the *Patrouille des Glaciers*. As in cycling the infamous EPO drug helped to get those legs working even faster. Doping is not however something new in the noble sport of alpinism. In 1953 Herman Buhl managed to reach the summit of the famous 8,000 m Nanga Parbat in a solo attempt; however, it was not entirely down to him alone: the amphetamine Pervitin helped him over the tough last few metres in altitude elevation. The good news here of course is that the next time we're swiftly overtaken by a smiling mountaineer on one of our ski tours, we'll know what it's all about. Maybe we'll soon need to swap our dried fruit and cured meat in our rucksacks for some slightly more potent energy boosters.

Source: http://ledauphine.com/index.jspz?chaine=31&article=59542 (fr)

Impressum: CIPRA International • Im Bretscha 22 • FL 9494 Schaan • Tel 00423 237 40 30 • Fax 00423 237 40 31 • alpmedia@cipra.org
Translation: Stephen Grynwasser