

Where unemployment is now unheard of: Idrija/SI, the "Alpine Town of the Year"



On the way to sustainability: Idrija/SI, the 'Alpine Town of the Year' intends to become a model town for climate protection.

In April the Slovenian town of Idrija has been declared "Alpine Town of the Year". In the Year of the Alpine Town Idrija intends to make a big step towards becoming a model town for climate protection. In the context of sustainable development, the "Alpine Town of the Year" brand should help the town to become known outside Slovenia as well.

Until recently the small town of 12'000 inhabitants in the south-eastern foothills of the Alps was mainly known for the second

largest quicksilver mine in the world. After the closure of the mines in the late 1980s Idrija developed into a centre of high-tech industry with an almost zero unemployment rate. The planned activities were presented to the representatives of the "Alpine Town of the Year" association at a workshop in early April. The prospective model town for climate protection has developed many initiatives for energy efficiency. For example, the amount of energy that can be generated from local biomass and the corresponding savings of energy from fossil sources will be calculated. Measures will also be taken to reduce environmental and light pollution. Another important theme is awareness-building among the population for a more rational use of drinking water. In this context, the construction of sewage plants is also given priority.

The development of sustainable tourism has a key role in the town and in the region as a whole. One initiative will be the creation of a geopark, as a geo-logical continuation of history, so to speak. Another is the expansion of the cycle track network. Green tourism is to become a reliable pillar of the local economy. Idrija has set itself the goal of being nominated for inclusion in the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Source and additional information: <http://www.alpenstaedte.org/de/alpenstaedte-1/220> (de/fr/it/si)

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What do the Julian Alps/SI and the mountain La Salève/F have in common?



Lanza's Alpine Salamander is considered to be endangered, and has been included in the European red list.

freshwater fish and vascular plants are to be published.

Publication: Sundseth, K. (2008): Natura 2000 - Protecting Europe's Biodiversity, Luxemburg, ISBN 978-92-79-08308-2.

The other publications can be downloaded under <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/info/pubs> (de/fr/it/sl), <http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature> (en)

Both are examples of protected areas in the alpine bio-geographical region and are presented in the new publication of the European Commission "Natura 2000 - Protection of Biodiversity in Europe". A double page spread shows readers which animal and plant species are particularly in need of protection, how the areas are protected and what their condition in terms of preservation is. The concise presentation also contains travel tips and many photos and maps. In addition the publication "Natura 2000 in the Alpine Region" gives an overview of high mountain areas in the EU: the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Carpathians, the Apennines and the Scandinavian Alps.

The red lists are an important tool for realizing the flora-fauna-habitat directives of the EU. The first European red lists - for amphibians, reptiles, butterflies, dragonflies and wood-boring beetles - have been published. They cover all species of a specific group of animals, not only those protected by law. The red lists therefore present the overall situation of a group of animals. Next year, the red lists for invertebrates,

National parks in the mountains and the simulation of local participatory processes



National parks do not only consist of nature: in many places, protected areas are worked by people.

The essays can be found in English and French under: <http://rga.revues.org/index1086.html> (en/fr)

This year's first issue of the "Revue de géographie alpine" / "Journal of alpine research" presents research on protected mountain areas and the participatory processes in those areas. The five essays discuss questions such as: Do trends and political guidelines contribute to the identification of compromises and consensus, and to the rectification of previous follies in environmental policy? Do cross-border dynamics and exchanges of experience during symposiums for those responsible for protected areas lead to common or widely used concepts for the management of national parks?

National parks have a long history. In the past, their creation has often led to conflicts with the local, native population. Since the 1970s, the involvement of the public has become common practice in national park management, although local reality differs. In his contribution, Stéphane Héritier argues that public participation may also split the population and make the creation of effective coalitions of interest groups more difficult.

Fire for the flowering meadows

In 2010, the "Fire in the Alps" campaign once more draws our attention to a burning issue with its signal fires during the second week of August. This year, the imposing fires on the heights will burn "for the protection of the alpine flowers", as a contribution to the Year of Biodiversity 2010. In Switzerland, the meadows full of colourful flowers as we know them from tourism PR have almost all disappeared in the past sixty years. Over 90 per cent of the valuable dry meadows have been lost to intensive agriculture or have become covered with scrub, even though dry meadows belong to the most important habitats in the Alps: they are the environment in which about half of the plant and animal species live.

This year's mountain fires are once again a sign of solidarity with the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of the Alps - the colourful alpine meadows and grasslands, in this case. All organizations and private persons who want to show environmental commitment can participate in the fires. CIPRA Switzerland is responsible for international coordination.

Source and all further information: <http://www.feuerindenalpen.com/> (de/en/it)

ECONNECT photo contest: clicks beyond borders

The partners in the ECONNECT project invite amateurs and professional photographers to make a pictorial record of ecosystem fragmentation in the Alps. The recently launched photo contest "Clicks beyond the borders" aims to visualize the importance of ecological links in the Alps in powerful images. The pictures should show barriers to ecological connectivity as well as strategies of animals and plants, helped by human beings, to surmount these barriers. The closing date is 15 January 2011. There will be awards for the twelve best pictures. These will also be exhibited during the final conference of the ECONNECT project in Berchtesgaden/D and be reproduced in a calendar.

With this contest, the partners in the EU-funded three-year project ECONNECT want to make the public more aware of the theme of ecological connectivity: although the theme is a very important one, it has received little attention in the popular media so far.

More information on the contest: <http://www.econnectproject.eu/cms/?q=news/en> (de/en/fr/it/sl)

Towards happy shrinking

Always more - the world will become better and better as long as material well-being grows. Nobody asks what this costs...until the system collapses. The present financial and economic crisis is giving us a taste of it. The Alps are now among the losers, but could be among the winners if they rise to the challenge. Must growth in principle be rejected? Or can there be qualitative growth? Do we need a vision differentiated by region? In its latest issue, "Wachstum auf Teufel komm' raus? Die Alpen auf der Suche nach dem Glück" (Growth at any cost? The Alps' search for happiness), CIPRA's thematic periodical "SzeneAlpen" focuses on the backgrounds and consequences of the growth spiral and presents solutions for spatial planning, the economy and politics. One thing is certain: in the Alps too, there is no royal road to happiness. More information in: SzeneAlpen Nr. 93 "Wachstum auf Teufel komm' raus?", available free of charge from CIPRA International, international@cipra.org. The issue can also be downloaded as PDF from <http://www.cipra.org/szenealpen> (de/fr/it/sl)

Swiss research into sustainable water use

Melting glaciers create new lakes in the Alps. This creates new tourism potential and new risks, such as floods and landslides, for the inhabitants of the valleys. Where and when are such lakes created? Who owns them and who is responsible for them? Climate change and social and economic development will have a marked influence on the future availability and consumption of water, and will therefore lead to conflicts of interest. How can water be used optimally in dry but intensively used alpine regions?

These questions are at the core of two projects in the framework of the Swiss national research programme "Sustainable Water Use" (NFP 61) which has just been launched. Sixteen research projects will study the effects of climate and social change on water resources, and will identify risks and future conflicts. The projects will be completed in 2013. The results will be documented and exchanges of knowledge and discussions will be stimulated through working groups and workshops.

Source and further information: <http://www.nfp61.ch/D/Seiten/home.aspx> (de/en/fr)

Kick-off for a new alpine media house

The "Las-Alps Infoteca" project was launched at the end of April in Chur/CH. In the coming five years, a competence centre will be established for media products that are relevant to the Alps. The project will be realized in two phases: in the first phase the focus will be on the provision of media products, in the second the centre will also produce and market its own products. A translation service for the languages spoken in the Alps, including the minority languages Rhaeto-Romance, Ladinish and Cimbrian, will be set up as well. The promoter of the media network is the broadcasting corporation RTR Radiotelevision Svizzera Rumantscha. More promoters are sought. Details of the project will be made public at a meeting in mid-November.

CIPRA International welcomes the project and looks forward to exploring the possibilities of cooperation.

Source and further information: <http://www.lasalps.ch> (de/fr/it/sl/rät)

New platform for tourism by electrobike

In mid-April, the ExtraEnergy association started the web site "Tourism and Electric Bikes". An interactive map provides information about various tour packages for electrobikers. The web site additionally provides useful information for holiday planning. Operators can upload their offers on the web site; in this way, the information platform will expand continuously. Partners in tourism and green mobility projects will find information on tourism solutions with electrobikes and can count on support from ExtraEnergy in the development and execution of projects.

The tourism destinations in the Alps presented on the web site include Werfenweng/A, Pfronten/D, Flims/CH and Mens/F. At these locations, electrobikes can be rented and complementary tourist services are available.

More information: <http://www.tourisme-velo-electrique.org/en> (de/en/fr)

Miscellaneous

CIPRA goes facebook

CIPRA has now joined the popular platform facebook with a profile of its own. At <http://www.facebook.com/CIPRA.org> facebook users can network with our organization and will be informed about novelties, events and actions. Videos and photos provide additional interest and visualize our motto "Life in the Alps". We are now, for example, looking for photos of the Alps that are personal favourites. Users can upload them on our page. We look forward to making many new friends and to lively discussions in all languages of the Alps.

Source: CIPRA International

New on-line portal for biodiversity in mountain areas

Recently, an on-line portal has been set up where those who are interested can find information on the many animal and plant species in mountain areas on an interactive digital map. Future users are familiarized with the functions of the data bank through an introductory video. The portal does require some knowledge of species, as the search function is manual, either by Latin name or taxonomic tree.

The source of the data (which are updated continuously) is the databank of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility GBIF <http://www.gbif.org> (en).

Source: On-line portal and video at <http://gmba.unibas.ch/index/index.htm> (en), <http://www.mountainbiodiversity.org> (en), <http://vimeo.com/11552863> (en)

New web page with information on visitor centres throughout the Alps

A new page has recently been added to the web site of alparc - the network of protected areas in the Alps - for those who want an overview of the many visitor centres in the Alps. The page covers all alpine countries - Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Switzerland and Slovenia - plus the various types of visitor information and awareness building activities in the protected areas. Work is in progress on wider coverage.

Source and web site: <http://www.alparc.org/index.php/nachrichten> (de/en/fr/it/sl), <http://de.alparc.org/index.php/die-schutzgebiete> (en)

Uphill with solar energy

The village of Tenna in the Safien valley of the Swiss canton Graubünden is working hard on a world premiere. The Skilift Tenna cooperative has decided to replace an ancient ski lift by the first solar-powered ski lift ever. Next to the existing lift, a T-bar lift with an electric motor is being constructed; solar panels will be installed above the tow cable. These can be moved according to the direction of the sun. When it snows, the panels can be flapped up to keep them snow-free and add snow to the ski lift route. The solar lift is to be ready for the 2010/2011 ski season. The installation will be used in winter and summer and will produce about 90'000 kWh per year, of which 22'000 are needed for the lift. The remaining power is to be sold.

Source and further information: "Südostschweiz", 15 March 2010, <http://www.skilift-tenna.ch/> (de)

Agenda

Film / TV and/or Radio Broadcast / Reading: **Lago Maggiore - LetterAltura 2010.**

23.6.2010 – 18.7.2010. Lago Maggiore/It. Language: de, en, fr, it. Organisation: Associazione Culturale LetterAltura, Verbania/It.

Info: www.letteraltura.it/en-en/home.

Excursion: **5. Sellaronda Bike Day.** 27.6.2010. Maciaconi - Selva/It. Language: de, en, it. Organisation: Val Gardena-Gröden Marketing/It.

Info: www.sellarondabikeday.com/index_eng.html.

Film / TV and/or Radio Broadcast / Reading: **16. Film Festival St. Anton.** 24.8.2010 – 28.8.2010. St. Anton am Arlberg/A. Language: de, en. Organisation: Tourismusverband St. Anton am Arlberg/A.

Info: www.filmfest-stanton.at/index2_en.php?a=11.

Conference / Congress: **Euromontana's VIIIth European Mountain**

Convention. 15.9.2010 – 17.9.2010. Lillehammer/NO. Language: de, en, fr, it, sl.

Organisation: Euromontana, Bruxelles/BE.

Info: www.euromontana.org/English/events/Lillehammer/EMC_Lillehammer.htm.

Conference / Congress: **ForumAlpinum 2010: Alps & Metropolises.** 6.10.2010 – 9.10.2010. Munich/D. Language: de, fr, it, sl. Organisation: ISCAR Geschäftsstelle, Bern/CH.

Info: www.forumalpinum.org/2010/.

Strange but true!

...What is essential for a mountain tour appears to be mortally dangerous on a train trip. At least that's what Eurostar thinks: with immediate effect, climbers' equipment such as ice axes and crampons has been banned from passenger coaches.

The argument: this equipment is too dangerous; it could be used for acts of violence. In future, mountaineers from the British Isles must hand in their "weapons", properly wrapped, an hour before departure; they are also out of pocket, as there is of course a charge for this additional service.

But not only mountaineers are prevented from having a go at passengers in good old "Basic Instinct" fashion: children and campers are subject to the new rules as well. Water pistols and camping gear must also travel separately. When planning their next climb, mountaineers will have to allow for travel time of ice axe and company. Only then can they put the train journey in the bag as well.

Source : <http://www.ukclimbing.com/news/item.php?id=52717> (en)

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