

## Alpine Week: Four organisations that operate throughout the Alps join forces

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## Flora Alpina - An atlas of all 4,500 plants in the Alps

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This joint event by four large organisations - an NGO, a scientific body, municipalities and protected areas - shows that all the players involved in the Alps are closely networked and work together on sustainable development. The Alpine Week provides the target audiences of these four organisations with an opportunity to convene at a single location.

The theme-based structure of the Alpine Week follows a multi-disciplinary approach. The first module addresses the general prospects for the Alpine region and the management of natural resources in connection with climate changes, from the viewpoint of biodiversity and the management of water resources. The main topics of the second module are the natural and cultural heritage of landscapes in the Alpine region. The third module looks at the economic aspects of tourism and regional development in connection with the EU's enlargement to the east. In the final module the participants' attention is drawn to socio-cultural issues of the Alpine region.

The main programme will be complemented by a large number of workshops aimed at showcasing and discussing current and future projects in research and implementation. The Alpine Week is to conclude with six theme-based excursions.

Information and registration: <http://www.alpweek.org> (de/fr/it/sl/en).

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The Summer Academy is taking place from 16 August to 3 September at the Liechtenstein University of Applied Science in Vaduz. The lectures and project work on topics related to the Alps are designed to offer a more comprehensive view of the Alps. The issues studied range from mobility and tourism to regional development, agriculture and forestry, energy and climate change. Besides the lectures, working groups are to be set up to develop projects on the subject of local recreation in the region of Liechtenstein - Werdenberg/CH. The course languages are German and English, with simultaneous interpretation provided for the lectures. Participants are to receive 4.5 credits under the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## K2: Environmental impact of anniversary treks

(19.05.2004) To mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first ascent of the K2 summit in the Himalayas the Italian Alpine Association is organising several treks to the mountain's base camps. Up to 60,000 people are expected to pass through some of the intermediate camps this year. The problems this causes include the insufficiently rapid degradation of biological waste at high altitude, the pollution of rivers, or damage to the vegetation through the gathering of firewood. A number of expeditions are also to make greater use of helicopters.

Mountain Wilderness International has expressed concern about the environmental impact of excessively high visitor numbers and called upon the government of Pakistan to implement regulations. Tourist flows should be spread to other mountain regions and maximum quotas allocated for the region around K2. Moreover each mountaineer should bear responsibility for preventing lasting damage to high-altitude mountain regions.

Source and information: 07.05.2004 <http://kairn.com/news.html?ident=21046> (fr)

## Preserving traditional crops and livestock breeds

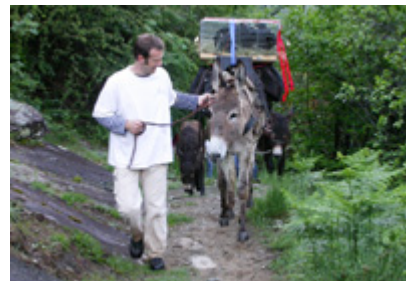
(03.06.2004) An agreement on plant genetic resources is to come into force in nine EU member states on 29 June, with only Germany featuring among alpine countries. The agreement is designed to secure the use of gene pools and free access to seed stocks and propagating materials for key agricultural crops.

On 22 May AGES, the Austrian Agency for Health and Nutrition Safety, presented the steps it has undertaken to preserve and maintain Austria's crop heritage. Besides a central gene database *Index Seminum Austriae* AGES also operates a gene bank with a seed stock collection. More than 5,000 seed varieties from all kinds of plants are stored, examined, tested and evaluated.

The *Pro Specie Rara* Foundation for its part seeks to preserve traditional breeds of domesticated animals: On 28 May some 140 domesticated animals belonging to endangered livestock breeds were driven up to the Val Cama/CH alpine pasture to fulfil their original function as farm animals.

Sources and information: <http://www.psrara.org> (de/fr), European Plant Genetic Resources Search Catalogue: <http://eurisco.ecpgr.org> (en), <http://www.save-foundation.net> (de/fr/en)

Driving endangered livestock breeds up to alpine pastures



© Yannick Andrea, Pro Specie Rara

## Ministers of alpine countries: More road safety and alternatives to road traffic

(19.05.2004) At a meeting in Switzerland the transport ministers of alpine countries underlined their commitment to improve road safety in cross-alpine HGV traffic in a joint and concerted effort adapted to the needs of the alpine countries, and to bolster the policy of transporting HGV traffic by rail. The meeting was attended by representatives from Germany, France, Italy, Austria and the EU Commission.

The permanent "Control Body for Road Safety and Mobility in the Alpine Region" had been set up in the wake of serious accidents in alpine tunnels. The Ministers have now taken note of the Control Body's initial findings and have commissioned contracts for the next two years. The Control Body for Transit Traffic in the Alpine Region for instance is to examine alternatives to road traffic, i.e. combined traffic for instance. Other areas of activity include technical safety measures for trucks, the working conditions of HGV drivers, and safety in tunnels with contra-flow traffic. A standardised database on freight and passenger traffic in the alpine region is also designed to help the countries to co-ordinate planning work for infrastructure projects.

Source and information: <http://www.bav.admin.ch/index.cfm?nav=medienmitteilungen.archiv&aktion=detail&ID=883&sprache=d> (de)

## Flora Alpina - An atlas of all 4,500 plants in the Alps

(17.06.2004) How many vascular plants make up the flora of the Alps? What do they look like? What is their correct designation? What species are annual, perennial or xyloid? When do they flower? Where can they be found? What ecology characterises the individual species? The answers to these and other questions can all be found in *Flora alpina*, a new publication in three volumes that covers all the flowering plants and ferns of the entire alpine region, from Vienna to Nice, from valley floor to eternal snow.

The Alpine range boasts an astonishing biodiversity: Around 4,500 species of vascular plants, i.e. more than a third of all European flowering plants and ferns, are indigenous to the Alps. Each native species and a selection of neophytes are featured in the book along with an extensive multilingual (de/fr/it/sl/en) nomenclature complete with bibliography, symbols, biological and ecological data, distribution charts, and one to two colour photographs per plant.

The authors (together with renowned botanists from other countries) have compiled a reference book of international importance, and as *Flora alpina* does not depend on any particular language it will considerably facilitate communication between scientists and amateurs alike. The book is the first complete plant atlas of the Alps, and is the fruit of decades of botanical research.

The German version of *Flora Alpina* went on sale in bookshops on 16 June. French and Italian editions have also been published with *Edition Belin*, Paris, and *Zanichelli editore spa*, Bologna, respectively.

Description: 2,670 pages, 5,933 colour photographs, 4,662 distribution charts, 1st edition 2004, ISBN: 3-258-06600-0, CHF: 286.00 / EUR: 190.00, Haupt Verlag.

For information and to order: <http://www.haupt.ch> (de), <http://www.editions-belin.com> (fr), <http://www.zanichelli.it> (it)

## Conference on "Cities in the Mountains"

(19.05.2004) The French mountain organisation *Montanea* is organising an international conference on "Cities in the Mountains" together with the *Alpe* magazine. It is to be held at the Chambéry Conference Centre on 29 June. Admission is free. The registration deadline is 22 June. The conference will offer simultaneous interpretation in French, German and Italian.

The Conference addresses the situation specific to alpine cities such as Aosta/I, Chambéry/F or Innsbruck/A. Through the unique convergence of mountain landscape, the identity of their inhabitants and their economy, these cities have often developed in contradictory ways. Does this result in confrontation or in a complementary reciprocity of nature and culture? Experts from Switzerland, Italy and France are to present numerous papers on how alpine cities were constructed, on urban development, the economy, the cultural heritage, and cities with an alpine panorama.

Information: [http://www.montanea.org/html/formulaire/formulaire\\_colloques.html](http://www.montanea.org/html/formulaire/formulaire_colloques.html) (de/fr/it/en)

Alpine cities - the convergence of mountains, landscape and urban life



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## Fires aglow for alpine protected areas

(03.06.2004) The "Fire across the Alps" event aims to send a glowing message on behalf of alpine policy in 2004, too. The emphasis this year is on alpine protected areas. Other "pot burners" include transit traffic and local issues. The fires also symbolise the solidarity between alpine countries and regions. On the night of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> August they are to burn in as many sites as possible from Vienna to Nice.

Past experience has shown that media coverage of the event is good. It is therefore all the more important for the organisers and other signatory organisations to communicate a manifesto of demands relating to the chosen issues. The campaign is being co-ordinated by CIPRA Switzerland. To register fires for the event visit the "Fire across the Alps" web site, which also has a list of the venues: <http://www.feuerindenalpen.org> (de/fr/it/en).

## European Mountain Forum launches Mediterranean co-ordination agency

(06.05.2004) The European Mountain Forum has launched its new Mediterranean co-ordination agency at Les Planes de Son/E on 16 and 17 June as part of the international conference on "Sustainable Development in Mediterranean Mountain Regions: Past, Present and Future". Its aim is to promote the idea of sustainable development and its implementation in the Mediterranean region, and to raise the awareness of the significance of Mediterranean mountain regions not just among the local population but throughout Europe and the world.

By 2005 the European Mountain Forum intends to be the leading information network for sustainable development in European mountain regions for experts and decision makers. The Mediterranean co-ordination agency is to consist of individuals and organisations from throughout Europe as well as North Africa and the Middle East.

Source and information: [http://www.mtnforum.org/europe/emf/what\\_new.cfm](http://www.mtnforum.org/europe/emf/what_new.cfm) (en)



## Project launch: Study of persistent organic pollutants in the Alps

(06.05.2004) Very little is known to date about the actual extent of the threat to the Alps caused by persistent highly toxic environmental pollutants, also known as POP chemicals. However initial studies suggest that they do represent a burden on the Alps, especially since POPs tend to deposit in cold areas such as mountain regions. Austria has therefore launched a wide-scale study project entitled MONARPOP (for MONitoring Network in the Alpine Region for Persistent Organic Pollutants). Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Slovenia as well as the EU (via Interreg IIIB) have joined the project as co-operation partners and financial backers. Measurements are to begin in autumn 2004, with initial results expected in autumn 2005.

POPs circulate globally and can have a series of toxic effects already in very low concentrations, which is why local initiatives are not enough. This is where UNEP's Stockholm Convention on the global restriction of persistent organic pollutants, which entered into force on 17 May 2004, comes into play.

Source and information: Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry 30.04.2004 <http://www.lebensministerium.at/presse> (de), <http://www.pops.int> (en/fr)

## Miscellaneous

### Invitation to compete for the International Environment Award

(19.05.2004) Exemplary environmental protection projects from all over the world that are closely linked to tourism are eligible for the International Environment Award. The Award is presented each year by the German Association of Travel Agencies and Tour Operators. The closing date for applications in German or English is 31 July. Last year for instance the Award went to Bahrat Basnet, The Explore Nepal Limited, for the protection of Nepal's environment and culture. Information: <http://www.driv.de> (de/en), [frohn@driv.de](mailto:frohn@driv.de)

### Ford Environment Award 2004: Special Award for Climate Protection

(17.06.2004) The Ford Environment Award of the Austrian Umbrella Organisation for the Environment and the Ford Motor Company Austria rewards with a total of €16,000.00 the three best initiatives for the protection of the country's natural and cultural heritage. This year a Special Award worth €4,000.00 is also being presented for climate protection projects. The deadline for applications is 30 August, and the competition is open to any individuals, associations, classrooms, municipalities and companies who this year or last year carried out projects relating to environmental protection or the preservation of cultural heritage.

Source and information: <http://www.umweltverband.at/schwerpunkte/ford/index.htm> (de)

## Agenda

**European Conference of Municipal Energy Managers;** 01-02.07.2004, Stuttgart/D; organisers: Stadt Stuttgart;

Information: <http://www.managenergy.net/conference/ecmem04.html> (de/en)

**5th International Conference on Snow Engineering;** 05-07.07.2004, Davos/CH; organiser: Swiss Federal Institute for Snow and Avalanche Research; Information: <http://www.snow2004.ch> (en)

**Summer School on Mountain Meteorology: Orographic effects on precipitation;** 25-30.07.2004, Trento/I; organiser: Università degli Studi di Trento; Information: <http://www.unitn.it/events/ssmm2004> (en)

**Symposium in conjunction with the 89<sup>th</sup> annual Ecological Society of America meeting: Functional significance of mountain biodiversity;** 01-06.08.2004, Portland/USA; organiser: Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment; Information: <http://www.colorado.edu/mrs/FSMB.html> (en)

**30th International Geographical Congress (three special sessions): Diversity in Mountain Systems;** 15-20.08.2004, Glasgow/GB; organiser: International Geographical Union;

Information: <http://www.meetingmakers.co.uk/igc-uk2004/index.html> (en/fr)

**Annual meeting of SAVE Foundation and SAVE network (Safeguard for Agricultural Varieties in Europe);** 02-04.09.2004, Bled/SI;

Information: <http://www.save-foundation.net/english/actual.htm> (en)

### Oh!...

... The US beverage "Mountain Dew" has been available in Switzerland since 12 May. Mountain Dew has had a huge following in the US for many years. The advertising campaign in Switzerland is targeted first and foremost at young consumers with an interest in fun sports. "With our new exciting measures ranging from guerrilla activities to skate park events and even a dedicated TV show we intend to make Switzerland part of our fan community," says a spokesman for manufacturers PEPSI-COLA GmbH.

Source: <http://www.mountaindew.ch> (de)