

## €160,000 in prize money for sustainable projects in the Alpine region

CIPRA, the International Commission for the Protection of the Alps, has awarded prizes worth a total of €160,000 to eight outstanding projects aimed at sustainable development in the Alpine region. The awards for the Future in the Alps Competition were presented today at CIPRA's annual conference in Brig/CH.

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The main prizes in the six competition categories were endowed with prize money of €25,000 each. CIPRA also awarded two special prizes worth €5,000 each. The prize winner in the category Regional Value Added is Qualitätsgemeinschaft Vorarlberger Holzbau from Austria and its Holzbau-Kunst project. The Governance Capacity prize went to the Polo Poschiavo Further Education Centre from Grisons/CH. Other prizes in the categories Protected Areas and Mobility went respectively to the non-profit association Logarska dolina d.o.o. from Slovenia and the Austrian Municipality of Werfenweng for its sustainable mobility concept. The prize in the category New Forms of Decision Making went to Italy and the support organisations of the Self-administered Referendum on the Future of Mobility in the Puster Tal. The prize winners in the Policies and Instruments category were Tyrol's Ferdinandeum Provincial Museum and Tyrol's Environmental Advocate's Office for the Die Helle Not project, a scheme aimed at protecting moth species. The two special prizes were awarded to the Kempodium urban project in Germany and the AIAB Association for Ecological Farming in Italy.

More detailed descriptions of these eight prize winners and the 15 projects which also made the shortlist are available in German, French, Italian, Slovene and English at <http://competition.cipra.org/de/wettbewerb>.

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## Mountains and the modern age: innovative construction at high altitudes

(07.09.2005) The Austrian Tourist Club [*Österreichischer Touristenklub*] recently opened the first high-alpine passive building, namely the Schiestlhaus am Hochschwab/A at 2,153 m. The Schiestlhaus was built as part of the "House of the Future" scheme, an initiative by the Ministry of Transport. It is based on an overall ecological concept that integrates aspects such as timber construction in zero-energy house standards, energy self-sufficiency using solar cells to provide hot water and photo-voltaic modules for electricity generation, biological waste water treatment, and rainwater utilisation.

In the Grisons Alps/CH the Kesch Hut makes use of active and passive solar technology for heating, lighting, hot water and in part also for cooking. The planned Monte Rosa Hut/CH at an altitude of 2,795 m is to be 90% energy self-sufficient thanks to an integrated water and material cycle that includes a biogas plant.

Source and information: <http://www.hausderzukunft.at/results.html/id2765> (de/en); <http://www.kesch.ch> (de/en), <http://www.ethlife.ethz.ch/articles/tages/nmorohuettesos05.html> (de)

Schiestlhaus: Modular timber system makes for short assembly times.



© <http://www.hausderzukunft.at>

## Alpine Protected Areas – from co-operation to ecological network

(25.08.2005) The Alpine Network of Protected Areas is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary as part of the international conference on "Alpine Protected Areas: Between History, Development and Challenges". Experts on protected areas from throughout the Alpine region are due to convene at Chambéry/F from 13 to 15 October. Besides three main themes with lectures and discussions the Conference will also organise excursions and a public event highlighting the Alps as well as the Carpathians and the Pyrenees.

All three themes focus on the future development and role of Alpine protected areas and the Network itself. Part 1 looks at "Alpine protected areas: from foundation to new challenges". The key issue of Part 2, i.e. "What role should protected areas play in the new territorial policy?", addresses such aspects as research, architecture, renewable energies and mobility. Part 3 finally is entitled: "From co-operation between protected areas to an ecological network." The deadline for registration is 15 September; the conference languages are French, Italian, German, Slovene and English. Information and registration: <http://www.alparc.org> (de/fr/it/sl/en)

## MARS and FUNalpin examine sustainability in the Alpine region

(25.08.2005) As part of the MARS Interreg IIIB project (Monitoring the Alpine Region's Sustainability) 22 partners from six countries (A, CH, D, FL, I, SI) worked on drawing up a set of indicators for measuring and evaluating sustainable development in the Alpine region. The set of 45 wide-ranging indicators provided the basis for benchmarking the 33 regions concerned by the project. Within the scope of the project the Austrian federal province of Vorarlberg emerged as the most sustainable region.

The Swiss FUNalpin project is also looking at sets of indicators for sustainable regional development. This project's key issue concerns the emergence of new forms of production in all the main sectors of the Alpine region. As a traditional resource the "Alpine landscape" is losing its significance and increasingly being replaced by technical structures, fun events, etc. The project is working on a strategy for a reorientation of regional policy within these altered outline conditions and is drawing up a concept for an indicator-based certification process for label regions.

Information and downloads: <http://www.bakbasel.com/wEnglisch/benchmarking/interreg/index.shtml> (en), [http://www.nfp48.ch/projekte/projects\\_detail.php?nfprojnum=29](http://www.nfp48.ch/projekte/projects_detail.php?nfprojnum=29) (de/en)

## MIREN: a new network looks at invasive plants in mountain regions

(22.09.2005) MIREN (Mountain Invasion Research Network) is a new global research network that was founded this summer as part of a workshop in Vienna/A. It focuses on the problem of invasive plants in mountain regions, particularly from the aspect of global change. High mountains vary greatly in structure, climate and vegetation, which is why they make an exemplary investigation system for research into the general mechanisms of invasive plants.

The MIREN network is planning to compile and operate a global database on the patterns, processes and repercussions of invasive plants in mountain regions. It is being co-ordinated by the Geobotanical Institute at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zurich/CH and includes members from six core mountain regions of the world. The programme's research activities will help towards implementing the GLOCHAMORE (Global Change in Mountain Regions) research strategy in Alpine biosphere reserves and other protected areas.

Sources and information: <http://www.miren.ethz.ch> (en), <http://mri.scnatweb.ch/content/category/3/10/31> (en)

## Decrease in water runoff from the Swiss Alps

(25.08.2005) A new study analyses the impact of a potential climate change on hydrological discharge regimes from the Swiss Alpine region for the period between 2020 and 2050. Eleven catchment areas with different glaciation rates and altitude ranges were examined. The scenarios were derived from regional climate experiments obtained within the EU research project PRUDENCE, which are based on a mean regional temperature increase of approx. 1.2 °C between 2020 and 2050.

All the scenarios drawn up by the team of experts predict changes of the same trend, with only the amplitude and timing of the changes differing. The authors conclude that the mean hydrological discharge over the period 2020 to 2050 is set to decrease by 7% due to lower precipitations and increased evapotranspiration. According to the study the precipitation rates will decrease by an average of 2%. A substantial decrease in the glaciation rate in the catchment rates is also anticipated along with a shift in the maximum hydrological runoff from July to June. The study shows that the change in the natural discharge rate will also have negative repercussions on the hydroelectricity production of hydro-storage plants and run-of-river hydroelectric plants.

Download: <http://www.energie-schweiz.ch/imperia/md/content/statistikperspektiven/36.pdf> (en)

## Transalpine exchange on research into protected areas

(22.09.2005) The third research symposium of the Hohe Tauern National Park/A, which was held for the first time as a transalpine conference on research into protected areas, ended on 17 September. At the conference 72 scientists from eight countries discussed a range of cross-border issues. The topics comprised the public perception of issues of research into protected areas, new technologies on visitor information in national parks, and the question of how the rising flood of data can be more effectively channelled into knowledge. Existing projects such as Habitap and Aquilalp.net provided a further insight into current research co-operation.

The research symposium was made possible by the Interreg IIIB project ALPENCOM. ALPENCOM networks managers of alpine protected areas and allows the development of joint PR concepts.

To download the conference papers: [http://webworks.at/uploads/symp\\_tagungsband.pdf](http://webworks.at/uploads/symp_tagungsband.pdf) (en)

For information on ALPENCOM: <http://www.alpencom.org> (en)

Bearded vulture: successful international co-operation



© <http://www.bartgeier.ch>

## Via Alpina via the internet

(25.08.2005) Via Alpina, the project for a network of long-distance hiking trails, now features a new internet website at [www.via-alpina.org](http://www.via-alpina.org). The Trails heading provides an opportunity to travel all 341 stages of the Via Alpina virtually, using interactive maps of different scales. The description of the Trail includes information on levels of difficulty, walking times and profiles in both directions for each individual stage. Contact addresses and information on current conditions and accommodation availability can also be accessed.

Two new headings have also been posted: a picture gallery, to whet your appetite for the landscapes along the 5,000 km trail, and a "Travel Mate" contact service. Both features are currently under construction and will be available shortly. A team of hiking experts is also working on drawing up special packages for organised stays in various regions, which are also soon to be posted on the website.

Information: <http://www.via-alpina.org> (de/fr/it/sl/en)

## Germany: Oberstdorf landed with costs of World Ski Championships

(11.08.2005) Five months after the Nordic World Ski Championships in Oberstdorf/D it would appear that the event has landed the community with a heavy financial burden. The large-scale event has added further financial commitments to Oberstdorf's inhabitants, who are already indebted to the tune of €57 million. The main question is how the ski installations, which were modernised at a cost of €23 million, might be cost-effectively operated. The municipality also waived its right to €237,000, which the organisers should have paid for approvals, licences and traffic diversions. The reason stated was that too few tickets were sold.

And while Oberstdorf struggles with the consequences of the World Championships, Garmisch-Partenkirchen is aiming to bring the 2011 World Ski Championships to Bavaria. The Greens in Bavaria's regional parliament [*Landtag*] have voiced strong criticism over the project due to the anticipated burden on nature and the environment, and also the high financial risk.

Sources: *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of 26.07.2005, [http://www.gruene-fraktion-bayern.de/cms/pressemitteilungen/dok/80/80947.wird\\_die\\_skischaukel\\_zur\\_schuldenschauke.htm](http://www.gruene-fraktion-bayern.de/cms/pressemitteilungen/dok/80/80947.wird_die_skischaukel_zur_schuldenschauke.htm) (de)

## Miscellaneous

### Plug-in IT services for small and medium-sized businesses

(11.08.2005) The Alise project (Alps IT Service Network) is designed to provide those small and medium-sized businesses for which IT operations have become a burden with all the IT services they require directly from the Network. The offices themselves simply operate the maintenance-free data terminal equipment that accesses external central servers, which are run professionally. Alise was developed as part of alpiNETwork, an Interreg III B project, and is currently in its pilot phase. alpiNETwork aims to create the ideal conditions for tele-workstations in small and medium-sized businesses by making improved use of the opportunities provided by information and communication technologies in the Alpine region. The project partners come from Austria, Slovenia, Switzerland and Italy.

Sources and information: <http://www.alise.at> (de), <http://www.alpinetwork.com> (de/it/sl/en)

### Alpine experience for Afghanistan

(06.09.2005) Mountain Wilderness International regularly trains young mountain guides in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The first Alpinism course focusing on a caring approach to nature in the upper Panshir valley was completed only recently. 22 young Afghan men and women took part in the training course. As part of the course they were able to acquire theoretical and practical skills which they will later need when accompanying expeditions and treks as well as in their duties as national park supervisors. The courses were held by seven mountain guides from Italy, who passed on their knowledge. Since 2002 Mountain Wilderness has been aiming to draw the attention of mountaineers to the fact that mountain sports are once again possible without risk in the north east of Afghanistan.

Source and information: <http://mountainwilderness.org/index.php?rub=172&art=4> (fr/en)

### Holidaying without barriers? A new Interreg project focuses on the disabled

(22.09.2005) *Una montagna per tutti* (a mountain for everyone) is the name of an Interreg project between Italy and France that was launched only recently and focuses on people with disabilities. The aim of the project is to facilitate access to the Alps' tourist and cultural offer as well as the natural environment to the disabled or the visually impaired. Besides evaluating the accessibility of existing tourist facilities for the disabled the project partners are also planning to look at restructuring tourist venues. The project is to be implemented by the municipality of Montana Val Sangone in co-operation with the local government regional authority of Briançon/F and the province of Turin/I.

Source and information: <http://www.comune.torino.it/pass/php/1/pagina.php?pag=7481> (it)

## Agenda

International Mountain Festival 2005: **Celebrating the Splendour of Mountains**; 01-03.10.2005, Islamabad/Pakistan; official language: English; organisers: Ministry of the Environment, Government of Pakistan, IUCN - The World Conservation Union, UNDP/GEF; WWF Pakistan

Information: <http://www.macp-pk.org/festival> (en)

International Conference: **The 6<sup>th</sup> Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change Research Community**; one session among others: "Making Global Change Research Matter in Mountains Regions" 09-13.10.2005, Bonn/D; conference language: English; organisers: International Human Dimensions Programme on Global Environmental Change IHDP;

Information: <http://openmeeting.homelinux.org> (en)

13<sup>th</sup> International **Festival of Mountain Films**; 12-16.10.2005, Poprad/Slovakia; official language: English; organisers: Horsky Film Poprad;

Information: <http://www.mfhf.sk> (en)

International Conference: **Integrated Rural Development in the Mountain Areas of Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans**; 24-26.10.2005, Liptovský Mikuláš/Slovakia; conference languages: English, Slovak, French; organisers: Euromontana;

Information: <http://www.euromontana.org> (en)

International Workshop: **Protecting the World's Mountain Corridors and Peace Parks**; 24-27.10.2005, Les Planes de Son/Spain; official language: English; organisers: Fundació Territori i Paisatge and IUCN WCPA;

Information: <http://www.mountains-wcpa.org/downloads/1st%20Announcement.htm> (en)

### Oh!...

Where on earth did that 55 m long, 5 m high pink woolly rabbit come from that has been lying atop the Colletto Fava in Italy's Piedmont since 18 September? That's probably not the only question that springs to mind when people see the giant animal that's designed so they can scramble all over it and cuddle up to it – not to mention that hole in its belly from where its insides come spilling out. According to *Gelatin*, the group of artists from Vienna who created the rabbit, the rabbit is going to live on the summit for the next 20 years, so we might as well learn to love it. In any case it loves us all, apparently.

Source:

[http://www.artesina.it/Pink\\_rabbit.pdf](http://www.artesina.it/Pink_rabbit.pdf) (it)