



Bulletin

Volume V Issue 1 | June 2005

Conflict in Mountain Regions: Regional Perspectives

Skardu Dam in Pakistan

Amenity Migration in North America

Park for Peace in Africa

Water in the Andes

Heliskiing in the Alps



Mountain Forum
www.mtnforum.org

Mountain Forum Bulletin

Volume V Issue 1 | June 2005

ISSN 1029-3760

Editors: Billi Bierling and Jacopo Pasotti

Publication Coordination Team: Agustina Barros, Celine Curi, Salima Khatoun, Prashant Sharma

Design: Payas Chhetri and Shivendra Shah, Trance Creation

Cover Photograph: Girls in Pokhara, Nepal, by Alvaro Zapata

Published by the Mountain Forum Secretariat in cooperation with the regional nodes in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and North America.

The opinions expressed by contributors to the Mountain Forum Bulletin are not necessarily those of the Mountain Forum Secretariat, regional nodes of the Mountain Forum, or any of their host institutions.

The editors of the Mountain Forum Bulletin reserve the right to edit and amend contributions for the sake of clarity and brevity.



Mountain Forum Secretariat
C/o ICIMOD, GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-552 5313 Fax: +977-1-552 4509

Email: bulletin@mtnforum.org Web: <http://www.mtnforum.org>

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Dear Mountain Forum,

We have great joy in introducing our new bulletin to you. As long-time members of the organisation we have seen a lot of positive changes over the years and we are very happy to give our input to the new *Mountain Forum Bulletin*.

With this bulletin we want to achieve better understanding between the different mountain regions and show that despite being far apart, mountain communities face similar challenges everywhere.

Snow-covered peaks, dry valleys and terraced mountain slopes are home to people who need mountain resources, but they are also fascinating to almost everybody all over the world. In order to preserve the beauty and resources of the mountains we have to work together, find solutions to problems, and make sure that they will be around as they are for many years to come.

When we first set out to produce this bulletin we received many ideas from members, node managers and our editorial staff. We had to make tough decisions on how to shape it and we hope you like the result. One of our priorities was to have a theme for each bulletin and we dedicated this issue to conflicts in mountain regions following on from the theme of the International Mountain Day 2004 - 'Peace: key to sustainable mountain development'. Conflicts in mountains can, of course, range from disagreement between local people and decision makers at one level, and between different countries on another.

The feature section focuses on the chosen theme and we have dedicated space to each of the Mountain Forum regions. Every edition also includes an interview with an expert on a mountain-related topic and a book review.

The Mountain Forum News section provides you with regular updates from our regions, and members who want to have their say, can do so in the Member Initiative section.

As this bulletin aims at giving a voice to everybody involved in the Mountain Forum we would like to invite you to send your ideas and contributions to us by email or regular post (details on the back cover).

We look forward to receiving your feedback for future editions and we hope that you will enjoy the new bulletin.

Sincerely,



Billi Bierling



Jacopo Pasotti



Uttarakhand, India

Photo: Prashant Sharma

Dear Mountain Forum,

It is with great pleasure that we bring to you the revised *Mountain Forum Bulletin*. We are planning on publishing it twice a year, and we hope this will be another effective medium through which members of the Mountain Forum family support each other. The purpose of the bulletin is to facilitate information exchange with members of the Mountain Forum who do not have access to email or the internet. While we have been surprised and encouraged by how many remote mountain areas are beginning to acquire email access, there are still only a tiny fraction of mountain communities who have, or can afford, this luxury. We hope this printed bulletin will assist you in your efforts to connect with mountain colleagues.

Jacopo Pasotti and Billi Bierling, both long-time members of the Mountain Forum, have graciously taken on the responsibility to be the editors of the bulletin on a voluntary basis. We would like to express our gratitude to them for being so generous with their time in the revitalisation of this critical means of communication.

We hope you will find the *Mountain Forum Bulletin* of use, and we look forward to hearing your feedback on it.

With best regards,



J. Gabriel Campbell
Chairperson, Board of Directors, Mountain Forum

Proposed Dam in Skardu

M. Ismail Khan

According to archaeologists, the great Indus valley civilisations of Mohenjodaro and Harappa in Sindh Province of Pakistan were destroyed when 35 maf of water flooded the plains some 3,000 years ago! This was mainly due to the outburst of a Moronic lake formed by rock slides at exactly the site where the Skardu-Katzarah dam is being proposed today.

The Skardu Dam, an idea initiated by civil engineers and river water managers of the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan, is proposed to be built at Katzarah, 18 km downstream from Skardu. With a water storage capacity of 35 million-acre feet (maf), the proposed dam would submerge Skardu (2,438 m above sea-level), the capital of Baltistan or Little Tibet in the Northern Areas. Scientists and geologists fear that an outburst or accident of such a high altitude dam of this magnitude could inundate all major cities of the country, including Lahore and Karachi.

The Skardu valley in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) of Pakistan has its own unique ecological, cultural and environmental significance. Sandwiched between the Deosai, one of the highest plateaus in the world (4,100 metres above sea level) and the largest naturally formed glaciers outside the poles - Siachen (72 km), Baltoro (62 km), Biafo (65 km) - the shimmering 20-mile long Skardu valley is dotted with a mix of lakes, sand dunes, streams, terraced fields, orchards and snow-clad greyish mountains, and serves as a cultural melting pot of the Balti people. It is the lifeline of more than 300,000 Baltis, who sparsely populate the numerous valleys of Baltistan. Skardu, the historical seat of the Balti Kingdom and the hub of the Balti cultural heritage, faces multiple challenges including the condition of this ethnic minority in the religiously radicalised social scene of the country.

“As a major ecosystem representing the complex and interrelated ecology of our planet, mountain environments are essential to the survival of the global ecosystem. Mountains are highly vulnerable to human and natural ecological imbalance. Mountains are the areas most sensitive to all climatic changes in the atmosphere,” say the meticulously inscribed words in Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 adopted by some 178 governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992.

The commitment to protect mountain ecosystems was reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002. The Johannesburg

declaration urged to “implement programmes to address land erosion, land degradation, loss of biodiversity, and disruption of water flows and retreat of glaciers”.

But do people ignore these stated commitments, calling for preservation of integrity and diversity of mountain regions, when proposing economic and infrastructural plans at the ground level? The Skardu Dam proposal, which is currently being debated and discussed in the corridors of power of Islamabad, Pakistan, is a case in point. According to a front-page report by Pakistan’s prestigious daily newspaper *Dawn* in its February 19, 2005 edition, a technical committee on water resources in the Senate of Pakistan is set to unfold its views on this proposal to construct the world’s largest high altitude water reservoir.

The pro-dam lobby argues that the site would be the best option available for Pakistan due to its inflow and storage capacity of silt free water, which would generate 15,000 MW power. It claims that the dam would have a 1,000-year lifespan and with an annual flow of about 30 maf, it would be the third largest reservoir in the world after the Aswan High Dam in Egypt and the Three Gorges Dam in China. This would be, however, the largest dam at over 2,000 metres above sea level.

From an environmental perspective, building a 35 million-acre feet dam in the heart of the Karakoram could be disastrous. The Karakoram is prone to earthquakes and other natural calamities. The present day geo-strategic situation prevailing in the region makes the dam even more dangerous. With a hot border separating Skardu from Kargil (India), the water reservoir could even turn into a super bomb. Skardu is the most porous valley in the Northern Areas, which houses a vital airbase, and serves as the military command and control hub of the critical Pakistan-China road link. In winter the temperature in the valley drops down to minus 20 degrees Celsius and geologists believe that underwater seepage from the proposed dam would expand and crack the fragile rocks and landfills. Besides, humidity and climatic effects generated by a massive water body would hasten the melting of the glaciers



Shangrilla Tourist Resort in Kachura

Photo: Ismail Khan

in the Karakoram thus raising possibilities for massive glacier outbursts. Imagine a situation where a dam outburst of such magnitude starts rushing down to the hills of NWFP and the plains of Punjab and Sindh. The gravity flow triggered by tsunami-like waves could imperil the entire downstream population of around 120 million.

Environmentalists and development analysts believe that if this were to happen, it would be the world's largest man-made tsunami. Others also believe that this proposal is an attempt to win lucrative mega projects and take the heat off political controversies generated by the Kalabagh and Basha dams in the NWFP.

When it comes to planning sensitive issues like water, ideas for development in many countries can sometimes sound quite radical. In 2001 for instance, a food minister from Sindh, Pakistan made an even more ambitious proposal. He called for the bombing of Baltoro and Hisper glaciers to overcome the water shortage downstream; some federal ministries passed the proposal to the ministry of science and technology for comments, which in turn shared the ideas with the country's famous nuclear scientists. This proposal however, was shelved in the end, in no mean part due to a spontaneous reaction against it by the Northern Areas' media and civil society groups.

Skardu valley is the gateway to most of the famous mountaineering expeditions in the Central Karakoram, home to K2, which is also known as the 'throne of the mountain gods'. In the late 1990s UNESCO considered including the area in the World Heritage Site list, but this was deferred due to Indian objections citing the disputed nature of the territory. This would have been the first natural heritage site in Pakistan in the list.

If the Kalabagh and Basha dams do not find many takers within the national audience, the possible submergence of Skardu would elicit even stronger reactions from India and the rest of the world. Senator A.N.G. Abbassi recommended the reactivation of the Council of Common Interest (CCI), which is a constitutional forum to decide inter-provincial disputes. However, Northern Areas is neither a province of Pakistan nor part of the CCI; it has no representation in the Senate, the National Assembly of Pakistan or the assemblies of divided Kashmir in the name of which the Northern Areas status has been kept in limbo for the last 57 years.

With this as the political context, we will have to wait and see what recommendations the senators and the CCI of Pakistan will make regarding the proposed Skardu-Katzara dam. If it is actually approved, it will be essential for the people at large to know the constitutional and moral arguments behind such a decision. In theory, the



Balti children

Photo: Ismail Khan

governance structure does command enough power to ignore the poor and marginalised Baltis in Skardu, but approving such a proposal may well go against common sense, nature, the world and more importantly against Pakistan's own strategic interests.

The writer is a freelance development and conservation analyst from Skardu, Karakoram in the Northern Areas of Pakistan, and is presently based in Islamabad. Email: ismail.k2@gmail.com

Did you know that...

... the Carpathian Mountains are the major mountain system of central and eastern Europe, extending 1,500 km along the north and east sides of the Danubian plain. The geologically young mountains, which are part of the main European chain, link the Alps with the Balkans.

To find out more, visit:

<http://www.encyclopedia.com/html/C/Carpati.asp>

Amenity Migration

Amy Krause

In North America, conflict in mountain areas often revolves around land-use. Activities such as mining, forestry or oil and gas are mainstays of many of our mountain economies, but can be the source of divisive and acrimonious conflict - whether the industry is moving into town or out. Today, when the mine or the mill closes, more and more communities try to resolve the conflict by developing additional or alternative industries, such as tourism.

But tourism can be fraught with conflict too. Nonetheless it has become a mantra in small, mountain communities. It seems as if everywhere you go, mountain towns are courting tourist dollars or banking on new housing developments catering to vacation home owners. But attracting people is only half the work - preparing for their impacts is equally important.

While communities often look forward to the economic rewards of tourism, tourists also create social and environmental change, especially if they decide to stay. Increasing property values, the development of adjacent wildlands, and cultural change are virtually inevitable. This is not to say that tourism is necessarily "bad" - it will, however, create challenges of its own that some communities may not fully appreciate in advance.

In the community where I live, in the front ranges of the Canadian Rockies, tourism has sparked amenity migration - roughly, the migration of people for reasons other than employment. While many migrants - myself included - work in the community, most come primarily to be close to nature, to enjoy a slower pace of life, and to enjoy the sense of community that only small towns can offer. Migration here has spurred the construction industry, and

"Amenity migrants often have economic power that, comparatively, the locals do not. In a market economy, where everything has commercial value, what is scarce gravitates to the wealthy."

by extension, home furnishing stores, local architects, security firms, and property management services. Hotels have sprouted up along the secondary highway. Ski rental outlets, trendy coffee shops, restaurants, and a new video store have come to town. There is now an entrepreneurial and adventurous spirit here that did not exist thirty years ago, along with two traffic lights, and a population that has tripled in twenty years.

On the downside, suburbs have sprung up across the valley, consuming wildlands that were formerly used for recreation and by wildlife. In fact, the average price of a home has increased 110% in the past decade. The last Community Indicators Report found that the majority of residents had salaries too low to allow the purchase of a residential home at the median or mean selling prices for that year. In other words, there may be more property to buy but most of the people who live here cannot afford to own it.

Dr. Laurence Moss, a researcher and educator from Santa Fe, New Mexico, has studied this phenomenon all over the world, and believes this expanding economic divide is bad news for mountain communities.

"Amenity migrants", says Moss, "often have economic power that, comparatively, the locals do not. In a market economy, where everything has commercial value, what is scarce gravitates to the wealthy. In mountain communities, land, water, and views, are scarce. For example, when open space is developed, locals' shares decline and typically tension results."

But he also believes that the challenges are more than economic. "People are also agents of social and cultural change. They can mitigate their impacts by getting involved and helping to sustain the amenities of their community. But here in the Santa Fe bioregion, where amenity migrants have congregated in large numbers, they impose their metropolitan values and expectations upon what is still basically a rural society, and conflicts, subtle and otherwise, result", argues Moss.

Dr. Timothy Duane, associate professor of environmental planning and policy at the University of California, Berkeley, believes that the values shared by newcomers and long-time residents may not always be that different, however,



Photo: Amy Krause

Bow River, Canmore, Alberta, Canada



Photo: Amy Krause

Canmore, Alberta, Canada

he thinks that the increasing population density will bring their interests into conflict.

“More density and more people means more conflict”, says Duane, “because the space that used to be my view is now the place you want to put twelve houses - your interests threaten my interests. Plus, the way people deal with conflict in these communities changes. As more and more people move somewhere, there is a tendency to shift from conflict resolution based on social networks, to more formal mechanisms like political or legal action. That too is fraught with challenges.”

The bottom line is, change is never easy, even when it brings prosperity. And in mountain communities, some of the characteristics that are most attractive - spectacular geography, proximity to nature, and small populations - can all amplify the effects of growth.

This is not to strike fear into the hearts of communities with respect to amenity migration. This is just to say that tourism will create conflict of its own, and that communities embarking on this path would do well to demystify the tourism mantra, and prepare for change.

For more information about amenity migration and its effects on mountain communities:

Buckley R., Pickering C. and D.B. Weaver. *Nature-based Tourism, Environment and Land Management*. Massachusetts: CABI International Publishing, 2003.

Cestero, Barbara. *Beyond the Hundredth Meeting: A Field Guide to Collaborative Conservation on the West's Public Lands*. Tucson: Sonoran Institute, 1999. (available online)

Duane, Timothy P. "Community Participation in Ecosystem Management," *Ecology Law Quarterly* 24 (4): 771-797, 1997.

Park for Peace in the Mandara Mountains Prashant Sharma

A mountain region about which little is known or talked about in international mountain circles is the Mandara mountains in Nigeria and Cameroon in West Africa. This region has also been a site of conflict as the two nations are trying to resolve a long-term border dispute over the oil-rich Bakassi Peninsula and their maritime boundary.

Of late, there have been some positive developments with efforts being made to establish a zone of peace in the region. The idea is to establish what is being called the International Mandara Mountains Peace Park, which would lie across the borders of the two nations. To take this process forward, confidence building measures between the two countries have been launched.

Peace is critical to this region not just for its own sake, but more importantly for the diverse ethnic groups which live within. The Mandara mountains are one of the most ethnically differentiated regions in the world, with a rich cultural history that goes back hundreds of years. People living in the region have welcomed the idea of the proposed peace park, and are hopeful that this initiative will take concrete form without the delays that are often associated with such attempts. Efforts are also being made by a small group of academics to bring positive international attention to this area which could hasten the process of reconciliation and establishment of the park.

To find out more, please visit:

<<http://www.ucalgary.ca/oncampus/weekly/march12-04/parks-for-peace.html>>

<<http://www.mtnforum.org/resources/library/sterj02a.htm>>



Photo: David Browning

Lake in the Andes

Constructing a Social Vision for the Waters in the Andes

Juan Carlos Alurralde

The South American Andean region is suffering a wide spectrum of social, physical, and environmental changes, which include the explosive growth of some cities, the constant expansion of industrial activity, as well as changes in climatic patterns. The Andean hydrological resources are being exploited to satisfy growing internal and external demands, and as the water supplies become uncertain and the debate on how this resource should be managed becomes polarised, the local users and the associated institutions are trying to figure a way out of this situation. The establishment of democratic processes that involve all the people connected to this debate must take place in this region. Out of these will come the basis for achieving legitimate and effective management. This paper is in itself the fruit of one of those democratic spaces: the International Development Research Centre collaborative forum for building the Social Vision for Water in the Andes, which happened electronically and via a workshop in 2004. The most important players from the region stepped up and accepted the challenge for building an agenda for the sustainable use of water in our region. We produced the following three themes.

Water Manageability

Humanity owns the waters of the earth. From this assumption, many processes have already begun to search for the most equitable and sustainable management practices. This is because the major threat to water systems comes from their management rather than anything else. The World Vision for Water cites three important areas in their "Dialogue on the Effective Governance of Water": an increased role of government in the market, legal structures, and capability development. Likewise, these issues need to move out of the regions, into the national spotlight, and ultimately cross country borders to unify themselves into one vision.

One point that came out of the workshop for our vision was that manageability is an ideal that can be easily warped by power and economic interest. Too often, the reality of the world is that even though you have the right to be a player in the water-use debate, you do not have the same power as one of the others. We can talk about democracy and equity, but the existing power structures remain, and the status-quo remains, too. Our mindsets, models and management must focus on what "really is" rather than on what "should be". We must know what is going on in the regions to best address the vision.

Water, Free Market Agreements and Investment Protection

There is no easy way to get around globalisation. International treaties have been or are being set up to privatise what has long been held in the hands of the state. International market and investment agreements are creating new access rights to international corporations to provide drinkable water and sanitation services, known as "liberalisation of services" and "privatisation". The protection of foreign investors and their access to water rights is harshly criticised in this sense. The embodiment of this is the investor-government dispute, which attempts to negate national law by using international law in favour of the investor. Fuelling the situation is the push to level the competitive conditions between foreign corporations and government companies. This dynamic puts the social and environmental interests of the countries participating in free market agreements at the mercy of the economic interests of foreign investors and corporations.

Water Rights for Indigenous People, Farmers and Citizens

Water management systems run by the farmers are the basis for national food supplies in most of the Andean countries. Therefore, it is vital that they have open access to the water systems. On the contrary, they must be empowered in the process of creating and implementing the vision. Many varied circumstances are jeopardising these regions today: demographic pressure, migration, globalisation and urbanisation. It is easy to imagine that traditional water management systems are collapsing from these stresses. Not only is this coming from inside the country, but the international community is also helping to tear down the established. The World Vision for Water that came out in 2002 has marginalised the Andean farmers, indigenous people and citizens. It does not take into consideration the vision, culture and proposals that come from the people actually living in this area, who know best what their environment offers. It is important to listen and learn from their value system for creating a sustainable vision for water-use. In fact, there is even more to be learned from the billions more living in their own, unique environments.

The author, who belongs to the Comisión para la Gestión Integral del Agua en Bolivia (CGIAB), presented this article at the International Seminar Experiences and Methods for Managing River Basins and Their Contribution to the Rural Development in the Andes: Challenges and Opportunities for Greater Impact in Bogota, Colombia. November 8 - 10, 2004.

For more information:

<<http://www.condesan.org/agua>>

Only the Sky is the Limit - Rolf Meier

Billi Bierling

“Heliskiing is a skier's most exciting dream: vast virgin slopes of fresh white powder snow, no crowded lift lines, no rutted slopes, no tinselly advertising – just long, free, joyous runs.”

Heliskiing companies use such slogans in order to attract adventurous skiers, who are looking for perfect white powder and untouched runs. Cruising down virgin snow somewhere up high in the mountains, far away from the crowds sounds very appealing but this attractive sport has increasingly come under fire in the past decade and more.

Heliskiing is banned in Germany, France and most parts of Austria and Italy. However, in countries such as Canada, Slovenia, India and Switzerland it is currently experiencing a real boom as an increasing number of people are seeking adventure on skies without having to walk up a mountain for hours on end.

Mountain Wilderness, a Swiss non-governmental organisation, has been fighting against heliskiing for more than ten years. According to the organisation, the noise created by helicopters threatens wildlife, damages the environment and has a negative effect on tourism as many hike to the Swiss mountains to find peace and quiet there.

Billi Bierling met up with Mountain Wilderness's Rolf Meier, who is coordinating the organisation's "Stop Heliskiing Campaign".



Photo: Billi Bierling

Heliskiing in the Alps

Mountain Forum (MF): Helicopters have become part of mountain life and it is hard to imagine what it would be like without them. What, in your view, is the main problem with heliskiing?

Rolf Meier (R.M.): We do not mind helicopters used for mountain rescue etc., however, additional noise pollution is threatening our wildlife. The noise does not only occur when the helicopters land but throughout the flight. It is even more of a problem in the winter when the animals are in a weakened state because of food shortages. We also think that silence in the mountains is what many tourists are looking for, so I believe that heliskiing is bad for the Swiss tourism industry.

MF: But what about those people who come to Switzerland in order to go heliskiing?

R.M.: Heliskiing makes up a very small part of tourism in Switzerland - about SFr 4 million per year. If you compare this figure with the rest of Swiss winter tourism it is next to nothing. But of course there are people who are looking for fun, entertainment and action and 20,000 people are being airlifted to Swiss mountain peaks every year.

MF: Switzerland is normally very concerned about preserving its nature. How come something so damaging is still allowed in Switzerland?

R.M.: I think the helicopter companies have a strong lobby in the Swiss parliament and a lot of former helicopter pilots now work for the Swiss Federal Office of Civil Aviation. And of course most Swiss mountain guides are in favour as they make a lot of money with it.

MF: Wouldn't a ban on heliskiing be very hard for those Swiss mountain guides, who rely on it for their income?

R.M.: Ten years ago the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology conducted a survey that found that a Swiss

“My main goal is to convince the Swiss government to ban heliskiing...”

mountain guide works about 72 days per year, however, they only spend about one day per year working with heliskiers. So, I don't think it would be a big loss.

MF: What about heliskiing in other countries? It is quite a big business in Canada and it is up and coming in Northwestern India - how do they deal with it?

R.M.: I don't know how other countries deal with it but I know that our sister organisation, Mountain Wilderness Italy, tried to get heliskiing banned in Italy but unfortunately failed. However, their petition was supported by the Italian Alpine guides, which makes the situation very different from the situation in Switzerland.

Austria still has two helipads but heliskiing is not very popular there. The big difference between Austria and Switzerland is that in Austria heliskiing is not allowed on weekends and helicopters are only allowed to take off for heliskiing at certain times of the day.

MF: But what difference does it make whether there are restrictions or not? A helicopter is noisy and the animals are scared anyway.

R.M.: No, in our opinion it does not really make a difference as heliskiing is ethically not acceptable. For the transport of four people 180 litres of fuel is being used. Alpinists are able to climb the same peak without doing damage to the environment.

MF: Going back to a country like India, where heliskiing is up and coming. Don't you think this business could help boost their economy?

R.M.: There must be other ways to generate income and develop tourism in a more ecological way. I do think that wherever you are in the world, heliskiing is very disturbing for flora, fauna and in fact other tourists.

MF: You have been fighting against heliskiing for more than 10 years. Have you actually achieved anything?

R.M.: I certainly think so. We made the Swiss Federal Office for Civil Aviation check the 42 airfields here in Switzerland. They are now also trying to find a solution to the problem, however, this is a very long-winded process, which could take a very long time.

MF: Have you ever tried heliskiing yourself or have you ever flown to the mountains in a helicopter?

R.M.: I have never tried heliskiing and I don't think anybody working for us would have done. But I have been in a helicopter on a working trip. We flew to the mountains with a geologist to do a survey on glaciers. Flying in a helicopter gives you a great feeling as you are very close to nature. It is certainly more thrilling than flying in a plane. It is not only the heliskiing that is appealing to people, it is also the flight.

MF: Did you feel guilty when you went on that trip?

R.M.: No, I did not feel guilty as it was a work trip. I am not opposed to working flights as it is important to bring food to Swiss mountain huts and, of course, rescue people.

MF: But aren't work and fun flights closely related? Would we actually need mountain huts if we did not go to the mountains to have fun?

R.M.: There was a time when there were no huts but that is more than 100 years ago. I also think that mountain huts control the flow of Alpinists. They leave their rubbish in a central place like a hut and no longer scatter it around.

MF: Why is this fight so close to your heart?

R.M.: I have been ski mountaineering for more than thirty years and the noise of the helicopters has always bothered me. I could never believe that people would actually get airlifted into the mountains in order to ski down. I think it is much more satisfying when you work out your body in order to get to the top of a peak. A few years ago Mountain Wilderness organised a rally on a UNESCO World Heritage Site here in Switzerland and within three hours around 35 helicopters arrived to drop off skiers.

MF: What is your main goal?

R.M.: My main goal is to convince the Swiss government to ban heliskiing. I am sure we will achieve our goal one day but it will probably take quite a long time.



Rolf Meier from Mountain Wilderness

Photo: Billi Bierling

Billi Bierling also met Hano Tschabold, a Swiss mountain guide who offers heliskiing. He has been observing the animals for many years and he thinks the animals have got used to the noise. "I have spent more than 30 years in the mountains and I have noticed that it does not matter whether we go to the mountains in a helicopter, with snow shoes or with ski touring skis. The animals have to get used to us either way and I actually think they already have," he told the Mountain Forum.

According to Tschabold there are around 1,300 mountain guides in Switzerland with a majority of them not even working in winter.

"Only those mountain guides who are fighting to survive work in winter as there are not a lot of days when we can go out with clients due to the weather. I need heliskiing as it is a significant part of my income. I have a big family and I need all the work I can find, especially in the winter."

Tschabold, who is based in central Switzerland, further argues that due to heliskiing many pilots have the chance to get proper training.

"Heliskiing offers great training in mountain flying. Those pilots, who train with the army, also do their flying exercises in the mountains, so we might as well make the most of the helicopters and give some people the opportunity to experience heliskiing."

Did you know that...



Photo: Billi Bierling

... the world's highest peak on land is Mount Everest in the Himalayas. It is 8,850.1728 m (29,036 ft) tall. The world's highest mountain from its base on the ocean floor is Mauna Kea on Hawaii. It is 10,203 m (33,474 ft) high but only 4,205 m (13,796 ft) is above sea level. The biggest rift valley runs through East Africa into south-west Asia and is 5,600 km (3,500 miles) long.

To find out more, please visit:

<<http://www.angelfire.com/ns/marianw/mountains.htm>>



Photo: Sonia Muller-Rappard

Book Review

The Price of Neglect by Bishnu Raj Upreti
Published by Bhrikuti Academic Publications,
Kathmandu, Nepal (2004), 446 pp

Ujol Sherchan

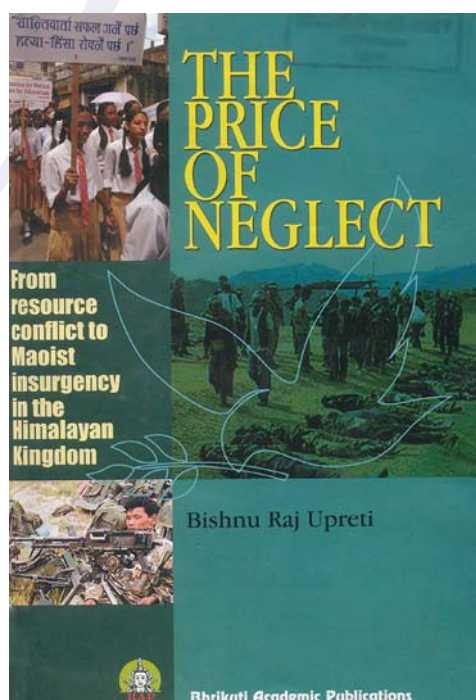
In *The Price of Neglect* the author, who holds a PhD in conflict management and has over 24 years of experience in working in different organisations, has attempted the ambitious task of painting the myriad drivers of conflicts in the field of natural resource management (NRM) and conflict management approaches needed to deal with these drivers on a broad canvas. He links all these,

“While the breadth and diversity of information and knowledge compiled in the book is indeed impressive, it comes at a stiff price: the book lacks coherence.”

with reference to water, forest and land resources as well as the social dynamics governing these resources. The third part follows the ascendancy of the Maoist insurgency in Nepal and proposes a road map for peace in the country. The book reads like three books in one, each covering much breadth at the expense of depth.

It seems that the author has merely assembled his earlier published articles and views on the conflict domain in Nepal and made a book out of it rather than start from scratch, which is quite obvious. While the breadth and diversity of information and knowledge compiled in the book is indeed impressive, it comes at a stiff price: the book lacks coherence. The narrative flow is marred by bullet points, tables, diagrammes, perspectives, methodologies and techniques, which rather than being presented as such, could have been worked selectively into the narrative itself. Moreover, there are not enough connective issues to hold the various parts and chapters of the book together as a coherent whole. And these detract immensely from both the reading and readability of the book.

However, the significance of the book, coming as it did at the height of the Maoist insurgency from one of the foremost conflict management specialists in the country, cannot be denied. The book, in spite of its scatteredness, is highly recommended as an excellent handbook for practitioners of conflict management, for professionals already working in the NRM sector, for champions of environmental justice as well as for those who are fighting for the rights and entitlements of the minorities of Nepal, if not for general readership.



somewhat tenuously, with the Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The book is divided into three broad parts. The first part lays down the basic understanding of conflict and conflict management, the second part - the most interesting - highlights the political economy of resource governance

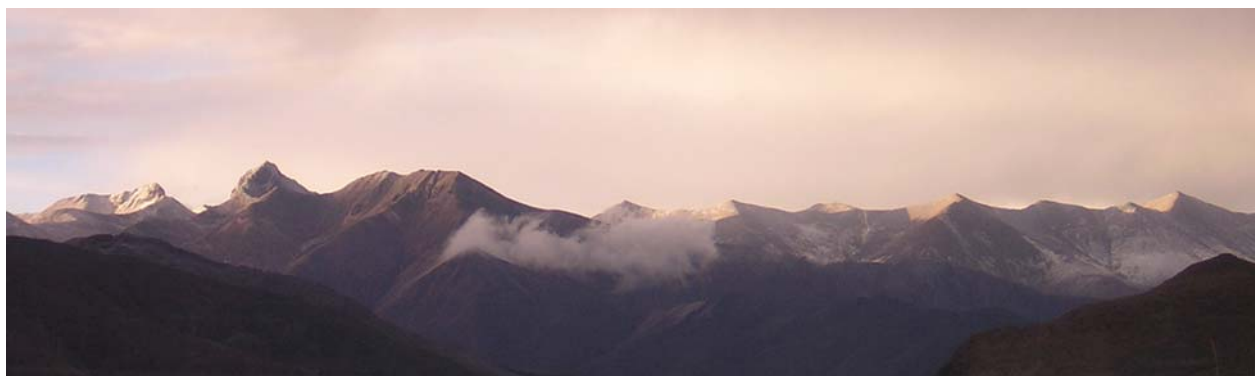


Photo: Agustina Barros

Asia-Pacific Mountain Network

Pilot Radio Project: Dialogue with the Grassroots

Asia-Pacific Mountain Network (APMN), Mountain Forum Secretariat (MFS) and Radio Sagarmatha (RS) entered into a three-way collaboration to implement a pilot radio project toward the last quarter of 2004.

The general objective of this project was to identify critical and emerging issues affecting the communities of the Kathmandu valley rim as well as to develop radio programmes around these issues with the participation of the affected communities, local government officials, local decision-makers and experts. The pilot project allowed the voices of rural mountain communities to be heard on the issues affecting their lives.

The larger objective of the project, however, was to see if a two-way communication flow could be made possible between rural mountain communities of the Nepal Himalaya and the larger world through the Mountain Forum by using a mix of community radio and internet technologies. While the results of the pursuit of this larger objective have been mixed, there is no doubt that media coverage of the hill/mountain issues from the perspective of the grassroots is still lacking in Nepal. But coverage of these issues through a mountain perspective lens is even more lacking.



Photo: Billi Bierling

Child porter being interviewed by Radio Sagarmatha

Hence, the pilot project not only helped fill this long-felt need but also raised consciousness about mainstreaming mountain agendas into the general development patterns of the Nepal Himalaya whilst imparting some sense of community amongst the scattered rural communities of the Kathmandu valley rim and adjoining districts.

Over the course of the pilot project, the partners developed a total of nine radio programmes on the topics outlined in the table below.

Details of the Programmes

1	<i>Mountain Identity</i>	Highlights how hill communities of Bhojini and Kartike perceive themselves in relation to those in the plains or cities
2	<i>Tourism Conflict</i>	Explores the nuances of the conflict between tourism service providers in and around Nagarkot
3	<i>Bhatte Danda Ropeway</i>	Highlights how the Bhatte Danda ropeway has transformed the rural economy of Bhatte Danda and its neighbouring villages
4	<i>Park-People Conflict</i>	Highlights the impact of the gazetting of the Shivapuri National Park on the indigenous communities living in and around the park
5	<i>Tripeni Rising</i>	Highlights the first stirrings of the impact of community mobilisation and diffusion of appropriate rural technologies in the villages of Tripeni and Chhapakharka
6	<i>Rural Urban Migration</i>	Highlights how villagers, who have moved to Kathmandu, cope with their new settings in the capital as well as the reasons for their migration
7	<i>Sand and Stone</i>	Explores how indiscriminate sand and stone quarrying along the river banks and on hillsides is degrading Himalayan river systems
8	<i>Peace and Conflict</i>	Highlights the impact of the decade-long Maoist insurgency on the lives of Nepali people
9	<i>Mountain Products</i>	Highlights some 'good' income generation initiatives built around the production and promotion of mountain products

Based on the feedback they received, the partners have internally reviewed what worked and what did not work and modified the modality accordingly. The partners envisage expanding the project to cover all mountain districts of the Nepal Himalaya in the next phase through collaborations with a network of community radio stations and community-based organisations.

To add to this an ongoing GTZ project of the German government on *Knowledge Networking for Regional Organisations working in Natural Resource Management* interviewed the radio team as well as radio listeners to study the role of leadership, communication and culture in the success of a project such as this one.

Contact

Ujol Sherchan

Asia-Pacific Mountain Network

ICIMOD

GPO Box 3226

Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-552 5313

Fax: +977-1-552 4509

Email: apmn@mtnforum.org

Web: <http://www.mtnforum.org/apmn>

Did you know that...

... the national animal of Bhutan is the Takin (*Bu-dorcas taxicolor*). Mythology has it that the great Saint Lama Drukpa Kunley visited Bhutan in the 15th Century and created this unique animal by magic: he is said to have stuck the head of a goat onto the bones of a cow. The animal came to be known as the donggyem tsi (Takin).



The Takin looks like a buffalo with the head of a goat and a humped nose. Its grazing behaviour continues to confuse taxonomists: in the open meadows Takins behave like herd animals but in the dense forests the herds scatter and most animals stay solitary like deer.

To find out more visit, please visit:

<http://www.windhorsetours.com/bhutan/takin.php>



Photo: Sonia Muller-Rappard

Valley of Flowers, Uttarakhand, India

African Mountain Forum

The African Mountain Forum (AMF) is a pan-African network of networks focusing on poverty and land-use change issues, particularly those associated with the degradation of the mountain ecosystems. An interim Steering Committee administers the African node with a secretariat hosted by the World Agroforestry Centre (formerly named ICRAF) in Nairobi, Kenya.

AMF was inactive during 2004 due to a lack of resources. However, AMF's board member has made progress in securing funds for the reactivation of the African node in 2005 and a new node manager will be joining AMF soon.

During this period, AMF's email discussion list has been managed by the information services team at the Mountain Forum Secretariat in Nepal. We would like to extend our thanks to all the active participants of the discussion list, who have been posting events, resources and several interesting ideas for discussion.

A particularly interesting discussion on the retreat of glaciers on Mount Kilimanjaro took place recently on the mf-africa discussion list. Our mf-africa subscriber, Guillermo Castro Escudero, sent us a press report from *Portada de EL MUNDO* (March 17, 2005) about glacier retreat on Kilimanjaro and the Himalayas which sparked this discussion. Researchers, mountaineers and other experts reacted to it by sending their comments, focused on the retreat of Kilimanjaro's glaciers and climate variability at the summit. References to research articles, satellite images, aerial pictures and photographs were given to provide evidential facts to the topic. Some postings from this spontaneous discussion are given below:

Glacier retreat on Kilimanjaro (17 - 29 March, 2005)

"As a layman living on the foot of this great mountain, Kilimanjaro, I believe the main reason for the retreat of the glaciers is the lack of long rainfalls."

Musa H. Kopwe

"Research shows that the recent retreat has been due to drier weather."

Henry Osmaston

"Reduced cloudiness is analysed as the main driver of glacier retreat. Still, when looking at most recent photographs showing how some Rwenzori glaciers have retreated over the last 10 years, they indicate that warmer air temperatures may have increased their role. On Kilimanjaro's summit, temperatures have still not reached positive values."

Georg Kaser

"Considerable research is underway to better understand the retreat of Kilimanjaro's glaciers and climate variability at the summit, in a collaborative effort between several groups including the Tanzanian Meteorological Agency. While we all wish it weren't so, recession of the mountain's beautiful glaciers has continued since 2000."

Doug Hardy

"On Kilimanjaro, the remnants of ice on the summit are diminishing mainly by retreat of the vertical sides."

Henry Osmaston



Roma, Lesotho

Related Links

Mountain Forum - Africa discussion list:

<<http://www.bellanet.org/scripts/lyris.pl?visit=mf-africa>>

Glacier retreat on Kilimanjaro and the Himalayas

<<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2005/03/14/ciencia/1110818946.html>> (Spanish)

Publications Tropical Glaciology Group, Innsbruck University

<<http://geowwww.uibk.ac.at/glacio/LITERATUR/index.html>>

Earth Observatory website with images of snow and ice on Kilimanjaro

<http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Newsroom/NewImages/images.php3?img_id=10856>

University of Massachusetts website

<<http://www.geo.umass.edu/climate/kibo.htm>>

Evidence of Holocene climate change in tropical Africa

<http://www.geo.umass.edu/climate/tanzania/pubs/kaser_etal_2004ijc.pdf>

Research on the Kilimanjaro glaciers by the Tropical Glaciology Group

<<http://geowwww.uibk.ac.at/glacio/RESEARCH/KILI/>>

Contact

Email: amf@mtnforum.org

European Mountain Forum

Photo: José Borrás Ferrán



Montserrat is a sacred mountain near Barcelona, Spain

A large proportion of Mountain Forum members are based in Europe. Their number is now just over a quarter of the total membership having risen from 1,164 individuals at the end of 2003 to 1,255 at the end of 2004.

The number of organisational members also rose from 110 to 118, comprising the same percentage at the global scale (29%). The numbers of subscribers to the discussion lists accounted for a small increase from 2003 (now just under 1,000), as did the number of messages posted (around 250). Usage of the online library also remained nearly unchanged compared with 2003.

These statistics show the continued importance of the European Mountain Forum (EMF) for communication on issues regarding sustainable development in the mountains of Europe - particularly given the fact that the EMF operated at a minimum capacity throughout the year. Only essential communication functions were assured by the EMF webmaster, Andrei Vasile in Romania, with support from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), which is gratefully recognised. Discussions continued with interested parties, mainly in France and Switzerland, with regard to the re-establishment of the EMF coordination centre, and we hope that these will bear fruit in 2005.

At the regional scale, the principal activities were in the Mediterranean region, where a regional node was launched in June with support from the Caixa Catalunya Fundació Territori i Paisatge (FTP) of Catalunya, Spain. The Mediterranean mountains are situated at the interface of Asia, Africa and Europe and have a common valuable natural heritage, great biodiversity and cultural landscapes that have evolved over many centuries. In June a meeting dubbed *Towards Sustainable Development in Mediterranean Mountains* included a half-day seminar for the public in Barcelona, followed by a field trip and a day-and-a-half's

workshop at FTP's conference centre in the Pyrenees, Les Planes de Son.

In preparation for the event, FTP supported the translation from English to Spanish of John R. McNeill's book *The Mountains of the Mediterranean World, An Environmental History*, which was first published by Cambridge University Press in 1992. This book is crucial for introducing the perspectives of environmental history in the context of sustainable mountain development in Mediterranean countries. FTP also financed the publication of 3,000 copies of the book. It was presented by its author at the seminar, *Sustainable Development in the Mountains of the Mediterranean: Past, Present and Future*, where presentations were also given by Martin Price, Chair of the EMF, and Joan Ganyet, General Director of Architecture and Landscape of the Generalitat de Catalunya (government). About 100 people attended the seminar. Over the next two days more than 30 people, mainly from Spain, participated in the workshop, at which the Mediterranean sub-node of EMF was formally launched. Further details, including many of the presentations, can be found at <<http://www.mtnforum.org/europe/mediterranean/>>.

Over the course of the year, our members received information about the workshop at Planes de Son and the Mediterranean network via the EMF website and email. A survey of individuals and organisations that work on sustainable development in Mediterranean mountain areas was prepared and launched (in English and French) on the EMF website. Initial contacts in Europe (Spain, France and Switzerland) were also made to build the Mediterranean network and to develop and improve communication and cooperation between north and south (and also west and east) of the Mediterranean, preserving the diversity of the cultural and spiritual values present in mountain areas.

Contact

Martin Price, Andrei Vasile, José Borrás Ferrán
Email: europe@mtnforum.org



Photo: Jason Espie

InfoAndina - Latin American Mountain Forum

InfoAndina is the information network arm of Consorcio para el Desarrollo Sostenible de la Ecorregión Andina (CONDESAN) and promotes opportunities for dialogue in the Andean region in order to facilitate the use of information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) and application of methodologies or research findings. It aims at reducing the digital gap, which still prevails in the high-Andean communities of South America, by including them in the information society and enriching the limited knowledge of development and management of natural resources with local content.

CONDESAN is currently restructuring its strategic objectives, which will be defined in the Navigation Charter (CdN). This process started last year and the results were released into a document, which will be discussed by the Technical Committee in July 2005. This will include strategic recommendations for the new activities of InfoAndina. Ana María Ponce, who until 15 February 2005 was the InfoAndina leader, has left her position in order to assume new responsibilities at the Mountain Forum Secretariat in Kathmandu, Nepal. Musuq Briceño has taken over her position on an interim basis. CONDESAN CdN has redefined the requirements of the candidate, and it will take a few months to select the new project leader.



Workshop on Mountain Products, Chambéry, France

Photo: InfoAndina

At the Global Level

In 2004, support for InfoAndina grew significantly thanks to its participation in the first two phases of the Project of Mountain Products, an initiative of the Mountain Forum and FAO. In the first phase (September 2003 - March 2004), InfoAndina carried out an inventory of mountain products, compiling more than 35 successful cases. For the second phase (December 2004 - March 2005), the selection criteria of the strategic subsectors and the list of the selected subsectors were determined.

The Annual Meeting of the Global Knowledge Partnership (GKP) was held in San José, Costa Rica in 2004. Due to the recommendation of the Latin American division of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the Secretariat of the GKP invited InfoAndina as "special guest" to the meeting. InfoAndina represented CONDESAN and the Mountain Forum.

InfoAndina supported the Mountain Partnership through an electronic conference (30 August - 17 September) to prepare the *Cusco Action Plan* <<http://www.condesan.org/e-foros/CuscoActionPlan/index.htm>>. Fifty five representatives of countries, major groups and international organisations took part in the meeting. This consultation was carried out over the course of three weeks dealing with four different subjects in three different languages (Spanish, English and French).

InfoAndina designed, implemented and developed the website for the second global meeting of the Mountain Partnership, which was held in Cusco, Peru on 28 and 29 October <<http://www.condesan.org/cusco2004>>.

CONDESAN, with substantial support from InfoAndina, organised the international seminar dubbed *Experiences and Methods of Benchmark Management and its Contribution to Rural Development in the Andes* (8 - 10 November) under the auspices of the Water and Food Challenge Programme of CGIAR and the International Fund for the Agricultural Development (IFAD). More than 90 representatives of NGOs, universities, research centres, news and governmental organisations and international companies participated in the event. InfoAndina was in charge of designing the website <<http://www.condesan.org/agua>> for this event, as well as of the logistics and organisation.

At the Regional Level

InfoAndina supported the projects and regional initiatives of CONDESAN and the Mountain Forum by distributing information through the use of information technologies.

The Andean Paramo Project together with InfoAndina designed, developed, implemented and maintained the website for the project <<http://www.condesan.org/ppa>> and participated in the design of another website for its intranet and the paramo ecosystem <<http://www.paramo.org>>. These websites contain information and valuable documentation on the subject. For the first quarter of 2005 we have planned to employ students to exchange articles, observations and messages on subjects related to the paramo ecosystem.

Parenting and Policies in the Andes Initiative was also supported by InfoAndina. It helped develop its website <<http://www.condesan.org/ProPoor>>, where one can find documents on reducing poverty in the High Andean livestock areas. It also supported the collection of successful experiences through a website about animal husbandry in countries such as Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru <<http://www.condesan.org/propoor/concurso05>>.

Andean River Basin of the CGIAR Program for Water and Food, a project providing systematic information through its website, has been developed and maintained by InfoAndina <<http://www.condesan.org/andean/index.htm>>. The website provides detailed information on sustainable watershed management in Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

At the National and Local Levels

Workshop in Santa Cruz (23 - 26 July)

Thanks to the initiative of Nathan Russel, the leader of Information and Communication for Rural Communities (InforCom) of the Centro Internacional de Agricultura Tropical (CIAT), and the support of the Major Northern Corporation, InfoAndina had the chance to attend the meeting of the *Chain of Organisations and Juvenile Institutions Project*, which was financed by the Kellogg Foundation in Bolivia. The meeting was carried out with support from the Major Northern Corporation. Along with other organisations, InforCom in Bolivia coordinates the rural telecentres project. This event was the ideal place to exchange ideas with Nathan Russel regarding a draft proposal for telecentres in the Altiplano. The proposal was jointly prepared by InforCOM of CIAT <<http://www.ciat.cgiar.org/inforcom/index.htm>> and InfoAndina, within the framework of CONDESAN. The proposal will combine the experience of CIAT and the Methodology of Partnerships for the Learning and the Methodology of Participatory Forums of InfoAndina.

Workshop in Cochabamba (26 July)

During a meeting with Martín Fischler, Director of of Agua y Tierra Campesina (ATICA) and representative of the Intercooperation in Bolivia, ideas were exchanged on InfoAndina's support to the Agricultura Sostenible Campesina de Montaña (ASOCAM) network and other projects like the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation's Rural Agriculture project.

Workshop in La Paz (27 July)

InfoAndina met Carmen Miranda, specialist in biodiversity and environment of the Academy of Sciences in Bolivia, Juan Carlos Alurralde, CGIAC-AguaBolivia, and María Marconin, Director of Biodiversity of the Ministry of Sustainable Development in Bolivia, who expressed their

interest in supporting InfoAndina and were in favour of organising a second forum (virtual and real) in 2005.

Workshop in Tilcara (June)

More than 30 leaders, including promoters of Humahuaca and rural leaders, participated in the meeting which took place within the framework of the Benchmark Unit project. A small workshop, run by Dr. Sonia Salas, identified the strengths and weaknesses of local food and agriculture systems and showed the importance of communication and information. The meeting resulted in the leaders and promoters forming a local network to continue exchanging knowledge, strategies and experiences.

In 2004 InfoAndina continued to provide its 1,700 members with relevant information on rural development. This information, which is global and thematic, is distributed via electronic bulletin board systems <<http://www.condesan.org/e-boletin/index.htm>>.

The active electronic fora during 2004 were:

Local Economic Development and Rural Microenterprises (2 - 27 February, 2004)

<<http://www.condesan.org/e-foros/Deslocal/index.htm>>

Evaluation and Impact on the Projects of Development and Incidences (12 - 23 of April, 2004)

<<http://www.condesan.org/e-foros/oxfam2004/>>

III Electronic Forum on Moors: Practices with Smaller Negative Impact on the Moor / Policies that Affect the Ecosystem (10 May - 9 July, 2004)

<http://www.condesan.org/e-foros/Paramo_2004>

E-conference on the Cusco Plan of Action (30 August - 17 September)

<<http://www.condesan.org/e-foros/CuscoActionPlan>>

Contact

Musuq Briceño

InfoAndina/CONDESAN

Apartado Postal 1558

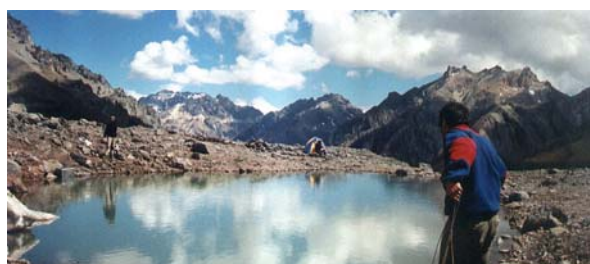
Lima 12 - Peru

Tel: +51-1-349 6017 ext. 2056

Fax: +51-1-317 5326

Email: infoandina@mtforum.org

Web: <<http://www.condesan.org>>



Lake in Aconcagua, Andes, Argentina

Photo: Santiago Yañez

North American Mountain Forum

Project Updates

Bow Valley Mountain Forum

The North American Mountain Forum office is located in a region whose communities face some significant sustainability challenges, a dearth of information about these challenges, and both transient and growing populations. In 2004 the North American node began asking local organisations how we could better serve the needs of the regional community.

Using their suggestions, the North American node began planning a “mini-network” to promote community engagement and information exchange about local sustainability and conservation issues. If successful, technology templates created for the project could be shared with other North American mountain communities for similar purposes.

In spring 2005, the North American node of the Mountain Forum began seeking funds for the project in earnest. By building on the resources and expertise at The Banff Centre, Mountain Forum’s regional host institution, the initial costs of the project have been significantly reduced.

We look forward to seeing the new *Bow Valley Mountain Forum* pilot project take shape over the coming months.

North American Mountain Forum Newsletter

Late in 2004, the North American Mountain Forum News became a regular feature on the regional email list. This simple, text-based newsletter summarises mountain news and issues that have appeared frequently in North American news outlets over the previous month. The stories chosen for each newsletter come from an archive of 200 articles collected monthly and are organised by theme. We look forward to seeing the newsletter grow over time as we make changes based on reader requests and feedback.



Photo: Ron Mader

Rural Tourism Fair, Oaxaca, Mexico

Consortium for Integrated Climate Research in Western Mountains (CIRMOUNT)

The Consortium for Integrated Climate Research in Western Mountains (CIRMOUNT) was created several years ago to facilitate communication, improved observations and better integration of research on western mountain resources and their vulnerability to climate variability and change.

The consortium was created by a cross-section of physical and ecological scientists researching mountain climate and ecosystems in the temperate regions of Western North America. They felt there was a need for a forum that would be responsive to North American society as it grapples with the effects of climate change in mountain ecosystems.

CIRMOUNT now aims to support improved observation, research, communication, and decision-making by:

- Implementing coordinated high-elevation climate and ecosystem monitoring (observation)
- Catalysing integrated research within and among mountain regions (research)
- Providing sound science for effective land-use planning and management (communication and decision-support)
- Promoting the development of long-term, policy-relevant mountain climate and ecosystem databases (research, observation, communication, and decision-support)

Six task-oriented CIRMOUNT Working Groups have been initiated with the intent of achieving concrete and ongoing progress toward CIRMOUNT goals. Current Working Groups include the following:

- Mountain-Based Hydrologic Observatories and Observations for the 21st Century
- North American GLORIA (Global Observation Research Initiative in Alpine Environments)
- Paleoclimatology and Water Resources Management: Time for an Integrated Paleo-Resource?
- CIRMOUNT, MRI and Mountain Climate Research Worldwide
- Mountain Climate Monitoring Network
- Mountain Ecosystem Responses to Climate in the North American West and CIRMOUNT Goals

CIRMOUNT also hosts a biennial science conference called MTNCLIM, to help improve communication between disciplines and among scientists, managers and policy-makers, and to provide a forum for making concrete progress toward CIRMOUNT’s goals. MTNCLIM 2005 was a success and more information can be found online at <<http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/mtnclim/>>. MTNCLIM 2006 will be held in September of that year.

CIRMOUNT aligns with the goals of the U.S. Federal Climate Change Science Program <<http://www.climatechange.gov/>>

and has been endorsed as a pilot regional project of the international Mountain Research Initiative <<http://mri.scnatweb.ch>>.

All interested in mountain climate research are welcome to participate. Contact Connie Millar <cmillar@fs.fed.us> to be added to the mailing lists or for information on projects and meetings.

On the Web

MTNCLIM 2005 Conference Proceedings

<<http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/mtnclim/talks.html>>
We applaud The Consortium for Integrated Climate Research in Western Mountains (CIRMOUNT) for placing the proceedings of its conference - MTNCLIM 2005 - on the web. Visit the website for abstracts and complete PDF files of virtually all conference posters, contributed talks, and invited presentations.

One Tonne Challenge

<<http://www.climatechange.gc.ca/onetonne/english/index.asp>>

One Less Tonne

<<http://www.onelesstonne.ca>>

Both sites offer 'greenhouse gas calculators' to help site visitors easily calculate a rough estimate of their annual greenhouse gas production - and potential reductions. One Tonne Challenge was created by the Government of Canada as part of its campaign to help Canadians reduce and adapt to the impacts of climate change. One LessTonne is a project of the Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development and it is interesting, fun and practical.

PeakBagger Mountain Range Classification System (PEMRACS)

<<http://www.peakbagger.com/rangindx.aspx>>
Although *Peakbagger.com* was created for recreational mountaineers, its mountain atlas is one of the most extensive on the web. The site has created its own arbitrary "Mountain Range Classification System" that divides most of the earth's land surfaces into a six level hierarchy of ranges and subranges. The author admits that the system is not perfect and has many errors but the effort is significant and worth a look.

Contact

Amy Krause, Leslie Taylor
Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre
107 Tunnel Mountain Drive
Box 1020, Banff Alberta Canada T1L 1H5
Tel: +1-403-762 6477 Fax: +1-403-762 6277
Email: northamerica@mtnforum.org
Web: <<http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/mtnforum>>

Secretariat

This new phase at the Mountain Forum Secretariat (MFS) has been very exciting, with many initiatives and activities taking place. Some highlights of this period were:

As part of MF's efforts to strategise for the medium to long-term, MFS carried out a global multilingual survey to assess the quality and value of the services currently offered by the Mountain Forum and to garner user feedback on MF strategies for the future. The survey results constituted an integral part of the reflections on the Mountain Forum's future orientation in order to ensure its success in the coming years.

Together with Radio Sagarmatha (the oldest independent community broadcasting station in South Asia) and Asia-Pacific Mountain Forum, MFS recently concluded a pilot community radio project aimed at linking communities at the grassroots with online community, through community radio and the internet.

In preparation for the Second Global Meeting of the Mountain Partnership (Cusco, Peru, October 28th and 29th, 2004), the Mountain Forum moderated an electronic conference (30 August - 17 September 2004) with the objective of providing an open and participatory platform for members to air their views and define the Mountain Partnership's Plan of Action. <http://www.mountainpartnership.org/files/pdf/e-consultation_en_2210.pdf>
Mountain Forum representatives also participated in this global meeting of the Mountain Partnership and contributed significantly to the development of Mountain Partnership's Plan of Action.

MFS consolidated its ties with the Institute of Geography of the Russian Academy of Sciences to collaborate on the Institute's Eurasia Mountain Newsletter.



Potato Park Center, Cusco, Peru

Photo: Agustina Barros

The Online Library is being restructured to provide a more efficient and powerful search engine for full text documents and to offer a more intuitive arrangement of mountain resources. The search engine will allow for more sophisticated searches to ensure more relevant and effective retrieval. The library will also offer more resources to support members' interests in publication, writing and networking. This process is being led by Suzy Conway (who is the consultant for the project), with tremendous support from Bandana Shakya (who is our new intern) and Agustina Barros.

With this issue of the bulletin that you are reading, we have also revived this critical means of offline communication between our members.

We would like to acknowledge the valuable contributions of Salima Khatoon who joined MFS in August 2004 and successfully completed her assignment in February 2005. Salima's contributions to the work of MF were extremely valuable, particularly with respect to the pilot radio project as well as the revival of the MF Bulletin.

Contact

Prashant Sharma
Mountain Forum Secretariat
C/o ICIMOD
GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal
Tel: +977-1-552 5313
Fax: +977-1-552 4509
Email: secretariat@mtnforum.org
Web: <http://www.mtnforum.org>

Impressions from Mountain Forum's New Home *Agustina Barros*

When in October 2003 the airplane touched down in Washington D.C. I felt very emotional because I did not know what or who to expect on the other side of the gate. When I entered the arrival lounge I saw a man with a big smiling face holding a sign with my name on it. I walked towards him and introduced myself as one of the new members of the Mountain Forum team from Argentina. It was quite exciting to know that the organisation, which helped me as a student and provided me with plenty of information on mountain conservation and sustainable development, was now going to be my work place.

I sat down with my new boss, Layton Montgomery, and we waited for our other new colleagues to arrive. First Sani from Niger showed up and shortly afterwards Prashant from India joined our group. Although all of us spoke English it was quite difficult to understand each other's accents. I just kept nodding even though I understood less than ten percent of what they were saying! There were four of us but one more person was still to join us in the Nepalese capital Kathmandu - Celine from Italy, though of Lebanese descent. Anju, who had been at the MF for a long time, was from Nepal. Within our new team we could collectively speak more than eight languages and represented five continents. What cultural diversity!

We drove through the beautiful hills of the Appalachian Mountains until we arrived at the Global Information Server Node (GISN) office of the Mountain Forum in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Later on we went to Spruce Knob Mountain Center, West Virginia, the birthplace of the Mountain Forum, and our training place for the next two exciting and fruitful weeks! During that time Elizabeth Byers, Jason Espie, Douglas Wandersee and Jane Werner, leaders of GISN, taught us all the activities that we would have to take over once the transfer of the GISN at The Mountain Institute to the Mountain Forum Secretariat at the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) was completed.

It was very interesting to learn how this network affected others all over the world and how many people from around the globe formed part of the Mountain Forum community. Some of the numbers are actually quite surprising! Over 17,000 people are subscribed to MF discussion lists and there are almost 4,500 individual members and over 400 organisational members. I also found out how a network of different networks really functions - something which is a core part of the MF. The network consists of a global secretariat and five regional networks: the Asia-Pacific Mountain Network (APMN), the European Mountain Forum (EMF), InfoAndina (the Latin American Mountain Forum),



Photo: Nimesh Adhikari

Rishi Acharya (Radio Sagarmatha) and Agustina Barros (MFS)

the North American Mountain Forum (NAMF), and the African Mountain Forum (AMF). These regional networks are run by enthusiastic people who share information and provide a platform to the Mountain Forum community in sustainable mountain development in different mountain regions. Andrei Vasile from Romania (EMF), Amy Krause from Canada (NAMF), Ujol Sherchan from Nepal (APMN), and Musuq Briceño from Peru (InfoAndina) are the Node Managers from these different networks.

At the end of 2004, Layton Montgomery, the Executive Secretary, resigned from his position for personal reasons. His contributions have been immense, not least in bringing us all together as a team to take forward the mission of Mountain Forum.

Since then, Ana Maria Ponce, who used to be the Node Manager at InfoAndina, has joined us as the new Executive Secretary of MF. We are very excited to have her on board. Ana Maria has seen the network grow since its inception and has gathered a lot of experience during her years at InfoAndina. Her contributions will be very valuable as she can offer a great deal of experience from the Andes Mountains to share with everyone on a global scale.

We have also just moved into our new offices in Khumaltar, Kathmandu where we are all still settling in. We can see the high Himalayan ranges from our windows, watch women work in the rice fields next to the office, and enjoy the relatively clean air of Kathmandu, as we are located outside the busy ring road.



MFS staff (L-R): Celine Curi, Sani Malam Karami, Anju Rana, Bandana Shakya, Prashant Sharma

So, here I am, amidst this talented and diverse team, writing this from my new office in the Himalayas, to all of you in the other regions; our members and subscribers of this “mountain community” who enable us to learn and share information about mountain conservation and sustainable development across the globe.

The best thing I have ever done in my life was to board that plane from Argentina to Washington, D.C. And now, I can understand everyone’s accents. And I think they can even understand mine!

Many thanks to Suzy Conway for giving me the inspiration to write this piece.

Newsflash

Mountain Forum members elect their representatives to the Board of Directors

Mountain Forum members from Asia-Pacific and Latin America elected their representatives to the Board of Directors through elections held in May 2005. The two representatives to be elected are:

Mr. Muhammad Ismail Khan from Pakistan, who will represent members from the Asia-Pacific region on the Mountain Forum Board of Directors. Mr. Khan is a mountain research and communications consultant and is based in Islamabad.

For more details, please visit:

http://www.mtnforum.org/apmn/election_index.htm

Dr. Sonia Salas from Peru, who will represent members from the Latin American region on the Mountain Forum Board of Directors. Dr. Salas is currently the President of the National Rural Agro-Industry Network (REDAR).

For more details, please visit:

<http://www.condesan.org/infoandina/vote2005.htm>

Building Capacity for Mountain Protection

Fausto O. Sarmiento, PhD

The essence of mountain protected areas is found in their devotion to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity in the mountains, the intention to protect natural and associated cultural resources typical of mountain communities and in their goals of managing the area through legal or other effective means, whether at the governmental, private, provincial, national or bilateral level. This reflects the definition of the World Commission of Protected Areas (WCPA) (Hamilton and McMillan 2004). However, the needs for the defence against the destruction of mountains and the imperative of mountain communities to survive with diminishing resources in an ever globalising world, puts the pressure on how well we can manage to keep a working socioeconomic system that values biodiversity components and their environmental services not just for the rural poor in the remote highland villages, but also in the hungry buzzing metropolis of the lowlands (Beresford 2004).

The parochial view of conservation is forced to swap into a broader conceptualisation of networks, corridors or other meta structures for protected areas, embedded in a matrix of market forces, like tourism, other industries and urbanisation (Lama, B.W. and N. Sattar 2004). Despite the hard work of cultural geographers in deconstructing the theorists' views of mountain systems in the tropics (e.g. Power, M. and J.D. Sidaway 2004), the cruel stress of the third dimension, with physical forces acting on the steep land terrain, makes verticality, the axis for life on mountains, undeniable (Smethurst 2000; Funnell, D.C. and M.F. Price 2003).

Mountain protected areas have gained exposure in the world thanks to a renewed effort to make them part of the political agenda in countries that are now just awakening to the reality of demographic changes, unanswered polemical debates, either of ecological meaning or socioeconomic applicability, and established dogmas that force mountain living to retain the challenges of marginalisation and mysticism (Carew-Reid, J. and K. Rao 2003). Myths in relation to geographical inquiry or to new ecological narratives are like the well-known mountain pathways, alive with possibilities and full of surprises. Paradigms of science and practices of management must be revisited in the light of the advances in "montology" in the last decade (Sarmiento 2000).

A good point to start with is training. The pedagogy of conservation is in the field and most conservationists are field workers. Therefore, a special emphasis for mountain protected area protection is to be placed with managers who may work for a variety of entities, including the

federal government and local municipalities; NGOs and universities; funding agencies and village leaders. The Mountain Protected Area Executive of WCPA, <<http://mountains-wcpa.org/>> has agreed to work on the capacity building of park rangers and other personnel of protected areas in mountain systems to gain knowledge of lessons learned and expose new theories and practices to help improve action in favour of the conservation of those mountain areas. The message for montologists interested in protected areas, as Mr. Graeme Worboys, Deputy Vice Chair (Mountains Biome) IUCN WCPA, puts it, is that the programmatic plan for the next four years includes international workshops, which will be small and might have to be by invitation. The organisers will be looking for participants who can directly contribute a written paper for the topic at hand, which will later be published as a book. The mountain executive at WCPA will be calling for expressions of interest in each workshop about a year prior to the workshop. For information on additional mountain conferences and other WCPA-Mountains activities, please visit: <<http://mountains-wcpa.org/html/conferences.htm>>

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Member Initiatives

Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment: A Research Network of DIVERSITAS

Eva Spehn

About GMBA

The Global Mountain Biodiversity Assessment (GMBA) is an international network of DIVERSITAS <<https://www.diversitas-international.org>>. It was installed to fulfill Agenda 21, and it explores the biological richness, its function and changes at the cool high elevation end of the biosphere. Steep terrain and mountain climate in combination with severe land-use pressure has led to mountain ecosystems ranking among the most endangered landscapes in the world.

Mountains provide an excellent opportunity for a global research network, as they exist in every climate zone. Mountain biodiversity is perhaps the best indicator of the value of the integrity of mountain ecosystems and the dependency of biological richness. The persistent functioning and integrity of mountain ecosystems are likely to increase as environmental conditions change. Functional implications of high mountain biodiversity for ecosystem integrity are largely related to slope stability. Traffic routes, settlements, streams and lakes, and also water reservoirs depend on the integrity of upslope systems. Mountain hydrology is strongly influenced by the type of vegetation and its stability. One of the core hypotheses of GMBA is that a highly structured and diverse ground cover is the best insurance for the maintenance of intact slopes under many erosional forces.

The main goal of GMBA is the synthesis of research results that are often hidden and fragmented. It also wants to establish an international research community, and actively explore and explain the great biological richness of the mountains of the world and its responses to global change. A central paradigm is that functional insight and theory will only emerge from large-scale comparison. This includes cross and intercontinental comparison of upper mountain zones, tree line ecotones and alpine regions, as well as elevational transects. GMBA is dedicated to shape a global corporate identity in the widely scattered research community. This will also help to increase the visibility of mountain biodiversity issues. GMBA advocates studies on the human influence on natural and cultural landscapes in the mountains aiming at encouraging sustainable development of rural upland areas. This was implemented in the project *High Mountain Biodiversity and Sustainable Land Use in the Tropics/Subtropics* with financial support by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and FAO. A synthesis book on *Land Use Change and Mountain Biodiversity*, with results of two international workshops (Tanzania and Bolivia) will be published in fall 2005.



Photo: GMBA

Mountain diversity

GMBA communicates its activities and results to the global scientific community, international organisations, and funding agencies while also raising scientific awareness amongst politicians and the public through executive summaries and press releases.

Recent and future activities

GMBA coordinated and contributed to the chapter on mountains of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (the "IPCC of Ecosystems", <<http://www.maweb.org>>). The report will be published in autumn 2005 (Island Press).

GMBA has become a major scientific partner of the Convention on Biological Diversity for mountain biodiversity issues and contributes to the implementation of the work program on mountain biological diversity.

The network office in Basel, Switzerland organises projects and meetings on a continental scale with members of the scientific steering committee. Upcoming events are:

Genetic Mountain Diversity: Symposia at the DIVERSITAS 1st Open Science Conference, Oaxaca, Mexico, 9 - 12 November 2005 <<http://www.diversitas-osc1.org>>

XVII International Botanical Congress in Vienna, Austria, 17 - 23 July 2005 <<http://www.ibc2005.ac.at>>

GMBA carries out assessment of available geo-referenced



Photo: GMBA

Mount Sajama in Bolivia

mountain biodiversity information. The network office of GMBA will organise a workshop to assemble information on mountain species richness available in large databases. Expected results will be a publication containing synthesis of regional mountain biotic richness and global trends. We highly welcome input to this latest topic.

Getting Involved

GMBA is preparing a list with science news and conference updates. For a subscription, please email us or fill out the form on our webpage <<http://www.gmba.unibas.ch>>.

GMBA Office

Dr. Eva Spehn, Executive Secretary
Sylvia Martínez, Science Coordinator
Institute of Botany, University of Basel
Schönbeinstr 6, 4056 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41-61-267 3511
Fax: +41-61-267 3504
Email: gmba@unibas.ch
Web: <<http://gmba.unibas.ch>>

Using Non Timber Forest Products (NTFPs), Conserving Dipterocarps

Benedicto Q. Sánchez



Photo: Benedicto Q. Sánchez

Slash and burn of dipterocarps

The tropical mountain rainforests of the Philippines possess a bounty of biologically diverse resources, which provide forest-dependent indigenous peoples and other local communities with equally diversified sources for subsistence.

Its forests are among the most diverse in the world, with 1,478 tree species. They are usually divided into six types: molave, beach, pine, mangrove, mossy and dipterocarp. Dipterocarp forests are the most important, however, consisting of six genera and 56 species. The *Dipterocarpaceae* family used to account for 90% of all commercial forest products, which were sold under the trade name "Philippine mahogany." Being the most exploited, deforestation in the Philippines is basically the denudation of its dipterocarp forests.

Pressure on forest resources largely stems from corruption, weak law enforcement and government policies that encourage forestland conversions into monocultures like palm oil and sugarcane plantations in order to generate foreign exchange.

Moreover, the intrusion of the demand-driven economy in hitherto subsistence mountain communities has reduced natural resource utilisation to its most marketable resource, which is timber. The beneficiaries are mostly large logging concessions, politicians and regulating agencies with their operations and transactions burdened with illegality, corruption and lack of transparency and accountability. The challenge therefore for dipterocarp forest conservation is to develop market-driven alternatives to timber extraction and exploitation. In cooperation with the Netherlands Committee-IUCN, the Broad Initiatives for Negros Development (BIND) recently concluded a project in two villages of the Northern Negros Forest Reserve, which came up with best practices on non-timber forest resource utilisation and conservation.¹

Did you know that...



... an enchanted lake in Veracruz rises every dry season but falls again during the rainy season. The lake is located near Catemaco in the Tuxtla region of the state of Veracruz, Mexico. The lake nestles on the southern flank of the San Martín volcano. This dormant volcano is a prominent landmark north-west of

Lake Catemaco, close to San Andrés, Tuxtla. Its crater, which is 1,500 m across, rises to about 1,400 m above sea level and has two small subsidiary cones inside it.

To find out more visit, please visit:

<http://www.mexconnect.com/mex_/travel/tonysarticle/s/tbdid0304.html>

Member Initiatives



Photo: Benedicto Q. Sánchez

Plant inventory

Its project generated NTFP-based enterprises as an alternative to timber use within the CBFMA² and the provincial illegal logging hotspot. Their products were sold under fair trade conditions linked to the urban green market of Bacolod and Metro-Manila.

While the highly regulated NTFP rattan has yet to take off as a source of livelihood, other unregulated species have been jumpstarted and diversified. They have branched out into four major categories: processed food, which include beverages (tea), organic sweeteners (wild honey, jams and jellies); household items (soft broom); medicines (forest-based homeopathic remedies); and handicraft (bamboo fashion accessories and novelties). Local men and women have formed a production chain of harvesters and processors for value addition. BIND is helping them sell their end-products, amongst other things.

In exchange for product development and marketing assistance, the CBFMA-holder BSMKSM³ rehabilitated grasslands through reforestation and enriched dipterocarp stocks through assisted natural regeneration. Women forest resource users actively joined their male counterparts in rehabilitation activities, baseline inventory of the various regulated rattan species. Survey mapping of rattan harvest sites has incorporated indigenous knowledge of the terrain with satellite technology through GPS and GIS. With emphasis of value addition on extracted non-timber forest resources, female mountain farmers diversified their income-generating activities. Men often harvest the resources from far-flung areas while the women generally process them into finished products. With their enterprises jumpstarted, their NTFP-based livelihoods have gone beyond the project's life span.

Moreover, the project was a prime mover in the ongoing prosecution of politicians charged with illegal logging, drawing in support from government agencies like the DENR⁴, Philippine Army, the Department of Justice, academia, national NGO networks, the Catholic church and some international institutions, amongst others. It also expedited the removal of the armed group in Bagong Silang, Salvador Benedicto town, whom the witnesses tagged as supporting the loggers.

Even after the Project ended, BSMKSM has continued to maintain tree nurseries of dipterocarp and other endemic and fruit trees. As an NTFP in its own right, the nurseries provide its caretakers with food from the fruit as well as additional income from the sale of mature seedlings to other NGOs and the government's reforestation projects. On its part, BIND is using the best practices it developed over a period of two years to lobby for policy reforms toward strengthening organised community resource users' legal access to regulated non-timber forest resources.



Photo: Benedicto Q. Sánchez

Bagong Silang household nursery

Now, the challenge is to mainstream these best practices into official policies to facilitate their replication in other parts of mountain forests, not only in other CBFMA areas in the province, but in the entire country as well.

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- 1 Based on the BIND Terminal Report Project No. 6AS00110A. Main author: Benedicto Q Sánchez, with Eva de la Merced and María Theresa Brunia. May 1, 2002 - December 15, 2004
 - 2 CBFMA - Community Based Forest Management Agreement, a contract entered into by and between the government and the local community, as represented by a people's organisation, as forest managers, which has a term of 25 years, and renewable by another 25 years. (DENR Administrative order No. 2004-29: Revised Rules and Regulations for the Implementation of (Presidential) Executive Order 263, otherwise known as the Community Based Forest Management Strategy)
 - 3 BSMKSM - Bagong Silang - Marcelo Katilingban sang Sustenidong Mangunguma, a forest-dependent people's organisation.
 - 4 DENR - Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Working Together for Change in the World's Mountains

Mountain Partnership Secretariat

The International Partnership for Sustainable Development in Mountain Regions, or the "Mountain Partnership", is a voluntary alliance of partners dedicated to improving the lives of mountain people and protecting mountain environments around the world. Launched at the World Summit for Sustainable Development in 2002, the Mountain Partnership taps the wealth and diversity of resources, knowledge and expertise of its members to support positive change in mountain areas.

By the beginning of 2005, some 115 members had joined the Mountain Partnership (MP). The membership is comprised of countries and intergovernmental organisations but the majority of Mountain Partnership members come from 'major groups' - civil society, NGOs and the private sector. A Mountain Partnership Secretariat, with financial support from the governments of Italy and Switzerland, is hosted by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and has the direct involvement of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The dynamic core of the Mountain Partnership is action on the ground through the so-called 'Partnership Initiatives'. These are guided by the recommendations of the World Summit for Sustainable Development. Members have identified and launched specific Partnership Initiatives that cover thematic areas of action - like education, gender, policy and law, research, sustainable livelihoods, sustainable agriculture and rural development in mountains (SARD-M), watershed management - and cover different geographic areas such as the Andes, East Africa, Central America and the Caribbean, Central Asia, Europe and the Hindu-Kush Himalaya. Linkages between these Partnership Initiatives are being encouraged at the local, national, regional and global levels. Other Partnership Initiatives will be developed by members, based on their priorities, needs and concerns.

The Mountain Forum is a key member of the Mountain Partnership. The strong information, networking and outreach experience of the Mountain Forum is being tapped into for the benefit of Mountain Partnership members in a fully complementary manner to the work of the Partnership's Secretariat staff in Rome.

In particular, the Mountain Forum is collaborating with the Mountain Partnership Secretariat to provide information, knowledge and communication services and tools to members to facilitate concrete activities within the framework of the Partnership Initiatives and is helping to promote awareness about the Mountain Partnership

throughout the Mountain Forum membership at the global and regional level.

Since the launch of the Mountain Partnership in 2002, for example, the Mountain Forum has been contributing its Mountain Calendar - the only one of its kind - to the Mountain Partnership website. Through its regional nodes, the Mountain Forum has assisted in the collection of regional case studies on the protection and promotion of high-quality mountain products, part of an ongoing project funded by the Government of France, and undertaken within the framework of the Sustainable Livelihoods Initiative of the Mountain Partnership. Just as importantly, the Mountain Forum, through its global Secretariat and regional nodes has organised and moderated two global e-conferences for the Mountain Partnership in 2003 and 2004. The first e-conference (7 April - 30 May 2003) served as a platform for a range of views on the Partnership from the 66 states and organisations which had joined the Mountain Partnership by 1 April 2003, particularly in preparation for discussions at the 11th session of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development - CSD (28 April - 9 May 2003) and to inform further development of the Partnership. The most recent e-conference (30 August - 17 September 2004) provided a participatory forum in which members debated the draft of the Cusco Plan of Action, prior to its re-drafting and final approval at the second global meeting of the Mountain Partnership (Cusco, Peru, 28 - 29 October 2004).

Work is now underway to define the future working relationship between the Mountain Partnership Secretariat and the Mountain Forum in their services to the Partnership. The underlying goal is to deliver the most timely, user-friendly and efficient information, knowledge and communication to the Mountain Partnership: support and services that will enable all members of the Mountain Partnership to share information, network and develop Partnership Initiatives to bring lasting change to mountain people and their environments.

Areas of focus for collaborative efforts in the near future include the tailoring and development of databases for members, the provision of toolkits for information exchange, knowledge management and networking, as well as the organisation of thematic e-conferences and discussion lists at the request of members.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.mountainpartnership.org/>

To be up-to-date with the latest news, activities and events related to the MP, please read the MP newsletter 'Peak to Peak'.

<http://www.mountainpartnership.org/newsletter06.html>

Interview

Interview with Ana Maria Ponce

Celine Curi



Photo: Sani Malam Karami

Ana Maria Ponce

“... MF should focus on strengthening its geographic outreach and provide quality thematic content...”

Celine Curi (C.C.): Hello Ana Maria, welcome to the Mountain Forum Secretariat! We are thrilled to have you as our Executive Secretary and are sure that our Mountain Forum members would like to get to know you a little and learn of your background. Could you please tell us something about this?

Ana Maria Ponce (A.M.P.): I am from Peru, and have worked for the International Potato Center since 1986, to support the scientific database and network systems at the Information Service Unit (ISU). I have an MSc in Electronic Engineering, and have completed PhD studies in Telematics and Telecommunications from the Technological University of Budapest.

C.C.: Having worked as Node Manager for the Latin American Mountain Forum (InfoAndina) for about 9 years you are one of the “pioneers” of Mountain Forum. Tell us about your experience with InfoAndina.

A.M.P.: Since 1996 I have been the leader of InfoAndina, the information arm of CONDESAN and the Latin American Mountain Forum. The project was initially funded by a seed-grant of the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) for an annual budget of \$20,000 until 1998, when it was selected as the regional node of the Mountain Forum in Latin America, with funds from the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Since its inception InfoAndina has facilitated participatory information exchange platforms among regional stakeholders working in sustainable mountain development in the Andes and beyond, through electronic and non-electronic communication means. The low cost and low band communication methods developed by InfoAndina (moderated electronic discussions) have been widely adopted by regional and international organisations across the world.

InfoAndina went through its strategic planning process in 2003, as result of which it strengthened its support to CONDESAN initiatives. It further aligned its priorities according to the “CONDESAN Navigational Map”, which is under construction by CONDESAN Technical Committee members. InfoAndina facilitates information exchange for SDC regional projects and other stakeholders in the Andes. InfoAndina is now a partially self-sustainable initiative, presently under its fourth operational phase until 2006.

C.C.: In your opinion, what priority areas should the Mountain Forum focus on in the future?

A.M.P.: Mountain Forum is a prestigious network of networks, recognised worldwide as a network of excellence for information exchange on sustainable mountain development issues. As a service organisation, the MF should focus on strengthening its geographic outreach, and provide quality thematic content through its information services. It should also provide quality and timely services in response to the demand of its audience.

C.C.: What do you think are the challenges the Mountain Forum Secretariat will be facing in this new phase?

A.M.P.: At the threshold of the information age, Mountain Forum should establish strategic alliances with other global and regional organisations working towards sustainable mountain development (SMD) in order to efficiently target the Millennium Development Goals.

Its main challenge lies in the capacity of the network to work as the “network of networks for SMD” in a coordinated and efficient way, across different cultures and continents, with regional nodes hosted by different organisations. However, the experience gained throughout the decade of existence of Mountain Forum shows that this goal is possible, and our node managers constitute members of the “MF Family”, facilitating the work of global SMD initiatives like the Mountain Partnership, the Global Mountain Program of the CGIAR, and others.

June - December 2005

The upcoming events listed below were brought to our attention by members of the Mountain Forum as well as the general public. If you have information on a mountain-related event, please send the information to the Mountain Calendar via the submittal form at: <http://www.mountainpartnership.org/events/c-newevent.asp> or email us at calendar@mtnforum.org. For many of these events, more detailed descriptions are available from the Mountain Partnership website www.mountainpartnership.org/events/calendar.asp. Many thanks to all the contributors for sharing this information with the mountain forum community.

Please note that calendar entries have been provided by either event organisers or at-large Forum members. The Mountain Forum is not responsible for any changes in the programmes. Please contact event organisers for the latest information.

June 16 - 19

11th International Symposium on Society and Resource Management (ISSRM)

Östersund, Sweden

Contact: taheberl@facstaff.wisc.edu

More information: <http://www.issrm2005.com>

June 20 - 24

Rethinking Development: Local Pathways to Global Wellbeing

Antigonish, Nova Scotia, Canada

Contact: jdelaney@stfx.ca

More information: <http://www.gpaitlantic.org>

June 25 - 26

Non-Timber Forest Workers and Products Workshop

Western Montana, USA

Contact: Mark Van der Meer vandy@bigsky.net

June 28 - 30

Symposium on Mountain Community Development: Planning for Tourism, Amenity Migration and Resorts

Smithers, BC, Canada

Contact: smitherssymposium@unbc.ca

More information: <http://www.res.unbc.ca>

July 29 - 31

Sierra Nevada Alliance: 12th Annual Conference

Kings Beach, USA

Contact: sna@sierranevadaalliance.org

More information: <http://www.sierranevadaalliance.org>

August 12 - 14

Fourth International Hindukush Cultural Conference

Chitral, Pakistan

Contact: maqsooddul_mulk@hotmail.com

August 19 - 21

Cultures at Risk Mountain Summit: An Exploration and Celebration of the Traditional Cultures of the World's Mountain Peoples

Banff, Alberta, Canada

More information: <http://www.banffcentre.ca/mountainculture/festivals/summit/2005/>

September 1 - 3

Architecture and Rural Landscape in the Social and Economical Development of Mountain Areas Conference

Rocchetta Ligure (AL), Val Borbera, Italy

Contact: paola.branduini@unimi.it

More information: <http://www.ruralia.org>

September 2 - 5

Changing Horizons in Geography Education

Torun, Poland

Contact: pecha@geo.uni.torun.pl

More information: <http://hopelive.hope.ac.uk>

September 24 - 25

Historical Transhumance between the Alps and the Po-Venetian Plains

ASIAGO (VI), Italy

Contact: michele.corti@unimi.it

More information: <http://www.sozooalp.it>

September 25 - 26

International Symposium on Landslide Hazards in Orogenic Zones, from the Himalaya to Island Arcs in Asia

Kathmandu, Nepal

Contact: symposium@nels.org.np

More information: <http://www.nels.org.np>

September 30 - October 6

8th World Wilderness Congress

Anchorage, Alaska, USA

Contact: info@8wwc.org

More information: <http://www.8wwc.org>

October 1 - 5

Open Science Conference: Global Change in Mountain Regions

Perth, Scotland, UK

Contact: martin.price@perth.uhi.ac.uk

More information: <http://www.mountain.conf.uhi.ac.uk>

November 17 - 20

Biodiversity Conservation in Asia: Current Status and Future Perspectives

Kathmandu, Nepal

More information: http://www.conbio.net/SCB/AsiaMeetin gs_EN.asp

My MF Agenda

June - December 2005

June

July

August

September

October

November

December



Mountain Forum Secretariat
C/o ICIMOD, GPO Box 3226
Kathmandu, Nepal

Tel: +977-1-552 5313 Fax: +977-1-552 4509

Email: bulletin@mtnforum.org Web: <http://www.mtnforum.org>