

## ***in Tandem for a Century***

*The golden thread running through this symposium is the 100-year old record of establishing large protected areas in Europe which started in Sweden in 1909. Research in protected areas is closely linked with this development, having been one of the triggers for establishing large protected areas in the first place. Only in such areas did scientists have the opportunity to explore natural processes largely or wholly without any human impact.*

*Such research has continued to evolve to this day, passing through three distinct phases in each protected area. In the first phase after establishment, research concentrates on capturing the natural and cultural basics and on building inventories and distribution maps. The second phase sees the creation of specific monitoring programmes, in the last two decades increasingly supported by the use of geographic information systems that allow spatial representation, identification and interpretation of the captured data and facilitate long-term observation and research. Recently this has been followed by a third phase of simulating potential developments, e.g. in the form of forecasts or future scenarios*

*Today, such projective analyses are indispensable for maintaining protected areas and for creating management plans, e.g. for preserving biodiversity, developing forest stocks or stabilizing the ground in high-mountain areas under conditions of climate change. In dealing with such future-oriented issues it is vital to draw in the humanities across their entire spectrum as well as economics and afford them a permanent place within protected area research.*

*One protected area on its own will hardly be in a position to tackle all these challenges seriously. Therefore, in recent years, ALPARC and ISCAR have jointly built up a so-called "Research Platform for Protected Areas" (ISCAR-P) with the aim of promoting internationality and interdisciplinarity in protected areas research across the Alpine Space. This symposium, organized for the 4th time by the Hohe Tauern National Park, is one of the most important tools of this new initiative for cooperation among the researchers on protected areas issues. We hope that these three days will engender new projects and enhance the cooperation between researchers and protected areas as well as further pan-Alpine approaches.*

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