

Preface

The guidelines of the International Union for Conservation of Nature IUCN oblige national parks to conduct research in addition to their defined tasks of protecting the unimpaired development of ecosystems and providing education and recreation for the visitors. The Hohe Tauern National Park Research Symposium, organized for the 5th time this year, also acts as a building block of the *Nationalparks Austria* work package on research and knowledge management.

Within the implementation of the Austrian National Parks Strategy key research areas were defined. The overarching project aim is documenting and disseminating knowledge gained in the course of comprehensive and long-term research on various themes. This project is entitled *LEGZU – Leitlinien, Grundsätze und Zusammenarbeit* (guidelines, principles and cooperation). In the area of knowledge management and research a series of measures are being developed and should be completed by the end of 2014.

The milestones that the working group on research has set itself include coordinating the research activities and documenting the results for all six Austrian national parks. In future these results will be held in a joint database. In this way insight into the manifold research projects and results of the national parks will be made available to the individual parks and beyond to an interested public. Key research questions are: Where does the 'knowledge' of the individual parks reside? Who is able and wants to make use of this knowledge? And who is responsible for maintaining the system? It will be interesting to hear the answers.

The symposium provides an ideal opportunity for an intensive exchange of knowledge and experiences across the boundaries of disciplines and protected areas and has certainly enhanced the dialogue between research and practice.

In this spirit I trust that you will find the conference volume an inspiring and enriching read and I look forward to seeing you again at the next symposium

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