

Introduction

Nationalparks Austria and Hohe Tauern National Park are proud to present you with the conference volume to the 5th International Symposium for Research in Protected Areas, held at the Hohe Tauern National Park Center in Mittersill, Salzburg, Austria, from 10 to 12 June, 2013.

This event aims at providing researchers and staff of conservation organizations with an opportunity to exchange valuable information, new ideas as well as joint interests and to discuss a variety of current research and management issues in protected areas across the boundaries of disciplines and individual protected areas and across state borders between the countries of the Alps and along the Danube.

Encouraged by the immense success already in 1996, 2001, 2005 and 2009 and the positive feedback give us pleasure again to offer sufficient time and space for the presentation and discussion for the numerous areas of interest of current research in protected areas.

Concept

Six of Austria's most ecologically valuable regions have been designated as national parks. They reflect the great diversity of this central European country: high mountains, forests, water and riparian marshes and steppes. Austria is part of two biogeographic regions: the alpine and the continental, and most of the Austrian national parks are part of two important regional networks: ALPARC (Alpine Network of Protected Areas, www.alparc.org) and DanubePARKS (The Danube River Network of Protected Areas, www.danubeparks.org).

In close cooperation with these regional networks for protected areas, and further supported by scientific institutions - ISCAR (International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps, www.iscar-alpineresearch.org), IGF (Mountain Research: Man and Environment, an Institute of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW), www.oeaw.ac.at, www.mountainresearch.at) and IAD (International Association for Danube Research, www.iad.gs) - we were looking for input from researchers or research groups working on issues related to protected areas across the entire geographic region, from the Western Alps to the Danube Delta, from the plains to the highest peaks in Europe, from glacier-fed torrents to one of the world's biggest wetlands.

Scientists were invited to contribute to the symposium by giving a talk or presenting a poster on any topic dealing with research in, for or on protected areas. These could cover scientific issues as well as various aspects of management on the ground and the scientific exploration of the natural and cultural landscapes of protected areas.

Guiding theme and focus

The organizer and the scientific board proposed to emphasize thematic sessions on the following topics of special interest:

Within the guiding theme "Dynamics and conservation in protected areas - challenges for research and management" and the focus on "Dynamics and conservation in protected areas under conditions of global change and the need to protect diversity" the following questions should be addressed:

- Do protected areas achieve the objectives defined for the protection of processes, functions and diversity and where are the limits?
- What are currently the most relevant research priorities, research questions, methods and recent results – regional and supra-regional, short- and long-term?
- Long-term ecosystem research: What do we know from science and practice?
- Where do protected areas, their regions and their networks currently stand regarding research and management?

Along the lines of this guiding theme and the questions, we wanted to stimulate a scientific debate about all aspects of basic and applied research that would contribute to meeting the challenges faced by protected areas regarding ecological and natural resource management.

Programme

Members of *Nationalparks Austria*, ALPARC and ISCAR made up an independent scientific committee which approved and classified more than 200 papers received and set up the final thematic sessions, the key note speakers and the full conference programme of the symposium. To accommodate the wealth of international submissions, this year's symposium is organized in three parallel sessions and two workshops.

77 speeches, 106 posters and 2 films cover a broad spectrum of topical issues in biodiversity and species conservation, ecology and the function of running waters, effects of climate change, the role of long-term research, quality standards in tourism and sustainable development.

If development processes, problem areas and protected area management are supported and evaluated by independent research, then science can contribute to continuous improvements in management, both conceptually and in the day-to-day operations. The 5th International Symposium for Research in Protected Areas 2013 in Mittersill provides an important input in this field. It provides an opportunity for experts from more than 20 countries to exchange their theories and findings and inspires further research.

Sincere thanks are due to all participants.

Enjoy reading the conference volume.

Dipl.-Ing. Wolfgang Urban, MBA

Director, Hohe Tauern National Park

Please note

Members of the Scientific Board

Dr. Günter KÖCK, Chair, Austrian Academy of Science, Vienna, Austria
Dr. Axel BORSCH, IGF Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research, Innsbruck, Austria
Dr. Valerie BRAUN, IGF Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research, Innsbruck, Austria
Dr. Leo FÜREDER, University of Innsbruck, Institute of Ecology, Austria
Dr. Alois HERZIG, guest lecturer, University of Vienna, Department of Limnology, Austria
Dr. Peter HUEMER, Tyrolean Federal State Museum Ferdinandeum, Innsbruck, Austria
Dr. Guido PLASSMANN, Task Force Protected Areas AC / ALPARC, France
Dr. Wolfgang SCHERZINGER, ecologist, guest lecturer, University of Salzburg, Austria
Dr. Thomas SCHEURER, ICAS/ISCAR, Bern, Switzerland
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Dr. Thomas WRBKA, senior lecturer, University of Vienna, Faculty of Life Sciences, Department of Conservation Biology, Vegetation and Landscape Ecology, Austria
Mag. Kristina BAUCH, Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg, Austria

Conference volumes online

3rd (2005) and 4th (2009) Symposium for Research in Protected Areas, Castle of Kaprun, Salzburg, Austria
www.landmuseum.at/datenbanken/digilit/?serienr=20669 (accessed: 31.05.2013)

eco.mont

eco.mont - Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research and Management is registered in the SciSearch® - WEB OF KNOWLEDGE (Thomson Reuters) index and publishes peer-reviewed articles on research within protected mountain areas and its potential interest for protected area management. Each issue also includes reports on management issues and showcases one protected area. eco.mont is published twice a year.
www.oeaw.ac.at/ecomont/index.htm (accessed: 31.05.2013)

European Mountain Pool

ALPARC, the network of Alpine protected areas, in cooperation with ProClim, Swiss Academy of Natural Sciences, provides a research meta data base of studies and research in European protected mountain areas. We would like to encourage you to register your current research and contact details in this data base by completing the questionnaire – “Add a new project”
www.alparc.org/our-actions/research-platform/european-mountain-pool (accessed: 31.05.2013)

Nationalparks Austria Science Awards



With the *Nationalparks Austria Science Awards* the Austrian National Parks and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management want to encourage young researchers to work on a master thesis or dissertation closely connected with the Austrian Nationalparks.

Nationalparks Austria Science Award 2013:

www.nationalparksaustria.at/nationalparks-themen/forschung/wissenschaftspreis/ (accessed: 31.05.2013)

ZOBODAT - www.zobodat.at

Zoologisch-Botanische Datenbank/Zoological-Botanical Database

Digitale Literatur/Digital Literature

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