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First Mountain Communities Conference in Banff: Human Use Management in Mountain Areas (HUMMA), 10–14 June 2001

HUMMA: The first of five annual conferences

We were delighted to welcome 169 participants from 7 countries to the Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, Canada, in June for Human Use Management in Mountain Areas (HUMMA), the first in a planned 5-year series known as the Mountain Communities Conferences. This series is based on the premise that mountain communities around the world face common issues and can benefit from the sharing of solutions.

HUMMA was sponsored by Parks Canada, with planning assistance from IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas. The Rivendell Foundation, the Arthur B. Schultz Foundation, and the Community Lottery Boards of Alberta provided scholarship assistance for 18 participants.

Themes and format

Our conference theme recognized the growing importance of human use management (the use of example, education, and regulation to change people's behavior) to the conservation of mountain areas. Subthemes included optimizing recreation and tourism, optimizing access, minimizing ecological impact, and minimizing cultural impact.

Each subtheme was introduced by a plenary panel, with panelists such as Edwin Bernbaum (USA), Ted Manning (Canada), Chris Rose (Australia), Bob Aitken (Scotland), Alison Gill (Canada), and many others. Following a lively panel discussion—and often energetic debate—that included all participants, case studies relevant to the subtheme were available to choose from.

Professional facilitators worked with the case study presenters to make sure that the problem or issue was clearly defined for the participants. Small working groups (12–15 people) then explored the problem and suggested potentially workable approaches. Finally, they shared their top ideas with other groups.

The total of 18 case study subjects ran the gamut from recreational use in Misty Fiords (Alaska) to ski operations in national parks, managing day use near the town of Banff, and cultural impact in Rajaji National Park (India). The working groups were enthusiastic in grappling with the issues presented. Many of the presenters were so

Quotes from papers presented

"Many conflicts over sacred sites arise from clashes between the economic and scientific interests of modern societies and the beliefs and values of religious traditions and traditional cultures. Pilgrimages and sacred sites in mountains, for example, frequently draw tourists seeking colorful sights and interesting experiences. Not only the beauty of many of these sites but festivals and rituals associated with them can be major attractions—attractions in danger of being reduced to staged performances done for the sole benefit of paying visitors."

From *Managing Conflicts and Minimizing Cultural Impacts at Sacred Sites in Mountains,* by Edwin Bernbaum

"People who didn't pay in the past don't want to pay in the future. People who think themselves disadvantaged want discounts. People who think taxes should pay for parks object to fees on principle."

From *Pay to Play in Parks: Global Issues and Australian Alps Case Study,* by Ralf Buckley

"Despite some of the challenges I have identified here, there have been many success stories in Gwaii Haanas and the cooperative management relationship between Parks Canada and the Council of Haida Nations has grown to be positive. We now have a relationship based on mutual appreciation, understanding, and trust."

From *Encouraging First Nations Involvement,* by Ernie Gladstone

"The most significant trend evident in the demand for tourism and outdoor recreation is an increasingly pluralistic society pursuing an increasingly varied array of activities in mountain regions."

From *Trends in Demographics of Users and How the Trends Affect Human Use Management,* by Alison M. Gill

"The model used here is one of risk reduction, framed in terms of the values obtained by the principal users (residents and tourists) as a means to identify priority indicators which can be used in a more sustainable form of management. The next challenge is to obtain the key information and to provide it in the form and timeframe needed to indeed affect the planning and management process."

From *How Many Tourists Does It Take to Change an Ecosystem? Indicators of Sustainability for Impacted Mountain Environments,* by Edward Manning

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enthusiastic about the ideas they heard from their groups that they tore the completed flipcharts from the feeble hands of conference organizers, preferring to type them up themselves in order to get early access to the information!

Outcomes

Intended outcomes for conference participants were to

- Provide them with access to a range of experts in the field.
- Equip them with information and ideas so that they can more effectively respond to and implement human use management initiatives in their home areas.
- Provide hands-on experience in the case study sessions to illustrate how that information and those ideas can be applied to practical management problems.
- Provide the opportunity to add to their network of personal contacts to continue their exploration of this field after their return to their home areas.

Conference participants rated the conference sessions very highly on their evaluations: average ratings were 4.34 out of 5 for the panel discussions and 4.12 out of 5 for the case studies.

Conference results are just being compiled. Proceedings from HUMMA will be sent to conference participants in late August 2001. Extra copies will be available from the Banff Centre. You can add your name to our mountain communities mailing list by visiting our web site, www.banffcentre.ca/cmc.



Robert Manning answers a key question during the debate on "Dividing the Pie" (on allocating limited space or opportunities to recreational users). (Photo by Kristine Thoreson, The Banff Centre)

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Seminar on Research for Mountain Area Development, Abisko, Sweden, 7–10 June 2001

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences initiated a series of seminars on Research for Mountain Area Development in 1997, 1998, and 1999, held at the Academy's Abisko Research Station in northern Lapland. The aim of the seminars was to explore the state of the art in research on sustainable use and management of mountain areas and contribute to the action plan put forward in Chapter 13 of Agenda 21. Papers presented during the seminars have been published in the Academy's international journal of the human environment, *AMBIO* (*Ambio* No 4/1998, No 5/1999 and No 7/2000, respectively; abstracts of the papers can be read on the *AMBIO* web site at www.ambio.kva.se).

To celebrate the International Year of Mountains (IYM) in 2002, the Academy organized a synthesis workshop in Abisko on 7–10 June 2001. The small group of participants, from 4 continents, represented a broad range of disciplines. Their task was to sum up and elaborate on the major ideas, highlights, and gaps identified at the 3 seminars and since 1992 and thus to develop a research agenda for the IYM and beyond. For each broad topic, critical issues, gaps, and research needs were defined. The edited outputs of the workshop will be disseminated as a report at major meetings relating to the IYM and at the "Rio +10" meeting in Johannesburg in September 2002. They will also be published in *AMBIO*.

For more information, contact Professor Mats Sonesson, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, IYM 2002 Synthesis Workshop, The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, Mats.Sonesson@planteco.lu.se.

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