

Editorial

This editorial differs from previous editorials. Since Covid-19 forced many of us to stay at home and work from there, many meetings were held online or even cancelled altogether. The advantage of online meetings is that they can be organized within a very short time span and, in the case of *eco.mont*, almost all members of the editorial board participated. Journeys to protected areas within the Alpine Arc to meet were not possible in the last year. Yet these meetings are very important to share information on protected mountain areas, to recognize new developments and to keep the journal's idea afloat. Virtual meetings, advanced they may be, have not been able to really replace physical meetings. Thus, in our last virtual meeting we decided to introduce ourselves to our readers and to share our enthusiasm for the journal's idea with you.

Serena Arduino is an Italian, living in Milan, and a board member of CIPRA International. Serena has a degree in natural sciences and a Master of Science degree in environmental planning. Originally she focused in her studies on wildlife issues (research on Alpine chamois' behaviour), and later embraced integrated approaches related to natural resources and larger ecosystems in Europe, Africa, Asia, North and South America. Recently she has concentrated on ecosystem restoration in the Mediterranean and transnational river governance in the Alps, addressing the political processes that influence biodiversity and ecosystems, and has always been interested in expert-based processes. Her contribution to the Journal is her experience of individual mountain PAs in the context of broader trends and processes.

Carole Birck is in charge of scientific programmes in the nine nature reserves of Haute-Savoie (French northern Alps) within the Conservatoire d'Espaces Naturels de Haute-Savoie and has specialized over time in network management and in bringing scientists into contact with nature managers. Although her initial training in conservation ecology (the relationship between man and nature) and ethology remain her favourite subjects, she is also interested in many of the Alpine topics covered in the journal *eco.mont*, such as the impacts of global change on ecosystems. She coordinates the sentinel lakes network (study of high altitude lakes in relation to global changes) in the French Alps.

Massimo Bocca was born in Aosta, within the Italian western Alps, where he also lives. He had been working for more than 40 years on conservation topics in mountain areas and holds an MsC in agronomic sciences from the University of Turin, with a thesis in entomology. He has authored or co-authored more than 50 scientific zoological papers, focusing on entomology, herpetology and, especially, on ornithology. His main research interest is in the ecology and conservation of boreo-alpine bird species. He was the director of the regional Natural History Museum of the Aosta Valley for six years and became the director of the Mont Avic Nature Park in 1991. This park is the first protected area to get the European EMAS certification (Eco-Management and Audit Scheme). He is currently member of the ALPARC council.

Valerie Braun lives and works in Innsbruck, Austria. She studied botany at the University of Innsbruck with a thesis on the physiological ecology of plants at high altitudes. Among other things, she is now responsible for the smooth running of the journal *eco.mont* at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research (Austrian Academy of Sciences). Her work on the journal has given her a broad understanding of the challenges, tasks and scientific findings in protected mountain areas.

Martin Coy is a professor of Applied Geography at the University of Innsbruck. He studied in Frankfurt / Main and Paris and holds a PhD from Tübingen University. His main research is on resource conflicts, sustainable regional and urban development and biosphere reserves with a focus on Brazil. In 2016 he became co-editor of *eco.mont*.

Cedric Dentant is a botanist at the scientific department of Ecrins National Park (France). He works on the conservation and monitoring of alpine natural habitats and flora. He is a specialist on the uppermost elevation plant species and his research focuses taxonomy, historical ecology, as well as epistemology on life science in these extreme ecosystems (Alps and Andes). He also collaborates in phylogenetic research on these communities, leading to the description of an unexpected biodiversity of the heights. Being part of the *eco.mont* editorial board allows him to be very aware of the scientific activity in other protected areas.

Leopold Füreder is a professor at the Institute of Ecology, University of Innsbruck, Austria. He holds a doctorate in limnology and tropical ecology, and *habilitated* (a post-doc qualification) in limnology and zoology. Key research topics are effects of climate change on freshwater ecosystems, trophic ecology, indicators of environmental status

and change, and aquatic conservation. His research focuses on regions of the Alps, Eastern Europe, Svalbard, Central America and Asia. He makes his wide range of expertise available to ensure the journals' high quality.

Matej Gabrovec is a geographer working at the Anton Melik Geographical institute of the Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts in Ljubljana and teaching regional geography at the Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska in Koper. He has been involved in several research projects in Triglav National Park: he has coordinated the Triglav Glacier observations, studied land use changes in past 200 years and he also prepared some studies on sustainable mobility with special regard on public transport. He is a member of the Triglav National Park professional board.

Günter Köck is Secretary-General of the Austrian National Committee for UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme, Vice-Chair and Rapporteur of the MAB International Coordinating Council, member of the Scientific Board of Hohe Tauern National Park, as well as one of the Austrian delegates to the International Scientific Committee for Alpine Research (ISCAR). As Arctic scientist he is associate researcher at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Mountain Research (Austrian Academy of Sciences) in Innsbruck. As coordinator of international research programmes and closely involved in protected area networks such as the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, it was his concern from the beginning to make scientific findings accessible to a wider scientific community. As one of the two founding editors of *eco.mont*, he was able to put this into practice.

Guido Plassmann has been studying, living and working in the Alps since 1985. His studies in Alpine geography and management of natural resources, economics and history gave him a solid appreciation for complex Alpine conservation processes. He has been developing and coordinating the Alpine Network of Protected Areas (ALPARC) since 1995. ALPARC was one of the initiators of *eco.mont* to propose a scientific platform for the exchange of research results and management experiences in protected areas. His main fields of expertise are the system of Alpine protected areas, nature protection policies and strategies, and ecological connectivity. Further current fields of work within the network are new challenges for the management of protected areas from new conditions linked to climate change and a higher volume of visitors in sensitive sites as a result of the pandemics. A further important field of work within the network is the implementation of EU projects especially within the Alpine Space Programme.

Roland Psenner has been trained in microbiology and biogeochemistry, two disciplines which led him into the field of limnology. By now he has a broader view of Alpine ecology and interdisciplinary aspects of climate change and biodiversity issues. His past activities as editor and reviewer of leading journals, but also his jobs in academia and private research institutions, are helpful for *eco.mont*. Currently he is president of Eurac Research where he is engaged in disciplines as diverse as language and minority studies on the one hand, and biomedicine and renewable energy questions on the other.

Astrid Wallner works as project coordinator at the Forum Landscape, Alps, Parks of the Swiss Academy of Sciences in Berne. She studied social anthropology and geography at the University of Zurich (Switzerland), worked on the local acceptance of protected areas in Switzerland and Ukraine for her PhD and built up the research coordination of protected areas in Switzerland. She is also member of the Swiss MAB board and of the *eco.mont* editorial board. The journal *eco.mont* is especially valuable for her work due to the wide variety of topics from various disciplines and the combination of research articles and management reports.

Herbert Wölger is Managing Director of Gesäuse National Park. There are only 13 national parks in the Alpine regions, to be responsible for one of them is a rewarding task. National parks stand for protecting large-scale ecological processes and allow people to see, learn, experience and enjoy *untouched* nature. His primary goal is to balance conservation, education and touristic development. Research has to supply the necessary information to take the right decisions. His role in the editorial board is to see the output of research in the light of practical conservation management. His education and some professional years in forest management has focused his interest on forests. That is fine because forests represent the most distinguishing feature whenever comparing Alpine national parks with their surroundings.

We would also like to take this opportunity to thank **Dominik Siegrist** for his many years of support to *eco.mont* as an editorial member since 2009 until 2021. We wish him all the best for the future.

The editors and the editorial board members of *eco.mont*