



Editorial

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Dear Readers,

Our final issue for 2010 marks another turning point for Mountain Research and Development. As we prepare it for press, we are also preparing for the Perth Mountain Conference at the end of September, at which MRD will host a side event. This event will inaugurate a new era for our journal. Most of the individuals attending the side event have confirmed their willingness to serve on MRD's reconstituted International Editorial Board, at the invitation of Editor-in-Chief Hans Hurni. Our new IEB, along with a new Honorary Board composed of individuals with long and distinguished service to the international mountain community, will help chart the course of MRD's future. It will play an active role in the review and solicitation of contributions to the journal and help shape editorial policy. The side event in Perth will be led by MRD editors Anne Zimmermann and Susanne Wymann von Dach, and hosted by Peter Messerli, Director of the Centre for Development and Environment (CDE), the editorial home of MRD. Thomas Kohler will represent the International Mountain Society (IMS) as its Managing Director. Theodore Wachs, MRD's Managing Editor since 2000, will be stepping back from this position and from regular employment at CDE at the end of 2010. We are confident that MRD's future holds more potential than ever. The entire MRD editorial team looks forward to a new era for the journal beginning in 2011!

In the present issue of MRD, we are pleased to present work on various topics relevant to sustainable development in mountains and ranging from tourism and impacts of tourism to biodiversity in relation to human activities, poverty and food security, livestock production, and interaction between indigenous communities and the corporate world. In the MountainDevelopment section, Florian Boller presents policy recommendations based on a study of hiking tourists' perceptions of the value of remoteness that conflict with their demand for more tourism infrastructure in Southern Switzerland. Boller explains how this "transformation knowledge" was gained and validates it by positioning it within an overall international debate on tourism development in remote areas.

The first MountainResearch article reports on a new method for monitoring impacts of recreation tourism on sensitive mountaintop vegetation in the Northern Forest, USA. Vegetation is also the focus of the next 3 papers: Thorsten Peters et al compare family and species diversity of vascular plants in natural and anthropogenic ecosystems in a biodiversity hotspot in the Ecuadorian Andes. Bharat Babu Shrestha analyzes the life history and population status of an endemic species in the Nepal Himalaya—a plant that is of particular importance for people in the area because of its medicinal value. Moktan and Jha focus on the impact of different forest management systems on trees as well as on people's livelihoods in Bhutan. Farmers' livelihoods in poverty-stricken mountain areas are the focus of the next 2 papers: Huaiyu Wang et al describe an assessment of where and how well farmers have adopted improved rice varieties and terracing in Yunnan, as a means to improve yields and protect resources; and Rea Tschopp et al present an analysis of Ethiopian farmers' perceptions of livestock, agriculture, and natural resource management in several highland areas, in a context where livestock are a key resource but are characterized by lack of productivity and overstocking. The final paper in the MountainResearch section presents an applied anthropology approach to communication between local communities and a multinational mining company in northern Chile: Anita Carrasco's theoretical insights have allowed her to find a way of mediating productively between indigenous people and the corporate world in the Atacama.

In the MountainPlatform section, a new institutional member of the International Mountain Society (IMS), the Swiss Interacademic Commission for Alpine Studies (ICAS), presents an overview of its activities and network. We are glad that support for MRD is extending within Switzerland. A second MountainPlatform paper presents a new monitoring program, HIMALA—Climate Impacts on Glaciers, Snow, and Hydrology in the Himalayan Region, which is being implemented as a collaboration between US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) partners and ICIMOD, an early IMS institutional member.

We hope this issue will provide food for thought and insights into issues of relevance to mountain people worldwide.

Hans Hurni, Editor-in-Chief

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