



The Himalayan Club and the Environment

A Report

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1. Summary of Recommendations

We submit a number of recommendations for consideration by the Himalayan Club. They are based on the discussions in the Seminar on the Himalayan Club and the Environment held in Mumbai, 15 February 2008, the lectures and talks given by Jürg Meyer during the celebrations of the 80th anniversary of the Club, a number of informal discussions, and the article by Aspie Moddie in the Club's publication on the Environmental Protection of the Himalaya, 1994.

The Seminar was attended by Suman Dubey (President of the HC); Tanil Kilachand (Vice President); Aspie Moddie; Meher Mehta; Gurdial Singh, Nalni Jayal; Mandip Singh Soin; Jürg Meyer (former Director of Environmental Department of the Swiss Alpine Club). Aamir Ali chaired the meeting. The Seminar and the talks by Jürg Meyer generated a great deal of enthusiasm; we feel strongly that urgent action should be taken so that the momentum is not dissipated.

1. Two phases approach

We propose a two – phases approach: A 1st phase 2008-2009 will begin with the foundation of an Environment Commission and aim at the adaptation of new Himalayan Club Environmental Guidelines and a decision about the employment of a professional specialist. Parallel to this a international fundraising will be started.

The 2nd phase 2009-2010 begins with the employment of the specialist, who will work on a situation analysis and project proposals, and it ends with the launch of one or two first projects, and decisions on the further employment of a specialist.

2. Widen the Aims and Objectives of the Himalayan Club.

The aims and objectives, printed on the title page of the Journal have remained unchanged since 1928. Tremendous changes have taken place in the Himalayan scene: Tourism, mountaineering, society, economy – everything has changed very much since then. The Seminar agreed to recommend that these aims be expanded as follows (the additions are given in bold italics):

“To encourage and assist Himalayan travel and exploration, to extend knowledge of the Himalaya and adjoining mountain ranges **and its local communities** through science, art, literature and sport **and to protect the environment.**”

As the Club is already dealing with the environment, this does not indicate any radical change but draws attention to a significant turning point in the Club's activities. The President and the Editor should draw the attention of members to this in an appropriate way.

We furthermore propose to reformulate the club's general objectives in the statutes completely, and, even better, to create a short document of general guidelines which serve as “road map” for the clubs activities in the next 10 to 15 years. We present some propositions for issues to be taken into the new objectives.

3. Establish a Commission on Environment

The HC had already decided to establish a Committee on Environment and Conservation. This should be expanded into a Commission on Environment consisting of a small core and a number of consultants. While the core should be composed of members of the Managing Committee, or senior members of the HC, the consultants should be drawn from outside, maybe even from overseas members.

The leadership of this Commission would be crucial for its successful functioning. The Commission should start functioning as soon as the core members are appointed; we would hope that this would not be later than August 2008. The Commission would be responsible for all environmental activities of the Club and should report to the MC.



4. Establish an Environmental Fund

The HC should establish a separate Environmental Fund. This would be fed by gifts, donations, and voluntary contributions. In the first instance, an appeal might be made to the approximately 400 overseas members of the HC.

We believe that US\$ 50,000 could be raised from overseas members, the Environment Fund of the Swiss Alpine Club, the Swiss Foundation for Alpine Research and so on. Jürg Meyer and Aamir Ali could help with this fund-raising exercise.

5. Environmental guidelines

The environment commission should prepare environmental guidelines which would provide the basis for the club's activities. We present a check list of points which should be covered by these guidelines. The guidelines have been adopted by the managing committee and finally by the General Assembly 2009.

6. Professional specialist

The Club should appoint a young professional specialist; initially this could be for a limited mandate of, say, two years. The person should be a graduate in environmental related sciences and have some mountaineering/Himalayan experience.

7. Prepare a Report on the Present Situation, with proposals for environmental projects

The first task of the professional specialist should be to prepare a report on the present situation of the environmental challenges in the Himalaya, of tourism & mountaineering, of the organisations and stakeholders active in the field. The report should further present a list of possible future projects for the Himalayan Club. We present a rough check list of issues which might be covered in this report. On the basis of this report the Environment Commission and the Managing Committee could decide about the first projects to be undertaken.

8. Budget 2008 – 2011

We submit a very rough budget for three years, 2008 – 2011. The main cost will be for the young specialist proposed above. We also suggest that ultimately travel and other costs for the Commission should be covered by the Environmental Fund. This would amount to US\$ 35,000; another \$ 15,000 should be provided for launching one or two projects.

9. Other Proposals for the Himalayan Club

During our discussions a number of other proposals were made and the Club might wish to consider them.

- Enlarge the membership base
- Revise the Club's management structure
- Become a member of UIAA



2. Background and Purpose of this Document

In the last years there was a growing conscience within Himalayan Club members and the management committee, that some environmental commitment for the protection and sustainable development of the Himalaya would be important. The general discussion about environmental challenges in the Himalaya is quite older. Already in 1994 the club published a booklet “Environmental Protection of the Himalaya – a Mountaineer’s View” with a broad range of articles on the subject. One of the more important is “Guidelines for Environmental Action” by Aspie D. Moddie, because it sketches many of the steps an organisation has to undertake to create successful environmental projects (see appendix 3). Furthermore, aspects of Himalaya environment and sustainable development have always been a subject in the clubs “Himalayan Journal”.

However, the club did not manage up to now to do anything in concrete terms, and there were no specific projects. The main reason for this is probably the fact, that with the existing voluntary work power the responsible members of the club were enough occupied, and that capacities for further work were just not there. This led Aamir Ali, a Swiss-Indian member of the club since xy, to raise the question of some professional staff for environmental work. He then proposed to the club to invite Jürg Meyer, who was until 1997 head of the environmental department of the Swiss Alpine Club SAC, at the occasion of the 80th year jubilee event in Mumbai in February 2008 for a lecture and discussions about the environmental work of the SAC. The main subject should be to discuss the installation of a paid environmental officer for the Himalayan Club.

The management committee approved this proposition. To make the visit of Jürg Meyer more profitable, a full day open workshop with some members of the management committee was organised for the 15th of February. This intense day of presentations and discussion was important; it gave the Himalayan Club representatives quite a deep insight in the nature of environmental projects and the experiences of the SAC, and the discussions brought some important insights for the next steps to be discussed and decided about by the Himalayan Club. A summary of the results of this day are given in appendix 2.

On the 16th of February, both authors of this document had the opportunity to present a lecture at the Indian Merchants Chamber IMC, which supports the Himalayan Club and where Himalayan Club vice president Tanil Kilachand is member of the board. Furthermore, the IMC quite went ahead in environmental issues in the last years, focusing on the challenges and opportunities of climate change. This made this exchange even more fruitful. On the main celebration day of the Himalayan Club, February 17th, Jürg Meyer held a lecture about the environmental work of the SAC and presented some prevailing structural and financial conditions as well as some ideas of environmental projects for the Himalayan Club.

Jürg Meyer and Aamir Ali proposed that they would process the results of these meetings, lectures and discussions into a working paper on behalf of the management committee of the Himalayan Club. This resulted in this document. This document does not deal with the question why a club like the Himalayan Club should also be an environmental organisation and why mountaineers should care for their mountains – this was subject of the lectures in Mumbai. The lecture of Jürg Meyer is attached to this report as appendix 1.

This document is directed at the management committee of the Himalayan Club. It should allow the committee to discuss the further direction of an environmental commitment of the club, to modify the propositions into their preferred form and then to decide on a work plan all the necessary steps to be undertaken. Parts of the report may also be used for communication or discussion with possible future partners. The document furthermore forms the base of further consulting of Jürg Meyer for the Himalayan Club.



3. Impressions and Feedback to Discussions of February 15th – 17th 2008

We were not only impressed by the hospitality of all the Himalayan Club members and those responsible for the meetings, but also by the effectiveness and professional organisation of all events. This proved us, that the Himalayan Club has great capacities of doing things in an effective and professional style – one of the basic conditions for environmental projects as well!

We were also impressed by the unanimous conviction and the will to really begin an environmental commitment and to get involved with specific steps and projects. This of course is the main and crucial condition! On the other hand we felt some feelings of frustration about the fact, that for years and years there were nothing than discussions, verbal commitments and written papers, but no real work; other expressed some feeling of helplessness – we really would like to do something, but we have neither time nor money, and there is so much to do, so where should we begin? We hope that we can contribute to resolve these feeling and to change them into positive motivation for the future.

We observed that the old and still valid main objectives of the club from 1928, were quite often quoted and interpreted under the aspects of the very much changed conditions of today. This of course raised the question about a revision of these objectives.

We were equally impressed by the very progressive “Knowledge Paper on India’s response to Emerging Challenges of Climate Change” of the Indian Merchant’s Chamber 2007, with all the commitments of the IMC. The excellent contacts between IMC and Himalayan Club are certainly promising for future partnerships in environmental projects. We do hope that the IMC or some specific companies might be partners of environmental projects of the Himalayan Club in future.

We got the impression that the need for some professional support for the planned environmental commitment is seen as given quite unanimously. It became quite clear, that the existing human power of the club – all voluntary! – is merely enough to keep the traditional work and services of the club going, and that no resources can be allocated to environmental projects. It was further agreed that the environmental knowledge and experience background within the Himalayan Club is not sufficient and has to be gained from outside the club.

Our conclusion therefore is, that the Himalayan Club expressed very clearly it’s commitment for the Himalayan environment, and that it’s only the question of “How to Start?” is open. We hope that we will be able to contribute some support to overcome these start-up difficulties.

4. Where is the Himalayan Club now?

The Himalayan Club is certainly a very traditional club. However, thanks to very committed members it is an active club. It’s main activities are the organisation and co-funding of Himalaya climbing expeditions, information services (e.g. library, maps, internet page) about Himalayan mountaineering, and the publication of the well-renowned yearly “Himalayan Journal” and members newsletters. More about the club on www.himalayanclub.org.

The club has some 900 members, of which ca. 500 are Indians, and the other 400 foreign members all around the world, with the main foreign member community in Britain. The main club seat is in Mumbai, the two other important Indian sections are placed in Kolkata and Delhi. There is some atmosphere of competition between these three Indian Club Centres, mainly between Mumbai and Kolkata. The club is based on the statutes of 1928, which have been altered several times since then; however, the general clubs objectives remained unchanged, although things in the Himalaya have changed so much since then. The club is led by a sixteen member management committee composed of three representatives from Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata, one of them as president, a honorary secretary, a honorary treasurer and 11 ordinary committee members. In addition there are 8 “officers” (among them the editor of the journal and the webmaster), and 27



“honorary local secretaries”, 12 of them Indian and 15 from 12 different other countries around the world. The editor of the Journal is a central person in the club.

The member base of the club is very small, and one of the future challenges will be to consider new member target groups. We have the impression that the management structures are quite old fashioned and complicated. The latent competition between the three main club centres Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai seem to be potentially delicate for the effective management of the club.

We do not have insight into the financial situation of the club. Regarding the member fees it becomes clear that the club has no extra finances to start another substantial commitment with need of substantial finances, as environmental work. Evidently the private sector sponsors club's events as for example the 80th year celebrations. Therefore to start environmental work also means to generate new money.

We think that the small member base, the lacking personal and financial resources are weak points for a start into environmental project work. On the other hand, the clear commitment of the leading members, the existing network of good connections, the positive image of the Himalayan Journal and the international members are strong points.

5. Steps towards Environmental Commitment

We present a series of measures we think should be considered and decided about by the Himalayan Club management committee quite soon. We believe that after all the years of discussion it is now crucial to actually make some very specific steps in order to really proceed towards environmental project work of the club. As already stated above, the most important base is there, i.e. the unambiguous wish of the leading exponents of the club to engage into environmental work.

The discussions of February 15th showed to different concepts for a start-up. The first heads for an immediate and dynamic start of a specific project, in order to prove that it is possible, that results can be produced and to bring a boost of motivation into the club for further action. The second aims to proceed step by step and carefully setting the necessary base (guidelines, structure, funding concept....), evaluating the actual environmental problems and the possible range of projects, and only then start into a first project. Both concepts have their strong and weak points. We clearly prefer the second concept for the following reasons.

- Without a good foundation in the whole club a long-term commitment might not happen
- The risk to stumble into troubles (wrong project, financial problems) is high
- Danger to create only a flash in the pan

However, if there come up brilliant ideas and opportunities for a very good project, these should in no way be ignored! It is absolutely possible to launch a good project and at the same time begin to set the base for long-term work in parallel. But we would not try to start with a project only. So the following propositions follow the second concept.

For good environmental project work should be based on corresponding guidelines, clear goals, good structures, enough finances and competent people. In the Himalayan Club Brochure of 1994 there is a short but excellent article by your former president Aspie Moddie, in which he presents a very clear and straightforward checklist of Self-Questioning about all the factors which have to be clarified before you start – like the expedition plan, budget and packing list of a big Himalayan climbing expedition. We integrate A. Moddie's reflections into our own propositions.

We stressed repeatedly at the meetings of 15. – 17th of February, that environmental work will always bring up differences of opinion and controversial discussions. This is even more true in a club like the Himalayan Club, which is primarily a mountaineering and mountain sports club, and this means a club which wants to use the Himalayan landscape and nature for it's activities. This results in a natural conflict potential – i.e. questions of free access vs. conservation. The club leaders



have to be prepared for such discussions. Our experience shows that solid written base documents help a lot to avoid unnecessary discussions and to find decisions about controversial points.

5.1 Guidelines

Environmental work needs a good and unambiguous base in written form, in the form of statutes, guidelines and other relevant documents, which have to be adopted by the General Assembly. The Swiss Alpine Club has general environmental positions in its main guidelines, and a special document called "Guidelines SAC and Environment" with detailed positions and lines of action, as well as further positions to specific subjects. Without such documents a organisation will always get stuck in fruitless fundamental discussions.

We consider the following approach for the Himalayan Club:

1. Revision of the statutes of 1928, reformulate the general club objectives according to the situation of today and the challenges of tomorrow (see also chapter 5.1.)
2. Work on a document of about 2 – 4 pages, "Himalayan environment and sustainable development – positions of the Himalayan Club".

This second paper should address the following points:

- Which is the Himalayan Club's self-understanding related to environment and sustainable development – why does the club commit to these subject's?
- Which is the primary region of concern and commitment (Only India? Only above tree line? Only Himalaya or also mountains & crags all over India?....)
- What are the main environmental problems and challenges in the Himalaya today and tomorrow?
- Which of these problems are included in Himalayan Club's environmental work primarily, secondarily, not at all? (e.g. will mountain forests be in the primary focus?)
- Short positions of the Himalayan Club to the problems in focus.
- How is the environmental work organised, what are the main decision paths?
- How is the environmental work financed?
- How does the Himalayan Club cooperate with other organisations and stakeholders?
- Does the Himalayan Club raise its voice towards government and in political issues related to the Himalayan environment and sustainable development? If yes how?

Jürg Meyer would help creating a draft of such a document. With the knowledge of the leading exponents of the Himalayan Club such a document could be produced in quite a short time.

5.2 Structures and Environmental Commission

Again to avoid unclear situations and conflicts a set of basic structural organisation has to be created. Maybe the Himalayan Club takes this as opportunity to have a critical look at its overall present organisation (see chapter 5.3). The management handbook can serve as source of inspiration, and we are convinced that the SAC managing director, Peter Mäder, would be willing to give some advice as well. We propose the following minimal structural framework:

1. A member of the main managing committee is appointed responsible for environment and sustainable development.
2. A commission on environment and sustainable development is created.

Commission on environment and sustainable development

3 – 5 core members: Representative of the management committee and 2-4 well respected members of the club, with different backgrounds (not only environmental). It would be ideal to get members which do not live too far away from each other, because 1 – 3 meetings per year would be es-



sential. A Mumbai – based commission seems to be natural since the club headquarters are in Mumbai anyway.

Furthermore it would be useful to create an operative board of the environment, consisting of the environment responsible in the managing committee, the environment commission president and the professional environment responsible.

5 – 10 consulting members: Members or non-members which have specific specialist and / or scientific background essential for the environmental commitment of the club (as stated in the guidelines), and which are willing to consult the commission.

The core commission has to work according to a duty&rights document which has to be created by itself as first step of its work and approved by the management committee. Jürg Meyer would help to draft such a document. The second step should be to set up a multiannual planning, an annual planning and a budget – all to be approved by the management committee or even the General Assembly.

The Himalayan Club should reflect on the possibility to cover the expenses of such a commission (mainly travel costs). It is usual worldwide that members doing voluntary work have their necessary expenses paid by the organisation.

The member of the MC responsible for environmental questions and the core commission must form a highly motivated and dedicated core unit. In this starting phase it is essential to have good leadership and few members – or even one member only – who are willing to push and pull, who go for the environmental adventure of the Himalayan Club with enthusiasm and persistence.

5.3 Himalayan environment: Situation Analysis and Project Proposals

During the discussions in Mumbai in February 08 we often heard “there is so much to do – where could or should we begin?” Indeed, looking at the sheer dimensions of the whole or only the Indian Himalaya and all the different aspects of environment and sustainable development, there is a vast range of challenges to be tackled, problems to be solved. It is clear that such a relatively small club like the Himalayan Club cannot be everywhere and do everything – a good choice of projects and project regions is essential for a success and for the credibility and image of the club.

We think that the environmental commission and the managing committee of the Himalayan Club need a report with a situation analysis and a choice of possible fields and project proposals for it's own environmental work in the next years. Only on the base of such an analysis can the committee really decide with the necessary information and background.

The report should address the following issues:

- Summary of the main environmental challenges and problems in the Himalaya, with special focus to the Indian Himalaya
- Summary on the environmental laws and politics in India relevant to the Himalaya
- Summary on Himalaya tourism (including pilgrimage tourism), and on expedition and trekking activities
- Summary of the main ecological impacts and problems related to expedition and trekking activities
- Overview over existing governmental and non-governmental environmental / sustainability projects in the Indian Himalaya.
- Overview over non-governmental organisations active in the Himalaya, including contact persons and actual projects (establish a modest databank)
- Summary of existing level and projects for sustainable expedition and trekking activities, with an first assessment of cooperation possibilities for the Himalayan Club
- Assessment of funding possibilities for environmental projects in the Indian Himalaya (government, private industry, Indian NGO's, foreign NGO's, Indian and foreign trusts and foundations)
- Proposition of main fields of action for environmental work of the Himalayan Club



- A list of project proposals, each with following points: goal, stakeholders, area, time frame, needed human and finance resources, possible partners, strong & weak points, communication possibilities,

This report should be created by a paid person (see 3.4. below) under the guidance of the environmental commission. Scientific consulting, information and contacts should be provided by the consulting members of the commission (see 3.2). Of course quite a wealth of published materials on the subject already exists, so the work would also include a literature research. Furthermore there are quite numerous scientific and non-governmental organisations which also can provide background, knowledge and information. Access to these bodies should be helped by the consulting members of the commission. In the case of international organisations with seats outside India Himalayan Club members of the respective countries can be asked for help. To some extent the main author of this paper can also give support (e.g. to the Mountain Research Institute).

5.4 Professional staff

The issue of professional staff was discussed quite intensely and it seemed to us that most Himalayan Club exponents approved the need of some professional support.

The club has no paid staff up to now – even the edition of the Himalayan Journal can be done, thanks to lucky circumstances, on a voluntary base. The “core business” of the club is mountaineering. So the logical question would be: why not first get some professional work for the core business? We believe that there are good reasons against this. For the active members of the club mountaineering is their primary goal for their free time. So it is quite natural for them to engage for this mountaineering in their free time, irrespective if this happens to be for only themselves, or for some friends, or for the club. Of course this does not mean that the club could not sooner or later come to the conclusion that it needs some paid professional work for the mountaineering as well. However, our impression is that up to now the mountaineering core business works quite well with the voluntary resources.

But all those members who already do work for the mountaineering and expeditions in the club have no more free resources to get also involved in other work – e.g. environmental projects. And everybody agreed that good environmental work has to be done professionally, otherwise it might get stuck too soon. Therefore we think that it is almost unavoidable to create some professional human resources. On the other hand we understand, that with the existing financial situation of the club there are substantial hesitations to create a paid post in the form of “a Mr. Meyer of the Himalayan Club”, as Aamir Ali once expressed it.

We propose a more flexible and less expensive model. The club could employ a young graduate student in environmental sciences (environment, biology, geography...) who has also mountaineering experience, for a 1 to 2 year period based on quite a modest salary. According to T. Kilachand and others Rs 25'000 – 30'000 (USD 600 – 800) per month should be considered. The commission would be the instructional body for this specialist, and the environment representative of the management committee it's direct boss.

The first task of this person would be to research and prepare the situation analyses and project proposals of chapter 3.3., as well as communication and networking.

5.5 Finances and Funding

Good environmental projects need money, paid staff needs money, even voluntary work needs money (travel costs). It is crucial that the HC has quite clear ideas what the financial dimensions of his planned environmental work has and what possibilities of funding exist.

Based on the work plan and budget of chapter 6 we deduce a need of cash for the next three years of around 50'000 USD for the basic preparatory work and some start-up financing of first projects. The money needed for projects of course depends on the kind of project. We proposed to budget a sum of 15'000 USD to create the possibility to start into one or two projects in the next years.



Money for specific projects is normally easier to raise than money for permanent work like commission work, paid permanent staff etc. As the HC has excellent contacts with the Indian Merchant Chamber, this organisation or single member enterprises could be partners covering some financial needs for future projects. But we doubt that the IMC or firms would be willing to help with a sort of start-up financing of the environmental work of the HC as presented in this paper.

Environmental Fund

We therefore developed another idea. We propose the HC to create an “environmental fund” by raising money mainly at its members abroad. Aamir Ali, Trevor Braham and Jürg Meyer would initiate this fundraising action, of course in close cooperation with the management committee, and in the name of the HC. We believe that one of the tasks of members of the HC outside India could be to share their responsibility with the problems and challenges in the Himalaya by making a financial contribution to this HC environmental fund. There are about 400 members outside India. We estimate that about $\frac{1}{4}$ of these would contribute an average sum of about 500 USD, which would make up 50'000 USD. The HC should consider a special “club of environmental donators” to thank the main contributors.

We would also try to get further funding by the environmental fund of the SAC, by the Swiss foundation for non-alpine research and others. We think that in this way we will be able to generate some 50 – 80'000 USD within the next two years. The IMC and specific firms in India should also be contacted for a contribution to this fund. This has to be done via the existing network of the HC.

With such a start-up capital the club could easily cover the first three years according to the propositions of this paper and get involved in first specific projects. Then the club could decide again on a continuation, correction or abandon of the environmental work.

Long-term funding

The three start-up years would allow to consider the possibilities of the long-term finances carefully. Main objective would be to establish a long-term financing of a paid post. One of the tasks of this person would be fundraising for the future specific projects of the club. We propose that a future permanent paid person should be financed by a mix of money. Something like $\frac{1}{3}$ from member fees, $\frac{1}{6}$ from private industry, $\frac{1}{6}$ from government funds, $\frac{1}{3}$ over projects could be realistic.

5.6 Network and Synergies

Since the Himalayan club is a small organisation and the Himalaya with its different environmental challenges is huge, it is crucial for successful work to join forces whenever possible. Of course it is sometimes important to manage and finish an environmental project by one's own forces – this produces self-confidence and a positive image, but often it makes more sense to cooperate with other organisations. Or an organisation can manage a project on its own, but this is embedded in a program of larger dimension which is directed by other organisations or government bodies.

The proposed analysis report of chapter 5.3. should give the HC responsables a good overview over all other players, their significance and their projects. Based on this the club can decide about cooperation with other organisations.

However, mutual information about ongoing initiatives and projects is crucial. This makes know how transfer easier, it helps to avoid unnecessary parallel projects and to embed own projects in a more general context. So the Environment Commission should build up informal connections with all relevant national and international organisations (IMF; HET, WWF, IUCN etc...) active in the Indian Himalaya, to the relevant government bodies and to important economic circles (tourism, energy, forestry, etc.).

We would also encourage the Himalayan Club very much to get involved into the umbrella organisations of mountaineering. The UAAA (Union of Asian Alpine Associations) unites all mountaineering clubs of Asia from Pakistan to Japan. And of course there is the UIAA (International Mountain-



eering Association) which is the most important world wide umbrella organisation. The UIAA is now in a crucial transformation process towards a modern and more dynamic organisation, and as far we can see it now environment issues will be one of it's main issues. The "official" Indian member in the UIAA is the IMF, but other associate members are welcome as well. All necessary information is available on the UIAA website www.theuiaa.org. A membership of the most traditional mountaineering club of the subcontinent would certainly be appreciated world-wide. And the club could benefit from the possibilities of the UIAA, which is mainly information, networking, publicity.

5.7 Projects

Based on the lecture of Jürg Meyer on February 17th we present a range of possible environmental projects which could be addressed by the HC. This is a very preliminary and somewhat also arbitrary choice, and one of the main objectives of the report proposed in chapter 3.3 would be the presentation of a more sound and comprehensive list of project proposals. We include this list anyway as a starting point.

A. Inter - Himalayan projects

Environmental issues do not stop at national boundaries. Therefore they should be tackled by transboundary coordination, collaboration and projects. I know how difficult the situation is in the Himalayas – just think of the India – Pakistan – China tensions in Kashmir and Karakoram. But nevertheless initiatives of transboundary efforts can – and must! - be undertaken by non-political bodies as mountaineering clubs.

1. Himalayan convention

A "Himalayan Convention" after the concept of the Alpine Convention would be an incredible vehicle of trans-boundary cooperation, which is crucial for the future of environmental management of the Himalayas. This would be at least a 20-year project. A similar convention is under way for the Caucasus mountain range. Trans-boundary river management would be one of the very important issues of such a convention. The use and management of waters from rivers out of mountain ranges will get a crucial topic in future, probably much sharpened by climate change. Solutions can only be found by transboundary cooperation.

2. Himalaya Map of protected areas

The Himalayan Club could initiate a map of the whole Himalaya with the most valuable areas which should be protected, analogous to SAC map of 1969 and the one now in process again. This should be done in collaboration with tourism, energy, agriculture, forest, military and conservation representatives.

3. Natural hazards

The Himalayan Club could engage in collaboration with research institutions to help in fieldwork support and other co-operation.

4. Activate UAAA

The Himalayan Club could initiate such environmental issues within the UAAA and help establish a permanent environmental structure and activities of this Asian umbrella organisation. Maybe the existing Himalayan Countries Mountaineering Association as well as the Himalayan Environmental Trust should be integrated into this framework.

B. Regional and local Projects in touristic areas of the Indian Himalaya

There is a wide range of possibilities for local and regional projects, where a organisation like the HC could act as initiator or project leader. However, most of such projects have much better chances for success when they are done in collaboration with other organisations.

5. Environmental standards for HC expeditions

Draft and adopt a simple check list with environmental issues for HC's own expeditions and outings. Funding by the club will only be given when proof of fulfilment of these standards is given. In this way the club goes ahead and gives a clear signal that it means it seriously with its own environmental commitment.



6. Partnership with parks and other valuable sites

The Himalayan Club could take over a special responsibility and commitment for an important touristic / mountaineering region. Aamir Ali and others suggested the Nanda Devi National park.

7. “Himalayan Eco Prize”

The Himalayan Club could develop a “Himalayan Eco Prize” for expeditions or trekking organisations in collaboration with the outdoor industry and with the UIAA which has ideas of developing an environmental label. Such a prize could then be developed into a competitive label like for example the Max Havelaar Label for tropical food products or the FSC-Label for sustainably produced wood which both are economic successes in Europe.

8. Waste and pollution projects

The Himalayan Club could identify regions where waste and pollution from tourism and/or pilgrimage are an issue and start very practical projects to improve the situation. Examples of such regions and project concepts are presented in the above mentioned booklet of your club from 1994.

9. Teaching book “The Himalayas – see, know, understand”

The Himalayan Club could initiate the production of a book like our “Lebenswelt Alpen” which could be widely used for the training and creating awareness among tourist guides, schools, tourists, expeditions. This could be a first project of a UAAA environmental commission.

10. Training of guides and porters

The Himalayan Club could initiate and lead training programmes for sustainable tourism and local environmental protection for Sirdars, liaison officers, local guides, porters and other tourism stakeholders like trekking agencies owners. Forget the old liaison officer and make it an environmental officer! In mid-terms environmental training must become compulsory for all such stakeholders. Today Swiss mountain guides have a full week of intense training in nature and environment!

11. Local CO₂ reduction

Together with other partners The Himalayan Club engages in local CO₂ reduction projects, e.g. to make better wood fires for cooking or substitute them with solar cookers.

C. Networking and know how transfer

12. Join forces!

This is probably the most important proposition. For example why not propose a paid professional for Himalayan Environment projects who works for the Himalayan Club, the Himalayan Environmental Trust and the Indian Mountaineering Association together – with shared costs and a shared Environment Commission. Competition is important and nice, but sometimes collaboration is better! It is like on the mountain: when the going gets tough and the conditions precarious, its better to join up and forget the competition....

13. UIAA

Collaboration with the UIAA, its expedition, mountain protection and access & conservation commissions. One project could be to build up an information platform about the Himalayas within the framework of the existing UIAA Website.

14. Know how transfer

Exchange with experts from alpine environmental projects. Mutual visits and look at specific projects. Check out possible collaboration with and support from European, East Asian or American clubs for Himalayan environmental projects.



6. Work Plan and Budget

6.1 Work Plan 2008 - 2010

We tried to transfer all the propositions of chapter 5 into a work plan, which gives a “road map” for the next three years for the relevant bodies of the club.

Time	Environment Commission	Managing Committee	General Assembly	Professional	J. Meyer & A. Ali
General Tasks	Work on strategies, guidelines. Guide professional. Propose to MC	Operative lead of HC. Decide about proposals of Envir. Comm.	Decision about strategic issues and finances / budget	Work on environmental projects corresponding to the Envir. Comm..	Consultants. Fundraising outside India.
2008	<p>Decide about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new environment commission and environment responsible in MC • HC Environment Fund • installation of a HC environmental fund • next steps <p>Starting up 1st meeting: Discuss Paper JM & AA, modify into own work plan. Draft management guidelines for commission work Draft HC Environmental Guidelines</p> <p>Search and evaluate Professional for 1 – 2 year mandate Propose management and environment guidelines to MC Plan media work for new profile of HC</p>	<p>Decide about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new environment commission and environment responsible in MC • HC Environment Fund • installation of a HC environmental fund • next steps <p>Controlling of commission set up and work</p> <p>Decide about revision of general objectives in HC statutes.</p> <p>Discuss and adopt management and environment guidelines.</p> <p>Approve employment of professional</p> <p>Approve media work</p>	<p>1st phase: preparation and decision</p>		<p>Present discussion paper for environment work of HC, based on meetings and discussions of Feb 15.-17.</p> <p>Start fundraising for HC environment fund</p> <p>Consult on Environment Commission work</p> <p>Report on fundraising</p>
2009	<p>Employ environmental professional Guidance and consulting of professional</p> <p>Support MC and professional in fundraising</p> <p>Work on environmental standards for HC expeditions</p>	<p>Start Fundraising in India (→ network!)</p>	<p>Adopt revised general objectives in statutes Adopt environmental guidelines</p>	<p>Sign contract with HC Start work on Situation and project analysis</p> <p>Help with Fundraising and media work.</p> <p>Present report and project proposals to Envir. Commission</p>	<p>Continuation of consulting and fundraising</p>
2010	<p>Discuss and adopt report Discuss project proposals</p> <p>Discuss and adopt project concepts, present them to MC Discuss permanent post for environment officer; chose person</p> <p>Establish pluriannual and annual planning including budget.</p> <p>Guide and consult project work of professional,</p>	<p>Discuss and adopt project concepts and permanent post for environment officer, if positive → approve person proposed by Envir. Comm.</p> <p>Approve pluriannual and annual planning and budget</p> <p>Help with fundraising for projects</p>	<p>Approve pluriannual and annual planning and budget</p>	<p>Work on Standards for HC Expeditions</p> <p>Make concepts for chosen projects</p> <p>Same or new professional: Start implementing the chosen projects</p> <p>Fundraising for projects</p>	<p>Continuation of consulting and fundraising</p> <p>Check possibilities of project partnerships with European mountaineering clubs</p> <p>Implement project partnerships</p>
2011+	Ongoing commission work according to guidelines.	Ongoing controlling and operative decisions	Yearly planning / budget approval	On going project work	Ongoing consulting if wanted / needed.



6.2 Budget 2008 - 2010

We propose a rough budget for the following three years under the assumption that our proposed road map is followed and a paid young professional is being employed for two years 2009 – 2010. This budget certainly has to be looked at very critically by the Environment Commission, because we do not have the necessary knowledge of Indian circumstances and conditions.

Nr	Item	USD
1	Salary paid environmental officer for 2009 - 2010: 12 x 2 x 800 USD	19'200
2	Insurances and other compulsory costs for paid specialist	2'000
3	Travel and other costs (hardware, telephone,) for paid specialist	4'000
4	Travel and other costs for Environment Commission 2008 – 2010: 1'500 / year	4'500
5	Communication (Internet, Media, Flyers...)	2'000
6	Layout & Print of Report	1'000
7	Start-up finances for 1 - 2 environmental projects	15'000
8	Reserve	3'000
9	Total 2008 - 2010	50'700

The first main budget post is the salary for the specialist, which we based on a monthly sum of 800 USD. The second is the sum of USD 15'000 foreseen as start-up for specific projects. Of course each project has to be planned with a separate budget, but we thought it to be useful to plan some start-up finances.

As discussed in 5.5, we are quite confident that the resulting overall sum of 50'000 USD can be generated by an international fundraising mainly at the foreign HC members.

7. Other Issues for the Himalayan Club

During the discussions in Mumbai it became clear that the commitment of the club into future environmental work brings up some other issues of more general character, which would be useful to consider by the Managing Committee.

7.1 Revision of Club's Objectives in Statutes

The only basic set of general objectives of the HC are the very short statements in the statutes:

To encourage and assist Himalayan travel and exploration, and to extend knowledge of the Himalaya and adjoining mountain ranges through science, art, literature and sport.

These general objectives remained unchanged since the club foundation in 1928. But the development since then was enormous, tourism, mountaineering, society, economy – everything has changed very much since then. We therefore propose to the club to reformulate its general objectives in the statutes completely, and, even better, to create a short document of general guidelines which serve as "road map" for the club's activities in the next 10 to 15 years.

We think that the general objectives should consider and include the following issues

- Support of mountaineering and expeditions with high ethical, social and environmental standards for club members
- Provide information on mountaineering and trekking in the Himalayas and all over India for everybody
- Keep technical and security standards of mountaineering activities at high level
- Engage in projects of environment protection and sustainable development in the Himalaya
- Educate mountaineers and stake holders on mountain nature, culture, environment.



7.2 Structures & Headquarters

The existing structures of the club should probably be revised and simplified. With the installation of an Environment Commission the question about other commission arises. The positions, tasks and rights of commissions have to be clarified. The structural model of the SAC and other european clubs could serve as a model.

It should furthermore be clear that the club has one main seat or headquarter. The connection with the other clubs have to be clear, and it has to be assured that democratic principles of club life are not undermined.

7.3 Membership and Member fees

Considering the clubs commitment for environmental work a broader member base would of course be very useful, not only for financial reasons. An opening of the club for more people and target groups is an important strategic issue and has to be discussed extensively, advantages and drawbacks have to be considered carefully.

Possible new target groups could be

- Young Indian climbers and hikers
- Hiking families
- International trekkers and mountaineers
- Trekking and expedition business people
- Older / richer people outside India as supporters

7.4 UIAA membership

Reasons and some aspects of an UIAA membership were already presented in chapter 5.6.

8. Appendix

1. Lecture Jürg Meyer of February 17th in Mumbai
2. Article by Aspie D. Moddie 1994

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Are Mountaineering Clubs also Environmental Organisations?

Lecture presented by Dr. Jürg Meyer

Mountain Guide, Geologist, 1996 - 2007 Chef of Environmental Department of Swiss Alpine Club SAC

Dear Mountain friends, dear colleagues of the Himalayan Club, ladies and gentlemen,

It is a honour and a pleasure for me to take part in this celebration of the Himalayan Club and to talk to you about environmental work of the Swiss Alpine Club amongst such renowned speakers.

According to your wish I would like to present the environmental work of the Swiss Alpine Club SAC to you. I will start with a historical review to make the actual situation of the SAC understandable. Then I will present projects, structures and finances of the environmental work in the SAC. After some reflections about environmental problems in the Alps and the Himalayas and the role of mountaineering clubs therein, I will make some suggestions for possible environmental projects for the Himalayan Club.

1. The environmental profile of SAC yesterday – today – tomorrow

1.1. How the environmental profile of SAC evolved

Early Days

The SAC was founded in 1863, at a time when the conquest of the Alps was exploding – mainly driven by British mountaineers.

Around 1900 we had a first bloom of alpine tourism with many new infrastructures such as hotels amidst the high mountains and cable cars up to the highest summits. This resulted in first concerns about the loss of natural and wild mountain sites. No wonder that the protection of the beauty of the Alps was included in the Statutes of the SAC in 1907. Since then this conservation and protection aspect has remained one of the main objectives of the Club besides mountaineering.

Boom years of development

After WW II the economies in Western Europe exploded, mountaineering and mountain tourism were not a rich privilege any more. This led to an incredible increase in infrastructures of all types in the Alps: roads, hotels, cable cars, skiing areas, hydroelectric dams, golf sites, and so on.

This development increased the awareness within the SAC for the protection of the Alps, and it triggered the first national law for nature and landscape protection of 1969. The SAC contributed to this law with a map of the regions of the Alps which should remain free of heavy infrastructures. In 1971 the club got official recognition from government as an environmental protection organisation with the right to be consulted on environmental issues. This made the SAC into an official nature protection organisation!

From 1986 onwards the SAC got an annual government subsidy of 50'000 Swiss Francs to its nature protection department. A paid 50% position for mountain protection was established. With this professionalization the commitment of the Club increased. It led to a revision of the existing mountain protection guidelines in 1991.

Outdoor sports with ecological impacts

The nineties brought enormous development in alpine outdoor sports of all sorts. Paragliders and heli-skiers in the air, mountain bikers, mountain runners, ski-tourers, snow shoe walkers etc. on the ground, sports climbing, bouldering and vie ferrate on the crags, canyoning, kajaking and rafting in the rivers - virtually every last corner of the Alps saw some outdoor activities. Parallel to this it became clearer that some ecological side-effects of mountaineering are substantial.

A scientific research project in 1997 comparing 50 sports activities showed that travelling distances for alpine outdoor sports are among the highest. An average Swiss mountaineer travels around 3'000 km per year, mostly by car, for his hobby. This of course has ecological consequences and contributes to climate change.

This led to a change in the environmental policies of the SAC: how can we ask mountain protection from others, when we do harm to the environment with our mountaineering activities ourselves?

The main focus since then was put on the ecological improvement of our own activities.

In 1996 I took over the environmental department; at the same time the post was upgraded to 80% with 30% administrative help. In 2000 another 50% scientific assistance job was added.

Towards an established environmental organisation

In 2002 time was ripe for a third revision of the SAC protection guidelines. Had the former guidelines titles like "Guidelines for mountain protection", the guidelines of 2002 were simply named "SAC environmental guidelines" to clearly signal the involvement of the mountaineering and club activities.

In the same time conservation circles began to look at outdoor activities more and more critically, and restrictions started to pop up everywhere. The most extreme occurred in Germany, where in one province the government declared rock climbing on lowland crags as generally forbidden - allowed only where explicitly stated!

In Switzerland this development was less dramatic, but it became clear that outdoor sports had lost their innocence. And questions of free access versus conservation became a central issue.

2006 post of responsible Sport-Conservation

To position the SAC as a competent organisation in the field of access and conservation, a further 80% post within our department was created in 2006. Since then our team consists of 4 part-time employees.

Today, the environmental department of the SAC is a well established sector. The SAC has a good reputation and is a significant player as an environmental organisation, even though our positions are less "green" and fundamental than those of conservation organisations.

1.2. SAC and Environment today – how it works, how it pays

First a few remarks on the SAC today as a whole. The last fifteen years saw a transformation from a quite traditional and conservative club to a modern, dynamic and attractive organisation. We opened up for families, kids, we strongly developed the competition sports sector. Professionalization led to almost a doubling of paid staff within 15 years. Marketing, Sponsoring partnerships, corporate design, corporate identity and quality management systems were introduced. In stark contrast to most other sport organisations, we have a regular increase in members, between 1'000 and 2'000 every year. Today we have at about 115'000, members, and we manage 153 mountain huts.

Overall the SAC is a great success story.

Structures, human resources, communication,

The Club is organised in 110 regional sections. About 50% of them have an environmental officer. The General Assembly is the highest organ, followed by the presidents conference, and the controlling commission. The central association has a board of about 8 people, one of whom leads the environmental department. For each activity there is a specialized commission, which brings in know how, makes propositions, and advises the board in the specific field strategic issues. The SAC environment commission consists of 10 members with mostly a natural science background (geography, biology, environment). It meets 4 – 5 times per year for a half-day meeting, and for two weekends.

The professional staff are responsible for the administration of the work, the preparation of necessary documents, project management, publications and internet, finance management, consulting of sections and members. The staff also can bring in own ideas and propositions.

In 2007 a total of 35 persons worked for the SAC making a total of 25 full-time jobs – the Club has a high rate of part-time jobs. The environmental department has 4 part-time positions which make up 2.5 full-time jobs. This makes up 10% of the whole staff.

The main communication channels within the Club are the monthly Journal "The Alps" with its very high quality standard, an bimonthly internal news bulletin, a monthly newsletter, special mailings and of course the internet.

Finances

The SAC has a total cash flow equivalent to about 12 Million US Dollars per year. About half of this sum is generated by member fees.

The environmental sector makes up about 5% of this total, i.e. 550'000 Dollars per Year. About 2/3 of this sum are used for salaries of the paid staff, the rest for commission work and projects. In most of the bigger projects we work together with external partners and only a smaller part of the financing is given by the SAC. For example, from 2000 to 2004 we ran a mobility campaign to bring members and sections towards a more ecological transport use, which had a budget of about 700'000 Dollars, of which the Club contributed only

about 90'000. The rest was financed by government, foundations, and sponsors. Fundraising mainly from foundations and the public sector is an important part of our project work.

In addition to the yearly budget and external finances the SAC has an own environmental fund, which was founded in the nineties by private donors and amounts to several hundred thousand Swiss Francs. This money is used to co-finance own environmental projects and also for contributions to other, non-SAC projects. In the average there are about 70'000 Dollars spent from this fund per year. The fund is refunded with a fundraising action every 5 – 6 years. Last year this fundraising brought a result of around 450'000 Dollars. So the turnover of SAC's environmental branch lies between 700'000 to 900'000 Dollars per annum. I am aware that this high sum might astonish or even frustrate you, but you have to keep in mind that the SAC has about 130 times more members than Himalayan Club.

Projects

We mostly work on specific projects. I briefly sketch you five SAC environmental projects as examples.

Book „Lebenswelt Alpen – sehen, kennen, verstehen“

(“Living Alps – to see, to know, to understand”)

In 2000 we produced a book about nature, environment and cultural aspects of the Alps. The idea was to give to people working in the Alps, like mountain guides, teachers, tourism people etc. a handy, readable and illustrated introduction to the Alps, to open their eyes to the variety, beauty and vulnerability of this unique mountain chain.

The book is now the official basis for the environmental training of the Swiss Mountain guides.

Awareness campaign for winter activities with respect of nature

Snowshoe hiking in winter has become a mega-trend in the last 10 Years. These winter hikers tend to intrude into retreat areas of animals which need to stay undisturbed during the hard winter months.

Therefore the SAC launched a big information and awareness campaign in 1999. One of the tools was this folder. As a second step the SAC initiated a much bigger, nationwide general campaign with partner organisations and the government, which is now under preparation and which will be launched next winter.

Guidelines for ecological hut management

Our 153 mountain huts are outposts of civilisation in otherwise undisturbed mountain environments. Environmentally correct management of these huts is a constant issue for the club. In 2003 we produced this brochure for hut guardians, to give them background information and very practical hints and tools for environmental improvements on their huts. The brochure works with best practice information transmitted by hut guardians.

Campaign “To the Alps and back“

We recognized that the most important ecological factor in mountaineering is the transport to and from the mountains. Swiss mountaineers travel around 3000km per year for their hobby, mostly by car, even in Switzerland, where public transport to the most remote mountain valleys is excellent. With the campaign “To the Alps and back“ running from 2000 to 2004 we had several objectives:

- To make our members aware of this ecological problem
- To motivate members to rethink how they travel to the mountains and to initiate improvements
- To transfer a total of 10 million person kilometres in club activities from private cars to public transport

The campaigns produced a lot of positive publicity for the SAC. All the goals were reached.

Future of alpine landscapes

The Alps have by far the highest density of infrastructures of all mountain ranges of the world. And there is not really an end in sight. On the contrary, climate change brings new pressures onto higher areas of the Alps for new skiing areas, and the hydroelectric energy business wants to use up the last drop of water running down alpine valleys.

This led to the idea, that the SAC should formulate its views for the future development and protection of the last remaining unspoilt areas in a process of basic democratic discussion. The results should be shown on a map, which then could be used in the general political discussion about the future of the Alps. The first internal forums of discussion will start this year, and the map should be ready in 2010.

1.4. SAC and Environment today, problems and challenges

I would like to address some important aspects of the environmental profile of the SAC. Some can result in tensions, discussions and problems. I do this because I expect that a stronger environmental commitment of the Himalayan Club would bring up quite similar aspects.

The increased environmental commitment brought also an increase in media coverage for the SAC, which in turn contributed to the positive image of the Club. Furthermore, it also helped finding sponsors for the club. Modern mountaineering equipment firms and others prefer organisations with a good environmental profile – it helps their positive image as well. On the other hand, being in the media also brings controversy.

SAC as atypical environmental organisation

The SAC as a whole is not a typical environmental organisation. We are primarily a mountain sports organisation, we are also member of the Olympic Movement, we are publishers, a cultural organisation, and much more.

As a consequence, our positions and practical solutions are generally more in the middle of the well known sustainability triangle. This often leads to critics from all three corners. For the environmental organisations we are not “green” enough, for the economy we are too “green”, and our members and sections sometimes question our environmental work as a whole – they want to enjoy mountaineering and not deal with problems. I am personally convinced that workable and sustainable solutions have to be found in the middle of the triangle. And with these positions it is easier for us to find open doors in all three corners, and we have the chance to build bridges between the poles.

Since environmental projects and positions are often much debated, we have to address the central committee quite often with proposals which they have to decide about. Therefore the individual positions of the central committee members towards environmental questions are important. We sometimes have central committees who support our environmental issues, and sometimes not – despite the fact that the club’s environmental guidelines are quite clear.

Every now and then we have the feeling that the support of the central committee is too weak, because they fear harsh reactions from local sections or the economy, and that decisions are taken which are in contradiction to the clubs environmental guidelines. This can be quite frustrating.

Restrictions of free access to climbing sites and mountain areas for conservation reasons have become a major issue in Europe in the last 10 years. The alpine clubs had to build up lots of knowledge and invest a lot to prevent unjustified or too far reaching restrictions. On the other hand, as an environmental organisation we cannot deny some negative impacts of our activities on nature and we have to accept certain restrictions. It is very delicate to find the right balance between needs and wants of free access and accepting restrictions for conservation reasons.

The SAC - and also the other alpine mountaineering clubs – has increased its environmental work markedly in the last 10 years. There is a certain danger that the local club sections and the members cannot really follow and that a gap between them and the central club builds up, with all the following problems in communication and mutual understanding. It is very important to communicate well to the base.

2. Mountains - their ecological significance and problems

2.1 Ecological and Environmental significance of Mountain Chains

Mountain ranges have a very high significance worldwide. They are biodiversity hotspots, due to their extremely varied surroundings and altitude zoning.

Mountains have crucial significance as water towers for the surrounding lowlands, with the glaciers acting as buffers. If glaciation and precipitation change due to climate warming, this will have direct impacts on the water supply of the surrounding lowlands, as well as on the occurrence of natural hazards.

Mountain ranges are important and attractive touristic regions for a very broad spectrum of people, not only mountaineers. Unspoilt mountain landscapes and wilderness is a capital for the future which has to be treated with care. On the other hand tourism can locally threaten biodiversity, water quality and other ecological factors.

Mountain ranges threaten communities and infrastructures with a whole set of natural hazards, which in turn are dependent on human-induced factors like deforestation, hydroelectric water use, climate change, and so on.

2.2 Ecological and Environmental Challenges in the Alps

Switzerland has very high standards in the field of technical environmental problems, for example garbage treatment and recycling, water quality management, air pollution management, forest management and so on. However, biodiversity and landscape protection are big issues where we have great deficits. The Alps are the last bigger region with a certain amount of untouched landscapes in densely populated and built-up middle Europe. These last landscape reserves are under pressure from tourism, outdoor sports, energy production, road building and others.

The landscape change due to glacier, ice and permafrost melting is dramatic and consequently the threat of different natural hazards increased. Prevention measures are very costly.

2.3 Ecological and Environmental Challenges in the Himalayas

Some of the ecological challenges are similar to the Alps, some are different. Certainly a big difference is that the Himalayas are much bigger than the Alps, and the extent of development with infrastructures is far less than in the Alps. Compared to the Alps the Himalayas are still a very wild and widely unspoilt mountain range – which makes it so fascinating for European mountaineers and trekkers.

One of the most formidable challenges is certainly climate warming with all its consequences. Glaciers of the Himalayas cover an area of about 30,000 km², one of the largest concentrations of glacier ice outside the polar regions. Climate warming results in increased glacial lake development, and an increase in the risk and frequency of outburst flooding. Less well understood is the impact that continuing climate change will have on the flow some of Asia's largest rivers. Impact on permafrost is still largely unknown, but it might be very serious – as it is in the Alps, where systematic monitoring and research on permafrost only started a few years ago.

Climate warming will also alter weather and precipitation – the effects on the Himalayas are still quite uncertain.

One thing is clear: all these effects increase the risks of natural hazards, which are already higher than in the Alps. This has to be taken into account for all further developments in the Himalayas.

Other important issues are deforestation, water and river management for hydroelectric energy production and irrigation as well as waste and pollution management.

Tourism and pilgrimage have shown some negative direct and indirect ecological impacts in certain areas of the Himalayas.

The same holds true for expedition climbing, where locally negative impacts can be observed mainly on the very well known and much trodden routes. For example, the situation on Everest with the tons of discarded equipment, ropes, oxygen bottles and dead bodies is a huge disgrace for the mountaineering community, proving that mountaineers are not automatically real nature lovers and ecologically progressive people.

The Himalayas still have a huge amount of unspoilt natural areas, of fantastic landscapes, of wilderness. This is an important capital for the future, and the use of Himalayan landscapes for all sorts of development and infrastructures should already now be planned carefully, and areas to be integrally protected should be outlined, ideally by international cooperation and with transnational protected areas.

3. Mountaineering and Environment – why bother?

Sports and environment are not two words which are normally used together. However, in the last years the environmental responsibility of many sports has markedly increased. The global sports organisation, the International Olympic Committee, has adopted a charter where ecologically sustainable action and development in sports is prescribed.

To present an example from Switzerland: The national Olympic organisation has developed, together with the ministry of environment, an "Ecosport Prize". Organisations can present their sports events with ecological measures. The prize is substantial and the prize event is publicised in the media. This leads to very positive image gains for the winning organisations and to increasing public awareness.

We are mountaineers, we want to climb rocks and mountains, enjoy ourselves, the intense experiences, the friendships, the mountain surrounding. Why should we care about environmental issues – that's what environment NGO's and governments are there for!

It is not necessary to get ethics and morale to show that such an attitude is very short sighted and utterly wrong. Let's try it with a very materialistic and egoistic concept instead. Imagine a cricket club saying: oh, we do not care if there are good cricket grounds, if government helps to maintain the existing infrastructures, if our training places are kept clean and nice. You would think that they lost their minds completely!

Just transfer this to mountaineering. The mountains and crags are our training grounds, our playgrounds. They are the places we need for our freedom and activities. So it would be quite natural that we care for

these playgrounds, that we take an active interest in their development, their protection, their use or misuse. It's as simple as that.

Of course there are other reasons. Mountains are also places of spiritual growth, of deep experiences of nature and wilderness, of its beauty and grandeur, and, as I mentioned earlier, mountains are places of outstanding biodiversity. These are more reasons to care about them! If we are real mountaineers we cannot but care for them, their environment, their ecological equilibrium. Real mountaineers must be environmentalists or they are not real mountaineers. And real mountain clubs must also be environmental and conservation organisations.

There are lots of benefits of an environmental commitment of Mountaineering Clubs. The first is reputation and image. More and more people and media take notice of the ecological profile of organisations. We know from Europe that the increased environmental work of the mountaineering clubs brought a lot of public recognition. Furthermore it is also positively noticed by possible sponsoring partners from the outdoor industry and other economic sectors, which prefer more and more to show and sell ecological sound profiles. Authorities and governments take notice as well, and mountain clubs with a good environmental performance have much more weight in discussions on free access or infrastructure projects they criticise.

4. Environmental profiles of International Mountaineering Organisations

Let me sketch very briefly the situation of ecological commitment in three international mountaineering bodies, beginning of course with the world mountaineering association UIAA.

UIAA

The UIAA was founded 75 years ago, and it had an environmental profile right from the beginning. The UIAA has adopted several basic documents with environmental postulates, beginning with the Kathmandu declaration of 1987, the environmental guidelines of 1997, the declarations on tourist mountain flights and on expedition waste management

All these documents are summarized in this 4-language brochure.

UIAA has a mountain protection commission, of which Harish Kapadia is member, and the access and conservation commission. The problem with UIAA and its commission is that up to very recently there was very little guidance, planning and practically no money – this restricts the possibilities of the commissions very much. But UIAA is now in an intense restructuring process and commission work will be revised and improved. I recommend you to take a look on the new UIAA website, which was launched just two months ago: www.theuiaa.org.

CAA

In Europe there is a head organisation which brings together all the mountaineering clubs of the alpine countries, a total of 7 clubs, called Club Arc Alpin CAA. This organisation has a strong environmental branch as well. Its major objectives is information exchange, coordination of positions to environmental issues, support of the political process of the Alpine Convention as the most important tool of trans-boundary coordination and collaboration.

UAAA

The Union of the Asian Alpine Associations comprises all Himalayan countries and more. Some of its member associations have own environmental programs as well – one example is the Eco Everest expedition led by Dawa Steven Sherpa, the son of UAAA President Ang Tshering Sherpa (details on the UIAA website). As far as I know the UAAA still has no coordinated environmental policy or commission.

5. Environmental Commitment of Himalayan Club – some suggestions

After this tour de force I would like to switch my focus to the Himalayan Club and present you some reflections on the environmental profile of your club. I invite you to take my thoughts just as reflections of an outsider, which might give you some inspiration for further discussion and evaluation – I hope we will have opportunities later. Much has been already written, discussed – I only remember to the booklet of your Club published in 1994 “Environmental Protection of the Himalaya”, where a rich collection of propositions is available.

There are some differences between Europe, the Alps and the SAC compared to Asia, the Himalayas and the HC, which affect the possibilities for environmental work. Firstly the Himalayas are such an enormously bigger mountain range, covering a much wider range of habitats and settings. The alpine countries have quite a similar cultural and historical background which makes trans-boundary collaboration a bit easier. In the Himalayas on the other hand very different cultures and political systems are present.

The level of infrastructure, tourism and other developments in the Himalayas is quite different from the Alps. The Himalayas still have much more quite unspoilt areas.

The SAC is a big club with a very broad member base and quite a comfortable financial situation. The Himalayan Club on the other hand is quite a small club. The club is not well anchored in the different regions of the Himalayas – its members are mostly “outsiders” to the local population. This limits the possibilities of HC. The special member profile on the other hand is probably helpful for making contacts to relevant government bodies, firms and organisations. The financial basis of the Himalayan Club is much smaller than the one of SAC – which means that professional work and projects have to find external funding much more than in the SAC.

Let me now scroll through a list of ideas which I think the Himalayan Club could consider for deeper discussion

A. Inter - Himalayan projects

Environmental issues do not stop at national boundaries. Therefore they should be tackled by transboundary coordination, collaboration and projects. I know how difficult the situation is in the Himalayas – just think of the India – Pakistan – China tensions in Kashmir and Karakoram. But nevertheless initiatives of transboundary efforts can – and must! - be undertaken by non-political bodies as mountaineering clubs.

1. Himalayan convention

A “Himalayan Convention” after the concept of the Alpine Convention would be an incredible vehicle of trans-boundary cooperation, which is crucial for the future of environmental management of the Himalayas. This would be at least a 20-year project. A similar convention is under way for the Caucasus mountain range. Trans-boundary river management would be one of the very important issues of such a convention. The use and management of waters from rivers out of mountain ranges will get a crucial topic in future, probably much sharpened by climate change. Solutions can only be found by transboundary cooperation.

2. Himalaya Map of protected areas

The Himalayan Club could initiate a map of the whole Himalaya with the most valuable areas which should be protected, analogous to SAC map of 1969 and the one now in process again. This should be done in collaboration with tourism, energy, agriculture, forest, military and conservation representatives.

3. Natural hazards

The Himalayan Club could engage in collaboration with research institutions to help in fieldwork support and other co-operation.

4. Activate UAAA

The Himalayan Club could initiate such environmental issues within the UAAA and help establish a permanent environmental structure and activities of this Asian umbrella organisation. Maybe the existing Himalayan Countries Mountaineering Association as well as the Himalayan Environmental Trust should be integrated into this framework.

B. Regional and local Projects in touristic areas of the Indian Himalaya

There is a wide range of possibilities for local and regional projects, where a organisation like the HC could act as initiator or project leader. However, most of such projects have much better chances for success when they are done in collaboration with other organisations.

5. Partnership with parks and other valuable sites

The Himalayan Club could take over a special responsibility and commitment for an important touristic / mountaineering region. Aamir Ali and others suggested the Nanda Devi National park.

6. “Himalayan Eco Prize”

The Himalayan Club could develop a “Himalayan Eco Prize” for expeditions or trekking organisations in collaboration with the outdoor industry and with the UIAA which has ideas of developing an environmental label. Such a prize could then be developed into a competitive label like for example the Max Havelaar Label for tropical food products or the FSC-Label for sustainably produced wood which both are economic successes in Europe.

7. Waste and pollution projects

The Himalayan Club could identify regions where waste and pollution from tourism and/or pilgrimage are an issue and start very practical projects to improve the situation. Examples of such regions and project concepts are presented in the above mentioned booklet of your club from 1994.

8. Teaching book “The Himalayas – see, know, understand”

The Himalayan Club could initiate the production of a book like our “Lebenswelt Alpen” which could be widely used for the training and creating awareness among tourist guides, schools, tourists, expeditions. This could be a first project of a UAAA environmental commission.

9. Training of guides and porters

The Himalayan Club could initiate and lead training programmes for sustainable tourism and local environmental protection for Sirdars, liaison officers, local guides, porters and other tourism stakeholders like trekking agencies owners. Forget the old liaison officer and make it an environmental officer! In mid-terms environmental training must become compulsory for all such stakeholders. Today Swiss mountain guides have a full week of intense training in nature and environment!

10. Local CO₂ reduction

Together with other partners The Himalayan Club engages in local CO₂ reduction projects, e.g. to make better wood fires for cooking or substitute them with solar cookers.

C. Networking and know how transfer

11. Join forces!

This is probably the most important proposition. For example why not propose a paid professional for Himalayan Environment projects who works for the Himalayan Club, the Himalayan Environmental Trust and the Indian Mountaineering Association together – with shared costs and a shared Environment Commission. Competition is important and nice, but sometimes collaboration is better! It is like on the mountain: when the going gets tough and the conditions precarious, its better to join up and forget the competition....

12. UIAA

Collaboration with the UIAA, its expedition, mountain protection and access & conservation commissions. One project could be to build up an information platform about the Himalayas within the framework of the existing UIAA Website.

13. Know how transfer

Exchange with experts from alpine environmental projects. Mutual visits and look at specific projects. Check out possible collaboration with and support from European, East Asian or American clubs for Himalayan environmental projects.

Before you start...

For realizing good environmental projects you need corresponding guidelines, clear goals, good structures, enough finances and competent people. In your Brochure of 1994 there is a short but excellent article by your former president Aspie Moddie, in which he presents a very clear and straightforward checklist of Self-Questioning about all the factors which have to be clarified before you start – like the expedition plan, budget and packing list of a big Himalayan climbing expedition. Combining some of his points with my experience from the SAC I just sketch some of the most important ones:

- Do our status, guidelines and other relevant documents set the necessary basis for the planned environmental commitment. If not, change them.

- Do all the involved people, bodies and organisations have clear - and the same! – ideas about the short-, middle- and long term outcome of the projects, the time frame, the resources and the costs? To get this clear might well take a while and need a lot of discussion and controversies.
- Which structures already exist? Do they need adaptation? Could e.g. an environmental commission be useful? If so, what kind of people do we need, how many, how shall the commission work, what duties and rights does it have?
- What kind of Network is already there? Should new networks be built up? How can we cooperate with other organisations and with government bodies? Let me cite a proposition of Aspie Moddie from his 1994 article: *"I would suggest a Consortion approach of all institutions and persons; Indians and international, who are competent to contribute."* With my invitation to this meeting you did a first step in this direction! But be aware: Collaboration means sharing – power, resources, successes. This is a difficult step for many people and organisations to take!
- Good projects need professional work. How can we make sure we are not wasting energies by lack of professionalism? Can we afford paid professionals? How should they work, under who's guidance, what would be their competences, their duties?
- What finances can we, will we allocate to environmental work?
- Is external funding possible? Only for specific projects? From administration, NGO's, industry and trade, foundations? What does it need to get such money? Fundraising is hard and time consuming work!
- How do we establish an efficient Controlling? How will we deal with conflicts and problems? Do we have means to deal with people who try to work against us?

6. Final Reflection

Reading your 1994 booklet I noticed that quite a few authors made statements like: "There were already so much discussion, conferences, meetings, there are so many good papers, guidelines, concepts – stop making more conferences and papers, just start doing things! This was almost 15 years ago, and here we are again, talking, discussing. Is it hopeless? No. There were already many good initiatives and projects in the last years, but much more work needs to be done. And it needs further meetings, talking, contacts, exchange as well. We have a saying in Switzerland which goes "Good things need a while", or in Africa they say "The grass does not grow faster, if you pull at it". You need time to prepare the ground, water the plant, steadily, consequently.

We are at the brink of a major cultural revolution of the whole humanity: We have to learn to think and act under the aspect of what our actions could have as consequences some generations ahead, globally. This is a completely new way of living, it is the concept of sustainability. We still are at the beginning of this change. But all can contribute to it, also your Himalayan Club.

I would like to end my presentation with this photo of an evening atmosphere in the Mont Blanc massif of the Alps. It reminds us to our love for the mountains, for nature, for the challenge and peace we find there. But the peace and integrity of our beloved mountains is in trouble. And we as mountaineers should be bothered and help to keep our mountains as valuable as they are. Therefore I encourage you to take action and go forward as a leading organisation, as a pioneer in sustainability for the Himalayas, as you did in the early years as pioneers of exploring and adventure. This adventure could be even more exciting!

I hope that I could contribute a small mosaic stone to your adventure, and it would be a pleasure for me to stay in contact with you. Maybe one day the SAC could invite one of your members or a future professional to Switzerland for discussion, know how transfer, and maybe – this is a vision I had already for many years – there could be environmental projects in the Himalayas in cooperation between Asian and European clubs – why not between Himalayan Club and SAC?

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Appendix 2

Extract from „Environmental Protection of the Himalaya”, published by Indus Publishing Company, New Delhi, for the Himalayan Club, 1994

Guidelines for Environmental Action

ASPIE D. MODDIE

Aspie Moddie is a former President of the Himalayan Club and has been on many Himalayan expeditions. He has been active in environmental questions for some twenty years and has played an important part in turning the Club's attention to the need for protecting the Himalaya. The article given below is a slightly modified version of the guidance he provided to the Himalayan Environment Trust (HET).

As one who has been rubbing his nose on the rock of Himalayan eco-development for 20 years, from the macro of the founding of ICIMOD, (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development), to the micro of practical projects for the sustainable eco-development of two micro watersheds in the Kumaon region, I may be excused in beginning with three negative pre-conditions for proposed work in future, especially as they are bluntly expressed in the style of a mountain man.

Negative Pre-Conditions

1. First, as climbers and trekkers, if you are serious about mountain ecology, cease being mere birds of passage. Far from having any biological value, your unbiodegradeable droppings are a mounting ecological threat to the mountains and to mountain people. Edmund Hillary's example in the field of education and health—resulting in a cultural change in Solo Khumbu—is an admirable example of the opposite, sustainable involvement. Without which, even a one-time clean-up expedition is only a temporary palliative.

2. Stop talking in easy, bald generalisations at high-level, 5-star seminars. They do not cut much ice. I have seen these for 17 years and they still leave you with the question on the ground, "How to get started?" Realities on the ground are a world apart. Rub your nose against those realities on specifics on a micro-scale, as in mountain climbing. Nature can be hard enough; the complex combination of man and nature in eco-systems can be as formidable as the Eiger face itself, and it will take years to climb. There will be no summit.

3. Avoid eco-tourism. It's pleasant. It's self-righteous. It too cuts no ice.

Self-Questioning and Answers

HET or any such body wishing to be more than a bird of passage, more than a seminar sponsor, and sustainably involved in Himalayan environments; might first address itself to some basic questions, as good strategic planners. And then find its best answers. I pose such a helpful approach below

1. *In what specific location* should it begin? The answer it has given itself is the Gangotri area. In these circumstances, I would advise:

- a) between the road-head and base camps in the Gangotri area;
- b) routes from base camps to higher camps on the main peaks in the area.

2. Who should be the *specific target groups* of its activities? I would suggest:

- a) the climbing and trekking community, and the Uttarkashi Institute of Mountaineering;
- b) the organisers of expeditions and treks, including tourist and travel agencies;
- c) policy makers, e.g. the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF), the Government of India, and the Uttar Pradesh Government.
- d) local populations, including pilgrims and their infrastructure.

3. For *what period of time* should one envisage activities for sustainable ecological effect? I would suggest 5 to 10 years, with a review after the 5th and 10th years, against clear sustainability criteria.

4. *What specific programmes and projects?*

- a) First, let us begin with target group (c), the policy makers. I would agree, with most of the policy recommendations of the 'Save Gangotri' Action Plan of the 1992 Seminar, around declaring it a National Park; with first priority for hygiene and garbage disposal with about 500,000 pilgrims, besides trekkers and climbers. No hoardings please! Paint ecological wisdom on rocks, Asoka-style. Forest plantations should be by and for local self-managing communities for fuel and fodder, primarily. The choice of plants for local nurseries run by local people as viable propositions should begin with about 5 or 10 species, the choice of local people and foresters. The first saplings may come from forest nurseries to be multiplied by local nurseries. The establishment of local self-managed communities is basic, and should precede any expenditures. Plantings by well-intentioned birds of passage won't endure. This calls for special expertise.

Also on the Policy front the following recommendations:

- dispersal of tourism, trekking and mountaineering; the Himalaya are spacious enough;
- the identification by IMF of suitable forward sites for trekkers and climbers on a viable self-financing basis of chalets with toilets, lights, incinerators for waste disposal, and cooking ranges, run by competent staff, preferably trained local guides;
- appropriate training of, and authority to liaison officers to observe environmental regulations, and to report. Deterrent fines and future disallowance;
- the replication of the unique example of Gandruk Annapurna Conservation area project (Vide p. 82 *The Himalayas, Ecology and Environment*, Vol. 2, 1992-

93); a mix of conservation of local natural resources, community participation, and village houses;*

- expeditions of more than four climbers to bring in their own fuel at and beyond BC. Obligation to take back their own garbage, at least to a retrieval point, from which local authority can dispose it.
- b) If HET wishes to put down roots in sustainable eco-development in local villages or a mini-catchment, its emphasis should be on biomass production for fodder and fuel, clean drinking water, wind and solar energy. The latter with the help of suitable Indian and foreign technical agencies. And that will involve years of work, in planning and at the grass-roots.
- c) If not the present, putting the next generation at Uttarkashi Mountaineering Institute to school in mountain ecology. How much do we know of the basics of mountain eco-systems, especially forest eco-systems, human settlements, and the eco-systems at and above BC? Concerned as we are with weather, how much do we know of micro-climatic changes in recent decades? We know nothing of the geo-hydrology of mountain springs, which are drying up. Do we know that bird and butterfly watching, over time, can tell us about ecological/climatic changes decades before climatologists? How much do young mountaineers know about the ecology and behaviour of glaciers, their impact on water cycles and climate? Herein lies the journey to self of hardcore mountaineers, who are now developing a conscience about mountain environments. As a guest instructor on mountain ecology on a basic and an advanced course of the Uttarkashi mountain school, I know how such instruction and discussion in the field can be more live, more real, and make mountain training more meaningful than outdoor gymnastics. Mountain life can then become continuous exploration; it can become an internalised experience of high value.

* As tourist lodgings, they could be a rich source of income from tourist trekkers.

d) A high-powered HET with internationally famous trustees capable of raising resources, could also sponsor local fact-finding research in the Gangotri area on:

- micro-climatic and ecological changes;
- medium altitude (high temperate) flora and fauna above 2500 m;
- the human impact on the ecology of the Gangotri area beyond Harsil.

5. *What kind of organisation/staff?* This is the last, but a fundamental problem. No organisation can muster all specialisations necessary. I would suggest a Consortium approach of all institutions and persons, Indians and international, who are competent to contribute. HET should be a catalytic learning and action-translating body.