

# Mountain Protection commission

*Bringing science, sport, and tourism together to improve mountain protection around the world*



Building on a firm platform of declarations and publications created over the years which define the goals and ethics of our Commission, we are now focused on **turning ideas into actions**. In 2009 we began working on our long-term vision to bring the three key mountain stakeholder groups—science, sport, and tourism—together with land managers to dramatically improve mountain protection around the world through effective collaborations and communications.

We are moving our vision into reality by creating projects and connections that enable climbers and mountaineers around the world to distinguish themselves as long-term **“citizen scientists”** and **highly-valuable mountain stewards**, with proven skills to access and monitor the world’s vertical landscapes.

Helping scientists and land managers **protect mountains with climbers and mountaineers** allows us to highlight our deep knowledge of mountains and our long history as conservation leaders around the world. It effectively reverses old perceptions of climbers and mountaineers as “part of the problem” of mountain protection, into realization that they are in fact **a crucially-important “part of the solution” of mountain protection especially in the face of climate change**.

By continually creating, testing, and promoting new ways to pursue our sports while “leaving no trace” on the mountains we cherish, we clearly demonstrate and encourage a better, more ethical and sustainable “path” for the world’s mountain tourists and tour operators to follow.



## **The UIAA Mountain Protection Commission offers:**

- A compelling long-term vision and unified voice for climbers and mountaineers to again “claim the high ground” as historical leaders and key stakeholders in mountain protection issues around the world
- Strong working partnerships with governmental agencies and the world’s leading conservation organizations to achieve effective protection of mountain ecosystems
- Updates, alerts, and action programs on mountain protection issues facing mountain regions of the world
- Innovative events that educate and inspire meaningful action in response to the impacts of climate change, loss of biodiversity, population growth, etc. on mountains and their cultures
- A collaborative platform for Federations to share mountain protection information, actions, results, “best practices”, and opportunities from their regions
- Valuable international mountain stewardship projects linking climbers and mountaineers with scientists and land managers to better assess, understand, and protect the special natural and cultural resources of mountain regions such as the Himalaya and Yosemite



## **Achievements:**

Here are some of the achievements of our UIAA Mountain Protection Commission members in 2009:



- Demonstrating Mountain Protection “Best Practices”**: In 2009, MPC Commission member Ang Tshering Sherpa and Dawa Steven Sherpa followed up on the huge success of their 2008 Eco-Everest Expedition, which focused on creating climate change awareness and testing effective low-impact mountaineering (<http://www.ecoeverest.net.np/>) practices. Their 2009 Eco-Everest Expedition continued to refine the eco-friendly “leave no trace” mountaineering

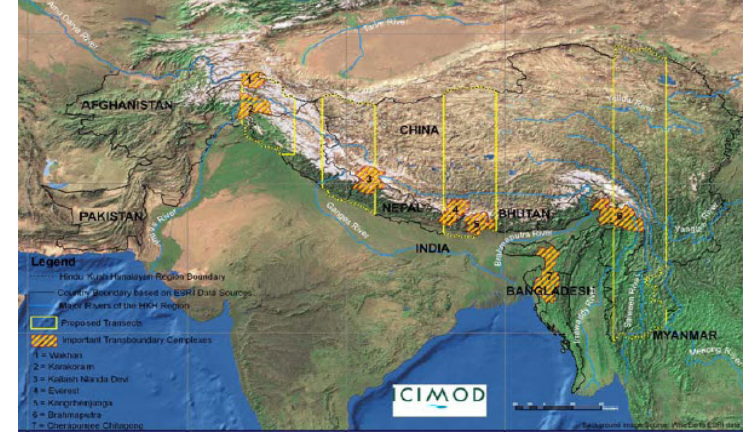
style using solar-powered cookers, a highly-effective “Cash for Trash” program for removal and recycling of all trash on the Everest massif, and advanced human waste management and removal systems. The Expedition also partnered with WWF-Nepal to promote their global climate change awareness program: **Climate For Life** ([www.Climate4Life.org](http://www.Climate4Life.org) )

- Preserving the Natural and Cultural Resources of Mountain Regions**: In the Khumbu-Everest region of Nepal, Dawa Steven Sherpa and IDEAS



(<http://ideas-action.org>) worked closely with local, national and international groups to organize two new events which attracted worldwide media attention to the perils of spontaneous glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) that could destroy the precious natural and cultural resources of that region, and others around the world with rapidly-growing glacial lakes, at any moment. The **Imja Tsho Action Run** featured more than 130 local men and women trying to “Beat the GLOF” by racing along the footpaths of the expected flood zones. The next day, the **Khumjung Festival** featured a series of leaders speaking out about the need for all mountains stakeholder groups to

**work together to understand and address the impacts of climate change** on the Himalaya and other mountains of the world. Large exhibits of maps, books, and other informational literature were available to attendees, along with a surprise special appearance by the Himalaya’s water hero, **Pani Prasad** (“Water Blessing”, shown above) encouraging everyone to do all they can each day to conserve the world’s precious water resources.



- Working as “Citizen Scientists” to Respond Effectively to Climate Change Impacts in Mountain Regions**: As a result of the success of the **Lichen Inventory Projects in Yosemite National Park** in 2007 and 2008 (<http://www.vimeo.com/1802651>) led by MPC Commission member Linda McMillan as part of the All-Taxa Biodiversity Index for Yosemite , the UIAA has been asked to participate in a new long-term trans-Himalayan ecosystem monitoring project by ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development: [www.icimod.org](http://www.icimod.org)) to help establish several new **scientific transects within the Hindu Kush-Himalayas to understand and combat the impacts of climate change** on biodiversity in that important mountain region. UIAA members have the exploratory skills and diverse expertise to support these innovative and collaborative types of transects and large landscape projects to help scientists and land managers understanding biodiversity loss caused by climate change in mountain regions. Among other tasks, climbers and mountaineers will help scientists with mapping remote areas, placing and retrieving remote sensing devices, cataloguing changes to ice and rock formations over time, submitting continual data about their observations of plants and animals in the region, gathering images and data about indigenous peoples and cultures, etc..
- Bringing Together Stakeholder Groups To Find Solutions to Major Mountain Protection Issues**: In 2009 the Mountain Protection Commission also focused on organizing a major international conference in 2010 to find practical solutions to an increasingly serious mountain protection issue: human waste management. The conference **“Exit Strategies: Managing Human Waste in the Wild”** will take place July 30-31 in Golden, Colorado hosted by The American Alpine Club and the UIAA. Presentations will be given by international experts on this issue, technologies will be explained and discussed, and participants will include major land management agencies such as the US National Park Service, US Bureau of Land Management, and USDA Forest Service.