

International conference on balancing renewable energy and nature in the Alps

*12-13 November 2013
in Brig/CH*



The demand for renewable energy is growing all over Europe. With abundant forests, rivers, mountains and plenty of sunshine, the Alpine countries possess optimal conditions for the production of energy from renewable sources. At the same time they are a unique habitat for animals, plants and people. It is a great challenge for society in the Alpine Space to determine where renewable sources can be safely used and where exploitation will have deleterious effects on human welfare, biodiversity, landscape and soils in the Alps.

The partners of the international project recharge.green are currently working to reconcile the use of renewable energy sources with nature protection and ecosystem service provisioning while keeping conflicts to a minimum. The project is establishing a decision-support-system for politicians and energy producers to facilitate the use of renewable energy resources in the Alpine region, while ensuring sustainable land use and preserving the unique biodiversity and soils.

The project partners will present their first results at the “International conference on balancing renewable energy and nature in the Alps” on 12 and 13 November in Brig/CH. They will discuss these results with experts and representatives from varied sectors such as energy production, policy, nature protection, Alpine towns, tourism, as well as other interested parties. The main topics of the conference will be the current use of renewable energy in the Alpine countries, both on a local level and in protected areas; potential for energy production from renewable energy sources in the Alpine space; the energy transition and the related environmental and political constraints.

The conference is open to all those interested. The language of the conference is English.

Moderation: *Madeleine Rohrer, Managing Director of the Alpine Town Association*

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Day 1, 12.11.2013

01:00 pm Welcome coffee, registration

01:30 pm

Welcome and introduction to recharge.green

- Valuing alpine ecosystems: reconciling renewable energy production and biodiversity conservation. Presentation on the first project results; *Chris Walzer, Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna*
- Sustainable use of resources in the Alpine Space and in Europe; *Stefanie Bischof, Alpine Space Programme*

Renewable energy: How alpine countries handle the big challenge of minimizing harm to nature

- Climate policy goals and the changing role of hydro-power in the European energy system; *Anthony Patt, ETH Zurich, Department of Environmental Systems Science*
- Energy turnaround and political constraints – national perspectives from different Alpine states; *Markus Reiterer, Secretary General for the Alpine Convention*
- Italian hydropower production: from rent maximization to environmental sustainability; *Federico Pontoni, Bocconi University, Milan*

03:30 pm Coffee break

04:00 pm

- Balancing biomass and biodiversity in protected areas, the Triglav National Park case study; *Aleš Poljanec, University of Ljubljana and Slovenia Forest Service and Rok Pisek, Slovenia Forest Service*
- Holding the balance in the Alps: bioenergy target versus ecosystem services; *Florian Kraxner, IIASA, Vienna*
- Wind energy in Switzerland and particular challenges with nature conservation; *Peter Suter, head of renewables, Centralschweizerische Kraftwerke AG, Luzern*

05:00 pm Poster session: Challenges & conflicts on regional level: Illustration of situations in pilot areas; Aperitif

06:00 - 07:00 pm Discussion (no registration needed, in German language)

Panel discussion moderated by *Ruth Seeholzer, Swiss Radio and TV*: "Alpenweiter Umgang mit der Energiewende und Auswirkungen auf die Biodiversität – Konflikte und Lösungen"

07:30 pm Common dinner for registered participants

Day 2, 13.11.2013

09:00 am World Café: Conflicts on regional level & involvement of stakeholder groups

Stakeholder groups from land-use planning, tourism, agriculture, forestry, towns, nature protection, renewable energy production and other fields discuss regional challenges in the following case studies:

- Vorarlberg/A: wind power and energy self-sufficiency
- Triglav National Park/SI: biomass and protection status
- Regione Veneto/I: hydropower/biomass and landscape/biodiversity protection in Belluno Province pilot area
- Bavaria/D: hydropower factors of profitable hydropower production and ecological trade-offs
- Northern French Alps/F: hydropower and self-sufficiency at local level
- Alpine Town of the Year Association: challenges in Alpine towns

12:00 pm Presentation of main results of the World Café

12:30 pm Summary and conclusion

Chris Walzer; Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna

01:00 pm Excursion to the Goms energy region with included lunch

Visit to different locations to exemplify the conference topic on existing examples like a woodchip heating system, a planned energy park and a hydroelectric power plant.

04:00 pm End of conference

Further Information

Registration & Accommodation

Details on our project website: www.recharge-green.eu

Location

Pfarrzentrum Brig
Alte Simplonstrasse 13
Postfach 444, 3900 Brig, CH

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