

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

This Book of Abstracts provides a comprehensive overview of the session content and is structured into three main sections:

- I. Session Description** – an introduction to each session, including its objectives and expected outputs
- II. Session Program** – a detailed schedule for each session, including speakers and timing
- III. List of Abstracts** – a complete compilation of all accepted abstracts

I. SESSION DESCRIPTION

ID: T8e

Evidencing the nexus between values, peoples' well-being and ecosystem health

Hosts:

	Name	Organisation	E-mail
Host (s):	Javier G. Montoya-Zumaeta	University of Bern	javier.montoya@unibe.ch

Abstract:

The session will focus on presenting methodological procedures for conflict assessment, on presenting proposals for the effective use of ecosystem services (conflict resolution) as well as on presenting good practices. The health of an ecosystem conditions its capacity to provide beneficial services to global and local societies. Over the last decade, it has emerged an increasing interest from different stakeholders to incorporate pluralistic values in decision-making processes oriented to design interventions with potential to achieve win-win outcomes, this is on increasing peoples' well-being while maintaining ecosystems healthy in terms of its vigourity, organization and resilience. However, the knowledge regarding how these pluralistic values are incorporated into the design of these policies and what are the outcomes of such interventions is quite limited in the literature. It is expected that this session might contribute to close such a gap by presenting empirical and prospective analyses shedding lights in relation to the following three themes: 1) the role of peoples' values on the vigourity, organization and resilience of natural ecosystems, 2) innovative methods and practices to incorporate plural values in the design of public policies primarily oriented to maintain ecosystems healthy; and 3) the impacts of such policies on ecosystem health and peoples' well-being outcomes.

Goals and objectives of the session:

This session aims to collect and disseminate insights from relevant studies evidencing the nexus between values, people's well-being and ecosystems health by characterizing pathways that might follow ongoing or planned policy interventions oriented to influence such values for generating positive impacts on ecosystem health outcomes in both rural and urban contexts.

Planned output / Deliverables:

Two outputs are planned: 1 policy brief and 1 scientific article oriented to policymakers and academics, respectively. These both document aim to document main insights presented during the session.

Session format:

It is expected that between 5-6 contributions could be presented during the session considering 10-12 minutes for each one of them, followed by 15 minutes for Q&A and 15 minutes for wrapping up and final reflections. In total, 90 minutes will be required.

Related to ESP Working Group:

[TWG 8 – Cultural services & Values](#)

II. SESSION PROGRAM

Room: C2

Date of session: Friday 22, May 2026

Time of session: 09:00 – 10:30

Timetable speakers:

Time	First name	Surname	Organization	Title of presentation
9:00-9:10	Tereza	Prášilová	Charles University, Faculty of Humanities	Pollinators decline in Czech Media: An analysis of Security Framing
9:10-9:20	Elena	Todorova	Forest Research Institute - Bulgarian Academy of Sciences	Understanding Stakeholder Perspectives for Resilient Mountain Development: A Q Methodology Study
9:20-9:30	Arianna	Tiralti	Department of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Science, University of Perugia	Value-based drivers of corporate engagement and willingness to support ecosystem services in the Natura 2000 network: Evidence from central Italy
9:30-9:40	Aditi	Mishra	G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment	Living with fire: Community Stewardship and Ecosystem Resilience Under Forest Fire Stress in the Indian Himalaya
9:40-9:50	Aida González	Ramil	EURAC Research	Cultural heritage and identity in Alpine landscapes: Understanding perceived values from South Tyrol (Italy)
9:50-10:00	Mireia Pecurul	Botines	Forest Sciences and Technological Center of Catalonia (CTFC)	Experiences of Mushroom Picking in Catalonia (Spain): Exploring Links Between Biodiversity, Cultural Values, and Well-Being
10:00-10:10	Sasha	Kosanic	Liverpool Jhon Moores University	Importance of Cultural Ecosystem Services for Cultural Identity and Wellbeing in the Lower Engadine, Switzerland
10:10-10:25			Q&A	
10:25-10:30	Javier	Montoya	Centre for Development and Environment (CDE) – University of Bern	Wrap-up and closing

III. LIST OF ABSTRACTS

The first author is the presenting author unless indicated otherwise


1. Pollinator Decline in Czech Media: An Analysis of Security Framing

First author: Tereza Prášilová

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The decline of insect pollinators has become a prominent theme in public discussions of the biodiversity crisis, with widely noted ecological and economic consequences. For most of the public, the issue is encountered through media narratives that foreground particular species, attach specific implications, and signal urgency. Drawing on the securitization theory of the Copenhagen School, this paper examines how Czech mainstream media construct insect and pollinator decline and whether these constructions involve securitizing speech acts, including urgent or alarmist rhetoric and claims of existential threat.

We present preliminary findings from a qualitative media analysis of Czech national outlets. The corpus comprises approximately 90 news articles from the most widely read Czech outlets published between 2019 and 2024. Articles were analysed for (1) dominant thematic framings of consequences (e.g., impacts on agriculture, economic impacts, biodiversity loss), (2) the referent object—who or what is positioned as most affected (e.g., food security, nature), and (3) the presence and form of securitizing speech acts.

Preliminary results suggest distinct differences in how honeybees, wild pollinators, and insects in general are portrayed. Honeybee declines are disproportionately linked to crop failure, with food security often being positioned as the primary concern. In contrast, wild pollinators receive less attention in this context and are more often connected to the biodiversity crisis. The most alarmist language is used when discussing the overall decline of insects, often connecting it to the matter of human survival. Taken together, these patterns suggest uneven securitising framings that may steer public concern and policy attention in different directions – for example, where food security is emphasised towards managed pollinators. These findings will inform the next phase of the project, which will develop a survey to assess Czech public perceptions of insect pollinator decline, using the thematic frames identified.

Keywords: pollinator decline, securitization, media analysis, biodiversity crisis, Czechia

2. Understanding Stakeholder Perspectives for Resilient Mountain Development: A Q Methodology Study

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Mountain regions face significant local development challenges related to demographic decline, persistent poverty, and economic marginalization (OECD 2021), further compounded by climate change, which drives systematic shifts along elevation gradients (Pepin et al. 2025). This results in rapid transformations that demand prompt and effective adaptation. Addressing this requires strategic planning that is finely targeted and attuned to the intricate connections between people, communities, and nature. Locally grounded knowledge plays a crucial role in guiding this process (Martínez-Fernández et al. 2021). The present study employs Q methodology to better understand why a mountainous region (Velingrad municipality, Bulgaria), with abundant natural resources and promising tourism sector does not retain its population and harness its endogenous potential to develop sustainably. The research focuses on identifying and structuring the perspectives of local stakeholders and their understandings of the values of the ecosystem services. The study shows that local perspectives are strongly shaped by how people value different ecosystem services. While some groups prioritize tourism and the economic benefits, others stress the importance of regulating services and ecological integrity, revealing both shared priorities and points of conflict. These differing views highlight the need for inclusive, place-based governance that incorporates local knowledge and supports the long-term resilience of the socio-ecological system. As a result of these insights, the study suggests changing the course of local development and reframing the management model into a more open community-based platform that integrates local voices and energy by involving them not only in framing the policies but also in the implementation and monitoring process. By aligning local knowledge, stakeholder collaboration, and socio-ecological priorities, Velingrad's experience sheds light on broader questions of how mountain regions can leverage their ecosystem services through participatory governance, addressing trade-offs while building adaptive capacity in the face of rapid environmental and socio-economic change.

Keywords: Q methodology, stakeholders, local knowledge, resilience

3. Value-based drivers of corporate engagement and willingness to support ecosystem services in the Natura 2000 network: Evidence from central Italy

First author: Arianna Tiralti

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Understanding how business decision-makers perceive their responsibility toward nature and ecosystem services conservation, and how their individual value orientations influence sustainability-related decisions, is essential for designing effective environmental policies and market-based conservation tools. This study presents empirical evidence from a structured online survey administered to 100 company representatives operating across Central Italy, targeting respondents closest to sustainability-related decision-making roles within their organizations.

The questionnaire integrates constructs from the Value–Belief–Norm framework, measuring egoistic, altruistic, and biospheric values; environmental worldviews; awareness of environmental consequences; ascription of responsibility; and personal norms. Additional sections capture respondents' familiarity with ecosystem services and Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), perceived importance of non-market forest ecosystem services, sustainability practices implemented by their organizations, and willingness to participate in voluntary carbon-credit schemes. In this context, PES are framed as voluntary market-based instruments that support the conservation of forest ecosystem services within the Natura 2000 network. Results reveal substantial heterogeneity among firms. Respondents with stronger biospheric and altruistic values exhibit higher perceived responsibility for environmental protection and positive attitudes toward PES. Environmental knowledge emerges as a key driver: greater familiarity with ecosystem service concepts is associated with higher engagement in sustainability planning, certification processes, and emissions-reduction strategies. Conversely, limited conceptual understanding is linked to weaker behavioral intentions and greater skepticism toward PES.

Approximately half of the surveyed firms express willingness to pay to preserve ecosystem services at the regional level and indicate interest in voluntary emissions offset programs sourcing credits from Natura 2000 areas. However, attitudes toward forest ecosystem service credits remain cautious, with concerns related to costs, greenwashing risks, and uncertainty regarding governance and credibility.

These findings provide insight into the value-based and cognitive drivers underlying corporate engagement with ecosystem conservation and highlight leverage points for policy instruments aimed at strengthening private-sector contribution to environmental stewardship.

Keywords: Value–Belief–Norm Theory; Corporate environmental responsibility; Ecosystem services; Payments for Ecosystem Services; Natura 2000

4. Living With Fire: Community Stewardship and Ecosystem Resilience Under Forest Fire Stress in the Indian Himalaya

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Forest fires pose an increasing threat to both human well-being and ecosystem health in the Indian Western Himalayas. In Uttarakhand alone over 11,000 fire incidences were recorded since 2022 burning large hectares of forests, an area that provides essential ecosystem services such as water regulation, soil stability, fodder, and fuelwood.

This study investigates how local communities in the Almora district of Uttarakhand perceive and respond to these fires, as well as the ecological changes triggered by them. By integrating ecological field assessments including vegetation and soil analysis, with community-based surveys structured around the DPSIR (Driver–Pressure–State–Impact–Response) framework, the research offers a layered understanding of the issue. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) were conducted in 35 villages across altitudes ranging from 1000 to 2000 metres above sea level. Each discussion involved 10–15 participants across three age classes (18–30, 30–60, 60+), maintaining gender balance to capture intergenerational and gendered perspectives.

Community participants identified the anthropogenic sources and weakened forest governance as major drivers of fire, worsened by rising summer temperatures. Fires were viewed not merely as environmental events but as social disruptions; reducing forest cover and limiting access to fuelwood, fodder and other livelihood resources. In response to the threats of forest fire, local communities have developed collective coping mechanisms such as, creating fire lines, taking turn to patrol forests and setting informal rules for forest use. The study highlights how such community-driven, value-based responses enhance both ecosystem resilience and social well-being. It calls for integrating these bottom-up adaptive practices within formal fire management and restoration strategies to promote locally informed, socially inclusive and ecologically sustainable pathways for long-term resilience of Himalayan forests.

Keywords: Forest fires, Ecosystem services, Community resilience, Traditional ecological knowledge, Socio-ecological systems

5. Cultural heritage and identity in Alpine landscapes: Understanding perceived values from South Tyrol (Italy)

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The Ecosystem Services (ES) field is advancing towards more holistic and inclusive understandings of the benefits that humans derive from nature and the human-nature interactions, yet knowledge on cultural ecosystem services -especially heritage and identity- remains limited. This study examines residents' and tourists' pluralistic values towards characteristic landscapes in South Tyrol (Italy), assessing their influence on human well-being and ecosystem health, and explores the influence that changes on ecosystems may have on the perception of valued landscapes. Mixed-method surveys were conducted online and in person with residents and tourists of South Tyrol, yielding a total of 318 questionnaires. We also analysed the interdependence of these landscape perceptions with demographic and ecological factors that could affect ecosystem health in the future, using statistical and text analysis. Preliminary evidence suggests that some landscape types, such as alpine pastures, are more strongly perceived as regionally meaningful. However, the heritage values expressed by respondents appear only weakly dependent on landscape type, indicating that landscape meaningfulness stems primarily from shared practices, memories and identities rather than from specific landforms. For instance, arable land with hedges was selected least often as an important landscape yet was attributed high cultural and historical value. Moreover, respondents anticipated that the importance of landscapes in the future would increase with higher biodiversity, although this expectation was species dependent.

Keywords: heritage and identity, pluralistic values, ecosystem services, landscape perception, ecosystem health

6. Experiences of Mushroom Picking in Catalonia (Spain): Exploring Links Between Biodiversity, Cultural Values, and Well-Being

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Mushrooms are a highly valued resource in Catalan forests, both because of their production and diversity and because of the sociocultural practices associated with their collection. Although there is a substantial body of research linking forest management to mushroom production, there remains a gap in knowledge regarding the cultural services they provide. To date, in Catalonia there is limited knowledge regarding the preferences of mushroom pickers, with studies relying mainly on contingent economic valuation approaches (Górriz-Mifsud et al., 2015; Prokofieva & Gorriz, 2013). By moving beyond predominantly economic valuation approaches, this novel study demonstrates that mushroom picking is underpinned by a diverse set of non-material values that are deeply embedded in people's relationships with forest ecosystems. To evaluate the cultural services associated with mushroom picking and to explore whether fungal diversity could influence this foraging activity, we developed a survey to characterise the socioeconomic profile of mushroom hunters and their values regarding ecosystem diversity and associated ecosystem services. In face-to-face interviews, we collected over 100 responses. Then, we conducted an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) to identify latent structures or response patterns within the set of statements. The EFA allowed us to group the responses into four main cultural service dimensions—Wellbeing, Identity, Health, and Leisure.

These results suggest that mushroom harvesting plays an important role in fostering individual and collective well-being, strengthening cultural identity, and promoting physical and mental health, while also serving as a key recreational activity. These dimensions reveal strong links between ecosystem biodiversity, particularly fungal diversity, and the experiential and relational values perceived by mushroom hunters. This underscores the importance of conserving forest biodiversity not only for its ecological and productive functions but also for the cultural benefits it generates for society.

Keywords: Mushroom Picking, Biodiversity, Cultural Values, Well-Being, Catalonia/Spain

7. Importance of Cultural Ecosystem Services for Cultural Identity and Wellbeing in the Lower Engadine, Switzerland

First author: Aleksandra (Sasha) Kosanic

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Current climate and environmental changes have brought unprecedented rates of transformation to mountain ecosystems. These changes are impacting the provisioning of ecosystem services. Despite the increase in academic publications on ecosystem services, research on cultural ecosystem services (CES) and their availability in mountain regions has largely been neglected. Here, we analyse how important different CES are for inhabitants and visitors in the Lower Engadine region (Switzerland). We use questionnaires and maps to identify the most important CES for individual and collective well-being as well as their geographical location in the region. We had 48 participants in this study, of whom 28 grew up in the Lower Engadine. Our results show that the most important (i.e., 'Highly important') CES are: 'The view of mountains, rivers or glaciers'; the presence of plants typical for the region, for example Fire Lily and Edelweiss (i.e., *Lilium bulbiferum* subsp. *croceum*, Edelweiss-*Leontopodium alpinum*); 'Hiking'; 'Local customs'; 'Watching large mammals'; and the importance of 'Terraces for traditional Agriculture activities'. Results from the spatial analysis show that identical geographical locations in the Lower Engadine provide multiple CES and bring health benefits to the users. Many recreational activities were highly valued by the younger generation, such as skiing, swimming, fishing, biking, free climbing, kayaking, and rafting. Hopefully, this could contribute to more equitable conservation strategies. Furthermore, the highest and the second highest statistically negative correlations between people who did not grow up in the region were calculated for the services 'Specialties and old recipes remind me of my childhood' and 'The region helps me understand my family's culture and history', showing how the Lower Engadine's landscape and heritage is imbedded in personal and community valuation of nature that is a common theme for the local population in mountain regions.

Keywords: mountain regions; climate change; environmental change; cultural ecosystem services; human well-being