

12th ICA Mountain Cartography Workshop

People, Maps, and Mountains

Snow Mountain Ranch, Colorado, USA, 11–15 April 2023

The 12th ICA Mountain Cartography Workshop, organized by the Commission on Mountain Cartography (CMC), was held April 11–15, 2023 in Colorado's Rocky Mountains. Workshops are usually held biennially, alternating with the International Cartographic Conferences (ICC). This year, however, the workshop was out of sequence due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop, originally scheduled for April 2020, was first rescheduled for April 2022, and then again for April 2023 in response to shifting pandemic conditions. By 2023, pandemic-related travel restrictions had eased and CMC members were eager to once again meet in-person. Our successful gathering this year thus concluded five years of planning which began immediately after the 2018 Hvar, Croatia workshop.

All based in Washington, D.C., the workshop organizers were: Tom Patterson, U.S. National Park Service (retired); Brooke Marston, U.S. Department of State; and Alex Tait, National Geographic Society. Dušan Petrovič, CMC Chair, supported the team in preparation of the workshop. We selected Snow Mountain Ranch, a YMCA facility, as the workshop venue because of its proximity to Denver International Airport (two hours away by car), and for its inspiring locale. Snow Mountain Ranch is nestled in a high valley (2,700 m; 8,860 ft) just west of Rocky Mountain National Park. Many workshop participants experienced a three-hour delay getting to Snow Mountain Ranch when an avalanche on Berthoud Pass (3,446 m; 11,306 ft) temporarily closed the road. It served as a reminder that high mountain environments are unique and often unpredictable.

The workshop had 51 participants from Austria, France, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Switzerland, and the United States. Thirty of the participants were first-time attendees, with women and younger participants well represented. The youngest participant was 25 and the eldest was 82.

The theme of this year's workshop was "People, Maps, and Mountains" in order to focus on the importance of using cartography to better understand human/mountain interactions—adventure, sustainable management, travel, recreation, etc. The workshop featured 40 presentations grouped into nine sessions. Brooke Marston organized the program. We asked several first-time and younger participants to chair sessions with the goal of making them feel welcome and involved.

The workshop began on Tuesday evening with welcoming remarks from Tom Patterson and Dušan Petrovič. This was followed by Alex Tait, who gave the keynote presentation titled, "A Climber's Tour of the Rocky Mountains: Teewinot, Pingora, Athabaska, and more". Afterwards, there was a social hour in our spacious meeting room, which also served as a map and poster gallery. The walls were covered with dozens of fine maps contributed by participants.

Wednesday and Friday were devoted to presentations covering a variety of topics related to mountain cartography. Presentations were either 10 or 20 minutes in length. Two presentations, one by Jürg Gilgen and the other by Timofey Samsonov, were pre-recorded because they were unable to attend in-person. Dr.

Samsonov answered questions remotely after his talk. After dinner on Wednesday, the organizers scheduled short (5 minute) “Avalanche Talks” for map/poster presenters. The schedule was packed with interesting and inspiring talks.

The traditional “Outdoor Recreation Day” was originally scheduled for Friday, but switched to Thursday due to inclement weather. The purpose is for participants to get to know one another better in a more informal setting and appreciate the outdoor beauty. There were options for the adventurous and those preferring to take it easy. Alex Tait organized the activities, which included backcountry skiing, alpine skiing and snowboarding, hiking in Rocky Mountain National Park, and soaking in natural hot springs. If this were not enough, several participants went roller skating afterwards. The last activity on Thursday was a mountain trivia quiz hosted by Tom Patterson. The winning team (Yann Boulanger, Alex Fries, Carl Churchill, Becca Holdhusen, and Chaney Swiney) scored 21 out of 27 possible points.

The workshop concluded Friday evening. Before dinner, we held the CMC business meeting. After dinner, we held a general meeting where everyone learned about the next CMC workshop scheduled for April 2024 in Zakopane, Poland. Rafal Jonca is the 2024 workshop organizer. Terje Midtbø, our representative on the ICA Executive Committee, concluded the workshop by giving a brief history of the ICA followed by a discussion of the ICA Cartographic Body of Knowledge project. He also presented Andrew Tyrrell (New Zealand) with the young cartographer travel grant award.

Ten days after the workshop concluded, Alethea Steingisser, Daniel Huffman, and Patrick Kennelly sent a survey to all attendees to hopefully provide us with constructive feedback on how to improve future CMC workshops, remove participation barriers, and make our group welcoming to all.

The workshop program, CMC business meeting notes, and other information are available on the CMC website at <http://www.mountaintography.org>.

Tom Patterson, Brooke Marston, Dušan Petrovič, and Alex Tait