



How Wiki Loves Earth benefits (and harms) nature

International WLE team

WLE: Introduction

- Annual photographic competition devoted to picturing natural heritage sites
- Goal: draw attention to protected areas & create a database of free photos of all natural heritage sites
- Second biggest Wikimedia photo contest after Wiki Loves Monuments

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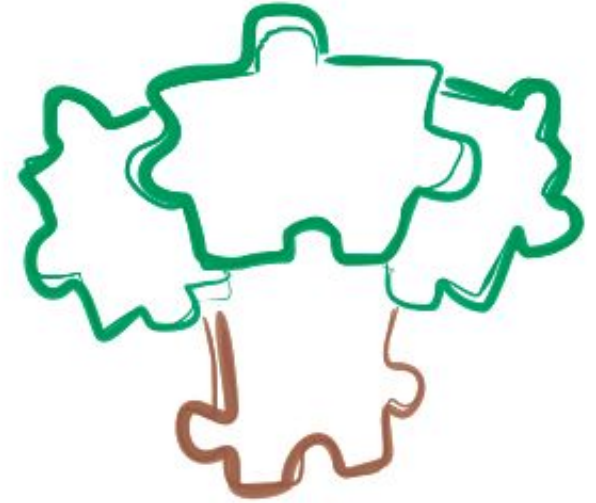


wiki loves
EARTH

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WLE_Austria_Logo_\(transparent\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WLE_Austria_Logo_(transparent).svg)

WLE: Highlights

- Started in Ukraine in 2013, became international in 2014
- 2019: 37 countries, 90k photos, 9500 participants
- Overall, 585k free photos of natural heritage sites, with around 130k being used in the wikis



Wiki Loves Earth and the environment

- Let's start looking at WLE from the perspective of environmental sustainability
- Wiki Loves Earth's impact on the environment:
 - Benefits
 - Harms
 - Solutions

Benefits of WLE for the environment

- **Raising awareness**
- **Tracking current state of nature sites**
- **Documenting nature changes over years**

Raising awareness

- WLE helps attract general public attention to the problems of nature, it's a good media story
- WLE steers Wikimedians towards this topic; good visibility on the Wikimedia projects



2019 edition of Wiki Loves Earth photography competition is now open.

Participate in the contest & help improve online coverage of Pakistan's natural landscape.

Participate



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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Commons:Wiki_Loves_Earth_2019/CentralNotice#Pakistani%20design

Monitoring nature: attracting attention to problems

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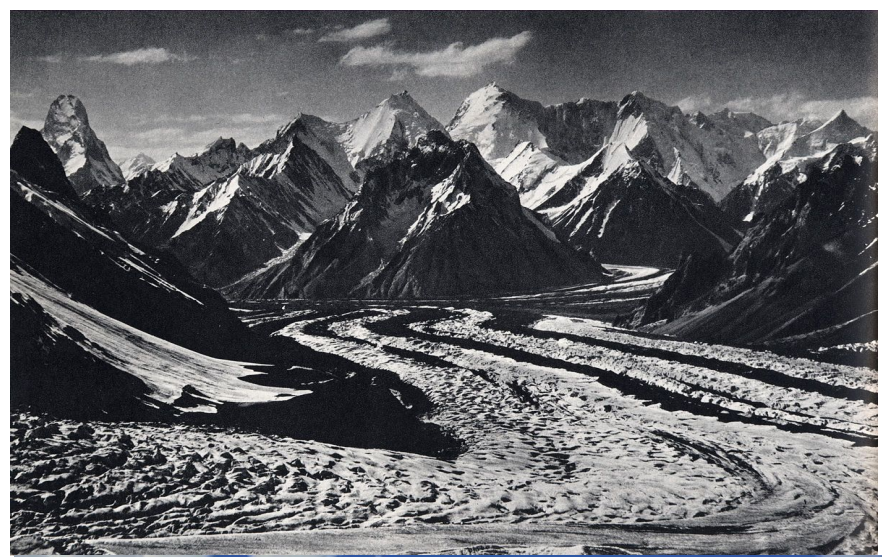


<http://wikilovesearth.org/take-only-photos-leave-only-footprints/>

Documenting nature evolution

- Even natural heritage sites might get destroyed. More often, their shape might evolve (think global warming)
- Wiki Loves Earth helps document that

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[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Muztagh_tower - skil brum 1909 sella.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Muztagh_tower_-_skil_brum_1909_sella.jpg)
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Baltoro_Muztagh_during_the_mid_day_sun.png

Harms of WLE for the environment

- Incentive to violate rules
- Disturbing fauna/flora, harming landscapes
- General environmental cost of a large online activity

Incentive to violate rules

- Participants may violate rules of the nature areas or behave unethically



Wildlife & habitat disturbances

- Participants may disturb animals & plants
- Also, theoretically (we've not heard of real cases), sensitive information about animals & plants might be used with malicious intent.



General environmental cost

Any large-scale Wikimedia activity incurs some negative cost for the environment by itself

- Most obvious example — 585 thousands photos on the servers, and $\frac{3}{4}$ of them not used in the wikis.
- People travel specifically to take photos

Potential solutions

- Discourage rule violators
- Work with professionals
- Encourage illustrating less documented areas
- Drones?

Discouraging rule violators

- Organizers might disqualify photos and their authors in case of an obvious violation.
- Getting back to our example— Australian organizers rejected photographs taken on top of rock Uluru.

Working with professionals

- To minimize disturbance and damage to nature, we should involve more professional folks in the process
- Example — organized photo walks (such as in France)



Encourage illustrating less documented areas

- We should encourage participants to focus on the sites not illustrated yet — as opposed to taking a 10,001st photo of a well-known area.
- Example — Ukraine assigns much less weight to photos of already illustrated sites when determining winners for quantity.

Drones?

Promoting a wider use of drones for photographs is a debatable solution:

- On the one hand, it can reduce the level of disturbance for animals & plants on the ground.
- However, regulations of some protected areas forbid the use of flying objects.

**Other solutions?
Questions?
Feel free to feel free!**