
MONTOLOGY
EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

What is Montology?

Montology is the **transdisciplinary study of mountains and their well-being** beyond the physical; it is an in-depth look at the **geology, labor, climate, spiritual symbolism, and human experience** layered together. All concepts co-exist to form an understanding between the physical, cultural, and historical nature of which makes mountains.

The practice brings together scientists and conservationists to promote the sustainability of the biocultural heritage of mountains. Although a smaller niche practice, this study is vital to the well-being of the cultural landscape of the Western Hemisphere.



Sangay National Park & Zuñac Parish



Sangay National Park spans approximately 270,000 hectares of diverse ecosystems in the **Andes of Ecuador**. Located within the **Zuñac parish of Chimborazo Province**, the park provides habitat for a wide range of plant and animal species. It is designated as a **UNESCO World Heritage Site** for its outstanding universal value, recognized for its exceptional biodiversity, unique ecosystems, and threatened species.



- **Sangay Volcano:** Internationally recognized for its exceptionally long period of continuous activity, shaping the park's unique environment.
- **Diverse Ecosystems:** Includes glacial and volcanic zones, cloud forests, Amazon rainforest, wetlands, and highland grasslands.
- **Threatened Species:** Home to species such as the mountain tapir and spectacled bear, highlighting its conservation importance.

Client

Fausto O. Sarmiento, Ph.D. is a Professor of Mountain Science in the Geography Department at the University of Georgia, with additional appointments in the School of Ecology and the Honors Program. He is a globally recognized scholar in mountain geography and sustainable development, with over three decades of experience working in mountain regions, particularly in Latin America and the Tropical Andes.

Dr. Sarmiento's work focuses on conservation, sustainable development, and the protection of biocultural landscapes in mountain environments. He has held key leadership roles at UGA and internationally, including Director of the Office of International Education and Chair of the International Geographical Union's Commission on Mountain Studies. He advises organizations such as UNESCO and the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), has authored more than sixteen books and numerous scholarly articles, and has been recognized with honors including the Fulbright Global Scholar Award and his selection as a Jefferson Science Fellow.





Overview

Our mission is to **highlight the biological and cultural significance of Zuñac and the Andean flanks of Sangay National Park** by bringing research, storytelling, and design together in one cohesive digital experience. By combining indigenous and local narratives with existing scientific research, **the project will create an accessible platform** that introduces audiences to the region's biodiversity, cultural history, and environmental importance.

Using a layered, user-friendly approach inspired by montological thinking, the project translates complex ideas into content that is approachable for a broad audience. Through an ethnotourism-focused perspective, the platform provides context for understanding the land, its communities, and the systems that connect them.

Purpose

- **Launch a public-facing website focused on the Zuñac parish and the Andean flanks of Sangay National Park**, communicating the region's biocultural significance through a montological and ethnotouristic lens.
- Develop a **cohesive project name and visual identity**, including a logo, color palette, typography, and branding guidelines.
- **Produce press materials**, including conference-aligned press releases, to support academic and public outreach efforts.
- **Design a conference**-ready infographic or poster that presents project goals, key concepts, and early outputs for the United Nations University conference in March.
- **Establish an Instagram presence** to support project visibility and outreach.
- **Create a toolkit**/guidelines document to support the continuation or adaptation of similar projects in the future.



Project Goal

The goal of this project is to **create a public-facing digital presence** that introduces audiences to the biocultural significance of Zuñac and the Andean flanks of Sangay National Park. By highlighting the relationship between mountains, biodiversity, and human presence, the platform communicates why this region matters and why its protection requires both cultural and ecological understanding.

Objectives

- Turn montological and ethnotourism research **into clear, engaging content** for a public audience.
- **Create a cohesive and credible online presence** that tells the story of Zuñac and its biocultural significance.
- **Build awareness** of the cultural and ecological value of the region among students, the interested public, and academic audiences.
- **Support conservation and ethnotourism efforts** by connecting audiences to relevant resources and organizations.
- **Develop conference-ready materials** that clearly communicate the project's goals and impact.
- **Create a foundation** that can be built on or adapted in future semesters.

Target Audience

After meeting with Dr. Sarmiento, we identified three target audiences: **college students**, **interested members of the public**, and the **scientific community**. The project is designed to appeal to these groups by the common interest of ecotourism, conservation, and culture.

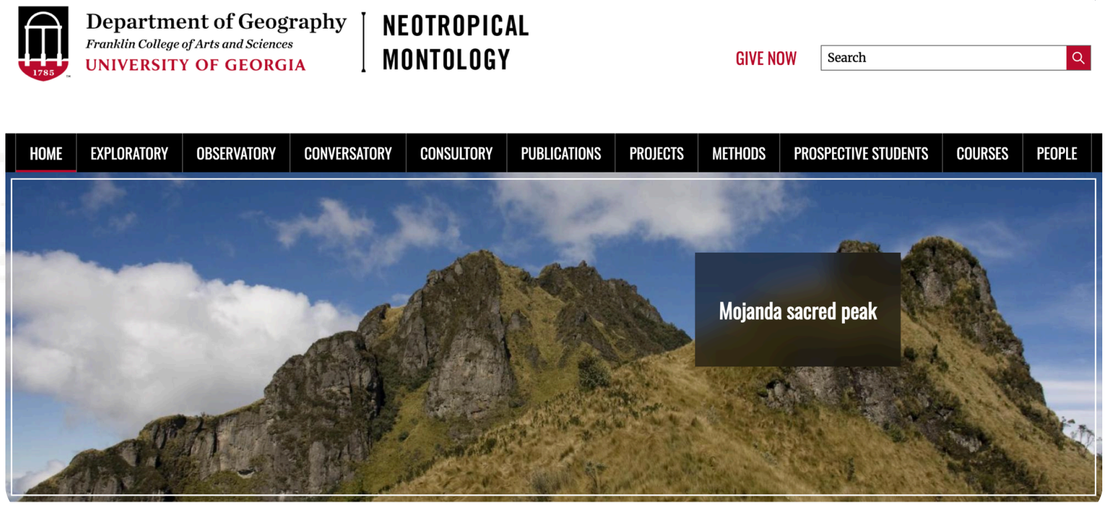


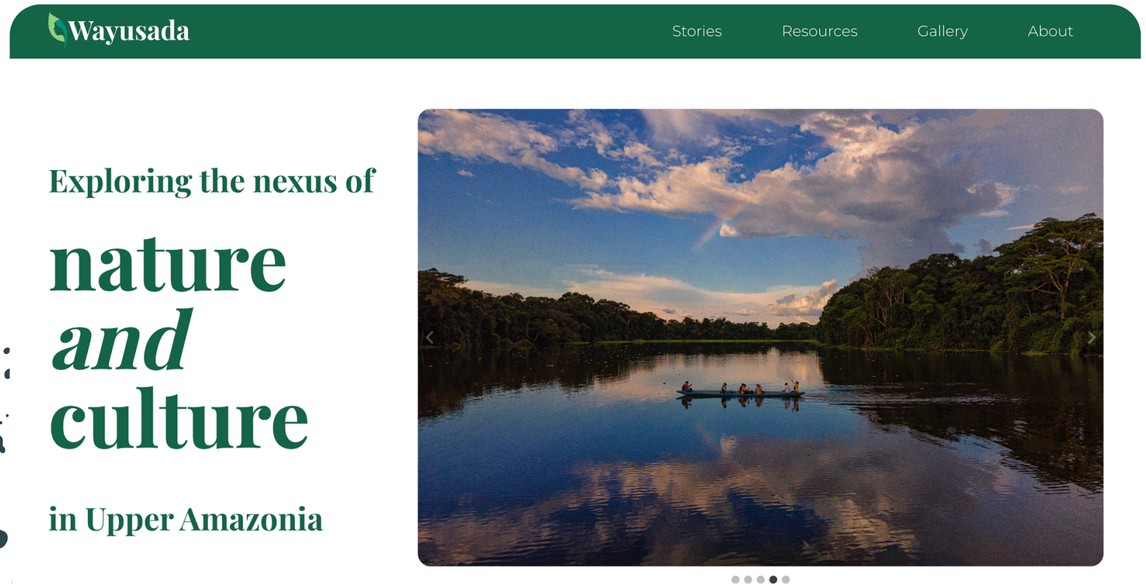


- **College Students:** Will use the site as an introduction into montology and encourage curiousity to the Amazonian mountains.
- **Interested Public:** Breakdown a complicated ecological and cultural system into something more digestible, encouraging further interaction and the realization of these flourishing scapes.
- **Scientific Community:** A site to keep up to date with the latest ongoing research and collaboration regarding the Sangay National Park and Zuñac Parish.

Current Platforms

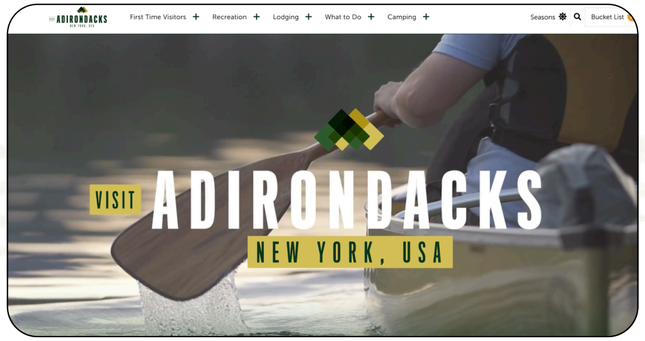
The Neotropical Montology Collaboratory, headed by Dr. Sarmiento, has its own landing page explaining its practices. It explains the who, what, when, and where of the collaboratory and aims to gather a cohesive group of fellow scientists, students, and conservationists to share research and ideas.



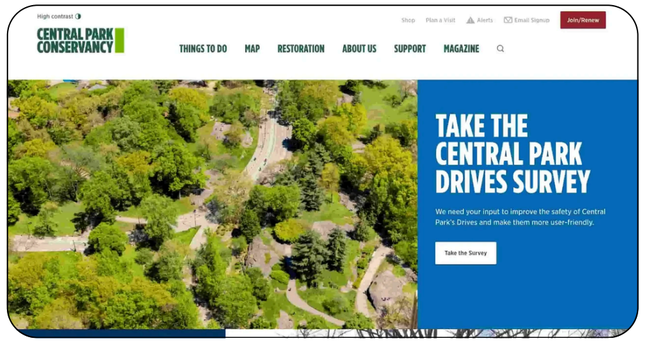


Wayusada is Dr. Sarmiento's first project with the New Media Institute. The website and project aim to explore the culture and nature of the upper Amazon. This includes all of its stories, legends, and related resources from Dr. Sarmiento's extensive research. We were directed to this website as inspiration and context for how similar topics have been explored through past collaborations with his research.

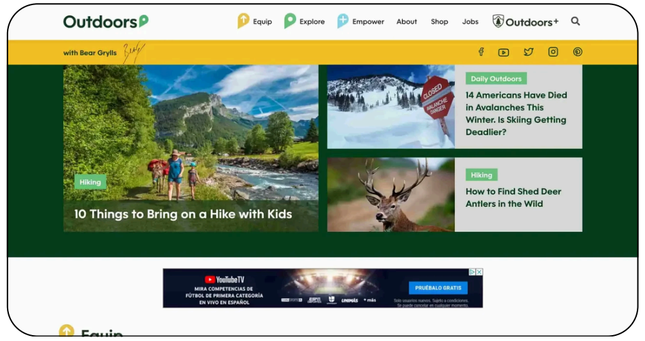
Website Inspiration



- **Visit the Adirondacks**
  - Compelling landing page with video = immediate viewer captivity
  - Interesting simple visuals
  - Promotes ecotourism and preservation

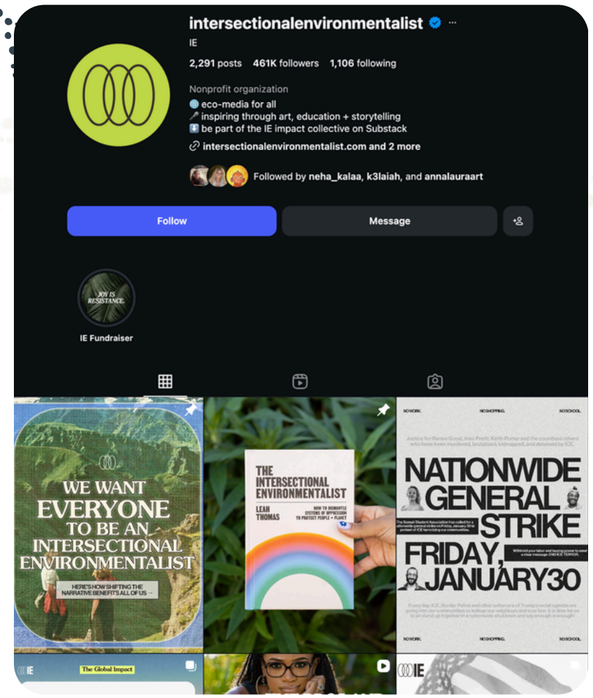


- **Central Park Conservancy**
  - Bold branding
  - Compelling photography
  - Fluid landing page with easily accessible options



- **Outdoors**
  - Simple icons, big impact
  - Various articles
  - Powerful tagline

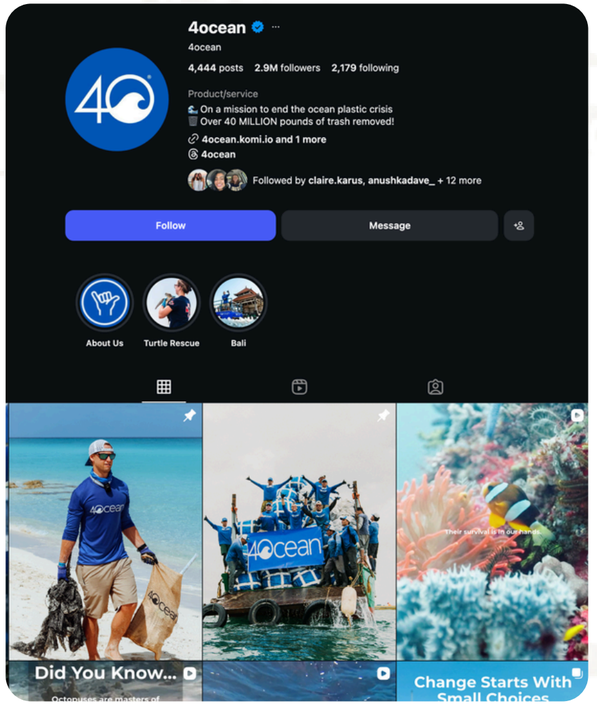
Social Media Inspiration



- @**intersectionalenvironmentalist**
  - Unique niche branding, Gen Z-esque
  - Similar equity messaging could be adapted
  - Bold, strong

- @**culturalsurvival**
  - Protection of indigenous people
  - Branding, story highlights
  - Impressive infographics

- @**4ocean**
  - Classic example of conservation social
  - Clear aesthetic
  - Clear mission statement



Infographic Inspiration



- **Dreamstime**
- Map-first layout that quickly sets the scene
- Icons and visuals make information easy to digest
- Data broken into clear, simple sections
- Color used to organize different types of info
- Balances facts with visuals

- **Insight Guides**
- Large, eye-catching photography
- Mix of landscapes, wildlife, and cultural moments
- Short captions that add context without feeling heavy
- Clear layout that's easy to scan
- Feels immersive and travel-focused



Sources

- https://montology.franklinresearch.uga.edu/
- https://geography.uga.edu/directory/people/fausto-o-sarmiento
- Initial Meeting with Fausto
- https://wayusada.com/
- https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/260/
- Website Inspiration
  - Visit the Adirondacks
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