



CHALLENGES FOR CONSERVATION

**We are living in a time of decision.
About the future of human kind as
we know it.**

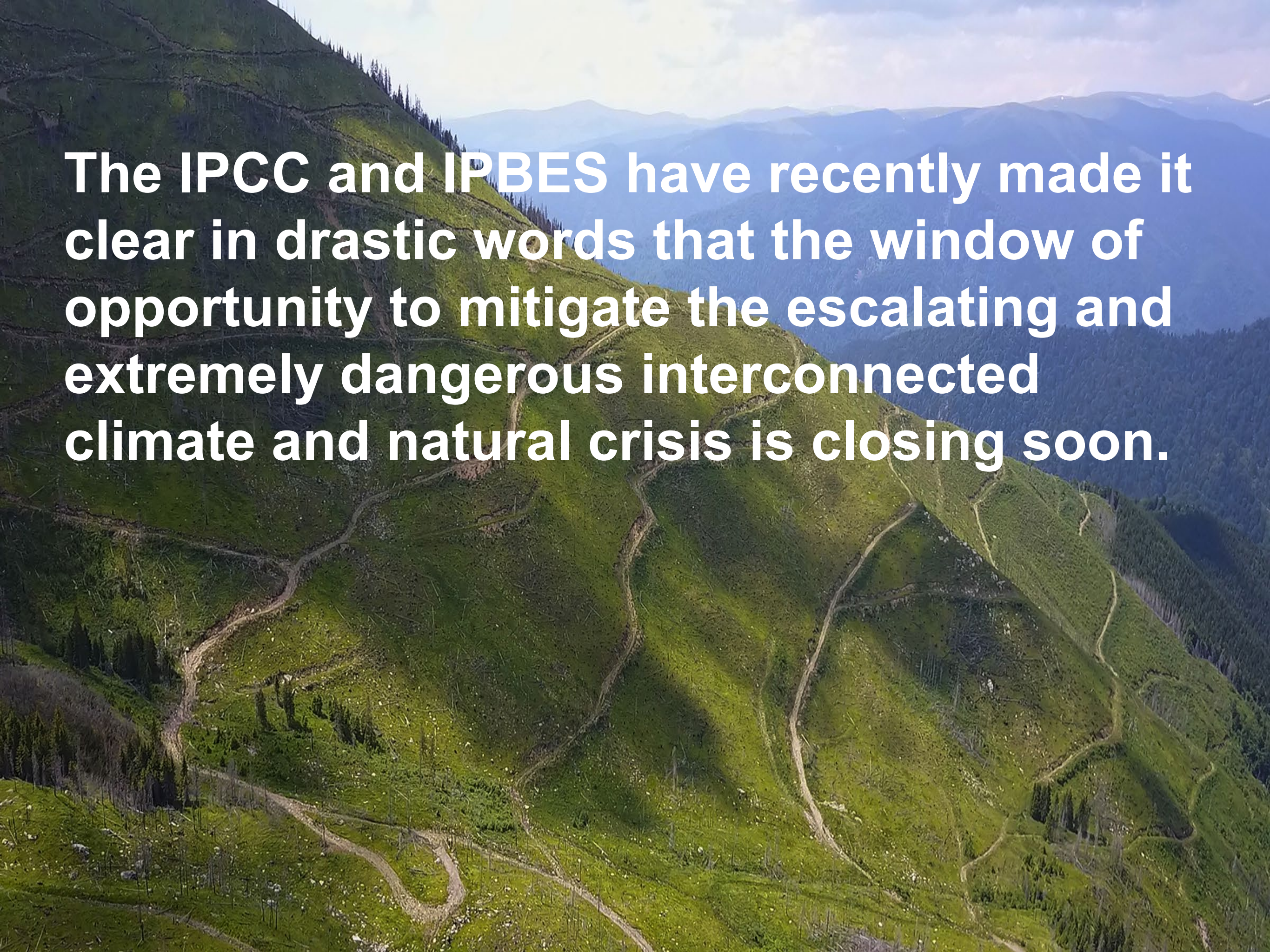




Humanity has never been in a situation where one generation held the fate of the next in its hands.

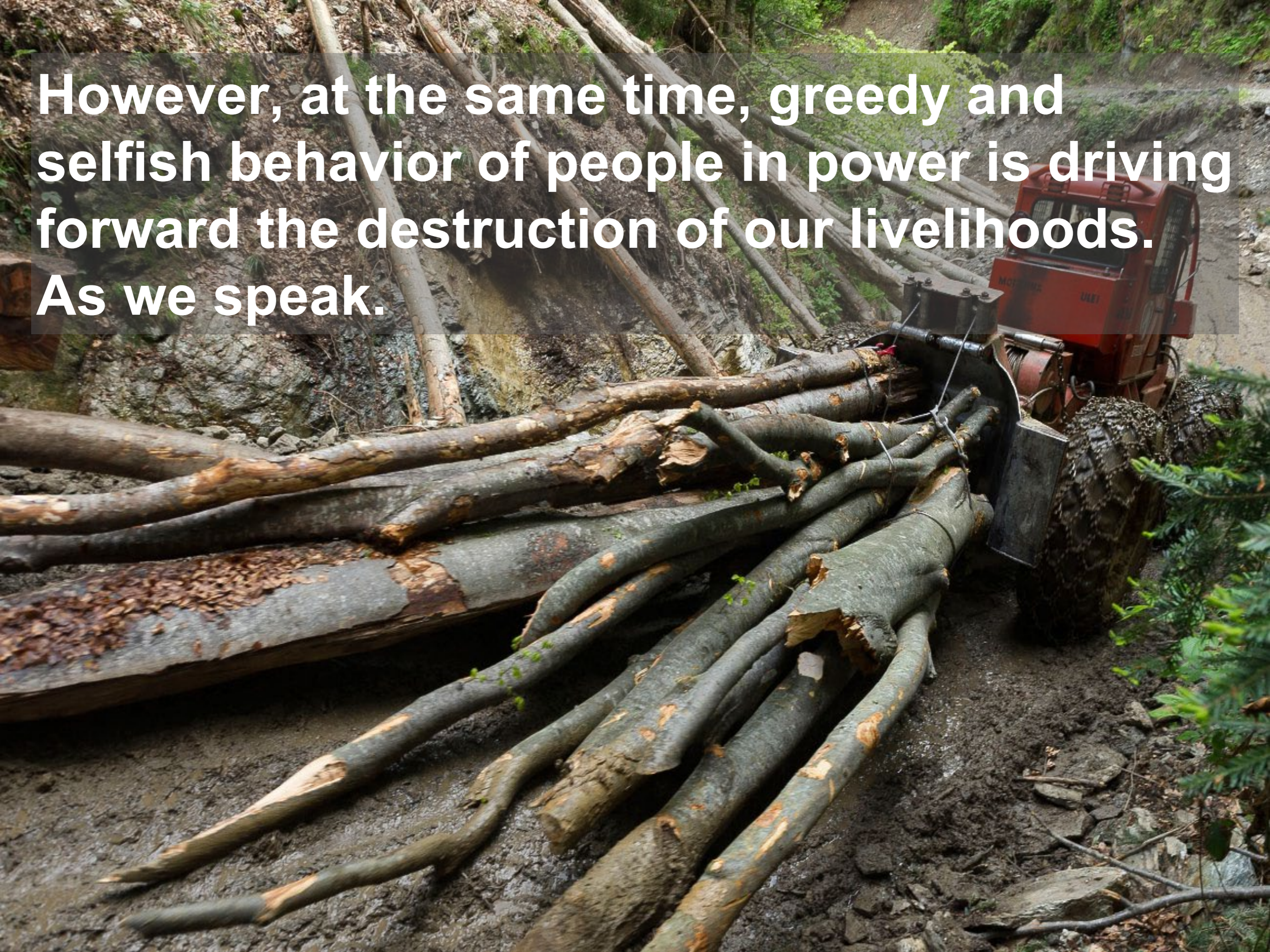
We are facing a disaster of unspoken sufferings for enormous amounts of people.


And now is not the time for speaking politely or focusing on what we can or cannot say. Now is the time to speak clearly.

An aerial photograph of a mountain landscape. The foreground and middle ground show lush green hills with a network of narrow, winding paths or roads. The terrain is rugged and appears to be a high-altitude or mountainous region. In the background, there are more mountain ranges under a clear sky. The overall scene is vibrant and natural.

The IPCC and IPBES have recently made it clear in drastic words that the window of opportunity to mitigate the escalating and extremely dangerous interconnected climate and natural crisis is closing soon.

However, at the same time, greedy and selfish behavior of people in power is driving forward the destruction of our livelihoods. As we speak.

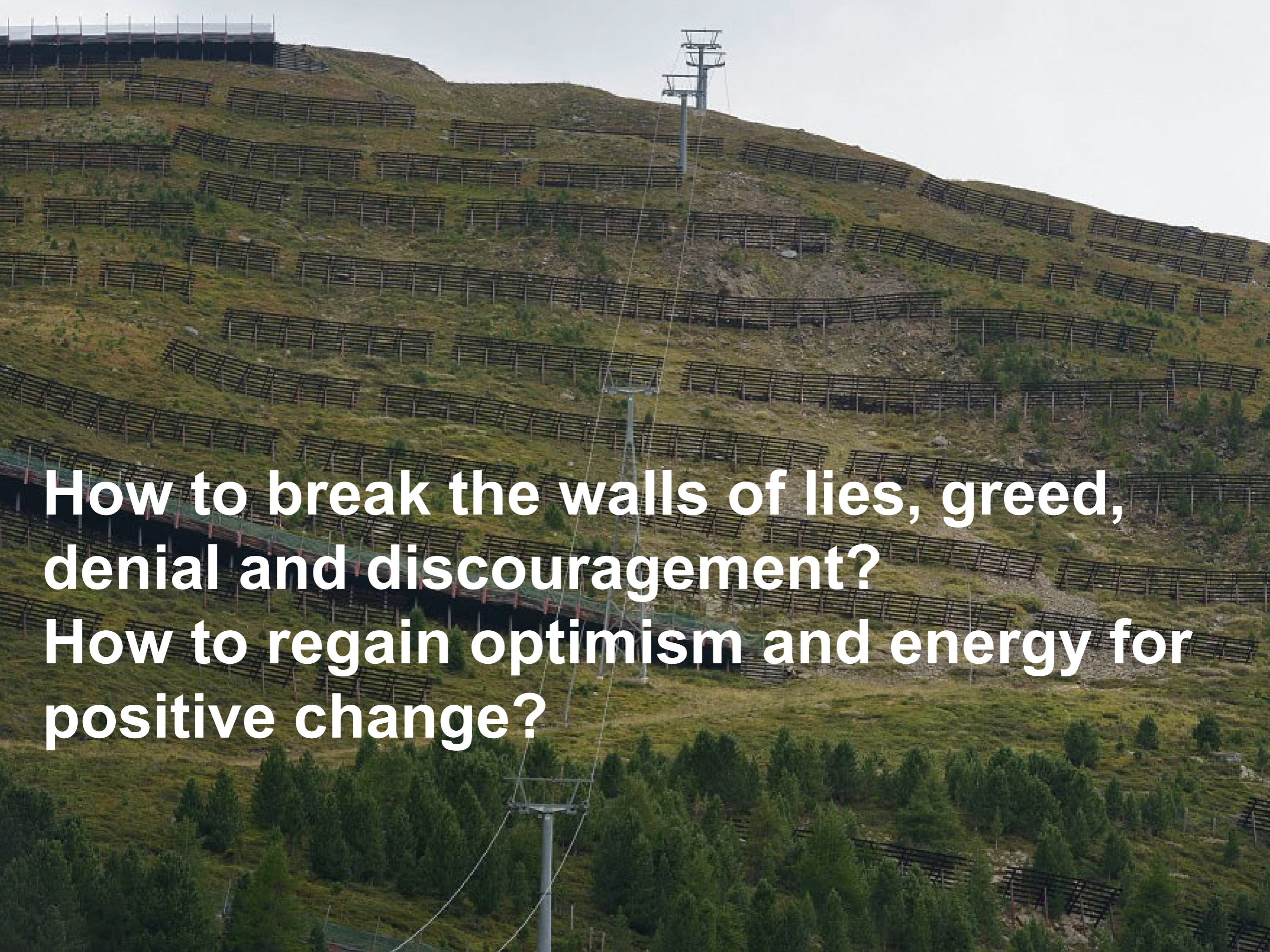




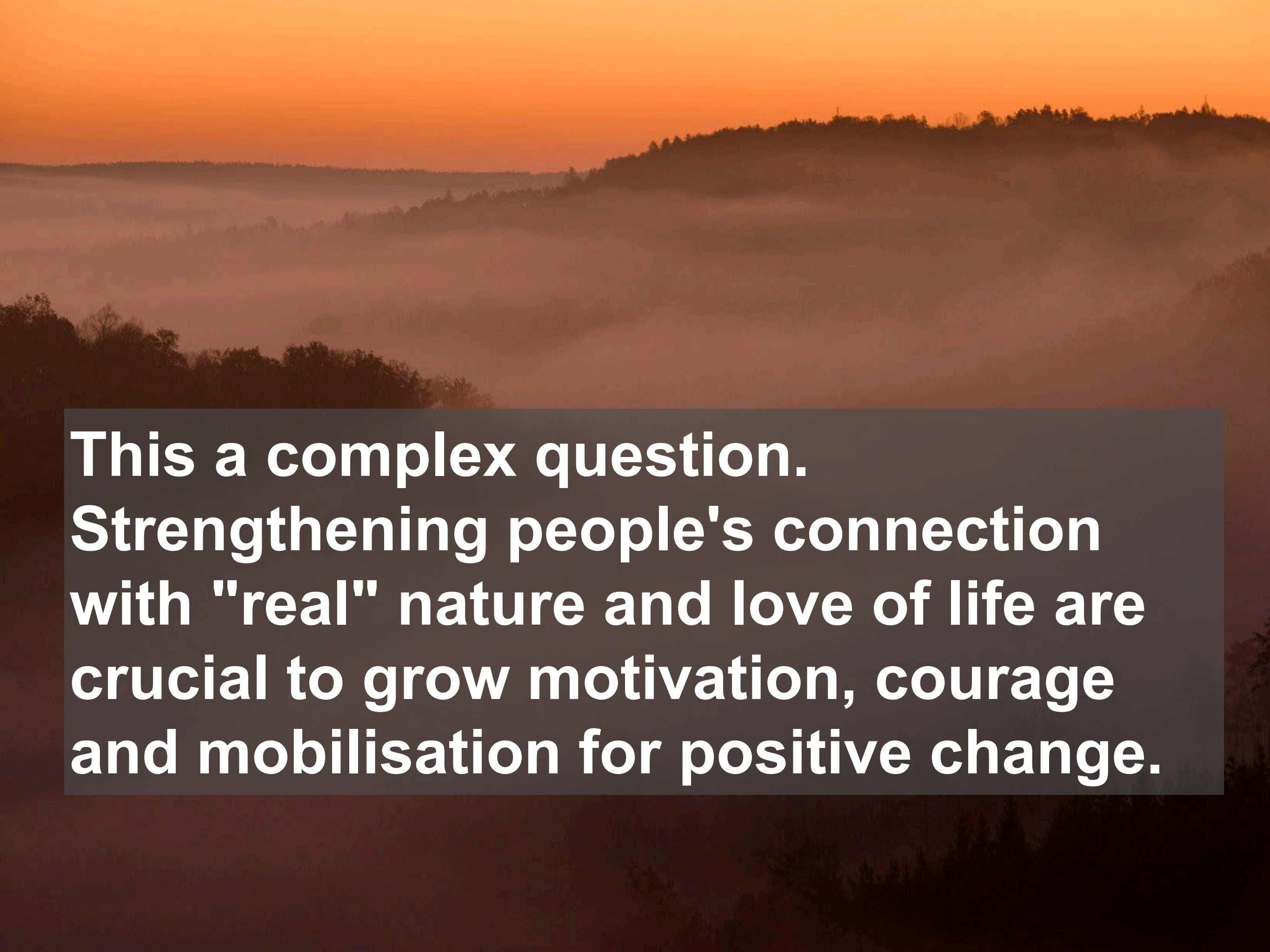
Climate and nature crisis are interconnected - and climate protection and nature conservation must not be played off against each other.

**I want you to act as you would
in a crisis. I want you to act as
if our house is on fire.
Because it is.**

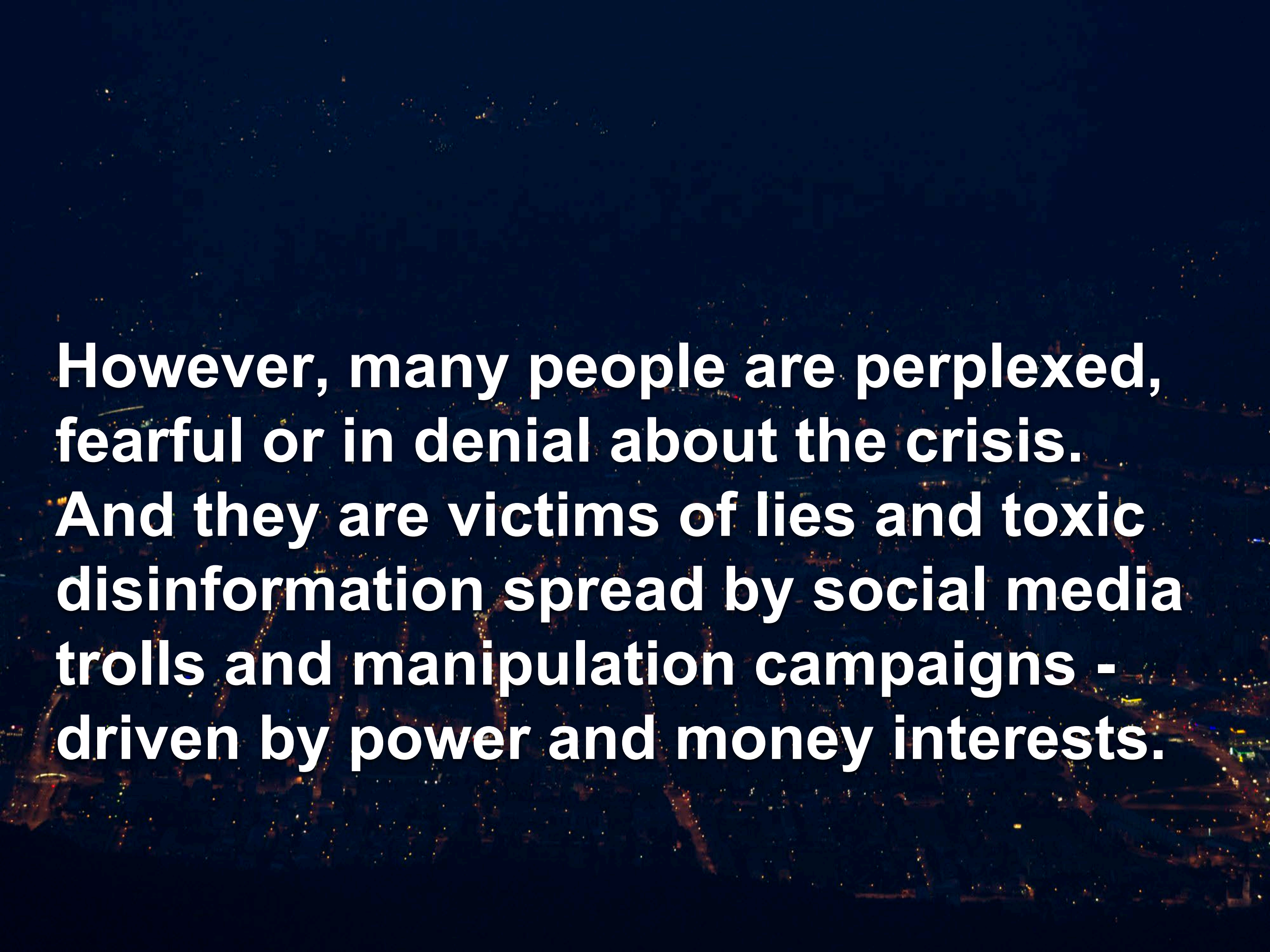
Greta Thunberg



**How to break the walls of lies, greed,
denial and discouragement?
How to regain optimism and energy for
positive change?**

A scenic landscape at sunrise or sunset. The sky is a warm, orange glow. In the foreground, there are dark silhouettes of trees and hills. The middle ground shows a valley filled with a thick layer of mist or fog, which softens the details of the hills and trees. The background consists of more distant, hazy hills under the same orange sky.

**This a complex question.
Strengthening people's connection
with "real" nature and love of life are
crucial to grow motivation, courage
and mobilisation for positive change.**

An aerial night view of a city, likely San Francisco, showing the Golden Gate Bridge and surrounding urban lights. The text is overlaid on this background.

However, many people are perplexed, fearful or in denial about the crisis. And they are victims of lies and toxic disinformation spread by social media trolls and manipulation campaigns - driven by power and money interests.



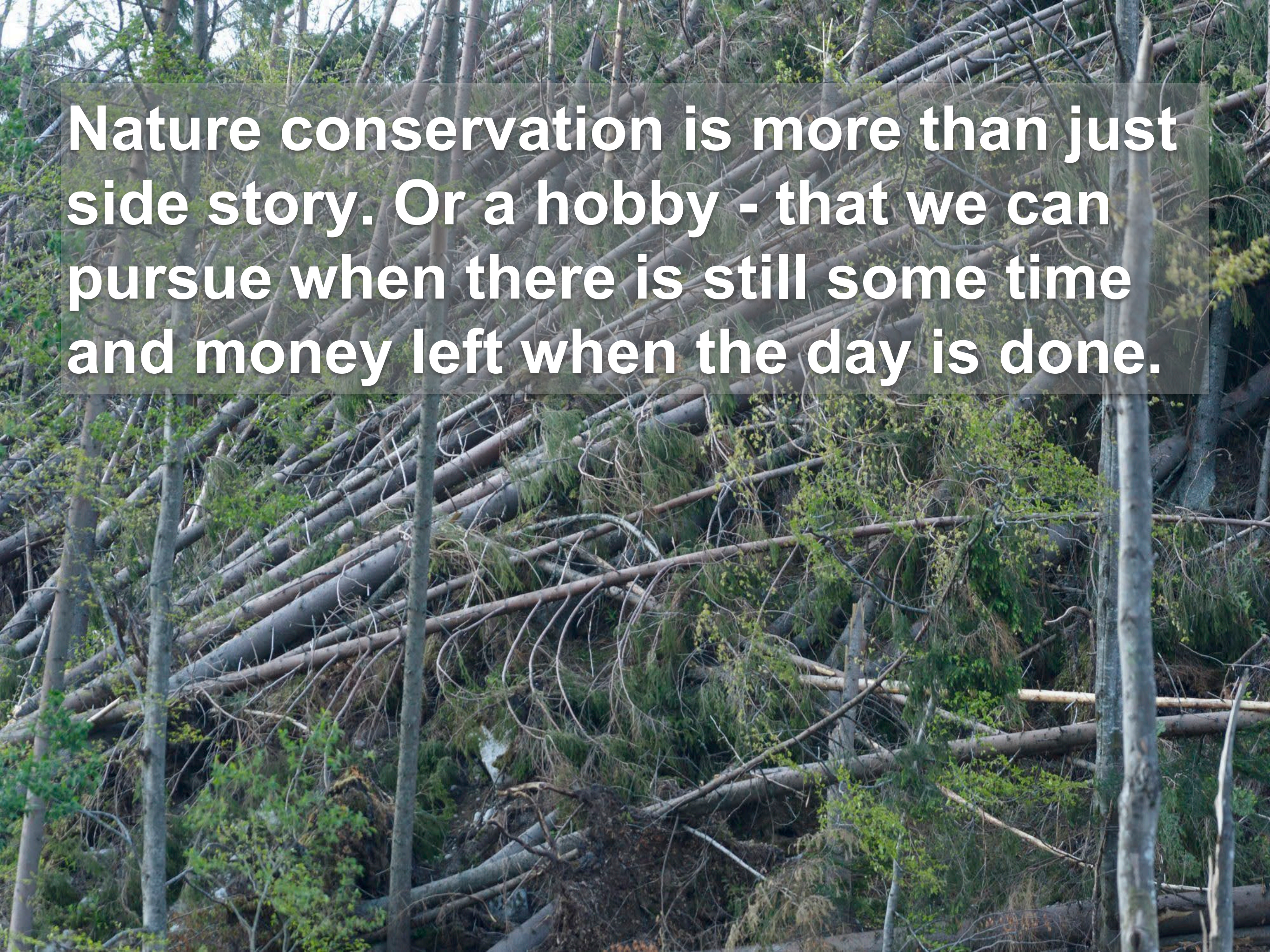
The mindset has changed.

**It became clear that times of business
as usual are over.**

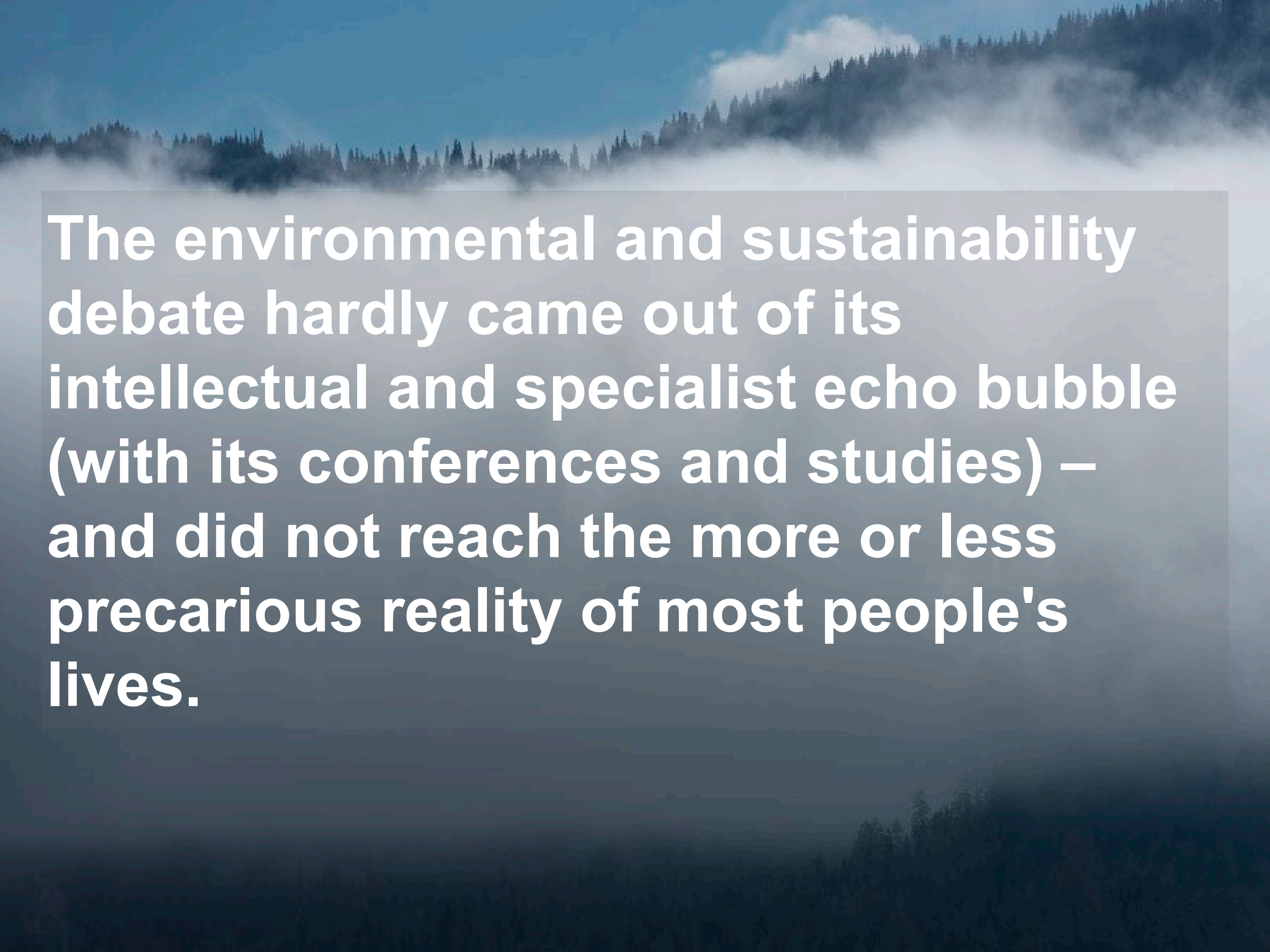
The crisis has arrived.

„Climate and biodiversity crisis has never once been treated as a crisis, people are simply not aware of the full consequences on our everyday life.“





Nature conservation is more than just side story. Or a hobby - that we can pursue when there is still some time and money left when the day is done.



The environmental and sustainability debate hardly came out of its intellectual and specialist echo bubble (with its conferences and studies) – and did not reach the more or less precarious reality of most people's lives.



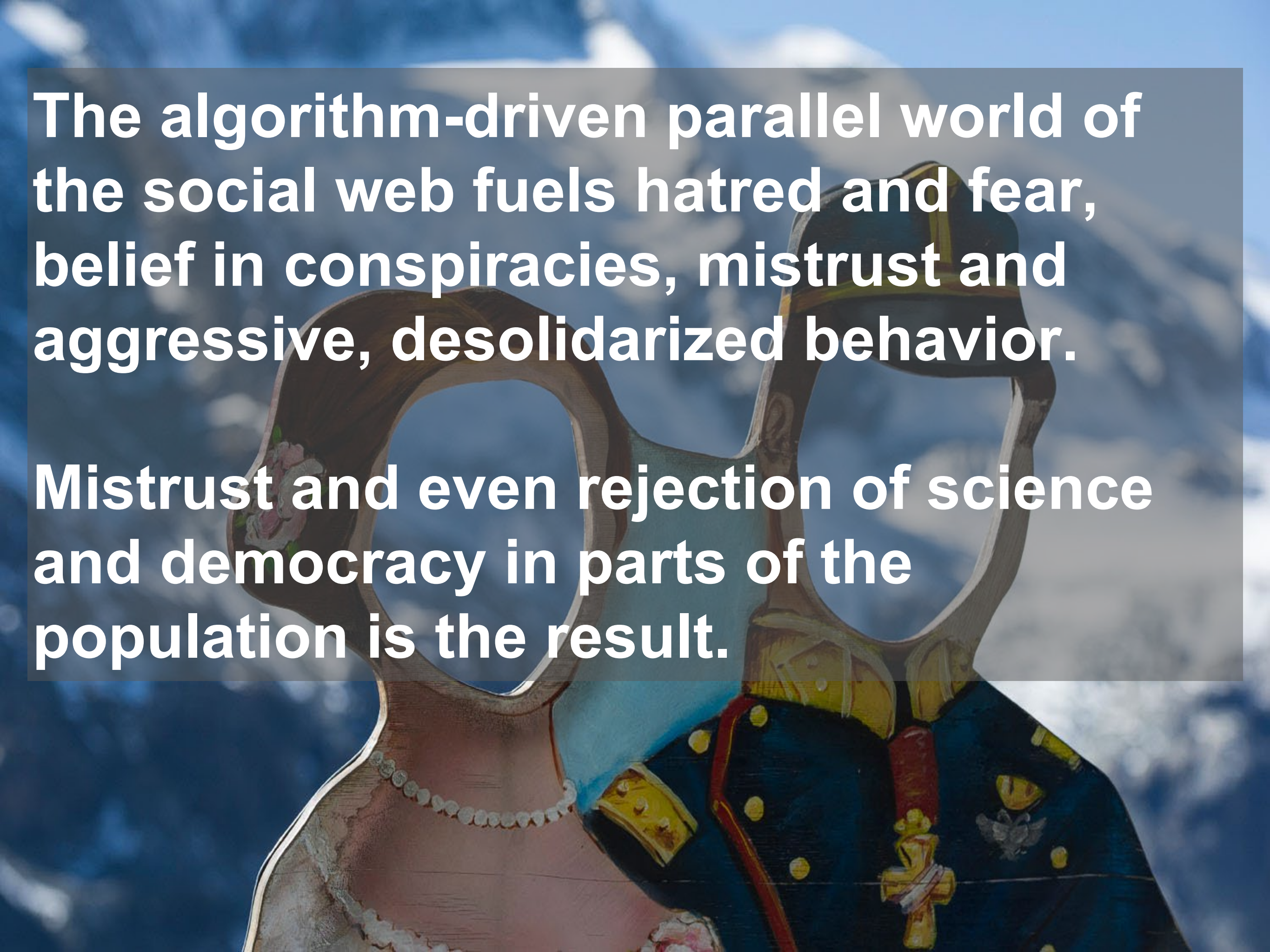
Business interest groups succeeded for a long time in sowing doubts about the scientific fact base for the urgency and threatening nature of ecological problems.

This undermined and slowed down the necessary political measures.



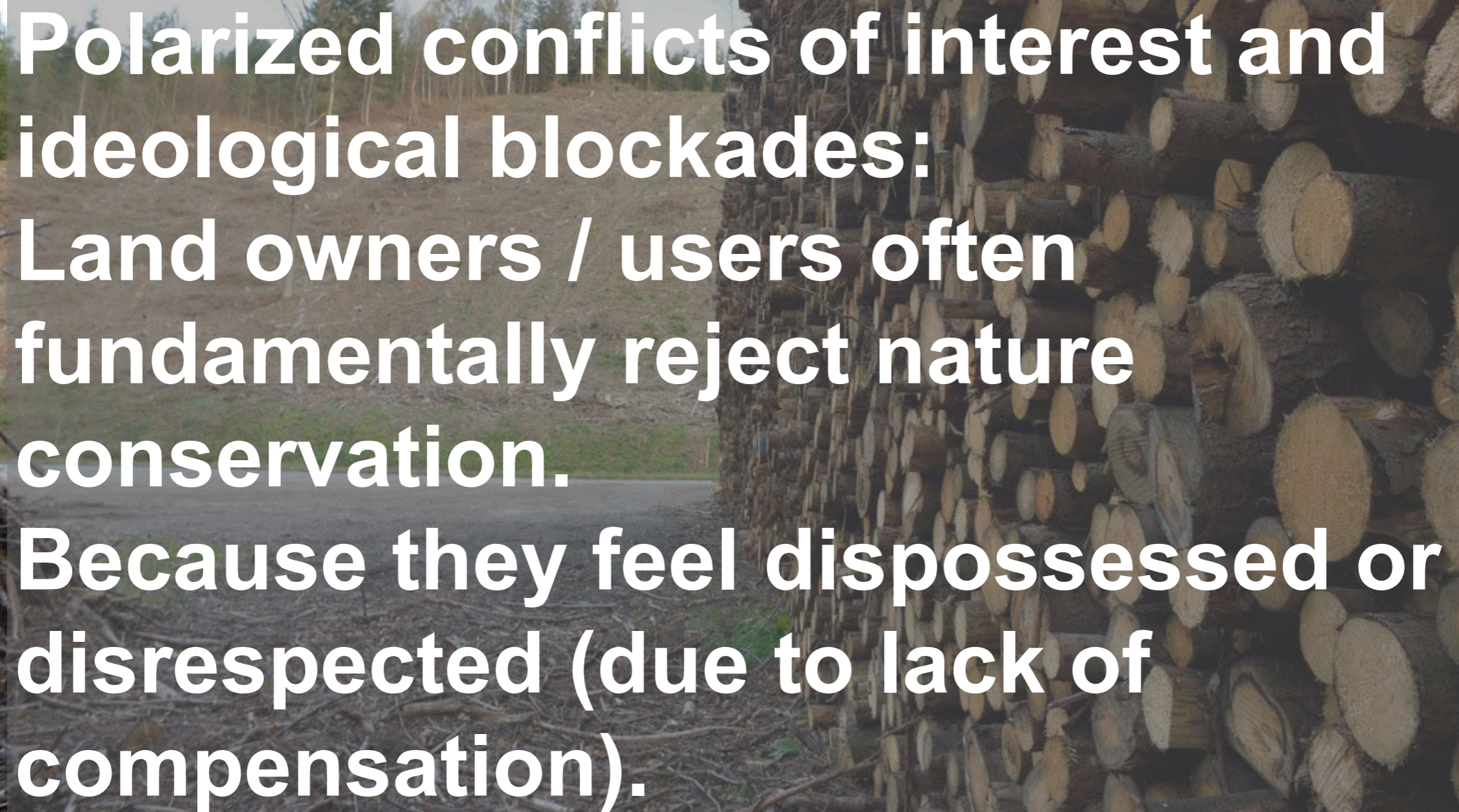
The worsening ecological crisis reached a dimension of psychological threat that caused many people to experience loss of control and powerlessness.

Denial and escapism into other realities - such as the fake happiness of consumer addiction or or conspiracy theories - are the result.

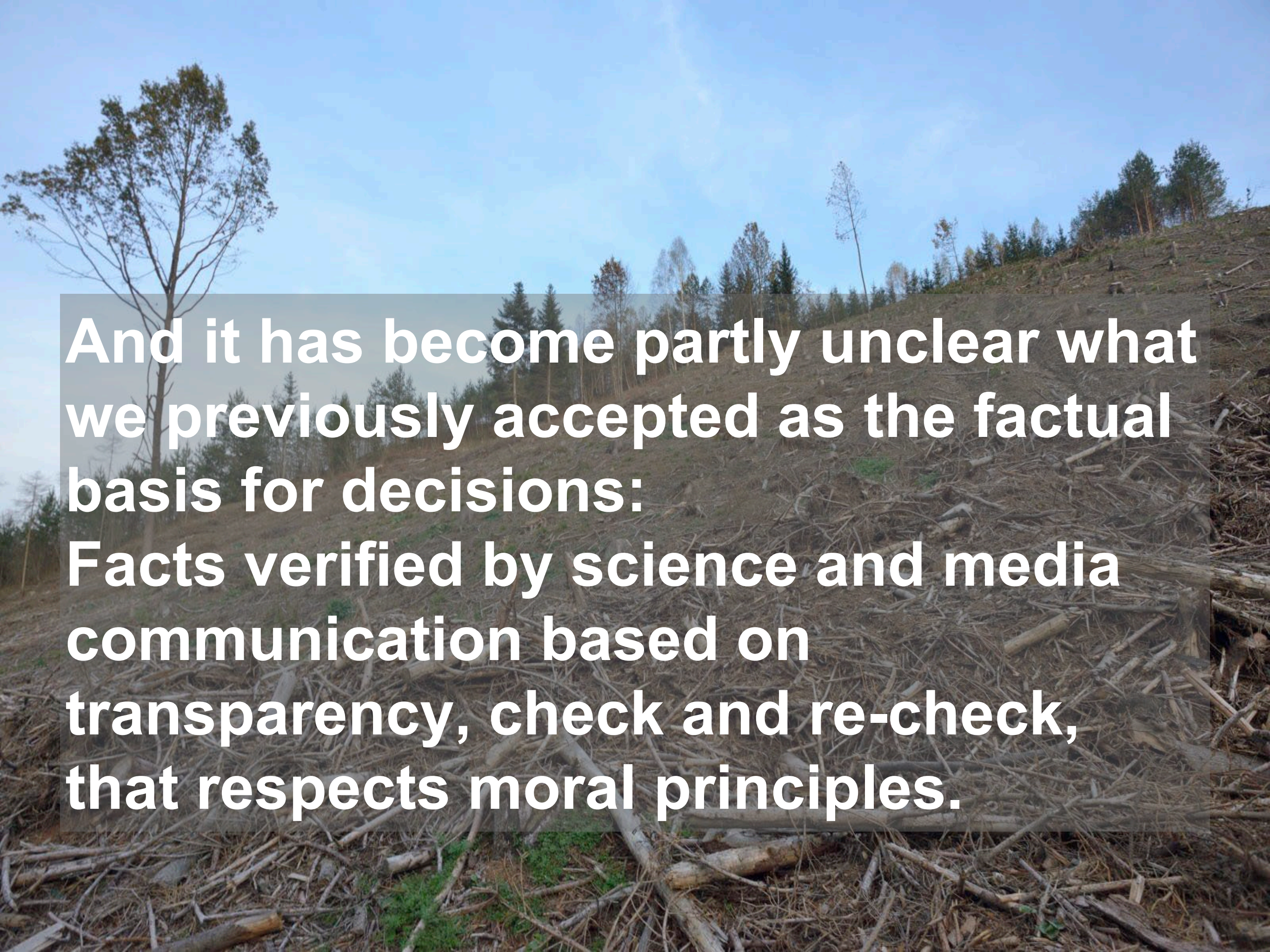
A painting of two figures with hollow faces, one in traditional dress and one in a military uniform, against a cloudy sky. The figure on the left is a woman with a brown headscarf and a necklace. The figure on the right is a man in a dark blue military uniform with yellow buttons and a red sash. The background is a blue sky with white clouds.

The algorithm-driven parallel world of the social web fuels hatred and fear, belief in conspiracies, mistrust and aggressive, desolidarized behavior.

Mistrust and even rejection of science and democracy in parts of the population is the result.

A large stack of cut logs is the central focus, stacked high and neatly. The logs are cut into uniform lengths and are piled in a way that shows their circular cross-sections. The background is a natural setting with trees and a clear sky, suggesting a logging site or a forest clearing. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent dark grey box that covers the lower half of the image.

**Polarized conflicts of interest and ideological blockades:
Land owners / users often fundamentally reject nature conservation.
Because they feel dispossessed or disrespected (due to lack of compensation).**



**And it has become partly unclear what we previously accepted as the factual basis for decisions:
Facts verified by science and media communication based on transparency, check and re-check, that respects moral principles.**



Why am I talking about all this at this conference?

A landscape photograph showing a road winding through a forested area. In the foreground, there is a large pile of cut branches and debris, suggesting a recent logging or clearing operation. The road curves to the right in the middle ground, with a white car visible in the distance. The background consists of a dense forest of tall trees, some with autumn-colored foliage. The overall scene is somewhat desolate due to the cleared area.

It is not much use creating an increasingly sophisticated, techie, targeted communications system if we fail to respond to the fact that we are losing ground.

A large stack of cut logs piled up on a dirt road next to a hillside under a blue sky. The logs are stacked in a neat, conical pile, showing the circular ends of the wood. The background features a dirt road, a hillside with sparse vegetation, and a clear blue sky with some light clouds.

**Business as usual is over.
We have to be honest, courageous
and outspoken even more.**

We need to take real action to mitigate the crisis. And defend protected areas against new hotel complexes, cable cars, roads or dams ...

PREVIOUS STATE.....FUTURE?



We need to speak truth and debunk fake solutions such as logging (protected) forests and burning wood biomass - adding CO2 to the atmosphere.



An aerial photograph of a forested landscape. The terrain is covered in dense green and brownish-green vegetation, likely a mix of deciduous and coniferous trees. A complex network of light-colored roads or paths crisscrosses the area, forming a web-like pattern. A prominent river or stream flows through the lower right portion of the image, winding its way through the forest. The overall scene depicts a natural environment with significant human infrastructure.

Our protected areas are not safe.

We need to do our homework.

And enforce our nature conservation laws.

Example: Romania's Fagaras Mountains Natura 2000 site.

decembrie 2011



Sâmbăta

Moldoveanu

Bălea

decembrie 2017



Logging of old-growth forests in Natura 2000 sites is widespread in EU (eg. Romania) - and must end.

Otherwise, the EU Biodiversity Strategy will lose its foundation and credibility.

A photograph of a forest with a large, moss-covered tree trunk in the foreground. The tree trunk is thick and textured, with several large, gnarled roots extending from the base. The forest floor is covered in fallen leaves and twigs. In the background, there are many other trees with green foliage.

**Even in Austria OGF in Natura 2000 sites
disappears - without appropriate
response action by authorities ...**





But how can we move forward?

A lush green forest scene with a large tree trunk in the foreground and a semi-transparent text box overlaid. The text is white and bold, set against a dark green background. The forest is dense with green foliage, and the lighting is soft, suggesting a misty or overcast day.

**Sure. Through audience centered
communication.**

**Building on courage. Honest.
Cooperation. Empathy. Directness.
Clarity.**



We often get stuck in expert debates that only few people understand and few can participate in.

A dense forest of green trees with a semi-transparent text overlay. The text is white and bold, set against a dark green background that is a semi-transparent rectangle covering the upper and middle portions of the image. The forest consists of many trees with vibrant green leaves, and the trunks are visible in the lower and background areas.

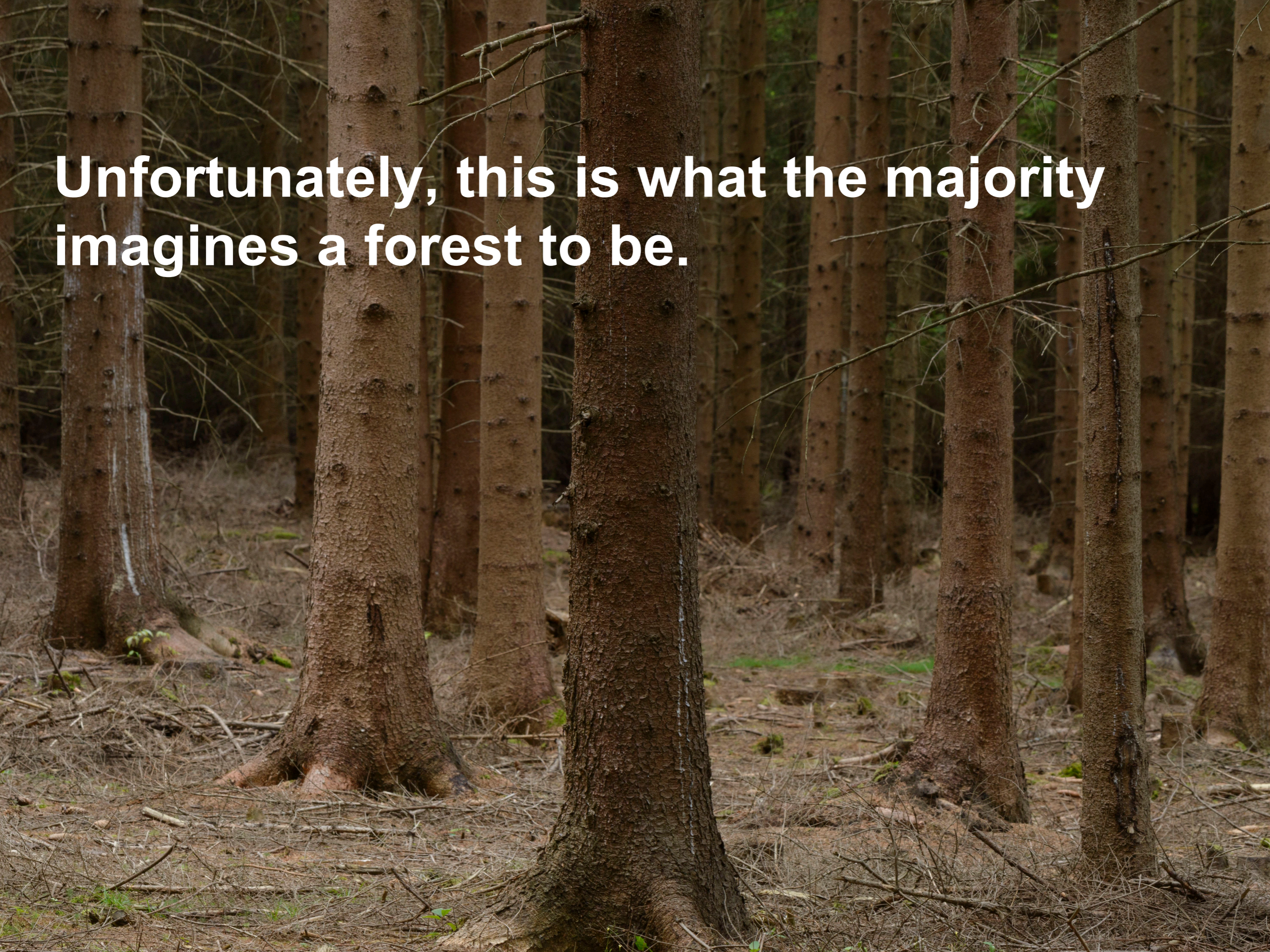
We need to avoid jargon and biology lessons when talking about conservation issues - and should pick up people with stories of fascination and magic.

And speak clear words about the conflicts and stand against manipulation and lies.

A lush green forest scene with tall, slender trees and a large, moss-covered tree trunk in the foreground. The ground is covered in green grass and moss. The text "Like Peter Wohllebens great story telling." is overlaid in white on a semi-transparent dark green background.


Like Peter Wohllebens great story telling.

**Unfortunately, this is what the majority
imagines a forest to be.**



**This is a real European forest.
However, hardly anyone has ever seen or
experienced a European primary forest or
old growth forest.**



A scenic view of a mountain valley with dense green forests and misty peaks. The foreground shows a steep, forested slope, while the background features more distant, hazy mountain ranges under a soft, overcast sky.

**We need to work even more
imaginatively and with catchy images
to win people's hearts.
As much as possible.**

By showing the beauty ...

... and the beast



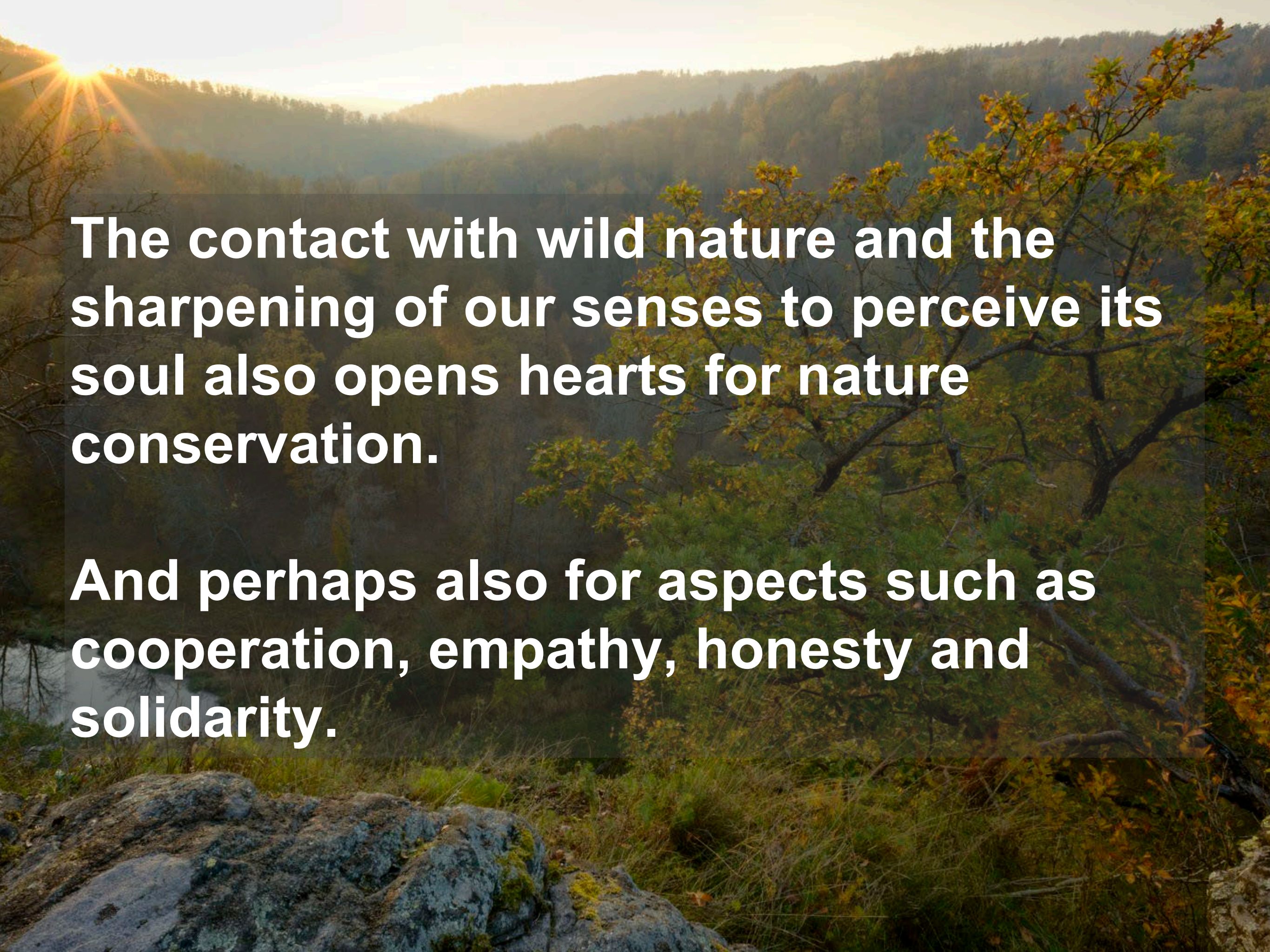
A large, moss-covered tree trunk in a forest. The tree trunk is thick and covered in vibrant green moss. The background shows a dense forest with many other trees and green foliage.

Learnings from 30 years of conservation:

We are children of nature.

Even if many think shopping centers, cars and comfy living rooms are their only true „habitat“.

But nature is the world we have inhabited for most of our genesis as a species.



The contact with wild nature and the sharpening of our senses to perceive its soul also opens hearts for nature conservation.

And perhaps also for aspects such as cooperation, empathy, honesty and solidarity.



**Campaign to highlight and save
Romania's natural forest heritage**

Iseltrail / East Tyrol: Nature experience, nature conservation and regional development

Genusswandern am längsten noch frei fließenden Gletscherfluss der Alpen –

einzigartige Erlebnisroute in 5 Etappen

Das Naturwunder Isel

Nur wenige große Flüsse in den Alpen können heute noch frei fließen und sind unbeeinträchtigt von Staumauern. Die Isel in Osttirol zählt neben dem Lech in Nordtirol und dem Tagliamento in Friaul/Italien zu diesen letzten großen alpinen Wildflüssen Mitteleuropas. Nirgendwo ist ihre Wasserfülle für energiewirtschaftliche Zwecke gestaut oder in Kraftwerke abgeleitet. Über weite Strecken weist die Isel daher einen ungezügelten, sich stetig verändernden Flussraum mit einer besonderen Vielfalt an seltenen Lebensgemeinschaften und Arten auf. Das macht das einzigartige Naturerlebnis aus.

Gletscherflüsse sind anders

Die Wasserführung der Isel schwankt je nach Tages- oder Jahreszeit deutlich, abhängig von der Schmelzwasser-Spende durch die Gletscher im Einzugsgebiet. In den Sommermonaten zeigt die Wassermenge der Isel einen typischen Tagesgang: An einem kühlen Morgen fließt viel weniger Wasser als am Abend, weil der Gletscher weniger stark auftauft. Am frühen Nachmittag ist die Sonneneinstrahlung am Gletscher hingegen am stärksten, das Eis rinnt dahin. Im Fall der Isel erreicht das Schmelzwasser erst am frühen Abend die Tälgen und trifft in der Nacht bei der Mündung der Isel in Lienz ein. Doch die Klima-Erhitzung lässt die Gletscher an sich schwinden. Immer häufiger Niedrigwasser auch in den Sommermonaten ist die Folge.

Dynamischer Flussraum

Die Schmelzwasser bedingten Hochwässer verändern beständig die Schottermassen und schaffen so stets neue Inseln, Schotterbänke und Uferbereiche. Dabei entstehen permanent neue Lebensräume, die wieder besiedelt werden. Diese Pionier-Standorte sind Voraussetzung für eine Reihe von seltenen, besonders angepassten Tier- und Pflanzenarten – wie die Deutsche Tamariske (*Myricaria germanica*). Sie kommt als einzige ihrer Gattung in Mitteleuropa vor. Früher war sie an unseren Flüssen weit verbreitet. Heute ist sie eine Rarität. Da sie sehr lichtbedürftig ist, Weiden und Erlen sie aber leicht überwuchern, kann sie sich auf Dauer nur dort halten, wo durch die Umlagerungsarbeit von Flüssen immer wieder neue Sand- und Schotterbänke entstehen.

Rare Ursprünglichkeit

Mit ihren Zubringern bildet die Isel ein riesiges ursprüngliches Gewässersystem. Auch viele ihrer Zuflüsse sind weitgehend unberührt, eine Garantie für reinste Wasserqualität. Das ist eine Seltenheit in der intensiv vom Menschen geprägten Landschaft. Die Isel ist somit der längste noch frei fließende Gletscherfluss der gesamten Alpen und daher ökologisch auch voll funktionsfähig.

Schutzgebiet Natura 2000

Die Tamariske ist ein untrügliches Indiz für die ungestörte Dynamik und ökologische Funktionsfähigkeit eines Flusses. Aus diesen Gründen wurde die Isel als Schutzgebiet gemäß der Flora-Fauna-Habitat-Richtlinie der EU ausgezeichnet.



Der Vireon Kitzbühel in einer steilen Schlucht, gebildet von naturnahen Bergsteinen, durchfließt die Isel über mehrere Gletscherzungen hinweg.

The Iseltrail

Today, only a few large rivers in the Alps can still flow freely and are not deteriorated by dams. Alongside the Lech in North Tyrol and the Tagliamento in Friuli / Italy, the Isel in East Tyrol is one of the last large alpine wild rivers in Central Europe. Nowhere, their water wealth is dammed for energy purposes or derived for power plants. For long stretches, the Isel therefore has an unrestrained, constantly changing river course, providing highly valuable habitats for numerous rare species.

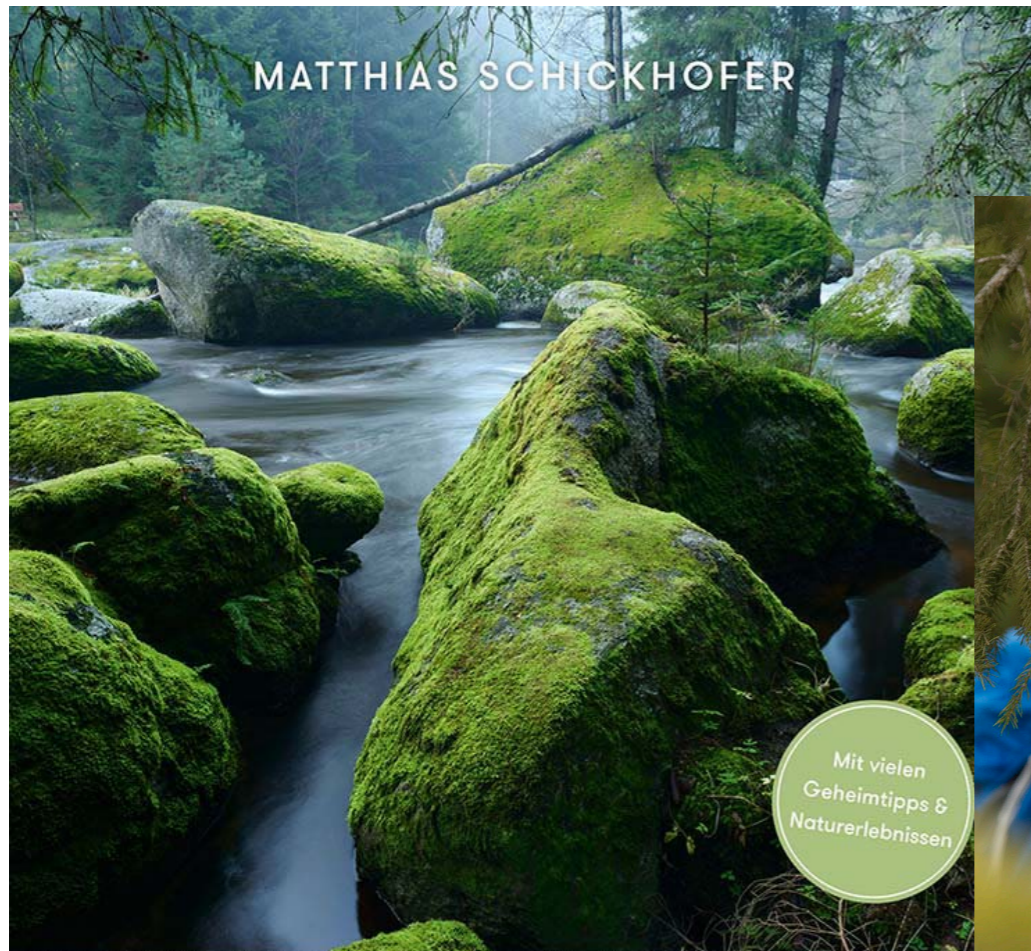
The Isel is the longest free flowing glacier river in the entire Alps and therefore also fully functional in ecological terms.

The water flow of the Isel fluctuates significantly depending on the time of day or the season, depending on the melt water donation through the glaciers in the catchment area.

The constantly changing water flow permanently creates new islands and bank areas. These new pioneer habitats are populated by several rare, specially adapted animal and plant species - such as the German tamarisk (*Myricaria germanica*). It used to be widespread on Europe's rivers, but today it is a rarity due to habitat loss. Since it needs a lot of light, but willows and alder trees can easily overgrow it, it can only survive where new sand and gravel banks are constantly being created and affected by floods. For these reasons, the Isel was designated as a protected area according to the EU's Habitats Directive.



Waldviertel / northern Austria: Nature (experience) as an identity and economic factor for an entire region.



WILDES WALDVIERTEL

Geheime Paradiesplätze, versteckte Urwälder, magische Natur

Brandstätter



**Let us use protected areas and their natural
and cultural heritage as seedbeds for
healing hearts and souls.**

**Let us use wild nature sites as fortresses and
churches against uniformity and lifelessness
– and to bring back hope ...**

