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# Swiss slow travel concept wins global award

ViaStoria says demand for environmentally-friendly travel options is growing - especially in the Alps.

Following in the footsteps of the tortoise that beat the hare, a Swiss institution has won an international award for its innovative approach to slow travel.

At the annual Alpine Convention conference held in Evian, France, Cultural Routes of Switzerland was recognised for its outstanding contribution to sustainable tourism. The Swiss tourism programme is a project of ViaStoria, the Center of Transport History.

linking both cultural and scenic attractions. For example, the ViaGottardo leads from Basel to Chiasso over the famous Gottard Pass, while the ViaJacobi follows the Constance-to-Geneva portion of the Way of St James, the pilgrim path.

The recommended itineraries involve a mixture of hiking plus travel by train, bus and boat. Travellers are encouraged to sample the local cuisine and to stay in traditional inns and hotels.

For those who wish to tackle the trails independently, there is a wealth of printed guide mate-

cal next step. Indeed, many of the Via-Routes already lead into neighbouring countries.

The network of historical trails is a natural fit for primary and secondary school teachers looking to combine education with recreation. With that in mind, the team at ViaStoria is creating learning materials to help young people discover Swiss history right at the source.

Together with the heritage organisation Pro Patria and the Bern and Valais colleges of education, ViaStoria is developing Internet and print resources suitable for students of all ages.

The materials, which will be ready in 2010, can be used to prepare for short excursions as well as for lengthier school trips.

*from swissinfo*



ViaFrancigena: above Plan de Barasson

The Bern-based organisation took first place in the competition for the Alpine Convention's sustainable and innovative tourism project award. Five additional projects from other alpine nations were also praised.

Established in 2003 as a Bern University spin-off, ViaStoria has three primary goals: to research Switzerland's historical transit routes, to protect them, and to promote their respectful use.

Its concept is based on a cross-country network of routes that follow historical paths and roads,

rial available. Cultural Routes of Switzerland also offers package deals that include meals, accommodation, museum entry and luggage transport.

In the coming year, ViaStoria plans to intensify its cooperation with like-minded international organisations. As concerns about global warming mount, the demand for environmentally-friendly travel options is growing - especially within the Alps.

Switzerland is somewhat of a "pass-through" nation - making cross-border collaboration a logi-

## THE 12 VIA-ROUTES

- ViaCook: Geneva - Lucerne - Pontarlier (F)
- ViaFrancigena: Pontarlier (F) - Aosta (I)
- ViaGottardo: Basel/Schaffhausen - Chiasso
- ViaJacobi: Rorschach/Konstanz (D) - Geneva
- ViaJura: Basel - Biel
- ViaRhenana: Konstanz (D) - Basel
- ViaRomana: Geneva - Augst
- ViaSalina: Arc-et-Senans (F) - Bern
- ViaSbrinz: Stansstad - Ponte (I)
- ViaSpluga: Thuisis - Chiavenna (I)
- ViaStockalper: Leuk - Domodossola (I)
- ViaValtellina: Schruns (A) - Tirano (I)

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