bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens attempted to climb Denali (formerly known as Mount McKinley), in the Alaska Range, in the United States. Since 1970, 34,000 persons have left behind over 25 metric tons of faeces, leading to contamination of waterways and soils. Summit crampons can weigh 4 kg each, and 3000 people could potentially leave 40 tons of crampons behind. In 2012, Mexico City opened its first large-scale composting plant. Composting and reduce the amount of waste which ends up as dumpsites and landfills.

Mountains play an essential role in supplying water and other services, such as food, energy and biodiversity, to the millions of people living in the mountains and downstream. This map shows where mountains are located around the world and the human population densities within these regions. Short case studies, which are referred to in the accompanying Waste Management: Outlook for Mountain Regions - Sources and Solutions, highlight the variety of waste challenges and opportunities in mountain regions.