

**FORESTS
& BIODIVERSITY**

Lessons learned

INTRODUCTION

Guarding the treasures of biodiversity is a tough challenge. But it can also be interesting, educative and even fun. And that is just what we need. In this booklet we have gathered inspiring examples of working methods used by devoted people in six European countries, sharing one in-common mission: to protect the biodiversity of the forests. There are didactical methods, large scale forest mapping projects, volunteers programmes, geocache trails, field seminars, new media strategies, innovative public awareness campaigns and more.

Placing these examples side-by-side gives a good overview of the variations in the nature conservation movement in the countries involved and allows us to see our work in a European perspective. Coming together creates a feeling of belonging to a movement larger than us. These are also some of the benefits of the Grundtvig Partnership “Biodiversity crisis and forests”, which is the project where we have all got to know each other. The project has run 2011-2013 and has involved grass roots movements in the Czech Republic, Germany, Slovakia, Sweden, Poland and Portugal. We hope that this publication will inspire our members to continue exchanging ideas, visiting and develop our collaboration.

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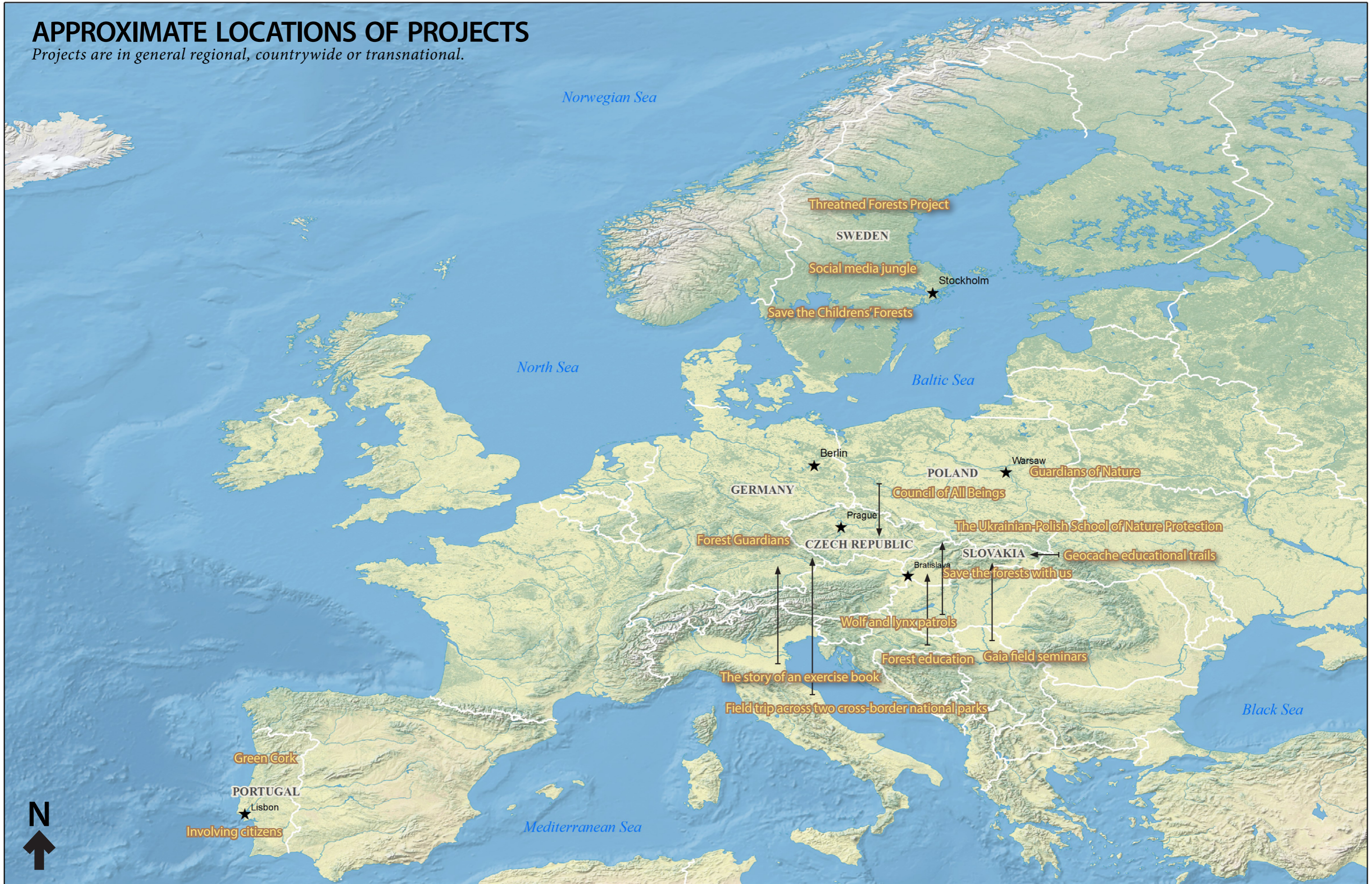
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APPROXIMATE LOCATIONS OF PROJECTS

Projects are in general regional, countrywide or transnational.





Wolf is an environmental non-profit NGO working to preserve natural forests and their wildlife in Slovakia. It was established in 1993 and it has 600 members and more than 3600 supporters. It has a seven-member staff and dozens of volunteers. The Board of Experts consists of 12 members including world known experts.

WOLF works at all levels: regional, national and international. All activities are conducted within four programmes: “Save Forest”, “Save Predators”, “Gaia - Our Home”, “ABIES Publishers”.

WOLF’s priority is the creation of a network of evolution forests – strictly protected areas with no human intervention (including creation of private nature reserves), lobbying for legislative changes and participating in legal proceedings concerning protection of forests and large predators and raising public awareness in the concerned topics.

Gaia - field seminars

Target groups: general public, forest activists (also open for participants from abroad)

Timetable: 3 times a year - May, June, September

The Gaia field seminars aim to create a deep understanding of natural ecosystems and processes.

During an eight day stay in the forests of north-eastern Slovakia, participants are guided to finding their connection with wilderness. They learn about forests as complex ecosystems, comprised of thousands of species of plants and animals; as web of life, in which each thread is equally important. Lectures are given by experts in ecology of forest ecosystems, mammal ecology, biology of forest plants,

ornithology and deep ecology. Most of the lecturers come from Slovakia and Poland, but some experts are also invited from the USA and Australia. One day of the seminar is dedicated to protection of forests by marking boundaries of protected areas or their proposed extensions or areas of new proposed reserves. The seminars are very popular, WOLF has been running them for 16 years and besides regular participants from Slovakia and the Czech Republic people from some other countries participated as well, e.g. from Great Britain, Poland, Austria.

A schedule and locality can be found at: wolf.sk or you can contact: dasa@osadne.sk for further information.



Save the forests with us



*Title: Save forests with us – information stalls
Target-public: general public in Slovakia
Timetable: Twice a year, for two weeks in April and October, in at least 15 cities all around Slovakia*

WOLF's information stalls are aimed at educating people by distribution of leaflets related to forest and wildlife topics and at discussing various hot topics and regional issues with them. The stalls are also used for running petitions. e.g. for halting logging in protected areas, for protecting rare forest areas, for protecting bears, to raise opinion against/for Olympic games in national parks, for legislative changes etc.

Moreover, the stalls are used for raising funds for the enlargement of the first private forest reserve in Central and Eastern Europe, Wolf Private Nature Reserve (PNR) in the Čergov mountains in Slovakia within Buy Your Own Tree campaign. WOLF has been running the campaign since 1998. People can make a symbolic purchase of a tree in the Wolf PNR by donating 50 €. All the money raised is used exclusively for purchasing forests for the extension of its area.

You can find more information at: wolf.sk/en/buy-your-own-tree or send your email to dasa@osadne.sk.

Geocache educational trails

Target-public: geocaching community, young people and tourists worldwide

WOLF has started create innovative nature trails in the Slovak mountains. The new concept combines the concepts of conventional nature trails with a geocaching game. The first trail was installed in the wilderness of the Eastern Carpathians and five more are in the making in the Eastern Carpathians, Čergov and Busov mountains. By using the new concept, disturbing elements as signs and marks can be avoided in the landscape. The visitors simply follow the trail by going from one spot (cache) to the next one following coordinates with the GPS.

The trails are promoted in the WOLF websites and shared via the geocaching website, where coordinates of the caches can be downloaded along with educational information about biodiversity in the particular places. E.g. the coordinates of a place

of abundance of dead wood is attributed with a text about the importance of the same and a site with a spectacular view is attributed with a description of what can be seen in the landscape. As the geocache community is vast and growing, attracting a significant numbers of young people, WOLF believes that this is a target group that could get interested in visiting these forests - not only to explore these beautiful remote mountains, but also to learn about the importance of protecting wilderness areas and their charismatic large predators, about forest evolution and the natural and cultural history of the area. Eventhough the information text at the stops of the nature path is only available in Slovak, foreign visitors will surely be amazed by this spectacular area (and by any from above mentioned areas where such trails are planned).

The first educational geocache trail can be found at: geocaching.com.



SWEDISH SOCIETY FOR NATURE CONSERVATION



The Swedish Society for Nature Conservation (SSNC) Forest Network is a national network aiming to enhance coordination and method development to strengthen the forest work of the SSNC locally, regionally and nationally. We make use of the resource of the many members devoted to forest conservation through effective and inspiring activities. We also work as a forum for contemporary social and environmental analysis and strengthen the link to the scientific community and other organizations in Sweden and abroad. As a result of this work we aim to higher the scientific quality and contemporaneity and strengthen the group feeling in the SSNC forest work. A well-operated forest network gives the SSNC strength, clear results and confidence among the potentates and the general public.

Lost in the social media jungle?

Methodology: Linking social media to real life activities

Target group: People who share a common interest in forest conservation, ranging from beginners to experts and even scientists.

There is no stopping social media. It is there whether we like it or not. It's almost as if those refusing it stop to exist and get forgotten. In the best case they get looked upon as retrogressive naysayers. The SSNC Forest Network realised this in 2007. It wasn't easy. Even though many members already had a facebook account, most computerised activities were still regarded as competing with real life experiences. And what about all the members that need to have a paper copy of our news letter, or at least an e-mail? Obviously the organisation worried more about the somewhat elderly member stock being excluded (because they are unable to learn to use new techniques) than about what would become of an organisation that didn't keep up with the development. The first period of time the forest network served information in many different ways simultaneously: regular pdf newsletter, facebook page and a webpage with RSS or e-mail subscription possibilities.

Now, after a few years, the predominant way members access our news and event invitations is

through our facebook page. It's followers list is now way passed 2500 and counting, i.e. more than double as long as the subscribers list for the news letter. Now you are probably going to think that this is just "likes" and no real estimate of the activity level. Probably there are people who are pretty unwilling to get more engaged in both lists. Interestingly the many of the "oldies" are among the more frequent to comment on posts and sharing new material. And; there they meet the newcomers, mainly young people who want to get in to forest activism. In the old organisation architecture that would rarely happen, if at all.

As a result of using internet and social media, the network itself starts to adapt and transform to become more like an independent media source of material for youtube, webpages, picasa albums etc. The trend is that the ability to communicate the forest issues will be equally important as the traditional species knowledge in future. But the best is if they can combine within the same group and make up highly skilled teams all over Sweden.

LINKS

- [The SSNC forest network facebook page.](#)
- [One very successful facebook campaign site for a forest on the island of Gotland.](#)
- [SSNC forest officer Malin Sahlins forest blog.](#)
- [SSNC:s film "Sweden no longer looks like you think".](#)



The Threatened Forests Project

In the time period 2007-2012 the SSNC has worked with a project that translates 'Threatened Forests'. This is a mapping project that aims to unveil the myth about the Swedish forestry model as a sustainable management system through collecting solid documentation of old-growth forest areas at risk as well as violations to forest legislation and the environmental requirements of the FSC-certification in clear-cut sites.

The mapping has been coordinated by the national office in Stockholm in close collaboration with the SSNC forest network. The whole process includes many different features marking the path for SSNC members to join the mission from the beginners level and onwards. For example, a newcomer can join the annual inventory kick-off session and learn all the basics, then go on a volunteer-ship for a minimum of a week during the Summer season

accompanying skilled experts, after this they are ready to start carrying out inventories of red-listed species and other species that indicate nature values independently, either on their own or in a local "forest group".

A lot of different campaigning products can be extracted from the collected data. Some examples are maps of areas in need of a logging moratorium, actual examples of forest destruction for media, several reports published by the SSNC on both national, regional and local levels, webpages and more.

Visit the SSNC webpage to see our forest map showing examples of the threatened forests and clear-cuts with species data and social values, descriptions and pictures: naturskyddsforeningen.se.

There is also a system in place with volunteers ("forest guardians") who agree to look out for certain areas marked on the map.



Save the Children's Forests



The project "Save the Children's Forests" is aiming to protect and increase accessibility to forests close to homes or schools, which can benefit children's learning and overall health. Research shows several positive side effects from being outside, such as mobility, development of language and creativity. They experience less stress, and rowdy children can often concentrate better by first playing freely. By keeping forests close and accessible to children they can create an interest in nature and sustainability.

The project is standing on two "legs":

1. Courses for teachers about outdoor learning, how they can bring out their subjects into the wild.
2. Local, regional and national activities, aiming to show children's need for these forests and green areas. Examples of activities are guided walks with politicians, mapping out how children use certain green areas and finding which areas are the most popular and therefore important to protect, writing debate articles, handing out suggestions for areas that schools can visit close by.



The Munich based Pro REGENWALD is a non-profit environmental NGO working on human rights and against destruction of ecosystems and deteriorating economic opportunities for affected population. This is done mainly by working towards a reduce of the German 'foot print' and assisting the ones in the 'South' being discriminated by unsustainable consumption patterns in the industrialised world.

Educational activities, advising consumers and decision makers, fundraising on request for project-partners in the 'South', consulting Southern NGO's on fundraising and project development, lobbying on state and federal level as well as companies, solidarity events and explicitly networking are part of the work portfolio.

In pursuit of these objectives, Pro REGENWALD among others has been working on 'Global Learning' since more than 20 years. The organisation has published and organised various travelling exhibitions on issues like 'Causes of rainforest destruction' or 'The impact of banana production/trade'. Pro REGENWALD has produced and disseminated educational modules on forest and consequences of forest destruction. Important part of the organisations educational activities is training of volunteers and interns to actively promote and share information on development issues.

The story of an exercise book

*Subject: An environmental lesson for school kids (1-4 grade, elementary school), 1 hour
Timetable: for demand (several times a year)*

The idea of "The story of an exercise book" is a one hour lesson, where children learn where their exercise books actually come from, out of what material they are made and how deep the impact of pulp production on the environment is, especially on forests. Moreover, the children learn what they can do themselves to avoid paper waste as well as how important it is to use recycling paper regarding forest protection. They get informed about different certification schemes like "Der Blaue Engel" and their different qualities or their grade of making sense respectively.

COURSE

The children were shown about 20 impressive pictures (as a power point presentation) from the "Great Bear Rainforest" in Canada by zooming in from out of space to small details deep inside this forest to show the beauty of the eco system and it's biological relationships, e.g. by showing the biggest trees as well as the smallest animals. They learn more about animals like the grizzly bear, the white headed sea eagle and others and also about the Indian tribes, especially the Nuxalk nation, living in that forest and their strong dependence on this eco system. Furthermore, they learn about the Indian tribes' struggle with the pulp industry and the corporations that are destroying the environment rapidly.

Afterwards the whole class gets time to work out different possibilities to help the Indians and the forest in a leaded discussion about their own dealing with paper.

At the end they can optionally "participate" on a programme called "Papierwende" by signing a non-binding letter of intent for using only recycling paper in future and thereby get an official certificate for their environmental awareness, developed and supported by the official consumer advice centre.

BACKGROUND

As - even the ecologically aware - consumer nowadays is often overstrained regarding the bunch of different certification systems and signs on paper products, it is important for us as a multiplier for environmental issues to bring the specific knowledge straight to where the paper consumption is naturally high and the user knows only little - like young school kids. The idea behind is that the children afterwards influence their parents to look for exercise books with the proper certification system and only to buy recycling paper in general.

As it's sadly still not part of the official curriculum to teach about this issue, we offer that lesson as an optional add-on for schools on our homepage. The offer is to understand as a part of the environmental education hold by the network "Papierwende", where Pro REGENWALD is participating as the main contact in Bavaria.

Reason for the relatively rare demand by school teachers for that lesson is the fact, that the "Verbraucherzentrale Bayern" (official consumer advice centre) offers quite the same. Pro REGENWALD explicitly does in this connection not compete but complete the offer.

The pedagogical concept of that lesson goes back to the Agnes Dieckmann of the German NGO "Urgewald" (also partner within the network Papierwende).

LINKS (only in German):

pro-regenwald.de

verbraucherzentrale-bayern.de/muenchen

papierwende.de

Forest Guardians

Subject: Workshops on environmental education and sustainable development for volunteers (age: 18 – 28 years)

Timetable: at least three workshops per year

The conservation of forests, especially the tropical rain forests, and their natural biodiversity is the main goal of Pro REGENWALD. Therefore, Pro REGENWALD attempts - together with the local people in rainforest countries - to make a contribution for an adequate development in these tropical regions, e.g. by practical and financial support and networking.

The 4 most important aims are:

- » to conserve (tropical) forests in cooperation with the local people,
- » to guard indigenous peoples regarding their self-determination and their cultures,
- » to influence the common eco-destructive lifestyle (also in Germany),
- » to realize projects in tropical countries by financial support and consultancy of local NGOs.

The work field of Pro REGENWALD includes therefore environmental education, consultancy of consumers, lobbying, campaigning, networking, project work and also the coordination and organization of voluntary assistance.

Coordination and organization of voluntary assistance (e.g. via weltwaerts):

The grassroots-minted partner-NGOs of Pro REGENWALD in Costa Rica and Nicaragua work in the field of environmental education, sustainable development, organic farming as well as nature protection and offer volunteers to participate in a practical way. Pro REGENWALD coordinates and organizes a volunteers-services, e.g. under the umbrella of the public weltwaerts-program (part of Germany's development policy).

The volunteers go to Nicaragua or Costa Rica for a period between some weeks as short-term volunteers or two years (maximum period for weltwaerts). The focuses here are monitoring and documentation, reforestation and nursery work,



environmental education, organization of specific workshops, communication with the local authorities, support of local activities and networking as well as inquiries.

These young people should on one hand concretely help with their physical as well as mental manpower and should on the other hand encourage the local, supra-regional and international network.

The work fields for the volunteers are wide and many-sided, depending on the whereabouts/ work places and personal skills.

Before the volunteers service starts, each volunteer participates in two special prep-meetings to get briefed for that work and to get intercultural competences and an intensive background knowledge about politics and history in Latin America as well as the local situation.

These meetings are organized and implemented by Pro REGENWALD, who also provides the whole volunteer assistance.

The volunteers services involve learning and helping in the area of development. Pro REGENWALD and its partner organizations offer service opportunities which combine learning, helping and interaction. In this connection, learning shall involve intercultural, environmental and development-related learning and space for personal development and growth. Learning requires reflection and guidance. Helping involves practical work at the place of assignment as well as the volunteer allowing the partner organization to benefit from his or her personality and background. This provides opportunities for the volunteers to demonstrate commitment and solidarity.

LINKS

forestguardians.net/blog

pro-regenwald.de/mm_weltwaerts



Pracownia (Workshop for all beings) Podlaskie Branch, is a non-governmental organisation active in north-eastern Poland. It's mission is to preserve the wildlife areas in general. In recent years the activity has been focusing on the protection of the Białowieża forest.

The means for achieving the organisation's goals are: mapping of relict species in Białowieża Forest, participation in the legal proceedings, monitoring of the Białowieża Forest's management and educating the public about the context of forest health and biodiversity.

Target groups: Environmental activists

Timetable: every 2, 3 years

'Guardians of Nature' is an educational project, that teaches both practical skills and social knowledge. The aim is to improve the ability to recognise and react to the destruction of Nature. Another important focus is how to establish cooperation between different stakeholders. A trained guardian can intervene on a legal, administrative and social level. solve a local nature protection problem, establish cooperation with organizations, local government, institutions, administrative bodies, media and representatives of local communities. The guardian gains qualifications and practical skills, that often have been proved more important than knowledge.

Starting in the mid 1990's the project is now virtually affecting the conservation status of many valuable places all over Poland.

For many years the programme consisted of three equally important themes: motivation, nature/ environment and law. However, as keeping up with the ever-changing legislation and the ability to use it, as well as media skills have become apparent key factors for successful nature protection the last few years, the the programme has emphasised more on these topics lately.

The programme has been designed to provide the participants with a wide range of skills that enables them to carry out campaigns for nature protection independently. The stationary training is complemented by a few days of field workshop taking place in an area of exceptional natural value. Additionally, in order to become more effective, the guardians in training take part in a two-day- workshop in professional media relations. All participants also work for two weeks as a trainees in the Pracownia association's educational centre which giving allowing them to take their newly gained knowledge into practice.

The outcomes of the training programme are so good that today many of the former participants now work in the nature conservation. Some work actively with environment protection in NGO's, others are civil servants working in positions connected to nature conservation and spatial planning, yet others teach new generations how to protect wildlife at schools and universities. . Another effect of the training are many campaigns carried out by the Guardians for the protection of local natural values of Poland.

pracownia.org.pl

Council of All Beings



Target groups: everyone who wants to overcome their egocentric attitude towards the world

Timetable: 3-4 times /year

The Council of All Beings is as a result of a search of contemporary rituals based on the experiences of various cultures as well as modern psychology. It is held on several continents. Currently we run the Council basing on the experience of John Seed, Joanna Macy, Pat Fleming and Arne Naess as described in the book: "Thinking like a mountain". The workshop refers to the principles of deep ecology, it is based on an old legend, rituals of various cultures as well as modern psychology. Possessing knowledge isn't enough to take actions for the benefit of nature. In order to effectively help the natural world it is essential to ask yourself some important questions beforehand. What am I coming with to the Council? What are my expectations? Do I have any hidden

objections? Where am I? Who am I? Why and how do I live? What do I live for? What can I do for both, my interior and exterior nature? What can I do in my everyday life to, firstly, "do no harm" and, secondly, to help?

Through the ritual we prepare to take on a hard task, we build up motivation and accumulate energy necessary to protect the Earth. Raising personal motivation to make efforts to protect of endangered species and habitats is key to real improvement of nature conservation. In the educative process of adults, the effects of the educative process always strictly depends on the motivation. e. For this reason a motivating training has been designed and conducted with the use of highly effective teaching method in the form of a group training.

LINK

pracownia.org.pl

The Ukrainian-Polish School of Nature Protection

Target groups: environmentalists, students, activists from environmental organizations, scientists and all who want to protect nature in a practical way

Timetable: once a year

The Ukrainian-Polish School of Nature Protection is a joint Ukrainian-Polish initiative by the Kiev Ecological and Cultural Centre and the Workshop for All Beings Association. The primary objective of is to enable the exchange of knowledge and experiences between institutions from Poland and from across its eastern border (especially Ukraine) that work actively for nature protection. The initiative also aims at influencing the participants in the area of ecological ethics based on the idea of absolute environmental protection.

The sessions cover theoretical and practical aspects. The participants get familiar with the reality of environmental protection in Ukraine, as well as in Poland, and more widely the European Union, circumstances concerning a particular issue. This helps the students to notice differences and similarities as well as strengths and weaknesses of the environmental protection in both countries.

Up to now, the participants have been acquainted with the current state and main problems of nature

conservation in Ukraine and Poland. The sessions have also covered topics such as protection of old trees, the ideology and practice of the Red List of Threatened Species, and issues related to so called 'harmful' species. Moreover, the teaching has encompassed legal aspects of nature protection, methods and experience of conducting long-term campaigns for safeguarding wildlife as well as a radical concept of protecting Ukrainian forest. The lecturers include lawyers, people who work in academic institutions and experienced ecological activists, who have made remarkable achievements in the field of nature protection.

The school is the first joint initiative of this type in history conducted by environmental activists from two neighbouring countries; and one can undoubtedly claim that it has proven successful. It has become a cooperation platform for active and thinking alike people who are interested in real and practical nature protection. It is worth highlighting that so far all editions of the school have been organised without any co-financing from external foundations.

LINKS

ecoethics.ru

pracownia.org.pl



FRIENDS OF THE EARTH CZECH REPUBLIC



The Olomouc local group is the biggest Friends of the Earth local group in the Czech Republic, independent from the main office. The NGO is based in Central Moravia, but focuses much on the Carpathians as well. The main activities in the Carpathian region stem from the conservation of large carnivores (wolves, lynxes and bears) which include monitoring and direct protection against poaching with help of volunteers, education programmes/seminars for children, students and adults and public awareness campaigns on the national level.

The organisation also deals with the protection of large carnivores habitats – especially migration corridors and with forest conservation, participation in decision making processes and educational programmes. In the Olomouc region, FoE focus also on the local environmental problems, especially protection of trees and green in urban and suburban areas, support of organic agriculture and free consultancy in environmental issues.

Wolf and lynx patrols

Wolves, lynxes and bears have been natural components of the Central European forest ecosystem for thousands of years, thus lost for a period of time and now gradually recovering their habitats throughout Europe. Also the West Carpathian Mountains have become the home of these controversial and charismatic species and thanks to the successful reintroduction program in 1980's, lynxes have also returned to Šumava and south-western part of Bohemia.

However, lack of knowledge, negative public attitudes, poaching and habitat fragmentation still seriously threaten the populations of large carnivore species. The project "Wolf and lynx patrols" is an attempt to solve these problems.

Wolf and lynx patrols are couples or small groups (2 to 4 members) of trained volunteers who look out for an area of frequent carnivore occurrence, conduct field monitoring (collection of signs of large carnivore presence, checking camera traps) and also act as anti-poaching guards. These patrols are also an important source of local community involvement; volunteers help with the distribution of information materials, communicate with tourists, recreational users and local people. Friends of the Earth Czech Republic organize special training sessions for new volunteers in cooperation with administrations of protected areas Beskydy and Šumava and other experts.

LINK
selmy.cz



Field trip across two cross-border national parks

The Šumava National Park and the bordering German Bavarian Forest National Park are, according to the IUCN, part of the largest, best conserved and most species rich forested area in Central Europe. This area is abundant with peat bogs, fens, mountain meadows and mountain spruce forests. Many endangered species occur in the area (lynx, capercaillie, black grouse, gentian etc.).

In 2007, almost 30 % of Šumava was protected as wilderness (non-intervention management) to re-establish ecosystem processes. However, on the German side of the border in the Bavarian Forest 75% area is a wilderness zone.

Lynx, capercaillie and other species sensitive to habitat fragmentation and non-disturbed areas are in danger, because the management of Šumava depends on the political situation. Unfortunately a bark beetle outbreak has become a main source of conflict between nature conservationists and

foresters. Under the false pretext of forest protection, intensive forest logging has already caused severe damages on the mountain spruce forests.

The best way to explain the forests ability to recover without human interventions is to see the real situation with one's own eyes. Therefore the general public is invited once a year to take part in a field trip with an expert guide across the two national parks. These four-day-trips bring the guests to in the most attractive areas of the both national parks and to locations where participants are allowed to see how forests are developing 5, 10 and 25 years after a bark beetle attack, and where new wild landscape is now establishing. They also see extensive cleared areas in places where forests infected with bark beetle were felled. The participants can see the strikingly fundamental differences and consequences of the two different approaches to management of nature protection in national parks.



Weeks for forests and wilderness

Weeks for forests and wilderness – volunteer camps organized by Friends of the Earth Czech Republic – aim to involve and educate public in nature conservation activities and create a networking platform where people who share a common interest in nature can get to know one another. Besides the field work,

there is always a field trip and several lectures and discussion forums focused on nature conservation issues related to the location where the camp takes place. Some 1,400 people have participated the Weeks for forest during the last 16 years and have worked almost 50,000 volunteer hours.





Quercus was founded in 1985. It is a grass-root NGO with around 4000 associated members and 18 regional centres. Currently it employs 30 people and mobilises hundreds of volunteers in its campaigns.

The first actions were related to the protection of birds of prey and native oak forests, opposing plantation of eucalyptus due to the pressure of cellulose factories. River protection, the fight against construction of a nuclear repository near the Portuguese border and the preparation of information materials regarding natural aspects of Portugal were the first and most relevant activities.

Quercus bought lands to preserve core natural values and contributes directly to the preservation of endangered species with three centres for the Rehabilitation of Wild Animals. Quercus is very active as a watchdog on the construction of big infrastructures and their impacts, especially on biodiversity and native forests.

Quercus organises training courses, awareness campaigns and environment education activities and is a member of several international organisations. Regarding biodiversity and forests it is quite active in the Biodiversity working group of the European Environmental Bureau and it is member of the Forest Stewardship Council.

Target-public: Consumers, other

Green Cork started as a project of selective collection of used cork stoppers for recycling. Implemented by Quercus, this project is now moving forward: with the collection of cork stoppers it is intended to contribute for the preservation of cork oak and indigenous forests in general, to raise awareness on the use of cork as an environmentally friendly material and on waste reduction. By selling the cork stoppers to the recycling companies, Quercus gets the necessary funding for a reforestation project – "Floresta Comum" (Common Forest). Since 2008 around 160 tons were collected and about 120 thousand native trees were planted. Green Cork is a living project, implemented by schools, scouts, the wider community, municipalities, small and big corporations and other NGO's.

Link: greencork.org

MAIN CONSTRAINTS/ CHALLENGES

Increasing communication and information campaigns is needed, in order to give continuity and to uplift Green Cork project and therefore to

increase significantly the potential for collection and recycling of cork stoppers. To overcome this challenge, Quercus did an application of the project to the European contest "A World you like with a Climate you Like" in 2013, and got positioned among the 10 most popular projects:

world-you-like.europa.eu



Year	Cork stoppers (tonnes)	Cork stoppers (units)	Planted trees (units)	Municipalities (units)
2009	6.960	1.546.600	5.690	2
2010	34.700	7.711.000	10.415	73
2011	39.263	8.725.200	14.848	16
2012	89.104	19.800.978	70.000	67
2013 (jan-june)	25.433	5.651.800	After October	74
Total	195.460	43.435.578	100.953	—

Table 1: Major results/outcomes.

Involving citizens

– in removal of invasive alien tree species



Target-group: Scouts; general public

DESCRIPTION

Invasive alien species is one of the major causes for the decline of biodiversity worldwide. During last three years, Quercus, through its regional delegation in Braga (North of Portugal), has been promoting an annual action of control of *Mimosa sp.*, an invasive alien tree species, at Bom Jesus area. This action has a wide participation, though most people are engaged from a scouts organization (Association "Guias de Portugal") ranging from 6 years old children to adults.

The Confraria do Bom Jesus, local NGO, provides technical support with a Forest Engineer. Other organizations provided some help, such as the firefighters (Sapadores) and, in the first year of the project, the forest state services (Autoridade Florestal

Nacional). Local hotels at Bom Jesus provide snacks to the volunteers and Quercus coordinates and pays the insurance for the volunteers.

The action takes place every year, in two phases: In April, we peel or pull out "mimosas" (cutting and systemic herbicide application is done by firefighters) and in November we plant indigenous trees. This year (2013), in addition to transplantation, we are planning to collect seeds and to sow them. This project has therefore two distinct activities: controlling of "mimosas" it self and soil occupation with autoctonous vegetation, which act as shadow providers and therefore contribute to control the germination of mimosa seeds still existing in the soil.

MAJOR RESULTS/OUTCOMES

Up to the present moment, there were four Spring campaigns of *Mimosa sp.* control e three Autumn campaignings of planting/sowing autoctonous forest species; the fourth is scheduled to November 2013, the 23st.

Its hard to quantify the number of *Mimosa sp.* trees intervened, as many were cut by the firefighters in the first campaign and the "mimosas" peeled by the volunteers, dozens each Spring, die standing up and are removed by the Confraria do Bom Jesus by the end of each year. Smaller trees removed by the volunteers reach up to many dozens each Spring.

We present below the number of participating volunteers in Autumn and Spring campaigns:

AUTUMN

1st year: 100
2nd year 17
3rd year: 10

SPRING

1st year: 30
2nd year: 33
3rd year: 23
4th year: 62

MAJOR CONSTRAINTS/CHALLENGES

Finding enough volunteers is the major challenge of this project. As an effort to overcome this, Quercus has established a cooperation protocol with a scout NGO (Associação de Guias de Portugal). Quercus provides training and Guias de Portugal provides labor capacity in the ground, supported by other organizations, as described above.



Forest are in trouble globally. The protection of biodiversity is a high priority political target of the EU. This has resulted in several EU-regulations that has got a great impact on national law and implementation. Despite this fact, educational activities addressing biodiversity and forests do not at all reflect this transnational approach.

This is the main reason 6 NGO:s from all across Europe has been conducting a Learning Partnership - a joint initiative to share knowlaedge around the topic of how to work with Forests and Biodiversity in an european NGO.

There are problems with management and conservation, that need to be highlighted. The

forests of Europe are the continents home of biodiversity. Considering the variety of forest ecosystems across Europe and historical quite different relation with their relevant forests, one can observe a range of methodologies and opportunities for environmental education addressing forest issues. The potential for improving educational methods and the knowledge about the importance of forest ecosystems, biodiversity and the complexity of this systems by sharing experiences, problems and solutions is very challenging and the main driver for this Learning Partnership.

In this booklet we share some of our recent experiences that we got from working with this topic.