

European State Forest Association (EUSTAFOR)
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EUSTAFOR in a nutshell

Established in 2006 by Metsähallitus (Finland), Office National des Forêts (France), Latvijas Vasts Meži (Latvia) and Österreichische Bundesforste AG (Austria)
Currently 28 members from 21 European countries
Forest area ~ 46 million ha (27% of EU forest area)
Protected forest area ~ 10 million ha
Certified forest area ~ 28 million ha (PEFC, FSC)
Annual increment ~ 155 million m³
Annual harvest ~ 117 million m³ (74% of increment)
Number of employees ~ 113 100

Mission and objectives

The mission of EUSTAFOR - a strong voice for European forests

EUSTAFOR, as a forum for the European state forest organisations, brings the positive contributions of forest management and of state forests in particular into the public view, in terms of the realisation of European sustainability strategies.

By supporting the pan-European sustainability strategies with all its strength, EUSTAFOR helps its members to implement their individual sustainability strategies.

The goal of EUSTAFOR is to promote the common interest of state forests in the EU in the scope of their sustainable development. The association supports and strengthens state forest organisations in Europe to maintain and enhance economically viable, socially beneficial, culturally valuable and ecologically responsible sustainable forest management.

The main objectives of EUSTAFOR are:

- 1. To analyse and investigate the existing framework conditions within the EU, in order to create the preconditions for sustainable management of state forests:
- 2. To facilitate and expand an exchange of ideas and contacts between the state forest organisations of Europe;
- 3. To keep its members regularly informed on topics and issues that concern the whole of Europe.



This EUSTAFOR publication is the second one of the series. It is something between an annual report and a booklet on a subject. This time we have selected non-wood goods and services offered by state forests as the subject. The selection has been made for a number of reasons. The first reason is to promote the development activities in the community of forest managers in the said area. The second reason is to inform the public of the role of state forests regarding offering environmental and cultural services. The third reason is to contribute to the pan-European discussion in the said matter. Perhaps it is also worth mentioning here that the EU Forest Action Plan 2007–2011 has prescribed the exchange of experiences on the valuation and marketing of non-wood forest goods and services. This publication is to some extent a common contribution of EUSTAFOR and members thereof to this process.

The members of EUSTAFOR, the number of which has increased to 28 as of this moment, have told their stories in this publication at their discretion. There have been diverse developments – starting with placing a new service on the

market and ending with untraditional marketing. We also wanted to offer our readers an insight into the "human face" of European state forests this year. For that purpose this time we have photographed the persons who are responsible for the implementation of development projects in the middle level of organisations or straight in the forest. This is, of course, a subjective selection, but perhaps it provides familiar feelings as well as valuable contacts for further cooperation projects.

The year 2007–2008 has been a very busy year for EUSTA-FOR. Pursuant to the resolution of the Executive Committee, or priorities have been informative activities in the area of wood energy and carbon trade related to forestry. Two respective working groups led by Mr. Roland Kautz from Austria and Mrs. Marianne Rubio from France have been engaged in the foregoing area. Both themes are closely related to legislative drafting. In January 2008 the European Commission made two proposals for a directive to improve the carbon trade and to increase the share of renewable energy. Therefore, we invited Mrs. Jessica Steinmetz from the state forests of Sweden who has the education of a lawyer to collaborate with us in our Brussels office. They tell their story in this annual report.

In March 2008 the General Assembly of EUSTAFOR approved the authorities of the Executive Committee for the next two years. Mr. Pierre-Olivier Drège from the state forests of France was unanimously elected to continue as President and Mr. Georg Erlacher from the state forests of Austria was re-elected Vice President. Three new members were also elected in the Executive Committee: Mr. Gunnar Olofsson (Sweden), Mr. Cristian Apostol (Romania) and Mr. Karl-Heinrich von Bothmer (Germany). Upon the increasing number of members it has been expedient to expand the representation of the Executive Committee, as well.

EUSTAFOR has integrated in several substantial international processes. In June 2007 the organisation became the observer member of the MCPFE and in November of the same year EUSTAFOR participated in the Ministerial Conference in Warsaw in the discussion panel of stakeholders. In 2008 EUSTAFOR has become a full member of the European Forest Technology Platform (FTP). Mr. Tomasz Wójcik, a member of our Executive Committee, represents the forest owners along with the Association of Private Forest Owners in the high-level group of the FTP. EUSTAFOR has actively participated in the workshops of the UN ECE Timber Committee, where the topics have mainly included wood energy or the development of the European timber market on a wider basis.

In summary a short overview of the European Forestry House in Brussels. This house was opened in spring 2007 in a newly renovated form. Today several forestry organisations have found their home in the house – the Confederation of European Forest Owners, Fédération Européenne des Communes Forestières, European Network of Forest Entrepreneurs, European Forest Institute, Forest-based Sector Technology Platform. Being physically together has proved to be the best measure of success – forest owners have been able to come out with common opinions and thanks to it they are considered more. On the other hand, the understanding of the different roles of state and private forests has also enhanced in society – the abundance of ownership is the strength, just like the strength of Europe lies in its cultural versatility.

We thank everyone who has contributed with their thoughts and actions to the completion of this publication. We like to hope that the strength of this publication is also the different opinions from the Nordic Countries to the Balkans and our common desire to make European forestry more innovative.

Erik Kosenkranius Executive Director



The European Forestry House in Brussels

Caption: The European Forestry House is not just a place for the offices of the European forestry organisations and for meetings. With its historical interior it also provides possibilities to exhibit cultural heritage related to forestry. Forestry-related historical exhibition in spring 2008.



EUSTAFOR's executive committee



President: Mr. Pierre-Olivier Drège (France)

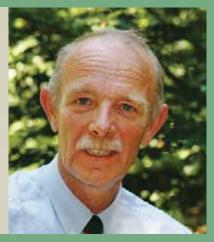
Members:



Mr. Hannu Jokinen (Finland)



Mr. Tim Crowley (Ireland)



Mr. Karl-Heinrich von Bothmer (Germany)



Vice-President: Mr. Georg Erlacher (Austria)

EUSTAFOR's executive committee



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EUSTAFOR Working Groups



The EUSTAFOR Working group on Biomass and Bioenergy has an ongoing commitment to working on one of the most discussed topics within EU sustainability policy: Biomass, Bioenergy and Renewable Energy Sources.

Given the mandate by 28 state forest organizations managing 46 million hectares of forests across Europe, the working group deals with biomass activities at the national level and with European policy developments. In this context, state forest organizations see themselves as key players in mobilizing wood biomass and offering their services, logistics and organizational concepts for the additional wood mobilization required. As a member of the "Standing Forestry Committee ad hoc Working Group on mobilisation and efficient use of wood and wood residues for energy generation", the working group was able to properly contribute to the overall European renewable energy source strategy development process. In relation to a number of stakeholders, the Working Group has prepared a range of papers presenting their position on these issues (1. EUSTAFOR's position on biomass and bioenergy issues; 2. EUSTAFOR's position on the European Commission's proposal for a directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources; 3. The European Forest owner's joint statement on the European Commission's proposal for a directive on the promotion of the use of energy from renewable sources (EUSTAFOR, CEPF, CO-PA-COGEGA, FECOF, NORDIC FAMILY FORESTRY)).

A booklet published in autumn 2008 will discuss the following topics:

- Energy versus pulp/paper competition for the same resource, facts and myths
- Soil degradation-nutrient balance issues in relation to wood biomass extraction
- · Supply chain for wood chipping
- Energy transformation pre-conditions, facts and figures for successful investments by SFOs
- Information sources on biomass and bioenergy an overview
- · Marketing of household firewood
- Resource Assortment (techniques, tree compartment)
- Access to private forests

We kindly invite you to contribute to the EUSTAFOR working group on biomass and bioenergy.

Roland Kautz





Working in Brussels.
Associated employee

In 2007, EUSTAFOR introduced the possibility for its members to send employees to the executive office in Brussels on secondment. One aim is to involve members more in the work of EUSTAFOR, as the organisation needs expert knowledge to ensure the quality of its work. I had the opportunity to join the EUSTAFOR team in Brussels for four months at the beginning of 2008 through my Swedish employer Sveaskog. It has been a very instructive experience – for me personally, for my employer and for EUSTAFOR.

My main task was to obtain a complete understanding of how the European Union functions and how decisions are made. I was integrated into the executive office's daily work, which includes quite a lot of legal issues. I participated in different meetings with staff from EU institutions and other stakeholders and was involved with the preparatory work. As I am a lawyer and have worked as a legal counsel for Sveaskog for almost four years, I found the subjects very interesting. I enjoy working in a European environment where several different languages are used on a daily basis.

After my secondment, I wrote a report and held a seminar for the management team at Sveaskog regarding the impacts the European Union has upon Sveaskog and what impacts we can have upon the Community.

I highly recommend all EUSTAFOR members to send their employees on a secondment to the EUSTAFOR team in Brussels – I am sure it will be valuable for your company, the employee and of course also for EUSTAFOR!

Jessica Steinmetz





Gerald Plattner

Natural Landscape Management by ÖBf A single approach to meet different needs

Österreichische Bundesforste (ÖBf) manages natural landscapes in a consistent effort that combines various ecological objectives – the preservation of Austria's rich natural heritage – with sustainable economic management to benefit society at large.

In our age of rapidly growing ecological problems, people attach great importance to nature conservation, but given the ever more complex social division of labour, responsibility for the preservation of valuable natural landscapes and habitats is more often than not believed to be someone else's business. As a major owner of valuable tracts of natural land. ÖBf understands this difficult situation and is using its specialist expertise and innovative solutions to ring in an era of comprehensive ecological responsibility characterized by a holistic approach to the potential benefits to be drawn from land management. Obviously, forest management remains focused on the sustainable production of timber, with the lease of hunting grounds and other land parcels, as well as buildings, as additional core business areas. But ÖBf now also provides additional services, including natural landscape management.

Österreichische Bundesforste AG (Austrian Federal Forests)
Area of managed forest: 0.51 million ha Number of employees: 1189
Annual harvest (2007) 2.35 million m³
Managing directors:
Georg Erlacher (CEO), Georg Schöppl (CFO)

Changing social values

Not too long ago, forestry experts were more or less confined to the care and economic exploitation of forested land. This was regarded as their central task. Many people, especially those living in urban areas, saw nature either as something primitive, threatening even, or at best idealized it as romantic scenery. Accordingly, preserving nature was deemed unproductive or even counterproductive by many of those who used natural resources – it was perceived to be directly opposed to economic interests.

This attitude has started to change over the last ten to fifteen years. Ecology is no longer an arcane term, and concern for the preservation of natural and cultural landscapes has spread far beyond the ranks of environmental activists. This change in general perception has been triggered by scandalous despoiling of the natural environment, acid rain, and not least by progressive urban sprawl that has given rise to the longing for a healthy environment. The concept of organic food is becoming increasingly embraced, and tourists as well as others appreciate the recreational value of intact natural landscapes. And now that climate change has started to make its mark, more and more people understand that functioning ecosystems are important – because we are part of them.

How do foresters cope with the new demands and tasks that result from this shift? We at ÖBf pursue a policy of proactive planning and timely action to meet economic needs as well as the needs of people and nature. As the largest landowner in the country, ÖBf bears responsibility for Austria's natural landscapes and habitats. Taking into account the interests of our society, we cooperate with the nature conservation units in local governments, National Parks and many other institutions to ensure that both locals and visitors from abroad can enjoy the natural beauty of Austria's forests, mountains and lakes (on the premise that certain basic rules are respected), while working to preserve the value of pristine landscapes and to restore other, less favourable areas to a more natural state.



Integrated nature conservation policy

ÖBf responded to the emergence of a new understanding of nature protection by establishing a unit for natural landscape management in 2004. Up till then, nature conservation policy had focused exclusively on the creation of designated "protection zones" with government regulations as the primary policy instrument. This has been replaced by a clear trend towards "integrated conservation" – modern natural landscape management is employing participatory solutions in an effort to balance the interests of the natural environment, agriculture/forestry and society with rights and duties laid down in contractual form. In the long run, nature conservation can only succeed in cooperation with those living in or next to areas that should be protected because of their natural value. While the "traditional" conservation policies of the past often ignored or dismissed the concerns of local inhabitants, "integrated nature conservation" is an approach that no longer excludes people by drawing borders around designated protection zones.

A broad range of tasks

The tasks of a natural landscape manager include: ecological restoration, planning protection zones, processing compensation claims, visitor support and management, and conducting projects to implement regional protection measures in cooperation with project partners ranging from environmentalist organizations to local communities, tourism associations, local governmental nature conservation units, museums, universities and business enterprises ("ecosponsoring"). ÖBf's natural landscape managers have proven their abilities in scores of projects, including, for example, the ecological restoration of 22 important moor systems lo-

cated in different Austrian provinces (Lower Austria, Styria, Tyrol). On the initiative of ÖBf, six of these systems have been included on the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance. In a number of Ramsar wetland sites, ÖBf has cooperated with local and regional stakeholders in the creation of infrastructure and education facilities that enable visitors to observe these fascinating habitats.

ÖBf was also instrumental in the establishment of the Vienna Woods Biosphere Reserve in 2006. ÖBf is not only the owner of large portions of the land included in the biosphere reserve, our natural landscape management unit also played a leading role in the planning of the reserve and will continue to provide good stewardship of the strictly protected sensitive core zone well into the future.

Strengthening the role of regional forestry operations

The experts in ÖBf's natural landscape management unit have been able to gather significant experience through our participation in the management of National Parks. In particular, the unit provides ongoing support for the work of regional forestry operations because dealing with "nature issues" or ecological problems – which are often a focus of interest for regional stakeholders – opens up new perspectives on these operations. They can thus become hubs in regional or local networks, taking an active role in projects and participating in decision-making processes. In some cases, they are also able to raise funds via Interreg, Leader+ or other national support programmes aimed at nature conservation or the facilitation of nature experiences.



Darko Vuletic

Foresters are aware of their responsibility, both as citizens and as experts. Therefore, in forest management planning we never forget that our main task is to preserve this green wealth for future generations.

Croatia, in preserving her forests and forested land has been extremely successful, as was confirmed by the international body, Forest Stewardship Council. The FSC certificate has been awarded for all our forest territory under state ownership, confirming that this area is managed in accordance with strict environmental, social and economic standards. The FSC certificate has now been extended for the second five-year period.

In our organisation, special care is taken of the biological diversity. The largest part of our growing stock consists of beech 36%, common oak 12%, hornbeam 95, fir 8%, common ash 3% and spruce 2%.

Among our numerous activities, we take this opportunity to single out hunting. Hrvatske Šume is the biggest hunting licensee in our country and they manage 29 state-owned open and enclosed hunting grounds and game breeding centres over a total area of 304,000 hectares. In its 240 years, the forestry profession in Croatia has witnessed that the integrated approach to the management of forests,

game and other animal species is the best approach for the entire ecosystem. Croatia can boast a unique natural area with natural diversity represented across a relatively small territory. In Croatia, game is a crucial part of our awareness of the importance of the natural environment, and this is evidenced by the fact that all three large European predators – bear, wolf and lynx – live on our territory.

This is the result of the expert management of forests, forested land and game. Employees in the hunting trade proved themselves exceptional in the post-war period through the renewal of parent stock of large game, particularly deer. Similarly, the systematic growth of a trophy structure for all kinds of large game is recognisable. Among large game, our hunting grounds breed red deer, fallow deer, roe deer, chamois, mouflon, wild boar and brown bear, and small game includes hare, mallard, rock partridge, quail etc.

In each of our 37 hunting grounds throughout Croatia, visitors find refreshment and peace and take home memories that invariably bring them back to Croatia.



Programme 2000

"Programme 2000" (Provision of Public Interest Aims at Lesy České republiky, s.p.) serves, among other purposes, to finance the restoration and maintenance of tourist trails and paths, nature trails, rest areas, spring wells, monuments and many other elements of the forest.

In 1996, the state enterprise Lesy České republiky (also referred to as 'LČR') adopted its Forest Policy with the main objective of establishing an optimal relationship between the fulfilment of all forest functions, the market economy and the development of the environmental functions of the forest. At the same time, it has become clear that to comply with the Government Policy Statement, it is necessary to plan the provision of public interest aims in the forests managed by LČR. That is why Programme 2000 was created at the turn of the millennium, establishing the basis for providing public interest aims beyond the obligations laid down by the Forest Act.

Programme 2000 was adopted in 1999, and was prepared by professionals of the state enterprise LČR in cooperation with experts involved in nature protection, research and professional education. Programme 2000 was adopted in order to satisfy social, strategic and publicly beneficial interests. It represents the main guiding principles and inspiration for LČR staff. The following examples represent activities financed from the LČR budget within Programme 2000:

- establishing and maintaining spring wells, springs and spring areas
- restoring reservoirs in the forests

Jaroslav Zezula

- restoring trails, paths and sidewalks for hiking, cycling and horse riding
- protecting monuments in forests
- establishing and maintaining information boards, guideposts and nature trails
- protecting and managing protected flora and fauna biotopes

Lesy České republiky, s.p. implements Programme 2000 on the basis of its own financial resources – profits earned from its activities. An amount of CZK 10 million was allocated to Programme 2000 in its first year, and CZK 30 million has been invested for each subsequent year since. Between 1999 and 2007, Lesy České republiky, s.p. has invested more than CZK 200 million in this programme. The allocation for this year has risen to CZK 60 million.

Among the significant activities conducted this year we can name, for example, the preservation of the historic construction Vápenka Javorník, the reconstruction of the Týřov castle in the Forest District of Křivoklát and an access project for the Žďárské vrchy (uplands) as well as the establishment of a system of trails, cycle paths and rest areas in the Forest District of Nové Město na Moravě. The newly restored area known as 'U Hřibu' located beside the national road between Rejvíz and Dolní Údolí was inaugurated on 3 May 2008.



Τμήμα Δασών (Department of Forests) Area of managed forest: 0,11 million ha Number of employees: 440 Annual harvest 5000 m³ General director: Aristides Ioannou



Forest Officer Takis Papachristophorou is collecting seed of Thymus capitatus

Non-Wood Forest Products in Cyprus

The forests of Cyprus constitute a valuable and precious asset that contributes significantly to the environmental stability, economic development and social prosperity and well being of the island.

Forestry in Cyprus has for many years been based on multiple uses. Along with the exploitation of forests for timber production, indirect benefits and secondary products have been of significant importance for the local population and have been considered in daily forestry practices.

Today, the overall social and environmental value of forests far exceeds the commercial value of trees as timber. The low productivity of such a dry region, as well as the globalisation of the market, has reduced the exploitation of local timber to quantities of around 5000 m³ per year.

At the same time, there is an increasing demand for a diversified range of non-wood products and services, both marketable and non-marketable. The state forests are a popular recreation destination for both residents and non-residents. They provide opportunities for outdoor activities such as picnicking, camping, hiking, walking, cycling, skiing, bird watching, sightseeing, hunting and fishing.



Other important services provided by forests include the protection of soil and water resources, conservation of biological diversity, amelioration of climate, carbon capture and storage and the mitigation of global warming, combating desertification and support for agricultural productivity.

Based on a study prepared within the framework of the National Forest Programme (NFP), the social benefits of forests attributable partly to recreation, tourism, water production from boreholes/springs and improvements in agricultural yields due to soil conservation, were shown to be approximately 62.76 million Euros per year or an average of 482 Euros per hectare per year.

In addition, Cyprus forests are still the main source for a variety of products other than timber. Edible mushrooms are collected free of charge for private consumption, but commercial picking can provide valuable extra income to rural communities in good years. Nectar honey originates from thyme, fresh lavender, citrus trees, wild germander, tare, sumach and other plants. Fruits and nuts which come mainly from Crataegus azarolus (oriental hawthorn) - eaten raw and used in the preparation of a very delicious traditional marmalade – and Ceratonia siliqua – exploited extensively due to the commercial value of their fruits, are also valuable for agro-pastoral purposes.

There are over 280 wild aromatic and medicinal plant species. The most important species according to the extent of their use are Origanum spp. (valuable aromatic oil), Salvia fruticosa (Greek sage, a medicinal plant against sore throats and colds) and Thymus capitatus (thyme collected as an aromatic herb in cooking).

Even though Forest Law regulates felling, processing and collecting of any NWFP, as it does for timber products, it is customary that such products are collected free of charge.

Traditionally, these freely collected products are important elements of the country's cultural heritage, and their collection and use is important to people in rural areas. They are marketed locally, nationally and some of them internationally.

The demand for medicinal and aromatic plants in the international market is growing and could result in significant cash returns for rural communities. Considering this, the Department of Agriculture and the Agricultural Research Institute have initiated several projects to promote the production and marketing of medicinal and aromatic plants on a commercial basis.



The Dalby Forest Project

Background

Dalby Forest is situated on the southern slopes of the North York Moors National Park and is one of the most visited outdoor attractions in Yorkshire with approximately 350,000 visitors per year. It is also an important habitat for wildlife, as well as being a highly productive forest.

The forest's network of forest roads provides access to an outstanding 'Rigg and Dale' landscape – valleys, uplands, streams and a mix of broadleaf and conifer forest. Following the disruption caused by foot and mouth disease in 2001, annual visitor numbers stabilised at approximately 300,000. Without major investment in the forest, facilities were becoming worn out, with the risk of a reduction in visitor numbers and loss of associated economic activity.

Government strategy identified economic development as a high priority for this part of England. Focusing on the distinctive character of Dalby Forest, and the special qualities of the National Park, the Forestry Commission and partners saw an opportunity to support economic regeneration by enhancing the natural environment. Adding to this existing tourism product would attract high growth and high spend economic activity to the area, offering new business and employment opportunities both on site and in the nearby market towns and villages.

Actions and achievements

The Dalby Project was divided into three phases, principally funded by Yorkshire Forward, ERDF Objective 2 and the Forestry Commission.

Phase 1 Dalby Courtyard was a £1.1m refurbishment of the old Forestry Commission offices, estate yard and village hall at Low Dalby, providing 6 craft workshops, 5 offices for rent, a new community resource centre, cycle hire, a new cafe, improved toilets, an extension to the existing car park and a path to the courtyard complex.

Phase 2 involved the construction of a £2.6m Visitor Centre. This is a contemporary building, built using sustainable materials and construction techniques. It showcases the principles of sustainability, particularly in the use of natural resources, energy, water management and recycling. It has its own wind turbine, solar panels, rainwater harvesting system, wood fuel boiler and fixtures made from recycled materials. The exhibition area enables visitors to gain a better understanding of the cultural and environmental roles of the forest.

The restaurant, divided between an internal area and external terrace, has kitchens designed to cater for conferences and major events with a strong emphasis on local food.

The new centre was awarded the prestigious Prime Minister's Better Public Building Award in recognition of its architectural and environmental excellence.

Phase 3 involved a £405,000 project to build 55 km of new cycle trails, promoting Dalby as a centre of excellence for mountain biking. A cycle skills area has been constructed

Forestry Commission England
Area of managed forest: 0.21 million ha
Number of employees: 900
Annual harvest 1.45 million m³
Chief Executive: Simon Hodgson



Visitors enjoying the new cycle trails at Dalby Forest

with support from 'PACE Mountain Bikes' and the local group 'SingletrAction.' Dalby was voted the best trail centre in England in June 2008 by 'Mountain Bike Rider' magazine.

A new national accounting system for 'Recreation Profit Centres' provides clear business and financial priorities and aligns resources to specific objectives and performance targets. Phase 3 continues our investment in the business. For example:

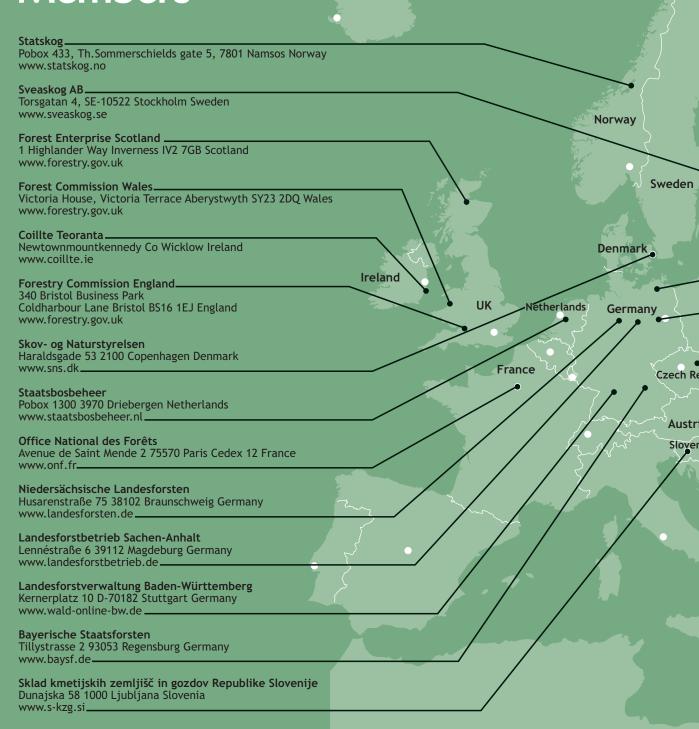
- Twin domes have been installed by the local Astronomical Society, providing impressive views of the planets, as well as deep space objects such as galaxies.
- A brand new 'Go Ape' course with rope bridges, Tarzan swings and zip slides up to 15 metres above the forest floor is attracting tourists and corporate events.

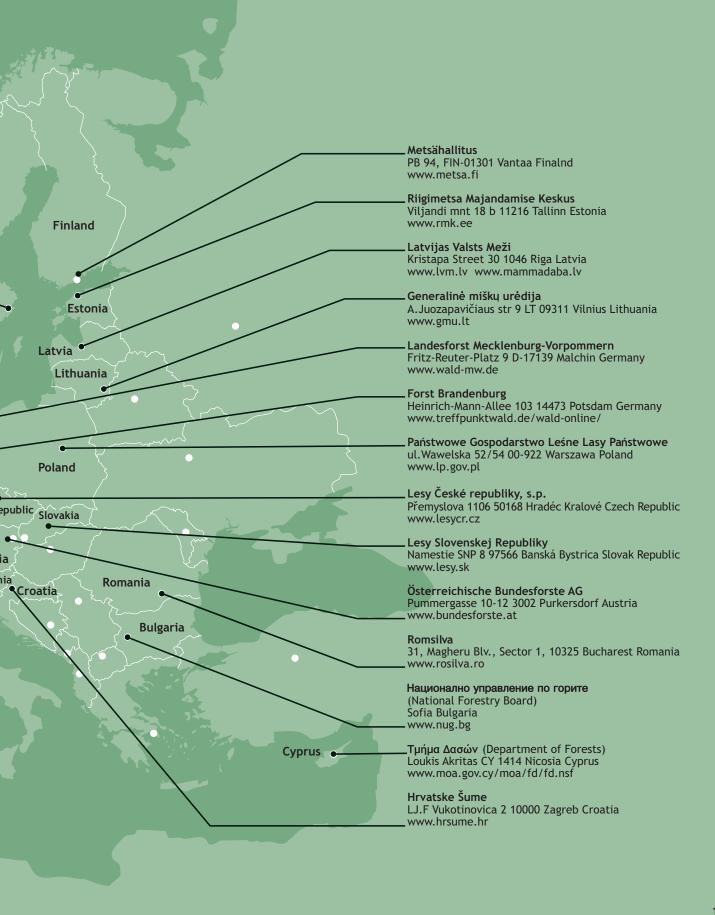
Outcome

An investment of £4.3 million over the last 3 years has resulted in the remarkable transformation of Dalby Forest into a Regional Centre of Excellence for sustainable economic activity and a "Profit Centre" with rapidly improving financial performance. It forms part of a network of major recreation centres operated by the Forestry Commission throughout England.

For further information visit www.forestry.gov.uk/england

Members







Riigimetsa Majandamise Keskus (State Forest Management Centre) Area of managed forest: 0.82 million ha Number of employees: 1118 Annual harvest 2.48 million m³ Chairman of the management board: Aigar Kallas



RMK nature guide **Riina Laanetu** introducing an old verst stone in Oandu

The preservation and introduction of cultural heritage in the recreation areas of the Estonian State Forest Management Centre

Mankind constantly influences the landscape around him. This is why there are visible traces of the life and activities of previous generations, like for instance ancient sacred sites, old forest paths, trees, rocks and springs associated with folk lore, windmills, stone fences, tar and lime kilns, various old structures etc. Such traces of the life and activities of previous generations left on the landscape are called items of cultural heritage. These items are not under protection and their maintenance and the importance they are given depends on the owner's awareness and will.

The Estonian State Forest Management Centre (RMK) has initiated the systematic registration and description of items of cultural heritage. Under the programme Interreg III A, such items have been registered in four Estonian counties as part of an Estonian-Finnish joint project. However, in addition to the registration of items of cultural heritage, RMK has also set the target of preserving cultural heritage in forestry and to introduce it to the wider general public by means of the Nature Management Department.

The general aim of the Nature Management Department at the State Forest Management Centre is to provide as varied as possible opportunities for people to visit the forest without damaging the forest and its biota. Twelve recreation areas have been established with the necessary infrastructure for organising short and extended visits, and 10 nature centres work to develop the behavioural practices and values of the forest users and improve their environmental awareness.

Since 2004, the items of cultural heritage located within RMK recreation areas have been registered and linked to the infrastructure and nature education activities of these recreation areas.

Oandu Nature Centre - linking cultural heritage to recreation management activities

The RMK Oandu nature centre is located in Lääne-Viru County, in the North-Estonian recreation area. The centre is located in a historical building originally built for the forester of the estate in 1860. In the surrounds at Oandu there are large areas of state forest and because of the long history of forest management, the Oandu forests are also rich in forest-related items of cultural heritage.

The inventory of cultural heritage at Oandu and surrounding villages began around the same time as the renovation of the building of the former forest district centre. Now 120 items have been registered in the surroundings of Oandu.

The activities of Oandu nature centre are specifically designed to introduce forest-related cultural heritage and the history of forestry. When introducing cultural heritage, attention is also drawn to measures involved in landscape protection. If necessary, activities are conducted to preserve or restore the condition of items of cultural heritage.

Although the Oandu nature centre will only be officially opened in autumn 2008, programmes introducing forest heritage mainly to schoolchildren have been taking place there for two years. In the cone drying room of the former Sagadi forest district, the study programme "How the cone became a tree" shows how cones were collected, dried and shelled in the past and what was subsequently done with the seeds. The participants also walk a 3.5-km route, called the "Stone fence walk", introducing the many of the sights of cultural value at Oandu. Most of the route runs along one of the attractions – a network of stone fences in the Oandu forest totalling nearly 9.5 kilometres in length.

In addition to nature education programmes, information concerning local cultural heritage, forestry and forest works is displayed in the exhibitions of the nature centres. As RMK nature centres are located all over Estonia, they enable us to introduce our rich and varied cultural heritage, past forestry practices and forestry traditions and knowledge, focusing on each specific area.

Linking elements of cultural heritage with the infrastructure of recreation areas and RMK education activities helps us introduce more varied topics, prolong the duration of each visit by providing more opportunities for visitors to learn about and appreciate elements of past work and activities in the landscape. This in turn helps them appreciate the continuity of the management of state forests and the use of timber as a renewable natural resource.







one-third of all Finnish land – is well-known for its versatile services. Metsähallitus stands for all business operations on state land as well as the management of national parks and other protected areas. Thus, a diversity of operations and customer-oriented services characterize Metsähallitus per-

Of the organisation's turnover (310 million euros 2007), forestry brings over 85%. Metsähallitus has also a number of other businesses. From the beginning of 2008, these have been brought together in a single business operations portfolio in order to streamline their governance and improve profitability. At the moment the portfolio includes nature tourism, real estate business, processing and sales of soil and rock resources as well as the sales of forest tree seedlings and seeds. These units are now being steered and developed as a more cohesive whole. The goal is to introduce new businesses to the portfolio, and renewable energy is of particular interest.

However, each of these businesses has their own marketing channels due to the fact that the target customers are different.

The ever-increasing significance of protected areas for tourism and recreation has also assumed an important role. Protected areas under the management of Metsähallitus' Natural Heritage Services cover over 40% of all state land. It is a positive development that besides biodiversity these areas now also increasingly serve another important purpose supporting regional economies. The number of visitors in protected areas is rising all the time, and great effort is being exerted to disseminate up-to-date information about available services in visitor centres as well as on websites, such as www.outdoors.fi, which offers information on nature destinations provided by Metsähallitus.

Finland also expects versatile revenues and services from

One of Metsähallitus' non-wood business areas is nature tourism involving various nature adventures. Oldstyle logging group having a coffee break. Metsähallitus' Wild North director, Johanna Tolonen, in the middle.

Metsähallitus. Besides direct revenue for the owner – 103 million euros in 2007 - Metsähallitus has to guarantee other, non-financial services in its managed forests. The value of these social obligations also has to be quantified in order to help government representatives in their decisions concerning annual targets for Metsähallitus.

In this sense, the business operations have benefited the protection of managed forests, recreational use, reindeer husbandry, Sámi culture and employment to a corresponding amount estimated at EUR 48 million. Although benefits with respect to biodiversity or recreational use are difficult to measure and quantify, this sum can be considered an investment in related social interests by the business operations at Metsähallitus.

Taking into account these social obligations for the business operations, the significance of Metsähallitus's services to society can be broadly divided into three:

- EUR 103 million contribution from profits to the State budget
- EUR 48 million investment in general social obligations in connection with business operations
- Natural Heritage Services: investment of EUR 54 million of the State budget in the provision of public services





Odyssée Verte is the trademark for a recreational walk through the treetops involving bridges and platforms. The fisrt Odyssée Verte is located in the Espace Rambouillet.

On the road to sustainable tourism: something for everyone

Every year French public forests welcome 200 million visitors. In a society that is becoming increasingly urban, forests, and particularly state forests, offer a natural area for sporting or recreational activities or simply taking advantage of the peaceful atmosphere.

The ONF is constantly on the lookout to improve its social function policy and find ways to make forests more open and accessible to everyone. A number of initiatives were launched in 2007 towards this aim.

One such initiative involved making forest trails more accessible for disabled people. This was realised by creating a mountain trail with access for the disabled in the Albères forest. The trail is located in the middle of a Laricio pine and beech forest, and leads to a panoramic lookout on the rocky coast of Les Albères. In addition, a new line of equipment can now be used by disabled people on special sports and recreational trails in the forest.

New nature education activities for school children were also launched in 2007. "Ti Forestié" is a special teaching package intended for the children of Guadeloupe and Martinique,

Office National des Forêts Area of managed forest: 6.7 million ha (plus 8.3 million ha in municipal forests)

Number of employees: 10181
Annual harvest 14.8 million m³
Director General: Pierre-Olivier Drège



A specific mountain trail with access for the disabled in the Albères forest.

thanks to a financial partnership with Foundation France Television

Outings for the elderly are also now organised through the "Estérel state forest discovery tour" – a three-hour trip that includes exploring the most outstanding landscapes, forests, animals and plants. Participants are also given the opportunity of taking a short walk with a forestry guide and the tour also includes a snack break to sample local products and enjoy the natural surroundings.

Completely new ideas for rediscovering the forest, Odyssée Verte® and Retrouvances® were also launched in 2007. Odyssée Verte is the trademark for a recreational walk through the treetops involving bridges and platforms. Although there are no harnesses, it is totally safe and can accommodate children, groups and families. The walk has two main objectives: to encourage the public to learn about forests and understand the importance of their preservation, and to help the public re-discover the forest from a new perspective. The first Odyssee Verte is located in the Espace Rambouillet, located 60 km outside Paris.

Retrouvances is also a trademark for three new hiking trails in Drôme, Haute-Ardèche and Ariège, also offering lodges.

A new series of maps called "Forest Walks" have also been produced in conjunction with the French national geographic institute (IGN).

The creation of a special "FEDD social budget" also occurred in 2007 to help channel investments toward social solutions. A special budget (2€ million in 2007) was reserved within the Environment and Sustainable Development Fund for investments related to social functions.





Forst Brandenburg (Forest Service Brandenburg)

Area of managed forest: 0.275 million ha

Number of employees: 2500 Annual harvest 1.6 million m3

Managing Director: Karl-Heinrich von Bothmer



Karl-Heinrich von Bothmer

est Range, which belongs to the Wünsdorf Forestry Office. Foresters on horseback organise trail rides through the forests. During horse trekking expeditions lasting one or more days, the riders gain an insight into the tasks of a forester. The treks always focus on a particular theme, and in addition to forestry, hunting and economic aspects of the forest, care is also taken to answer any other questions the riders might have. For example, there is often a particular interest in determining flora and fauna. Explaining the structure of ownership and the views of the forest owners increases people's awareness about the need to show consideration. The programme aims to prevent conflicts of interest arising between forestry owners and riders and to provide information on the type and scope of recreational activities in the forest. For their part, private forest owners gain a better understanding of riders' expectations and a greater acceptance of riding in the forest.

Trekking with the Zescher foresters enables riders to gain a holistic perception of forests, and lays the foundation for a good rider-forest relationship. This pilot project organised by the Zesch Forest Range is now being conducted and further developed by other foresters in the State of Brandenburg.

This approach taken by Forst Brandenburg is being continued to resolve conflicts between riders and other forest users and expanded to benefit the forest in 'Brandenburg horse country'.

Hacking in the forest with Brandenburg's foresters

Horses in the forest ... Tracks left in the sand are often a nuisance for other recreational users. Riding is allowed by forest law on all two-lane forest tracks with the exception of sport and nature trails and reforestation areas and forest breaks. This freedom to ride in the forest offers considerable potential in terms of tourism, but also runs the risk of causing conflict with other forest users.

In order to identify and minimise conflicts, several projects have been developed by Forst Brandenburg to control riders and integrate the forest into the 'Brandenburg Horse Country' tourist concept in a non-invasive manner.

With the facilities provided by the foresters for the riders under the slogan "together is better", expectations are discussed and mutual agreements reached. The foresters have offered facilities for various target groups among the cross-country

The Melchow Riding Range administered by the Eberswalde Forestry Office, which has a 7.5 kilometre-long circular course and 20 natural hurdles, has been constructed for riders who enjoy sport-based recreational activities. Neighbouring riding stables have also included the riding range in their list of attractions to increase their appeal. This makes the local rural area more attractive. One type of cross-country riding that is aimed purely at recreation is horse trekking. Forst Brandenburg has provided two facilities in order to appeal to horse enthusiasts.

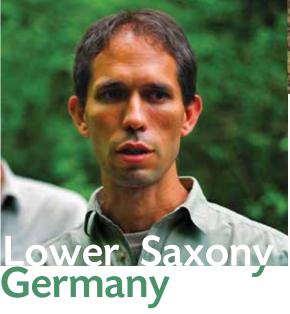
The Kyritz Forestry Office has opened the 'Dosseblick' paddock area, which enables horses and riders to rest during a trekking expedition. It can also be the destination for a trek. The paddocks have been created in cooperation between the Friedrichsgüte forestry range, a stable and a vocational training organisation. These recreational facilities for riders have enabled the forest to be incorporated into the region's tourist attractions in an environmentally friendly manner. The 'Dosseblick' paddocks also help control the activities of riders: other forest areas are less frequented, thus preventing ecological and economic harm. Four other forestry offices have created trekking stations in order to expand the use of publicly owned state land.

The aim is to offer attractive facilities for riders and to ensure ecologically compatible recreational use of the forests – it is not about imposing bans!

Direct contact with the riders is provided by the 'Horse trekking with foresters' scheme offered by the Zesch am See For-



Niedersächsische Landesforsten (Lower Saxony State Forests) Area of managed forest: 0.32 million ha Number of employees: 1327 Annual harvest 1.77 million m³ Managing Director: Klaus Merker



Thomas Jensen, Forest Specialist in charge of soil survey of afforestation areas

Clean water through afforestation

The Niedersächsischen Landesforsten (NLF) is sustainably delivering goods and services resulting in an acceptable level of economic revenue. We strongly believe that sustainable production also includes economic stability. For the third year in a row, our economic results have been improving. The result for the past year was clearly governed by our permanent improvement process. The wind throw following the 'Kyrill' winter storm in January 2007 was quite a test of our organisation's capacity. The joint efforts by our staff and long-term partners made it possible to clear the areas and sell the wood on a thriving market.

We were able to achieve a substantial increase in prices for our timber, by far our main product. Although we were very pleased with the developments on the timber market, we continue to work on diversifying our products.

One of the services we deliver to the local communities is clean water. This clean water is not only delivered thanks to the absence of pollution in our forests, but also due to the specific biological activity in forest soils which supports a slow and permanent seepage of precipitation, and this is the perfect way to deliver water to the suppliers in Lower Saxony.

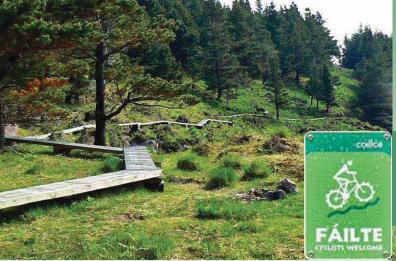


In the north-western area of Lower Saxony, for centuries an area with only 10% forest cover, we look back over the lengthy cooperation with the regional water supplier 'Oldenburg-Ostfriesischer Wasserverband' (OOWV). Following the intensification of agricultural production, in particular the change from grassland to corn production, the water supplier was confronted with increasing amounts of nitrogen and pesticides in the ground water. This led to additional efforts to purify the water and higher costs. In the 1990s, cooperative work commenced with the aim of afforesting the well fields in the OOWV. To achieve this the project follows various steps:

- The OOWV is buying agricultural land from local farmers surrounding their well fields.
- The land is transferred to the NLF and the NLF takes full possession of the area.
- The NLF makes a soil survey of the area and starts planting.

During recent years, about 1 500 hectares of forests have been planted. The afforestation of the former agricultural lands was carried out by the local Forest Ranger Districts. Based upon the forest site assessment for each individual area, 3 million oak, 2 million beech and birch, 150 000 brushes and 50 000 fruit-trees have been planted. Although the plantation of fir trees, specifically Douglas fir, would have been cheaper and the wood production would have been higher, the plantations were carried out with hardwood. This is based on the LÖWE program (long term ecological forest development) on the one hand, (more site adapted broadleaf trees) and the wishes of the OOWV on the other. The greater water output from broadleaf trees (reduced interception) is an important factor for the water supplier.

Society in general benefits not only from clean drinking water at reasonable prices, but also from the increased forest cover in the area. As a result of the project, not only the afforested areas have benefited, but also the surrounding areas have been ecologically upgraded. Altogether about 70 kilometers of new forest verges, areas of very high importance for plants and wildlife, have been planted.



collce

Coillte

Area of managed forest: **0.45 million ha**Number of employees: **1200**Annual harvest **2.56 million m**³
Chief Executive: **David Gunning**



Bill Murphy, Head of Recreation

Coillte Recreation Initiatives

Coillte is Ireland's largest landowner and recognises that forests provide an excellent landscape for a wide range of recreational activities and as such has a special place in the provision of access to recreation. Each year, Coillte welcome over eighteen million visitors to its forests with an estimated value to users of €97 million per annum. It has ten forest parks, over 150 recreation sites and manages over 50% of all the off road national long distance hiking routes.

Two of Coillte's success stories within the recreation area include the Launch of the "Welcome Initiative" and the Dublin Mountains Partnership.

Coillte and Failte Ireland launch €5m "Welcome Initiative"

Coillte in partnership with Failte Ireland, the tourism development and marketing body, has delivered the €5.3 million "Welcome Initiative" providing state of the art outdoor recreation facilities for walkers and cyclists across the country.

Part funded by Failte Ireland, the Forest Recreation Infrastructure Upgrading Programme, delivers 250 km of walking, hiking and biking trails to the highest standard at 34 sites across Ireland, including upgrading of existing trails and construction of new ones. The new signage at these sites and the "Walkers Welcome" and "Cyclists Welcome" logos will also increase public awareness of the access to the countryside that Coillte lands provide.

A dedicated website – www.coillteoutdoors.ie – allows anyone interested in outdoor recreation in Ireland to research and plan activities around the country, providing maps and information on the different types of trails people can visit on any of Coillte's sites. The facilities include:

- Walking Trails in excess of 40 walking trails are situated in various locations around the country
- Mountain Biking 3 mountain bike trails exist in Ballinastoe Co. Wicklow, Derroura Co. Galway and Ballyhoura Co. Limerick
- Family Cycling Trails 2 family cycling trails exist in Portumna Co. Galway and Curragh Chase Co. Limerick

Managing forests on the capital's fringes

Coillte has been instrumental in bringing together stakeholders with an interest in the Dublin Mountains, a large area of

forest and open moor upland south of Dublin, Ireland's capital city, to establish the Dublin Mountain's Partnership. This initiative brings together the key stakeholders to address the many issues faced by forest and other land managers in managing access to lands for recreation on the urban fringe. The stakeholders include Coillte, South Dublin and Dun Laoghaire Rathdown County Councils, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Dublin Mountain Initiative, which represents user groups.

The Partnership has agreed a management structure which will include staff and volunteers and has set out a ten year vision and plan of action to manage recreation and other users of forest, national park and municipal lands. The project will improve access and facilities with the development of trails for both hiking and cycling, improve information through signage, a website, public awareness and the development of a Dublin Mountains Access Map. The project also seeks to tackle anti social and unauthorised use through a range of programmes, from the promotion of the Leave No trace message, to a volunteer ranger scheme to developing new facilities to manage current unsanctioned activities such as scrambler bike riding. The partnership is one that Coillte hopes can be rolled out to other areas of the country where forests on urban fringes are subject to increasing pressures.



Latvijas Valsts Meži (JSC Latvian State Forest)

Area of managed forest: 1.4 million ha

Number of employees: **746** Annual harvest **5 million m**³

Chief Executive: Roberts Strīpnieks



Latvijas Valsts Meži - a campaign for clean forests that has turned into a national movement

For the third year in succession, the JSC Latvijas Valsts Meži (LVM) has implemented a social campaign against littering in the forests of Latvia involving more and more NGOs, companies, foundations, local community institutions and schools. The public opinion poll carried out in 2007 indicated that Cūkmens [the Pigman], the central image of the campaign, has been embraced by more than 70% of Latvia's population.

The main purpose of the campaign "Avoid littering the forest!" organized by LVM is to change the attitude of the public to pollution. Forests are a beloved place of recreation for about 80% of the country's inhabitants, and the number of people visiting forests continues to grow. At the same time, unfortunately the problem of pollution in the forest is becoming more and more acute. Over recent years, LVM has spent 100 000 EUR annually for litter picking. Litter picking in the forests and the appropriate disposal of the waste collected is much more expensive than handling and disposing of the waste appropriately in the first place through dumpsites. Garbage and waste has a degrading impact on the aesthetic value of the forest and a jeopardizing effect on wildlife and humans, for it prevents sustainable development.

Roberts Strīpnieks, Chairman of the Board at LVM, says: "In my opinion, the forest pollution problem does not lie in the waste itself, but in people's attitudes to the environment. Too often people feel like they are the kings of the environment, throwing litter as if there will be a hotel maid to pick up after them. The primary and most difficult task is changing people's attitudes."

Cūkmens was created as a special character for the campaign to address the public and speak to children, educating them on the damage that pollution in the forest does and attracting the attention of the media. In addition to ads in the national print and electronic media, publicity for the campaign is ensured by numerous public relations activities throughout Latvia. The campaign attracts more and more participants and it has even inspired the President of Latvia to join in.

LVM is looking forward to running this successful campaign for at least 7-10 years, turning attention also to upgrading legislation in this field. This year, there is a special focus on the need to set up a PET bottle disposal system as well as organizing large-scale voluntary work and tidying-up activities in the natural environment in honour of the 90th anniversary of Latvia. The President of Latvia, as a patron of the joint activities, is proof of the national scale of the campaign.



Generalinė miškų urėdija (Directorate General of State Forests) Area of managed forest: 1 million ha Number of employees: 2700 Annual harvest 3.5 million m³

Director General: Benjaminas Sakalauskas

The development of recreational forest functions in Lithuania's state forests

The General Plan of the Republic of Lithuania anticipates forestry development with regards to the key objectives of Lithuanian Forestry Policy. It also intends to increase the recreational potential of the forests. One of the 12 strategic goals of forestry development included in the Lithuanian Forestry Policy and its Implementation Strategy, is meeting general public needs in relation to forests.

State foresters implement the delegated tasks of the State. The focus of this implementation is intended to prepare the forests for visitors in such a way that potential damage to forest ecosystems can be minimised as much as possible while satisfying the most common human requirements. State forest enterprises manage natural resources and items of cultural heritage, take care of the preservation of the landscape and provide society with opportunities to explore them. While developing a recreational infrastructure, we focus on the most favourable and frequently visited forest areas. In such a way, the flow of visitors to the forests is being regulated and allocated to the safest places in terms of the risk of fire and the protection of the ecosystem. The creation of thought provoking and educational installations is aimed at allowing the public to explore the riches of the natural environment and cultural heritage. At the same time, this assists public education, and enhances the behaviour of the public in the forests, and creates favourable conditions for visits to Lithuanian forest areas. Through such developments, there is less litter in the forests, the landscape and biologically sensitive sites are being damaged less, and thanks to the installation of well-equipped fireplaces, there are less fire hazards.

During recent years, public interest in spending leisure time in the forests has grown. People are increasingly interested in the attractiveness of the landscape, its natural and cultural qualities and their suitability for recreational activities. Visitors often spend time camping, sightseeing, relaxing, entertaining themselves, etc. By seeking a balanced approach to the economic, ecological and social functions of the forest, the foresters are focusing on adapting the forests to suit the needs of a range of stakeholders.



The adaptation of recreational sites in the forests to cater for the disabled is a new development in Lithuanian state forests. By developing and improving the general recreational activities in the forests, state forest enterprises can make attractive, interesting and valuable forest sites more accessible for the disabled; develop an infrastructure of accommodation, information systems and special recreational equipment so the disabled can also enjoy what the forests have to offer; and perform supervision, maintenance and cleaning works in these sites to guarantee a tidy and well managed environment.

Based on data from 2008, over two thousand recreational sites with different functional purposes were inventoried in the forests: educational paths, recreational and specialized paths, sight-seeing places, rest spots, resorts, camp sites and other recreational destinations. Each state forest enterprise has at least one recreational site that has been adjusted for the disabled in accordance with their expressed wishes.

The project "Adaptation of recreational objects in the forests for the physically disabled", prepared by the Director General of State Forests, was announced as a best practise case for public administration in Lithuania and presented at the 4th Quality Conference for Public Administrations in the EU, held in Tampere (Finland) in 2006.

Państwowe Gospodarstwo Leśne Lasy Państwowe The State Forests National Forest Holding Area of managed forest: 7.24 million ha Number of employees: 26000 Annual harvest 31.5 million m³ Director General: Marian Pigan



Marian Pigan

Forest education

Forest education – an integral element of ecological education – is one among many of our important non-wood forest goods and services. Since the 1990s, forest education has been an obligatory service for the State Forests National Forest Holding. The main goals of forest education are as follows:

- increasing the level of knowledge about forest environments and propagating sustainable forest management
- raising public awareness of the rational and responsible non-wood use of forests
- building public trust and confidence in foresters

To reach these goals, forest education has to be attractive and diverse. The educational offering provided by the State Forests NFH is very broad; it includes a variety of educational formats, such as outdoor classes conducted by a guide or forester in specially designed forest education facilities, meetings with foresters in and outside schools, as well as competitions, exhibitions, etc. It is important that forest education be carried out mainly in the field. This provides an opportunity to involve all our human senses in the learning process, to "touch and taste" the forest, to experience an ecosystem from the inside. This combination of excursion, exploration and education makes forest education attractive and effective. Every year, almost 2 million visitors may benefit

from the broad educational programmes that State Forests offer on account of the significant involvement of Polish foresters in educational activities (annually, approx. 6000 foresters spend some of their time on education). Most of the visitors are schoolchildren; however, the programmes and activities included can be adapted for any age group - kindergarten children, students and adults. To make the educational programme as attractive and effective as possible, the State Forests NFH provides a well-developed educational infrastructure, including educational forest trails, education centres, forest education rooms, "green classes" and other facilities that are practical when conducting forest education. Most of the facilities are located within the 19 Forest Promotion Complexes (FPC) - functional units especially established to promote multifunctional and sustainable forest management and play a leading role in conducting forest education. Due to their location, the FPCs represent all regions of the country, making their educational contribution particularly interesting.

In addition to the above-mentioned activities, the State Forests NFH issues many educational materials such as leaflets, journals, newspapers, computer games, CD and DVD films, as well as some TV and Radio programmes. The most recent educational initiative is an interactive computer game e-rys (e-lynx). This game (available at the official website of the State Forests NFH) is aimed at schoolchildren surfing the Internet who are interested in forest and nature-related issues. E-rys provides a compendium of specialist knowledge about forests, forest ecosystems and sustainable forest management most useful for biology and ecology teachers in preparing classes on forest issues.

The aim of the above-mentioned educational activities offered by the State Forests NFH is to safeguard the beautiful Polish forests for future generations.





Romsilva (National Forest Administration) Area of managed forest: 3.5 million ha Number of employees: 21077 Annual harvest 10.7 million m³ General Manager: Dan Ioan Aldea

"If we don't do this, then nobody will" ...that is how our story begins

It all started in the office of one of the managers at Romsilva during a relaxed conversation, because this is how great ideas are born. Since the theme for this year's stories is non-wood forest products and services, the Romsilva story will focus on our latest achievement in this field – our online reservation system (www.rosilva-turism.ro). This is the first business-to-business reservation system in Romania, giving the public the opportunity to benefit from the beautiful cabins located in our state-owned forests.

Although Romsilva has always had the capacity to provide accommodation services, this was never utilised efficiently. The company owns 205 forest cabins, located all over the country; however, only 68 of them are included in the tourist circuit and 10 of them among the famous Ceausescu's villas.

The idea of launching a completely transparent reservation system available to the public through tour operators was not looked upon positively by most of our colleagues. On the one hand, this was because these cabins were traditionally used to accommodate important political figures free of charge, and on the other, because the thought of providing access to Ceausescu's cabins was hard to accept. Despite this bias, the system was launched on 1 April and the first bookings were accepted on 1 May.

The application is friendly and easy to use. At the moment there are 30 Romanian tour operators working with the system and we are about to sign with two agencies in Germany. After receiving a user name and password, potential clients may access our website and search for a cabin using different search criteria (country map, region, cabin name). Each cabin has its own tabs with a general description, location and access roads, accommodation capacity, photo gallery and, of course, the option of making a reservation. Most of the cabins are built in places with high tourism potential, offering good accommodation conditions and the low costs. Internationally renowned personalities such as King Juan Carlos of Spain and the Sheik of Qatar have spent several nights in the Ceausescu villas. The Hollywood star Nicole Kidman was also accommodated in a villa when she was shooting the movie Cold Mountain.



Mihai Dragos

Although the forestry sector had reservations about the success of this concept, the media was eager to find out more and willing to promote the system via television stations and newspapers. Foreign papers with offices in Romania were interested in publishing articles about the Romsilva cabins. It seems that people are more interested in spending quality time in our cabins than we expected. After working in the office for weeks on end, a weekend or a 7-day vacation in a quiet, simple yet clean cabin in the forest, surrounded by wonderful landscapes could be heaven on earth. Because the accommodation rates are reasonable and our clients are satisfied, the enquiries keep coming.

The online reservation system has generated the surprising revenue of 180 000 Euros in the first two months, compared to 300 000 Euros for the entire year in 2007 and 100 000 Euros in 2006!

Although tourism is a relatively new assignment for us, we are determined to develop and expand our infrastructure. We plan to build two hotels in attractive areas – one by the seaside in Eforie Nord and one in the mountain area of Poiana Brasov – so that tourism will continue to form an important share of Romsilva's income



Forest Enterprise Scotland
Area of managed forest: 0.46 million ha
Number of employees: 955
Annual harvest 3.2 million m³
Chief Executive: Dr Hugh Insley



Education Ranger and Primary School Children

Edinburgh and Lothians Forest Habitat Network Partnership

The Edinburgh and the Lothians Forest Habitat Network Partnership is an initiative between Forestry Commission Scotland, Scotlish Natural Heritage, the four local authorities in the Lothians, Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust, Central Scotland Forest Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland.

The development of a Forest Habitat Network Partnership in Edinburgh and the Lothians aims to improve significantly the scale, quality and linkages in woodland habitats across the entire area. It also aims to increase the competitiveness of Edinburgh and the region as a location for investment as well as to improve the quality of life for local citizens.

A Forest Habitat Network Officer has recently been appointed by the Partnership to produce a Forestry Framework for Edinburgh and the Lothians and identify priority areas for woodland creation and management in liaison with landowners, managers, local communities and interested groups.

Central Scotland Forest Trust

CSFT is a partnership initiative between the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise, Forestry Commission Scotland, the area's five Local Authorities and Scottish Natural Heritage. The main aim of CSFT is to secure the creation of the Central Scotland Forest by working with local communities,

voluntary organisations, the private sector, farmers and land-owners

Over the years, CSFT has managed to secure funding for the delivery of projects in key WIAT (Woods In and Around Towns) locations to create attractive places for people who live and work in those areas.

Glasgow and Clyde Valley Green Network Partnership

The Glasgow and Clyde Valley (GCV) Green Network Partnership brings together the eight regional local authorities, Communities Scotland, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Enterprise, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Glasgow Centre for Population Health.

The aim is to make the Glasgow metropolitan region one of Europe's most attractive places to live, work and play through the creation of a large functional Green Network connecting quality woodland and greenspaces from Greenock to Lanark and Cumbernauld to East Kilbride.

Dundee Trees and Woodlands in Greenspace

The Dundee WIAT project has funded management intervention on 21 sites across Dundee. The partners include Dundee City Council, Forestry Commission Scotland, Scottish Natural Heritage, Greenspace Scotland, and The Woodland Trust.

As part of the WIAT project in Dundee, the Dundee Trees & Woods in Greenspace (TWIG) project has promoted integrated thinking by linking woodland closely with the sustainable development agenda of the Dundee Community Planning Partnership. The project is co-ordinated by a steering group and led by an officer who is responsible for development of strategic policy on urban forestry and greenspaces.

Aberdeen WIAT Partnership

The Aberdeen WIAT partnership between Forestry Commission Scotland, Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council and Aberdeen Countryside Project has developed and is implementing a strategic restoration and enhancement of the woodlands of the city and satellite towns. This has involved works to improve access to 14 key urban woodlands. A community woodland ranger has been employed by the partnership to engage with local communities and involve them in the management of the woods. Four woodland groups have been formed. An extensive Treefest roadshow has been run within the communities closest to the woodlands, raising awareness and promoting involvement. The North East Forest Education Initiative is delivering a forest school programme within the city woods and the partnership is working with NHS Grampian to develop a healthy walking initiative utilising the WIAT woodlands.

Stirling and Clackmannanshire WIAT

The Stirling and Clackmannanshire Woodland and Greenspace (WAGS) Partnership is a partnership between Forestry Commission Scotland, Scotlish Natural Heritage, Stirling Council, Clackmannanshire Council and Greenspace Scotland which aims to protect and enhance the urban woodland and other greenspace in and around the city and towns of the two council areas. A Woodland and Greenspace officer working jointly between the two councils was appointed in June 2007 to facilitate the work of the partnership.

Bringing neglected woodland under active management Gore Glen

Located 8 miles from Edinburgh, this 44-hectare glen was the site of the first gunpowder mill in Scotland, and was once the centre of a thriving coal mining community. The woodland is owned and managed by Midlothian Council and has a popular programme of ranger led walks.

The local community has been involved in planning and managing the operations to help bring the neglected site back into active management. The woodland has been thinned and exotic species removed. These operations have helped discourage anti-social behaviour.

As part of this work a three hectare area has been felled and the timber chipped to be used to fuel a biomass boiler at Vogrie House, Vogrie Country Park – a Council owned facility less than four miles away.

Galashiels

The WIAT Programme has significantly contributed to the completion of an easily accessible pathway surrounding Galashiels, as a result of the collaboration of a number of stakeholders including Scottish Borders Council, Borders Forest Trust, local landowners and community groups.

In addition to offering outdoor access through the provision of footpaths, the WIAT scheme includes woodland management, the development of education opportunities and community initiatives. A development manager was appointed as part of the Gala Policies WIAT scheme to engage with local schools, the wider community and other interest groups.

Creating new woodland Milnwood, Motherwell

These 25 hectares of new planting lies in the heart of Motherwell and has been developed as a community woodland since 2006. The site is adjacent to the "GreenLink Project" that has recently developed extensive recreational infrastructure on the western side of the Calder Valley.

The main objectives of this scheme are to enhance the biodiversity of the Calder valley by establishing native woodland, to provide informal recreational opportunities that link with the existing infrastructure and encourage local use.

Working with people to help them use their local woodland

Cathkin Braes Country Park

Cathkin Braes Country Park, near Castlemilk, is the most prominent woodland on the south-eastern edge of Glasgow. Glasgow City Council owns and manages the woodland. WIAT funding has supported an extensive woodland management and community engagement programme helping



Easterhouse Project - Opening of a Trail

to make the woodland safer and more inviting. Following the physical improvements to the woodlands, a number of health related projects have been developed aimed at encouraging people to use the woodland more.

One of these is the Branching Out project. The project explores new ways to help people recover and cope with mental health issues, to use woodlands to provide a natural environment to facilitate individuals coping with ongoing mental health problems, and to help people progress towards good mental health.

Drumchapel

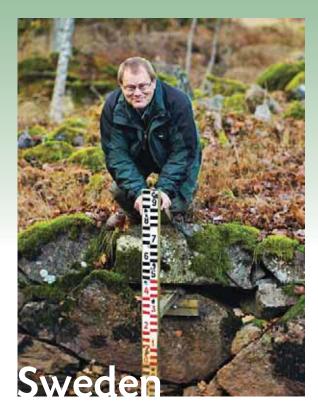
The Bluebell Woods around Drumchapel in Glasgow are owned by Glasgow City Council and managed in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland. Drumchapel is a deprived urban area with significant social challenges.

A community and environment ranger started working in the Drumchapel woodlands at the end of 2006 and is encouraging the community to use the woodlands and help improve the woodland environment.

A number of initiatives have started in partnership with Glasgow City Council, Drumchapel Life and Kelvin Clyde Greenspace and other agencies. These initiatives include: volunteer work for long-term unemployed and young people, a health walking group, woodland classes for the local primary school and promotional events with a group of people living with disabilities. The woods are now better managed and better used.

Walk Moray

A project which aims to improve the health of communities in Moray through a structured programme of community health walks led by trained local volunteer walk leaders. The project aims to develop, implement and co-ordinate health walking programmes throughout Moray, recruit and train volunteer walk leaders and develop a local walking referral programme through work in partnership with key groups (e.g. Moray Council, Paths to Health, GP practices, partner organisations and voluntary agencies) Forestry Commission Scotland is a partner in the project, facilitating the use of WIAT woods as destinations for health walks.



Per Pettersson

A sea of reeds becomes a lake again

A snipe flies over the mirror-smooth surface of Lake Gästern near Oskarshamn. Until recently this was just a huge sea of reeds. Gästern is one of the 100 wetlands to be restored on land owned by Sveaskog by 2010. Wetlands are extremely important for many species, particularly insects, frogs and birds. Sveaskog is now drawing up plans to restore 100 wetlands in the forest landscape.

"Wetlands perform a number of key functions in the landscape. They are an important habitat for a wide variety of species, many of which are now red-listed because wetlands have disappeared," says Per Petersson, who works with the 100 wetlands project.

Important for biodiversity

Wetlands provide breeding grounds and habitats for many migratory bird species, including the common snipe and other waders. Other species that use the deciduous forests surrounding wetlands include the long-tailed tit, hazel grouse and woodpeckers, and several of these depend on the dead wood that collects on the fringe zones surrounding the wet environments

"The small wetlands that are found in the forest landscape are important for biodiversity. But historically many of them have been drained to provide arable land or for forestry production," says Per.

Wetlands can be everything from small alder swamps or bogs to shallow lakes and coastal bays. They act as natural biological filters in the landscape and clean the water as it heads for lakes, watercourses and the sea.

Gästern lake to be restored

The restoration of Gästern in the county of Kalmar is one of the major wetlands projects in southern Sweden.

The lake covers about 50 hectares and the water level has been lowered on three occasions since the mid-19th century. After it was last drained it was used to receive wastewater from a treatment plant in Misterhult. The resulting large volumes of nitrogen and phosphorus meant that the lake soon became overgrown. The restoration work is complicated. The two landowners, Sveaskog and Gässhult manor, are cooperating in this project with the Misterhult District Association, Oskarshamn Municipality, the Swedish Society for Nature Conservation, the Swedish Wetlands Foundation, the Swedish Ornithological Society and the Kalmar County Administrative Board.

Before the project could be started, in 2006, an environmental impact study was carried out and later that autumn a dam with adjustable sluice gates was built. The first open areas of water have now returned.

"The plan is to restore the lake to its original water level," explains Per.

Environment monitored and studied

The University of Kalmar is assisting with environmental monitoring and carefully observes what happens as the water level is restored. The fact that there is a lot of data about the wetland prior to the restoration makes Gästern particularly interesting in an international perspective as well.

"This is fantastic material for us to study. There are very many drained lakes waiting to be restored. Now we have realised the importance of returning water to the landscape," says Börje Ekstam, senior lecturer at the University of Kalmar

Another aspect of improving natural values at Gästern is to restore the old surrounding meadowlands. In spring 2008, cattle will graze both in the old meadows and on the shore of Lake Gästern. Work is also under way to set up viewpoints and hiking trails round Gästern in order to improve opportunities for recreation and eco-tourism.

Sveaskog AB

Total area of land: 4.4 million ha

Number of employees: 730

Annual harvest 5.7 million m³

Executive director: Gunnar Olofsson

₩ SVEASKOG



Facts

100 wetlands to be restored

- Restoration of wetlands is one of Sweden's national environmental objectives, called *Thriving Wetlands*.
- By 2010, 100 wetlands will be restored on Sveaskog's land. In this way the company and its partners are helping to achieve Sweden's environmental objectives.
- Suitable areas will be selected and restored together with the Swedish Ornithological Society and the Swedish Wetlands Foundation.
- A lot of flora and fauna depend on forest water and wet-
- The project includes an inventory of birds on Sveaskog's land, where members of the Swedish Ornithological Society will play a key role.

