



**EUROPARC**  
FEDERATION



EUROPEAN PROTECTED AREAS CONFERENCE EUROPARC 2011

# “Quality counts – benefit for nature and man”

BAD URACH, SEPTEMBER 21 – 24, 2011



Biosphärengebiet  
Schwäbische Alb







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# Preface

*The EUROPARC Federation conference is our most important annual event, bringing together members from across Europe. The exchange of experience on both the policy and practical issues of protected area site management is invaluable and the networking between members is a laboratory where new ideas, partnership and projects are forged.*

The 2011 conference in Bad Urach was no different with inspiring words from our key note speakers opening the proceedings, called us to consider how protected areas can deliver benefits for Nature and People. Learning from this we now look forward to see how all members and their teams create and participate in new projects and a daily work that leads to a greener society, conservation of Biodiversity and communicating the spirit of Nature. Their words and call to action with the deliberations of the workshops and are represented in this conference report.

The opportunity to meet and discuss is a vital component of any EUROPARC conference and the various receptions were a joyful meeting with local food from the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve. In particular though was the 20 years celebration of EUROPARC Germany with a German dinner with a fantastic menu from all different German members' areas. It was a genuine example of ecosystem services! Thanks to all at EUROPARC Germany for sharing their birthday with us!



I also would like to express my thanks to everybody that have been working with and made the 2011 EUROPARC conference an event long lasting for us all.

The message of our conference was articulated in the Bad Urach declaration, where delegates called for the values and benefits of Europe's protected areas to be more supported and recognised in public policy. The conference delegates themselves took away from the conference a clear "To Do" list which included the following

- Coordinate our communication
- Have understandable messages
- Understand that we are managing large areas for the future citizens of Europe
- Reconnect our citizens with nature
- Remember that Europe is a part of the globe's nature.
- Make continuous learning a rule in your organisation.
- Seek professionalism in your relation to nature
- Think effectiveness when you work with people

So the message from the 2011 EUROPARC conference in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve Germany, not just to delegates, but to all members, is to remember it is the quality that counts!

THOMAS HANSSON,  
PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPARC FEDERATION





Impressions of  
the EUROPARC  
conference in  
Bad Urach

# Programme

## Wednesday 21st September 2011

**15:00 Discover Bad Urach**

**16:00 Side meetings at the Stift Bad Urach**

**19:00 Official Opening of the EUROPARC conference 2011 at the Castle**

- Erika Stanciu, President of the EUROPARC Federation
- Winfried Kretschmann, Minister-President of Baden-Württemberg
- Petra Bernert, Director of Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve
- Guido Puhlmann, Chairman of EUROPARC Germany
- Prof. Dr. Beate Jessel, President of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation
- Dr. Fritz Brickwedde, Secretary General of the Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt
- Olaf Tschimpke, President of NABU Germany
- Alexander Bonde, Minister of Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection of Baden-Württemberg

**20:00 Reception at the Castle on behalf of Baden-Württemberg**

## Thursday 22nd September 2011

**9:00 Keynote speeches,**

**Moderator Klaus Liedtke, former editor-in-chief of NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

- “European Protected Areas: visions for the Future, Lessons from the Past”: Miranda Schreurs, Chair of the European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils, Member of the Advisory Council on the Environment
- “Claws, Paws & the Cause: how Branding Biodiversity can transform your communications”: Ed Gillespie, Futerra Sustainability Communications
- “Protected areas: life insurance for a changing planet”: Trevor Sandwith Director Global Protected Areas Programme IUCN
- “Diversity of actors for diversity of life”: Eberhard Brandes, WWF Germany
- “Contribution of National Natural Landscapes to the implementation of the German biodiversity strategy”: Ursula Heinen-Esser, Parliamentary State Secretary, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

**11:45 Panel discussion**

**12:30 Lunch and registration for EUROPARC General Assembly (presidential and council election)**

**13:30 EUROPARC General Assembly and election // Programme for non-members**

**19:00 Side meetings at the Stift Bad Urach**

**20:00 Reception by the Head of the Regional District & the Lord Mayor at the Metzinger Kelter**





## Friday 23rd September 2011

### 9:00 Selection of 19 excursions

- EX 1: Forest, vineyards and their products
- EX 2: Flora and fauna of the former military training area, sheep farm including production chain
- EX 3: Orchards and regional marketing
- EX 4: Buffalos and snails – the function of land-mark projects in agriculture
- EX 5: Regional grain – Nature and value chains in the Biosphere Reserve
- EX 6: Black Forest – conservation and sustainable tourism
- EX 7: Opportunities for local rail transport and tourism
- EX 8: Partner system and tourism marketing
- EX 9: Paths for reflection and contemplation
- EX 10: Landscape interpretation – Swabian Alb expedition
- EX 11: Upper Danube valley, rocks, climbing and nature conservation
- EX 12: The cultural landscape of past centuries – the former military training area of Münsinger Hardt including a tour of the Biosphere Centre
- EX 13: Water in the Swabian Alb – hydro geological excursion
- EX 14: Castles and Medieval Sights
- EX 15: Caves and landscape elements of the Swabian Alb
- EX 16: Randecker Maar
- EX 17: Environmental Education and Junior Rangers
- EX 18: Biodiversity and raw material extraction
- EX 19: The Wurzacher Ried

### 18:00 Workshops Briefing for the workshop chairs and presenters at the Stift Bad Urach

### 19:00 20 Years EUROPARC Germany. Event at the Castle

## Saturday 24th September 2011

### 9:00 Selection of 15 Workshops (designed and organised by EUROPARC Consulting)

- WK 1: Quality In Effective Management – Best practice in action
- WK 2: Benchmarking & Assessment – Going for the best
- WK 3: Strategies For Biodiversity – Halting the loss of biodiversity: how protected areas can help
- WK 4: Increasing And Managing Biodiversity – Special action for special landscapes
- WK 5: Benefits Of Quality (I) – How ecosystems work for us
- WK 6: Benefits Of Quality (II) – Premium tourism products for premium landscapes
- WK7: Volunteering In Protected Areas – Benefits for all
- WK 8: Quality In Outreach & Communication – Involving others and conveying the message
- WK 9: Quality in Interpretation – Going beyond panels and leaflets
- WK 10: Visitor Management – Knowing where to go
- WK 11: Partnerships for Quality – Partners working for you, with you
- WK 12: Financing Quality – Good value for money
- WK 13: Intrinsic and Spiritual Values of Protected Areas – Getting to grips with the intangible
- WK 14: Quality For Regional Development – How protected areas and their surrounding regions mutually benefit each other
- WK 15: New Technology For Quality – Surfing to nature

### 12:30 Lunch

### 15:00 End of Workshops

### 16:00 Plenary Session at the Castle:

- Feedback from the workshops
- Conference message
- Closing remarks from the new President of the EUROPARC Federation
- Presentation of the Charter for Sustainable Tourism Award
- Handover to conference 2012

### 20:00 Reception provided courtesy of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation at the Festhalle Bad Urach:

- Presentation of the Alfred Toepfer Prize and the Alfred Toepfer Scholarships





At the opening speeches: G. Puhlmann, P. Bernert, A. Bonde, E. Stanciu, B. Jessel und O. Tschimpke



*Protected areas conference EUROPARC 2011*

# Welcome

*Under the motto “Quality counts – benefit for Nature and Man”, over 330 experts from 40 countries attended the European EUROPARC conference 2011, from 21st to 24th September, at Bad Urach in the heart of the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve.*

Petra Bernert, director of the Biosphere Reserve, welcomed the guests: “I could hardly believe this morning: more than a year of preparation and now the day has come. I am pleased to welcome you to the young Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve for this year’s EUROPARC conference”.

A big thank you was issued to the sponsor of the conference, including the state of Baden-Württemberg, the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, nature conservation associations NABU and WWF, as well as other supports and sponsors, such as Allianz Environment Foundation, German Federal Environmental Foundation, Heinz Sielmann Foundation, Commerzbank, the stone and quarry association (ISTE) of Baden-Württemberg, TUI, Skoda, the district of Reutlingen, and others. Without the tireless efforts of many helpers from the region, the conference would not have been possible.

In her opening speech, Erika Stanciu, then president of the EUROPARC Federation, emphasised that Germany is a good place to discuss the quality management of protected areas. This is because Germany is a leader in conservation issues. In particular, German biosphere reserves Europe-wide, or even worldwide, are among the best examples of successful implementation of the UNESCO concept.

Alexander Bonde, Minister for Rural Affairs and Consumer Protection in Baden-Wuerttemberg, was proud of the fact that the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve, the youngest member of EUROPARC, could organise such an event: “It is very special that this year’s EUROPARC conference is taking place a biosphere reserve for the first time. Since UNESCO nomination the area has developed into a real conservation highlight.



But in Baden-Wuerttemberg, optimism is not only in the Swabian Alb. The creation of a biosphere reserve in the southern Black Forest is currently being discussed. In the northern Black Forest there might even be the first national park created in the state. The State Government supports the establishment of new protected areas. "But the region must be included here. People's fears must be taken seriously," says Bonde. This corresponds to the "politics of being heard", the new policy guidelines in Baden-Wuerttemberg.

Guido Puhlmann, Chairman of EUROPARC Germany, was pleased with the potential new entrants in the network of National Natural Landscapes. Especially in the southwest of the Republic, there are white spots on the map of large protected areas that need to be filled. He offered strong support for further development. For motivation, he handed to Alexander Bonde a tie of the National Natural Landscapes on which all members of the

*But in Baden-Wuerttemberg, optimism is not only in the Swabian Alb. The creation of a biosphere reserve in the southern Black Forest is currently being discussed.*

network are painted as bright spots. "If you succeed in the southern Black Forest and the northern Black Forest in establishing new large protected areas, we are happy to design a new tie," promised Puhlmann.

As a top conservationist in Germany, Beate Jessel, President of the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, said in her welcoming speech that cooperation and regular exchanges between European protected areas is important and worthy of support. "That is why the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation will also support you in the preparation and organization of this conference." She recalled that the global trend of loss of biodiversity so far had not been stopped, although the number of protected areas continues to increase globally.

Neither the European Union as a whole or its individual countries managed to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. The EU now wants to achieve this goal by 2020. This applies to the marine sector as well as on land, which even includes caves and

other natural phenomena under the earth. This is not possible without a strong position for Europe's protected areas. But where to start? With effective management, says Beate Jessel. Because the quality and the importance of a protected area will be influenced by management. "Our goal therefore is to further increase the management effectiveness of German protected areas.

We can bring the experience of our efforts to improve quality and evaluations for national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks in discussing ways to high-quality protected area systems in Europe". In this sense, she wishes all guests a stimulating exchange of ideas.

As the final speaker of the opening night, Olaf Tschimpke President of NABU, looks far back in history. In 1899 NABU was founded under the name "League for Bird Protection" in Baden-Wuerttemberg. Ironically, in the state that had previously no large protected area to its name. "It's painful," said Tschimpke, "the more I am pleased with the designation of the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve, which NABU advanced considerably". He hopes that Dr. Markus Rösler, as a representative of NABU at EUROPARC Germany and now as a state representative, can assist Baden-Wuerttemberg in the development of other large protected areas. For Tschimpke it is important to support and educate people to be inspired by nature. Therefore, protected areas can offer educational and recreational opportunities for families. Because without broad public acceptance, the goal of preserving nature and designating new protected areas becomes "mission impossible". In cooperation with NABU, EUROPARC Germany wants to support protected area development. As a representative of a non-governmental organization, he urges that targets in the National Biodiversity Strategy 2007 are effectively implemented. For example, the demand for five per cent share of forest area with natural forest development, which was not addressed by the Federal Government in the recently adopted "Forest Strategy 2020". "In particular our ability to protect the beech must be taken seriously," says Tschimpke, referring to the nomination of the five German beech forest areas as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, which since June this year; they form a World Heritage Site together with the beech forests of the Carpathian Mountains.

Accompanied by the sounds of the saxophone quartet Balanced Action, the guests were free to enjoy a social evening with a colourful buffet.



# *We need strong protected areas in Europe*

Together with the conference hosts – the state of Baden-Württemberg, Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve, EUROPARC and EUROPARC Germany – the conference participants looked at the question of how effective management can be achieved by protected areas and be sustainably funded.

After intense debates, high-calibre technical papers, workshops and field trips, the conference ended with the adoption of the “Bad Urach declaration”. This holds the European Commission, European Parliament and the governments of all European countries to continue to help strengthen protected areas in Europe.

It is not enough to just designate a minimum percentage of protected areas on land, in coastal areas and at sea as required by 2010 in Nagoya. What counts is quality. Accordingly basic conditions are to be created – even in difficult economic times – with sufficiently financial and personnel resources provided, so that protected areas can contribute to maintaining diversity and to thus finally fulfil the demands of international conventions as well as national strategies.

## *The Bad Urach Declaration*

We, the members of the EUROPARC Federation gathered here today, address the European Commission, the European Parliament and the national governments of the member states of the European Union and hereby declare that, with reference to the outcomes of this conference, only high-quality and well-managed protected areas in Europe will be able to serve as model contributors in the implementation of the Convention on Biodiversity and climate protection. We call upon the EU and its member states to establish the legal, financial and human resource conditions necessary to fulfil the objectives of the Convention on Biodiversity by 2020.

The EU's original goal of stopping biodiversity loss by 2010 failed in all 27 member states.

A contributing cause has been the fact that in many protected areas the related tasks were completed either insufficiently or not at all. Over the past few years, conditions in many areas have in fact deteriorated considerably, despite the ever-increasing significance of protected areas as “treasures” of European biological diversity. If the loss of biodiversity cannot be stopped within protected areas, it will be impossible to do so outside their borders.

Therefore, the motto “Quality counts - Benefits for Nature and People” was chosen for this year's EUROPARC Federation conference. With regards to the quality of nature parks, regional parks, national parks and biosphere reserves in Europe, as well as in the host country Germany, this means that:

- quality must be ensured by means of comparable standards, and
- financial and human resources appropriate to this task are required, which are necessary for the development and administration of the protected areas.

Only on this basis can the objectives set out by the designation of the protected areas be adequately fulfilled. The signatories of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and UNESCO member states have committed themselves to these provisions. The criteria of IUCN and UNESCO are recognised as the basis for the development of protected areas.

- According to international agreements and national legislation, the role of protected areas includes:
- protection of natural and biological diversity and the involved processes, also by means of large wilderness areas
- development of models for climate protection and adaption to climate change



Voting during the  
conference



- education for sustainable development
- research and monitoring
- establishing and enhancing sustainable land use models, which integrate conservation standards and are economically viable
- establishing and enhancing sustainable working practices within every aspect of life and the economy (tourism, energy production, waste management, trade, industry, etc.)
- building regional business cycles and value-added networks.

To this end, the following conditions must be met:

- protected areas are to be safeguarded within the European framework and by means of national legislation
- the governmental institutions responsible for the designation and management of protected areas are to have immediate jurisdiction over them
- protected areas are to be administered according to modern management principles and regularly evaluated
- protected areas must have a clearer presence as catalysts for sustainable regional development than in the past
- protected areas must implement their respective core missions and legal tasks via multifaceted cooperation and networks
- protected areas must protect and preserve Europe's natural heritage within sustainably used cultural landscapes as well as in newly emerging wilderness areas.

#### Call to Action

We, the members of the EUROPARC Federation, therefore call upon our national and regional governments, as well as the European Commission, to:

- develop the legal framework necessary to enable Europe's protected areas to efficiently fulfil their obligations and realise their functions
- provide protected areas with the authority required to complete these tasks and strengthen the park administrations by means of correspondingly high-quality human, financial and technical resources
- regularly review the achievement of conservation objectives and the effectiveness of protected area management, and establish the appropriate monitoring programmes and evaluation procedures required for this purpose
- resolve the conflict between the undisturbed development of wilderness and the preservation of valuable open land habitats necessary for the conservation of biodiversity, which burdens so many protected areas
- foster exchange and cooperation between European protected areas
- raise awareness of the significance and value of protected areas and the preservation of biodiversity amongst decision makers, relevant stakeholders and the public
- include comprehensive protection of natural caves and karst phenomena under the protected area regime.





The findings  
in detail



# Halting the decline of sites

## The contribution of protected areas to the preservation of biological diversity

Over the course of four days in Bad Urach, more than 330 experts from 40 countries examined the status, condition and development potential of protected areas in Europe. But why is there so much interest in these areas, which comprise only 13 percent of the world's land mass? "Protected areas are life insurance for a changing planet," says Trevor Sandwith, Director of IUCN's Protected Areas Programme. "We are currently facing major challenges. Our quality of life in the future depends on our reaction to increasing carbon dioxide emissions and the accelerating loss of biodiversity." Policy makers are also aware of this, and as a result the Parties to the Convention on Biodiversity adopted the "Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020" in Nagoya in 2010. By adopting this plan, signatories pledge to take effective action to halt the loss of biodiversity. One of the targets of these endeavours, among others, is the establishment of protected areas. By 2020, at least 17 percent of terrestrial habitats and 10 percent of marine areas are to be conserved through effectively managed and well-connected systems of protected areas (Target 11).

Ursula Heinen-Esser, Parliamentary State Secretary for the German Ministry for the Environment also discussed the importance of protected areas in her keynote speech. "Despite our successes, we have not been able to stop biodiversity loss, either in Germany or in Europe. However, if it were not for the large protected areas, the balance would appear still far worse." Uwe Riecken of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation explained to participants in Workshop 3 that in Germany, suitable living conditions for many protected species of animals such as the Lynx, Alpine Ibex, Capercaillie or Lesser Spotted Eagle can now be found only within protected areas. Certain habitats, including dunes, moorland, natural woods or

wetland meadows have all but disappeared outside of protected areas. Therefore, protected areas play an essential role in nature conservation, especially when networked with one another via "green infrastructure" and ecological corridors. After all, nature knows no boundaries – as evidenced by the Wadden Sea, for example.

The Wadden Sea tidal region of the North Sea is one of the largest areas of its kind in the world – a fascinating habitat which changes its appearance entirely many times every day. Large areas of the Wadden Sea regularly become flooded twice daily and then empty again as the tide ebbs. Islands and channels cut by the tidal streams are constantly changing shape and sometimes even their location. This transformation from land to sea and back again is what makes the Wadden Sea unique. Approximately 10,000 different varieties of plants and animals make their home here, both on land and in the water. <sup>1)</sup> "Between 10 and 12 million migratory birds use the Wadden Sea each year," explained Jens Enemark from the Common Wadden Sea Secretariat in his presentation in Workshop 4. Since 1978, the governments of the three countries bordering the Wadden Sea, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany, have been working together to protect this special habitat, which was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2009. A common secretariat was established in 1987 in Wilhelmshaven, Germany to facilitate the cooperation between the three countries. Its governing board meets every three years to assess progress and determine future courses of action. This trilateral cooperation has made the Wadden Sea one of Europe's largest coastal protected areas. And the effort has paid off: due to decreased grazing, salt marshes are once again growing and developing naturally, seagrass beds have nearly doubled in size over the past ten years and levels of pollutants in birds' eggs are decreasing. These are just a few examples of successes out of many. However, Enemark reminded the workshop participants, there is still much work to be done. Climate change and the migration of invasive species would present a new set of challenges to the management of this region. A factor which has been advantageous in the past, and will continue to be so in the future, is that by cooperating across borders, the functionality of an exceptionally important coastal landscape can be preserved on a large scale. Scientific studies and the attendant monitoring also contribute to the success of these efforts.

1) Source: Wadden Sea World Heritage Website  
<http://www.waddensea-worldheritage.org/4.0.html?&L=1>





Keynote speaker  
Miranda Schreurs  
during her lecture  
„European protected  
areas: visions of the  
future, lessons of  
the past“

### The Natura 2000 sites – a success story

Two of the great successes for European conservation have been the enactment of the Flora and Fauna Habitats Directive and the Birds Directive. These directives set forth the objective of restoring all wild species and natural habitats typical to Europe to a “favourable conservation status”. Habitats Directive-protected areas were designated to protect certain species and habitats. Together with the areas designated under the Birds Directive, these comprise the Natura 2000 network. In her keynote speech, Miranda Schreurs, a member of the German Advisory Council for the Environment, noted that since its establishment, approximately 26,000 Natura 2000 sites covering a total of 750,000 square kilometres have been designated within the EU member states. This is equal to 18 percent of Europe’s land mass. “However, only 17 percent of targeted species and habitats currently exhibit a favourable conservation status. This means that urgent action is still needed to protect the vast majority,” said Stefan Leiner, Head of the Natura 2000 Unit of the European Commission. All the more so given that the Natura 2000 sites also play a vital role in fulfilling the goals set by the European Union in its 2020 Biodiversity Strategy. The loss of biological diversity can only truly be stopped if the Habitats Directive and Birds Directive are fully implemented. Natura 2000 sites must be better administered and managed in a sustainable manner. Management plans need to be developed for all Natura 2000 sites. Last but not least, the network needs to be brought to completion in sea areas in particular. A new process called the Natura 2000 seminars was recently introduced. The seminars will provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and examples of good practice and also facilitate cooperation throughout Europe. The first pilot seminar for the Boreal Region is scheduled to take place in Helsinki in May 2012. In Workshop 3, Stefan Leiner invited EUROPARC

members to actively participate in preparing for and following up on the seminars. However, co-operation must also be extended to involve, in particular, the key sectors and interest groups jointly responsible for the directives’ success. This includes forestry and agriculture as well as the transportation, energy and land use planning sectors. Leiner criticised the fact that up until now, there has been little coherence between the goals of nature conservation and the standards set out in other policy areas. He urged environmental groups and administrators of protected areas to become actively involved in discussions regarding EU funding in the coming years. All of the main EU financing instruments are currently being reappraised. Therefore, effective lobbying is all the more necessary in these economically difficult times to ensure that conservation issues influence every area of policy making – and are not sacrificed to the pursuit of short-term profit.

Taking the Hortobágy grass steppes in Hungary as an example, Gábor Szilágyi, director of Hortobágy National Park, illustrated in Workshop 4 how EU funds contribute to the preservation of landscapes which are valuable from a conservation standpoint. The landscape of the Puszta was carved into a vast plain by regular flooding of the River Tisza and its tributaries. The traditional grazing of Hungarian domestic breeds such as the Nonius horse, grey steppe cattle, water buffalo, Racka sheep and Mangalitza pig prevented the forestation of the steppe. Under the communist regime (from 1950 to 1980), new land uses were introduced to parts of the steppes. Szilágyi voiced his dismay over the effects this had on the Puszta. “The land was ploughed for the cultivation of maize and cotton, and irrigation systems were developed to grow rice.” Only towards the end of the communist era did the regime recognise that the diverse landscape of the Puszta was home to abundant plant and animal life. Established in 1973, Hortobágy National Park became Hungary’s first and largest National Park. Thanks to the Habitats Directive and financial support from the European Union (LIFE and EU Structural Funds), work to renaturalise the damaged areas of the steppe has been ongoing since 2002. Irrigation systems were removed from a stretch of land 1,057 kilometres long for a total renaturalised area of 29,230 hectares. The steppes and wetland meadows of the Pannonian Region are among the habitats listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive, and therefore enjoy the status of special protection areas. The quality of protected areas is also closely linked to nature conservation regulations currently in effect.

## Why biodiversity strategies strengthen protected areas

Protected areas play a central role in the preservation of biological diversity and therefore should be strengthened. It has been apparent in Finland as well as in Germany that the implementation of the countries' respective national biodiversity strategies is helping to achieve this same goal. The Finnish government's second National Biodiversity Strategy for 2006 to 2016 has advanced the further development of the country's protected areas, according to Rauno Väisänen, Director of Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services<sup>2)</sup>. "We have more protected areas, they are better managed and the number of parks that exist only on paper is decreasing," Väisänen explained in his presentation in Workshop 3. In addition, the relevant knowledge base and management of information have both improved, regular evaluations of the parks are taking place and the focus is now on the overall protected area system, rather than on individual areas. "Using these methods, we have been able to improve the connectivity of our protected areas." And small successes are already being seen: although the loss of biodiversity is still continuing in Finland, it is now occurring at a slower pace than in previous years. Uwe Riecken of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, who chaired Workshop 3, confirmed that the National Biodiversity Strategy has also had a positive impact on protected areas

*And small successes are already being seen: although the loss of biodiversity is still continuing in Finland, it is now occurring at a slower pace than in previous years.*

in Germany. For the first time, an integrated and comprehensive approach which addresses a wide range of social areas and stakeholders has become available to Germany. The national standards also motivate the states to adopt and implement their own strategies. Large protected areas play a central role in these efforts, not only by protecting species and biotopes, but also by promoting the establishment of sustainable systems of use and acting as disseminators in the areas of education and public relations. Strategies on their own will have little effect unless they are backed up by the necessary tools and resources. The results of a survey of protected areas personnel showed that the great majority viewed the German Biodiversity Strategy as a helpful tool in the achievement of conservation targets. .

2) Metsähallitus: The state forest and conservation enterprise which administers protected areas in Finland.

## Priorities for action

- If we are to halt the loss of biodiversity and achieve the targets set out in our national and international strategies, we need well-functioning protected areas.
- We must view protected areas not only as isolated individual areas, but in their entirety and as a network. They must be connected with one another on a large scale and across borders via "green infrastructure".

### The EUROPARC Federation could support these efforts by the following means:

- Promoting communication between experts from protected areas and the political arena (at the national and European level) ;
- Promoting green infrastructure, including the establishment of new protected areas as core zones;
- Stronger communication and cooperation with land use groups, with the goal of working together to promote environmentally friendly methods of land use (e.g. contests and awards for good practice);
- Lobbying at the EU level, particularly in the areas of agriculture and fishing, in order to promote sustainable farming practices;
- Promoting the exchange of experiences with regard to the re-naturalisation of natural habitats and species conservation projects.

Trevor Sandwith talked about "protected areas: life insurance for a planet in transition"





## Quality counts – Going for the best

Beate Jessel from the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation explained what this means for European protected areas in her opening speech. "Protected areas fulfil their purpose when a habitat's natural diversity is preserved on the one hand, and when the needs of society, such as the need for recreation or high quality food, are also satisfied on the other hand." However, Trevor Sandwith of IUCN's Protected Areas Programme questioned whether European protected areas are currently achieving all of their targets. In his keynote speech, he referred to the results of the Global Biodiversity Outlook 3 of 2010, which showed that the diversity of species and habitats is decreasing worldwide, despite an increase in the number and coverage of protected areas. Therefore, existing protected areas need to work more efficiently than previously and demonstrate a higher level of quality in order to have a better effect. Using the key phrases "achieving standards", "making a difference" and "meeting the challenges", Sandwith called on the members of the EUROPARC network to achieve high standards of quality, recognise good management practice and confront any challenges that arise with innovative ideas.

Ursula Heinen-Esser, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Ministry for the Environment also emphasised that the main concern should not be expanding the current network of protected areas, but rather increasing quality and management effectiveness. The extent to which

conservation targets are being achieved should be reviewed at regular intervals. In Germany, evaluation processes for biosphere reserves have been in effect for over ten years. The evaluation of all German national parks began in 2009 and the quality drive for nature parks in 2005. "It is my hope that this conference will send out the message that a similar quality process should be introduced within Europe," Heinen-Esser said in her keynote speech.

This task, which is also a requirement of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is being addressed in a variety of ways. For example, biosphere reserves are required by UNESCO to undergo a standardised evaluation every ten years. However, other categories of protected areas are still in the initial stages when it comes to quality management. The PAME study, which assessed management effectiveness in European protected areas from 2009 to 2010, provided an overview of existing conditions in Europe. The results show that thus far only a quarter of European countries have achieved the target set out in the CBD, of evaluating one third of their protected areas (in relation to their number and coverage) by 2010<sup>3)</sup>. "What is remarkable is that the efficiency of marine protected areas as well as that of national protected areas systems has hardly been investigated up until now," noted Gisela Stolpe of the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation, which funded the study, in Workshop 1. While evaluations are required frequently in Western Europe and are completed on a regular basis, a large number of individual studies were recorded in Eastern Europe. Methods and indicators vary considerably. The "RAPPAM Method" and the "tracking tool" are some of the more frequently used tools. The management effectiveness information platform on the pages of the World Database on Protected Areas (WDPA<sup>4)</sup>) provides an overview of the variety of methods used.

What do all these evaluations reveal about the strengths and weaknesses of protected areas in Europe? In comparison to the global situation, some of the positive aspects are a relatively good conservation status, clear land ownership, strict compliance with legal requirements and a political framework which generally takes nature conservation issues into consideration. On the other hand, European protected areas rank lower when it comes to financial and personnel capacities, visitor management, monitoring and cooperation with local interest groups. Those in charge of the study strongly recommend an increased effort when it comes to quality management, given that all CBD signatory states have been tasked with evaluating management effectiveness in 60% of the total area of their protected areas by 2015.

3) PAME study: Nolte et al. (2010): *Protected Area Management Effectiveness Assessments in Europe. A review of application, methods and results.* BfN-Skripten 271a.

4) Management effectiveness information platform at WDPA; <http://www.wdpa.org/me/Default.aspx>



Left: The keynote speakers with moderator Klaus Liedtke

Right: Ursula Heinen-Esser, Parliamentary State Secretary for the Federal Environment Ministry

It is important that evaluations be carried out at regular intervals and that management practice reflects the results (adaptive management).

Many attempts at monitoring and regular evaluation fail because of a lack of human and financial resources. For this reason, Germany decided in the first instance to focus its review of management effectiveness on large protected areas and Natura 2000 sites, particularly the national parks. Andrea

*“It is my hope that this conference will send out the message that a similar quality process should be introduced within Europe.”*

*Ursula Heinen-Esser*

Hoffmann of EUROPARC Germany described the evaluation process in Workshop 2: The 15 UNESCO-recognised biosphere reserves in Germany have been evaluated every ten years starting in 2001 (in accordance with UNESCO guidelines). Together with EUROPARC Germany, the Association of German Nature Parks introduced the “Nature Parks Quality Drive” in 2005. Participation is voluntary. Thus far, 65 of the total 103 nature parks have taken part in the quality drive. Sixty Nature Parks were recognised as “Quality Nature Parks”, while five were classified simply as “Nature Park Quality Drive Partners.”<sup>5)</sup> The latter have yet to reach the number of points required for recognition as Quality Nature Parks, but will continue to work toward this goal in future.

5) Nature park quality drive in Germany: <http://www.naturparke.de/pages/quality>

The development of a quality management system for the 14 German national parks also began in 2005 with support from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and funding from the Federal Ministry for the Environment. Over a period of two and a half years, a team (which included experts from the national parks; the Inter-State Working Group for Nature Conservation, Landscape Management and Recreation (LANA); the states’ Ministries for Conservation<sup>6)</sup>; academic institutions and environmental associations; the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and coordinated by EUROPARC Germany) compiled a list of 44 criteria within ten fields of action. In 2008, LANA adopted these criteria as the basis for the evaluation process. Participation on the part of the protected areas is voluntary. “Since 2009, 12 of the 14 National Parks have undergone the evaluation process,” said Hoffmann. The review begins with a self-evaluation. A team from the protected area’s administration fills in a comprehensive questionnaire to the best of their knowledge and belief, and an assessor then converts these responses into a report. Finally, the report is sent to a committee, which, after studying the relevant documents, visits the park. The committee completes the process by providing a comparison of the current situation and target situation within the park and a list of recommendations. Once this supplementary information has been added, the final report is sent to the national park’s administration, as well as the appropriate state and federal authorities. Publication is in the hands of the relevant state.

6) In some cases the ministries of the environment are responsible, while in others it is the ministries of agriculture or rural development.





Excursion 11:  
viewpoint overlooking  
the Danube Valley

The lack of transparency concerning evaluation results is a thorny topic which was the subject of controversial debate in Workshops 1 and 2. On the one hand, the public has the right to be informed of the results. After all, the evaluation procedure is paid for using public funds. At the same time, it is frequently the case that management teams do not particularly welcome evaluations which is likely partially due to fear of poor results. If publication

*At the same time, it is frequently the case that management teams do not particularly welcome evaluations – which is likely partially due to fear of poor results.*

of the results were mandatory, acceptance would likely be still less. The debate during the conference highlighted the fact that there are vast differences between countries in this respect. While in the USA for example it would be impossible to conceal results of this sort, protected areas in Spain appear unlikely to accept the external publication of weak results. Out of the five final reports which are currently available for the German national parks, only two have been made public thus far (the Lower Oder Valley and Eifel National Parks).

Doing so has clearly caused no damage. On the contrary, the Lower Oder Valley National Park has received further resources since the evaluation in order to strengthen the management of the park. What lies ahead for the evaluation of the German parks? The next step will be to complete final reports for the parks which have already been evaluated. The two remaining national parks were evaluated at the end of 2011. A report presenting an analysis of results from all 14 areas is scheduled for publication in German and English by mid-2012. The next review will take place in ten years.

Spain has also begun to evaluate its national parks. The country's administration is highly decentralised, and the 17 regional governments pursue 17 different nature conservation strategies. The regional governments are responsible for the protected areas in their respective regions, but not for the 14 national parks, which are administered by the central government in Madrid. These are now reviewed according to a uniform set of criteria. "We don't necessarily need more protected areas, but first and foremost better management," contended José Atauri of the Spanish section of EUROPARC in Workshop 1. The national park evaluation system is based on the IUCN's criteria and simple, yet significant indicators which are detailed in a handbook (Manualo8<sup>7)</sup>). In addition, standards relating to the planning, implementation and evaluation of conservation projects were developed. These can also be downloaded from EUROPARC Spain's website (Manualo9). Training courses are available for those interested in learning more about the guidelines. Twelve protected areas are already using the project standards and have been awarded a quality label for their participation.

7) Criteria used in the evaluation of the Spanish National Parks, download at [http://www.redeuroparc.org/manuales\\_y\\_monografias.jsp](http://www.redeuroparc.org/manuales_y_monografias.jsp)



Ingrid Sieler from the Parks Forum, the body for protected areas in New Zealand and Australia, discussed the bigger picture in Workshop 2. Protected areas overseas are also striving to become more efficient. Data and figures such as the number of parks and staff employed in administration and in the field, the size of their budgets, numbers of guests in protected areas and so on are obtained as part of the collection of annual statistics. This enables a quick assessment which can then be used to effectively communicate the significance of protected areas to the public.

For example, statements such as “15,500 people manage approximately 20,000 protected areas covering 146 million hectares, which are visited by 280 million guests each year,” can be generated from these statistics. Nonetheless, the Parks Forum is also seeking a comparison of actual performance that cannot be captured with numbers alone. To that end, the organisation rolled out its Benchmarking Programme<sup>8)</sup> in 2007 and 2010. Just under two thirds of Parks Forum members participated in the evaluation. In 2010, this included ten protected areas, eleven urban parks and five protected area authorities. The evaluation involved filling in a survey of 72 questions relating to environmental, social, cultural and management measures. The management teams provide their own assessments; however, these are also informed by studies or the opinions of specialists. A final report is published which presents the results in aggregate form.

8) *The Parks Forum Benchmarking Programme*: <http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/Benchmarking-Program.html>

## Priorities for Action

- We must develop evaluation systems for Europe as a whole in order to regularly review the quality and progress of protected areas. Examples of best practice can be imitated and used as models in this process.
- Monitoring is one of a protected area’s most important tasks; we must establish appropriate indicators and the relevant monitoring systems.

**The EUROPARC Federation could support these efforts by the following means:**

- Creating an overview of the status of protected areas evaluations in individual countries (e.g. in the form of a barometer);
- Providing workshops on the topics of method sharing, capacity building and for communicating examples of best practice;
- Building a website covering protected areas evaluation, with links to relevant sites;
- Lobbying at the political level to highlight the necessity of protected areas evaluations.

Tourist attraction in the Biosphere Reserve:  
The Alb buffalo







# High costs, what benefits?

## Nature's treasure trove

Although we might not always realise it, we benefit from nature each and every day in a variety of ways. "Ecosystem services" is the name given to the resources which nature supplies to humans. For example, biodiversity provides us with food, wood, fuel, textiles, medicines, clean water and fertile soils. It offers beautiful landscapes, a healthy en-

vironment and spaces for exploration, recreation, relaxation and spiritual reflection. Insects pollinate crops, forests help regulate earth's climate and prevent erosion and heathlands absorb carbon dioxide. The conclusion that humans need nature to survive – while nature can exist without humans – seems obvious. Klaus Liedtke, a journalist and the conference's facilitator, sees nature as a topic which will always be current and relevant, one which would still exist even if there were no humans left one day. Despite this, many people still view nature conservation as a luxury, particularly in economically difficult times. Thus, the fact that nature conservation is profitable is worth demonstrating again and again, as is the fact that the benefits far outweigh the costs incurred, such as that of managing a protected area.

This was precisely the same approach taken by the TEEB study<sup>9)</sup>, the worldwide study of the economics of ecosystems and biodiversity. Under the leadership of Pavan Sukhdev, information from around the world was collected and analysed over the course of three years in order to evaluate the economic benefits of biodiversity as well as the costs incurred by the loss of natural resources. The worth which our society places on specific things is highly dependent on their economic value. For this reason, it is helpful to quantify nature's value.

9) TEEB – *The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity*:  
[www.teebweb.org](http://www.teebweb.org)



In workshop 5, Claudia Bieling from the University of Freiburg pointed out a compelling result of the TEEB study: nature conservation creates added value. For example, over 120,000 terrestrial protected areas worldwide produce ecosystem services with an estimated value of 4.4 to 5.2 billion US dollars each year. The establishment and management of an optimal protected areas network covering 15 percent of the world's land mass and 30 percent of its seas would cost an estimated 45 billion USD each year. This is a considerable sum, which is put into perspective nonetheless by the finding that these protected areas would mean a hundred-fold increase in the value of ecosystem services, equal to approximately 5,000 billion USD each year.

Many people find it hard to see the relationship between data of this sort and reality. Isn't nature's value something that is personal for each of us, something that cannot be captured by numbers?

*Scientific studies demonstrate the positive effects which rest and relaxation within nature and protected areas have on human health.*

The results of a short story contest initiated by the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve provide evidence of the connection between humans and the natural environment of their homeland. In the submitted stories, people describe natural spaces as part of their personal identity; they mention that they treasure the landscape's beauty, enjoy relaxing there and find inspiration in nature. An overwhelming majority of visitors to Finnish national parks also seek out nature because they find tranquillity and a respite from the hectic pace of daily life there. Scandinavians traditionally have a close relationship with nature. Under the motto, "Healthy parks, healthy people," Metsähallitus, Finland's state forest and conservation enterprise, has made these intangible assets part of its respective parks' profiles. Scientific studies demonstrate the positive effects which rest and relaxation within nature and protected areas have on human health.

Despite this, Claudia Bieling said that she fears cultural and spiritual values are not taken into consideration often enough when it comes to assessing economic value. But this is true only to a certain extent. People visit protected areas to recharge their batteries and regain their equilibrium. When they visit, they spend money which benefits the regional economy. And this economic effect can be measured, as studies in Finland and Germany show. A 2010 study investigated the influence of 37 Finnish national parks and seven national hiking areas on regional economies. According to the MGM2



A place to relax –  
sea of blossom in  
an orchard



A climber's  
reward - panorama  
view of Goldland  
Klausenberg Nature  
Reserve





Excursion 6:  
The storm damaged "Lothar path"  
at Schliffkopf on  
the Schwarzwald-  
hochstraße

(Money Generation Model 2), which was developed by the University of Michigan for the US national parks, three parameters are required in order to measure the economic influence of parks: the number of guests, the length of their stay as well as the amount they spend. "In 2010, just under two million guests visited the Finnish national parks," reported Liisa Kajala of Metsähallitus in Workshop 5. "They spent in the region of 108.9 million euros, which corresponds to employment for 1,403 people per year." The popularity of the seven

national hiking areas corresponds to employment for an additional 201 people. Taking into account only those guests who came to a region for the purpose of visiting one of the protected areas, the effects would be roughly halved.

Hubert Job from the University of Würzburg in Germany has also been studying the economic effects of large protected areas since 2002. Professor Job reported in Workshop 14 that 50 million people visit the German national parks alone each year. One fifth of the guests are drawn to the respective regions solely by the "National Park" brand, spend approximately 431 million euros and create and maintain around 14,000 jobs. These are useful arguments when it comes to convincing broad sections of the population of the impact of existing or planned protected areas.

*One fifth of the guests are drawn to the respective regions solely by the "National Park" brand, spend approximately 431 million euros and create and maintain around 14,000 jobs.*

### Who pays for nature conservation?

Conservation measures and the establishment of European protected areas are financed primarily by public funding. Currently, issues such as "the euro crisis", "national debt" and the fear of a new economic recession set the tone within social debates. Nature conservation does not go unaffected; it must compete for the distribution of personal and financial resources. Nonetheless, Ursula

Heinen-Esser, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Ministry for the Environment promised EUROPARC members that the preservation of biodiversity, which is promoted by protected areas in particular, is not just a luxury or fair weather issue for the German government. “Our motto is not nice to have, but must have.” In her keynote speech in Bad Urach, she presented two programmes intended to further the implementation of Germany’s National Biodiversity Strategy:

- Founded in 2011, the Federal Biological Diversity Programme<sup>10)</sup> provides 15 million euros of annual support to innovative, exemplary projects focused on the preservation of biodiversity. The core funding areas include species for which Germany has a special responsibility (e.g. the Cheddar Pink or Red Kite), biodiversity hotspots as well as the preservation of nature’s ecosystem services. The programme was not developed in isolation, but rather as part of a dialogue process involving environmental and conservation associations (including EUROPARC Germany), as well as state conservation authorities and academic, economic, political and management specialists.
- Over the past 20 years, the “chance.natur” programme, which was designed to promote large-scale conservation projects<sup>11)</sup>, has supported over 20 ventures. A number of these projects involved large protected areas in Germany – a contribution to the preservation of landscape and species diversity covering an area of close to 200,000 hectares.

Particularly in times when funding is scarce, there is no alternative to seeking additional, innovative sources of financing. Partnering with the business community is one possible solution. Udo Gattenlöhner of the Global Nature Fund provided examples of this in Workshop 12, arguing that some 40 percent of economic activity worldwide is based on biological products or processes. Therefore, he concluded, the private sector should play a greater role in the protection of ecosystem services. There are already many initiatives of this sort: the German airline Lufthansa, for example, supports a tree planting initiative in South Africa and the construction chemical company Sika finances the renaturalisation of mangrove forests in India. The Business & Biodiversity campaign was introduced in Germany and in Europe.<sup>12)</sup>

As attractive as this possibility might appear, establishing partnerships of this sort is a difficult and highly complex process. Business and nature conservation speak different languages and have different needs. Oftentimes, businesses are only



Red Kite:  
characteristic  
species for  
the Swabian Alb  
Biosphere Reserve

10) Germany’s Federal Biological Diversity Programme:  
<http://www.bfn.de/bundesprogramm.html>

11) Large-scale conservation projects: [http://www.bfn.de/0203\\_grossprojekte.html](http://www.bfn.de/0203_grossprojekte.html)

12) Information regarding Business & Biodiversity campaigns can be found at: <http://www.business-biodiversity.eu/> and <http://www.business-and-biodiversity.de/>



concerned about buying a positive public image for themselves.

Nonetheless, Gattenlöhner has witnessed a positive shift in recent years, moving away from pure sponsorship towards a holistic approach. He cited “landscape auctions<sup>13)</sup>”, an innovative financing mechanism developed by the Dutch consulting firm Triple E, as an example. A minimum price is determined for specific landscape elements such as ponds, hedges or wildlife corridors depending on the amount of money required to maintain the element’s ecological functions for a set period of time (e.g. ten years). Interested parties, from companies to school groups, can place a bid. The winner does not become the owner of the element but rather assumes the cost of maintaining it, thereby ensuring the preservation of a landscape which s/he considers valuable. Starting in 2010, auctions have been held in the Netherlands, Germany and Spain. In the Netherlands, the money that is raised is man-

Conservation, the project is intended to generate private funding for climate-related conservation measures in Germany’s large protected areas via a certificate scheme. The renaturalisation of heathlands, for example, is as beneficial to conservation targets as it is to the objective of reducing levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. So far, contributions to climate protection of this sort have rarely been rewarded financially. The project aims to develop “products” for the voluntary carbon compensation market in Europe’s emission’s trading scheme which will provide CO<sub>2</sub> compensatory measures within Germany’s protected areas, and to set up a suitable marketing structure for the products. The sale of CO<sub>2</sub> emission certificates will provide additional funding for conservation projects. At the same time, the image of protected areas will also be improved, since the certificates will help the public to see the connection between protected areas and climate protection.



Wurzacher Ried -  
one of the most  
intact raised bogs  
in central Europe

aged by a trust fund, which verifies that the promised preservation measures are in fact carried out. EUROPARC Germany, meanwhile, relies on tapping the value of the services protected areas provide to us – for example, when it comes to climate protection. The research and development project “Valorisation of Conservation Measures” was introduced in early 2011 with financial support from the Federal Ministry for the Environment. Under the supervision of the Federal Agency for Nature

13) Information regarding landscape auctions can be found at:  
<http://www.landscape-auction.com/> and  
<http://www.business-biodiversity.eu/default.asp?Menu=113>

## Priorities for Action

- We must place more emphasis on the value and benefits of our protected areas in order to advance political lobbying at both national and EU level. We must also have a clear understanding of the ecosystem services our protected areas provide to humans and carry out inventories of ecosystem services in all protected areas.
- We must develop a common understanding of our protected areas’ intangible assets (e.g. intrinsic and spiritual values, contribution to human health) and use uniform terminology to describe them.

The EUROPARC Federation could support these efforts by the following means:

- Exchanging examples of best practice;
- Improved communication of the services and values which nature provides to humans;
- Establishing a EUROPARC working group to focus on the marketing of natural values;
- Lobbying at the EU level.



Young researchers -  
Junior Rangers exploring

## Communicate, inspire, engage

During the four days of conversations and discussions in Bad Urach it might have been easy to conclude that everyone is aware of nature conservation issues and the need for action; that people no longer need any convincing and all that remains to be done is to set specific resolutions and activities in motion. But Bad Urach was a meeting of like-minded people, and the general public often has a different attitude when it comes to nature conservation. "It isn't enough to discuss the importance of protected areas within our own circles; we must share this message with others, particularly those who are not yet involved," Erika Stanciu reminded EUROPARC members. According to an opinion poll in the European Union in 2007<sup>14)</sup>, some 90 percent of EU citizens consider the loss of biological diversity to be a serious problem in their respective country and globally. However, only every fifth respondent (19%) said that this problem already affected them personally, while over two thirds (70%) thought that they or their children might be affected by it in future. This survey therefore indicates that there is an abstract awareness of the problem, but only a minority feels personally affected by it. In addition, many people are unsure what they can do personally to contribute to the preservation of biodiversity in our environment. Eberhard Brandes, CEO of WWF

Germany, echoed this in his keynote speech. "There has never been so much interest in nature conservation matters on the one hand and so little action on the other hand. We must close this gap." The only question is how. How, in our consumer society, can we manage to attract people's attention to environmental topics?

"Should nature be advertised like washing powder or brands of cars?" facilitator Klaus Liedtke asked accordingly. "Yes," was the response of Ed Gillespie from the English communications agency Futerra, "if we want to be successful, we must turn nature into a brand that people associate with positive emotions<sup>15)</sup>." His company's vision is to make sustainable behaviour so desirable for people that it becomes part of their daily lives. And the complexity of the technicalities must be reduced to the point that a clear message can be communicated in a language that society will understand. In doing so, it is important not only to provide information but to provoke an emotional response. "We have the choice of protecting or destroying nature. If we want to reach people, we cannot focus on the message of extinction any longer, but rather on the love we feel towards nature and our connection to it," Gillespie urged conference participants in his keynote speech. The two formulas he proposes for converting simple discussion of the issues to increased action are the following: the "love + action" formula can be used to rouse public emotions, while the "need + action" message can be used to motivate policymakers to increased action. Thus, both formulas communicate a clear call to action, but the motivation for that action varies.

EUROPARC Germany's decision to introduce the umbrella brand "National Natural Landscapes"<sup>16)</sup> in Germany's large protected areas also involved the building of a brand. After initial

15) *Branding Biodiversity, Nature as a Brand*: [http://www.futerra.co.uk/downloads/Branding\\_Biodiversity.pdf](http://www.futerra.co.uk/downloads/Branding_Biodiversity.pdf)

16) *The National Natural Landscapes brand for German protected areas*: <http://www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de/>

14) *Eurobarometer 2007 on biological diversity*: [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/flash/fl\\_219\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_219_en.pdf)





Learning to protect nature together from an early age

scepticism, a majority of the national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks now use the brand. "The brand contributes significantly to increased awareness of public areas among the general public, strengthens regional development within protected areas and networking between them, provides a boost for sustainable tourism and thereby serves to protect our natural heritage," said Ursula Heinen-Esser, Parliamentary State Secretary at the German Ministry for the Environment in her keynote speech. "Visually speaking, the well-known dot logo is also a real eye catcher."

There is still the question of whether people love the umbrella brand; that is, whether the public sees the dot logo in a positive light. A factor which could have a positive effect on this is working with children and young people in nature, for example within the Junior Ranger Programme, which was founded by the EUROPARC Federation in 2002. "Take a look around this conference room," Eberhard Brandes from the WWF told conference participants. "The average age is probably somewhere between 30 and 60. We must focus more on working with children and introducing them to nature. After all, they will be the ones making the decisions in future." To that end, the Junior Ranger Programme needs to be established in as many European protected areas as possible.

Germany has already managed to do this. Since 2008, EUROPARC Germany has been working together with the WWF to establish a Junior

Ranger Programme. Its aim is to gain children between the ages of 7 and 12 and their families as advocates for protected areas. The children do not need to live in close proximity to the protected area; visitors, web users or school groups can also participate, explained Gudrun Batek of EUROPARC Germany in Workshop 8. While young people living nearby can help directly with nature conservation projects in protected areas, guides for nature activities are available to guests. E-learning platforms and teaching materials for use in schools were also developed. T-shirts, caps and a programme logo contribute to brand building and identification, and the "Lotta and Lars" mascots answer children's questions. The campaign's media partner is GEOLino, a magazine for children and young people with some 800,000 readers in Germany alone.

Rodna National Park in Romania is also focused on working with young people. Young people here are helping to monitor populations of key species. In addition, a network of 40 eco-clubs has been established, Claudia Iusan reported in Workshop 8. Young people receive training and are equipped with nature guides and inventory sheets before going out into the park. Working in nature is enjoyable and promotes an understanding of complex natural relationships. In doing so, the young people also make an important contribution to species protection in the park.

Voluntary work of this sort helps to reconnect humans with nature. Strengthening volunteerism is an important concern that should continue to be developed after the completion of the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (see also activities relating to the GRUNDTVIG project in section 3.6). But not everyone will take the time to become directly involved in volunteer work in protected areas. "We need good environmental education and more dialogue to make people more aware of protecting biodiversity," Miranda Schreurs from the EEAC<sup>17)</sup> urged in her keynote speech. James Carter from the UK explained in Workshop 9 how he envisions environmental education taking place. "Good interpretation engages people, catches their interest and relates to experiences in their daily lives." Seeing, hearing, feeling and the rest of the senses should all be involved. A protected area's key message should always be "This place is precious, and worth looking after." But Carter also stressed the importance of honesty in protected area marketing. If brochures promise guests a wilderness experience, they should not then be greeted by a uniformly planted forest when they visit. Rather, creative means should be used to enhance natural areas for visitors.

In Germany, ParcInterp<sup>18)</sup> – a joint project sponsored by EUROPARC Germany, the Nature and Environmental Education Working Group and the German Ranger Association – is going

17) EEAC: European Environment and Sustainable Development Advisory Councils.

18) ParcInterp: <http://www.parcinterp.de/>

one step further. The project links traditional environmental interpretation in protected areas with aspects of education for sustainable development. Although there is a long history of environmental interpretation in Germany's National Natural Landscapes, the concept of education for sustainable development is less well established. This is set to change. With academic guidance from the Academy for Sustainable Development in Eberswalde, the principles of education for sustainable development will become more fully integrated in interpretive services in Germany's protected areas than previously. The goal is not only to inform visitors, but to enable them to recognise interrelationships in nature and motivate them to take action themselves.

*Previously, visitors had to carry hiking guides, maps or identification guides in their backpacks. The mobile digital information system, which can be loaded onto iPhones, now provides information on location, natural phenomena and trails in the park.*

However, when it comes to the range of communicative and interpretive services offered in protected areas it is crucial that the connection to technological advances not be lost. In his keynote speech, Trevor Sandwith from IUCN suggested also using social networks to raise the profile of protected areas. IUCN is using this exact approach with its "Protected Planet"<sup>19)</sup> internet platform. In his presentation in Workshop 15, Alan Rankin from Cairngorms National Park in Scotland recommended using mobile devices such as smartphones in addition to social networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or Flickr and programming special apps and gadgets to provide information on respective protected areas. Cairngorms National Park has had good results using this approach. The "Visit Cairngorms" mobile app has been available as a free download on the park's website since October 2010<sup>20)</sup> and has been downloaded 5,500 times thus far. App users have access to information on visitor facilities, restaurants and accommodation as well as activities in the area. The Swiss National Park offers a similar service with its GPS-based "iWebPark" information system. Previously, visitors had to carry hiking guides, maps or identification guides in their backpacks. The mobile digital information system, which can be loaded onto iPhones, now provides information on location, natural phenomena and trails in the park. More than 500 points of interest await

## Priorities for Action

- Environmental interpretation in protected areas must evoke an emotional response and address the relationship between humans and nature.
- We must apply effective social media and new technologies as core instruments in internal and external communication in order to reach as many different sections of the population as possible.
- Volunteer work is an important part of educational work in protected areas and we must do more to encourage it.

**The EUROPARC Federation could support these efforts by the following means:**

- Exchanging examples of best practice relating to environmental interpretation and communication;
- Establishing a EUROPARC working group to revise our communication strategy;
- Establishing new media for green social networks, e.g. a "green Facebook", protected areas apps, forums, virtual teams, etc.;
- Developing a EUROPARC IT strategy;
- Extending the Junior Ranger Programme to the entire EUROPARC network;
- Establishing a youth conference in connection with the annual EUROPARC conference.

discovery. Interactive quizzes make hiking an adventure for children and adults alike. Integrating technology of this sort not only lightens backpacks, but also attracts new target groups with a passion for technology.

19) IUCN's Protected Planet information platform:  
[www.protectedplanet.net](http://www.protectedplanet.net)

20) Cairngorms National Park visitor app:  
<http://m.visitcairngorms.com/>



## Protected areas as tourist magnets – a blessing or a curse?

In the past few years the travel market has seen an increased interest in nature travel. Many people are seeking rest and relaxation and want to visit areas offering scenic cultural landscapes or untouched wildernesses. As a result, protected areas are increasingly becoming tourist magnets. The stimulus this provides to regional economies can be a blessing for many remote rural areas. However, the benefits of having so many visitors can quickly become overshadowed by concern as nature begins to suffer from the rush of tourists. In this context it is again crucial that we identify effective approaches for visitor management and disseminate them within the EUROPARC network.

Yrjö Norokorpi from Metsähallitus in Finland gave an account of his own experiences in Workshop 13. He knows that too many visitors can result in damage to protected areas. Hiking paths grew ever wider as more and more people travelled them, soil was eroded, plants trampled, wildlife frightened. At the end of the day, it is not only nature that suffers, but the visitors who come in search of rejuvenation themselves when they encounter a landscape whose beauty has been diminished by the damage caused to it. To counter this, Metsähallitus introduced a concept for sustainable tourism in the Finnish national parks which takes into account intangible and spiritual assets. Indicators such as visitor satisfaction, quality of nature experience and recreation, disruption caused by high visitor volume, soil erosion in the trail

network, impact of waste, fulfilment of expectations and the range of offerings were determined. Park visitors are regularly surveyed with regard to these indicators and the results analysed. Ultimately, it is the task of park administration to lay down limits; that is, to decide when a situation is still acceptable and when a protected area is in danger of being compromised by tourism. Depending on the outcome, either proactive or reactive measures must be taken to improve visitor management.

In Workshop 10, Frank Steingäß reported that the “honey pot” strategy is being used in Germany’s Harz National Park. In other words, areas that are popular but less critical in terms of conserving plants and wildlife are more heavily promoted by the park’s administration. The result is that there is a higher concentration of park guests in these areas, while other areas remain protected from the rush of visitors. Thus, marketing and trail management are used to determine which areas absorb higher numbers of visitors and which remain largely unaffected by tourism. In addition to spatial management, temporary regulations can also be useful, for example when it comes to defusing the conflict between nature conservation and rock climbing. During excursion 11 to the distinctive climbing rocks of the Upper Danube Nature Park, one of the issues explained was how roundtable discussions contributed to joint work on behalf of the area. One measure involves the temporary closure of climbing rocks during the breeding season of sensitive species of birds. The process used in the Upper Danube has the potential to serve as a model given that conservation representatives and climbing associations were able to reach a consensus concerning climbing regulations which was in both their best interests; a win-win situation.

Hans Schiphorst from the umbrella organisation SNP for national parks in the Netherlands emphasised cooperation with tourism enterprises. He reminded participants in Workshop 10 that each tourism provider should serve not only as a host, but also as an advocate for the protected area in which they are located. The STEPPA Project <sup>21)</sup>, which seeks to promote cooperation between the various initiatives for sustainable tourism enterprises in protected areas across Europe, follows the same approach. “The enterprises’ experiences with sustainability criteria were exchanged with the aim of turning tourism enterprises into real advocates and supporters of their protected areas,” explained Asnate Ziemele from STEPPA in Workshop 6. The question of whether tourism enterprises which are certified and operate sustainably also reap financial benefits was also examined. The results did in fact suggest that they are often in a better financial position than their competitors, but that they still suffer from dependability on the seasons to the same extent. However, the results of the surveys showed that most companies do not participate in a certification system because

21) Information on STEPPA can be found at <http://uef.fi/mot/steppa>



Typical Jurassic rocks in the Upper Danube Nature Park - a popular recreation area in the region

they think that a sustainability label will increase their profits. They do it because they believe it is the best way forward for humanity. The some 700 guests surveyed, from Italy, Spain, Germany, Latvia and Finland indicated that ecolabels serve as an incentive to consider the environment when they travel. Most respondents said they intended to take greater notice of ecolabels in the future.

Lydia Tague also spoke about her experiences with certification systems in Workshop 11. She works at Ribby Hall Village, an exclusive hotel in the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Beauty in the UK. Each year, approximately 270 employees welcome 250,000 guests. Ribby Hall Village came into contact with the Forest of Bowland protected area via a certification scheme for hotels. Tague had only positive things to say about the collaboration. "Today, through our participation in the accreditation scheme, we work in cooperation with other businesses. We join forces to promote our beautiful landscape. This means less effort is required on the part of the individual businesses." The Bowland Experience Group of Businesses<sup>22)</sup>, a joint initiative of tourism providers within the protected area, grew out of this cooperation. Members of the organisation pledge to preserve the natural foundations of life in the Forest of Bowland and to pass on an appreciation of nature to their guests by increasing their awareness of the natural environment.

22) Bowland Experience Group of Businesses: <http://www.bowlandexperience.com/>

## Priorities for Action

- We must make tourism in protected areas ecologically sustainable; a useful point of reference in this effort is the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas.
- We must develop certification schemes and partner initiatives; these are important factors in helping guests to choose environmentally friendly travel options.

**The EUROPARC Federation could support these efforts by the following means:**

- Posting examples of best practice on the Charter for Sustainable Tourism website;
- Developing exchange programmes on the topic of sustainable tourism;
- Promoting brand building in protected areas;
- Promoting visitor monitoring in protected areas;
- Promoting work related to sustainable tourism via the Alfred Toepfer Scholarship Programme;
- Discussing and redefining the role of EUROPARC as a competence centre for sustainable tourism in protected areas;
- Offering training seminars on the topic of marketing as a tool for attracting visitors (e.g. as part of the Siggen Seminars);
- Better representation of the financial aspects of sustainable tourism in protected areas.





Swedish dance for the twentieth birthday of EUROPARC Germany

## Achieving more, together

While EUROPARC members met in Bad Urach, Europe and the rest of the world was busy discussing how to solve the Greek debt crisis. Many people are still of the opinion that our well being depends on a sound financial sector rather than a healthy natural world in which the balance of ecosystems is maintained. "It should not be the case that we are more willing to help threatened banks than our threatened natural environment," facilitator Klaus Liedtke entreated conference delegates. "Each of you plays a central role in saving our natural heritage. Your protected areas must help to counterbalance the destruction of nature that is still continuing to take place."

But this is easier said than done. It will take a wide range of participants working together if we are to reach this goal, for together we will achieve more. The active exchange of experiences within the European network of protected areas is one of the keys to success. "There are often complaints about the lack of resources available to nature conservation efforts," noted Eberhard Henne, outgoing council member of the Federation. "Money is of course important. But a reliable network is just as important." And the conference helped to further strengthen this network, for example through the decision to further collaborate between the EUROPARC Federation and Eurosite. The newly elected president, Thomas Hansson, predicted that by joining forces the organisations will be better equipped to represent the interests of protected areas in

Europe. Forming one organisation will also help to intensify lobbying work within the European Union in the future. As Uwe Riecken from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation pointed out, protected areas must be safeguarded from negative impacts of the EU's developmental and agricultural policies and the expansion of renewable energies. Could unconventional methods perhaps be used to convince policymakers to integrate the preservation of biodiversity and climate protection into every area of policy as cross cutting issues? Klaus Liedtke also suggested offering protected areas as venues for cabinet meetings; perhaps this would prompt more decisions to be made in favour of nature.

In addition to unconventional measures, there is also a need for unconventional cooperative schemes, for quality alliances with partners working with and on behalf of protected areas. In the plenary session, Eberhard Brandes from the WWF introduced the Danube-Carpathian Programme as a project in which environmental associations, government organisations, companies and civil society are pulling together. Thanks to lobbying work on the part of the associations, the governments of Bulgaria, Republic of Moldova, Romania and the Ukraine agreed to assume joint responsibility for the preservation of a green corridor along the Lower Danube. The Lower Danube Green Corridor Agreement was signed in 2000. Natura 2000 sites were designated and a Biosphere Reserve stretching across five countries was established in order to maintain this valuable habitat's diversity of species in the long term. Cooperation with the business community was also successful. The furniture giant IKEA, for example, invested 1.5 million euros to promote sustainable forestry in the region. Lafarge, a manufacturer of building materials, reduced its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and takes into consideration the protection of biodiversity when working in its quarries and the areas surrounding them. The advertising agency Ogilvy contributed its services pro bono to promote the current campaign "Carpathian Opportunity. More business, more jobs, more nature"<sup>23</sup>. "We hope that through the united efforts of environmental associations, governments and businesses we will be able to contribute to the preservation of a habitat which is currently home to half of Europe's populations of Bears and Lynx," Brandes explained.

<sup>23</sup>) „Carpathian Opportunity. More business, more jobs, more nature“: [http://wwf.panda.org/what\\_we\\_do/where\\_we\\_work/black\\_sea\\_basin/danube\\_carpathian/our\\_solutions/forests\\_and\\_protected\\_areas/carpathian\\_ecoregion/carpathian\\_opportunity/](http://wwf.panda.org/what_we_do/where_we_work/black_sea_basin/danube_carpathian/our_solutions/forests_and_protected_areas/carpathian_ecoregion/carpathian_opportunity/)

Partnerships are also the focus of much activity in Loire-Anjou-Touraine Regional Nature Park. “No partnerships, no nature park,” Loïc Bidault emphasised in Workshop 11. An example is the cooperation agreement signed by the Nature Park where he works and the Loire Valley World Heritage Site. The Nature Park stages a competition to select businesses, farmers and communities as partners, and those operating in concordance with the ethos of the Nature Park are awarded an “Eco Trophy”. Accommodation establishments fulfilling certain criteria are certified as partner enterprises. In addition, 133 nature park ambassadors have been enlisted since 2003. “To start with, people wishing to represent the Park receive three days of training. After that there are further training seminars, as well as outings to other protected areas.” To ensure that the training expenditure is worthwhile, those involved in the programme sign an agreement committing to at least three years’ activity on behalf of the Park. “It is important to us that partners are connected to the Nature Park for a longer period of time,” Bidault summarised. Mutual trust, respect and shared values also play a significant role.

*In addition to unconventional measures, there is also a need for unconventional cooperative schemes, for quality alliances with partners working with and on behalf of protected areas.*

The same applies to working with volunteers of all types, and volunteer management in European protected areas must be professionalised and advanced accordingly. Under the leadership of EUROPARC Germany, a GRUNDTVIG project introduced during the European Year of Volunteering 2011 is pursuing this very goal.<sup>24)</sup> The project aims to train volunteers for work in European protected areas and to lay down quality standards. “We want to develop a vital network of qualified volunteers and support lifelong learning using good materials and training methods,” explained Anita Posser from BTCV in the UK in Workshop 7. Doing so will help to raise awareness of the value of doing volunteer work in protected areas.

24) Further information available at <http://www.volunteers-in-parks.eu/>

Protected area administrations in France are seeking cooperation with agricultural enterprises via a meadows competition. Any farmer with land in a national or nature park can participate. Prizes are awarded to meadows exhibiting the best balance between production and the preservation of plant and wildlife diversity. The intention is to highlight the important role played by farmers in protected areas. In 2011, 220 agricultural enterprises in 25 parks (including four national parks<sup>25)</sup>) participated in the competition. A local jury with representatives from nature conservation and agriculture alike decides which enterprises are awarded the prizes. “If we are able to get farmers onside and recognise them as competent partners, we will be able to achieve great success in nature conservation,” Véronique Boussou concluded her presentation in Workshop 4.

Therefore, it is necessary to put aside any competitiveness or hostility in order to forge new alliances. Doing so will help to prevent the possibility of species continuing to die out while the world meets for discussions on biodiversity strategies. It could be that this is the perfect time to do so, at least if the statement made by Charles, Prince of Wales in his book *Harmony*, and quoted by Klaus Liedtke at the conference, holds true. “I believe that a time is coming when many people will realise that nature’s boundaries are not deficiencies, but instead represent a framework within which we must manoeuvre.”

25) Vanoise, Écrins, Mercantour and Pyrénées National Parks.

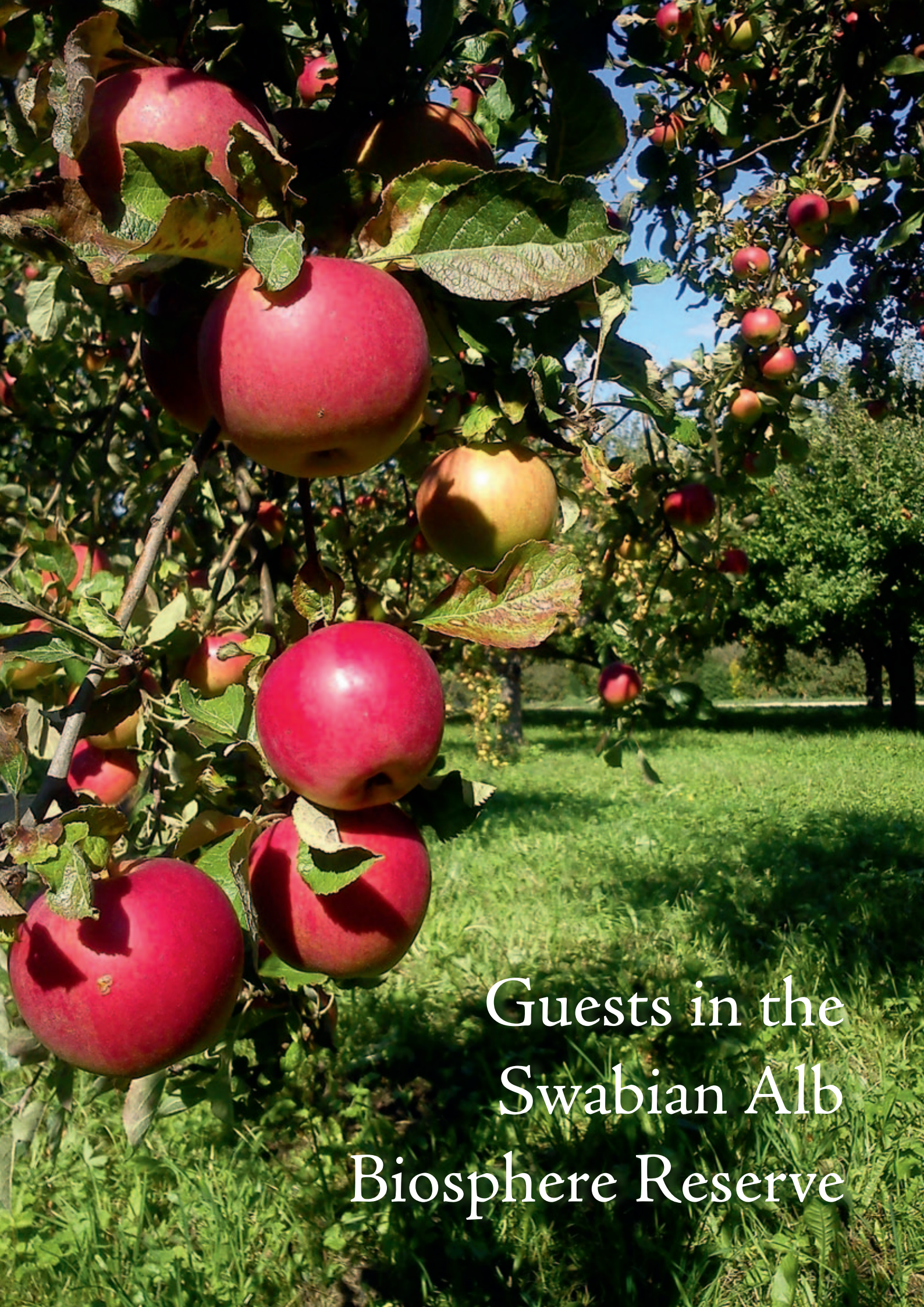
## Priorities for Action

- We must strengthen cooperation with like-minded groups and individuals in order to create a more powerful voice for nature conservation issues.
- We must explore new political, business and civil partnerships in a spirit of mutual respect, for together we will be able to achieve more.

**The EUROPARC Federation could support these efforts by the following means:**

- Supporting innovative partnerships (e.g. with companies, banks, NGOs, etc.) with the aim of attracting more volunteers for work in protected areas;
- Creating a slogan for EUROPARC’s work as part of the brand building process;
- Developing a website to manage volunteer work, including guidelines, toolkits, etc.;





Guests in the  
Swabian Alb  
Biosphere Reserve



# Life and business with nature

## Slope and ravine/gully forests in the core zones: here, nature can develop freely

The Swabian Alb was inhabited very early, in the Neolithic period. Thousands of years of human influence in the region have left their mark. The result is a diverse cultural landscape with a beautiful mosaic of forested and open land. Nature untouched by humans, however, is rare. Nature can only develop freely in the slope and ravine forests of the Albtrauf and its side valleys and in the classic Kuppenwäldern forests of Kuppenalb hill. These scattered remnants of 'wilderness' are protected in the core zones of the Biosphere Reserve. They cover a total of about three percent of the area. The forests are owned by the municipalities, the state of Baden-Württemberg and the Federal Republic of Germany. The group which goes on the excursion to Donntal will see the core zone. Beech, ash and sycamore dominate here. The forest area was designated as a protected forest in 1995, and has thus taken out of productive use for less than two decades. The trees are relatively young (about 70 to 130 years), the amount of dead wood is rather low. The difference to a commercial forest is still minimal. Nonetheless, the excursion leaves a lasting impression of a forest that can develop without human influence.

## Buffer zones: diversity through extensive use

About 42 percent of the land area is designated as a buffer zone. Here one of the hallmarks of the Swabian Alb is maintained – the juniper scrub. It is the result of a centuries-old form of farming – sheep grazing. Without grazing the forest would long since have grown back on the steep karst slopes. Every year 16 sheep farms put about 30,000 sheep on the open land of the former military training area at Münsingen. They sell the meat of the lambs to restaurant owners in the region, as well as to Muslims. With a few excep-

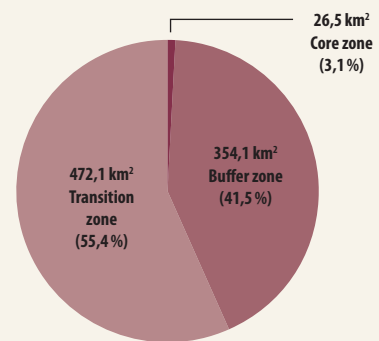
Orchards along  
the Albtrauf

## The take off of the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve

- 2005: End of military use of the 'Gutsbezirk Münsingen' training area
- 2006: With the new state nature conservation law, the legal basis created for the establishment of biosphere reserve regions in Baden-Württemberg
- 2008: Designation of the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve under state law
- 2009: Approval by UNESCO
- 2011: Held the annual European protected areas conference

## The region in numbers

- Location: About 50 km southeast of Stuttgart (Baden-Wuerttemberg)
- Altitude: 329 to 872 m
- Area: 852.7 km<sup>2</sup>
- Landscape: Varied uplands of the Swabian Alb with Alb highlands, the steep 'Albtrauf' and the Alb foreland
- Features: Contrast between the Stuttgart metropolitan region and rural areas; small-scale change between forest and open land
- Team: Director Petra Bernert and seven colleagues
- Partners: 29 municipalities in Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany
- Budget: ca. € 700,000 (30 % of which is funded by the 29 municipalities)
- Sponsors: e.g. Allianz Environment Foundation, Commerzbank







The Albtrauf  
also gives  
spectacular views

tions, the use of wool has become unprofitable. Through selective browsing the sheep created the calcareous grasslands – an ideal habitat for rare plant and animal species. Herbs such as Common Thyme, Wild Marjoram and Lady's Bedstraw cover wide areas in their thousands. They are important food plants for butterfly species, for example, the Swallowtail. Rare plants include, among others, Spring Gentian, Cat's Foot and Common Moonwort. Red Kites circling over the rolling hills and also the rare Woodlark and the Red-backed Shrike will find ideal living conditions. Bicycle is the best way for visitors to explore the vast landscape of the former military training area. But they must stay on the marked trails as there are still a lot of munitions in the soil. Since the withdrawal of troops in late 2005 the Federal Forestry Administration has managed the entire area.

*Red Kites circling over the  
rolling hills and also the rare Woodlark  
and the Red-backed Shrike will find  
ideal living conditions.*

It is not just sheep which contribute to landscape conservation, but also, for example, the buffalo herd in Hohenstein. "For me it was very interesting to see the buffalo in the Swabian Alb. This form of grazing can be used elsewhere as an example, assuming that the stock density is correct. I did not know how healthy the meat of the buffalo is. It contains less fat and cholesterol than beef," Karl-Friedrich Abe commented after the trip to Hohenstein.

Another defining element of the landscape of the Swabian Alb is the belt of orchards that runs through the north of the Biosphere Reserve. Nowhere else in Europe are there so many orchard trees. Thousands of cherry, apple, pear and walnut trees create a landscape with bright colours and scents and incredible animal and plant diversity. Up to 5,000 animal and plant species are found in this habitat, provided the meadows are mowed infrequently and fertilized moderately. It is not only nature that is a winner here, but also man. The range of products from the orchards ranges from cherry liqueur and sparkling apple wines to fruit juices and cider up to jams and preserves. More and more restaurateurs in the region offer dishes from farms orchards. There are various events around the marketing of fruit, such as cider, cherry or plum festivals, which bring together the inhabitants of the Alb. The orchards offer an enjoyable visit and are freely accessible in all seasons and with hiking and cycling trails. Nature trails, show gardens and museums are also on offer for visitors. Excursion 3 went to the orchard area. "It was impressive to see agriculture and biodiversity in harmony with each other, and how the regional economy is supported by the products of the orchards. The juice tastes great," enthused Richard Blackmann from the EUROPARC Section Atlantic Islands after visiting a fruit winery near Beuren.

### Natural treasures underground

The karst landscape of the Swabian Alb is one of the richest cave regions in Germany. In the fascinating world of caves there are impressive rock formations and streams as well as works of art from our ancestors. Due to its geological features, the Swabian Alb was honoured with the prestigious title of “Geopark” in 2001. An excursion led the conference guests into the depths of Wimsen cave, the only water cave in Germany navigable by boat. “Although the entrance of the cave is very touristy and you can only take the boat a little way into the cave, we had a real cave experience: the low ceiling height, clear water, the mysterious darkness, and above all the silence” said Dutchman Arnold Boer, a member of the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas, about the visit to the depths. “Even such small caves must be considered when it comes to putting the many karst phenomena in Europe under protection.”

*Thousands of cherry, apple, pear and walnut trees create a land-scape with bright colours and scents and incredible animal and plant diversity.*

“Caves are among the most sensitive ecosystems in the world. And they serve as roosts and winter quarters for rare species such as bats” says Michael Spielmann, CEO of Heinz Sielmann Foundation; this Foundation makes the same demand as the Association of German Cave and Karst Research – the granting of better cave better protection. This appeal was heard by the participants of the European protected areas conference. In the Bad Urach Declaration they call on governments and

the European Commission to include natural caves and karst features in their protected area systems. For further information about caves in the Swabian Alb, see: <http://www.geopark-alb.de>

### Regional value-added chains in the Transition Zone

The Transition Zone in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve Reserve covers about 55 percent of the area. Commercial, industrial and service companies are located here and the majority of the population lives here. There are no restrictions, but support for economically, socially and environmentally sustainable economies. Innovative ideas to strengthen regional economic cycles and value chains are promoted among others by the PLENUM programme. This creates collaborations, such as between the Stotz sheep farm and the Flomax Natural Fashion company. For many years the company took wool from South America, to be processed in the Swabian Alb into sweaters, jackets and caps. For two years it has cooperated with the neighbouring Stotz sheep farm. Contact came about through a workshop as part of the PLENUM programme. Without this initial promotion, the wool would today probably not come from the region; the wool industry has declined in Germany for a long time due to the fall in prices of wool. The procedure for processing larger

Important cultural  
landscapers at work







Signs and apples invite you to the Biosphere Reserve

quantities of high-quality wool had only to be re-established and optimized before the experiment was successful. Since then Stotz sheep farm can sell not just the meat but also the wool of their animals. Flomax has benefited from the large amount of public attention after the transition to a regional wool supply. Excursion group 2 were impressed by the quality regional fashion which could be tried on and can be purchased at the factory outlet in St.Johann Gächingen.

The close cooperation between Biosphere Reserve Reserve management and businesses in the region is also reflected in the 'Partner Initiative'. Quality and environmental standards ensure a consistently high level with the participating enterprises. They are characterized by the high quality of their products and services, and they contribute to the preservation of the cultural landscape by working as ambassadors of the Biosphere Reserve Reserve concept. Several partner companies were seen by those who visited during a field trip, such as the Hotel Graf Eberhard in Bad Urach, Gasthof Schwanen in Metzingen, or the studs at Marbach.

"It was a very exciting behind the scenes look at the Biosphere hosts. What particularly impressed me was the variety of partners in one of the youngest and now the biggest initiatives in Germany," commented Andrea Hoffmann of EUROPARC Germany when giving her impressions of the excursion. So far there are more than 60 partners in the Biosphere Reserve, mainly including companies from hotels and restaurants, as well as specially trained nature and landscape guides and other educational partners. The information centres in the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve are currently under certification. Incorporation of partners from other fields of work is being prepared.

#### Research – for man and nature

Research and environmental monitoring are among the basic tasks in biosphere reserves. The Swabian Alb is also being researched. Since May 2009, for example, an interdisciplinary team has been looking for practical solutions in the biosphere reserve in the conflicts of land use, nature conservation and climate protection. Another project focuses on the relationship between the type of land use and the diversity of species and the importance of biodiversity for the functioning of ecosystems. In addition to the Swabian Alb, other areas have been selected for this: Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve (Brandenburg) and Hainich National Park (Thuringia). An excursion group visited the small scientific research station, which since 1966 has documented the bird and Insect variety on Randecker Maar, a former volcanic vent.

#### Modern, innovative and embedded in the region: the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve

In October 2010, the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve Centre opened its doors. It is located in the old Münsingen camp in two stylishly renovated historical buildings connected by a modern structure. Soldiers carried out their duties here for over 100 years. Today, visitors learn about the Biosphere Reserve from a very special perspective in a 450 square metre exhibition space: the people of the Swabian Alb speak for themselves. At more than 30 interactive elements, visitors have the opportunity



A warm welcome to the Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve



to find out about, for example, the life of Melanie Dangel (shepherdess) or Willy Wolf (water buffalo breeder) or follow the impact of the expansion of renewable energies on the landscape. Also the decisions of Michael Donth, mayor of the municipality Römerstein, can be followed, as he looks at the choice of using either the bicycle or the car for the journey to the work.

*In addition to the main information centre in Münsingen there is a network of 15 other information centres that are scattered across the area.*

During a tour it soon becomes clear that the exhibition concept was developed jointly with local people – alive and authentic, the region presents its characteristics. Its weaknesses are also not concealed. The expansion of public transportation still remains an important goal, to make the flow of commuters and day trippers environmentally friendly. An important milestone was reached: after over 30 years of closure the Swabian Altbahn is running trains again. One of the excursion groups used this example of environmentally friendly travel to go to the Marbach studs, which have bred quality horses over the last 500 years. The idea of sustainability was also taken into account in the reconstruction of the building. A

wood pellet heating system, heat-exchange ventilation system and good internal insulation ensure low energy consumption in the Biosphere Centre. Gabriele Niclas from the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation said after her visit: "The Information Centre is great. All thematic areas are covered and the local people have their say."

In addition to the main information centre in Münsingen there is a network of 15 other information centres that are scattered across the area. Biosphere Reserve Ambassadors are available for excursions. In addition to their training as certified nature and landscape guides, they undergo further training focussing on the Biosphere Reserve.



# Interview with the Director Petra Bernert



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*The conference is almost over. How do you feel?*

I'm very relaxed but also very tired. I've done many interviews in recent days and have seen many happy faces and people who have had good discussions and exchanges. I thought that was nice.

*The organization must have been very expensive. Was it worth the effort?*

From today's perspective, I would say 'yes,' because everything went so well. It is however always also important to me that a conference has a lasting effect. Whether that will be, I still cannot judge at all. This will also depend on how the results are processed and whether it leads to new permanent contacts and cooperation. The effort was enormous for our relatively small office. We could not have done it alone: we were actively supported by EUROPARC Germany and the Federation.

*As a very young EUROPARC member how did you come to host the annual protected areas conference?*

If I must be honest: like the Virgin with the child. If you had involved me in the discussions to host the conference, I would have tried to move the whole thing back a year or two. At the Association level, however, it has long been considered to bring the conference once again to Germany. Markus Rösler, who is very active in the Swabian Alb and also in EUROPARC, in cooperation with Holger Wesemüller, deputy chairman of EUROPARC Germany, then guided it along the political tracks. After the decision, we had first of a few restless nights. Then we thought about how we should divide the tasks between the Biosphere Reserve team, the Federation and EUROPARC Germany.

*What lessons will you personally take from the conference into your daily work?*

I personally cannot take that much to my work because I was too busy with ceremonial duties. Therefore, I could hardly participate in the special events. But my people were in the workshops and on the field trips and had very positive experiences. We want to then discuss this as a team. We will get together and everyone will bring along what they have taken professionally.

This was the largest event in the short history of our protected area. I've noticed here that I am more relaxed in my capacity as managing director and representative of the area. That was a good feeling that I can take into my daily work.

*This is the first year that the EUROPARC conference has been held in a biosphere reserve. Do you think that this helps to bring this still relatively unknown UNESCO concept to a broader public?*

I hope so. Initially I did not know that this was the first EUROPARC conference to be staged in a biosphere reserve and that the Federation is generally more focused on national parks. Of course it has made us very proud. In the selection of excursions we have done our best to show good examples of sustainable regional development and regional supply chains and introduce the special people with whom we cooperate in this biosphere reserve. Perhaps it has disappointed some that we are not driven primarily to high-level protected areas. But we wanted to show how we work here. And perhaps the participants will hence take away good suggestions.

*Are biosphere reserves adequately represented in the EUROPARC Federation?*

I am not yet so well established in the Federation, but I do have the impression that national parks have a stronger position. Hopefully, the conference has helped to convey the concerns and strengths of biosphere reserves.



Teck Castle greets  
you from afar on the  
Albtrauf at Owen

*Why do you think a biosphere reserve should be a member of the Federation?*

I can only strongly recommend everyone to become a member of the German section. There are many active strategic projects, such as the Junior Ranger programme, the Partner Initiative or the Quality Offensive, from which individual protected areas can benefit. Also, the technical exchange in the Federation working groups is a great benefit to my staff.

*'Quality Counts' – what does this motto mean for biosphere reserve in Germany?*

Quality really does count. For our biosphere reserves it is very important that it becomes evident that the activities in our model regions stand out in comparison to what happens in 'normal environments'. The Federation can help us in this endeavour. Maybe one should have emphasised more at the conference that biosphere reserve evaluation and quality management systems are already exemplary.

*What about the motto for your own area, the Swabian Alb? Is the quality right, or does it need to be improved perhaps?*

Quality must be constantly reviewed and improved in everything we do. Our focus is currently on expanding the partnership initiative. We work together with various business enterprises or individuals, i.e. from bottom to top, to develop quality standards. I see this as an opportunity for businesses to bind to the protected area. If they follow the basic idea behind our biosphere reserve area we can achieve a lot. I think our criteria in hotels and restaurants are pretty good. The people we have won over are happy.

*Can you give some advice to those who have yet to complete establishment of a biosphere reserve?*

In Baden-Wuerttemberg we are currently discussing the establishment of new protected areas. We would welcome this very much. Here the success factor was that a biosphere reserve was desired by everyone, from the locals to the state politicians. In the end everyone pulled together. Therefore, the Reserve could also develop very quickly. In general, no large protected areas should be pushed through against the will of the people. To me it seems very important to get everyone together to seek solutions, to organize themselves as a region and then to say together 'we want this.'



# EUROPARC

## news



# EUROPARC Federation – General Assembly

An atmosphere of renewal prevails at the Federation in Bad Urach: a new president is elected, close cooperation with the Eurosite organisation is decided upon and a new strategy for 2013 onwards is discussed. The goals for the coming years can be summarized as follows: “More cooperation, more lobbying, more exchange of experience”. Accordingly the motto for the next EUROPARC conference, which takes place from 22nd to 25th October 2012 in Genk, Belgium, will be: “Feel connected”. The future host Ignace Schops states that more connections are required, connections between natural habitats, connections between humans and nature, but also new connections between economy and biological diversity as well as politics and practice.

## EUROPARC Federation – General Assembly

In the historic surroundings of the castle of Bad Urach EUROPARC members gathered from across Europe to discuss pertinent issues facing the EUROPARC Federation and, importantly to elect a new council and President. Above the stage, one of the Federation’s banners proclaimed a quote from John Muir, “Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees”, which reminded all of the value and benefits of the protected areas as they manage.

### From Europe to Down Under

Who has never dreamt of interrupting their career and working for a certain time in another country,

to experience a different culture, to broaden their horizons? Since the signing of an agreement in 2009 between EUROPARC and the Parks Forum (the umbrella organization for protected areas in Australia and New Zealand), this possibility is open to the staff of member organisations.

In Bad Urach, Ingrid Sieler of the Parks Forum presented an initiative for an international exchange of personnel from protected areas in Europe, Australia and New Zealand. Among the three, six or twelve month stays are either study tours, internships, projects, job exchanges or assistance in critical situations. The exchange programme provides new knowledge, brings fresh motivation and reinforces cross-cultural competence. Those interested can register by calling EUROPARC. Then the candidates are matched with open positions and the exchange is arranged.

For further information see: [www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/International-Staff-Exchange-Programme.html](http://www.parksforum.org/cms/pages/International-Staff-Exchange-Programme.html)

The activities of the Parks Forum include, among others, exchange programmes and evaluations as well as performance comparisons. Every two years a major conference is organised. In 2012 the theme is “Parks Beyond Boundaries 2012”. In education, the Parks Forum focuses on modern media. An iPhone application was developed under the “My Parx” project that allows visitors access to information, maps, tours and games in the respective reserves.

### The Federation gets down to business

Outgoing President, Erika Stanciu, then presided over the general assembly proceedings, drawing the member’s attention to the business reports from the Treasurer, Internal Auditor and Directorate. The President Council and Sections were also tabled. Further the members were asked to support the creation of a new EUROPARC strategy, subject to the collaboration discussions with Eurosite. The members unanimously approved all reports. Full details are provided in the minutes of the General Assembly on the EUROPARC Federation website ([www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)).

One important report indicated the work of the joint committee who had considered the ongoing and future collaborations between EUROPARC Federation and Eurosite. With a large majority, the EUROPARC General Assembly in Bad Urach





Richard Partington  
presented to the  
successful outcome of  
EUROPARC Consulting

voted to build on collaboration and seek to create one organisation with Eurosite. Two weeks earlier, the Executive Board of Eurosite already agreed to this step. Now, a common structure has to be built. Creating one organisation seems obvious due to the similar goals of the two organisations. While EUROPARC is primarily concerned with large protected areas (national parks, nature and regional parks, biosphere reserves), Eurosite mainly focuses on the effective management of Natura 2000 sites. Collaborations have been around for some time, e.g. the “Natura 2000 Network Initiative”, run by Eurosite from 2004 – 2006 in cooperation with EUROPARC and the European Landowners’ Organisation to increase awareness of the Natura 2000 network. Since autumn 2010, a jointly staffed committee has been dealing with the question of how the future might look in the form of cooperation between the two organizations and the general assembly further mandated EUROPARC and Eurosite to establish again a joint committee to consider procedures and possible structures and to introduce a further report in 2012 at their respective meetings.

#### 10 years of EUROPARC Consulting

EUROPARC Consulting celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2011. The in-house consulting arm of the Federation is based on a broad network of experts throughout Europe. Individual counselling services are carried out for protected areas as well

as for major international projects. For example, EUROPARC Consulting is just starting the development of a concept for sustainable tourism in both the German and Dutch World Heritage Sites in the Wadden Sea as well as in the Danish Wadden Sea area (which is not yet a World Heritage Site). In addition, it organises study tours in selected protected areas in Europe and the design and facilitation of seminars and workshops. Richard Partington (Chairman) and Wilf Fenten (CEO) invite protected areas to make use of the expert services in the future, with discounted prices available for EUROPARC members.

For further information, see:  
[www.europarc-consulting.org/](http://www.europarc-consulting.org/)

### Thanks and farewell

The retiring council were thanked for their support, commitment and hard work for the EUROPARC Federation during their term of office. As they were formally discharged of their duties, Director Carol Ritchie took the opportunity, on behalf of the members, to look back on the contribution of Erika Stanciu, outgoing President.

In Bad Urach, Erika Stanciu stepped down from her post as President of the EUROPARC Federation. The Romanian worked for ten years at the top of the leadership of the EUROPARC Federation.

With charm and assertiveness she has strengthened and realigned the Federation and its programmes, giving it a greater voice and political influence in Europe. She has promoted more efficient structures in the organisation, the creation of stronger national sections and called for more intensive cooperation.

*“I like to believe that we managed together to find some solutions and perhaps a new way for the Federation.”*

*Erika Stanciu*

The members showed their approval of their dedicated colleague with long-lasting applause.

Trained as a forest economist, Erika Stanciu worked for twelve years in the Romanian forestry industry. Between 1999 and 2003 she was involved in a project that laid the basis for the management of protected areas in Romania. As Director of Retezat National Park she created the first management plan for the oldest national park in Romania. In 2003 she began working for the WWF Danube-Carpathian Programme, where as team leader she coordinated the Carpathian mountains, forests and protected areas projects in Romania, Bulgaria and the Ukraine. Since 2008, with support from WWF and “Fauna and Flora International”, the “Propark Foundation” for protected areas in Romania has been developed. Propark is working to develop and implement a training programme for protected area practitioners.

From 2002 to 2005 Erika Stanciu was a member of the Board of EUROPARC. From 2005 to 2011 she held the office of President. With images from the past few years, Carol Ritchie thanked Erika for her dedication and commitment to Europe’s protected areas. “As president, Erika mastered the art of speech, communication and hand-shaking,” said Carol Ritchie. “She will stay in our memory as Queen of the flipcharts.”



In her farewell speech, Erika Stanciu said “The last six years were very intense and challenging. But it was great to work with all of those involved in the core activities of the Federation. I do have special thanks to express to all the council members who were working with me in the last two councils. I like to believe that we managed together to find some solutions and perhaps a new way for the Federation. I did ask myself from time to time why I accepted in the first place to stand for this position, especially knowing that I do not like getting a lot of attention and I hate to be on the stage and in front of the cameras. It was probably regional pride that pushed me into this position. I thought and still think that Eastern Europe, as a natural treasure chest, should be more present in EUROPARC. And I strongly believed – and still do – that the Federation is the best platform to share and learn from each other. I wish you all a very good time here at the conference and good luck and lots of successes in your work in the future.”





The EUROPARC team with the new President, Thomas Hansson

### The new executive team introduces itself

Following the formal general assembly meeting, the election for President and then Council members took place.

### Fresh Wind: Thomas Hansson is the new President of the EUROPARC Federation

In Bad Urach, about 150 EUROPARC members elected Thomas Hansson (Sweden) as their new President. He takes over the Presidential reins from Erika Stanciu (Romania), who stepped down in 2011 after six years in the position. Thomas works as a Consultant Senior Advisor at the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. For the last three years, he has been chairing the Nordic-Baltic section of the Federation. He brings in his experience in nature conservation and protected areas management, and his professionalism in leading a multi-national body. His new role as EUROPARC President is generously backed by the Swedish Environment Agency. Half of his position at the Swedish Agency is reserved for this Presidency. "I feel very honoured to have been elected as President for the largest European network of protected areas", stated Hansson after the election. "I will be leading a strong and ambitious council and we will continue to make the Federation more visible in the context of European nature conservation."

### Interview with Thomas Hansson

*What was your personal motivation to seek election for this position?*

I have been working for a long time on EUROPARC related questions. Thus I took an interest in becoming a part of the work which is done by the council of the Federation. I thought the presidential position could be something worth taking over for a while. From now on, I will put all my emphasis and professionalism to ensure the success of this organisation.

*What will be your emphasis in the upcoming years?*

One of my tasks as president is to keep the council working. Parallel to that I will work with the directorate. I will take the leadership and assure that the different units are pulling in the same direction; that they are in the same boat. In the coming years, it will be very important for EUROPARC to strengthen its membership base. We need active members. Furthermore, it is crucial to highlight EUROPARC's role on a European level. We have to make sure that we are not perceived as just another big NGO. The Federation has been well-known for a while, but we need to be even more visible.

*How will the Federation look in five years?*

The Federation is made up by its members. In five years time we shall have built up our membership structure more systematically. I would like to see representatives from different parks representing different ways of managing protected areas. Additionally, national and subnational agencies shall be addressed systematically in all regions.

*What do you expect from the close cooperation between EUROPARC Federation and Eurosite?*

I expect to increase the visibility of our concerns if we create one common organisation. Together we can raise our voices in order to strengthen protected areas in Europe. Besides, Eurosite is more oriented to questions related to the NATURA2000 network, an important base for protected areas around Europe.

It will be a challenging task to merge the two organisations in a short period of time. But if you have an aching tooth you have to decide if you want to take it out now or if you want to suffer for a long time. We decided to face the challenge and to take both organisations one step beyond.

*In Sweden you have more than 100 years of experience with protected areas management. What can the rest of Europe learn from your country and from EUROPARC's Nordic-Baltic Section?*

Sweden is not such a big country but we have more than 20 different actors who are involved in the management of protected areas. And we have been quite good at developing national guidelines and giving advice on how to maintain a high quality of management. Recently, we developed a common branding for our national parks. Once implemented, visitors entering a Swedish national park will realise that this is something different from the nature outside the park.



In many of the Nordic-Baltic countries recently there has been a very severe cut in nature conservation budgets. As a result, they have been forced to modernise and re-build the operational systems of their protected areas. So there is a lot to learn from them, even for us in Sweden. The financial cut forced them to be creative instead of sticking to the same structures which have been applied for many years. Others can learn from them how to work in a new and efficient way.

*In Sweden you still have many pristine areas. Do you have any advice for your German colleagues who resolved to increase their wilderness areas to two per cent by 2020?*

My advice is: patience. If you look at trees which are currently 65 years old: in 500 years they will be older and more biodiversity will evolve. Related to this topic, the question of green infrastructure has to be addressed. We have to find ways to systematically integrate nature into our planning and into our lives. I invite our German colleagues to work with us on that topic.

*The work of EUROPARC Federation is successful if...*

... we raise the number of our members and if the members are actively participating in our discussions, conferences and working groups. I would be happy about the creation of more working groups on different topics. In summary, for me success generally means more activities within the network from the bottom up.)





Elected in  
Bad Urach: The new  
EUROPARC council

### The Council of EUROPARC

Every three years the members of the Federation elect a new management team. In Bad Urach the following were confirmed as council members: Rolands Auziņš (Latvia), Giampiero Sammuri (Italy), Ignace Schops (Belgium), Gabor Szilagyi (Hungary), Marian Woltgen-Jäger (The Netherlands) and Dominique Leveque (France). After being on the EUROPARC Council for six years, Eberhardt Henne decided not to stand again. Carol Ritchie, director of the Federation, thanked him for his dedication to the organization.

The focus of the council members in the coming years:

**Rolands Auzins (Latvia):** "My priorities would be to work for joining forces with other environmental organizations, particularly Eurosite, communication at purely professional level between the European Commission and the experts managing sites in member organization, to improve the role of the Sections in the Federation, to promote the development of best practice and providing information of the benefits of networking across the Europe. We have to develop the Federation towards being a stronger European advocate of protected areas. I see the EUROPARC Federation as professional organization on a European and wider scale."

*"EUROPARC – as the largest umbrella network in Europe – proves that protecting and safeguarding our natural and cultural heritage is highly valuable."*

*Ignace Schops*

**Giampiero Sammuri (Italy):** "I think EUROPARC should further develop its lobbying and cooperation efforts with the EU to find new resources for protected areas and should improve its collaboration with the other main international institutions and organisations working for biodiversity conservation. Moreover, I think we need to stimulate a stronger and more active involvement of the members in the organisation. I consider that the development of new international projects, the wider implementation of the existing and successful EUROPARC programmes (Junior Ranger, European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, Transboundary Certification, etc.) and clear and practical information dissemination will be strategic tools in the coming future."

**Ignace Schops (Belgium):** "For me the EUROPARC Federation has to take leadership in pan-Europe and show Europe that we are finding local solutions for global problems! EUROPARC – as the largest umbrella network in Europe – proves that protecting and safeguarding our natural and cultural heritage is highly valuable and (re)connects citizens and the entire society! Now it's time to step forward! If we don't do it, who will do it? If we don't do it now, when will we do it? If we don't do it together, how will we do it? ... Yes, we can!"

**Gábor Szilágyi (Hungary):** "Below are a few words about my personal priorities as a EUROPARC Council Member for the upcoming 3 years:

- encourage the exchange of best practices at different levels – members, sections, council – of the Federation especially in the field of conservation oriented management of protected areas and Natura 2000 sites
- represent and support the Federation in its policy making/influencing activities with special respect to the financing of Natura 2000 site management and its interrelations with the new CAP in the upcoming EU budgetary period"



Andrew Holz and Thomas Hansson at the presentation of the Alfred Töpfer Scholarships to three outstanding young talents

Marian Jager-Wöltgens (Holland): “For the next period I have two main ambitions. As we are having tough times in Europe now, more than ever it is important to take forward the issues we are working on to a political level that counts. That’s why we should join forces, first of all with Eurosite, and also with all the other relevant partners in the European network. As a member of the joint committee EUROPARC-Eurosite I hope to contribute to that process.

*“I think we need to stimulate a stronger and more active involvement of the members in the organisation.”*

*Giampiero Sammuri*

In many countries there are methodologies for evaluating protected areas. There are some very good systems that can be used as models for developing a European framework for evaluation, so that we will be able to show what we are doing and what the effects are. EUROPARC can develop this framework together with its members, and use its network for capacity building and mentorship for those members who are interested. We had a very inspiring workshop at the conference in Bad Urach and hope to get this project further during the next two years“.

Dominique Levêque (France): “As a member of the EUROPARC Council, I would like to continue on the lobbying work towards the European Commission and the European institutions as I did previously. The merger between EUROPARC and Eurosite is one of the conditions of the success of this work and I also would play my role in that!”

## This year’s prizes and awards

### Alfred-Töpfer scholarships

Each year, in cooperation with the Alfred Töpfer Foundation, the EUROPARC Federation awards three scholarships to outstanding young professionals who want to get involved in protected areas. The €3,000 scholarship enables young people to travel around protected areas in Europe and gain experience from them. Andrew Wood, Managing Director of the Alfred Töpfer Foundation, this year congratulated Tünde Ludnai (Lithuania), Ross Watson (Scotland) and Robbert Casier (Belgium) for their scholarships.

Tünde Ludnai deals with the role of rangers in the management of Natura 2000 sites. Her journey will lead to in the Wicklow Mountains National Park in Ireland and the Biebrza National Park in Poland. Following her trip she is planning to work for the “Baltic Environmental Forum” and to assist in building a ranger system in Lithuania. Ross Watson is currently working for the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds at Abernethy National Nature Reserve. He is interested in the grazing of open forest ecosystems. For this he will visit Dovrefjell Sunndalsfjella National Park in Norway, Bialowieza Forest in Poland and Belarus, and the Porojhe area in Slovenia. Until July 2011, Robbert Casier worked with the UNESCO World Heritage Programme in Paris with a focus on marine protected areas. The goal of his project is to improve the exchange between the marine protected areas and World Heritage sites in the Mediterranean. His journey will take him to the Natural Park of Ses Salines in Spain as well as the Brijuni Islands and the island of Cres-Losinj in Croatia.

### Alfred-Töpfer Medal

The Alfred Töpfer Medal is awarded annually to people who have done special work for nature conservation in Europe. This year the highly prestigious award goes to Hans Bibelriether.

Bibelriether began his career as a forester; in 1969 he became head of the Bavarian Forest National Park Office. For nearly 30 years he was the head this national park – Germany’s first. Under its motto of “let nature be nature” an internationally known large-scale conservation area developed. In 1990 Bibelriether helped in the development of the national park programme of the former GDR. And with success: four weeks before German reunification the GDR Council of Ministers agreed





**Outstanding:** In Bad Urach, twelve new areas received the Charter Certificate for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas

to the designation of 14 new large protected areas. As a result Bibelriether was involved in developing EUROPARC Germany, over which he presided from 1991 to 1996 as the first president. But Bibelriether didn't limit his commitment just to Germany. A particular concern of his was the cross-border protection of nature and the development of protected areas across Europe. From 1986 to 1994 he assisted as Vice-President of the European Commission on National Parks, part of the work of the IUCN. He was active for EUROPARC in different roles, namely Vice-President (1984 to 1988), Director (1988 to 1995) and finally as President (1996 to 1999). He organized exchange programmes and partnerships between protected areas in Europe, Asia and South America. He worked as a consultant with the WWF, BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany) and the German Federal Environmental Foundation. It is therefore not surprising that the Alfred Töpfer Medal is only one of his many awards. For his work Bibelriether has already received the Federal Cross of Merit, the Bavarian Conservation Medal, the Binding Award for Nature and Environmental Protection, the Golden Ark Award as well as the Euronature Environment Prize.

Praise was given by Dr. Eberhard Henne. "Bibelriether's commitment has contributed significantly to wilderness again in Western Europe, and to large areas being committed to nature. This laid the foundation for the primeval forests of tomorrow".

Bibelriether said: "Today it is more important than ever to protect European natural heritage."

## News from ongoing EUROPARC programmes

### The European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in protected areas

More and more protected areas are concerned with the question of how tourism can be environmentally and socially responsible. The world's great interest in travel in beautiful natural and cultural landscapes will further increase pressure on the use of reserves. An aid to this is the "European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas". Parks who want to receive the EUROPARC Charter certificate must follow certain steps on the path to sustainable tourism (e.g. inventory and assessment of tourism within the park, formulation of development goals, creating a five-year action plan, etc.). Here representatives of nature conservation and tourism are sitting at a table so that the needs of nature conservation and environmental protection, as well as the guests and business, are considered. Interest in the Charter continues to grow. As part of the Parks & Benefits project, which will finish in January 2012, the Charter process was launched in eight protected areas in the Baltic region. During this year's EUROPARC conference, twelve new sites in Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Spain and the UK received the award. Five Charter areas were re-evaluated – with a positive result and their certificates were renewed for another five years. A full list of all Charter awarded Parks can be found on the Federation website (<http://www.european-charter.org/charter-network/charter-areas2>). Currently 88 conservation areas in nine European countries are involved in the Charter process. The seventh meeting of the Charter network sites took place in 2011 in Djerdap National Park in Serbia. In addition, the EUROPARC Federation this year trained seven new evaluators for the Tourism Charter. The STEPPA project went a step further: it suggested exchange of experience between small tourism enterprises in Charter parks in the past two years. The aim was to harmonize and optimize the criteria for certification of sustainable companies.

For further information, see:  
[www.european-charter.org](http://www.european-charter.org)



### Nature across borders

In addition to the tourism quality initiative, the EUROPARC Federation supported cross-border cooperation in protected area management. Since 2003, seven bilateral and one trilateral protected area complex in Europe were honoured for their exemplary cooperation with the label "Following Nature's Design". To get the certificate, at least 10 of the 14 criteria must be met. Transboundary parks form the TransParcNet, whose members meet once a year in one of the parks to share their experiences. In 2011 the meeting took place in Krkonoše/Karkonosze National Park. Cooperation in this area on the border between the Czech Republic and Poland was re-evaluated seven years after the initial award. Arnold Boer, a member of the EUROPARC Transboundary steering group, presented certificates to Jacob Kasper (Krkonoše National Park) and Przemysław Toloknow (Karkonosze National Park) as representatives of the two areas and congratulated them on their successful cooperation. Jacob Kasper commented "I see the TransParcNet as one of the most important things we gain from the EUROPARC Federation as a platform for networking and information exchange. I warmly welcome all transboundary protected areas in Europe to join the network. It really works."

The certificate was also renewed for the National Parks of Oulanka and Paanajärvi. Finland and Russia are cooperating in the preservation of this cross-border wilderness area in the far north. Matti Tapaninen of the Finnish state enterprise Metsähallitus accepted the award on their behalf. To consider and evaluate further areas for cross-border cooperation, the Federation appointed five new evaluators in 2011.

For further information, see: [www.europarc.org/what-we-do/transboundary-parks](http://www.europarc.org/what-we-do/transboundary-parks)

### Junior Ranger Programm

The Junior Ranger Programme was created by the EUROPARC Federation in 2002. It is aimed at young people who are interested in nature and live in the vicinity of a protected area. You go on a discovery tour with rangers, learn to identify flora and fauna and learn why it pays to conserve nature. The pilot project was a great success: today there are 75 protected areas in 15 European countries participating in the Junior Ranger programme, 120 rangers and about 2,500 young people are involved. Each year, the members of the network of protected areas hold an international Junior Ranger Camp. This year the camp took place in the Dutch National Park of Weerribben-Wieden. The young people explored an area of fenland by canoe, looking at the water quality and biodiversity. They energetically joined in with the construction of a boardwalk over the reedbeds. In discussions it became clear that many young people are annoyed by the rubbish that is often left in the wild. They therefore decided to jointly launch an international campaign that aims to raise awareness of visitors and prevent the disfigurement of protected areas by rubbish.

For further information, see: [www.europarc.org/what-we-do/junior-ranger](http://www.europarc.org/what-we-do/junior-ranger)





## Happy Birthday, EUROPARC Germany!



Looking back,  
and forward -  
twenty years of  
EUROPARC Germany

### Celebrating 20 years of EUROPARC Germany, a brief background

During the 1920s, the Hamburg businessman Alfred Toepfer built a successful trading house specialising in agricultural products among other things. He established the charitable foundation "Stiftung F. V. S. zu Hamburg" in 1931 and began contributing company revenue to this organisation. Toepfer was particularly involved in supporting nature conservation throughout his lifetime, and in 1973 he founded the "Federation of Nature and National Parks", known today as the EUROPARC Federation. This umbrella organisation for European protected areas opened its first office in 1986 in the Bavarian town of Grafenau. Five years later, in 1991, EUROPARC Germany was established as the Federation's first national section.

The founding of the Federation was concurrent with Germany's reunification. A group of experts in the DDR led by Michael Succow made the most of the period of political transition, proposing that large tracts of land such as restricted areas, border strips and military training grounds already inaccessible to German citizens be declared protected areas. The wide variety of schemes involved in German nature conservation efforts ultimately joined together with the new protected areas in the east to found EUROPARC Germany, a joint platform



A delicious buffet: culinary delicacies from the National Natural landscapes



Gertrud Sahler congratulated EUROPARC Germany in her speech



for all of the reunified Germany's national parks, nature parks and UNESCO biosphere reserves. The founding members included several from Bad Urach.

Although the number of members has since grown from 12 (1991) to 76 (2011), the objective remains the same: working across state borders, the section strengthens German protected areas by connecting them with experts and NGOs, pro-

motes the exchange of experience, fosters training and publicity work and establishes quality criteria. The umbrella organisation began introducing national programmes such as Volunteers in Parks or Junior Rangers in 1993 and also continually strives to identify new sources of funding for projects in protected areas, such as cooperative schemes with businesses. A milestone was reached in 2005 with the introduction of the "National Natural





Landscapes” umbrella brand. All of the large protected areas in Germany were brought together under this single brand, providing them with a unified presence.

The head office of EUROPARC Germany has been located in Berlin since 2001. The organisation’s current management team consists of Guido Puhlmann (Chairman), Johannes Hager, Karl Friedrich Sinner und Holger Wesemüller.

Further information is available at: <http://www.euoparc-deutschland.de/>

## Interview with Guido Puhlmann, Chairman of EUROPARC Germany

*Mr Puhlmann, how does it feel to be 20?*

Good, it feels like we are becoming increasingly mature.

*EUROPARC Germany has been around for 20 years now – what have the most significant achievements been so far?*

The introduction of the “National Natural Landscapes” brand for Germany’s protected areas was a great achievement in my opinion. It naturally took a lot of work to convince everyone to participate and to back the idea. Ultimately, many people had to give up things that were very important to them in order to adapt. But the joint brand is important when it comes to presenting ourselves as a strong network and increasing our visibility in politics and society. Another important step was the move from Grafenau to Berlin. Having the organisation’s office in the capital city strengthens the position of Germany’s protected areas.

*What could your colleagues in Europe learn from Germany’s protected areas?*

We have a lot of good projects; one example is the Junior Ranger Programme, which the German section played a significant role in building and developing. Also, there has traditionally been a close connection between the German section and the Federation because the head offices of both organisations were previously located in Grafenau.

In accordance with Germany’s biodiversity strategy, natural life should once again be able to develop unhindered on two percent of Germany’s land area and in five percent of its forests by 2020. But many protected areas in Germany have yet to declare large enough areas as core zones. What can we learn from our European colleagues about wilderness preservation?

When it comes to learning about wilderness preservation we should look to protected areas in northern and southeast Europe. The problems that some German biosphere reserves are having in terms of protecting three percent of their land area



Mayor E. Rebmann symbolically presented an apple tree for EUROPARC Germany's birthday

as core zones are somewhat difficult for me to comprehend. The German MAB committee has granted an adequately long transitional period before the three percent requirement needs to be reached. At the end of the day, protecting pristine areas and allowing their unhindered development is always a question of political and public consent. If, for example, a state government decides there should be a national park in a given region, this can be implemented as well.

*The communications agency Futerra in the UK is touting a new strategy called "Branding Biodiversity" for publicity work related to nature conservation. For example, the "need + action" message can be used to convince policymakers of the need to conserve nature. How could this message be used to persuade a landowner to donate his forest as part of a core zone in a new protected area?*

My argument is that we are a part of nature, and nature existed before us. Preserving unspoiled natural environments on adequately large areas of land should be part of our culture. Only in these areas are we able to see the limits to growth and experience wilderness in contrast to our urban world.

*The German government's decision to phase out nuclear power is set to make the development of alternative renewable energy sources increasingly important. Conflicts with nature conservation are inevitable. How will EUROPARC Germany respond to this challenge?*

EUROPARC Germany published a paper stating its position with regard to biogas plants in Germany back in 2009. But discussions relating to wind farms in forests are causing us concern. Pressure on Germany's protected areas will increase. Good plans have yet to be developed. We want to work together with large environmental groups such as

BUND, NABU and the WWF to develop these and other key issues.

*What are EUROPARC Germany's priorities for the future?*

We must do more to highlight protected areas as models for the protection and sustainable use of our natural resources. Very few people are aware of the potential protected areas have to serve as models and we want to close this knowledge gap.

*What role does EUROPARC Germany play within the European umbrella organisation today?*

The focus of our work is at the national level. But due to its size alone, the German section plays an important role within the Federation. We expect the European umbrella organisation to provide us with good tools which can be used in every protected area across Europe. An example is the Junior Ranger Programme, which is already well established in many countries. But tools relating to the renewable energy sector or emissions trading will also play an important role in future.

*What are your expectations of the Federation's new president, Thomas Hansson?*

We hope that the structure of the Federation will become more streamlined and that there will be a content-related realignment and focus.

*On a personal level, you will consider this conference a success if ...*

... the guests go home satisfied at the end.





*“I’ve been to many international conferences, but I have never met such nice and competent helpers.”*

*A participant from Austria*

The team of helpers at the EUROPARC Conference 2011 were praised by all participants for their tireless efforts and willingness to help.



# Imprint

Publisher: EUOPARC Deutschland e.V.  
Friedrichstraße 60, 10117 Berlin

Editors: Sigrun Lange (chief editor), Nina Kuschniok, Jan Wildefeld

Translation: Mark Sixsmith / Sigrun Lange

Photos: Unless otherwise stated: Wawra / EUOPARC, Detlef Rieker (Cover / 34), Sigrun Lange (4 / 36 left / 37), Stephanie Schubert (7 right / 18 / 29 / 34 / 53 center / 54), Dietmar Nill (12), Dieter Ruoff (20 / 21 / 39), Manfred Delpho (23), Sook-Thing Wong (22), A. Morascher / junior-ranger.de / EUOPARC + WWF (25 / 26 / 49), Petra Bernert (32), Blackmann (36), Jan Schünemann (24), Stephanie Schubert (54)

Concept and Design:: Oswald und Martin Werbeagentur, Berlin

Sponsors: The production of this brochure was sponsored by the Federal Agency for Nature Conservation (Bundesamt für Naturschutz - BfN) with funds from the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety, printing with support of TUI Deutschland.



Editorial deadline: 04 / 2012

Printed by: Uhl-Media GmbH, Bad Grönenbach

Print run: 500 Deutsch / 500 Englisch  
Gedruckt auf revive 50:50 FSC Mix

Host and Organisers:



Partners and Supporters:



Further Supporters:





