



PROTECTED AREAS IN-SIGHT

THE JOURNAL OF THE EUROPARC FEDERATION



European Parks:
Inspired by the Next Generation

Imprint

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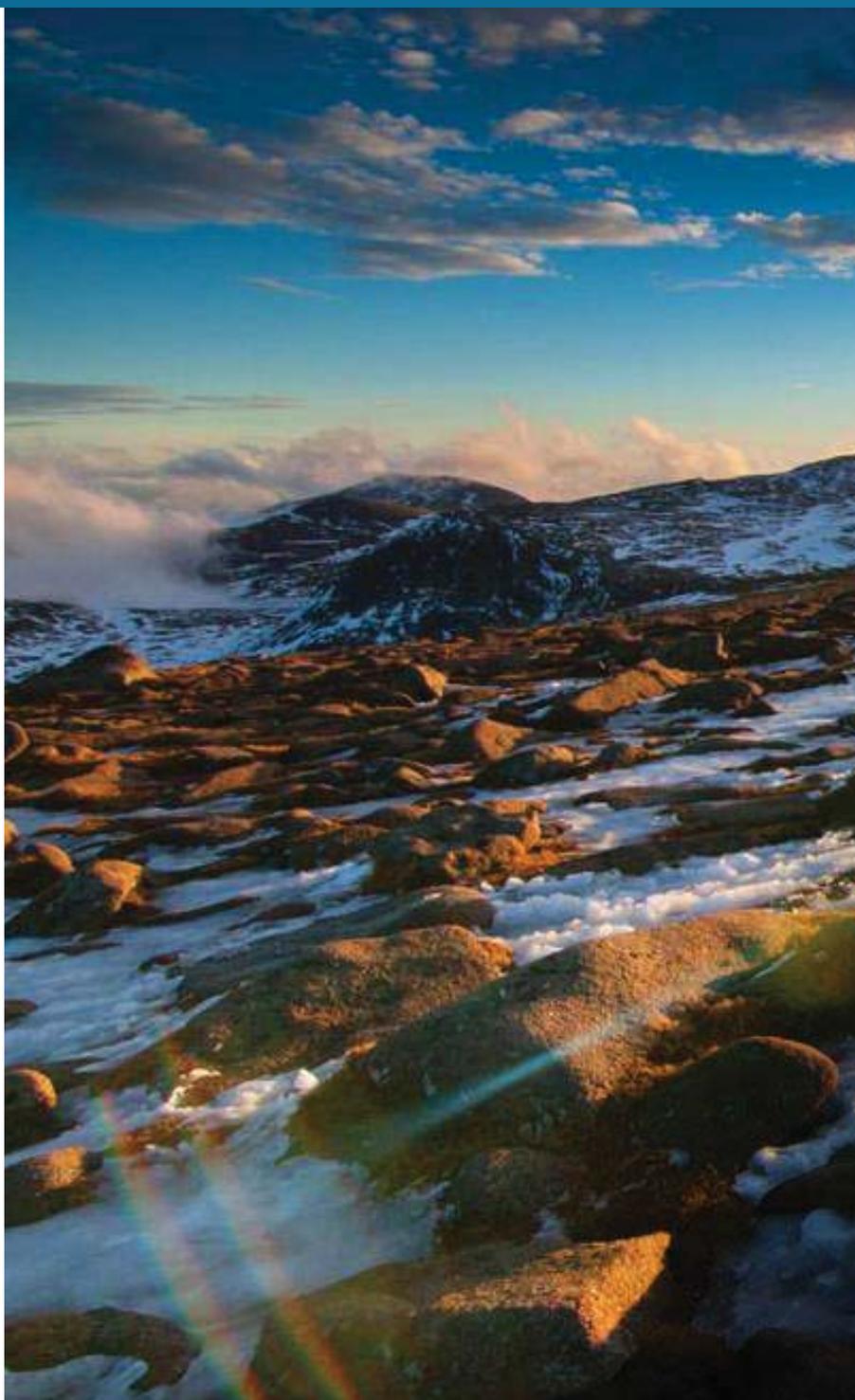
Youth in a fieldtrip during EUROPARC Conference 2018, Cairngorms National Park, Scotland, United Kingdom

Photo on the right:

Snowscapes in the Cairngorms National Park, Scotland, United Kingdom

More information at

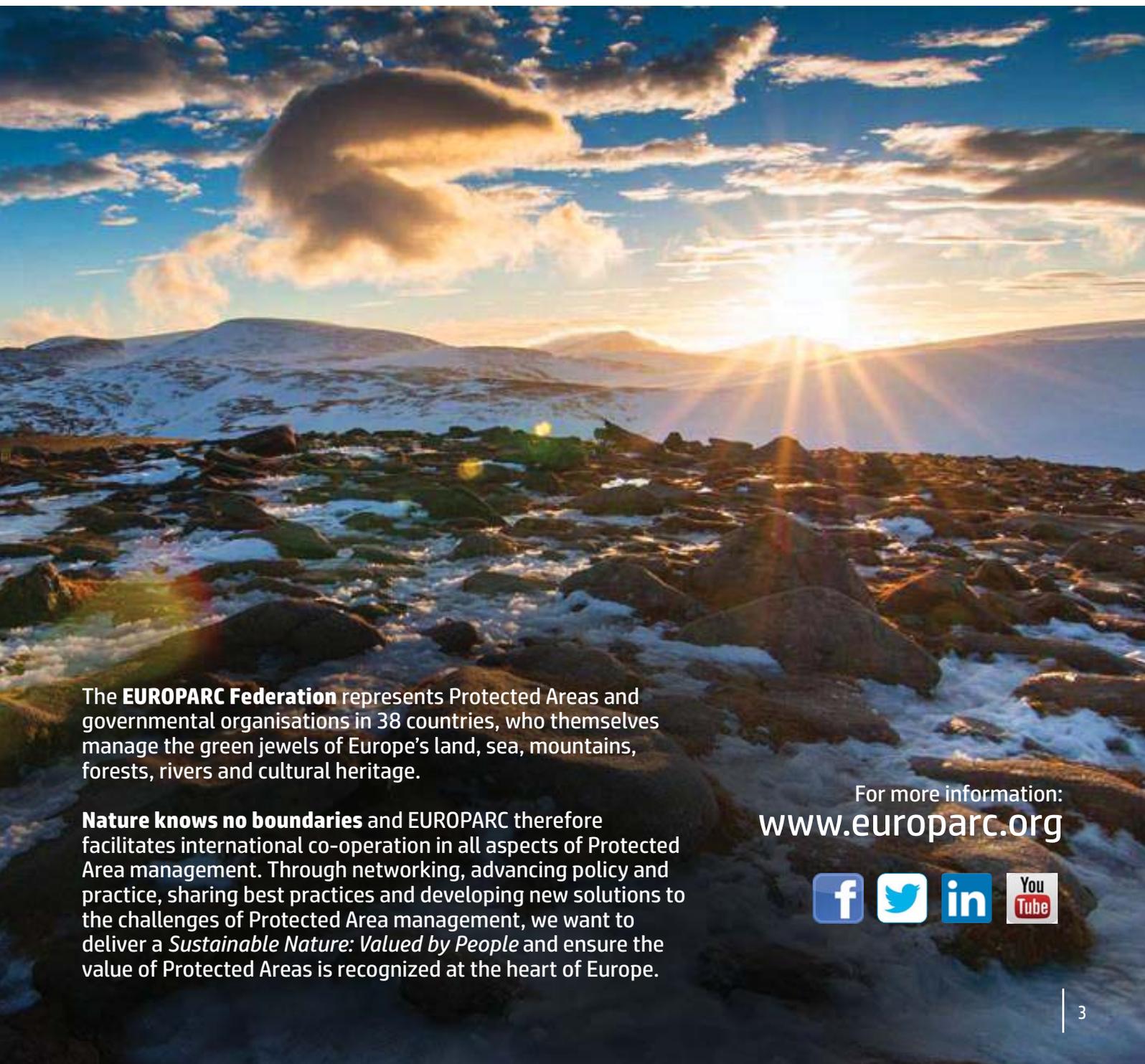
<http://\cairngorms.co.uk>





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The **EUROPARC Federation** represents Protected Areas and governmental organisations in 38 countries, who themselves manage the green jewels of Europe's land, sea, mountains, forests, rivers and cultural heritage.

Nature knows no boundaries and EUROPARC therefore facilitates international co-operation in all aspects of Protected Area management. Through networking, advancing policy and practice, sharing best practices and developing new solutions to the challenges of Protected Area management, we want to deliver a *Sustainable Nature: Valued by People* and ensure the value of Protected Areas is recognized at the heart of Europe.

For more information:
www.europarc.org



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*Junior Rangers in Prealpi
Giulie Nature Park, Italy*

Editorial

This edition of EUROPARC's Journal, "Protected Areas In-sight", takes an insightful look into how European Parks can be inspired by the next generation.

In a society increasingly driven by technology and geared towards rapid progress, Protected Areas offer a particularly valuable balance for young people (and the rest of us), to slow down, discover, think and become actively involved in nature. In return, **our Protected Areas can benefit greatly from their creative energy, unconventional thinking and understanding of the younger generation's needs.** We believe that young people have a vital role to play in caring for Europe's natural heritage.

EUROPARC recently launched The **Youth Manifesto**; A call for change in our Protected Areas and rural communities from youth representatives of Europe. They make it clear; they want to be part of our collective parks and our collective future. They made a demand not just asking that something be done FOR youth in rural and Protected Areas but that something be done WITH them. Beyond consultation, to co-design a sustainable future. The imperative is now on parks and administrations, communities, decision and policy makers to rise to that challenge.

Youth are often the missing ingredient in the policy and practise areas discussed in this edition.

Youth need to be part of the sustainable development of our communities and of the management of our parks, this needs to be embedded in our thinking and hence in our planning and actions.

Youth are dedicated travellers, used to open borders and cultural discovery. "A Sustainable Journey" a film created by EUROPARC for the CEETO project, will motivate and encourage youth (and us all) not just to choose sustainable tourism, but as we see in the film, to be the sustainable tourism entrepreneurs' of the future.



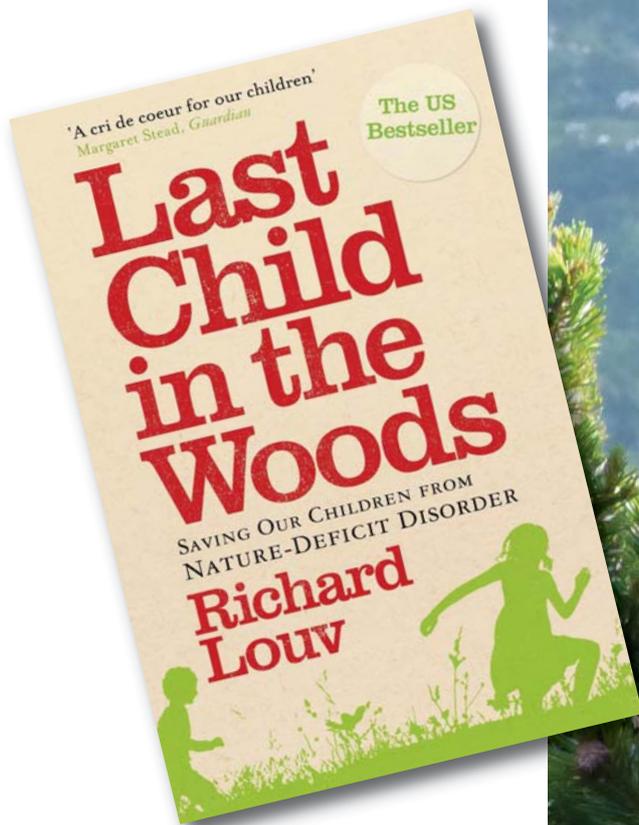
Youth need help to understand our cultural and values. Seeing the links with the past and how that informs our present thinking on nature management, as seen in the ancient waterways in Sierra Nevada National Park (Spain), is vital if new, innovative solutions can be envisaged.

Youth need urgently to appreciate the complexity of **food production alongside the need for a healthy and thriving biodiversity**, and the European policy framework and global economy that informs our current situation. Youth need to have a role in that agenda, it is not only an immediate concern for today but the outcomes of which, will pave the way for the way society will operate for the next generation.

Youth too need to always be informed of our European history, as the effect are also evidenced in our parks. **Transboundary work** that we see through our EUROPARC programme, shows the values of international cooperation, shared needs and working together for mutual benefit, as against raising borders and walls.

I hope these inspirational and informative articles and interviews, in this edition, will stimulate ideas and action that parks and Protected Areas can take, **to truly work with youth to co-create a vibrant and sustainable future for us all.**

Carol Ritchie
Executive Director
EUROPARC Federation



The Future Will Belong to the Nature Smart

By Richard Louv

Richard Louv

is a bestselling author who sparked an international debate and movement to reconnect kids and nature, through his book *Last Child in the Woods*. He coined the term nature-deficit disorder which has influenced policy and inspired campaigns across North America.



Climate change, biodiversity collapse, and the disconnect of children from nature are the greatest environmental challenges of our time — and all are interrelated.

The Nature-deficit disorder

In recent decades, children and adults around the world have become increasingly disconnected from nature, with profound implications for human health and child development – with indicated impacts on attention disorders, Vitamin D deficiency, myopia, childhood obesity and the growing epidemics of both inactivity and loneliness.

The great work of the remainder of the 21st Century will be the development of a new and positive relationship between human beings and the rest of the natural world.



European Parks: Inspired by the Next Generation!

Photo: Junior Rangers in Prealpi Giulie Nature Park, Italy

When I wrote “Last Child in the Woods” about what I called nature-deficit disorder (not a known medical diagnosis, though perhaps it should be), I cited about 60 studies. The topic of the influence of the natural world on human development was, to say the least, understudied. Today, over 800 studies are abstracted in the Children & Nature Network’s research library, which is available to anyone in the world.

Specific to the **nature-deficit disorder**, five major barriers stand between humans, especially children, and the rest of the natural world.

1. **Urbanisation** without nature.
2. A media and politics-driven **culture of Fear**
3. **Digital dominance** of our lives.
4. Cultural and educational **devaluing of the natural world**
5. The **Dystopian Trance**: a post-apocalyptic view of the future.

The good news is that attitudes about the nature connection are changing – not fast enough – but we now see pediatricians in the U.S. writing prescriptions for nature; we see a 500% increase in the number of nature preschools; family nature clubs spreading all over; and we see an international movement growing around the world.

Ten Reasons Why We Need a New Nature Movement

By Richard Louv

- 1 As of 2008, more than half of the world's population lives in towns and cities.** This transformation will produce one of two outcomes: either the end of meaningful daily experience in nature, or the **beginning of a new kind of city** – and a new view of our role in and our definition of nature.
- 2 Adults have nature-deficit disorder, too.** The children and nature movement will not succeed unless adults come to see the importance of our own connection to the natural world.
- 3 Environmentalism needs to hit reset.** Environmental concern, in some areas, has dropped to its lowest point since before Earth Day 1970. Why? Economic recession. A well-financed campaign of disinformation. An inability to describe a great future. For whatever reason, environmentalism remains a pup tent. We need a bigger tent. In fact, we need a river.
- 4 Sustainability alone is not sustainable.** Though we don't have a better word to replace it, the word sustain suggests stasis. We need more than stasis; we need to produce *human* energy (health, intelligence, creativity, joy) through nature.
- 5 Conservation is not enough. Now we need to "create" nature.** Even if we conserve every square foot of remaining wilderness, and we should, it won't be enough to guarantee the biodiverse habitats that humans and other organisms will require to thrive. In addition to conservation, we must now **restore or create natural habitats** on our farms and ranches, in our cities, neighborhoods, commercial buildings, yards, and on our roofs. We'll need the true greening of the urban world.
- 6 The more high-tech we become, the more nature we need.** We hear talk of a "post-biological" era in which human beings are optimally enhanced by technology. Yet, we've only begun to study how the natural world can optimize human health and intelligence. Technology will always be with us, but as it grows, we'll need an antidote to its downside.
- 7 The Development of Hybrid Minds,** ones capable of the ultimate multitasking: to live simultaneously in both the digital and physical worlds, using computers to maximize our powers to process intellectual data and natural environments to ignite our senses and accelerate our ability to learn and feel.
- 8 A New Nature Movement will create new jobs.** Connecting nature experience directly to human health and cognitive abilities will need nature preschool teachers, physicians and therapists who specialise in the healing power of nature; biophilic architects, landscapers and city planners to start using native plants to increase biodiversity; park rangers to take on the additional role of health para-professional – and many more.
- 9 Connecting children to nature brings unlikely allies together.** Conservatives, liberals, business people, environmentalists, teachers, pediatricians, and people of different religions will sit down at the same table.
- 10 We hunger for a positive image of the future.** If we see only an apocalyptic future, that's what we'll get, or close to it. But imagine a society in which our lives become as immersed in nature as they are in technology, every day, where we live, work, learn and play. **Imagine a future in which our intelligence and creativity, our ability to feel and be fully alive is enhanced by more frequent contact with the natural world.**



Frog. Photo: www.pixabay.com

The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto

A Call for Change in Rural Communities and Protected Areas

By Steffi Burger

During 2018, the EUROPARC network could feel something was moving: a Youth Manifesto was in the making. Young people were becoming more visible within the network; ready to have their voices heard by the Federation and Protected Areas across Europe and ready to question the status quo. After its official launch at the EUROPARC Conference 2018 in the Cairngorms National Park, there was no way to avoid noticing the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto.

Co-designed and created by a group of committed youngsters aged 15 to 25 growing up in parks and rural areas all over Europe, the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto sparks ideas for the involvement of young people in nature and calls on decision-makers to empower the younger generation in shaping the governance of our common parks and rural places.



Steffi supports the Federation's policy and communications work, mainly following the topics of Youth and Sustainable Agriculture.



Youth exploring the surroundings in Kalajoki, Finland, during the second meeting of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto Project.

Inspired by the Next Generation

Across Europe, rural communities face similar challenges: they struggle with an image of clinging onto traditions, neglecting societal changes and not picking up opportunities arising through technology. Young people and families are the future of rural places in Europe, and yet they are increasingly moving to bigger cities, that promise good education, viable jobs, more diverse career opportunities, reliable infrastructure, tolerant mindsets and greater freedom for self-development.

“This must change: We must engage young people with nature and support them to experience what fantastic places rural and Protected Areas are to live in.”

Many youngsters want to stay, but it proves **a challenge to provide enough infrastructure for social activities, affordable housing and attractive, long-term job prospects** for young professionals to make a living in rural areas. Protected Areas, likewise, often find it hard to attract youngsters and encourage them to engage more with the natural environment.

“To achieve change, we must first resolve the issues young people face with staying in these areas.”

If they open up to embrace change and listen to young people, rural places hold great potential to support the younger generation: to **experience the beneficial effects** the outdoors can hold for their health and personal development; to **allow them the chance to develop a deeper sense of connection and responsibility** to look after our nature.

How can we understand the challenges young people face with living in these places – and how can we tackle them? Let’s ask the youth and listen:

Between May and September, a diverse group of youngsters aged 15-25 from across Europe came together in two face-to-face workshops and collaborated online to exchange their personal experience and map out the challenges young people face when **living, learning and working** rurally.

They discussed common challenges and inspired each other with successful examples from their regions, where cooperation across generations and youth-led initiatives are already successfully co-creating sustainable solutions. **The workshops were all about experience sharing, creating ideas and drafting the Manifesto.** Working groups came up with some very concrete ideas about how to support young people in building a good life in rural and Protected Areas: ideas that allow their voices to

be heard more intently by decision-makers at local level. The youth proposals include: running youth empowerment workshops; training provision for decision-makers on how to better empathize and communicate with young people; and, installing Youth Councils or having a young person representing youth interests in councils and boards.

Why a EUROPARC Youth Manifesto?

“We are the next generation of people who will live and work in rural and Protected Areas. However, we are leaving. Leaving to find easier lives in the big cities – and with us leaving, our nature will begin to wither.”

(EUROPARC Youth Manifesto Project, EUROPARC Conference 2018, Cairngorms National Park)



Read all the Youth proposals from the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto –available for download in several languages at

<https://www.europarc.org/youth-manifesto/>

Inspired by the next Generation at EUROPARC Conference 2018

After months of online and offline co-creation, the young participants finally launched the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto on the final day of the EUROPARC Conference 2018.

Delegates had become curious to learn from the youth - tremendous excitement for the release of the Manifesto built-up throughout the Conference. Over 60 youngsters from the project were around making their presence known!

Dressed up in their green sweaters, young people engaged with delegates during activities, displayed the project at their bright purple info stand and made themselves heard unexpectedly, stirring up the Conference programme with several surprises. A short theatre performance and a flashmob showed in a playful way that youth are capable to contribute what it is needed to create a sustainable future: **creativity, joy and some fresh ideas.**

“We are ready to take action with you - now we need you to respond” (EUROPARC Youth Manifesto Project 2018)



What's next?

Taking action and implementing change with the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto

The Youth Manifesto is now out there. Addressing decision-makers, but inviting initiative from all of us living, learning and working in parks and rural areas together. It provides you with ideas to kick-off concrete projects in your areas, and is a powerful back-up reference document when talking to your local authorities, decision-makers, park managers and when engaging with youth in your community.



Launch of the EUROPARC Youth Manifesto at EUROPARC Conference 2018, Scotland

The pledges made by the youth on stage at the official launch fell on fertile ground. Young people pitched their pledges to delegates supported with **examples from their personal lives growing up in rural areas.**

Their clear message reached delegates who, thriving off the inspiration sparked by the youngsters with their Manifesto launch, rushed to the Manifesto stand to get their printed copies and discuss ideas with the young ambassadors on the spot.

Obviously, **youngsters didn't only want to talk about joining forces; there have been enough nice words in the past.** It is now time for action and joining forces in practice! Initial project ideas were discussed and some of the **youngsters had the chance to work out concrete plans for follow-up action with delegates and authorities** in their parks and communities once back home.

The younger generations of today are the ones in charge to shape and manage our communities and parks tomorrow - **they should be involved in the management and decision-making already today.** All you need to respond with is an open mind, curiosity to learn with the youth and trust that creating together is the way forward.

“Looking forward to making some headway internally within our National Park. We are doing a presentation to our board of members at the next Authority meeting, we are also in the process of setting up a youth forum!! Exciting times.”

Katy Foxord, youth involved in the Manifesto project

The EUROPARC Youth Manifesto was created as an output of a transnational LEADER project, led by the Cairngorms National Park Authority in collaboration with the three Finnish LEADER groups Rieska, Keskipiste, and Ravakka; the Cairngorms Local Action Group; Scottish Natural Heritage; Young Scot and the EUROPARC Federation. The project supported the Scottish Year of Young People 2018 and will continue into a second year.

Make sure you keep us posted about your ideas youth@europarc.org - we're thrilled to learn about your projects inspired by the Manifesto and make them visible throughout our European network. **Let's take action for change and co-create sustainable Protected Areas and resilient communities!**

Interview with Steffan Gwynn (23)

Snowdonia, North Wales

From your experience: What is the greatest challenge you face / your peers face living, learning, working in your area?

- **Living:** Lack of affordable houses and terrible public transport.
- **Learning:** Lack of opportunities to learn locally.
- **Working:** A lot of the work is seasonal - especially that which is based on tourism.

What do you think: Why should your own community/park use the Manifesto?

Snowdonia could really use the Manifesto to provide a platform for young people to get involved with all aspects of the work of the park, to create a sense of shared identity based upon place and to locate the park within a broader family of European protected areas - there's no denying that foreign travel and the world outside is a really appealing prospect to many young people.

If you had a free wish (or the time, money and power it takes): what project would you start with your friends in your community to make it a better place for youngsters to live, learn and work in?

Better infrastructure - running commuter trains side-by-side with the steam trains that are run for tourists over the summer; electric car charging stations; electric bike subsidies; a regular bus service.



Interview with Laura Peters (23)

Zwolle, Netherlands,

EUROPARC Youth+ Ambassador and Representative in EUROPARC Council

From your experience: What is the greatest challenge you face / your peers face living, learning, working in your area?

The major challenge would be "living": There aren't many places to rent, usually only bigger houses that are for sale.

What do you think: Why should your own community/park use the Manifesto?

It is a really great way to help the youth in your area, and you can decide for yourself which parts are applicable and that need action.

If you had a free wish (or the time, money and power it takes): what project would you start with your friends in your community to make it a better place for youngsters to live, learn and work in?

Give the Junior Ranger programme a boost and make sure there is budget for Youth+ activities!

“Building the next generation of Nature Conservationists”

An outdoor talk with Hendrickus van Hensbergen

Watch EUROPARC Live Video with Hendrickus' full interview!

<https://www.europarc.org/europarc-live/>



How often do you meet entrepreneurs making a change for nature? Hendrickus van Hensbergen was an invited speaker at the EUROPARC Conference 2018 and we could not miss the opportunity to talk to him in person. Founder and Chief Executive Officer of the charity “Action for Conservation”, **Hendrikus is not only a young entrepreneur working for conservation – he is inspiring other youngsters to lead the change.**

Despite his Dutch name, Hendrikus grew up sharing his time between the UK’s South-West Jurassic Coast and the Guadarrama Mountains in Spain. “As a child, I remember collecting vulture feathers and catching lizards”, revealed Hendrikus with sparkling eyes. Growing up in such iconic landscapes has certainly shaped his character and triggered his career choices - his passion for nature led him down a path into zoology and conservation. Now, he spends his time engaging with youngsters in schools and camps, enabling them to connect to nature. As he explained, “by 2030, 92,2% of the UK’s population will be living in cities, **so we need to think about ways to get young people out to enjoy natural spaces, otherwise they won’t value or care for them**”.

EUROPARC Federation (E): What made you start the charity "Action for Conservation"?

Hendrikus (H): In my previous job at WWF, I had the chance to visit my old secondary school. I went with some quite lazy assumptions about young people and how they would engage with environmental issues - in my case, I was not really aware of them until late into my teens. Also, the image presented by the press about young teens is quite negative: addicted to technology, disengaged, disinterested... **but I found completely the opposite.** They were really inspiring and keen to learn and that sparked something in me. **What if we could harness the energy and ideas of young people?** Particularly in England and Wales, there are very few approaches that really target teenagers - it was a bit of a niche, a gap that was not being filled. Understanding this made me join forces with fellow young conservationists. We started out as a project going to schools to speak to young people from different backgrounds. And that's really how the charity began, just as a network of young people interested in engaging other young people in environmental issues.

(E) How are you engaging young people?

(H) We believe that all young people should feel moved and empowered to protect the natural world and so we developed **three programmes for youngsters.** The main one, which also reaches a broader audience, is **developed in secondary schools,** particularly in disadvantaged urban areas. The second programme is our residential camp, which is a much more immersive experience, taking place in national parks, where we bring young people to spend time together and connect with nature. Lastly, we have an **ambassador programme,** which is a year-long programme to mentor and support young individuals taking action in their communities.

(E) Can you tell us more about the programme with secondary schools?

(H) Our schools' work is focused on engaging a wide spectrum of society. The aim is to inspire the youngsters and **support them in designing and delivering their own projects** so they can have a real impact in their community and feel a sense of success. We would go into three workshops with the same group of students, over a school

term. The 1st workshop is all about inspiration, it's very active as we are building knowledge and interest levels. In the next workshops, we support them in designing and implementing their projects, which they present back in the end. If they were successful, they go through a final event with several schools, where they share their achievements.

(E) This means that the students, in the end, are making a real contribution in their communities...?

(H) Yes, we try to focus on local issues and partner as much as possible with other conservation organisations working locally, so that young people can have meaningful action and impact. Addressing something place-based, which is relevant for their area and community, is essential. **If you are not connected with your local place, then it is hard to be connected to anything else.**

(EU) What have you learned on the way?

(H) I have learned how to fundraise, which is very challenging - there are limited pots of money and typically, funds in the UK have been quite focused on particular areas - it might be children and young people, it might be environment, and they would not necessarily fund things that sit at



the intersection between these two. To start the Charity, for example, we had to find an alternative solution and made it through a crowd-funding campaign. There are also a lot of **challenges around working with schools**. Teachers are under a lot of pressure and have in average 8 seconds to read an email, so you really have to be quite sharp on how to get teachers on board and get their interest. Working with young people is amazing but can be challenging. We work with theatre professionals to make our workshops more interactive and not rely on boring PowerPoints - that's how what we do sticks with them.

(E) What would be your 3 pieces of advice for Young people?

(H) First, **find your passion and hold on to it**, it does not necessarily have to be conservation. Following your passion is not easy - it might not always mean money or a certain life style, but it will give you fulfilment! Second, take action. If you feel like something needs to change and there is no mechanism to change it through other organisations or normal routes, you need to take the risk and take action. That is in essence what happened with the charity. I started a project to fulfil a need, to fill a gap,

Photos with the courtesy of Action for Conservation



and everything kind of evolved out of that. Third, **build a community around you** – they will be your support and will make things happen. But **be willing to work really hard!** Built up slowly and steadily, because it will give you a stronger base and thus, will be more likely to work. **Take things slowly, let them evolve naturally.**

(E) So far, you have mainly been working with national parks in England and Wales. How do you see a future cooperation with EUROPARC and other European Protected Areas?

(H) We are keen to work with organisations to put young people at the centre of decision-making - it is the only way they will feel empowered for protected areas to become a part of their identity. We see ourselves as facilitators: **what we have is a layered model that is effective and can be adapted to different contexts across Europe.** I have been taking it to other places, and I would be very interested in doing it also with other EUROPARC members.

For more information visit

<http://www.actionforconservation.org/>

THE ROOTS OF THE FUTURE

A “special” nature park dedicated to the education and the well-being of “kid-rangers”

By *Maurilio Cipparone*

Maurilio Cipparone

IUCN CEC & WCPA member, involved in nature conservation and parks for 50 years, in three continents. Now leading “NèB”, an Italian pilot project for children’s well-being in nature.



Could we transform an old farm in an extraordinary protected area? Could we go back through the years to recreate a wild marshy landscape once reclaimed for harvesting? Could the reborn wilderness be the “trigger” of an educational vision to put in practice the “Healthy Parks Healthy People (HPHP)” global strategy? Moreover, could children be the main actors in this process?



The answer is YES: the protected area has been established and named “**Pantanello Nature Park**”; the abandoned farm’s landscape has been “reclaimed back”; the HPHP vision has been implemented and more than 2,000 school children have been the main actors of an educational programme started in 2015 and still going on, gaining national relevance as a “pilot project”.

But let’s go back to the Park and to the “Kid-rangers” project.

In Italian, ‘pantanello’ means ‘**little swamp**’. Until 1993, Pantanello was actually an old farm, bordering the renowned Garden of Ninfa Natural Monument. Both the Garden and Pantanello are owned by the Roffredo Caetani Foundation, which manages the cultural and natural heritage of one of the oldest Italian dynasties. Since Roman times, the land has been an extensive marshland, until it was reclaimed in the early thirties to be harvested by veterans.



The farm was gradually abandoned, the ancient landscape - with its natural and cultural values - began to recover: the Foundation, according to its objectives, committed to create a Park to conserve nature and culture values. They dug a network of ponds to host migratory bird species, built trails and birdwatching shelters, and restored barns and buildings which are now used as classrooms and environmental education labs.

Health in Protected Areas



Promoting health and well-being for children

In 2013, Pantanello hosted the second Italian BioBlitz and in 2014 the "Roots of the Future" project started, with the ambition to create the first Italian protected area dedicated to, and possibly managed with, the children from local communities. The educational activities, carried out by a team from the **University Consortium CURSA**, have been designed for knowledge building and biodiversity conservation, but, gradually, they have been oriented towards **activities promoting children's well-being and**



their psychophysical development. This unusual path was motivated by the results of research demonstrating how nature can influence children health.

Outdoor play fosters children's intellectual, emotional, social and physical development: in Pantanello's environment, all educational objectives have been planned to promote more active lifestyles, to fight obesity, to act against video-addiction, to manage attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) effects. This unusual Kid-rangers project shares the objectives of the HPHP strategy and, at the same time, it has helped to promote the commitment of the Italian Ministry of Health.



A pilot project "**NèB-Natura È Benessere**" (Nature IS Well-being) has been launched with the "institutional" objectives to promote knowledge of the healthy benefits of green spaces for children. Through information and communication campaigns, it aims to raise public awareness and to promote, at different levels of government, the importance of the relationship between nature, biodiversity, human health and children's cognitive development through education and training.

Our objective, no less ambitious, is to promote awareness and actions on these issues through all Italian Parks: to keep the project's benefits alive, building beyond the borders of the Ministry's support.



To read more:

<http://www.frcaetani.it/parco-pantanello/>
<https://www.facebook.com/piccoleguidepantanello/>
<https://www.facebook.com/NaturaBenessereBambini/>
<http://www.cursa.it>

Climate Change: the NaturAdapt Project

The management of natural areas must now be adapted to the challenges of climate change in Europe. Réserves Naturelles de France, EUROPARC and eight other partners have come together in the LIFE Climate project to transform this challenge into an opportunity: an opportunity to innovate and trigger a transition towards the adaptive management of protected areas, based on a dynamic collective learning process.

"Climate is changing! Let Protected Areas rise to the challenge!"

Climate change is already impacting our natural heritage...

Everywhere in Europe, we are seeing the effects of climate change to varying degrees: species found at higher altitudes and latitudes, forest dieback following periods of drought, coastal erosion due to rising sea levels, Whether direct e.g. early onset of certain phenological stages owing to warming, or indirect through change in human activities e.g. increased pressure on water resources owing to the greater use of snow canons in mid-mountain areas, these effects are often speeding up the loss of biodiversity at an alarming rate.

... Climate change is still not sufficiently taken into account in protected areas

Despite the existence and acknowledgement of the signs of climate change, several recent investigations in France (RNF, FCEN 2015; IUCN 2015) and in Europe (Bonn et al., 2014) show that the management of protected areas currently only incorporates climate change and its social, economic, environmental and health consequences to a very limited extent. Only 15% to 18% of those surveyed are sensitive to this issue.

There are numerous reasons for this:

- For managers, it is not an immediate priority compared with other pressures they are faced with such as change in land use and invasive alien species;
- Managers feel ill-equipped to deal with climate change e.g. lack of knowledge and resources;
- Existing methods and feedback are not always accessible e.g. language barriers; heavy investment in time required to adopt them.

Adapting is a necessity, but also an opportunity

We must therefore identify the vulnerability of protected areas to climate change and its impacts and consequently adapt methods for their management, planning and governance. Some experiments have already been conducted in this respect in Mexico and in the US.

Réserves Naturelles de France, EUROPARC and eight other partners have decided to take up the challenge by taking joint action, leading to the creation of the NaturAdapt project: "Adapting the management of nature to the challenges of climate change in Europe: the foundations of a dynamic collective learning process". Starting with managers' existing resources and needs, a prototype adaptive management method will be tested by six French nature reserves as pilot areas. A second phase will see the experiment extended to 15 sites.

This approach is considered an opportunity to innovate, develop a participatory approach and position protected areas at the heart of the ecological transition and adaptation of regions to climate change.

In practical terms, what is NaturAdapt?

This is an ambitious project: **we want to trigger a paradigm shift to move from planned management to adaptive management.** After 10 years, we want to have engaged 80% of nature reserve managers into adopting an adaptive approach to management, planning and governance.

To do this, we want:

- To make available knowledge and know-how on adapting the management of natural areas accessible;
- To develop methods and services tested by experiments to help managers produce a vulnerability diagnosis and put in place an adaptation plan;
- To create and develop a community of experts and practitioners working on this issue;
- To create innovative mechanisms to disseminate and transfer the results of the project in other contexts, in France and in Europe;
- To raise awareness in the public of the regions of protected areas about the direct and indirect effects of climate change.

And at European level?

The tools and methods developed by the project will initially be tested in France. At the same time, European protected areas will be integrated in all stages of the project through a series of actions undertaken by EUROPARC:

- a survey of the current initiatives and needs of managers of natural areas in Europe;
- the creation of a "climate change" commission within EUROPARC;
- the provision of a tool box and webinars on the issue;
- the drawing up of a White Paper for European and national policy makers.

The NaturAdapt project in figures:

- 5 years (2018-2023)
- €4.2 M, of which €2.5M from the European Commission via the LIFE Climate programme, €500,000 from the French Ministry for Ecological and Inclusive Transition, and €500,000 from the French Agency for Biodiversity.
- 10 partners



AGENCE FRANÇAISE
POUR LA BIODIVERSITÉ
MINISTÈRE DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT



Are you interested in this topic?

Let us know if you have any experience or questions on the adaptive management of protected areas. We'd be delighted to talk about it!

find more about the project at:

www.europarc.org/naturadapt

The future of CAP and the environment

The **CAP (Common Agricultural Policy)** is the set of EU rules aimed at the development of a uniform agricultural sector across the EU. Established in the 60's to increase European agricultural productivity, assure the availability of food supplies at reasonable prices and ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, CAP now has to respond to many more imperatives including those related to human health, animal welfare, environment and biodiversity protection, landscape and climate change. Also, **it is necessary to find new synergies between the CAP and other European policies and International agreements.**

Therefore, a process to revise the current CAP (2014-2020) and to establish a new agriculture policy post-2020 is underway. This revision process started with the European Commission 2017 Working Programme "*Simplification and modernisation of the Common Agricultural Policy*".



The Legislative Proposals of the European Commission

The debate among European Institutions, Member States and all stakeholders is still very open and the European Commission Legislative Proposals have to take many technical aspects and different interests into consideration.

A New Delivery Model

One of the proposals is a new delivery model, increasing the freedom to the Member States to elaborate National Agriculture Strategic Plans.

It is one of the most debated aspects of the proposal. For some, the model concretely responds to different realities, and should provide Member States more flexibility to implement the CAP. For others though, it brings serious risks of re-nationalisation of the CAP and non-fulfilment of EU environmental objectives, as well as increased bureaucracy and competition between farmers from different European countries.



CAP debate: what has happened so far?

- A Public Consultation launched in Spring 2017 by the European Commission (EC) clearly showed public concern **about the connection between agriculture and environment.**
- the EC published an orientation communication about "**The Future of Food and Farming – for a flexible, fair and sustainable Common Agricultural Policy**", in November 2017, and an European Parliament Resolution on "**the Future of Food and Farming**", in May 2018.
- In June 2018, the EC published **Legislative Proposals**, currently under hot debate in the European Parliament and in the European Council.

To finalise the legislation process, these two institutions will have to vote on the EC proposal, but the theme is complex: CAP legislation involves very different visions and it is not certain that the process will be concluded before the new elections of the European Parliament in May 2019, or the nomination of the new Commission.

https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en



Locally grown garlic, Resia, Italy
Photo by: Cristina Buttolo

A Greener Cap

The European Commission is aiming to establish a “greener” CAP by means of the new Legislative Proposals. Compared with the current CAP, among the 9 new objectives of the Legislative Proposals, focus is given to “Preserve Landscapes & Biodiversity”, “Environmental Care”, “Climate Change Action” and “Vibrant Rural Areas”.

Member States’ National Strategic Plans will have to uphold European and international environmental laws, including biodiversity policy and the Birds and Habitats Directives. The new proposal maintains the two CAP Pillars and includes environmental measures in both of them. **In Pillar 1, connected with the Direct Payments to farmers, the previous “greening” measures will be replaced by “eco-schemes”.**

In Pillar 2, in relation to rural development, the proposals include payments for management commitments (including agri-environment-climate commitments), compensation for constraints (as per the Water Framework Directive and Nature Directives, also taking into account natural constraints), and **support for investments, knowledge transfer, innovation, and co-operation.**



Download EUROPARC Position Paper at:

<https://www.europarc.org/sustainable-agriculture>

EUROPARC Position Paper

The EUROPARC Policy Office in Brussels, with the support of the **Agriculture and Protected Areas Commission members**, launched a Position Paper in March 2018 to contribute to the CAP reform debate. Entitled **“European Protected Areas & Sustainable Agriculture: Working in Partnership for Biodiversity and Rural Development”**, the position paper calls for a CAP reform that recognises and better values the role of Protected Areas and Natura 2000 Sites in rural development.

Confirming the role of Protected Areas for a healthy environment, and illustrated by many successful examples of collaboration between protected areas and farmers from the EUROPARC network, the position paper reinforces the need **for new, better-integrated approaches and more innovative funding mechanisms** at regional, national and European levels. Built on five key-strategic points, EUROPARC describes in concrete ways **how Protected Areas hold the potential to integrate EU agricultural interests with environmental concerns and how that can be tapped within a reformed CAP framework.**

Transhumance in France, Espaces Naturels Régionaux, by Samuel Dhote



A breakfast meeting in the European Commission



Mrs Caroline Pottier

is Officer on Environment and Agriculture at the Natural Capital-Land Use and Management (Direction D1) in the European Commission-DG ENVI (Directorate-General for Environment).



They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day, well, for our policy officer Stefania Petrosillo, a Brussels breakfast is combined with work. Here, over a croissant and coffee, she meets Mrs Caroline Pottier, from the Environment and Agriculture at the Natural Capital-Land Use and Management unit, to discuss some environmental aspects of the new CAP proposal.

Stefania Petrosillo (S): Mrs Pottier, the Common Agriculture Policy is a huge and complex topic, therefore we would like to ask you to underline some general points that you consider important for nature protection and environment.



Caroline Pottier (C): The new CAP will take into consideration several aspects connected with environment, nature conservation, and sustainable use of natural resources. Briefly, I think that the most important points of the proposal presented by the Commission can be synthesised in:

- A new delivery model: new governance that relies on more subsidiarity to re-balance the roles of all actors.
- CAP objectives: environment and climate (incl. biodiversity) are strongly present.
- "Whole CAP" approach: conditionality details, plus environment-relevant Pillar I and Pillar II interventions, are all planned together in CAP plans.
- Links to non-CAP legislation on environment and climate: CAP plans to take account of analysis, objectives and targets from list of other legislation (incl. biodiversity).
- "No backsliding": a legal obligation is placed on Member States to raise ambition on environment and climate compared to the current period.
- The new conditionality terms will combine and improve aspects of cross-compliance and "greening".
- Better toolbox: Pillar I includes "eco-schemes", which are a new instrument.
- Ring-fencing: Member States will be required to spend at least 30% of EAFRD budget on interventions directly targeted at environment and climate change

SCould you say something more about some of these points? Maybe we can start from the new delivery model that will give much more freedom to Member States than before.

CCorrect. We know that this is a point debated in the European Parliament and in the Council. **The Member States will have a lot of flexibility to establish their National Agriculture Strategic Plans, but they will have to follow the common indications and objectives stated by the Commission,** and the Strategic Plans will be submitted for the Commission's approval. One important achievement is that the authorities in charge of environment have to be involved in the elaboration, implementation and control of the National Strategic Plans. **It means that the new CAP recognises that agriculture is not only a topic for Agriculture's Ministries, but that the Ministries of Environment and the Regional Authorities for Environment and Nature Protection are also strongly concerned.** The challenge will be if, in the reality, these authorities in the Member States and Regions will be actually proactive.

SFor instance, until now only the European Council of Agriculture, composed by the national ministries of agriculture, discussed the new CAP proposal... we consider that also the EU Environment Council, composed by the national ministries of environment, should include this topic in its next meetings.

CIndeed. The CAP proposal gives a role to these authorities, but they have to take this opportunity. About the Council meetings, as you know, the agenda is decided by the Member State who has the Presidency (currently Austria) together with the other Member States.

SAnother important point you mentioned is the link to non-CAP legislation on environment and climate.

CExactly. In Annex III of the proposal, there is a list of 12 items of legislations concerning the Birds and Habitats Directives as well as climate change, water, soil protection, air, animal welfare and public health. National Strategic Plans will have to take account of analysis, objectives and targets from legislation on these topics.

SThe new CAP will maintain the two pillars, the first one, 'direct payments', and the second one, 'rural development'.

CThe two pillars' architecture is strongly connected with the previous points. Accordingly, in the proposal, Member States will have a large margin of flexibility to decide the percentage of funds to devote to rural development and they are asked to increase the co-financing. The concrete risk is to see the second pillar and notably the support to environmental measures, becoming weaker in the National Plans. However, rural development is strategic to reach the link to non-CAP legislation on environment and climate, especially on biodiversity and landscape. **Therefore, it will be crucial also for organisations like you and your members, to be engaged at national level to make sure that rural development, which is vital for environment and social aspects, will receive the importance that it deserves and the funds it needs.**

SFor European Protected Areas, both pillars are important: **in the framework of the first pillar, we would like to see the possibility to award farmers located inside or nearby parks and Natura 2000 sites, working sustainably for landscape and nature resources. In the second pillar, we consider that natural protected areas, especially regional parks, play an important role to support rural development.**

CThe 'direct payments' supporting farmers' income will remain central in the new CAP architecture and budget. All farmers' payments will be submitted to the conditionality, that in the new proposal will be connected to legislations on biodiversity, pesticides, and others. Beside conditionality, a new instrument, the 'greening', that was introduced in the current period has not proved to be efficient. The new proposal suggests a new instrument, the "eco-schemes", for farmers who really make ambitious commitments to observe agricultural practices beneficial for the climate and the environment. However, there is no requirement in terms of budget to be allocated by Member States to these eco-schemes.

To learn more about the Legislative Proposals visit:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/future-cap_en

Transboundary Parks



Participants at the TransParcNet Meeting in the Transboundary region composed by Thayatal National Park (AT) and Podyjí National Park (CZ)

How to protect nature across borders?

Ever since humans started to settle, they have erected borders to protected land, property and territory. **However, nature does not recognise man-made borders...**

Protecting and living alongside nature means **following nature's design**. Working across borders is fundamental for the effective conservation of shared nature and landscapes, but it is also a means to achieve regional development, whilst promoting mutual understanding and international peace.

To encourage dialogue and cooperation between Protected Areas which share common natural resources, the EUROPARC Federation developed the **Transboundary Parks Programme – Following Nature's Design**. It is the only method in Europe to **analyse the progress of transboundary cooperation**, while supporting the growth of a network of professionals working in this field.

The TransParcNet

With the TransParcNet, the network of certified Transboundary Parks, we provide opportunities to build-up expertise in cross-border cooperation based on the exchange of experience, tools and best practice. By following the EUROPARC standards of transboundary cooperation, parks aspire to be models of sustainable development through the effective protection of Europe's natural and cultural heritage.

Since the Basic Standards evaluation system of the programme was launched in 2003, 23 European Protected Areas have been successfully certified as **10 Transboundary Parks**.

EUROPARC is looking for new Transboundary Parks across Europe, willing to improve their cooperation and to share their experience within the TransParcNet. We are most glad to welcome you!



To learn more about the programme, please visit:

www.europarc.org/transboundary-cooperation



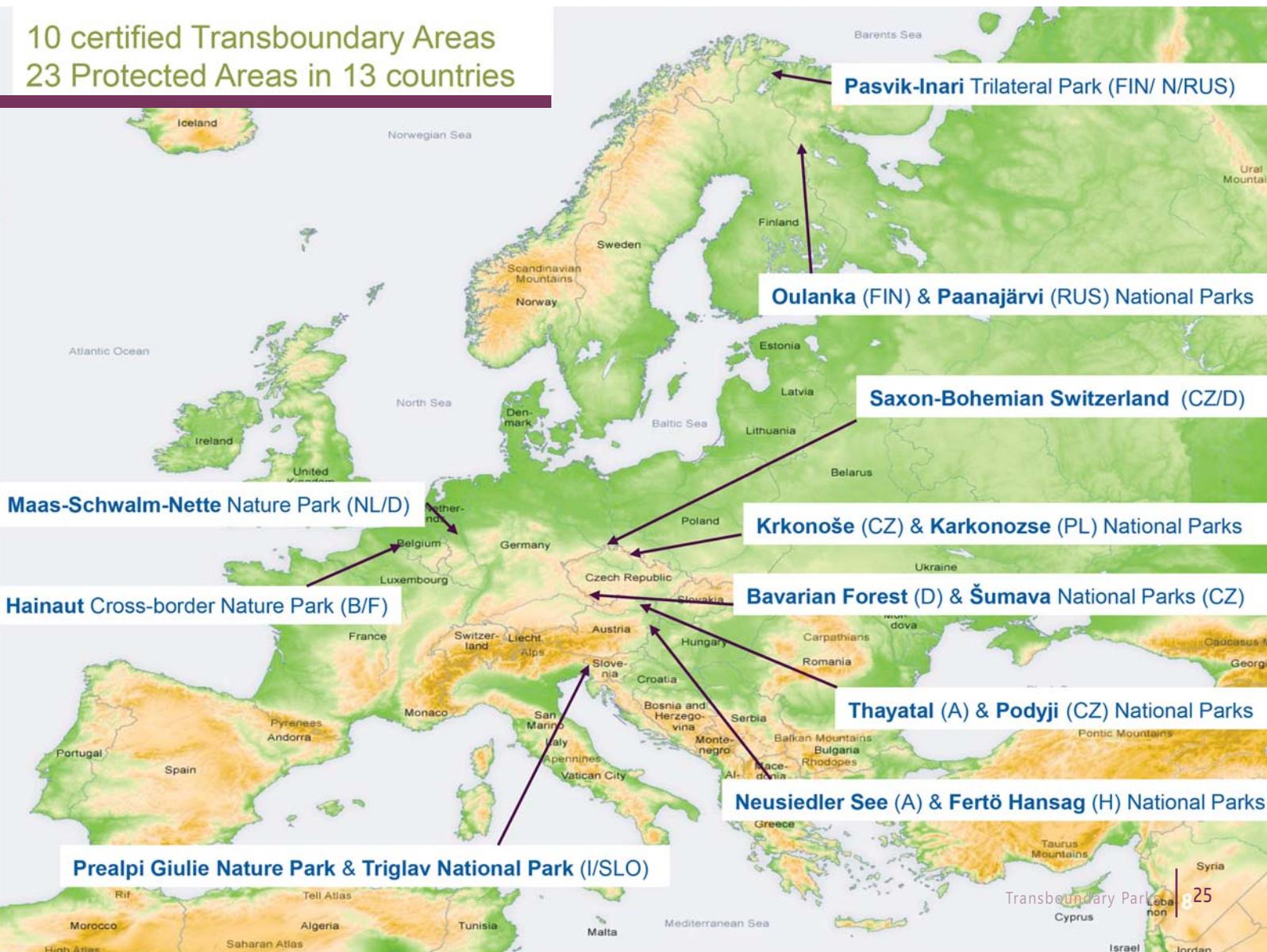
Photos:
The Thaya river in Thayatal National Park (on the left)
and in Podyji National Park (on the right)



Transboundary Parks

EUROPARC

10 certified Transboundary Areas
23 Protected Areas in 13 countries



7 steps for an effective cross-border management of river ecosystems

The cross-border cooperation between the National Parks Thayatal and Podyjí is vital for the protection of the canyon-like valley of the border river Thaya between Austria and the Czech Republic. **The basic principle of this cooperation is to optimize the impact of conservation management** by combining methods and management tools.

Over the past 20 years, the parks' administrations have been working together in research and monitoring projects, forest management, regulation of game stocks, and educational visitor programmes. Their continuous efforts to find the best solutions for the complex management of the Thaya river ecosystem is proving highly effective. Here is what we can learn from their experience:

1

Find an alignment of interests and objectives

In order to implement an effective cross-border river management, it is important to identify current issues, to be aware of the history causing the present situation and to agree on possible improvements of the river ecology together with the partner. Don't hesitate to speak openly in a constructive manner about region-specific problems and **set common goals to act in concert.**

2

Set up common research

Studying problems together and agreeing the methodology to address them, increases the likelihood of being able to reach outputs that are accepted by both partners: this can be used to establish a common basis for further actions. Even though it might not always be possible to conduct research on both sides of the cross-border protected area, always **try to set up research questions that will result in findings useful for both sides of the protected landscape.**

3

Agree on a common strategy for nature protection management

Having aligned interests and reached shared conclusions, **decide whether measures are necessary to be taken or not.** If so, coordinate and agree appropriate measures. Sometimes actions are only effective on one side, but nevertheless, communicate and discuss those measures with the partner since it will have influence on the entire river landscape. Do not focus only on the main water flows, but be aware of possible consequences for side streams.

4

Apply a common policy of national park administrations towards main stakeholders

Collaborate not only with each other, but **also with other institutions on both sides of the border.** In some cases, the cooperation of the bordering parks is not enough and requires the involvement of regional or national stakeholders and authorities. Due to legislative differences, it might be necessary for one park to collaborate with specific stakeholders - do not leave your partner to act alone, but provide assistance and support if useful. A written statement of support can be very effective in convincing other stakeholders.



5

Identify and work on multiple political and institutional levels

In some cases, it is necessary to work on a higher political level in order to achieve common goals. Across borders, those levels might vary and therefore it is important for partners to support each other to identify and collaborate on multiple levels.

6

Joint financing

Financing measures together to improve the ecological situation of water streams or a border river in a transboundary park is a benefit for the entire protected landscape and should therefore be funded by both parks. There are also international cooperation funding programmes that you can look for and apply together.

7

Effective public relations strategy for transboundary cooperation

The management measures and the cooperation should also be shown to the public. Transboundary cooperation is not only a necessity for protected areas in border regions, but also a benefit for the entire region and a great example for future projects.

The Podyjí National Park was created shortly after the fall of the Iron Curtain in 1991, inspiring nature conservationists to start a debate about protecting the area on the Austrian side of border. Nine years later, the Thayatal National Park was finally established. Since then, both national parks have been working together to achieve the best possible protection of this natural habitat and have been following the EUROPARC Transboundary Parks Programme in 2007.

In 2018, Thayatal and Podyjí hosted the TransParcNet meeting focused on the topic "Bridges over troubled water – Nature protection of river landscapes". Read the outcomes and access the presentations of the meeting at

www.europarc.org/transparcnet-meeting-2018/

Check EUROPARC toolkits on Transboundary Cooperation, with case studies from the TransParcNetwork.



*Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park,
by Ben Arne Sotkajærvi*



<https://www.euoparc.org/transboundary-protected-areas-efforts-in-green-infrastructure/>

Transboundary Protected Areas' efforts in Green Infrastructure

Protected areas are the natural cornerstones of a network of Green Infrastructure in Europe, especially transboundary protected areas. Administrations work hand in hand in order to conserve ecosystems across borders and provide landscape connectivity.

Large Carnivores in Transboundary Protected Areas

Large carnivores are some of the most challenging species to maintain or reintegrate back into the natural areas of Europe. In this toolkit, you will find information and real examples that illustrate the cooperation efforts carried out by different administrations in Europe to effectively manage large carnivores in transboundary protected areas.

<https://www.euoparc.org/species-management-transboundary-protected-areas/>



*Wolf in the Rodopi Mountains
National Park, Greece*

CEETO - Central Europe EcoTourism: tools for nature protection

By Giacomo Benelli (EUROPARC Federation)

This exciting project aims to make tourism a real driver for nature protection and local, socioeconomic well-being, the CEETO (Central Europe Eco-Tourism: tools for nature protection) project will **elaborate an integrated approach that includes environmental, social and economic aspects**.

It seeks too, to address some of the conflicts that can arise from tourism activities, such as, increasing pressures on natural resources (water, land) and on services/infrastructures (roads, mobility, waste management facilities).

The three-year project funded by the Central Europe Regional Development fund of the European Union is a cooperation between 11 partners from 6 countries (AT, DE, HR, HU, IT, SL). It **promotes an innovative sustainable tourism planning model based on the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (ECSTPA)**, which aims to protect and enhance the natural heritage of Protected Areas (PAs) and the Natura 2000 Network.

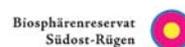
Within CEETO, 8 Protected Areas in 5 different countries are actively involved as pilot areas. Each is implementing an innovative governance system for tourism based on a participatory planning approach, which involves bodies at both policymaking and protected area management levels. The participatory planning approach, which often takes the form of a Forum on sustainable tourism, is designed to establish effective participation and engagement of public and private actors: this can be a quite challenging process and requires special skills and knowledge.



Building Sustainable Tourism Plans in Protected Areas

By Luca Lietti and Giacomo Munegato (FEDERPARCHI/Agenda21 Consulting)

Building common interests is the foundation of every community-based Action Plan. For the purpose of a Sustainable Tourism, participatory processes play a fundamental role to change the current status quo. Despite seen as time-consuming activities, not just for those managing the processes but also for the stakeholders involved, as they have to take time-out from their regular activities to voluntarily join in the meetings, **participatory planning processes enable a favorable discussion context and contribute for the convergence of different interests.**



In order to design an incisive, effective and time-saving process, each manager should answer to three basic questions:

a) Is the goal of the process clear and understandable for everyone? Before involving the local community, each Protected Area should define what the expected results of the process are and outline an understandable key message to potential stakeholders - keep in mind that most of them are not familiar with technical or scientific terminology to avoid confusion and false expectations.

b) Which interests are affected by the process and who represents those interests? Once the goal is clear, managers should enlist all possible interests that the foreseen changes could affect. Each of these interests is represented by one or more group of stakeholders. This assessment will help to define correctly the group of stakeholders needed.



The CEETO project activities are designed to improve planning, management and monitoring tools especially conceived to make tourism activities inside Protected Areas sustainable, environmentally friendly and a positive boost for nature protection.

c) What kind of conflicts or alliances can/should the process bring out? Drawing a map of explicit or latent conflicts and alliances can help to identify possible obstacles or threats: in turn, this can help to inform new opportunities to create a more inclusive process.

Well-designed participatory activities require consequent stages to be mapped out to be implemented in chronological order in order to reach the goal of the participatory planning process: this lies at the heart of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan. Keep in mind that each context is different and unique!

A Participatory Planning Process in 5 steps



UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Salzburger Lungau

1 Establishing the Forum

Has the Protected Area already involved the local community in the decision making process?

The establishment of an inclusive local Forum between the Protected Area and stakeholders groups is a precondition to start a participatory planning process. It should be open to all stakeholders dealing with tourism and conservation issues. The Park should play the role of the "discrete honest arbiter" of the Forum.

OUTPUT: establishment of a Local Forum

2 Participatory Mapping

Has the Protected Area already defined the main geographical areas inside the Park that represent the heritage, the landscape, the knowledge which the local community also recognise?

This is an intuitive, cartographic representation of the way in which the local community sees, perceives and attributes value to its territory. It consists of memories, transformations, current reality and vision for the future. The methodology combines cartography with participatory methods to depict the territorial knowledge of local communities.

It is useful to define: the most **valuable areas to preserve and promote**, the most **vulnerable areas** at potential risk from tourism pressure, and the **most relevant tourism flows**.

OUTPUT: Community Map / Hot-spots of tourist pressure

3 The Future Search

Has the Protected Area already identified the specific tourist issues to be managed through the Action Plan?

This is an interactive planning activity that focuses on **developing common scenarios for the future**. Participants are asked to imagine the future, starting from analyzing the time-line that has brought them to the present situation, and to express a forecast both on desired positive aspects (what I hope that will happen ...) and on possible negative changes (what I fear that will happen ...). A synthesis of the visions is compiled to identify shared features and a common vision for Sustainable Tourism development, which includes both negative and positive impacts of tourism flows.

OUTPUT: main problems and potentials of tourist flows / Strategy for the development of Sustainable Tourism

4 The Ideas Factory

This is a participatory activity to draft different potential answers which react to a common issue. The activity focuses on the proposal of ideas, i.e. the formulation of operative proposals necessary to be undertaken to realize the common vision. Participants are asked to elaborate some initial ideas concerning chosen themes in order to build a sort of Bank of Ideas, which is the first step for an effective Participative Action Plan.

OUTPUT: Bank of Ideas

5 The World Café

This creates a collaborative environment to develop concrete actions and initiatives from multiple ideas. Participants are divided into homogeneous groups, taking into account the ideas expressed during the previous meeting, in order to stimulate a discussion to help stakeholders to define indicators, implementation timescales, economic resources and possible partnerships resulting from the Actions.

OUTPUT: Sustainable Tourism Action Plan

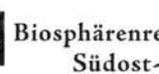


To learn more about the CEETO project please visit:

<http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/CEETO.html>

A SUSTAINABLE JOURNEY

A FILM BY THE EUROPARC FEDERATION FOR "CENTRAL EUROPE ECO-TOURISM: TOOLS FOR NATURE PROTECTION"



Taking a holiday has become less of a treat but a necessity for most people, to rest, relax, reinvigorate, away from the everyday stresses.

At the same time, we are all more conscious of the need to care for and appreciate our natural environment. We try to use less resources by recycling, we support the protection of plants, birds and animals, we enjoy that peace, fresh air and calmness that we get from being in nature.



On holiday we are welcomed to someone else’s nature, using the resources of another place.

HOWEVER we can enjoy our holiday and be responsible and caring towards nature and the culture of our chosen destination.

We can choose **SUSTAINABLE TOURISM!**

The Film “A Sustainable Journey”, has been produced by EUROPARC in the framework of the CEETO project.

The film tells the story of an ordinary traveller, seeking to escape the pressures of everyday life to a different kind of tourism that they believe will be good for nature and good for him too.

Realising that their choices can affect the local environment, culture and economy. They see that as a guest to a protected area, a place where people live and work, they too respect and look after their special place.

We have created a film to inspire and inform.

To show that Sustainable Tourism is a state of mind, a conscious choice to work, live and to be on holiday in a different way. A way that makes one feel good and is good for Nature. That indeed, sustainable tourism is something for ordinary people, like YOU.

Watch the film at:

<https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/A-Sustainable-Journey-The-Film.html>

eservat
Rügen



MEDVEDNICA
Park prirode
Nature Park



With all these positive and responsible attitudes about how we humans affect our environment at home – we need to pack these with us too when we go on holiday!



Special Feature: Cultural Heritage

"Acequia Alta" and "Mulhacén"

Water management in a prominent Mediterranean mountain such as Sierra Nevada has been the concern of its inhabitants since time immemorial. Here, summer droughts quickly prevail as water from melting snow races through rivers and streams to reach the seas in just a few days - speed is increased due to the high impermeability of the rock in the summit of the Sierra, mainly composed by schist

Muslims were the first to climb and cultivate these mountain slopes centuries ago. They **designed a network of ditches spreading out hundreds of kilometers away from the streams' headwaters**. Working at maximum horizontality, they were able to slow down the water flow and spread it throughout the territory. These are the so-called "*acequias de careo*" or "ancient irrigation channels". According to the R.A.E (Real Academia Española), "*careo*" means "*directing livestock somewhere*" or "*the action of grazing*", or "*grazing cattle when they are on the move*". From this definition, it is clear that livestock and mountain agriculture were the first beneficiaries of these irrigation channels, but they were not the only ones.

Sustaining communities and biodiversity

The objective of the *acequias* is to retain the presence of water on the slopes, and have it available during the summer to create pastures, supply the irrigation ditches below, fill pools for irrigation systems, create fountains, move mills, etc. To do this, across some parts of the route **the water is allowed to spill over large areas where pasture will grow for livestock**. In other places, taking advantage of gorges, the **water is directed towards them**, appearing below, in village fountains. In other cases, a forest of oaks or holm oaks will be the beneficiaries.

These different adaptations take into account the unique character of the slopes: this is hard work for the "*acequero*", the person in charge of the management of the ditches. The end result though is increased **benefits from the ditches, which reach far beyond their original design and purpose**.

How ancient cultural waterways are sustaining natural systems

By Antonio J. Ramos Lafuente

Antonio J. Ramos Lafuente

is Guide-Interpreter in the Sierra Nevada National Park for over 25 years. Antonio also works as a Technician in Natural and Landscape Resources.



Illustration from the "Acequero Manual"



Cattle in the "Acequia de Papeles"



"Careando" the water of the ditch

Some of the most important ecological benefits include the increase of areas of grass at higher altitudes, and also the expansion of diverse flora species, many of which are endemic. Without the irrigation ditches, the species' distribution would be limited to the area of high mountain meadows (*grasslands that surround the lagoons located in the ancient glacial cirques*): now though, species such as *Gentiana sp.*, *Pinguicula sp.*, *Veronica sp.*, among many others, are able to find larger areas to establish. In addition, **relict oak** groves are miraculously maintained at this latitude also benefiting from the water in the ditches available during summer, when this tree species most need it.

From the point of view of tourism, visitors appreciate walking along the ancient irrigation channels and the many trails associated with the old service roads of the ditches.

Besides sustaining the landscape of the Sierra Nevada that has been shaped by humans, the "*acequias of careo*" achieve **three important objectives**: on one hand, they fulfill the function for which they were designed, that is to provide water to meet the needs of the inhabitants of the mountains; on the other hand, they **sustain oak groves and exclusive flora** that have been the main features that led to the declaration of Sierra Nevada as a National Park; and, finally, they allow a rewarding experience for visitors discovering the mountain slopes.

For all these reasons, a tremendous debt of gratitude is owed to all those people who came before us and who for centuries worked so hard to shape this wonderful landscape.



**EUROPARC
CONFERENCE
2019, LATVIA**

Kemeri National Park
September 24-27

Nature on your Mind: Understanding our Values



More information coming soon: www.europarc.org/europarc-conference

**Inspirational video of Kemeri National Park
and other natural treasures of Latvia:** https://ej.uz/EUROPARC2019_Kemeri