Agriculture in a transboundary alpine nature park

The case of Binntal Veglia – Devero

Italy – Switzerland
Localization in the Alps
2 Nature Parks in the Lepontine Alps

Shared border: 23.9 km
Some Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parco Naturale Alpe Veglia – Alpe Devero</th>
<th>Landschaftspark Binntal (Binntal Nature Park)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Italy, Piemont Region</td>
<td>• Switzerland, Canton of Valais</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 85 km²</td>
<td>• 180 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• <strong>1600 – 3500 m a.s.l.</strong></td>
<td>• <strong>800 – 3200 m a.s.l.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 30 inhabitants</td>
<td>• 1300 inhabitants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 4 municipalities</td>
<td>• 5 municipalities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Nature Park since 1978</td>
<td>• Nature Park since 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Based on national and regional legislation</td>
<td>• based on Swiss federal legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unit of Piedmont Region</td>
<td>• Private association (municipalities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Permanent staff: 14</td>
<td>• Permanenstaff: 6 persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Annual budget: 2 Meur</td>
<td>• Annual budget 1, 2 Meur</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Alpe Veglia, IT
Binntal, CH
Land Use in Binntal Park (180 km²)
Land Use in Veglia Devero Park (85 km$^2$)
Challenges of mountain/alpine farming

- **Natural Conditions in mountain areas:**
  - Altitude (Binntal 800-3200 m, Veglia-Devero 1600-3500 m)
  - Steep slopes
  - Mosaic of meadows, pastures, forests, ditches, gullies, hamlets
  - Natural dynamics (avalanches, landslides, debris flows, floods)
  - Short vegetation period (3-5 months)

- **Consequences for agriculture in mountain/alpine areas**
  - high labour input, limited mechanization, high costs.
  - **In short:** low productivity, no competitive capacity.
  - **From an economic point of view:** Stop tinkering.

A Swiss think tank suggested years ago that the mountain area should be turned into a wasteland and the population relocated to the plains.
But, who are these farmers?

- Destroyer of nature’s biodiversity
- Polluters
- Animal abusers
- Opponents of protected areas
- ...
The alpine parks perspective

Species-rich habitats

Attractive landscapes

Thanks to the work of farmers
Traditional rural mosaic landscape
Alpine pastures
Arable Flora
High Stemm trees
Activity of the Park, Exemple 1: Promoting biodiversity through contracts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Habitat</th>
<th>Flora</th>
<th>Fauna</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Habitat" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Flora" /></td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Fauna" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Habitat" /></td>
<td><img src="image5" alt="Flora" /></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image6" alt="Habitat" /></td>
<td></td>
<td><img src="image7" alt="Fauna" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Provisions in the contract for meadows and pastures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>All Meadows and pastures</th>
<th>Extensive pastures</th>
<th>Low-intensity pastures</th>
<th>Meadows</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No liquid manure</td>
<td>No manure</td>
<td>manure allowed</td>
<td>Grass cut after 15th July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.no chemical products</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No silage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extensive meadows</td>
<td>Autumn pasture</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Activity of the Park, Exemple 2: Dwarf shrub removal and direct support to farmers and direct management by farmers
Activity of the Park: Exemple 3: Fight against neophytes
Activity of the Park, Exemple 4: Support for tree care and fruit utilisation
Activity of the Park, Exemple 5: Support for rye harvesting
Activity of the Park, Exemple 6:
Land sharing and support for rye cultivation and harvesting
Activity of the Park, Exemple 7: Dissemination, excursions and tourism through parks and borders
Regional Specialities are park ambassadors
Sensitisation of the population appreciation of the work of farmers

- Recognition of farmers' achievements in favour of landscape, biodiversity and regional identity
- Creating contacts with farmers and their products
- Organising visits to farms
- Regular exchange between farmers and park staff
- Participation of farmers in the organs of the Parks
High quality of certified niche products
Online Shop

As a Park of National Importance and a representative of some of the most beautiful countryside in Switzerland, we aim to offer you products and services which are of the highest quality and authentic in every way.

We want to offer you the best possible. We work with the producers and service providers in the park to find ways of making your stay in Birnztal a special and unique experience – one you’ll never forget. Via our online shop you can send park products home or organise a picnic for your next hike. Discover our products and producers online, and get to know them in person on your next visit!
Common markets
Lessons learnt

- The park staff appreciates the farmers, knows their concerns (e.g. collapse of prices, seven days working week, regulation of farm succession, growing bureaucratisation) and speaks their language.

- Only if both parties value each other, they can together continuously improve the ecological performance of agriculture in the park perimeter.
Thank you for your attention!

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