



EUROPARC
F E D E R A T I O N



EUROPARC Siggen Seminar – Report 2012

Gut Siggen, May 21 – 25, 2012

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EUROPARC Sigger Seminar – Report 2012

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The EUROPARC Federation is the largest non-governmental organisation representing national parks and other protected areas across Europe. Together, the members of the EUROPARC Federation are committed to the protection and sustainable management of Europe's natural heritage. Nature knows no boundaries and EUROPARC facilitates international co-operation to further improve and conserve our shared natural heritage and to ensure the values and benefits of protected areas are at the heart of Europe.

The Alfred Toepfer Foundation FVS is a private non-profit foundation established in 1931 by Alfred C. Toepfer. The Foundation is committed to promoting European unification as well as ensuring cultural diversity and understanding between the countries of Europe. It is mainly active in the domains of European integration, international understanding, art and culture, science, nature conservation, and youth work.

The Foundation and the EUROPARC Federation have worked closely together for a large number of years. The Foundation has charitably donated money for three Alfred Toepfer Scholarships awarded by the Federation to young conservationists each year.

From 21 – 25 May 2012 the EUROPARC Federation took up the generous offer of the Alfred Toepfer Foundation to host the third Sigger Seminar and meetings. EUROPARC were given free use of the Foundation's seminar centre, the Sigger Estate on the German coast of the Baltic Sea. The seminar benefits the EUROPARC Federation and its members and helps to take the organisation's mission forward.

The week was split in three main sections: The first two days were dedicated to the seminar on **Conflict Management in Protected Areas**, the other days to EUROPARC council, section, working groups and staff meetings.



1. Conflict Management in Protected Areas

The first part of the week was dedicated to a seminar with the title 'Conflict Management in Protected Areas':

In recent decades, increasing utilization pressure on forests and emphasis on the need for nature conservation has resulted in numerous conflicts between local communities and the institutions responsible for implementing nature conservation policies. Protected areas management is in many ways a form of conflict management. Traditions, customs, rules, laws and policies dealing with issues of access to, and use and management of, natural resources all aim to bring order to situations where conflicting interests are present. EUROPARC noted a growing awareness of the scope, magnitude and implications of conflicts among the multiple stakeholders in and around protected areas. Given this new situation, protected area staff has a greater need to prevent or proactively deal with conflicts. EUROPARC Federation has responded to the needs of its members offering this seminar.

Exciting case studies were discussed during the EUROPARC Siggen Seminar moderated by Eric Baird of Cairngorms National Park (GB), a EUROPARC council member and conflict management trainer. Mr Baird enabled the 16 participants from eight European countries, active park rangers and management staff, to analyze conflict situations in their areas of work using tools of conflict analysis and resolution. The interaction of participants made them gain a "change of perspective". Interestingly, issues raised were often related to tourism activities in protected areas, for instance jet skiing disturbing natural habitats; hunting and land ownership were other concerns.

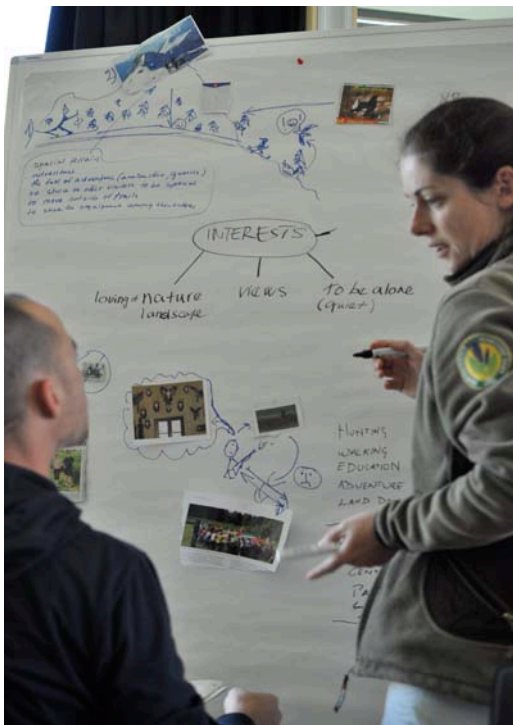
It became clear in intensive one-to-one and group discussions that conflicts are based on opposing interests and lack of communication between stakeholders as diverse as government agencies, to national park organisations, citizens, farmer associations, politicians, and businesses.

After an introduction by Carol Ritchie, director of the EUROPARC Federation and a self-presentation of the participants the seminar started with the definition of conflict. Participants learnt that often contrasting values are the base for conflicts. In an interactive session, case studies were discussed on a one-to-one basis and then shared with the group. Guided by the trainer, participants understood better the key issues of respective conflicts.



Eric Baird explained the complexity of conflict in protected areas. With a critical view at the situations, issues, themes and roles participants gained further insights into "conflict patterns". From there they were able to identify their own role and potential solutions.

In a session on stakeholder identification, the relationship between and with them was analyzed, as well as coping mechanisms.



Using a case study series of the IUCN on conflict management in protected areas, participants had a chance to apply their knowledge. Highly appreciated was the introduction of the typology of power by Eric Baird. Finally, the park rangers shared their thoughts on how to use their new skills and how to contribute to the work of their agencies in protected areas management.



Evaluation of the Siggen Seminar May 2012

Participants' feedback of the seminar showed very positive results. With regards to communications before and during the event, all were very satisfied. Content and structure were highly appreciated and most were satisfied with the information provided and emphasized that they will apply their new skills in their work. The level and amount of technical equipment used was satisfying for most participants. And all had enjoyed the unique opportunity at Siggen to network and interact with each other. EUROPARC is glad that the quality of the lectures and competence of the trainer met the students' expectations.

Looking into the future, participants would appreciate more information about Gut Siggen and emphasized that spring or autumn would be best for seminar times as park rangers are otherwise too busy in their parks. Topics suggested for future workshops include: visitor management, working with volunteers, maritime parks, sports and recreation management, interpretation, branding / marketing, staff development and motivation, working with young people; financing protected area work.



2. EUROPARC Development

Gut Siggen provided a great environment to host, for the first time, the EUROPARC Council to meet. It considered the strategic planning for the Federation looking in particular to the potential merger with Eurosite. A further meeting with the Eurosite Board also took place of which a joint communiqué resulted. It points out how the two organisations will work together in future. It was reconfirmed EUROPARC and Eurosite's commitment to create a single organisation, a decision taken by their respective members in 2011.

It is one of the most important strategic meetings where all parts of the Federation come together. Siggen offered us this unique opportunity to bring together sections, working groups, staff and council to plan and consider the future of the Federation. Representatives of the French, Nordic-Baltic and Czech section shared their most recent information. For the French section, an important issue was the coming together with Eurosite, and the successful application of the European Charter on Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas was highlighted. For the Nordic-Baltic section that counts a total of 50 members now a possible extension toward Poland and Russia is planned. The Czech section is spearheading the establishment of a new section, Central Europe Section (with Austria, Czech, Hungary, Slovakia and Slovenia), and is supporting a protected landscape management plan in Georgia.

Working groups' representatives of **'Steering and Evaluation Committee/Transboundary Parks'**, **'Ecosystem services and economic'**, **'Sustainable Tourism'** showed their achievements: The first group highlighted that exchange between certified groups function very well via TransParcNet. However, the implementation of certification of parks across borders should be enhanced more. The second group report showed that an increase in meetings would be beneficial. The group on sustainable tourism continues its work around the European Charter, a most successful program of the EUROPARC Federation and EUROPARC Consulting.



In a final session, EUROPARC Federation identified priorities for the federation's work looking at shared benefits, capacity building, training & education, and the development of the federation's protected areas network.

3. Benefits for the EUROPARC Federation

The environment and peacefulness of Gut Siggen encourages the spirit of EUROPARC people. The results gained during this week greatly contribute to unite us as an international federation and provide us with directions for the federation's development.

The sharing of experiences and learning about the expertise within EUROPARC is most beneficial to all members. The time in Siggen does greatly contribute to strengthen the awareness about our "quality marks", and develop our unique and relevant fields of expertise.

Communication is crucial for an international network. At the Siggen seminars people who are working in protected areas get to learn from each other and expand their network across Europe. This by no means a most treasured opportunity. Working with young professionals and connecting them to the core principles and vision of the federation allows us to pursue and take forward our role from a political and socio-economic and conservation perspective. We will incorporate the seminar output into our strategy beyond 2012 supporting our members in their field of work.

Thus, EUROPARC's members directly benefit from the skills participants gained on conflict management as they will work more consciously on conflictive issues. The benefit of continuing these seminars every year is that they will ensure that members can actively contribute to the ongoing development of the Federation. Ideas for future seminars will be taken into account for future planning.

Most importantly, the Siggen Seminars bring people together from across Europe to closely work with each other and share experiences, ideas, and important information. The EUROPARC Federation would like to thank all participants for their contribution; the staff at Gut Siggen for their support, patience, the wonderful food and friendly service; Eric Baird for his professional input as trainer and moderator of the seminar.

And finally, we thank the Alfred Toepfer Foundation for enabling EUROPARC Federation to provide our members with this seminar and facilitate this year's high level meeting.



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