Working with wood – Resolving conflicts of interests with commercial forestry in protected areas
Nature conservation and ecosystem management of the Austrian Federal Forests

EuroParc 2013, Debrecen, Hungary

DI Gerald Plattner
Sustainability means...

... a responsible approach to natural resources.

... only extracting as many raw materials as nature can reproduce itself.

... always ensuring a balance between nature, society and economy.

AUSTRIAN FEDERAL FORESTS (AFF)
THE "SUSTAINABILITY COMPANY"

Average age        124 years
Sustainable yield  1,6 Mio. m³ per year
OUR AREAS – FROM WEST TO EAST

- Appr. 10% of national territory
- Appr. 15% of Austria's woodland
- Appr. 70% of Austria's major lakes
- Appr. 50% under nature protection
§5, Z6:

“Protect the public interest in ecologically valuable or sensitive areas and natural monuments; possibility of participation in the design and maintenance of national park areas and to areas that are provided by nature conservation laws under protection.”

*Principle: Contract on nature conservation*
Biodiversity to describe the diversity of species in a defined area of life

Habitat diversity, which defines the variety and diversity of habitats

Genetic diversity to describe the different genetic information of individuals.
AUSTRIAN FEDERAL FORESTS (AFF) BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM

TARGETS

Protection of the elements of biodiversity:

- Near-natural developments are supported
- Special conservation activities for endangered species and habitats
- Increase of ecologically valuable tree species
# AUSTRIAN FEDERAL FORESTS (AFF) BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM

## STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AFF – Starting Points</th>
<th>Integrative Approaches</th>
<th>Special Approaches</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>forest areas</td>
<td></td>
<td>Potential project partners: NGO’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>water bodies</td>
<td></td>
<td>Naturschutzbund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mountains</td>
<td></td>
<td>WWF</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>species wild animals</td>
<td></td>
<td>Naturfreunde, NFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Natural forest/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Forest Reserves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Gene conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>forests</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Standards**
  - Standards
  - Guidelines/ Rules

- **Controlling**
  - Controlling

- **Public awareness**
  - Public awareness

- **Protection of the cultural (and social) values**
  - Protection of the cultural (and social) values
EXAMPLE: BIODIVERSITY PROGRAM

RESULT

909 conservation project in the year 2012

Naturschutzmaßnahmen 2012 je Maßnahmenkategorie, Gesamtsumme = 909

- Umweltbildung / Öffentlichkeitsarbeit; 23%
- Totholzmanagement; 12%
- Sonstiges; 5%
- Projektarbeit und Forschung; 5%
- Gewässer- und Feuchtgebietsmanagement; 12%
- Habitat- und Artenschutz; 29%
- Naturschutz im Rahmen der Waldbaumaßnahmen; 7%
Increase of 1.000 conservation actions in the future

Quality assurance due to a forest control

Possibility of expulsion of a conservation budget per territory

Conservation actions only include activities, which have AFF performed on its own initiative and without fee payments by third parties.
EXAMPLE: PROJECT WITH THE URAL OWL

- Project start: 2009
- Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, University of Veterinary Medicine, Vienna; das Land Niederösterreich (Bundesland/State of Lower Austria); Austrian Federal Forests
- Target: Resettlement in Austria through breeding and release
- Wilderness Area Dürrenstein and Biosphere Reserve Wienerwald
EXAMPLE: PROJECT WITH THE URAL OWL

- The Austrian Federal Forests provide the area and supervise the project: GPS-Monitoring, aviary construction, monitoring and subsidies.
- In the first two years of the project a total of 50 Ural Owls were released.
- Increase of the areas for resettlement.
COOPERATION PROJECTS
SPECIES, HABITAT AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE PROTECTION

- Bird LIFE: Foundations for the protection of birds in the forest
- Naturschutzbund Österreich: Species conservation campaigns „überleben“ („survive“) and „vielfaltleben“ („diversity life“) to secure the biodiversity;
- WWF: predators, wildlife, habitat network
Range of measures:

- Increasing amount of decaying wood
- Preservation of biotope trees
- Preservation of mature tree stands as biodiversity islands (≥ 120 years)
- Diversified forests egdes
- Promote natural rejuvenation and pioneer tree species
- Establishing natural tree composition
MEASURES: DEAD WOOD AND BIOTOPE TREES

- Dead wood and pioneer tree species should be left in the stand (e.g. thinning)
- Badly formed trees with less economic value can be selected (max. 50%)
- Preserving trees with nests or cavities
- Marking of trees
- Oaks: single trees, beech: groups
- Cutting off a few trees at 1m height
- "Carving instead of cutting"
BIODIVERSITY ISLANDS (> 120 YEARS) – A BORDERLINE

Establishment of Permanent Biodiversity Islands

- Excluded permanently from management
- Marginal or no positive contribution to profit
- Aim: 4 Permanent Biodiversity Islands (≥ 1 ha) per forest district

Establishment of Temporary Biodiversity Islands

- Excluded temporary or in parts from management for 20 years
- Old growth forest feature should remain (percentage of overstorey)
- Aim: increase the area of old growth forests

⇒ Funding needed
EXAMPLE: PUBLIC AWARENESS

- Brochure on deadwood
- Trainings biodiversity and deadwood
- Natura-Trail-Project Naturfreunde International
- Forest and natural education
- Potential of biomass taking into account biodiversity
EXAMPLE: STRATEGIC STUDIES - SCENARIOS
PROJECTS OF COOPERATION

➢ STUDY CONCERNING CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY

➢ Austrian Award for climate protection in 2007

➢ further information:
  http://www.bundesforste.at/
EXAMPLE FOR ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT
TASKS OF THE BIOSPHERE PARK WIENERWALD

- Development of natural space projects
- Research and monitoring
- Developing of management plans
- Maintaining and construction of visitor facilities
- Environmental education
- Collective public awareness
NATIONAL PARK DONAU-AUEN
ACTIVITIES IN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT

- Forest Management
- Wild Management
- Conservation projects for flora and fauna
- Visitor service
NATIONAL PARK DONAU-AUEN
INFRASTRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

- Visitor Management System
- Visitor Facilities
- Field supervision
- Other Services
- Support from Management Headquarters
EXAMPLE: ALIENS-MANAGEMENT IN THE BIOSPHERE PARK WIENERWALD


- Action plan in Austria (2004)
  - awareness
  - monitoring and research
  - legal implementation
  - capacity building (e.g. coordination office)


"The loss of biodiversity in the EU can be halted only if simultaneously the problem of biological invasions will be competed comprehensively. The ecological, economic and social consequences of the introduction of invasive species into the EU are significant and require a coordinated approach ...."
KEY POINTS OF THE PROJECTS

- **Results**
  - Analysis of the „Aliens-Inventory in the Biosphere Park Wienerwald“
  - Comprehensible containment tests based on test areas
  - Cost-benefit analysis
  - Processing of information
  - Alien species Strategy for the Biosphere Park Wienerwald

- **Duration of the projects:** Summer 2011 until Summer 2014

- **Project volume:** 176,000 €; 90,000 € personell costs AFF

- **Project partners:**

ÖSTERREICHISCHE BUNDESFORSTE AG /DI Gerald Plattner
EXAMPLE: LIFE NATURE PROJECT

In 2013, a new LIFE+ Nature project started

„Natural forest, Bogs and Habitat network Ausseerland”

Application development for a LIFE project - "NATURE"

Objective

- Expansion and preservation of habitats for endangered species throughout Europe through measures to improve habitat in the Natura 2000 sites under the Habitats and Birds Directives
- Securing a habitat connections network between the Natura 2000 sites
- Public awareness
Opportunity for habitat network with three corridors

Connection corridors (1+2) with *Tetrao urogallus* as the target species with about 300 ha project area

Connection corridor (3) with *Bombina variegata* and *Titurus carnifex* as the target species with about 150 ha project area

PROJECT AREA
approximately 45.000 ha
on areas of AFF

ESG 19 - DACHSTEINPLATEAU

ESG 35 - TOTES GEBIRGE

ÖSTERREICHISCHE BUNDESFÖRSTE AG /DI Gerald Plattner
THE AUSTRIAN FEDERAL FORESTS...

...where nature is at home