

### The Furnas Landscape Laboratory (Furnas LandLab), Azores Regional Directorate of the Environment

The intensification of dairy farming in recent decades has led to the eutrophication of Furnas Lake. Therefore, to restore its water quality, a legally binding Furnas Watershed Plan was adopted in order to effect a major change in soil use. It was the turning point in the landscape management and economic activities of the last few decades. Since 2007 about 300 hectares of agricultural land within the watershed were bought by the Government of the Azores, which enabled the management team to implement an ambitious plan. Furnas Landscape Laboratory, a future multifunctional forest landscape, was created to act as a large experimental ground, the first of its type in the Azores, to implement new ecological restoration techniques, economic activities and management practices, promoting a widespread public involvement, to achieve sustainability at all levels (ecologic, economic, social, cultural and aesthetic). There have been many concrete achievements since 2007 and the project is on-going with no conclusion date.



The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe recognised the great value of the project. The Furnas Landscape Laboratory represents an example of good practice which will be useful to other States. The regaining of water quality, return to a kind of agriculture more respectful of the natural substrate and the eradication of invasive species are the project's strong points. The project, which certainly corresponds to the spirit of the European Landscape Convention, gives off a feeling of high energy. Activities were on a huge scale and required numerous resources, provided by many volunteers and, to some extent, European Structural Funds.