

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1  
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008  
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)<sup>1</sup>*

**Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports**

**Annual report for the year October 2022 to September 2023**

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: **Germany**

Name of the area: **Wurzacher Ried (Fen) nature reserve**

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:

**European Diploma renewal: 2019, reporting year: 4 years after renewal**

**Central authority concerned:**

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**Authority responsible for its management:**

Tübingen Regional Administrative Authority  
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<sup>1</sup>As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.  
Internet: <http://www.coe.int/cm>

**1. Conditions:** List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. By 2021, revise the 2007 management plan or draft a new management framework meeting the provisions and objectives of the European Diploma for Protected Areas and complementary to the Natura 2000 management plan in preparation;

The management plan (MaP) for the FFH and bird sanctuary "Wurzacher Ried und Rohrsee" was completed with effect from 1 November 2019. This management plan presents the occurrences of the habitat types and species of the Habitats Directive on a plot-by-plot basis and specifies the objectives and measures that must be taken to conserve and develop these protected areas of community interest. The management plan complements the 2007 maintenance and development plan (PEPL) for the nature reserve.

**2. Recommendations:** List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. investigate the possible technical methods to connect the aquatic system of the Haidgauer high moor, separated by the trunk road B465, through water channels or other technical measures in order to enable more water flow towards the eastern part of the moor and to ensure water exchange, especially in the Randlagg;

The nature conservation objective is to reconnect the two hydrological bog areas to the left and right of the road and to eliminate the barrier effect for selected target species. Within the framework of a feasibility study, various technical solutions (raising road on pillars, green bridge, ...) as well as the option of dismantling the road and redirecting the traffic around the moor were examined. The feasibility study was forwarded by the Tübingen Regional Administrative Authority, Unit 44 (Road Planning), in technical consultation with Unit 56 (Nature Conservation and Landscape Management), to the Ministry of Transport with the recommendation to pursue a technical solution.

A road traffic report, commissioned by the Regional Administrative Authority through the Ministry of Transport, has been available since last year. The task was to investigate the composition of the traffic on the B465. The traffic figures should provide insights into a possible traffic solution for regional and through traffic during the period in which construction measures are being implemented. The plan is to analyse these figures this autumn. The results of this study will be part of the decision as to which type of construction work will ultimately be carried out on the federal motorway.

2. draw up a prevention plan to manage invasive species, to be prepared in case of their appearance, according to EU Regulation 1143/2014;

For years now, the occurrence or presence of invasive species has been observed, and appropriate preventive measures have been taken to systematically combat specific species such as Canadian goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*), glandular balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*). To date it has been possible in this way to limit their further spread. Further invasive species are not currently expected to appear.

3. pursue the efforts to create an observation tower next to the Torfmuseum to provide an additional attraction in the area without disturbing the ecosystem;

The construction of an observation tower at the Haidgau peat works will make it more feasible to carry out scientific bird observations in the waterlogged area of the fen (regular observations can be made without disturbance), and the tower will also make it easier for citizens and visitors to see and detect the fen that has a European Diploma. The fen will only be recognised as worth protecting if its uniqueness and relevance to climate change can be demonstrated.

The construction of the tower is planned for winter 2024/25. This will require a planning and nature conservation approval process, which is currently being prepared. The staff of the Nature Conservation Centre are very much involved in the activities. In addition, a visitor management concept for nature-based tourism in harmony with nature will be developed in 2023.

4. in co-operation with the aeronautical authority, stop any unnecessary aerobatic flights over the Ried due to their negative impact on the site and especially birdlife;

Above the Wurzacher Ried Nature Reserve there is a “flight box”, which was regularly used in earlier years by the Tannheim aerobatic training school. No flight movements have been detected in the nature reserve for two years. The reasons for this are not known. The aim is to secure the permanent closure of the flight box through legal means under the Nature Conservation Act.

The Ministry for the Environment wrote to the Deutsche Flugsicherung (DFS) and the Federal Ministry of Transport to point out the legal situation and to request that both authorities do their part to end aerobatic flights. Response letters from both institutions are still pending.

The Federal Administrative Court has now ruled that it is not up to the Länder to deal with the issue, but that it is the sole responsibility of the federal government to come up with a regulation that will, among other things, generally regulate flights over sensitive areas.

5. resume negotiations with landowners in order to acquire land in the outlying areas – mainly near the village of Albers – to limit and eventually stop the deposition of substances harmful to this sensitive environment, such as livestock effluents or chemical fertilisers. In case of inconclusive results, long-term agreements should be negotiated to reduce this;

Baden-Württemberg’s real estate management authority has now completed acquisition of 17 hectares of hillside land near Albers. See also Annual Report 2021/2022.

A small area of the fen was acquired in 2023. This is the parcel of land with the Dietmannser Ach spring. The purchase contract for the parcel of land was signed in the summer of 2023. Some trees will be removed for road safety reasons.

6. preserve the integrity of the landscape around the Bad Wurzach Basin and avoid the construction of technical infrastructure on the hills and hilltops in the visual range of the Wurzacher Ried.

The expansion of wind energy is one of the most important measures for achieving climate protection targets in Baden-Württemberg. The construction of wind turbines in outdoor areas is prioritised by law. The Bad Wurzach municipal council voted unanimously in favour of maintaining the European Diploma and, consequently, of keeping the Wurzach Basin free of technical infrastructure.

In the course of planning to achieve the expansion targets for renewable energies, the Regional Association of Upper Swabia / Lake Constance has created the conditions for the area to which the European Diploma applies that correspond to the resolutions. This area should be kept free of wind power. The Regional Association has submitted an enquiry to the Council of Europe regarding the compatibility of these conditions with the European Diploma. A reply has not yet been received. However, the plans drawn up by the Regional Association – which cover the free-standing area – are not expected to become legally binding for at least another year.

No such projects were realised during the reporting period. However, there are plans to erect several wind turbines of around 200 m in height on the moraine edge of the Wurzach Basin (Hummelluckenwald) to the south-west of the fen. As the Regional Association’s plan is not yet in force, there are currently few reliable grounds for refusal.

**3. Site Management:** List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

## Staff

The following people worked for the Nature Conservation Centre in the 2023 reporting year:

Permanent employees:

Dr Siegfried Roth (Head of the Nature Conservation Centre, 100%)

Dr Nicole Jüngling (Deputy Head; Environmental Education, 60%)

Sabrina Schiller (Environmental Education, 60%)

Valeska Ulmer (Marketing / Public Relations, 50%)

Regina Kuhn (Secretariat, until 31 March 2023, 55%, since 1 April 2023, 60%)

Irma Heine (Secretariat, until 31 March 2023, 55%)

Belinda Tosun (Secretariat, since 1 April 2023, 50%)

## Financing

The Nature Conservation Centre is financed from subsidies granted to the centre's sponsors as well as from the income generated by the centre itself. The ongoing operating costs of the NCC are borne pro rata by the donors of the NCC.

On the basis of the figures up to the end of September 2023, a good economic result can be expected, due to the good number of visitors to our events and the "Moor Extrem" exhibition, but also due to the good sales in the shop. On the cost side, the Ukraine crisis and inflation are having an impact on high building-related costs (especially energy). These costs cannot yet be quantified. In this respect, the budget result for 2023 cannot yet be estimated at this time.

## Landscape management

All maintenance and development measures are performed in accordance with the FFH Management Plan, the Maintenance and Development Plan for the nature reserve and specialist concepts developed by the nature conservation authority of the state of Baden-Württemberg. All measures taken in the Wurzacher Ried prioritise and are designed to conserve the habitat types and species in the Habitats Directive, including the bird species in the bird sanctuary, and to improve the conservation status. Two major maintenance measures were carried out in the nature reserve during the reporting period.

In winter 2021/22, initial maintenance was carried out by the Tübingen Regional Administrative Authority below the Haidgau spring lakes near Haasen by removing bushes from a former hay meadow covering an area of approximately 1 hectare. The nature conservation objective is to restore an open lowland moor landscape and, in the medium term, to reactivate the former hay meadow.

In autumn/winter 2022/23, extensive woodland maintenance work took place southwest of Albers on the Riedhalde estate. This involved thinning out the area by completely removing around 2.7 hectares of bushes and sparse trees. There are no plans for regular maintenance. Rootstocks are removed sporadically. In the eastern part, smaller sections will be connected to the existing mowing area.

This measure serves to restore the habitat types "transitional mires and quaking bogs", "calcareous fens" and "Molinia meadows" protected under the Habitats Directive. The focal species here are butterflies, orchids, small sedges and moor frogs.

Agreements are being reached with numerous farmers for the maintenance of the reed beds in the peripheral areas of the fen. Throughout the reporting year, 20 contractors maintained a total of 130 hectares of wet and hay meadows in line with Baden-Württemberg's Landscape Maintenance Ordinance. Twenty-five contractors maintained a total of 158 hectares under contracts of use.

Wet and hay meadows which are inaccessible to agricultural machinery are mowed with the State Forest Administration's mowing machine. In the reporting year there were around 20 hectares of mowed area.

### Visitor guidance and path construction

Regular maintenance work is carried out on various path sections, especially wooden walkways, in cooperation with the State Forestry Office, the municipal construction works department and the Bad Wurzach local heritage society. This also includes removing dangerous trees along hiking trails in connection with path safety.

Sections of wooden walkways have to be repaired or renewed at irregular intervals. In autumn 2023, the public works department will renew the defective wooden walkway in the Untere Ried from the drainage channel to the first viewing platform along a distance of approximately 150 metres and will equip it with recycled plastic planks.

### Documentation of flora and fauna

In 2023, systematic mapping of selected bird species (Eurasian teal, spotted crane, common snipe, corncrake and meadow pipit) took place in the Wurzacher Ried as part of the state-wide species conservation programme. The species conservation programme records threatened and highly endangered animal and plant species and implements conservation measures to stabilise and enhance their populations.

The mapping in the Wurzacher Ried was commissioned by the Baden-Württemberg State Institute for the Environment and carried out by two ornithologists. During the mapping, 3 reliable breeding records of the Eurasian teal, which is threatened with extinction in Baden-Württemberg, 9 territories of the spotted crane, 3 territories of the common snipe, 6 territories of the corncrake and at least 19 territories of the meadow pipit were found.

The fen is an extremely important habitat for the crane. The Wurzacher Ried is still the only breeding site of this species in Baden-Württemberg. It has been breeding here for six years and regularly raises one or two young birds. This was also the case in the reporting year. In addition to the existing breeding pair, two other cranes stayed in the Wurzacher Ried and Rohrsee area in 2023.

The mapping results thus confirm the outstanding importance of this area in the region for these rare bird species and provide valuable impetus for the further management of the Wurzacher Ried.

- 4. Boundaries:** Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

There were no changes in the boundaries of the protected area in the reporting year.

- 5. Other information:** List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

### “MOOR EXTREM” experience exhibition

The centrepiece of the Nature Conservation Centre is the “MOOR EXTREM” experience exhibition designed in 2013, which takes visitors on an immersive experiential multimedia journey into the fascinating world of moors and the Wurzacher Ried. The permanent exhibition, which is open all year round, is very popular and is an important component of the Nature Conservation Centre’s educational work.

The permanent exhibition has now been in existence for ten years. This small anniversary was celebrated on 26 March 2023 as part of an open day. This was the day on which the town of Bad Wurzach was open for “Sunday Shopping”. Guests enjoyed free guided tours of the exhibition, a wheel of fortune and face painting for children. A stand on peat-free gardening from the

Weihenstephan-Triesdorf University of Applied Sciences was also part of the anniversary celebrations.

### Fen maintenance

The “School students and nature conservation” project was established in the 2011/2012 school year in cooperation between the NCC and Bad Wurzach secondary school. This cooperation has continued since 2014 up to the present day as part of the activities of a nature club at the secondary school. Fen maintenance work usually takes place between September and December.

The nature club at Bad Wurzach secondary school again began its fen maintenance work in September 2023. School students remove the young growth of birch, deciduous tree, spruce and Scots pine from selected areas once a week through to December in order to keep the pipe grass areas and transition mire areas open. They were supported by the FÖJ / BFD volunteers at the Nature Conservation Centre.

On 22 October 2022, a public fen conservation day was held for the first time on the initiative of the Nature Conservation Centre. A total of 20 people took part and carried out scrub clearance measures in the area of the peat nature trail and along the peat tracks. The success of the measure was confirmed by an inspection of the areas in the summer of 2023. Scrub clearance has encouraged the development of plant species typical of raised bogs, particularly on the transition bogs in the area of the peat nature trail. The fen maintenance day will take place again in autumn 2023.

### 50 years District of Ravensburg

The District of Ravensburg looks back on its 50th anniversary this year. The main ceremony took place on 16 and 17 September at the Wolfegg Farmhouse Museum. The weather was perfect. Several thousand visitors enjoyed the activities offered by the associations, clubs and district organisations taking part in the festival. The stand shared by the Nature Conservation Centre with the Association for Nature Conservation in Upper Swabia was well attended.

The Nature Conservation Centre also took part in the anniversary by offering a guided cycle tour around the Wurzacher Ried followed by a rustic snack. However, this event had to be cancelled due to bad weather.

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