



Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz



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Europadiplomgebiet Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald

Anlage: Jahresbericht 2013 in englischer Sprache

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

in Anlage dürfen wir Ihnen den Jahresbericht 2013 für das Europadiplomgebiet
„Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald“ übersenden.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen

Ulrike Lorenz
Oberregierungsrätin

Annual Report 2013 European Diploma

Country: Germany

Name of nature reserve: Bayerischer Wald National Park

Responsible Ministry:

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1. Natural Heritage and Nature Protection Situation

1.1 Bark Beetles and Protection of the Forest

One of the main tasks of the forest management was dealing with bark-beetle infested spruce on the periphery and in the development zones of the National Park. In the Rachel-Lusen region (old national park) the amount of bark-beetle infested wood increased slightly (2,700 m²) over the level of 2012 (**2,400 m²**) and is thus still low. Also in the Falkenstein-Rachel region (extension area) there is slightly more beetle-infested wood (**19,000 m²**) than in the previous year (18,200 m² in 2012).

Of the total amount of damaged wood (beetle-infested wood, windthrows and wood damaged by snow) approx. 2,000 m² (about 10 %) was debarked on site and left in the forest as biomass.

1.2 Flora and Vegetation

No change since the previous year

1.3 Fauna

- ***Lynx***

The photographic trap monitoring that was carried out in the Bayerischer Wald National Park from mid-September 2012 to mid-January 2013 revealed a minimum of 13 independent lynxes and 5 young animals. Independent means that the lynx is more than one year old, so no longer a young animal. Monitoring by means of tracing measures did not produce any additional findings due unfavourable snow conditions.

- ***Peregrine falcon***

In 2012/2013, all four traditional breeding areas in the National Park were once again occupied by pairs of peregrine falcon. However, the fact that there was only one case of successful breeding with probably two young falcons was most likely due to the choice of less suitable nesting places. In the other areas, predators as well as the penetration of thaw water presumably led to breeding losses.

- ***Ural owl***

In 2013, eleven territories were occupied in the National Park. There was no successful breeding, presumably because of the low mouse population.

- ***Black stork***

Both known territories were again occupied in 2013. No evidence of any breeding could be found, however.

- ***Beaver***

The sharp increase in the number of beavers of the past few years remained high. Inside the National Park, the work being carried out to shape the habitat of such animals can be rated very positively and is speeding up development towards natural structures especially in river valleys. Conflicts can, however, arise in areas adjoining private land and settlements.

- ***LIFE+ Nature Project***

The application submitted in 2012 for the “Bogs, flowing waters and nardus grasslands in the Bavarian Forest National Park” project was approved by the European Commission. The project focuses on the rehydration of bogs and bog forests, improving the continuity and dynamics of selected flowing waters and exemplary grazing of mountain pastures.

The launch date of the project was 1 October 2013. One member of staff was engaged for a limited period to manage the project. The steering group met for the first time at the beginning of October 2013.

2. Cultural Heritage and Socio-Economic Aspects

- ***Restructuring the organisation of tourism in the National Park***

The National Park Administration supports the project to restructure tourism in the Bayerischer Wald National Park with both non-material and financial resources and it is also actively participating in the scheme. The project was successfully continued in 2013 in collaboration with the municipalities and associations involved in the National Park as well as with the Eastern Bavaria Tourist Association (Tourismusverband Ostbayern). 11 municipalities in the National Park have now decided to reorganise the outdated local tourist structures and create an effective, market-oriented structure that will operate in the National Park region in close coordination with the local tourist institutions as well as the supraregional tourist organisations – guest-oriented, irrespective of political and administration boundaries. The restructuring programme is expected to be completed by the middle of 2014.

- ***“Bayerischer Wald National Park Partners” cooperation project***

The cooperation project currently has 71 National Park partners. These excellent tourist enterprises and providers from the region meet the agreed quality and environmental standards and act as ambassadors for the national park concept. They receive regular training from the National Park Administration, which equips them to inform their guests about the events and experiences offered in and around the National Park.

In May 2013, the Bavarian Minister of the Environment, Dr. Marcel Huber, presented all the enterprises with the *Bayerisches Umweltsiegel für das Gastgewerbe* (Bavarian eco-label for the hospitality industry) – an award for energy- and environmentally friendly management.

- ***“Tierisch Wild” [Running Wild] initiative“***

The “Tierisch wild” [Running Wild] tourist initiative is also being continued beyond the actual funding period in order to inform and sensitise inhabitants and guests about indigenous wildlife. Examples of events held once again in 2013 include the Open Day in Spiegelau, Deer Days in St. Oswald and Lynx Days in Bayerisch Eisenstein.

Information on the 12 indigenous species in Germany were added to the Internet website of the Bayerischer Wald Nature Park and this strategy was supported by the National Park Administration. Intensive links between national park, nature park and regional websites were completed.

- ***Local public transport***

The free local public transport services offered to overnight guests could be secured in 2013 again. Using the visitors card “GUTi” (guest environment ticket) it is now possible to ride, free of charge, on any number of buses or trains along 1,100 kilometres of roads and railways. This project significantly helps to strengthen local public transport, contributes to sustainable mobility in the National Park and makes the guests happier. The free use of local public transport for resident guests is financed by a tax levied on health resort overnight guests of 31 cents per person and per night.

The Igel bus service (part of the local public transport services) was put out to tender on a Europe-wide basis in 2013 and awarded for a further 5 years. Moreover, intensive talks were held and initial measures instigated for the proposed hourly railway service to be introduced between Zwiesel and Grafenau in 2014.

3. Environmental Education and Scientific Research

3.1 Visitor-Information Policies

Falkenstein Wilderness Camp

In 2013, a large number of people of varying ages once again enjoyed unforgettable stays in the theme and country huts at the Falkenstein Wilderness Camp and left the National Park with impressive memories of the wonders of nature. Some 2,000 schoolchildren of all grades and from all types of schools visited the Wilderness Camp. At weekends and during the holidays, the Camp was also used by family groups, clubs and youth groups.

The Wilderness Camp was a meeting point for nature conservationists from the whole of Germany (e.g. for the big Sielmann Nature Ranger Meeting), from all over Europe (e.g. for the International Junior Ranger Camp, which was attended by young people from thirteen European countries) as well as from all corners of the globe (e.g. a German-Venezuelan youth exchange).

Forest Youth Centre – Wessely-Haus

In 2013, close on 3,500 schoolchildren took part in the wide-ranging full-day and half-day programmes. The agenda included such “classics” as the National Park Experience Day “Forest or Water Bodies”, topics like “Formation and Decay in the Forest Eco-System” as well as guided tours addressing the theme of “Education for sustainable development”.

The number of overnight stays in 2013 amounts to 6,755. Altogether some 1,680 people spent two to four nights in the Forest Youth Centre.

The intensive cooperation during the GIS Summer Camp with Montessori School Kreuzberg, which has been a National Park school since 2011, the Technical University of Munich (Education seminars on forest conservation for students), Bayreuth University, Marburg University and the company ESRI should be underscored. Continuing training for teachers and multiplier courses were also organised on a variety of national park topics.

National Park Centres and Information Facilities

The three major information centres in the Bayerischer Wald National Park – the **House of Wilderness**, **Hans-Eisenmann-Haus** and the **Waldgeschichtliches Museum St. Oswald (Forest Museum)** – were open throughout the period under report and visited by a total of some 440,000 guests.

Falkenstein National Park Centre

- ***House of Wilderness***

The National Park Administration's New Year's reception was held at the House of Wilderness for the first time on 14 January 2013. This innovation was especially popular with the guests from the National Park extension area. On 15 April 2013, the House of Wilderness welcomed its one-millionth visitor since opening in August of 2006.

The top-class exhibitions and diverse array of events at the House of Wilderness attracted a great number of visitors. The year started with the *Art and Stories of the Inuit and Native Indians of North America* exhibition (26 December to 7 April 2013) displaying the works of Canadian artists Norval Morrisseau and Roy Thomas (Woodland School of Art). Aleksei Vakhrushev of Russia presented his award-winning film *The Tundra Book* at the exhibition's opening event:

Large-scale landscape photographs in black and white by Czech photographer Martin Milford highlighted the nature of the Bavarian and Bohemian Forests. The exhibition was especially well received by visitors and was accompanied by the release of its own catalogue.

The traditional annual festival with the motto "Autumn Forest – A Celebration of Fire and Glass" took place on 6-7 July 2013 in cooperation with local associations and handicraft businesses. The House of Wilderness now offers 10 programmes for school classes of various levels providing an unconventional and exciting approach to teaching about Bayerischer Wald National Park Administration topics.

The Bayerischer Wald National Park Administration is striving to set an example for environmentally friendly energy use as it develops the House of Wilderness. A large photovoltaic system was put into operation in the summer of 2013. The electricity it produces is used directly on location at the House of Wilderness and for the House's parking area. This environmentally friendly electricity can also be used at an e-filling station for electric vehicles and bicycles.

- ***Wildlife enclosure***

The pair of lynxes adopted from Salzburg Zoo last year has already produced offspring this year. The female gave birth to one kitten in May of 2013.

The Bayerischer Wald National Park Administration continues its participation in the conservation-breeding programme for the endangered Przewalski's horse. After a two-year interruption, a colt was born in 2013.

Lusen National Park Centre

- ***Hans-Eisenmann-Haus***

An important interface between nature and culture in the region, the Hans-Eisenmann-Haus presented three large art exhibitions in 2013. Schönberg painter Franz Zanella exhibited his works at the beginning of the year. Pictures, graphics, and sculptures by Heinz Theuerjahr were on display during the summer and autumn. The friends of Theuerjahr, a former resident of the National Park region, opened their collections for this exhibition to celebrate his 100th birthday. The year concluded with the "Primary Forest Structures" exhibition with pictures by Dr Gerhard Heiss.

Hans-Eisenmann-Haus further expanded its environmental education programme in 2013. This effort focused primarily on local children, an important target group for improving the National Park's foothold in the region. The programme hosted over 40 forest-themed birthday parties attended by around 350 children and offered children's afternoons and a multiday vacation programme attended by approximately 200 children. The regular programmes for nursery-school children should also be highlighted. They introduce very young children to the nature of the National Park in the vicinity of Hans-Eisenmann-Haus.

The traditional Nature-Vision Film Festival was held again in 2013 and attracted over 2,500 visitors.

- ***Wildlife enclosure***

The challenging hazel hens produced pleasing breeding results, and highly intensive care resulted in two chicks being raised to adulthood. Also remarkable was a pair of Boreal owls that successfully raised two broods. The enclosure also gained a pair of grey-headed woodpeckers, a species that is not on display at any other wildlife venue in Europe.

- ***Waldgeschichtliches Museum St. Oswald (Forest Museum)***

The Museum was reopened by State Minister Dr Marcel Huber in a ceremony on 21-22 July 2013 following completion of the new permanent exhibitions.

Local schools and classes accommodated in the National Park's Forest Youth Centre have now made the Museum an integral part of their curricula.

A "regional information service" has also been launched. Visitors can now use a touch screen to view pictures and texts describing 100 places of interest in the Bavarian and Bohemian Forests. This service also provides information on how to reach these places and National Park partner companies by public transport.

- ***Mauth National Park Information Centre***

No changes since last year

- ***JagdLandFluss Museum in Wolfstein Castle***

The National Park Administration is currently working with a team of specialists to convert the former Wolfstein Castle Hunting and Fishing Museum belonging to the County of Freyung-Grafenau into a new environmentally oriented museum. This will also be the location of a cross-border information centre covering the Sumava and Bayerischer Wald National Parks as well as the Bohemian Forest Landscape Conservation Area (Sumava CHKO) and the Bayerischer Wald Nature Park. Completion of this facility is planned for early summer 2014.

Conversion of Visitor Facilities

- ***New visitor guidance system at Lusen wildlife enclosure***

The number and behaviour of visitors in the wildlife enclosure entrance area have changed significantly since the tree top walk was opened. The visually dominant lift tower providing access to the tree top walk automatically guides visitor flows to the former wildlife enclosure exit. To ensure adequate visitor reception, the direction of movement in the wildlife enclosure has been reversed and the former exit has been converted into an entrance.

As the first section of the path leading from the entrance to the wood grouse aviary was relatively long and monotonous, a barrier-free boardwalk has been built in the adjacent attractive woodland area. The path provides access to typical national park forest landscapes with standing and fallen deadwood and offers visitors a vivid visual representation of the "Leave nature to nature" objective. Small information boards along the path provide suggestions for interactive discussion.

Barrier-free conversion of the Lusen wildlife enclosure was largely completed with the modification of the visitor viewing platform providing unimpeded view of the bison enclosure.

- ***National Park app***

"Experiencing forest – understanding nature – feeling wilderness": The task of making the National Park's world of experience accessible to technically minded visitors is becoming ever more challenging with the steady drift of our everyday living environment away from nature. The new Bayerischer Wald National Park app offers assistance in bridging this gap. With around 30 hiking and experience tours of varying length and difficulty selected from

over 300 km of marked trails, the app offers users an opportunity to experience nature. Special routes with limited barriers and winter tours requiring snowshoes or skis are also available. The app provides detailed maps and travel and accommodation tips allowing vacation planning to begin at home.

The app was developed for iPhone® and Android® and has offline functionality as mobile phone network coverage is often weak or non-existent in the Bayerischer Wald National Park. It is recommended to download the app beforehand.

- ***Czech and English-language websites completed***

The National Park website has undergone a comprehensive update in 2013 and is now fully available in Czech and English as well.

3.2. Scientific Research

- ***International “Natural Disturbances” Conference***

An international conference on the topic of “natural forest dynamics in the National Park” was held in early 2013 and attended by scientists from North America, Russia, Finland, and Sweden among other countries. The conference’s wide-ranging presentation programme impressively demonstrated that storms and bark beetles are not the only factors that should be considered as natural disturbances. Floods and forest fires are also drivers of natural ecosystem dynamics and act as important biodiversity control mechanisms. The scientists agreed that national parks offer an ideal starting point for long-term studies on such topics as forest development following storm felling or bark beetle infestations without human intervention as there is little or no room for such studies in commercial forests. They were also unanimous in their view that the unexploited ecosystems of national parks represent especially crucial reference areas for studying and understanding forest ecosystems in times of climate change.

- ***Interreg lynx and roe deer ecology research project***

The results of this four-and-a-half-year long project were presented to the public at a conference held at Hans-Eisenmann-Haus on 22-23 May 2013. The essential findings are as follows:

- A cross-border photo-trap project for monitoring lynx behaviour was designed and implemented jointly with colleagues from the Czech Republic. Over three years, 16 to 19 lynx with young were observed in both National Parks each year.

- Lynx home ranges were established using satellite telemetry data. Females have a range of 122 km² and males cover 432 km².
- Habit utilisation data gathered from radio-collared lynx was used to create a habitat map of the German-Czech-Austrian lynx population. Results indicate that a total of approximately 100 territorial lynx may be living in the study area with approximately half of them living in the Bohemian Forest.
- Distribution analysis of the lynx population in Eastern Bavaria revealed that large areas of land suitable for lynx habitat have no current lynx population. The determining parameters for distribution of the species are spatial proximity to nature reserves and prey density levels. This means that the lynx are still reliant on the nature reserves 20 years after reintroduction to the region.
- Roe deer distribution in the Bohemian Forest was analysed using pellet counts. The deciding factors in their distribution were elevation and the hunting policies of the countries in question. In Bavaria, where the maxim "Forest before Game" is buttressed by law, roe deer populations are significantly lower than in the Czech Republic. However, roe deer population density is not affected by whether the area in question belongs to a national park. This is a product of the animals' migratory movements. Approximately 50% of the National Park's roe deer leave the park in winter.
- The diet of lynx consists of 79% roe deer and 17% red deer. Foxes, hares, and wild boar together constitute a mere 4% of their prey. Lynx also eat a considerable number of small mammals in summer. None of the collared lynx preyed on domestic animals.
- The average female lynx with two kittens captures and kills 75 roe deer and 2 red deer per annum and the average male's prey consists of 45 roe deer and 11 red deer.
- All lynx are capable of preying on roe deer. This applies to both female and male as well as young and mature lynx. The condition of the prey animals also plays no role for the lynx.
- Life expectancy among roe deer has declined since the return of the lynx. Approximately one half of the deer in the National Park are killed by lynx, one quarter are killed by humans (animals that leave the territory of the National Park), and one in ten roe deer become the victims of road traffic. The cause of death for the remaining animals could no longer be established.
- Roe deer hunting was discontinued in the entire National Park during 2012 as natural mortality factors for the deer had come to outweigh other factors and seedling damage from grazing was very low.
- Survey results show that approximately 90% of holidaymakers and 70% of local residents are pleasantly disposed toward lynx. However, about one third of locals believe the animals cause damage and are dangerous.

- Despite a high level of acceptance across broad sections of the population, the lynx population cannot be considered secure due to their low numbers. In particular, the illegal lynx killings exposed in recent years represent a serious danger to the continued existence of the population.

- ***Socioeconomic monitoring***

In addition to the National Park's environmental monitoring efforts, a monitoring programme covering socioeconomic issues was introduced in May of 2013. Prior to this, the Bayerischer Wald National Park had lacked a well-founded database covering socioeconomic aspects and left socioeconomic issues to be examined exclusively within the scope of isolated studies (2008 study on the regional economic impact and acceptance of the National Park). While visitor-related data are now regularly gathered on a selective basis (car park occupancy, tour participation, exhibition attendance), data on visitor numbers throughout the Park are also required to form a reliable basis for management decisions. There is also a complete lack of information regarding visitors' desires and expectations.

A cooperation agreement for the monitoring programme was signed with the University of Vienna, which has comprehensive expertise in this field. The monitoring contract is designed to encompass a five-year plan and contains a provision for continual renewal. During the first year, the focus will be placed on collecting comprehensive visitor data including the spatial and temporal distribution of visitors within the National Park as well as their knowledge and expectations of the Park. To this end, 14 selected National Park entrances have been equipped with automatic counting devices that will be in operation for 12 months. At the same time, visitor counts and surveys are being carried out at other entrances (approx. 230 locations) on 12 days of the year distributed in a statistically relevant manner. The surveys for the first summer season have already been completed (6 days covering a total of 130 locations). 666 visitor surveys were successfully carried out and initial analysis results are expected in mid-2014.

- ***Special guests to the National Park in 2013***

- 09 - 11.04. Delegation from the Northern Black Forest National Park (then being planned) with County District Commissioner Jürgen Bäuerle (Rastadt) and Mayor Hubert Schnurr.
- 10.04. Delegation from the planned Hunsrück National Park region

- 25.04. Information visit by executives from the Federal Employment Agency in Bavaria
- 01.05. Information visit by a delegation from Georgia including several ministers.
- 03.05. Chairing of the meeting of the National Park Advisory Council by the Bavarian Minister of the Environment, Dr. Marcel Huber.
- 25.07. Opening of the Waldgeschichtliches Museum St. Oswald (Forest Museum) by the Bavarian Minister of the Environment, Dr. Marcel Huber
- 09.09. Inaugural and information visit by Director General Dr. Christian Barth (Bavarian Ministry of the Environment)
- 13/14.09 Visit by Minister-President Kretschmann of Baden-Württemberg and his Minister of the Environment Alexander Bonde
- 26 – 28.09 Visit by a delegation of the Partner Saxon Switzerland National Park

On excursions lasting several days in some cases, the Bayerischer Wald National Park was visited by nature conservationists and business experts from many countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and America.

4. Status as a Nature Reserve

4.1. Changes in the Legal Basis

- ***Core Area Regulations***

The government of Lower Bavaria has amended the core area regulations as requested and established new provisions covering border-crossing options between the two nature reserves, taking into consideration:

- the results of a two-year monitoring project covering the distribution and stress coefficient of wood grouse living in the border area
- the results of negotiations between the Bayerischer Wald and Sumava National Park Administrations and
- the results of municipal national park committee meetings.

Access restrictions were introduced to the *Grenzsteig* tour, insofar as the route includes bogs that are sensitive to trampling as well as the core habitat area of the endangered wood grouse. This was an ecological balancing measure for a new border-crossing option, other smaller modifications to the route, and the usage intensity of the existing path network. While action was successfully completed on time by the Bavarian side, the opening of a new path route was halted on the Czech side due to a lawsuit filed by the Plzen District Court citing grave deficiencies in the review of nature conservation aspects.

5. Nature-Reserve Management

5.1. Progress in 2012/2013

- ***Renaturation measures/ forest road renaturation***

Following the demarcation of new non-invasive nature zones in the Falkenstein-Rachel region in 2012, some 1.3 km of defunct logging roads have now been renatured.

In addition, roughly 10 km of skid trails and tracks no longer needed were renatured in the development zone. They were levelled with a chain-mounted excavator, thus re-creating the natural profile of the terrain.

- ***Control of hoofed-game populations***

No changes since the previous year.

5.2. Management

- ***National Park Plan***

No changes since the previous year

- ***Acquisition of land***

An approx. 1.3 hectare plot of land could be acquired in the area of the visitors' car park in the Falkenstein National Park Centre. Besides the positive realignment impact of the purchase, the National Park Administration also set up a photovoltaic plant on a subplot to enable the nearby visitors' centre to generate its own electricity in an environmentally friendly manner and at the same time to provide an electric charging station for cars and bicycles on the car park.

- ***Personnel***

As of 1 December 2013, the National Park Administration was further reorganised as part of the policy of restructuring the fields of reference and assigning the National Park Watch to the National Park management. The reorganisation had been made necessary by professional changes and the retirement of several senior members of staff.

- ***National Park Watch***

Following the retirement of the current head of the National Park Watch for age reasons, management of the National Park Watch as well as regional responsibilities were transferred to two longstanding staff members of the National Park Administration and the National Park Watch as a whole was placed directly under the National Park Director for organisational purposes. The decision by the National Park Administration to rely on a dual strategy in filling the position of "Head of the National Park Watch" underscores the great importance attached to nature reserve management.

- ***Junior Ranger Project***

The Junior Ranger project of the Bayerischer Wald National Park was continued with great success in 2013 as well. During the Whitsun and summer holidays many new Junior Rangers were once again filled with enthusiasm for the National Park. Older Junior Ranger age-groups were given the opportunity to take part in national and international camps as well as in a youth conference as part of the 40th anniversary of the Europarc Federation in Hungary.

- ***Volunteers in the National Park Watch***

5 volunteers were used to assist the National Park Watch. This involved more than 1,000 hours of field service covering supervision of the nature reserve, visitor information and measures to preserve species.

5.3. Cross-Border Collaboration with the Sumava National Park

No changes since the previous year.

I. Effect of the European Diploma Award

The amendment of the statutory regulations in 2007 created the basis for continually extending the nature zone to 75 % in gradual uniform steps, also in the Falkenstein-Rachel region of the National Park, up until 2027. As of 1.11.2012, the nature zone was therefore extended, as scheduled, by a further 296 hectares. It currently covers

4,044 hectares (37.8 %) in the Falkenstein-Rachel region. The nature zone now accounts for 13,530 hectares (55.9 %) of the whole National Park.

II. Conditions and/or Recommendations in Connection with the Award of the European Diploma in 2011

No changes since the previous year.

Annex:

1. Map extract "Zoning in the Falkenstein-Rachel region" (as of 1.12.2013)
2. Scientific publications
3. CD with documents on the international "Natural Disturbances" conference