

# Annual Report 2015 on the European Diploma area “Wurzacher Ried” Nature Reserve

**Period under review: 01/10/2014 to 30/09/2015**

**Country: Germany**

**Name of the area: Wurzacher Ried Nature Reserve**

**European Diploma Extension: 2009 to the year 2019 (currently 6 years)**

## **Central authority concerned:**

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## **1. Conditions for extension of the European Diploma**

No conditions have been imposed.

## **2. Recommendations for extension of the European Diploma**

### **Recommendation 1:**

The Peat Museum on the edge of the nature reserve will represent a new attraction. It aims at providing information about issues of nature conservation, and install suitable facilities, in particular a small tower affording panoramic views. The funding for this should preferably be raised on the basis of a co-partnership arrangement.

#### **➤ Re. Recommendation 1:**

*The Peat Museum with the Peat Railway and Peat Educational Trail has evolved into an attraction and an important and well-attended building block of the educational work carried out in the Wurzacher Ried, with annual visitor numbers reaching again around 15,000 in the year under review. It is generously run on a voluntary basis by the local culture and heritage preservation society “Wurzen”.*

*First talks concerning the planned viewing tower were held with all parties involved. However the planned tower with observation platform must be at least 30 meters high to offer a good*

*panoramic view over the central moor area and the extended renaturation areas. This required height raises difficult questions concerning the foundation in the peat bed on the one hand and the financing on the other hand. Therefore the City of Bad Wurzach will have an exploration borehole drilled in the provided site in the Haidgau peat extraction area so that the realisation of the tower can be finally advanced.*

**Recommendation 2:**

The scale of projects performed by a small permanent staff team is considerable. The special endeavours undertaken to provide guided tours and to host school classes deserve to be supported. In consultation with the school authorities, ways and means must be found to maintain this support.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 2:**

*In the Nature Conservation Centre Wurzacher Ried, just under 300 events and projects are executed every year, which are attended by around 22,000 visitors. Around 80 projects in particular are aimed at children, youngsters and school classes within the framework of the nature study curriculum, and these are attended by around 1,500 participants.*

*Contact has been made with the responsible Education Ministry with a view to arranging for an increase in staffing for the Nature Conservation Centre team by the school administration authorities, and intensive talks aimed at improving the cooperation with the school administration authorities are held. Some initial training seminars for teachers and a conference as to the topic "sustainable school" took place. A study group with the target to improve the cooperation between schools and extra-curricular learning sites has been established.*

*In addition, in the year under review 16 voluntary moor guides have been trained by the Nature Conservation Centre. These new recruits are already integrated into the educational program and reduce the workload of the Nature Conservation Centre team considerably.*

**Recommendation 3:**

The road section of the B465 which cuts through the nature conservation area is now no longer a major problem due to the measures undertaken. In the medium or long term, as a result of the demolition of the road, in future road traffic should give way entirely to pedestrian and cycle traffic.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 3:**

*Now that the recommendations of the European Council have been successfully implemented on the relevant road section of the B 465, there are currently no further changes to report.*

**Recommendation 4:**

The areas planted with maize on the slopes around the moor are to be restricted, for instance by the purchase of land. This would have a positive impact on the water quality.

**Recommendation 5:**

The main endeavours to purchase land in the surrounding areas are to be continued. The problem of the Albers hillsides, in which five hectares of purchased land still continue to be intensively farmed, must be tackled.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 4 und 5:**

*The acquisition of land will be continued as the financial circumstances of the State of Baden-Württemberg and the existing offers from private land owners allow. Intensive efforts are currently being made to possibly acquire of the hillside areas around Albers which could, however, not yet been implemented successfully due to the lack of suitable barter areas.*

**Recommendation 6:**

The marked increase in the number of high-voltage conductors in the surrounding area is damaging the countryside. Applications for underground laying must continue to be submitted, even if this involves high costs.

➤ **Re. Recommendation 6:**

*In respect of the demolition or underground laying of high-voltage conductors in Wurzacher Ried nature reserve, contact has been made with the responsible utility company. However, to date no suitable measures have been achieved.*

### **3. Site management**

In spring 2015, the contents of the seven information sign boards at the main access paths leading into the Wurzach reed were updated and the boards were newly installed.

#### **Maintenance and development work**

In the renaturation areas, the vegetation development initiated in line with the stipulations of the maintenance and development plan progressed further. Overall, the waterlogging areas are developing as hoped and in various reed moor areas gratifying regeneration tendencies are in evidence with increased peat moss growth. The irrigation measures have permitted the undergrowth proliferation and forestation of the moor to be significantly reduced.

The damming activity of the beavers (castor fiber) in residence since the year 2000 is supporting this development. The beaver population remains stable with 6 – 7 families.

The maintenance and development work carried out in cooperation with local farmers within the maintenance and extensivation zone has been continued as in past years in accordance with the maintenance and development plan (appr. 300 hectares; 35 local farmers). Furthermore the maintenance plan prepared by the Regierungspräsidium Tübingen for the moor areas to be maintained by the State in the “mowing caterpillar programme” has been revised in the period under review and updated and extended according to the present developments.

#### **Monitoring**

It had been planned to commission the scientific monitoring from 2015 onward for the next five-year-period to new providers. But all agencies in question are presently very busy and the commissioning could not take place due to the lack of candidates. Therefore the tender for the monitoring will be repeated in 2017.

#### **Moor protection approach of the state of Baden-Württemberg**

The State government of Baden-Württemberg prepared in the year under review a moor protection concept with a detailed schedule for the implementation of the relevant protection measures. The target is the middle and long-term renaturation of all regenerable moors and the adjustment of land use to low moor soils in the sense of climate protection and the maintenance of biological diversity. For the Wurzach Reed, this concept will have a very positive impact, directly and indirectly. It has been chosen as one of six pilot sites in this state, and a first research order has been commissioned to a specialised planning office to further optimise the renaturation measures.

#### **Bad Wurzach Nature Conservation Centre**

The most important informative facility for visitors is the Bad Wurzach Nature Conservation Centre. In the year under review, the centre could celebrate its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a

number of jubilee events. In this anniversary year, a photo calendar 2016 and a 45-minute documentary film on the Wurzach reed could be realised, Around 280 environmental education events were offered here, and the Centre was visited by around 22,000 guests. The new permanent exhibition "MOOR EXTREM" opened in 2013 at a financial cost of around 800,000 Euro in the new annex of the monastery building Maria Rosengarten is enjoying ever-growing popularity.

The final relocation together with the administrative wing of the Nature Conservation Centre into the renovated historic monastery building Maria Rosengarten will presumably take place in spring 2017.

#### **4. Site boundaries**

There were no changes in the period under review

#### **5. Further information**

##### **Wind power plants**

Within the framework of endeavours to encourage regenerative forms of energy creation, to date it has been possible to eliminate the Wurzbacher Basin as a possible location for the installation of wind power plants, partially also on the basis of recommendations to this effect by the European Council.

##### **Public relations in connection with the European Diploma**

The request of the European Council that in public relations the importance of the European Diploma be emphasized with a logo informing on the European Diploma areas has been fulfilled in the Wurzach Reed.

The logo is meanwhile integrated in the program and the website of the Nature Conservation Center (see [www.wurzacher-ried.de](http://www.wurzacher-ried.de)), the information flyer Wurzacher Ried and the sign-boards of the protected area. A special station has been devoted to the European Diploma in the permanent exhibition of the information centre Wurzacher Ried (see enclosed photo documents).

In future new publications and/or reprints of existing publications or newly established infrastructures, the European Diploma together with the logo will also appear as far as possible.

##### **50 years European Diploma**

The State of Baden-Württemberg organised on 12 June 2015 a special event in the Nature Conservation Centre Wurzacher Ried in the framework of the festivities given by the European Council for the 50-year anniversary, in the presence of Alexander Bonde, Minister for Nature Protection in Baden-Württemberg. Minister Bonde emphasized the great importance of the European Diploma and promised the continued full support of the State to protect this outstanding moor landscape.

Ms Tatiana State-Masson had travelled from Strasbourg to Bad Wurzach as representative of the European Council and honoured the event with her presence. In her address she informed the audience on the high importance of this European title awarded since 1965 to particularly important natural spaces in Europe and she congratulated the responsible persons on their excellent job for the protection of nature.