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AND NATURAL HABITATS

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**REPORT
OF THE VISIT OF THE INDEPENDENT EXPERT
TO THE BAYERISCHER WALD NATIONAL PARK
(Germany)**

28-30 June 2021

*Document prepared by
Mr Robert Brunner (Austria)*

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Preface

The on-the-spot appraisal to the Bavarian Forest National Park was carried out for the first time since 2010. Due to restrictions because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the mission scheduled in 2020 had to be postponed and took place from 28 to 30 June 2021. The site was awarded the European Diploma in 1986 and has been regularly renewed since then. The latest renewal of the Diploma to the Bavarian Forest National Park was granted until 18 June 2021 (Resolution CM/ResDip(2011)4, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 6 July 2011). Because of the delay of the current appraisal, the validity of the European Diploma has been extended to 2024.

Available documents

Official documents on the European Diploma include the on-the-spot appraisal reports 2001¹, 2005² and 2011³, the resolution on the renewal of 2010⁴ and the annual reports for the years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020. In 2015, an extraordinary on-the-spot-appraisal visit took place after alarming information about the construction of a large wind farm in the immediate vicinity of the Bavarian Forest National Park requiring urgent action.⁵ However, this wind farm project was never implemented. Further documents can be found on the Council of Europe website.⁶ A management plan under the title Bavarian Forest National Park Plan exists, which consists of separate volumes for various topics. It does not have a fixed period of validity, but is updated when required. Furthermore, since 1998 the National Park is a Natura 2000 site under the Fauna-Flora-Habitat Directive and the Birds Directive, with boundaries widely identical with the park's boundaries. A separate Natura 2000 management plan is available, which is an exception in many European Diploma holding areas.

A brief review

When plans were made public to find a national park in the Bavarian Forest in the late 1960ies, resistance arose mainly from the forestry and lumber industry and their employees. Although the opposition against strict protection was well organised and sometimes accompanied by violence, it failed to stop the creation of the park. After severe storms in the 1980ies, which caused heavy windfalls followed by massive bark beetle occurrences, it was a political decision not to clear the site, but to leave the fallen logs in the habitat. The new slogan, "Let Nature be Nature" was born. It was not sure at the beginning whether tourists would accept a protected area with huge areas of dead trees. However, the concept was successful. Today, the natural succession is overgrowing the dead trees, the mixture of young, old and dead trees is mostly accepted.

When the park was enlarged in 1997, it was more or less the same game. A new opposition against the extension was organised, but less strong. One concession made was the strict bark beetle control in the extension area for 20 years, later extended to 30 years, until 2027.

Nowadays, the park is widely accepted, although some negative comments can be found in leaflets or letters to the editor. But for local politicians and the local economy, in particular the growing tourist sector, it is obvious, that the park is strictly protected nature, a highlight for tourism and of economic importance for the region.

Excursus

¹ Report PE-S-DE(2001)9

² Report PE-S-DE(2006)2

³ Report T-PVS/DE(2001)7

⁴ CM/ResDip(2011)4

⁵ T-PVS/DE(2015)8

⁶ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/bern-convention/-/bayerischer-wald-national-park>

When the national park was founded in 1970, it covered an area of approximately 13,300 hectares. Along with the 25th anniversary of the national park, the Free State of Bavaria enacted an extension to more than 24,000 hectares, which became effective in 1997. A further enlargement was announced for the 50th anniversary. It is under preparation and will add another 600 hectares probably in 2022.

All appraisals since 2001 accepted the enlargement without any further comment, neglecting the fact that the Free State of Bavaria never sent an official application for an extension of the European Diploma to the Council of Europe. Therefore the Bern Convention website still lists the Bavarian Forest National Park with an area of 13,300 hectares.

With the first enlargement in 1997, the Government agreed on a management period in the extension area for 20 years until 2017. Later, but before the 2011 appraisal, the management period was extended for another 10 years to 2027. It should be noted that after severe storms in the 1990ies and after 2000, massive bark beetle infestations occurred, which will be discussed later. The rather long management period mainly to fight the bark beetle was implemented in the extended area to avoid further conflicts with locals, primarily neighbouring forest owners, who were concerned about their property, though there was no scientific argument. However, the bark beetle management has been successful in the view of forest owners, though some interventions owed to the local resistance against the bark beetle could have been avoided.

The Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas agreed to evaluate the extension area along with the current appraisal under the criteria of the European Diploma, presuming that the Free State of Bavaria submits an official application to the Council of Europe. Otherwise the European Diploma area could remain within the same boundaries as it is. Any condition or recommendation for the extension will be discussed in the respective chapter. The evaluation can also include the current extension area, which is foreseen for 2022. In general, both the old territory of the national park and the extended areas do not differ significantly and are both dominated by forests. Sufficient data on the natural conditions are available and the field trip included spots in the various sections.

Site description

The Bavarian Forest National Park is located in the east of Bavaria at the border with the Czech Republic, where the adjoining area belongs to the Sumava National Park. The Sumava National Park, founded 1991, is much larger than the Bavarian Forest National Park (approx. 69,000 hectares or 690 km²) and stretches along the state border to the south-east. It is a distinct advantage that the adjoining areas on the Czech side of the border are designated as national park core zone.

The Bavarian Forest National Park covers more than 242 km² (24,200 hectares). The territory of the park is owned by the Free State of Bavaria. Founded in 1970, it was the first German national park and recognised as IUCN category II National Park. About 73% of the park are non-intervention nature zone, which comes close to the 75%-rule according to the IUCN.⁷ It was awarded the European Diploma in 1986. In 2009 the Bavarian Forest and Sumava National Park were awarded the Transboundary Park Certificate by EUROPARC.

It is not (only) the number of rare species or habitats, which makes this park so unique and valuable, but the successful management and the consequent strategy, which made the park a model for many parks in Central Europe. With the adjoining Sumava National Park, the park forms a large, protected area in the heart of Central Europe and a refuge for many species.

The Bavarian Forest belongs to a low mountain range. The highest tops in the national park are Falkenstein (1315 m a.s.l.), Großer Rachel (1453 m a.s.l.) and Lusen (1373 m a.s.l.). Geologically, the national park is part of the Bohemian Massif, one of the oldest geological formations in Central Europe. About 97 to 98% of the territory are forests. Between 750 and 1100 m a.s.l. a mixed mountain forest with beech (*fagus*), spruce (*picea*) and fir (*abies*) dominates. Due to regular forestry over centuries, spruce is overrepresented in the area. In heights above 1100 to 1400 m a.s.l. the dominant forest community is *Calamagrostio villosae - Piceetum barbilophozietosum* (Wollreitgras Fichtenwald). In this harsh climate with high snow layers,

⁷Dudley, N. (Ed.) (2008), Guidelines for Applying Protected Areas Management Categories. Gland, Switzerland (IUCN), p. 35

spruce is the typical species with single mountain ashes (sorbus). Other habitats are bogs, grasslands and various brooks.⁸

Findings

I. European interest

Together with the Sumava National Park, the Bavarian Forest National Park protects a huge territory. Although the story of Sumava since its founding in 1991 was not always harmonious, the situation has improved and the protective measures have reached a high standard. The co-operation across the border includes nature management and research studies as well as visitors' management.

Both parks are part of a homogenous and protected natural environment of more than 90,000 hectares, which form the largest and most important protected area in low mountain areas in Central Europe. Both belong to the Natura 2000 network under both directives, the Sumava National Park partly only under habitats directive. They are in a good state of preservation. The Natura 2000 management plan for the Bavarian Forest National Park was published in 2008.⁹

But the Bavarian Forest National Park is not only a well-managed protected forest, it also became a model for excellent management in Europe. Over decades, hundreds of experts, environmentalists and national park managers all over the world came to the park to learn and they still do. With the slogan “Let Nature be Nature” the park set a best practice example for many other protected areas.

II. Conservation measures

The legal base for the national park is the regulation on the Bavarian Forest National Park in the version of 12 September 1997, last modified on 26 March 2019¹⁰. The competent governmental entity is the Staatsministerium für Umwelt und Verbraucherschutz (Bavarian State Ministry for Environment and Consumer Protection). The National Park Administration is a special agency under the Ministry.

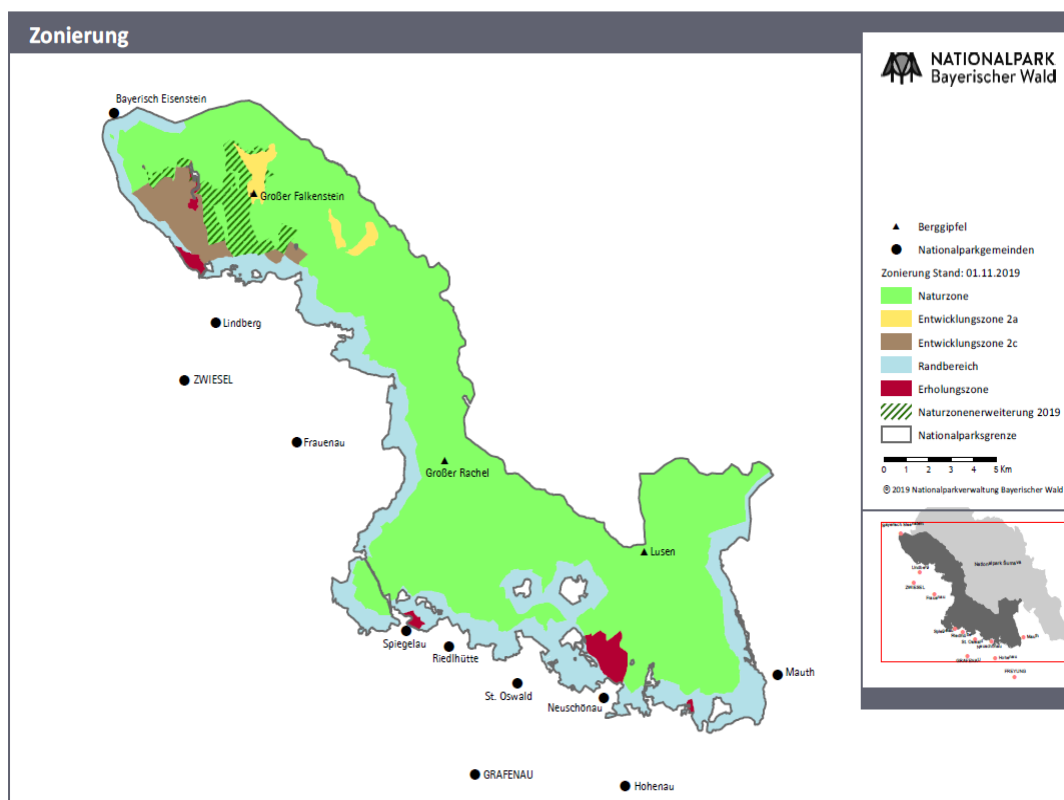
The Bavarian Forest National Park was the first national park in Germany and the first one in Germany recognised by the IUCN as National Park cat. II. It is part of the Natura 2000 as FFH and SPA area.

As already described in the section Excursus, the area was enlarged in 1997, nearly doubling the protected area. Another 600 hectares will follow in 2022. The zoning of the Bavarian Forest National Park is rather simple. The area is split into the nature zone (green) and the boundary area or buffer zone (light blue). The latter stretches along the outer border of the park but not along the border to the Czech Republic. The boundary area is a minimum of 500 meters wide depending on the morphology, and is designated for pest control, primarily the bark beetle. Part of the nature zone is a core zone, which is designated as zone with restricted access, but does not differ in the general management. Restricted access means that either visitors have to stay on designated tracks or are allowed to enter only in fixed periods. This zone is marked-off by signposts in the field.

⁸Leibl F. and R. Simonis (2018), Der Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald. Edition Lichtland. Freyung

⁹Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald (ed.) (2008), Natura 2000 – Management im Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald. Grafenau

¹⁰Verordnung über den Nationalpark Bayerischer Wald in der Fassung der Bekanntmachung vom 12. September 1997 (GVBl. S. 513, BayRS 791-4-2-U), die zuletzt durch § 1 Abs. 343 der Verordnung vom 26. März 2019 (GVBl. S. 98) geändert worden ist <https://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayNatWaldV>true>



Zoning of the Bavarian Forest National Park, (c) Bavarian Forest National Park

A few places with tourist infrastructure, including both visitors' centres, are defined as zones for recreation (dark red). The temporary development zones describe those areas with temporary management within the 1997 extension zone. They are being included in the nature zone step by step. The new 2022 extension area, which is not shown on the map, will be designated as nature zone. No transition period shall be imposed.

Due to the economic exploitation over the centuries, the forests in the area became uniform in species and age classes and lost their stability. Since the 1980ies when the park was affected by severe storms with massive windfall, the management and the authorities decided not to intervene in the core zones after the bark beetle attacks, but to leave the areas to natural succession. The principle of "leave nature to nature" was born. Other large windfalls in the following decades were treated following the same strategy. For many years, dead trees dominated in large sections of the park. Nowadays, the forests are a mixture of old dead trees and young trees.

Some 150 years ago, bears, wolves and lynxes were the large predators in the Bavarian Forest. Though the bear never returned, the wolf (*canis lupus*) and the lynx (*lynx lynx*) probably never completely disappeared and survived in the Bavarian Forest or in Sumava. Recently, there have been two wolf packs in both parks. The open borders between Sumava and the Bavarian Forest enable an undisturbed migration of these carnivores. As in many other regions all over Europe, the growing number of wolves is discussed emotionally, and positions are hardening.

Some examples of flowering plants are great wood rush (*Luzula sylvatica*), white butterbur (*Petasites albus*), Austrian leopard's bane (*Doronicum austriacum*) or brown gentian (*Gentiana pannonica*). The park is also an important area for fern. Notable bird species are capercaillie (*tetrao urogallus*), ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) or three-toed woodpecker (*Pocoides tridactylus*).

But there are other examples of how fauna and flora are developing in the national park. In 2019, *Peltis grossa*, a rare kind of beetle, was discovered in the Bavarian Forest, which is the first non-alpine appearance in Germany. Or the ural owl (*Strix uralensis*), for which nesting boxes have been installed. But these birds prefer stumps of old broken trees, which can be found in the park in growing numbers.

III. Management

When the park was founded in 1970, two organisations were responsible for the area, the National Park Office and the National Park Forest Office. It took until 1979 to reorganise the administration and establish the National Park Administration under one single director.

Beside the Natura 2000 management plan, an extensive management plan (National Park Plan) was published in 2010, which is updated on demand. It covers all relevant topics of park management and incorporates the results of the Natura 2000 management plan; however, a general update is recommended, which could be documented in an additional volume.

One of the problems since the beginning of the national park is the number of red deer, which is higher than the natural features would allow. One reason is the absence of predators, another the interruption of traditional summer-winter migration routes. Under these preconditions, game regulation is necessary. To provide the administration with the necessary legal rights, the responsibility for hunting was transferred to the National Park Administration. Whereas it was equipped with the legal rights of a forest authority, all attempts to gain legal rights as nature protection authority failed. Nevertheless, it would make sense to strengthen the legal rights in this field.

Nowadays, the administrative body consists of the central administration unit, a staff section, (including rangers, public relations and tourism) and six subject groups (1 – maintenance and storage facilities; animal park; 2 – visitors' centres and youth camps, including environmental education; 3 – nature protection and research; 4 – forestry, game regulation and area management; 5 – visitors' management and national park monitoring; 6 – general services e.g. human resources, finances etc.). The number of employees has been stable over the years with between 175 and 180 full time equivalents.

The budget of the national park comes entirely from the state budget. All income goes in turn to the state budget. The total expenditure of the park increased from €15 Mio. in 2012 to €22 Mio. in 2020. Staff costs represent about 50% of total expenditures. The financial support from the state budget is secured in the long run.

It is one of the tasks of national parks or other protected areas to enable research studies, either by the protected area staff itself or by external researchers and scientists. Scientific research also includes long-term studies, which becomes more important with the climate crisis. With the high number of research studies and monitoring programmes in the Bavarian Forest National Park, and some of them transboundary with the Czech neighbours, only a few examples can be highlighted for this appraisal report.

A good example of long-term studies is the monitoring of water bodies in the national park. Some series of measurement go back to the 1980ies and will hopefully continue. One of the themes is nitrogen from agriculture or combustion processes, which appears in the groundwater bodies as nitrate. However, with regards to nitrate, the water in the national park has excellent quality. Since about 15 years, the groundwater level has been slightly decreasing, but so far it is not alarming. Two harsh winters might help.

With the open borders and good relations with the neighbouring Sumava National Park, transboundary lynx monitoring can easily be carried out. In 2005, the first lynx worldwide was equipped with a telemetric collar. In 2009, the Czech neighbours joined this programme. Together with numerous camera traps, the data provide a good picture of the number and range of the lynx.

Of course, climate change is visible and measurable in the national park. The snow cover ends some weeks earlier and spring starts four weeks earlier than a few decades ago. So far, plant distribution in relation to altitude has not changed remarkably, but fauna is already under pressure. However, many questions about climate change can only be answered with long-term data collection, which should therefore be continued. Water balance is important, but also evapotranspiration through the forest, which can have an impact on the groundwater regime. Another project monitors the CO₂ balance in the national park.

But there are not only biological studies carried out in the national park. A socio-economic monitoring was

implemented to gain data about visitors and their views on and their expectations from protected areas. More than 5,000 visitors were interviewed. Sensors counted hikers, cyclists and cross-country skiers on transborder hiking routes. These data provide enough information about the spatial and temporal distribution of visitors in both parks. It can also be estimated that approximately three million people visit both parks per year. The results of this study are the basis for sustainable visitors' management. It is planned to evaluate the measures regularly.

However, not only scientific studies are prepared by the park. Innovative initiatives are developed through the day-by-day experience in the field. It was a challenge to stop the spreading of the bark beetle and at the same time save biodiversity in the park. When bark beetles infested trees, decortication of the bark was seen as the only effective measure. Within three years, the park developed and tested a machine slitting the bark of afflicted trees with one-centimetre-wide strips. This measure notably reduces the bark beetle without seriously affecting other species inhabiting dead wood. This system is now applied in the Bavarian State forests and also available on the free market for any forest enterprise.

As long as the forest was economically used many forest roads were built to transport the logs. Nowadays, these roads have no longer any function. The park administration started an initiative to either dismantle such roads completely or replace them with hiking trails. Although these measures were not always appreciated by locals, they are helpful to reduce disturbances. It is recommended to continue this programme.

As already mentioned, the start of the national park in 1970 and its enlargement in 1997 were accompanied by protests and sometimes physical attacks on national park infrastructure. At the beginning, the main arguments against the park were the loss of jobs and recessions in the lumber industry. Later, the bark beetle infestation became the focus of the protests. This totally changed. The national park is one of the biggest employers in the region on a high level. The head of the district authority, Landrat Sebastian Gruber, as well as the Mayor of Neuschönau, Alfred Schinabeck, confirmed the leading role of the national park as employer, as important tourist destination, but also as a marketing label for the whole region. The European Diploma is appreciated as a valuable award. Similar statements can be heard from local entrepreneurs, mainly from the tourism sector.

To guarantee the participation of local representatives and organisations, two advisory boards were set up:

The Kommunal Nationalparkausschuss (Communal National Park Board) was established to support the Nationalpark Park Administration and to secure the consideration of communal interests. It consists of the Landrat of Freyung-Grafenau district and the Landrat of Regen district and the 11 mayors of the communities, which share the national park area.

The Beirat (National Park Board) is an advisory board for all matters concerning the national park. It consists of 37 members, representatives of various ministries, communities, stakeholders, inter alia hunting, fishery or forestry organisations, environmental NGOs as well as a member of the Sumava National Park administration and from the Technical University in Munich.

The National Park Board is involved in the elaboration and establishment of the landscape framework plan and the national park plan as well as in the specification of annual provisions for the further development of the national park as far as they affect the communities' territories outside the park. It also participates in the elaboration and establishment of concepts for visitors' control and touristic traffic in the national park and its region.

IV. Uses and socio-economic activities

Meanwhile 1.6 mio. overnight stays are counted annually in the Landkreis Freyung – Grafenau alone. The park still has no serious problems with overtourism, though some attractive spots are sometimes overcrowded. Based on the socio-economic monitoring, a de-concentration of visitors' flows might be considered. More problems occur from day tourism, which grew significantly during the pandemic when international tourism was cut off.

It can happen that visitors do not observe regulations. Illegal mountain-biking, camping or cross-country

skiing off skiing trails are just a few examples. Rangers can only inform tourists of the rules or warn them, but unlike the Czech rangers, they cannot punish violators, which makes the system less effective. Similar arrangements could be helpful.

The park provides information about the park itself and single features through publications and leaflets, as well as during guided tours on all kinds of topics. Special attention is paid to young people, including youth camps in the park. It would be good if the logo of the European Diploma could be used more often, not only on brochures, but on all national park publications.

The national park is accessible on foot, via cycling routes and also by car to defined parking lots. Since 1996, the Igelbus (hedgehog bus) has been offering many connections between villages and various attractive spots in the eastern part of the park. A similar system has been implemented along the extension area.

Hunting and fishing are forbidden in the Bavarian Forest National Park. But red deer has to be regulated. This is done by national park staff in winter enclosures, where red deer is kept to avoid damages caused by overpopulation.

There are no settlements on the national park territory, but a few villages are surrounded by the park.

Two visitors' centres provide information and exhibitions for people of all ages. Forestry has a centuries-long history in the Bavarian Forest. This is presented in the museum for forest history in Sankt Oswald. Other museums, which are not under the responsibility of the national park inform about the history and the local industry and handicrafts of the region

Typical land use is preserved in selected places in the national park. Farmers used forest clearance areas (Schachten) as forest pastures. A total of 70 hectares of these areas are still maintained and used as pastures for rare cattle breeds, supported by European Union (EU) funds. The so-called Schachtenhaus is under monument conservation and maintained by the national park.

Forestry often used waterways to bring the logs from the mountains to the lowlands. To provide enough water for the transport (Trift) water storages (Klausen) were built. These Klausen are partly in a good state and maintained by the national park as cultural monuments.

V. Connectivity of the area

The most important protected area in the neighbourhood is the Sumava National Park. A long common border enables interchange of wildlife. Together the parks cover more than 90,000 hectares or 900 km². Next to the Bavarian Forest National Park lies the Nature Park Bavarian Forest. Nature parks contribute to nature protection but focus on cultural landscapes and regional development too.

During the appraisal visit there was a possibility to talk to representatives of the Sumava National Park. The discussion showed a harmonious co-operation. It results in joint projects as well as in personal exchange. As mentioned before, the park authorities of the Bavarian Forest National Park and the Sumava National Park co-operate across the border very efficiently. Several research studies are carried out jointly, partly with the support from EU programmes. Zoning and park development are designed through mutual coordination. This was not always the case in the last decades, but the current administrations are doing a perfect job. The efficiency of the co-operation was confirmed by EUROPARC's Transboundary Programme.

Of course, due its size and age, the Sumava National Park has not achieved the same standard. But it is on the right track, not only thanks to the support of the Bavarian colleagues.

Quality of the extension areas

The appraisal did not only focus on the renewal of the European Diploma, but also on the extension areas of 1997 and 2022, though the time for the evaluation of more than 11,000 hectares was very limited. Thanks to the organisation of the appraisal visit, it was possible to gain enough information and visit the extension

areas.

With the bark beetle infestations from the 1980ies onwards, owners of adjoining forests including the Bavarian State Forests were concerned that these infestations could invade commercial forests. The proposals for an enlargement of the park raised more resistance against these plans. To calm down the opposition, the state authorities agreed to fight the bark beetle for 20 years, not only in a designated buffer zone, but more or less on the whole added areas. Later, the time frame was extended to 30 years, although there was no urgent need.

Although there was no scientific argument for this approach and some of the interferences could have been avoided, the management had to follow the regulation. After several negative reports, the administration had already reduced interventions in the forest and could stop them immediately, depending on the political decisions.

Both the old area and the extended site do not differ remarkably, the ongoing interventions slowed down the natural succession under the slogan “Let nature be nature.” But this is only a delay. Without the extended European Diploma, the administration would be forced to continue the interventions for another five years. And it can be confirmed that the habitats, especially those on the heights or along the Czech border, are in a good condition. It can therefore be recommended to extend the Diploma to the extended areas.

Recommendations 2011

The Committee of Ministers attached six recommendations to the latest renewal (2011 to 2021):¹¹

1. *secure on a long-term basis the current policy of non-intervention in large areas of the park and continue the corresponding scientific monitoring;*

The non-intervention strategy is applied in the whole territory with the exception of bark beetle control in the extended area. Though some efforts were made to accelerate the integration of the extension areas.

2. *pursue consequently a non-intervention policy for 75% of the forests in the older part of the park and progressively implement this policy in the newer part, thus working toward the agreed objective of achieving the same proportion throughout the national park by 2027;*

Efforts have been made to accelerate the process to fulfil the 75% rule according to IUCN criteria. As laid out in the new conditions, all interventions should be stopped immediately and not only in 2027.

3. *continue targeted interventions to control the bark beetle development outside of the park, but limiting it strictly to the buffer zone (or “bark beetle management” zone);*

Bark beetle control in the buffer zone to prevent infestations of private and commercial woodland in the vicinity of the park was successful. Again, all other measures to stop bark beetle infestation outside the buffer zone should be stopped immediately.

4. *pursue and develop the dialogue with local communities; develop synergies with the Bayerischer Wald Nature Park and assess together the potential for the re-establishment of the Biosphere Reserve in accordance with the Sevilla Strategy;*

Though the dialogue with stakeholders, including the Bavarian Forest Nature Park continues, the re-establishment of the Biosphere Reserve is not on the agenda for the time being.

5. *pursue the collaboration with the Šumava National Park (Czech Republic) and develop further synergies; work towards a joint document “Vision for the Bohemian Forest” including all the protected areas adjacent to, or included in, both national parks as an umbrella document leading to a co-ordinated*

¹¹CM/ResDip(2011)4

management and zoning system. Secure together a large joint core zone on both sides of the border;
The co-operation between the two national parks has improved in the last seven or eight years, overcoming differences in the management strategy in the years before. The annual report 2020 lists several examples of how co-operation is working.

6. *maintain the public transportation “Igelbus” network, secure its financial sustainability and possibly develop it across the border in co-operation with Šumava National Park.*

The operation of the Igelbus is secured and co-financed by various stakeholders.

Summary

Although only recommendations were attached to the 2011 renewal of the Diploma, all recommendations were implemented.

Recommendations 2015

The extraordinary appraisal in 2015 attached five recommendations:

R1: In the frame of the further development of the wind farm project, data on breeding birds potentially threatened by the impact of windmills on and around the area where the implantation of windmills has been identified as feasible (Vorranggebiet 43) should be collected during at least one year. Existing data should be included.

R2: Similarly, existing data on bats in the same area should be analysed and presented and new complementary data should be collected during at least one year.

R3: The existing data, including telemetry information, and other data on lynx showing breeding and resting sites of the animals in and around the national park should be analysed and presented in the frame of the further development of the wind farm project. As cliff habitats are of outstanding importance for the rearing of the young, special attention should be given to the use of these habitats in the surroundings of the NP.

R4: Given the importance of the landscape aspect, a landscape character assessment should be provided for the vicinity of the park, in particular the area where the wind farm is planned.

R5: Guidance should be sought in the Bern Convention’s paper “Wind Farms and Birds: an updated analysis of the effects of wind farms on birds, and best practice guidance on integrated planning and impact assessment”

Summary

The proposed wind towers were never installed and it can be assumed that the plans were abandoned. Nevertheless, the park authorities are invited to carefully observe further developments in the use of green energy and to report to the Council of Europe in case of new proposals.

Renewal of the Diploma

It is recommended to renew the European Diploma for the Bavarian Forest National Park (Germany) for the period 2021 to 2031, taking into consideration the following recommendations.

Recommendations

1. Entrust the national park administration with the appropriate legal rights as nature protection authority, (Naturschutzbehörde) in addition to its role as forest authority (Forstbehörde), to strengthen its function in the field of nature protection;

2. Entrust the National Park Watch (rangers) with additional rights, first of all to collect fines in case of violations of the national park regulations, as it is done in the Sumava National Park (Czech Republic);
3. Periodically evaluate the National Park Plan and update topics when useful. This might be documented in a supplementary volume.
4. Periodically evaluate the management of visitors to avoid overtourism in sensitive areas and react if and when problems occur;
5. Secure the continuation of research studies, in particular those that have been conducted for a long time and those that are important in the context of climate change in a broader sense and for invasive species;
6. Dismantle the forest roads that do not function as service roads to a minimum and replace them with hiking routes in line with the infrastructure plan in places where disturbance of wildlife is to be avoided;
7. Harmonise the hiking routes with those on the Czech territory to avoid a mismatch;
8. Carefully observe any further plans of installations for the production of green energy in the vicinity of the Bavarian Forest National Park and report to the Council of Europe immediately if impacts on the park can be expected;
9. Make more use of the European Diploma logo in all information material and brochures, and explain the relevance of the Diploma wherever appropriate, in particular in the visitors' centres and on the website.

Extension of the Diploma Site

It is also recommended to extend the validity of the European Diploma to the areas included in 1997 and to those to be added in 2022 under the conditions below.

Conditions for the extension of the European Diploma to the sites added in 1997 and those proposed for 2022

1. The responsible authority of the Free State of Bavaria to apply for the extension of the European Diploma to the enlarged area of the Bavarian Forest National Park;
2. To immediately stop all interferences in the forest in the 1997 extension area, including bark beetle control, with the exception of the buffer zone (Randbereiche) where such measures are intended to minimise the spread of the bark beetle to adjoining private forests outside the national park, and for security reasons;
3. To guarantee that the same regulations as in condition 2 are applied for the enlargement to the east, which is proposed for 2022, without any transition period;
4. To take into consideration the neighbouring core zone in the Sumava National Park when designing visitors infrastructure and ensure that the management goals and conservation measures of the proposed extension area to the east are harmonised with those of the adjoining area in the Sumava National Park;

Acknowledgments

The administration provided an interesting programme to gain insight on the Bavarian Forest National Park, the efforts made and the current work. Various field trips and meetings with stakeholders complemented the appraisal visit. Special thanks go to the director, Franz Leibl, and to Hans Kiener, as well as to the National Park staff, who provided detailed information. I would also like to thank the representatives of the region, the colleagues from the Sumava National Park and the members of NGOs who shared their views on the park.