



Protected Areas In-Sight

The Journal of the **EUROPARC** Federation

**TRIBUTE TO OUR LANDSCAPE;
WHERE NATURE AND PEOPLE
MEET IN HARMONY.**

TOWARDS WILDER PARKS

EUROPARC Federation and Rewilding Europe sign partnership agreement

THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATURE PROFESSIONALS IS HERE

Learn from their experiences

50 YEARS OF EUROPARC; 50 YEARS OF STORIES.

Discover our new interactive storybook!



Connecting People & Parks
since 1973

Imprint

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Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition.

Participants at the EUROPARC Conference. Picture by PDF-Grafie



Content

The EUROPARC Federation represents Protected Areas and governmental organisations in around 40 countries, who themselves manage the green jewels of Europe's land, sea, mountains, forests, rivers and cultural heritage.

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National Park Schiermonnikoog, The Netherlands. Picture by Fernando Pinillos

Nature knows no boundaries and EUROPARC therefore facilitates international co-operation in all aspects of Protected Area management. Through networking, advancing policy and practice, sharing best practices and developing new solutions to the challenges of Protected Area management, we want to deliver a Sustainable Nature: Valued by People and ensure the value of Protected Areas is recognised at the heart of Europe.

For more information:



www.europarc.org

Editorial



2023 has been a golden year for EUOPARC, celebrating 50 years serving and representing the Protected Area community across Europe.

50 YEARS OF NATURE SUPERPOWERS

By **CAROL RITCHIE**

EUOPARC Federation Executive Director

It is a testament to the enduring power of networking and commitment of the EUOPARC membership, that we have been able to celebrate a journey that has spanned half a century. That journey has been filled with shared successes, has weathered difficulties and is underpinned with a passion for nature that has stood the test of multiple challenges.

Reflecting on our history, and listening to the voices of those who have shaped the organisation, has emphasised once again, EUOPARC's drive for a more sustainable future for our Protected areas and to restate the need to value our parks across European society.

People, are our Parks' most significant asset. Their passion powers the values and principles upon which the Protected Area sector is built and gives it true authenticity. EUOPARC wouldn't be what it is today, if it wasn't for people believing that nature conservation concerns all European countries, regardless of political frontiers.

It has been the stories of the people of Europe's Protected Areas that created the solid foundation of knowledge skill and political influence, upon which we build a new future. It is the networking and connection of sharing, learning and working together that will enable a collective shared strong voice to be heard at all political levels. New evidence needs to be gathered, new innovation and solutions to the pressures and challenges faced by Protected Areas to be found.

What has become apparent having reflected upon the 50 years of EUOPARC's work, are the latent Superpowers within the Protected Area community. These superpowers are activated and enhanced with strong networking, connectivity and capacity building that enables those who manage our Parks and Protected Areas to learn and grow.

WE HAVE THE SUPERPOWER OF DEEP UNDERSTANDING OF THE VALUES, NEEDS AND DRIVERS OF PROTECTED AREA MANAGEMENT.

One of the laws of life and nature is that nothing ever stays the same.

Everything is in a constant state of flux, sometimes slow and gradual, sometimes rapid and abrupt. The triple emergencies of COVID-19, climate and biodiversity in recent years, have underlined the speed at which old certainties can melt away. EUOPARC works to ensure Protected Areas manager have access to new thinking, ideas and tools about governance, working with communities and the drivers of change in order they can adapt and evolve in order to ensure nature and people can live in harmony.

OUR SECOND SUPERPOWER IS NETWORKING AND WILLINGNESS TO LEARN.

*World Café at the EUOPARC Conference.
Picture by PDF-Grafie*



The desire to find out **what is happening across borders**, and the interdependence of Europe's nature, led the founders to commit themselves to further the conservation of Europe's natural heritage through international cooperation. This hope for a **better future** emerged in the early 1970s, a time of considerable political and economic crisis. 50 years later, the challenges remain and the need for international cooperation and the shared hope for our European Nature is as vital as ever if we are to build resilience in Protected Area management. It was the **face-to-face meetings and exchange of ideas and knowledge in the annual conference** that tapped into the need of Europe's Protected Areas to learn and work together, setting the ethos and tenet of the Federation that continues to the present day. EUROPARC continues to identify networking opportunities and innovating how to deliver them online and at regional and European level. Check out just some of the great networking events for 2024.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Siggen Seminar: 4 – 6 March
- LIFE ENABLE , developing the European Nature Academy: 14 – 16 May
- ECST Event: May/June
- ESPARC: 22 – 25 May
- EUROPARC Atlantic Isles event in Autumn
- EUROPARC Online conference 6 - 7 November

WE HAVE THE SUPERPOWER OF BUILDING TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS AND THE CREDIBILITY TO ACHIEVE CHANGE.

Our third Superpower reflects the real-world reality for most Protected Areas, and that is to work with, collaborate and partner with actors at a local, national and international level.

The Federation network, has learnt that **cooperation as the most powerful and effective policy instrument available** and has been able to influence a wide range of sustainability and nature conservation-related issues including species migration, pollution, biodiversity loss and ultimately climate change. It has required a mind set of collaborative and

participatory governance of Parks and the vision to work with sectors often outside nature conservations, such as tourism, agriculture, hunting and outdoor sports.

The **need** to learn from each other, the **need** to raise standards in the management of Protected Areas, the **need** to conserve and protect our shared resources, the **need** to realise we are more interdependent and interconnected than ever. Fundamentally, the need to highlight the value and benefit of Protected Areas collectively, with allies across the policy agenda, is **something we do better as a common endeavour and is as important now as it ever was and without which change that will halt biodiversity loss and mitigate climate changes will never be realised**. To achieve that means forging stronger partnerships between social, cultural and natural processes. An understanding that is underpinned by good science on how ecological dynamics and environmental constraints are influencing societal political choices and are in turn influenced by them.

European and national policies areas are signposting that a change is needed, if we are to tackle climate change and biodiversity loss. **Inspirational stories and sustainable choices** by many Parks and their communities are leading the changes required. These individually may seem small measures but collectively they act as exemplars of change in the approach and practice of Protected Areas management.

Finally, the real strength of the EUROPARC Federation collectively is that we have a

VISION FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE AND THE ABILITY TO TELL THAT STORY.

Our story is one of continual curiosity, our ability to change, innovate and improve and to ensure a welcoming space, created by members, for all of Europe's Parks and Protected Areas.

To tell our Story and realise our common purpose, we must remain as advocates for Protected Areas at political levels and Remain Relevant to multiple agendas.

Be stronger together, across all European countries. Converting our Aspirations into Action through shared endeavours, capacity building and projects. Adopting innovative, forward thinking, outward looking, inclusive approaches, as well as partnership working with communities, public sector, business, academia.

Fundamentally to **Embrace Sustainability**, enabling Protected Areas to be exemplars and multipliers as models for nature conservation, benefiting society and maintaining our cultural heritage and rural livelihoods. EUROPARC will continue to engender sense of Protected Area community across, **Common Goals: Shared Vision**, encourage exchange of ideas through international cooperation and networking

As a Protected Area community, **what story will we tell tomorrow?** One of endless struggle, feeling overwhelmed? Or one of forging new paths and creating new opportunities for **parks to be the green hearts of Europe**.

The creation of Protected Areas of Europe and of EUROPARC itself was, and is, an expression of **faith in the future** between generations, a promise from the past to the future... a promise yet to be fully realised. It requires vision, of a **SUSTAINABLE NATURE; VALUED BY PEOPLE**, building on the legacy of our predecessors, so that all have the opportunity to realise the economic, social and environmental benefits Protected Areas can and do bring to society.

Our story is founded on the need to protect nature, to support Parks and build sustainable resilient rural economies, and that is done by connecting people and places. Because, the Parks and Protected Areas of Europe are a variety of landscapes, embedded in cultural identity. Sculpted by nature and shaped by people. Influenced over the course of history, inspiring artists and thinkers and enriching lives. They are our natural life support system. These Protected Areas represent the land that is our inheritance - we hold it in trust for those who come after us. That is the Story of EUROPARC's past, continues in the present and for the next 50 years and beyond.

TOWARDS WILDER PARKS

The EUROPARC Federation and Rewilding Europe have signed a Partnership Agreement to work together on Wilder Parks. In this article, you can discover what the 'Wilder Parks' initiative means.



Article written by **AMY DUTHIE**

Head of Upscaling at Rewilding Europe

ENHANCING THE ECOLOGICAL INTEGRITY OF EUROPEAN PROTECTED AREAS

EUROPARC and Rewilding Europe have teamed up to enhance the ecological health and functionality of Europe's Protected Areas. Through the „Wilder Parks“ initiative, the two organisations will work together to support and showcase the work of Protected Areas that are already making great progress in restoring nature, to inspire others, in the wider landscape, to follow their lead. By helping to make the Protected Areas of the EUROPARC membership - which account for around 40% of the Natura 2000 network - wilder, the initiative will make a significant contribution to the recovery of nature across Europe, with wide-ranging benefits for European citizens, businesses and communities.



Hendrik Oosterveld, Carol Ritchie, Michael Hošek, Frans Schepers and Princes Laurentien van Oranje. Picture by PDF-Grafie

The restoration of natural processes within European Protected Areas will give them greater resilience to the impacts of climate change. The development of wilder parks will also inspire people living in and around them to engage with European nature. Against the backdrop of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, as well as the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Wilder Parks initiative will link global with local, supporting restoration efforts that are good for nature and good for people.

THE RESTORATION IMPERATIVE

Protected Areas are the backbone of European nature. With more than 120,000 sites designated across Europe, including the 27,000 sites of the Natura 2000 network, such areas cover nearly 1.2 million square kilometres: this equates to an area the size of France and Spain combined.

Many of Europe's Protected Areas contain unique and frequently awe-inspiring repositories of biodiversity. However, simply protecting the nature they currently contain isn't enough. It's not enough to halt and reverse biodiversity decline and it's not enough to slow and stop climate change. Given the large geographical extent of such areas, there is now a fantastic opportunity to build on the conservation efforts being carried out within them, enhancing the invaluable nature they already contain through rewilding. By focusing on the restoration of natural processes and working to support and scale up the comeback of European wildlife species that is already happening in many parts of the continent, we can really amplify the benefits such areas deliver: clean air, fresh water, the locking up of atmospheric carbon and so on.

LETTING NATURE LEAD

From politicians and entrepreneurs, to scientists and everyday citizens, interest in rewilding is now at an all-time high, with an ever-growing number of initiatives generating positive impacts across Europe. This is stimulating a rethink about conservation and our relationship with wild nature.

Some of Europe's National Parks and Protected Areas are clearly wilder than others. Collectively, we need to make more space for natural processes to reshape landscapes,

rather than expending precious and often dwindling resources trying to reach and maintain artificial end-points. Going forwards, there will still be a need for intervention in many areas, but rewilding is an opportunity for us to reconsider our goals: an opportunity to work towards a situation where nature leads, rather than humans.

PRACTICAL MEASURES

Rewilding Europe has established a set of rewilding principles, helping to define what is different and special about rewilding, providing coherence, inspiration and transparency, and positioning rewilding in relation to other conservation approaches.

There are a wide range of rewilding measures that Europe's Protected Areas can employ to create the right conditions for nature recovery. These include allowing forests to naturally regenerate, removing dams and restoring natural water regimes, more natural wildlife management, enhancing natural grazing, leaving carcasses



Bison, Kennemerduinen National Park, Kraansvlak, The Netherlands. Provided by Staffan Widstrand / Rewilding Europe

in nature, improving connectivity, reintroducing keystone species, and many more – all with the aim of restoring natural processes and food webs. In conjunction, these measures help to enhance the health, connectivity, functionality and resilience of natural ecosystems. Working with communities and stakeholders across such areas, the overall aim is to create spaces where nature manages itself to the fullest extent possible - a cost-effective approach with beneficial outcomes for nature, climate and people.

The work carried out as part of the „Wilder Parks“ initiative will include learning from EUROPARC members that are already carrying out rewilding measures and enabling them to share their knowledge with others. Additional Protected Areas which are keen to apply rewilding principles will be identified with Rewilding Europe offering them training, resources, and opportunities for knowledge exchange. Access to Rewilding Europe’s European Wildlife Comeback Fund, for example, could help some to start or scale-up the reintroduction of keystone species.

MEETING COMMITMENTS

In December 2022, leaders of European countries agreed to adopt the historic Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, which includes a global target to restore 30% of degraded ecosystems globally by 2030. This commitment will contribute to the EU’s own restoration agenda and obligations of EU Member States under the new Nature Restoration Law; this was approved by the European Parliament in July 2023 and is currently in the final negotiation stage. By enabling the development of a more expansive, better connected and wilder network of Protected Areas, the „Wilder Parks“ initiative can play a game-changing role in this transformation.

LEARN MORE!

Learn more about the partnership between EUROPARC and Rewilding Europe.

NATIONAL PARK WEERRIBBEN-WIEDEN LAUNCHES NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

‘GOOD TO SEE YOU HERE’



Article written by **NICOLETTE BOLTÉ**

Area Developer and marketing expert at National Park Weerribben-Wieden

Creating a landscape in harmony involves working across sectors and ensuring good communications. This year, National Park Weerribben-Wieden in The Netherlands launched a new promotional campaign. More than 80 entrepreneurs, cultural and heritage providers, residents and nature organisations were there when the Alderman and Park Director unveiled the new slogan: ‘Good to see you here’. Learn more about how this overarching approach towards a ‘brand identity’ was developed and implemented.



*Cover Magazine
about National
Park Weerribben-
Wieden*

Good to see you here sign at National Park Weerribben-Wieden



IDENTITY

In the weeks leading up to the unveiling of the promotional campaign and new slogan, stakeholders from the area, including residents, nature organisations and entrepreneurs, worked on sharpening the area's identity. This is an important part of the transition to a 'National Park New Style', a development in The Netherlands, which focuses on creating a strong connection between the nature core and the surrounding areas with its unique nature, landscape, and culture. It is precisely the involvement of stakeholders from different disciplines that ensures recognition and support for the campaign. From the participatory development sessions, "quirky" and "cordial" were the words that best describe the identity of Weerribben-Wieden, any communications campaign should then fit into this and follow a friendly and informal approach. Having established that the core identity of the area is cordial, it enabled its character to be defined as stimulating and distinctive. With this profile, National Park Weerribben-Wieden can strongly distinguish itself from other areas.

CONNECTION

A side-effect of defining the area's identity through a participatory process is that it creates connection with the area. It supports the feeling of shared pride and recognition of the beauty of the area, but also of the people who live and work there. 'Good to see you here' is a slogan that reinforces this feeling. The area and its inhabitants are quirky and warm-hearted. The aim of the slogan is then for everyone in the National Park to continue radiating this feeling together and to say to visitors, new residents, and employees: Good to see you here! During a gala event organised for and by entrepreneurs of the area, this was the central theme.

QUALITY VISITOR

In designing and developing this promotional campaign, several choices were made. A campaign was chosen that focuses mainly on the 'quality visitor'. This is a visitor who is not seasonal, but stays in the area for several days and has a high willingness to pay: such visitors do not disturb local people or nature, and feel connected to the area. This connection can be also linked to an interest in culture, landscape, nature and the history of the area, whereby they are inclined to discover the edges and lesser-known places of the National Park as well.

Billboard as part of the campaign





Meeting Stakeholders about area identity

PROMOTIONAL TOOLS

Commissioned by the municipality, the foundation Weerribben-Wieden, together with business owners and other stakeholders, organised the financial means to implement the campaign through diverse communication methods. To attract visitors from outside the area, advertising on national radio combined with images on large billboards along highways was planned. In April and September this year, it generated outreach on radio of 17% of the target audience. The billboards provided a reach of 4.1 million passers-by. A free magazine (circulation of 40,000) was released containing stories about the area and news about fun outings. There was also a series of leaflets (circulation 50,000) describing walks and an events calendar (circulation 75,000). These communication products were distributed to 200 addresses in the area, most of which are hotels, restaurants, and nature and leisure organisations. In the National Park itself, billboards were placed along roads from April to October. In addition, signs in 5 different languages were placed at several frequently visited spots to let visitors, residents, and businesses feel: 'Good to see you here!'

AND THERE'S MORE!

It is important to keep using and repeating the slogan. To this end, National Park Weerribben-Wieden has planned several activities for 2024. One is to help entrepreneurs align their services and communications with the area identity and the wishes of quality visitors, paying attention to year-round offers to stimulate the spread of visitors. There will also be a stronger focus next year on attracting target German and Belgian visitors to the area. The campaign underlines that the National Park is a unique area where everyone is welcome: so, in the years to come, it will indeed be 'Good to see you here!'

THE EUROPEAN NATURE ACADEMY



The project and all actions are made possible with support from the LIFE financial instrument of the European Community



50 YEARS IN THE MAKING

Article written by **NEIL MCINTOSH**

EUROPARC Federation Project Manager for LIFE ENABLE

At its core, EUROPARC is about exchanging experiences and becoming more competent nature managers. Through LIFE ENABLE's European Nature Academy, this goal becomes more accessible than ever.



LEARN MORE!

[Click here for more info on LIFE ENABLE.](#)

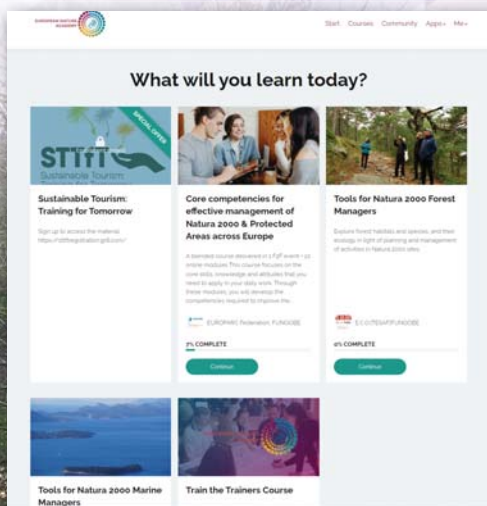
[Click here for more info on on LIFEedu.](#)

[Click here for more info on LIFE EME.](#)



Management of Protected Areas has come a long way in the last 50 years. Although the essence of what we do is still the same, how we work has changed considerably: in response to continuing biodiversity loss, increasing land use pressures, climate change impacts, growing visitor numbers, rural depopulation, invasive alien species, use of new technologies, increased recognition of the importance of sustainable development ... the list goes on.

Protected Areas are central to nature protection in the wider landscape, increasingly requiring to be managed in more holistic and integrated ways. From its beginning, EUROPARC has worked to bring people together, stimulating networking amongst growing numbers of Protected Areas at European and global levels, in order to share experiences, exchange information and innovate management practices.



ENA Interface

Now, as managers of people and places, EUROPARC is leading new opportunities for Protected Area staff to have access to competence-based training in order to build individual capacities, in teams and across organisations, to do their work more effectively, competently and with impact. Integral to our capacity building projects is the focus on applied learning, generating greater benefits for nature through more effective management practices.

Over the last 10 years, EUROPARC's capacity building projects have evolved: from the 2013 LIFE EME (Efficient Managers for Efficient Natura 2000 Network), through the LIFE e-Natura2000.edu (LIFEedu) Moodle, to the new European Nature Academy MOOC launched by LIFE ENABLE. The common feature of these projects is to train Protected Area staff, not only to apply their technical knowledge for the protection of nature in Protected Areas, but to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to work more inclusively, with local communities, wider ranges of stakeholders and manage nature in wider contexts.

The response so far has been overwhelmingly positive. The European Nature Academy (ENA) ethos of peer-to-peer, co-learning has struck a chord with participants: the mix of online group working sessions is identified as being particularly valuable, distinguishing the ENA from other online learning provision. Also, 96% of LIFEedu participants reported that they were able to apply their learning in ways that directly benefited their work.

Together with our project partners, EUROPARC is transforming capacity building to meet increasing demand by using online learning technologies to provide flexible, cost-effective training. The aim is not to replace face-to-face training, but rather to augment it with more sustainable, replicable and accessible online learning opportunities, which can reach many thousands of Protected Area staff, tailored to their needs, whilst reducing the need for travel.

EUROPARC continues to advance its capacity building programme, building on our expertise with face-to-face networking. We are committed to innovating new ways of working and learning together, for example, by exploring how Artificial Intelligence (AI) can be incorporated into our capacity building work in the ENA. Also, we are exploring ways to establish national capacity building programmes through ENA 'centres of excellence' in future. Our capacity building journey, directed to meeting the needs of Protected Area practitioners across Europe, continues.



European Nature Academy induction meeting in 2023

INTEGRATING SOCIAL VALUES IN THE DESIGN OF THE TEN-N



Article written by **MARIT SCHNEPF**

EUROPARC Project Manager for NaturaConnect

The vision of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is a world of “living in harmony with nature” where, by 2050, biodiversity will be “valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people” (Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, 2022). The EU Biodiversity Strategy aims to align with these international statements and sets specific objectives for the EU. A key goal is the design of a connected Trans-European Nature Network (TEN-N). This work is supported by the NaturaConnect project.

Kobuleti - Agency of Protected Areas in Georgia

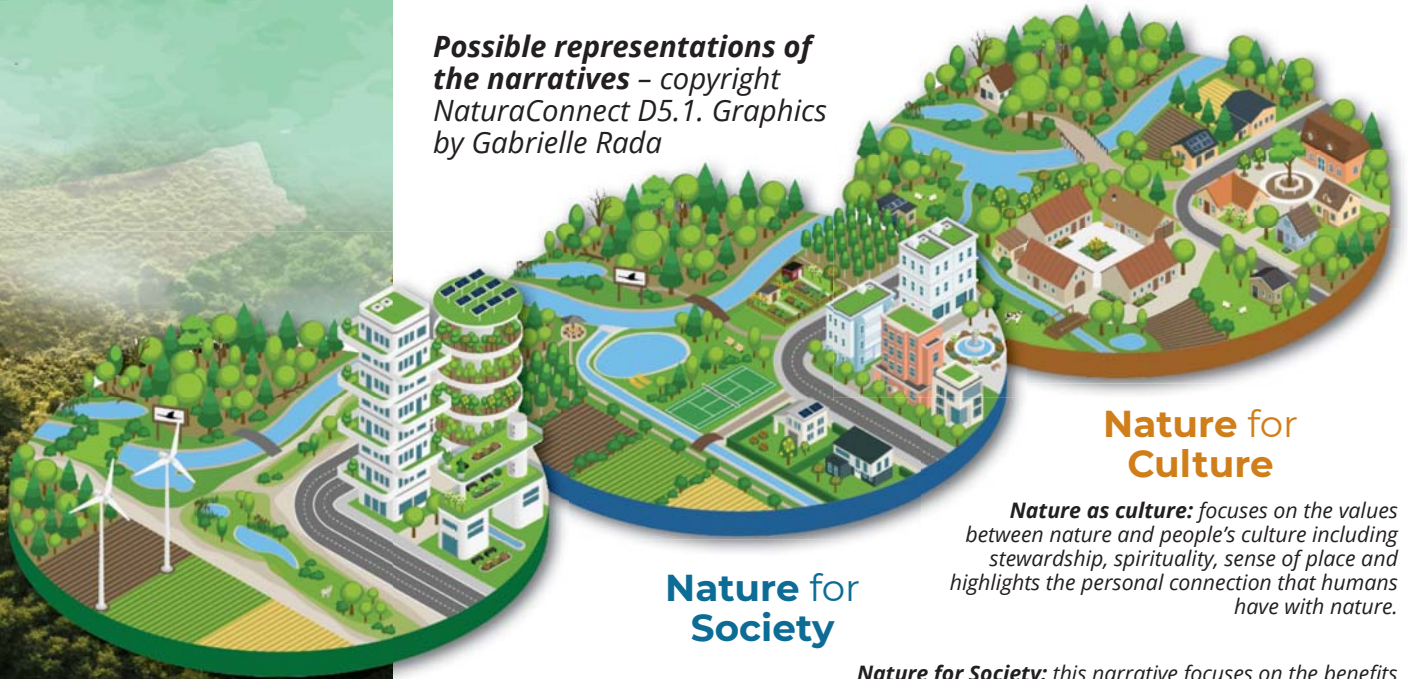
Stakeholder workshop to identify characteristics for the three NFF corners.



How can a coherent and resilient TEN-N integrate societal perspectives on future biodiversity protection in Europe?

NaturaConnect is developing narratives on future nature protection in Europe based on the three pillars of the **Nature Futures Framework (NFF)**: Nature for Nature, Nature as Culture, and Nature for Society. The narratives are the basis for investigating how land use and nature conservation scenarios can be integrated into the design of the TEN-N for nature and people.

Possible representations of the narratives – copyright NaturaConnect D5.1. Graphics by Gabrielle Rada



Nature for Culture

Nature as culture: focuses on the values between nature and people's culture including stewardship, spirituality, sense of place and highlights the personal connection that humans have with nature.

Nature for Society

Nature for Society: this narrative focuses on the benefits provided by nature for people. Ecosystems are managed to prioritise and enhance the provision of Nature's Contributions to People (NCP), a concept that goes beyond ecosystem services by emphasising culture as central link between people and nature and recognises other knowledge systems for example those of indigenous people.

Nature for Nature

Nature for Nature: the intrinsic value of nature is at its core, independently of the benefits to people.

It is important to note that the three corners of the NFF triangle are extreme cases. The mix of perspectives on nature conservation that influence local or national decisions on land use will always be distributed throughout the triangle, often tending towards the middle. Therefore, the spatial conservation planning analysis that NaturaConnect will create includes some intermediate assumptions between the three perspectives and explores small variations around them. The narratives aim to address Protected Areas planning at different scales and can be used by planners, depending on need and context. For example, sometimes it might be useful to use an "extreme" narrative, while other times call for a more "intermediate" narrative.

How can the narratives be used in spatial conservation planning to help design connectivity?

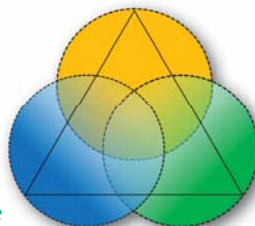
NaturaConnect will use the narratives to simulate how land use could look in the future if policies and management strategies to support a specific NFF perspective are adopted. Simulations of alternative realisations of different societal preferences represented by the three corners of the NFF triangle can help identify opportunities for co-benefits or costs that should be avoided. The land use change scenarios will be coupled with a connectivity analysis, which identifies areas suitable for ecological corridors. Together they will be used as inputs for identifying priority areas for Protected Area expansion. The priorities identified will complement the existing European Protected Area network in terms of species, habitats and Nature's Contributions to People (NCPs), while also accounting for future changes in climate or land use as well as socio-economic considerations, according to the main strategic objectives of the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

What do the narratives look like and how does the project ensure that they truly reflect various nature perspectives across Europe?

With the input of stakeholders, three narratives for positive futures matching the three corners of the NFF triangle have been developed. They present contrasting perspectives and priorities for seven themes: Protected Areas, connectivity and restoration, forestry, freshwater ecosystems, urban systems, agriculture, and energy. Although the narratives differ in terms of what is perceived as a desirable status of nature in Europe and how nature should be managed, all of them reflect positive visions for nature. They also include socio- and macro-economic developments, demographics and policies.

Nature for nature
Intrinsic value of nature
Space allocated for nature

Nature for culture
Living in harmony
People one with nature



Nature for society
Nature's benefits to people
Ecosystem services

LEARN MORE!

Go here for more info on NaturaConnect

Go here for more info on Nature's Contributions to People (NCP)

Go to the official project website here



50 YEARS OF EUROPARC, 50 YEARS OF STORIES

EUROPARC's presidents took the stage during the 2023 Conference. Picture by PDF-Grafie

Article written by **ESTHER BOSSINK**

EUROPARC Communications Manager



Connecting People & Parks
since 1973

How can you adequately capture 50 years of international cooperation for nature? When this discussion around EUROPARC's 50th Anniversary first started, the EUROPARC Directorate knew that a 'regular brochure' would not suffice to honour the work of our Network. In this article, discover what we came up with instead.



EUROPARC's founding fathers in the 1970s

“NATURE KNOWS NO BOUNDARIES.

So, EUROPARC is founded on the principle that the future protection and conservation of nature is achieved through **international cooperation**. International cooperation works best through **personal contact**. That through personal contact comes **mutual understanding, shared experiences, knowledge and innovation**. This delivers better support and management of Protected Areas, which ensures the **future protection and conservation of nature.**“

This small paragraph encapsulates the essence of EUROPARC. Our founding fathers, 50 years ago had the, at that time groundbreaking, idea that good nature conservation, requires working across borders. From this idea, a network that is now over 400 members strong, has grown.

So, what is behind all these years, all these members, and all these ideas? An incredible wealth of stories! Stories about international cooperation, about personal contact, shared experiences and new innovations. Stories, from the heart of EUROPARC: stories, from our members.

Through interviews, video messages and old publications, we were able to pull together the stories of the people and events that have made our 50th Anniversary possible and combine them into an interactive storybook. You can hear from former presidents, EUROPARC's first Director, long-standing members and new additions to the network.

The storybook features audio, videos, pictures, and quotes from those that have lived the history of our organisation. We invite you to discover EUROPARC's history, by following the vines and leaves throughout the 'book'. They will guide you through your story journey. Click on them in any order you wish. They appear at the beginning and end of each section.

This Storybook is not just a testament to EUROPARC's golden jubilee, but much more a 'song of praise' to the amazing work of our members that have made this milestone possible.

The heartbeat of EUROPARC is its members, and the Federation its voice. Let's share the story of EUROPARC through their own words.



DISCOVER THE STORYBOOK HERE!

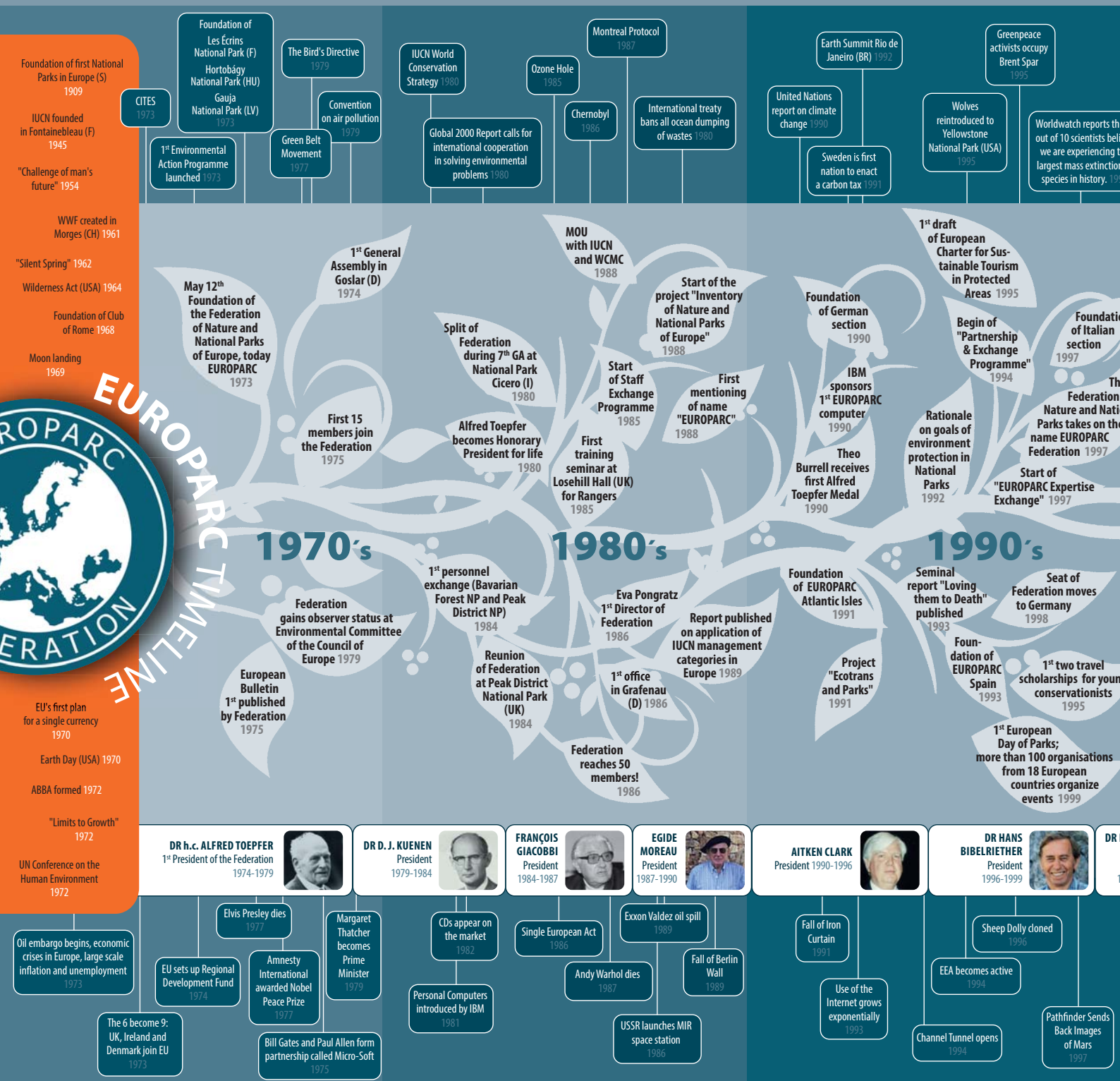
The EUROPARC Federation is incredibly grateful for all that submitted messages, took part in interviews, or shared their pictures of the past five decades. We also want to thank Emma Moletto, for bringing our vision to life. Furthermore, a massive thanks to our members, for their unwavering support and dedication to our Network, as well as to the conservation of nature in Europe.

We wish happy readings.

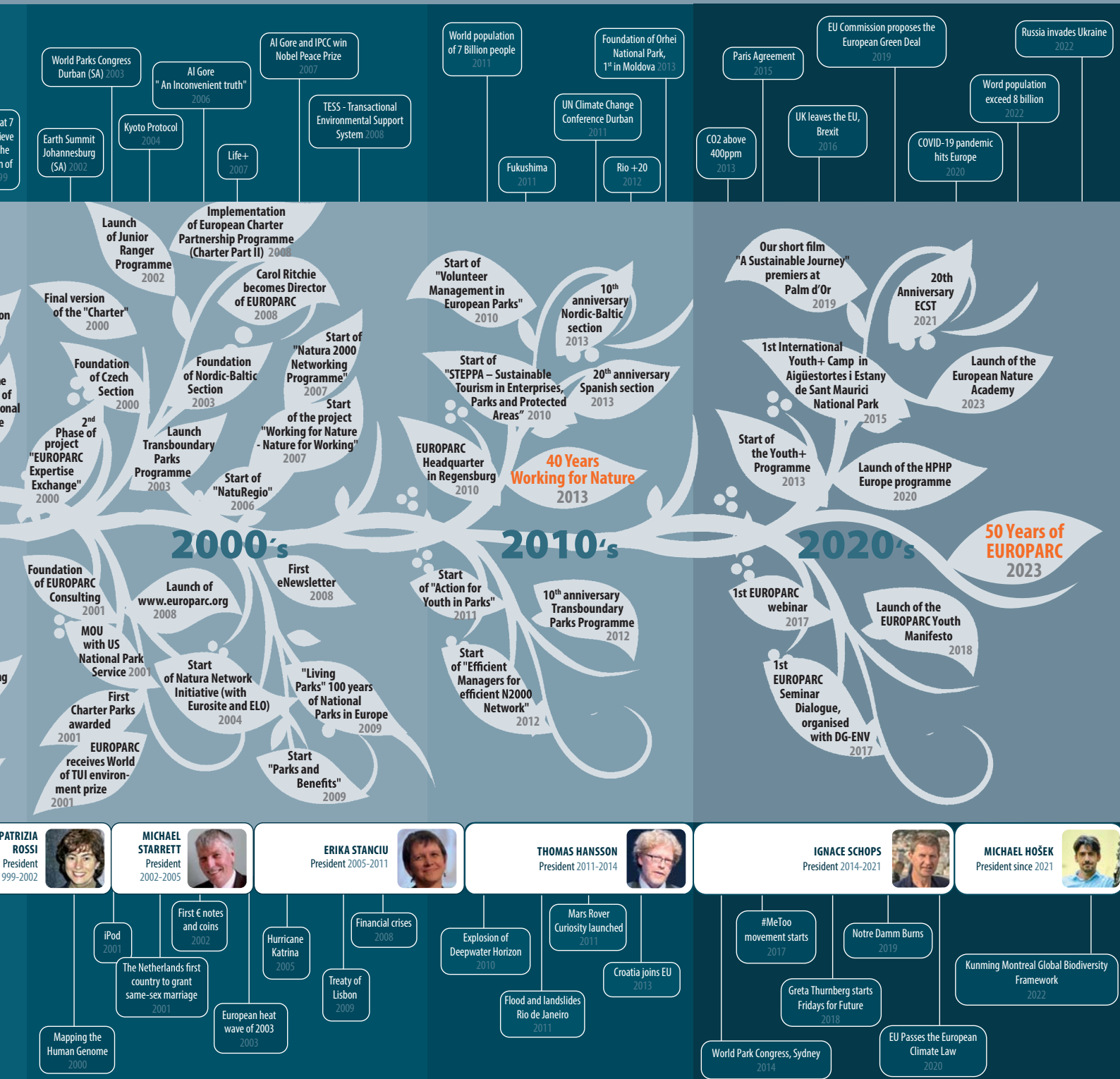
50 YEARS OF EUROPARC

Since 1973, EUROPARC has facilitated international cooperation in all aspects of Protected Area management, to improve and conserve our shared natural heritage.

Join us on this trip through memory lane, where we highlight a fraction of our achievements.



All this could not be possible without the support of our members.
Thank you for being a part of our network.



THE NEXT GENERATION OF NATURE PROFESSIONALS IS HERE!

LEARN FROM THEIR EXPERIENCES.



With grateful thanks to the generous support of the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung, EUROPARC was able to invite 14 young professionals to join the EUROPARC Conference in The Netherlands. In this article, you can read the experiences of

HERMIONE POCOCK, GEORGE PORTON

(both active in Yorkshire Dales National Park, England), **MARLA SCHULZ** (active in Nationale Naturlandschaften e.V. and Biosphere Reserve Spreewald, Germany), **MARC CASTELLÓN** (active in Parc Natural del Cadí-Moixerò, Spain) and **ALEXANDRA IMBERH** (active in National Park Hunsrück-Hochwald, Germany).



All 70 young participants at the EUROPARC Conference. Picture by PDF-Grafie

Where do you see the role of youth in creating landscapes in harmony?

A. Marc Castellón

"Young people have been clear at this conference: we want climate justice and we want it now. Social-ecological landscapes are key to providing resources and wellbeing for us and our children. I believe we can best contribute by informing key decision-makers in Protected Areas and local governments. These professionals also have a duty to listen to us. We need spaces for effective participation. Otherwise we may speak, but no one will hear us."

B. Alexandra Imberh

"The current generation of young people is bearing witness to a scale of biodiversity loss and environmental degradation that will have effects throughout our entire lifetime. It is thus essential to be heard and included in decision-making processes that protect and recover spaces for people and nature. It is about fixing broken relationships. We can bring the emotion and passion: to implement the procedures and policies that are already in place more swiftly and advocate for improvements."

What is the importance of involving youth in EUROPARC?

A. Marc Castellón

"Young people will grow up to live in an uncertain and dangerous future, one that is the result of profound environmental injustices inherited from previous generations. Including us in decision-making processes is a matter of intergenerational justice. EUROPARC understands this, which is why the Youth Council was recently created. Through our representatives, we will continue to push for better practices in Protected Areas, especially with regard to climate change adaptation."

50



What are some of the main takeaways from the Conference that you will apply in your Park?

A. Hermione Pocock "My main takeaway from the conference is to get people engaged in the natural world. It helps to tell a story. Storytelling is a tool that is underused in the conservation sector. If we include people in the story of our national parks and wild spaces they may be more inclined to take action to help save them. I also took away that the older generation of EUROPARC are eager to listen to the younger members. This is really positive and means we can work together and learn from one another."

B. George Porton "My main takeaway from the conference was the importance of learning from and collaborating with other people, projects and Protected Areas. Many people across Europe are struggling with similar problems and it is inefficient if time and money is invested in finding solutions independently. If the challenges we face in our work have been tackled before, we should learn from the successes and failures of others. Where new problems arise, finding solutions collaboratively can be far more effective. Whilst working collaboratively often comes with its own issues, the EUROPARC Conference was a fantastic starting point for that process."

C. Marla Schulz "What really impressed me throughout the conference is how much knowledge can come together in one room! With so many ideas and different approaches, I see a lot of potential that we can look positively towards our future! I was very inspired to talk to different people with different backgrounds and experiences and to discover many new perspectives and solutions myself."

What are the challenges and opportunities that you see for the future?

A. Hermione Pocock "Opportunities for the future that I see are collaboration between countries and national parks. As there is a tight timescale to bring about change to our environment, it is vital that we work together on solutions. There are also opportunities to educate more people about the natural environment from different backgrounds."

Challenges that I see are political. I hope that future governments will have green agendas. Currently, it is not being seen as a top priority."

B. Alexandra Imberh "With the very commendable inclusion of a Youth Council in EUROPARC I see great opportunities to diversify the representation of Protected Areas and people in nature even more. With the educational programmes already in place in so many Protected Areas around Europe, which focus on accessible nature connection for minority groups, it will be great to see these being represented more in the future."

And why EUROPARC is important to YOU?

A. Marla Schulz "EUROPARC is important for me because I work in the field of Protected Areas and I am interested in the further development and spread of such Protected Areas. This can only be achieved if everyone pulls together. Therefore, a coming-together of people who are committed to the same things as you is incredibly important for inspiration and motivation. Since I feel not only German but also European, I find it important and interesting to meet people from other Protected Areas, especially because I can imagine working in this field in other European countries."

A NEW EU REGULATION FOR NATURE RESTORATION: **WHERE ARE WE?**

The proposal for the new EU Nature Restoration Law is the first major EU biodiversity law since the Habitats Directive in 1992 and follows the commitments contained in the EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030. The new law should restore at least 20% of the EU's land and sea areas by 2030 and repair all ecosystems in need of restoration by 2050.

After the publication of the legislative proposal for Nature Restoration in June 2022 by the EC, the EU Council and EU Parliament gave the green light to the Nature Restoration Law in summer 2023, although with some ambitions contained in the initial proposal, reduced. A final version of the legislation should be agreed by the end of this year, with a final vote in early 2024.

In this delicate phase we encourage EUROPARC members, in particular National Authorities, to ensure a high level of ambition together with coherent and effective measures are maintained, to contribute to a successful approval and future implementation of the new legislation.

Keep on reading to learn about the restoration actions Forstete Casentinesi National Park in Italy is already undertaking.

FOR MORE INFO:

Learn more about the EU Restoration Law [here](#).

Read the Joint Statement for Nature Restoration [here](#).

Read the FAQs on nature restoration [here](#).

*Marker Wadden,
National Park Nieuw Land, The
Netherlands. Picture by Esther Bossink*

RESTORING FORESTS BETWEEN HISTORY, LANDSCAPE, ETHICS AND NATURE



Nature Reserve Sasso Fratino. Picture by Nevio Agostini



Article written by **ANDREA GENNAI**

Acting Director at Foreste Casentinesi National Park

From a forestry point of view, the Foreste Casentinesi National Parks is the home of two very special forests: the ancient beech forests, recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site with trees up to 600 years old, and about 5,000 hectares of silver fir forests, cultivated for a thousand years according to the classic rules of silviculture. These forests originated from the school of Benedictine monks who founded the religious community of Camaldoli in 1024 AD.

These two forests are examples of areas that are very important for the landscape and are ingrained in the history of the place. Furthermore, they harvest a special relationship with the people that benefit of it economically, ethically and spiritually.

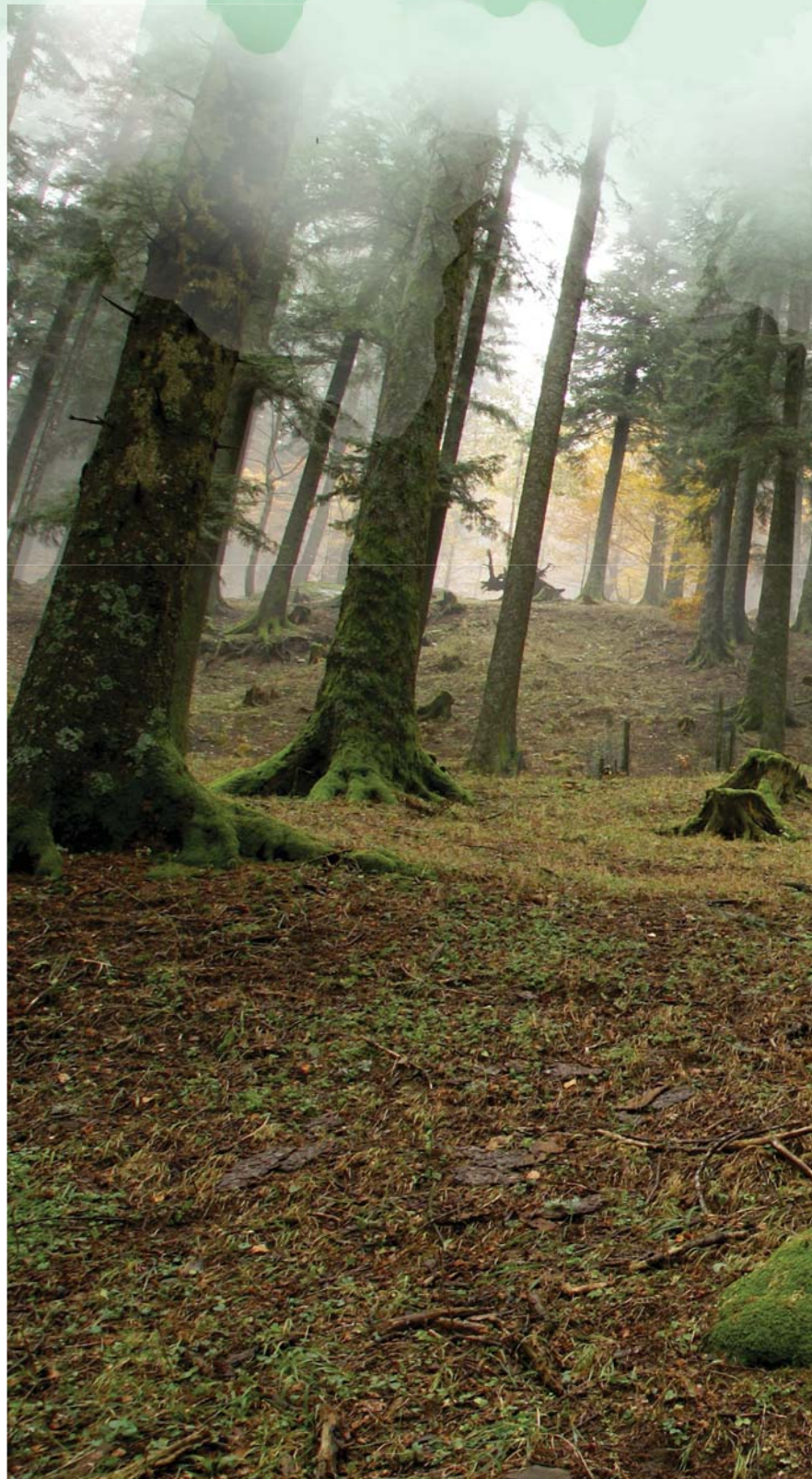
In the case of the ancient beech forests, nature is left free to decide its own destiny, however, in the silver fir forests, it is man who dictates, with precise silvicultural instructions, the rules of the game, according to an approach that increasingly seems to be unsuitable to an ecosystemic, holistic and ethical vision of forest management.

The National Park Authority is therefore directing its planning and forest management choices towards models that build a new relationship (which is actually very ancient) with the forest, where people continue to benefit without interfering heavily with the evolutionary dynamics and natural processes. This all within a context of climate change such as the one we are currently experiencing. A true cultural revolution, rather than a forestry one.

The European Restoration Law is precisely what is driving this epochal change of approach in the forests of the national park.

There are essentially four bases for this „forest and cultural transformation“:

- Giving time to the forest: nature, especially when it comes to forests, works in different timeframes than humans. Forest time is measured in centuries and this is something we must learn to respect, adopting a forestry approach that is always cautious, continuous, and thorough. The cultivated forests of silver fir, which are even-aged and monospecific, are moving towards natural forests according to a process that may take decades or, sometimes, centuries.
- Combining economics with conservation: „Conservation without money is conversation“, means that we must increasingly emphasize the value that is obtained from the protection of natural forests, in addition to the immaterial benefits to humanity, and that we must enhance the economic value of these benefits. At the Foreste Casentinesi National Park, this is very well realized thanks to the value that public opinion recognizes in the large protected forests. Not only because they are visited by thousands of tourists, but because their conservation, thanks to the communicative work of the Park, is recognized as a factor of well-being in public health, and therefore worthy of special funding. In this case, economy is a real tool for conservation (and not the other way around).



- Building an alliance with local populations, who must be the real actors of forest restoration. Today more and more residents in the Park's territories feel themselves to be part of this process of return to nature, also because they clearly perceive (also in economic terms) that the forests are, today, important for everybody.
- Communicating change innovatively. The return to nature must be the result of a cultural change, and this also requires a change of pace in communication and educational strategies. We need communication professionals, true interpreters of the natural heritage, who make everyone experience from inside a natural forest what its value and power is.



Silver fir forest. Picture by Nevio Agostini

One of the functions of national parks is to experiment with solutions that can then be useful for other contexts. In the Foreste Casentinesi National Park this great experiment is fully underway and the first results are already arriving.

DEVELOPING DESTINATIONS THROUGH CO-CREATION AND MOBILISATION

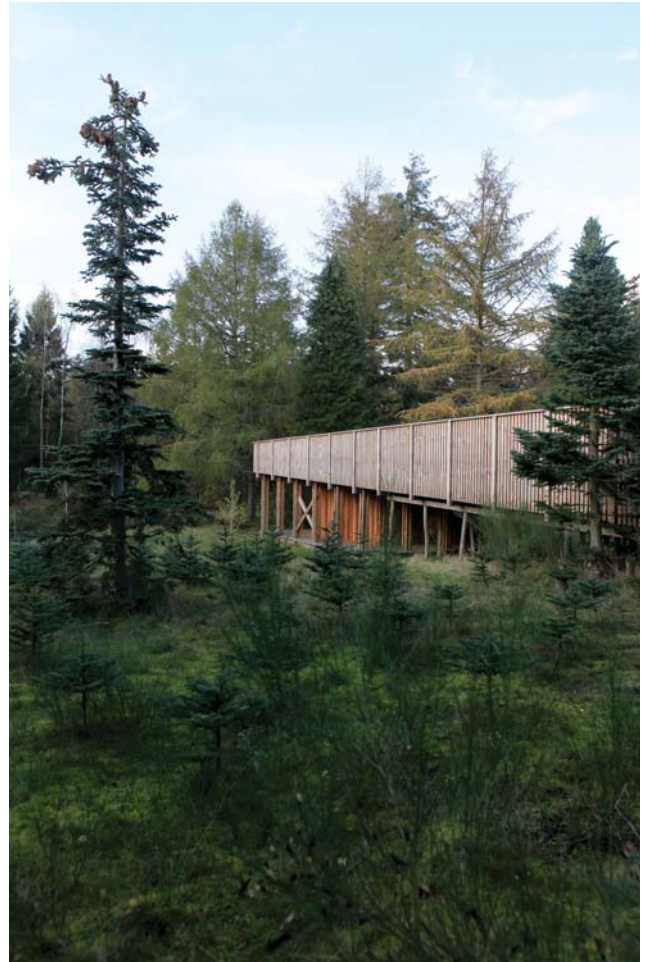


Article written by **KAREN LILLEØR**
 Head of Nature at NORRØN architects

Public spaces, whether natural or urban, are better managed and created by following a co-creation and mobilisation approach. NORRØN, an award-winning Danish architecture studio and knowledge house based in Copenhagen, is specialised in planning and designing extraordinary experiences, recreational infrastructures and destinations in nature.

Nature serves as an arena for various, potentially conflicting, user groups. Multiple interests must be considered and incorporated into the planning of new initiatives and projects in European Parks. What should an area offer and to whom? How can we create favourable conditions for nature and people to coexist harmoniously? How can we ensure long-term ownership and local pride in the development of our nature destinations?

Co-creation and mobilisation of multiple stakeholders are essential starting points for both long-term strategic planning and the development of specific projects that will make a Park appealing to residents, user groups, farmers and visitors.



The Insight – one of NORRØN's projects in Gribskov, at the border to Nationalpark Kongernes Nordsjælland.

Graphic summary - planning for different user groups, Køge Bugt Beachpark

	LANDAKTIVITETER																							
	VANDRETURE	HUNDE	MOTIONSLOB	CYKLING	TRATHOLN	FITNESS	LEGEPLADS	DANS	DIRT BIKE	BMX	SKATEBOARD	BASKETBALL	FUTBAL	BEACHVOLLEY	STRANDHÅNDBOLD	STRANDFODBOLD	LGBT+	SALINA	WELLNESS	YOGA	ORNTOLOG	NATURFORMIDLING	SHELTERS	
FOKUSOMRÅDE 00 ELIPSEBAKKERNE	●	●	●	●		○	○	○	●	○	○	○	○								●	○		
FOKUSOMRÅDE 01 BRONDBY HAVN	●		●	●	○														○			●		
FOKUSOMRÅDE 02 BRONDBY STRAND	●		●	●		○	●							○	○	○			○		○	●		
FOKUSOMRÅDE 03 VALLENSBÆK STRAND	●		●	●			●												○			●		
FOKUSOMRÅDE 04 ISHØJ - HAVHYTTEN	●	●	●	●																	●	●		
FOKUSOMRÅDE 05 ISHØJ - ARKEN	●		●	●			●												○	○	●	●		
FOKUSOMRÅDE 06 GREVE MARINA	●	●	●	●	○	○	●	○						○	○	○	○		○			●		
FOKUSOMRÅDE 07 GREVE	●		●	●			●												○	○	○	●	○	○



Co-Design Session. Photo by NORRØN

WHY IS CO-CREATION AND MOBILISATION ESSENTIAL AND HOW CAN WE SUCCEED?

Firstly, co-creation and mobilisation can help bring out the **tacit knowledge** of civil society. Developing authentic destinations involves highlighting the local, place-based qualities, embedded knowledge, stories and myths that reside within the people living in the area. A destination or Park's identity emerges from the place and its inhabitants. Therefore, it is crucial to create a conducive framework for a broad representation of the local population to contribute their voices and knowledge to the area's development. Using various engagement methods that appeal to different demographics is important: for example, workshops, temporary drop-in pavilions, online surveys, walks and talks and drawing sessions with school children, provide opportunities for engagement in different ways and at different times of the day and week.

Secondly, co-creation and mobilisation can help **mitigate potential conflicts**. By identifying the many different stakeholders and their desires and needs for the development of an area, it is possible to generate solutions that harmonise versatile and multifunctional uses of the area. It is often useful to consider how an area can be made accessible for different users and activities throughout the day, week, and year, thereby reducing

visitor pressure. By listening openly and attentively to the wishes and needs of various user groups, it is possible to incorporate these considerations into future planning and eliminate potential obstacles along the way. Workshops involving various user groups are essential engagement tools in this context. Subsequently, a graphic summary can be created to visualise the needs and wishes of the different stakeholders.

Thirdly, co-creation and mobilisation produce a **democratic mandate**. When the multiple local stakeholders are involved and mobilised in an area's development, it ensures that the people who live, work and spend their leisure time in the area have a voice and influence on the development that takes place. A democratic mandate is essential to ensure local political support for the development of the area and the interest of investors and funds to invest in the area.

Co-creation provides NORRØN with valuable insights into the local area that are pivotal in shaping the design and architecture we envision for the place. In this way, our design and architecture naturally evolve from the specific context and contribute to a sense of local pride and ownership.

LEARN MORE ABOUT NORRØN

PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

IN PASVIK-INARI TRANSBOUNDARY AREA

For over 30 years, authorities from Norway, Russia and Finland have been working together on the cross-border management of the Pasvik Inari Transboundary Area. As esteemed members of EUROPARC's TransParcNet, Tiia Kalske and Riina Tervo relay their experiences and lessons learned.

Article written by **TIIA KALSKE**

Senior advisor at the County Governor of Troms and Finnmark, Norway



and **RIINA TERVO**

Development Manager at Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland.

*Tiia and Riina in 2016 during Barents Ski.
Picture by Bjørn Arne Naess*

Brown bear © Steinar Wikan

Nature knows no boundaries, as such Transboundary cooperation is crucial for nature protection. Here, high up in the North, the objectives for nature conservation focus on boreal old-growth forests and species of flora and fauna living at the edge of their range.

The area has been inhabited by Sámi, Norwegian, Russian, and Finnish people. All share a history in this common border area with Peoples who have lived next to each other. Apart from more effective nature conservation, Transboundary cooperation also brings understanding, learning and capacity building for organisations and experts involved.

PAST

It was in the early 1990s that environmental authorities in Northern Norway, Russia and Finland sat together to discuss a cooperative approach to nature protection. The timing was right: the Iron Curtain had crumbled; the Cold War had ended. Slowly and surely the annual meetings as well as common activities and field trips evolved. It was in 2008, that Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park was established as a certified EUROPARC Transboundary Area. At that time, it was the first cooperation area between three countries in

the European wide network of certified Parks. The basis of this successful trilateral cooperation have been our joint cooperation agreement, 10-year action plans as well as annual meetings of the working group and advisory board.

Norway and Finland have had no cooperation with Russia since February 2022 because of Russia's aggression towards Ukraine. The cross-border cooperation continues bilaterally, between Norway and Finland, in Pasvik-Inari Transboundary Area.



PRESENT

Even though cooperation with Russian authorities has stopped, the Finnish and Norwegian authorities continued their mission. In 2023, the following activities were carried out: Annual meetings for the working group and advisory board have been organised. New visitor point Gjøken for Norwegian Øvre Pasvik National Park was established and built in a cross-border project. This new sight and point for guiding was opened in June 2023. Furthermore, joint brown bear monitoring work was implemented for the 5th time over the summer. The results from brown bear monitoring will be published in the beginning of 2024. Expert staff exchanges also took place in early autumn.

We wish and hope that nature conservation can be “a bridge over troubled waters” when there is peace again and reconstruction of losses in Europe.

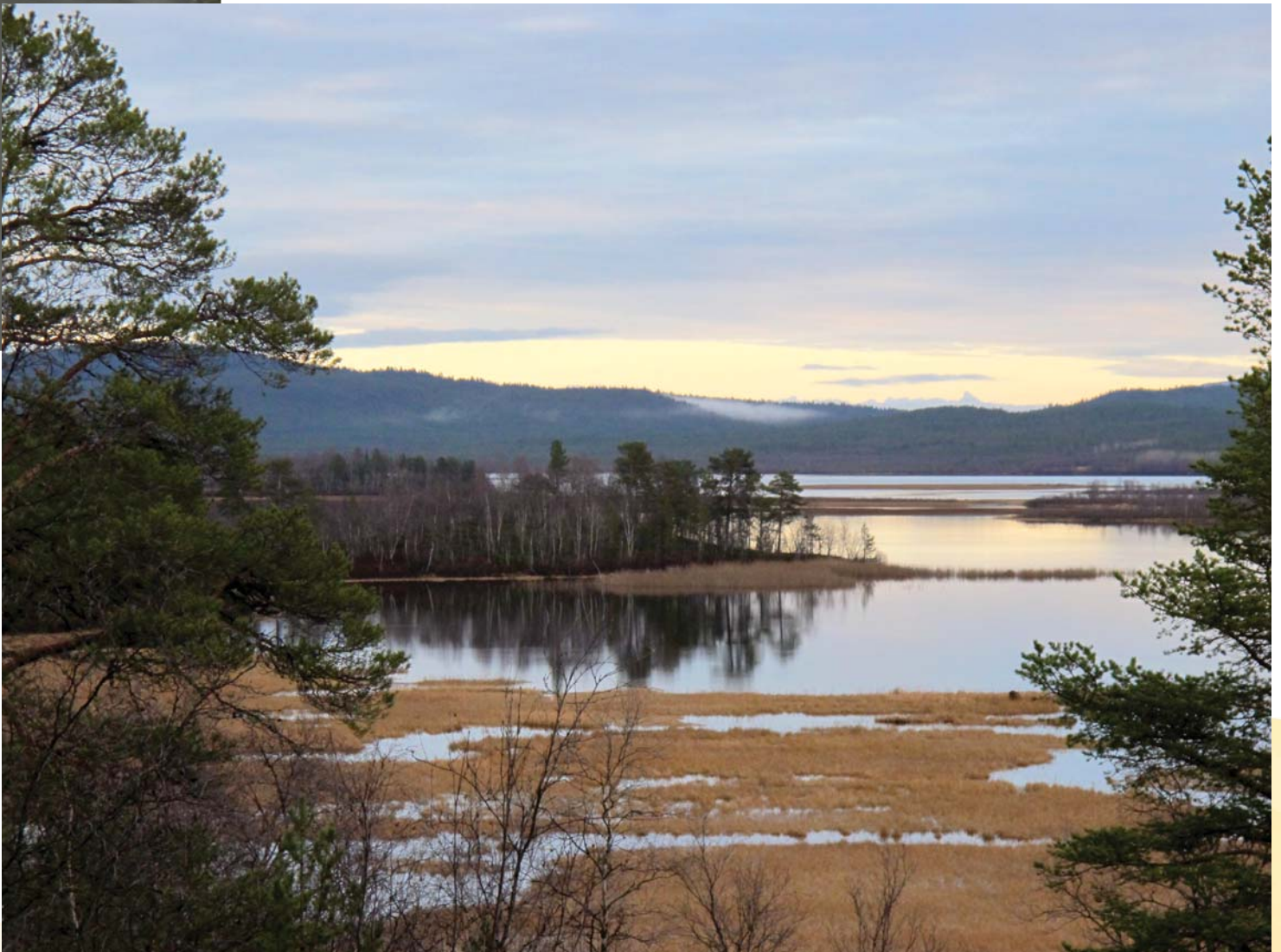
FUTURE

Norwegian partners, County Governor of Troms and Finnmark and Øvre Pasvik National Park Board, and Metsähallitus Parks & Wildlife Finland are committed to continue the cooperation across national borders. Currently, plans are underway to cooperate with schools on the themes of phenology and climate change. The managers of the Protected Areas are also keen to launch a joint project about adaptation to climate change in Protected Areas and climate communication, if funding from Interreg Aurora -programme will be granted. In 2025, the Pasvik-Inari Transboundary area will also go through the process of the bilateral re-evaluation of the Transboundary Parks programme's criteria.

LEARN MORE!

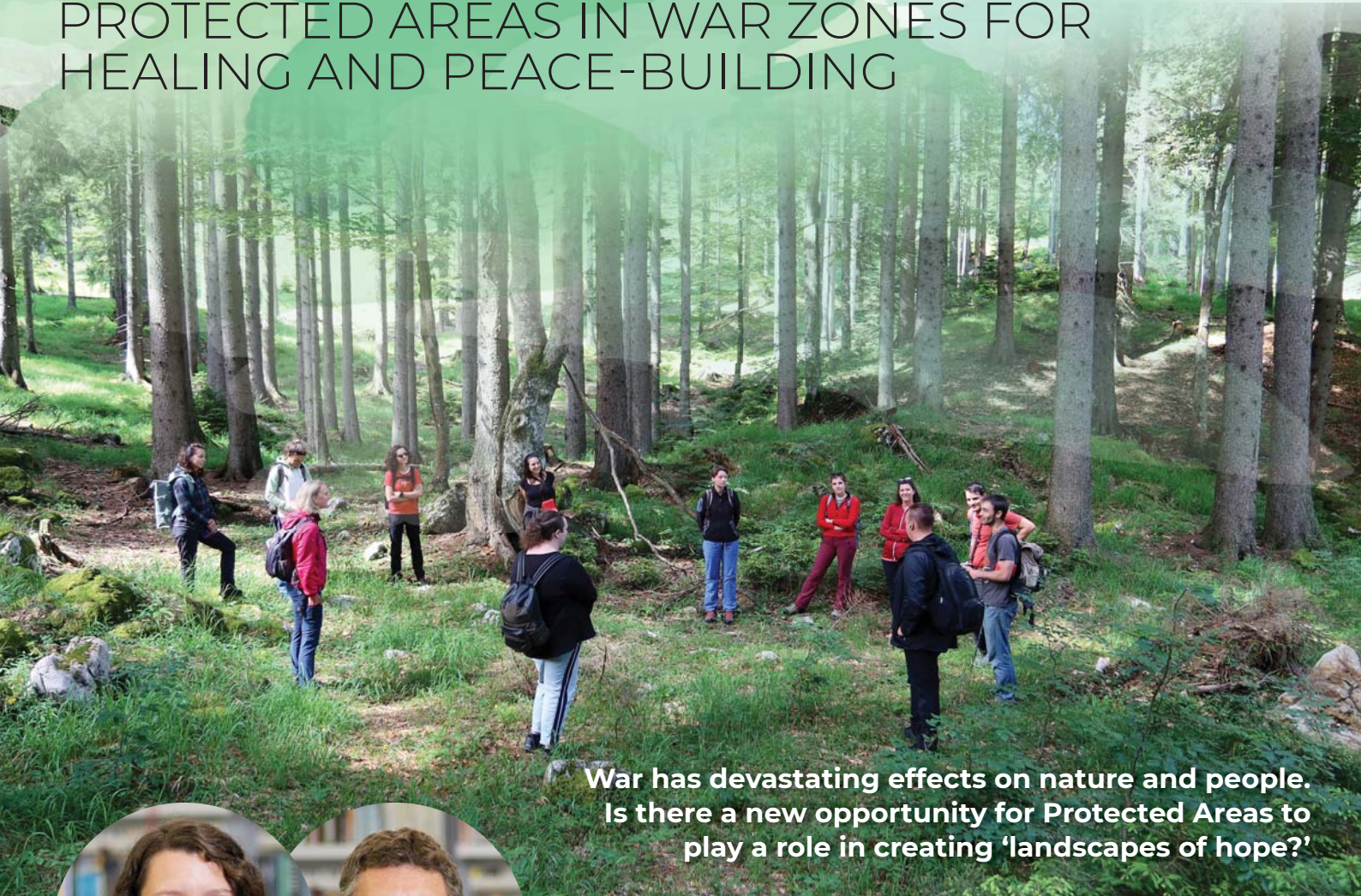
Learn more about Pasvik-Inari Transboundary Area.

Pasvik Nature Reserve, Bjørnar Strøm-Hågensen County Governor of Troms and Finnmark



NATURE FOR PEACE

PROTECTED AREAS IN WAR ZONES FOR HEALING AND PEACE-BUILDING



War has devastating effects on nature and people. Is there a new opportunity for Protected Areas to play a role in creating 'landscapes of hope?'

Foresbathing. Picture by Michael Jungmeier



Article written by **ELISABETH WIEGELE**, Scientific Associate

and **MICHAEL JUNGMEIER** UNESCO Chair for „Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas“ at Carinthia University of Applied Sciences

Around the world, tragic news continues to emerge day after day. World peace is in danger and all disciplines must join efforts to find solutions for peace-building and peacekeeping. Armed conflicts have a direct impact on local ecology, animal and plant species, natural ecosystems, and Protected Areas. However, war also affects nature beyond national borders, for example, migratory species such as birds.

In times of war, Protected Areas are under great pressure. On the one hand, there is the danger of an area being destroyed directly through military activity. On the other hand, a much greater danger lurks in resource management. As the dramatic example of Ukraine shows, military conflicts result in the destruction of ecosystems and infrastructures of conservation areas and long-term damage through poisoning, mines or terrain changes. By redirecting staff and equipment for the war effort, these Protected Areas are unable to maintain many functions. For example, a weakening of the law enforcement can encourage poaching, which leads to consequential damage.



War events mean great human suffering that leaves individuals, social groups (children, disabled communities, ethnic groups, etc.) and societies physically and psychologically traumatized. Whilst this is bleak, in the long term, it can also result in a new function for Protected Areas. Many studies examine the benefits to health and well-being perceived by visitors of Protected Areas. Nature is already being used in a variety of therapies around the world. Therefore, Protected Areas can play a crucial role in improving the health and emotional recovery of conflict. Emotional suffering related to armed conflict may occur not only due to direct exposure to life-threatening situations and violence, but also through living in damaged environments, broken infrastructure, and under the influence of negative environmental factors.

Nature for Peace is a newly developed concept in which Protected Areas become focal points for the recovery of people affected by armed conflicts. Protected Areas have natural, ecological, cultural, and historical potential for the recuperation of communities who were impacted by war. By implementing the Nature for Peace method, Protected Areas can share knowledge about biodiversity, nature conservation, ecosystem services, climate change, and other global topics and therefore raise awareness to prevent illegal activities in the conserved area.



Forestbathing. Picture by Michael Jungmeier

Nature for Peace should bring together people with different cultures and values to help them focus on their personal responsibility for sustainable nature use. This involves maintaining a healthy environment, playing a key role as an agent for raising awareness in their communities, and finally making peace with nature. Therefore, Nature for Peace has the potential to become a future peace-building and peacekeeping movement. Moreover, Protected Areas can become Landscapes of Hope through the application of Nature for Peace as a peace-building tool.



Picture by Hanns Kirchmeier

READ MORE!

More Information about Nature for Peace can be found here.

THE EUROPARC NETWORK

IS READY TO CREATE A FUTURE
IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

During the EUROPARC Conference 2023, a special Conference Statement was produced. Through seven 'steps', this statement of intent underlines what actions are needed to create a future in harmony with nature.

World Café at the EUROPARC Conference. Picture by PDF-Grafie

From 3 - 6 October over 450 nature professionals gathered in Leeuwarden, The Netherlands to dive into the theme of the week: Tribute to our Landscape - Where nature and people meet in Harmony.

But, what does harmony mean? And how can Protected Area professionals help shape a 'harmonised future'? The official Conference statement wants to provide clear answers and actions to these questions.

The creation of this statement was spearheaded by Jan van de Venis, president of the National Park Dunes of Texel, and part of the EC2023 organisational team, as well as EUROPARC's Executive Director Carol Ritchie. In an interactive session on the final Conference day, participants could provide their feedback and discuss with their peers on how to take this work forward.

Through seven 'steps', the statement serves both as an inspiration, as well as a practical guide on how Europe's Protected Areas can lead the way to a greener, healthier and harmonised future. Discover it here and help take the good work forward!

1. PAST - PRESENT - FUTURE

Understanding our past and present helps us to work towards the future: the future we need and want. The connection between nature and culture manifests in diverse landscapes that change over time, whilst respecting our natural heritage and all life. Preserving landscapes' core values for the future reconfirms and conserves our link to previous generations.



Jan van de Venis. Picture by PDF-Grafie

2. HARMONY WITH NATURE

Living in harmony with nature, a stable climate and no pollution, requires a change in human attitudes and actions. We recognise the impact of humans on the landscape and nature and current dis-harmony that exists between people and non-

human nature in many places in Europe. Many people and cultures have forgotten or lost their place within global ecosystems. Climate and biodiversity cannot wait any longer: we stress that nature is the foundation of our existence.

3. CONTACT AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS WITH NATURE

Go out there and spend time in nature. We have different experiences and backgrounds. However, appreciating nature and all its diversity is crucial to recognise its value to human society. Storytelling can inspire a growing understanding of nature's importance for our health, food, water and air. Share beautiful and connecting stories.



Delegates capture their actions creatively.
Picture by PDF-Grafie

4. KNOWLEDGE

Even if humans know about nature, they tend not to act accordingly. Scientific knowledge and practical experience often stay in closed circles, instead of reaching out to people, beyond a “green bubble”. There is a need to reach consumers, business owners or other stakeholders. Behaviour change is necessary.

50 years of EUROPARC have passed.

May the next 50 years of EUROPARC bring us towards a more mature relationship in harmony with nature. For present and future generations. For all life.”

5. BE AMAZED, PROTECT AND EDUCATE

Continue to marvel at nature and landscape beauty. Protected Areas have an essential educational role in reconnecting society with nature. You want

to protect what you know and love. We need comprehensive approaches and cooperation to foster continuous environmental protection and nature education at European, national and regional levels. We need to work with the education sector to learn together - to share more between those knowledgeable in nature, heritage interpretation, environment and other areas.

7. START AND ACT NOW

We know that our landscapes face many challenges: overexploitation, intensification of uses, pollution, biodiversity loss, effects of climate change and loss of cultural heritage. Protected landscapes need to be pilot areas for integrated solutions. Let’s take the action needed now to move from fear towards hope. Creating a better, more natural world together must begin now. Not only should we focus on our current perspectives, we need intergenerational interaction where young and old learn together, share achievements and improvements, for a common future. A roadmap for change is needed, with everyone playing a role, individually and collaboratively.

6. EVERYWHERE AND ALL OF THE TIME

Nature exists everywhere: in natural areas, cultural landscapes, cities and towns - they are all connected. We should seek better links between such areas, by collaborating with managers, users, residents and other organisations. New technology can help, but it should be supportive rather than controlling.

CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION AND MITIGATION IN EUROPE'S LIVING LANDSCAPES

The NRL Task Force signs the Climate Declaration at the EUROPARC Conference 2023. Picture by PDF-Grafie

Europe's 900 Nature Regional Landscape Parks (NRL) make up a vibrant network of Protected Areas dedicated to the conservation of biodiversity and landscapes. NRL Parks promote sustainable economic development and community involvement, as well as opportunities in Education for Sustainable Development. They are also leaders in nature-based tourism.

Now, NRL Parks across Europe unite under the common goal to protect our climate, while conserving and restoring nature through a new *Declaration on Climate Change*.

Climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies call for healthy and well-connected ecosystems at a watershed and regional scale. NRL Parks offer the opportunity for long-term, large-scale integrated landscape management. At the same time, these Protected Areas are great tools to improve ecological continuity and connectivity, central to the foundation of sustainable climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.

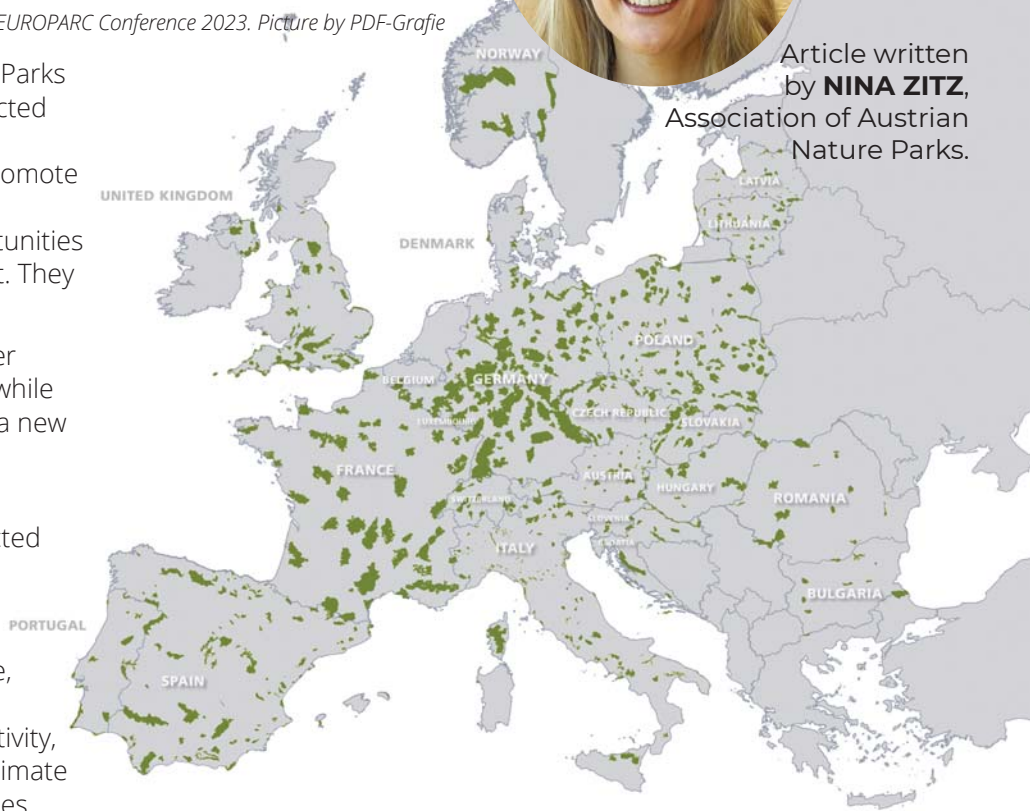
Furthermore, due to the collaborative nature of NRL Parks, they are well-placed to work together with local authorities to better identify, anticipate and decide upon actions that protect and adapt their territories against climate change impacts.

As important drivers of regional sustainable development, NRL Parks encourage systemic as well as holistic land use management practices, promote and implement low emission actions, and support the organisation and improvement of the local food sector to create short supply chains. Through a wealth of projects, NRL Parks are already creating more climate-resilient land management approaches.

READ MORE!



Article written by **NINA ZITZ**, Association of Austrian Nature Parks.



Now, it is time to amplify that potential and impact. That is why the NRL Parks developed the *"Europe's Nature Regional Landscape Parks Declaration on Climate Change"*. It calls upon policymakers and governing authorities at all levels to support, invest in and work with Nature Regional Landscape Parks across Europe.

This declaration has been launched and signed during the 2023 EUROPARC Conference, in Leeuwarden (Netherlands).

The term Nature Regional Landscape Park includes a wide variety of large-scale Protected Areas across Europe - for example, Nature Parks, Regional Parks, Landscape Parks, Regional Nature Parks and Protected Landscape Areas. They correspond to the description of Category V 'Protected Landscape/ Seascape' according to the management criteria of the IUCN. They make up almost 8% of the total surface area of the EU, including Switzerland, the UK and Norway.

SAVE THE DATE

6 - 7 NOVEMBER 2024



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