

European Wilderness Academy Days 2019

Book of Abstracts



Biosphere Reserve Lungau, Austria

www.wilderness.academy

KEYNOTE

JOHN HAUSDOERFFER

Organisation:

University of Western Colorado, USA



PORTRAIT

John Hausdoerffer is the founding Dean of the School of Environment & Sustainability and Director of the Master in Environmental Management program at Western Colorado University. One of his focus topics is peace between humanity and wilderness, which begins with spiritual connection. His successful books “Catlin’s Lament” and “Wildness” delve into these fundamentals. Further, John has co-founded numerous institutes to unite environmental work to help in conservation and find shared solutions. These include the Coldharbour Institute, Resilience Studies Consortium, Mountain Resilience Coalition and Sisters City International.

Keynote: The Spiritual Value of Wilderness

Wilderness advocates and their spiritual connection with Wilderness: A look beyond the scientific approach to Wilderness

What can the US and Europe Learn from each other?

The future of wildness as US becomes more of a culturally diverse and urban society, with some comment on what we can learn from Europe

Let's get Wild!

KEYNOTE

PIERRE IBISCH

Organisation:

Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development, Germany



PORTRAIT

Pierre Ibsch has a long history in conservation, biodiversity and global environmental change including resource management. His role was instrumental in the designation of the UNESCO World Heritage site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and other regions of Europe”. Pierre also founded the Centre for Economics and Ecosystem Management at University of Sustainability at Eberswalde and has been actively involved in the publication of over 350 research papers.

Keynote: Free-willed ecosystems on a hot, flat and crowded planet: a challenge, but no alternative

Being wild is about free-willed systems. Modern ecosystem theory and systems ecology allow for ever better understanding why and how ecosystems work, even under disturbance and change. Resilience is a result of permanently growing complex systems, where after biomass, especially information content and networks grow. As humans attack these very key ecological attributes on all fronts and also increase exposure to all types of stressors the situation becomes messy. There is no alternative to giving back (free-)wil(le)dness to our ecosystems.

Let's get Wild!

MAX ROSSBERG

Organisation:

European Wilderness Society, Austria



PORTRAIT

Max Rossberg is the chairman of the European Wilderness Society. His main focus is Livestock Protection against the large carnivores in the alpine regions, and project development. He is currently developing an International Wilderness Exchange programme in cooperation with the University of Sustainable Development in Germany and the Western Colorado University in the United States.

Welcome Note

A warm welcome to all the participants of the European Wilderness Academy Days 2019. Max will discuss general conference information, and build enthusiasm for the next few days of Wilderness knowledge exchange between participants.

Successful Wilderness Outreach - Best-practice examples of European Wilderness Society

The European Wilderness Society's mission is to identify, designate, steward and promote Wilderness across Europe. A large part of this involves outreach, including the WILDart programme, youth education, and Wilderness-exchange programmes. Max will provide examples and reflect on strategies the European Wilderness Society has learned and developed since its establishment five years ago.

Let's get Wild!

GARRY OYE

Organisation:

Former Chief of Wilderness, US National Parks Service



PORTRAIT

Garry Oye is a former Chief of Wilderness for the US National Parks Service, who leads assignments for the National Park Service and the US Forestry Service, amounting in 35 years of experience in protected area management. In national parks alone, this included 44 million acres spread across 60 Wilderness areas in 49 parks. With his wealth of knowledge, Garry has travelled the world to impart his experience in Wilderness Stewardships concepts.

Evolution of Wilderness policy, regulation and law – How it all came to be in the US

Wilderness in the US has a specific history, definition and experience with implementation. Legislative framework is result of long and demanding process. Gary Oye will share experience with Wilderness interpretation across the 4 national services (US Forest Service, US National Parks, US Bureau and Land Management and US Fishery and Wildlife) and provide an overview of the history of Wilderness in the US.

A successful Wilderness Stewardship program – experiences from the US

Garry Oye will share his experiences with Wilderness stewardship in the US Wilderness over the course of his career, from a ranger over 40 years ago to Chief of Wilderness for the US National Parks. He will cover some of his challenging decisions through his career, such as fire vs air quality, or endangered species habitats, and .will further discuss the evolution of the Wilderness programme. Examples from several iconic national parks demonstrate the wide variety of wilderness stewardship in the US.

Let's get Wild!

VLADO VANCURA

Organisation:

European Wilderness Society, Slovakia



PORTRAIT

Vlado Vancura has been working for the benefit of European Wilderness for several decades. Currently he is involved in the building of the European Wilderness Network with the European Wilderness Society. The purpose of this network is to designate and steward Wilderness across Europe. He is also responsible for the development and implementation of 'The European Wilderness Quality Standard and Audit System', to systematically guarantee the quality of Wilderness throughout the entirety of Europe. This challenging work is done through an extensive network of partners, supporters committed Wilderness stewards all over Europe.

European Wilderness Quality Standard

Due to history and cultural diversity, Wilderness in Europe used to have various diverse interpretations, from strictly protected and undeveloped land, to areas with remnants of traditional use and certain levels of resource management. Since the 1990s however, Wilderness in Europe has become more and more important, and thus an agreement of common understanding and interpretation for what Wilderness means in the European context has become very important. The framework of this work was the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) definition of Wilderness. It took time, but in 2012 a common agreement on Wilderness Definition in Europe was achieved. The logical follow-up step was that the European Wilderness Society (with support of many partners) developed the European Wilderness Quality Standard and Audit System (EWQA) as a tool to implement unified Wilderness interpretation throughout Europe. In 2019, the European Wilderness Society launched the EWQA 2.0.

Let's get Wild!

ANGELIKA STÜCKLER

Organisation:

Kalkalpen National Park, Austria



PORTRAIT

Angelika Stückler has been working in Kalkalpen National Park since 1995 in various fields, such as education and visitor services, national park ranger education and training, exhibition development as well as research publications. Being a biologist, ranger and leader of the Wilderness educational training programs she actively shares her passion of the Kalkalpen rewilded forest with visitors, with a special focus on youth groups. Since some parts of the forest in Kalkalpen National Park were utilised by forestry for more than 500 years, the currently implemented non-intervention management provides a unique visitor experience.

The Value and Challenges of Kalkalpen Wilderness

Main parts of the forests in Kalkalpen National Park have been utilised by forestry for more than 500 years. In the past wood was the primary source of energy for a flourishing iron industry in the region. However, the Reichraminger Hintergebirge and the Sengsengebirge were difficult to get into because of inaccessible gorges, steep slopes and rock faces. Therefore, natural wild forests and remnants of primeval forest survived with outstanding biodiversity. For more than 20 years wilderness has returned to Kalkalpen National Park and visitors can experience and feel the wild.

Let's get Wild!

MARTIN HARTMANN

Organisation:

Gesäuse National Park, Austria



PORTRAIT

Martin Hartmann is head of the department for nature and environmental education, head of the Fotoschule Gesäuse and president of the VTNÖ (Association for Animal and Nature Photography Austria). As a national park ranger, the forestry scientist and protected area manager has been able to experience the development of a protected area up close and personal since 1996 in the Donau Auen National Park. Since 2003, he is now responsible for all educational activities in the Gesäuse National Park and, in addition, head of the Working Group on Education of National Parks Austria. His work in Admont is surrounded by the impressive Gesäuse mountains, and his passion for nature photography has taken him on numerous trips to the most beautiful nature reserves in the world.

The meaning of wilderness in Gesäuse National Park – From the concept to the content of an educational program

The meaning of “wild” for Gesäuse National Park and their communication strategies, including education, photo exhibitions, publications, and films, all with deep-rooted Wilderness philosophy.

Let's get Wild!



**WWF GENERATION EARTH:
GUDRUN BRUCKNER
JUDITH KAPPELLER
NINA MOSER**



Organisation:

WWF Generation Earth, Austria



PORTRAIT

Generation Earth are a colourful network of young people, who want to inspire, educate and take action for our planet. One of their programs is the “young wilderness ambassadors”. Their projects focus on wilderness protection and education - to bring wilderness closer to young people, with the aim to strengthen connection to nature and environmental awareness.

Generation Earth - Young.Empowered.Active

An introduction to the Young Wilderness Ambassadors of WWF Generation Earth, and their projects, events and activities which promote Wilderness protection and education.

Let's get Wild!

HANNA ÖLLÖS NICK HUISMAN

Organisation:

European Wilderness Society, Austria



PORTRAITS

Hanna Öllös is a Slovakian biologist, graduated from Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. Coming from an academic background in zoology and behavioural ecology, she joined the European Wilderness Society in early 2019. Her work is focused on Interreg projects, predominantly on the Interreg Central Europe project Centralparks, for which she is the main contact point. She is also supporting other European Wilderness Society projects such as Livestock Protection and communication work.

Nick Huisman has been working for the European Wilderness Society since June 2017. He is a graduate biologist from the Wageningen University, Netherlands, and much of his work is focused on project development and implementation. Starting April 2019, he is the main point of contact for European Wilderness Society in the new Interreg Central Europe project: BEECH POWER. Besides project work, he assists the European Wilderness Society team in other activities, including Wilderness audits and communication.

Introduction to Interreg Centralparks and BEECH POWER projects

The Carpathians belong to the most important European eco-regions. Biodiversity loss and increasing pressures threaten their outstanding natural values. Traditional approaches to resource management and nature conservation are no longer sufficient to guarantee long-lasting economic benefits and the provision of ecosystem services. The Centralparks project aims to harmonise management capacities in Carpathian protected areas. The project implements an innovative approach by reconciling both biological and landscape conservation policies as well as measures for the local socio-economic development, thus involving local communities in protected area management.

The UNESCO World Heritage Site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe” represents the most complex natural site in the UNESCO portfolio – comprising of 78 parts in more than 40 protected areas in 12 countries. While local management units of the parts face similar challenges e.g. buffer zone management, the environmental and socio-economic contexts differ considerably. The BEECH POWER project aims to improve the management quality and effectiveness of this site to safeguard the ecosystem integrity of the single parts by improving capacities and active participation of relevant stakeholders. The project focuses on creating a “Beech Forest Quality Standard” to support protected areas.

Let's get Wild!

VASYL POKYNCHEREDA

ROMAN KUZMINSKY

Organisation:

Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, Ukraine



Vasyl Pokynchereda



PORTRAITS

Vasyl Pokynchereda is the Head of the Department for Scientific Research and International Cooperation in the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, Ukraine. During his almost 35 years of experience in nature protection, he made a significant contribution to the establishment and development of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve as a protected area, as well as in the enlargement of its territory. He took active part in the preparation of the Ukrainian-Slovak nomination “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians”, which was included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in 2007. Furthermore, he was the national coordinator of the extension process of this Heritage Site in Ukraine, which resulted in the transnational Heritage Site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe”.

Roman Kuzminsky is the deputy director and chief naturalist of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve, Ukraine. His work with the Reserve has spanned almost 30 years, from being a ranger through to being head of the Chornohora Division, which has a strategic significance for the Reserve. Currently he is responsible for preserving the most valuable natural complexes and objects on the Reserve territory, particularly primeval forests and sites of the UNESCO World Heritage. Since 1990, Roman Kuzminsky actively participated in the three stages of Reserve enlargement.

Carpathian Biosphere Reserve: achievements, challenges, perspectives

Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (CBR) was created in 1968, and over its history it has conducted many international activities, and faced many challenges, which will be discussed in detail. This presentation will introduce a new 10-year management plan for CBR, which includes a focus on Wilderness.

Let's get Wild!

GIUSEPPE MARCANTONIO



Organisation:

Majella National Park, Italy

PORTRAIT

Giuseppe Marcantonio has been working for the protection of Majella National Park and particularly for the extremely rare Majella Wilderness for several decades. At the beginning of his career he conducted extensive research on the biodiversity of the Majella National Park area. Thanks to his systematic work and passion, he became a leading person to protect Majella Wilderness already in 2004, when the area became a member of the PAN Parks network. More than 15 years of experience with the Majella Wilderness stewardship made him one of the most pragmatic Wilderness activists in central Italy.

Majella National Park: Wilderness in the heart of the Mediterranean

The presentation will start with a brief introduction of Majella National Park, including location, size, main features, and outstanding natural values. Then it will focus on the Italian General Law on Protected Areas, which is the legal basis of the functioning of all the Italian P. A.'s, with a particular attention to the Zoning System. The zoning system of Majella National Park will then be described, and it will be explained why, notwithstanding the "A" zones are formally classified as "Integral reserve", they do not fully comply with the wilderness criteria of European Wilderness Society, because for example, some traditional land uses are safeguarded. So, we will explain the process that led to the definition of a Core zone, smaller than the A zone, where the Wilderness criteria are fulfilled. We will also explain the main issues (historical and present) in finding a wild area in the core of the Mediterranean, and how this is possible in a peculiar park such as Majella National Park. The differences between other mountains of central Apennines in terms of morphology and terrain will be highlighted. Also the past experiences, and particularly PAN Parks and the procedure to get the PP certification will be described. Finally, there will be a mention to the possible further steps that could be implemented: e.g. special WILD habitats. (WILDForest etc.).

Let's get Wild!

YAROSLAV PETRASHCHUK

Organisation:

Gorgany Nature Reserve, Ukraine



PORTRAIT

Petrashchuk Yaroslav is an ecologist, being engaged in environmental control regarding the use and protection of land, subsoil, waste management and hazardous chemicals for more than ten years. He took an active part in the transportation of the banned agricultural chemical hexachlorobenzene from the territory of Ukraine. Since October 2017, he is the head of the Gorgany Nature Reserve. Yaroslav puts great efforts on significantly decreasing illegal human activity in the territory of the Reserve.

History of Wilderness in Gorgany, Ukraine

The Gorgany Nature Reserve represents a natural reference model of a site not disturbed by human intervention in the central part of the Ukrainian Carpathians. It contains the only European and global primeval forest site of a relict species belonging to the early Holocene period – Swiss pine. With a continuous massif it covers three climate zones and five vertical vegetation zones of primeval, relict and endemic vegetation, habitats and animal populations. The reserve contains a vertically and horizontally homogenous belt of the five virgin forest sub-formations and demonstrates stages of pristine vegetation development starting from the early Holocene. Further the reserve contains some of the hardest post-glacial populations of relict Scots Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and water (dark) birch (*Betula obscura*). The Gorgany mountain range is famous for its localities of arboreal flora and cleavages of parent bedrock, which are of great scientific importance in terms of investigating the history of the vegetation cover in the past-glacial period, and studies of the mountain and highland ecosystems' dynamics tendencies caused by change of climate situation.

Due to the strict environmental protection regime, flora and fauna of the reserve are under minimal impact of anthropogenic factors. A systematic approach is being developed and implemented in order to improve protection of the reserve. For this purpose, training of security guard employees is organised, thematic scientific-practical workshops and study-visits to other protected areas of Ukraine are conducted for scientists of the reserve. The system of protected populations and ecosystems assessment is a leading link in scientific research. The development of indicators for the virgin forests status is the most important task for the nearest future.

Let's get Wild!

MINDAUGAS LAPELĖ

Organisation:

Dzukija National Park, Lithuania



PORTRAIT

Mindaugas Lapelė is Head of Nature Division at Dzūkija National Park and Čepkeliai State Nature Reserve Administration, Lithuania. He has spent a significant part of his life with the protection of the largest contiguous area of wilderness in Lithuania - Čepkeliai Wilderness. He witnessed the several decade-long spontaneous rewilding process in Čepkeliai Wilderness that resulted in the increasing percentage of dead wood in the forests, as well as dynamic changes in the water level due to the presence of beavers and the gradual overgrowth of formerly open wetland areas.

Čepkeliai - the largest Wilderness of Lithuania

Čepkeliai State Nature Reserve, established in 1975, is a Ramsar Site and has been part of the Transboundary Ramsar Site Kotra-Cepkeliai (Belarus - Lithuania) since 2010. Additionally, it is recognised as a Natura 2000 territory for both Habitat and Birds Directives. With an area of 11 212 ha, it represents the largest Lithuanian raised bog, lowland sedge bogs and black alder swamps, surrounded mainly by dry lichen pine forests on continental dunes.

Almost 40 years of strict protection have resulted in re-wilding of the area and changes in habitats, which were previously affected by forestry, extensive grazing and natural fires in the forests or wetlands. During this time notable changes were also observed in the hydrological situation and vegetation structure – the increase of dead wood in the forests, rising of water level by beaver activity and overgrowth of formerly open areas of wetlands.

However, still an open issue is how to combine the protection of rich biodiversity (more than 4,000 species of animals, fungi and plants found in the area) and the natural successions of plant communities. Managed fire would help to increase number and diversity of open habitats, but still there are some legal obstacles to use this nature management tool. In 2018, the new management plan for the Nature Reserve was prepared and we hope that in the future Čepkeliai will be even more wild, and a place not only for wolves, lynx or capercaillie, but for brown bear too.

Let's get Wild!

ONDREJ KAMENIAR

Organisation:

REMOTE Primary Forests, Slovakia



PORTRAIT

Ondrej Kameniar is a researcher working in the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague, Czech Republic. He is also a member of the research group REMOTE (REsearch on MOUNTAIN TEMperate) Primary Forests. This group is providing scientific insights into mountain temperate primary forest dynamics while establishing long-term international scientific and research collaboration. Ondrej has extensive experience in the documentation of the destruction of primary forests in the Carpathians and the complexity of mountain temperate primary forest dynamics.

Destruction of Primary Forests in the Carpathian Mountains

REMOTE (REsearch on MOUNTAIN TEMperate) primary forests is a long term international scientific collaboration since 2010. The general objective of the project, largest of its kind in Europe, is to better understand the disturbance dynamics, forest structure, biomass patterns and biodiversity in remaining primary forests in temperate Europe.

Our project is based on extensive network of permanent research plots in spruce- and beech-dominated primary forest remnants in nine countries, mostly in the Carpathian and the Balkan region. Dendrochronological methods are used for describing disturbance history. According to our results, these ecosystems are naturally shaped by a mixed severity disturbance regime with high spatiotemporal variability in severity and frequency. Large-scale disturbance events were also recorded in primary spruce forest. Different taxonomic groups of native biodiversity, including birds (Aves), showed preference to disturbance-driven forest structure and reactions to disturbance events. In spruce forest bird communities in Western Carpathians, total abundance on stand level was increasing with decreasing time since the last disturbance, consistently on 10 primary forest localities. Alpha diversity was not significantly affected. Our preliminary results show, that bird community is affected by disturbance only temporarily and it is not leading to community impoverishment. This results are in congruence with other research which shows that natural forest dynamics is integral part of spruce forest.

However, large-scale industrial logging is rapidly damaging this precious wilderness throughout Carpathians, including our research plots. Often it is justified as “salvage logging”, which aims to manage and suppress natural disturbances. Conservation actions to halt these harmful and scientifically indefensible practices are urgently needed.

Let's get Wild!

NEŞE ERSÖZ

Organisation:

General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks, Turkey



PORTRAIT

Neşe Ersöz has been working at the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks in Ankara, Turkey since many years. She was involved in the 2011 identification process of the very first internationally recognised Wilderness in Turkey in National Park Küre Mountains. One year later this protected area was added to the PAN Parks network., followed by becoming part of the newly developed European Wilderness Network in the following years. This process was strongly encouraged and supported by Neşe Ersöz.

Challenges of management in Küre Wilderness

Neşe Ersöz will explore the history of Küre Wilderness, Turkey, alongside its current situation, and how the management team are working to enhance their effectiveness of Küre Mountains National Park.

Let's get Wild!

ONDŘEJ VÍTEK

Organisation:

Nature Conservation Agency of Czech Republic



PORTRAIT

Ondřej Vítek is a landscape ecologist, working in the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic. He has extensive experience with the visitor monitoring in Czech Protected Landscape Areas, with publications on the impacts of road and walking trails upon adjacent vegetation, the assessment of online tourism data regarding activities related to geographic location as well as the monitoring of recreational activities in Protected Areas using online sharing services.

Visitor Management at the Nature Conservation Agency of Czech Republic

The Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic (NCA) manages 24 Protected Landscape Areas (PLA) and several hundred National Nature Reserves and Monuments. NCA runs visitor monitoring to obtain data mainly for interpretation and decision making for visitor infrastructure planning. Most of the data comes from automated counting, some from visitor surveys, too.

NCA develops a network of visitor centres in PLAs. They are known as “Houses of Nature“. There are already 8 visitor centres and several infocentres running within the project. Several more Houses of Nature are under preparation.

Together with regional partners, NCA secures development of Visitor Management Policies for PLAs. These documents contain interpretation as well as management plans for visitor infrastructure. Proposed activities are fulfilled by NCA and its partners.

Implementation of interpretation through nature guides in protected areas is currently under development. Together with partners in interpretation, NCA prepared courses for those who want to offer guided tours, especially for volunteer rangers. Successfully certified trainees will be promoted through Houses of Nature and at NCA webpages. Park rangers, of course, fulfil other tasks in visitor management, too.

All these activities lead to more effective nature conservation of protected areas and higher satisfaction of their visitors obtaining proper natural experience.

Let's get Wild!

OLENA SLOBODIAN

Organisation:

Carpathian National Nature Park, Ukraine



PORTRAIT

Olena Slobodian is the Head of zoological laboratory of the Carpathian National Nature Park in Ukraine. Since 2008, she has been closely involved in biodiversity conservation and sustainable development with a particular focus on conducting faunal researches, developing research methods, as well as the management and planning processes in protected areas. She was one of the experts taking part in the preparatory phase of the inclusion of the primeval beech forests of Gorgany Nature Reserve to the UNESCO Natural Heritage “Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe”, as an extension to the existing Natural World Heritage Site “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and the Ancient Beech Forests of Germany”.

Carpathian National Nature Park: the best practice of nature protection, sustainable development, and management

Carpathian National Nature Park is the first national park of Ukraine and one of the biggest national parks of the country. The area of the park is 50 495 ha. The territory of the park is divided into 4 zones: protected (core) zone, regulated recreation, the zone of stationary recreation and the economic zone.

Olena Slobodian will present examples from Hoverla Wilderness, which is located in the core zone of the Carpathian National Nature Park. All management activities are forbidden except for scientific research. Here the core zone is influenced only by natural power and phenomena.

Let's get Wild!

VLADO TRULIK

Organisation:

Trulik Travel, Slovakia



PORTRAIT

Vlado Trulik provides nature trips in the most beautiful corners of Northern Slovakia. Through having thorough knowledge in botany, ornithology, mycology, large carnivores and many more both in German and Slovakian, he shares experiences of monitoring and wilderness on tours. Through these tours, he managed to conduct extensive wildlife monitoring and research to provide an insight into the mysterious life of wild animals.

Experiencing Wilderness in Slovakia

Since many years, I have spent all my free time observing wildlife. It is a beautiful hobby but only few can actually make a living from it. I managed to get a lot of experience in wilderness and understand its connections. Through vigorous self-studying, I learned to recognize bird calls as well as other animals; I learned the names of all plants, fungi and animals. Since I have been actively using German, I have acquired all this knowledge in German to accompany German speaking customers. Clients who come to me are not only a source of income, but through their participation I am also able to indirectly support my activities in the field of monitoring and research of large carnivores.

I invest a big amount of my income from tourism in the purchase of monitoring equipment, mainly wildlife cameras (currently I have 30 pieces). The recording is then forwarded to the database of relevant reports of National Parks and Protected Landscape Areas but mainly to the partner organization DUHA where they are professionally processed and evaluated. By installing camera traps in areas along the tour paths, even some spectacular night-shots can often be seen. The most beautiful pictures from the company archive are provided to the participants as a gift.

Therefore, the people who are interested to experience this way of nature tourism also support a wilderness survey that helps me to better understand wildlife. Thanks to the results of this survey, we are able to better protect Wilderness: To pressure investors to building eco-corridors in land-use planning or construction of highways, so as to mitigate the shrinking of protected area coverage and to improve their protection.

Let's get Wild!

PAVEL BEČKA

Organisation:

Šumava National Park, Czech Republic



PORTRAIT

Pavel Bečka studied economics in Prague, CZ and biology in Oldenburg, D, and has since been working in the Šumava National Park from 2008 and also in the Bavarian Forest National Park from 2015. He is the coordinator of the German-Czech cooperation of Šumava and Bavarian Forest National Parks.

History of Šumava and Bavarian Forest National Parks

Pavel Bečka will present the history of Šumava and Bavarian Forest National Parks, including the development of natural areas without forest management. Further he explores the transformation of forests used in the past into new wild forests in these two National Parks.

Let's get Wild!

GABRIELLA NAGY

Organisation:

CEEweb, Hungary



PORTRAIT

Dr Gabriella Mária Nagy is a landscape architect and an environmental protection specialist with over 15 years of professional experience working in landscape design and nature related research. She has worked on more than 200 projects in open-air design all over Hungary, as well as for 10 years as a researcher. She holds a PhD in Forestry and Wildlife Management Sciences (University of West-Hungary, Forest Value Assessment Doctoral Program, Hungary), an MSc in Landscape Architecture (University of Szent István, Hungary), an MSc in Environmental Specialist (University of Debrecen, Hungary) and an MSc on Forest Pedagogy (University of West-Hungary, Hungary). She joined CEEweb for Biodiversity in 2018 and works as Project Coordinator of TRANSGREEN and ConnectGREEN.

Monitoring big carnivores in the Carpathian countries along grey infrastructure – First outputs of ConnectGreen project

ConnectGreen aims at maintaining and improving the ecological connectivity between natural habitats in the Carpathian ecoregion. Gabriella will discuss first insights of the Interreg project, including impacts on ecological corridors and policy contexts.

Let's get Wild!

DAVID FREUDL ZDENEK MAČÁT

Organisation:

Thayatal National Park, Austria

Podyjí National Park, Czech Republic



PORTRAITS

David Freudl is working in the Thayatal National Park. His work includes interaction with local stakeholders and the conduction of scientific research and monitoring activities. Apart from focusing on cross-border cooperation with partners at the Czech side of the Thaya River, he also played a crucial role during an International Wilderness Audit in this protected area in 2018. His experience on the subject of wilderness stewardship in Thayatal Wilderness and Thaya WILDRiver greatly supported the audit work.

Zdeněk Mačát, is working at Podyjí National Park, Czech Republic as a zoologist and expert for research and NATURA 2000 areas. Finishing his Ph.D. studies, he focuses on amphibians and reptiles, especially on crested newts and their hybrid zone, ecology and biology in the Czech Republic. Since the beginning of partnership between European Wilderness Society and Podyjí National Park, he has been involved in the International Wilderness Audit process and thus contributed significantly to Podyjí Wilderness becoming a member of the European Wilderness Network.

Transboundary Cooperation in Thayatal and Podyjí National Park

The Thayatal National Park, Austria protects the natural jewel of the Thaya valley jointly with the Podyjí National Park, Czech Republic. The lifeline of the 77km² large Inter-National Park is the Thaya River; which, on its 42km long path, has created one of the last near-natural canyon-like valleys in Central Europe. This cross-border protected area plays an important role in the preservation of flora and fauna.

Transboundary cooperation is the key element for the successful management of this area, which, due to legislative differences was sometimes quite challenging but intensive and currently thrives in multiple aspects. In 2018 a transboundary wilderness area and a wild border river were embedded in the Inter-National Park Thayatal-Podyjí.

With a forest coverage of 91%, the natural or semi-natural forest communities cover approximately 1200ha of the National Park area. The high quality of these habitats are underlined by the occurrence of the European Wildcat, which has been detected in the National Park multiple times in the past decades. The Wildcat is considered the leading species for large, well-networked semi-natural forest areas. To support the return of the Wildcats to Austria, the improvement of green infrastructure is especially important since they avoid open terrain.

Let's get Wild!

JOANNA TUSZNIO

Organisation:

Institute of Environmental Sciences,
Jagiellonian University, Poland



PORTRAIT

Joanna Tusznio is a sociologist conducting projects on the functioning of nature conservation programmes, with a focus on dynamics between various socio-ecological problems in today's world. Teaching at the Institute of Environmental Sciences at the Jagiellonian University, Poland, Joanna holds lectures about ecological education, environmental policy and environmental protection. Furthermore, she puts great effort in analysing relationships between the environment, society and the economy.

The Role of European Bison to local communities in Poland

The history of European bison (*Bison bonasus*) – the largest terrestrial European mammal – is one of the most amazing and successful stories of saving a species that was literally facing extinction. Currently, about a quarter of the world's bison population live in Poland, mainly in free ranging herds in five different regions of the country. These regions vary in conservation regimes, land cover, land use and density of human settlements. The presence of bison has become or is currently becoming a regular part of everyday life for various stakeholders, e.g. local residents, farmers and foresters. While they do not necessarily admire the heroic efforts of saving European bison, or even have knowledge about this process, they are at the interface of potential conflicts. However, they can benefit from presence of bison. It is important to understand stakeholders' perceptions of bison in order to understand various reactions to reintroduction, increasing numbers of individuals and various management measures, such as eliminations or translocations. Especially important are preferences towards goals of bison restitution programs and favored characteristics of "wild" bison, which describe modes in which communities coexist with this species.

Let's get Wild!

SEAN PRENTISS

Organisation:

Author



PORTRAIT

Sean Prentiss is the author of *Finding Abbey*, which won the National Outdoor Book Award. He is also the author of the textbook, *Environmental and Nature Writing: A Writer's Guide and Anthology*. He and his family live on a small lake in Vermont.

Living Maps: Wilderness Writing Workshop

In *Living Maps*, Sean Prentiss talks about how to write beautiful, complicated, and thoughtful essays, stories, and poems about our wild areas. We will also work on our own environmental writing during this discussion. This discussion will be partnered with an excursion to Dürrenecksee on 28th May. Please bring a pen, notebook, and imagination.

Let's get Wild!



Biosphere Reserve Lungau, Austria