

ForestConnect Expert Meeting Involving Protected Area Managers

Date: February 18th – 21th, 2025

*Location: Carinthia University of Applied Sciences
Europastraße 4, 9524 Villach, Austria*

This event will bring together protected area managers, forest experts, and large carnivores experts to discuss and explore strategies for enhancing forest connectivity in the face of climate change, with a focus on large carnivores.

Program

Tuesday, February 18

Afternoon

- Sundown hike at Dobratsch Nature Park to connect with the natural surroundings and transfer of knowledge.

Wednesday, February 19

Morning Session: Protected area management tools (with a focus on climate change challenges)

- Welcome by the UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas
- Introduction from the World Natural Heritage Beech Forests Secretary
- Workshop about the IUCN Monitoring Guideline
- Presentation of Integrative Protected Area Management (IPAM) Toolbox

Afternoon: Transfer of knowledge from the Carpathian countries to the Balkan and Dinaric Regions

- International action plan on conservation of large carnivores and ensuring ecological connectivity in the Carpathians
- Assessment of climate risks and adaptation options for Carpathian forest ecosystems and their services

Experience exchange

- Discussion on interdisciplinary approaches, with a focus on large carnivore management in Tanzania

Open Space

- Identifying challenges and solutions related to climate change in protected area forests
- Expert input about Large Carnivores and Climate-smart Forest Connectivity

Thursday, February 20

Morning

- Workshop Engaging Protected Area Managers in the ForestConnect Strategic Guideline development

Afternoon

- Hiking in the UNESCO Nockberge Biosphere Reserve, featuring a "walk and talk" workshop focused on the ForestConnect Strategic Guideline

Friday, February 21

Morning

- Summary and closing of the expert meeting

Questions? Contact Elisabeth Wiegele, UNESCO Chair on Sustainable Management of Conservation Areas
e.wiegele@fh-kaernten.at - Register for the event: <https://forms.gle/mykLBQCAGiwijiWdg>

ForestConnect Towards a Climate-smart Forest Connectivity for Large Carnivores in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric Region

ForestConnect is designed to address common challenges and needs on protecting and preserving ecological corridors of large carnivores (LC) in the target area of the project - the Carpathians, Balkans and Dinarides. Specifically, it will focus on:

- the Western Balkan mountain on the territory of the Bulgarian North-Western State Forestry Enterprise and the Serbian nature park Stara planina (BG-RS border);
- the Romanian larger Apuseni-Maramures Carpathian region and the Ukrainian Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (RO-UA border);
- the Slovak Paradise National Park in SK as part of the Western Carpathians;
- and the National parks Durmitor, Biogradska gora, and Prokletije in Montenegro.

The project involves 13 PPs and 10 ASPs from 7 countries. The functionality of the ecological corridors of LCs in the target area is endangered by unsustainable management practices and infrastructure developments in forest habitats and their surroundings, which harms their structure. Climate change (CC) poses additional pressure on the ecosystems. Due to the prevalence of LCs cross-border distribution and the complex effects of CC, a multinational conservation planning accompanied by a holistic governance framework for biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction is required. ForestConnect aims to secure climate-resilient forest corridors for LCs to move across borders in the Balkan-Carpathian-Dinaric region.

Partners:

Austria

Carinthia University of Applied Sciences

Bulgaria

WWF Bulgaria
Northwestern State Forest Enterprise
Executive Forest Agency

Montenegro

Public Enterprise for National parks
Center for Protection and Research of Birds

Serbia

WWF Adria-Serbia

Slovakia

WWF Slovakia
Slovak Paradise NP Administration

Romania

WWF Romania
University of Cluj-Napoca
Cluj Environmental Protection Agency

Ukraine

NGO "Rakhiv Ecotour"



Co-funded by
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Homepage:
UNESCO Chair: www.fh-kaernten.at/unesco-chair
ForestConnect: <https://interreg-danube.eu/projects/forestconnect>