

## *Documentation*



## *2015 Activity Report*

*Salzburg National Park Fund  
Hohe Tauern*

## **Publication Details**

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The glacier buttercup (*Ranunculus glacialis*) is one of the most cold-resistant plants on the planet. It has been known to flower at over 4,200 metres above sea level, the alpine record-holder for any flowering plant. As a ruderal species, its roots are anchored deep in the ground, with the plant itself lying on the surface rubble. It requires two to three vegetative growing periods for the first flowers to appear. The leaves are dark green, succulently lustrous, and tripinnated. The white petals are often tinged with red. (photo: F. RIEDER).

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## Contents

*Callicarpous cladonia (Cladonia bellidiflora) is one of the most striking species of indigenous lichen flora. Its fruiting structures are vividly red in colour and up to 3 mm in diameter. Lichen designates a symbiotic biocoenosis (biotic community) between a fungus and one or more photosynthetic partners such as green algae or cyano-bacteria (green-blue algae). This group of organisms is characterised by a huge variety of colours and shapes. Cladonia bellidiflora favours forest floors of acidic raw humus and moss. It also occurs outside the Alps at elevations ranging from 700 to 2,500 metres, for instance in the Mühlviertel and Waldviertel regions of Austria. (photo: F. RIEDER).*

<b>2</b>	<b>Preface</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Mission Statement</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>National Park Year 2015</b>
<b>16</b>	<b>National Parks Austria</b>
<b>18</b>	<b>International Affairs</b>
<b>20</b>	<b>Natural Resource Management</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>Science and Research</b>
<b>32</b>	<b>Education &amp; Visitor Information</b>
<b>40</b>	<b>Preservation of the Cultural Landscape</b>
<b>42</b>	<b>Tourism</b>
<b>44</b>	<b>National Park Region</b>
<b>45</b>	<b>Partners and Friends</b>
<b>46</b>	<b>Organisation</b>
<b>49</b>	<b>Outlook</b>
<b>50</b>	<b>Contact</b>

## *2015: A strong year for National Parks Austria*



*With its six National Parks, Austria possesses a natural treasure of inestimable value. The lead projects of Austria's nature conservation are part and parcel of our national identity and represent our national natural heritage. They are centres for environmental education and an attractive provider of 'green jobs'; they also make nature a tangible experience for all our visitors.*

*This year, we drew up a joint PR project for the years ahead in a bid to make the tasks performed by the National Parks accessible to a wider public. In doing so, we laid the cornerstone for concerted research, education and visitor support services nationwide. The highlight of this year's work was the 13<sup>th</sup> National Park Employees' Day, which fittingly was held in Heiligenblut, the place where the success story of Austria's National Parks first began.*

*Indeed, it will soon be thirty years since the Austrian National Parks, which represent all of Austria's principal landscapes, first set about preserving the biodiversity and original*

*character of these regions. Approval of the Austrian Programme for Rural Development 2014 – 2020 has secured the financial basis for innovative further development and the preservation of biodiversity. The UN Climate Change Agreement concluded in Paris is also a milestone that contributes hugely to mitigating climate change.*

*2016 is set to be another busy year for the National Parks. Some of the highlights planned for 2016 include presenting the new National Park Strategy 2020+ and intensifying the nationwide National Parks Austria initiative.*

*I would like to thank all the people working for the Austrian National Parks for their commitment and dedication in preserving our natural heritage, and wish them all a successful 2016.*

*Yours,*



*Andrä RUPPRECHTER  
Austrian Federal Minister  
of Agriculture, Forestry,  
Environment and Water  
Management*



# *Learning from nature in so many ways in the Hohe Tauern National Park*



*The colourful programme on offer at the Hohe Tauern National Park reflects the diversity and richness of this unique protected area. Over the past year I had several opportunities to take part in presentations of projects and new visitor attractions. In the Habachtal Valley research preserve for instance, where red deer could be spotted at close quarters from the observation stand. The detailed information provided by the National Park Administration gave a comprehensive insight not only into the way in which these wild animals live, but also the way in which the National Park is managed.*

*I was also delighted by the success of this year's partner school fête in the National Park Municipality of Uttendorf. More than 1,300 schoolchildren took part in this attractive offer organised by the National Park Administration. It provided a fun way for children and teenagers to get to know more about the themes of nature conservation and environmental protection. And I was also impressed by how thrilled and motivated the children were by this key National Park campaign.*

*National Parks all over the world aim to offer a stunning experience of nature to as large a circle of people as possible. And this year more than 1.6 million Austrians and guests from*

*abroad visited the National Park and its amenities between May and October. So it was with great pleasure that I accepted the invitations to open two new visitor attractions. A walk-in ecological footprint was planted in Hollersbach in the form of a hedge maze. And the most pleasing aspect was that the Q&As for the environmental quiz inside the maze were compiled by the pupils of the Bramberg Tourism Partner School. And, as of this year, a fascinating exhibition on the cultural landscape of the Hohe Tauern in Hüttschlag now complements the National Park attractions in the region.*

*The Hohe Tauern provide the ideal retreat for many animal and plant species. It's a sanctuary we need to preserve and protect for the future. How quickly such a habitat can change and how little nature can be tamed became all too apparent when I visited the clear-up operations following the floods in the Obersulzbachtal Valley. And so there has to be co-operation between mankind and nature.*

*Finally, my thanks to all the staff of the National Park Administration for their hard work and dedication!*



Deputy Governor Astrid RÖSSLER  
Chair of the Board of Trustees of  
the Salzburg National Park Fund



*'The Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg is characterised by cultural landscapes utilised to varying degrees of intensity, by near-natural forests, and by unspoilt high-mountain areas. Each of these habitats shapes the National Park in a different way, creating an extremely diverse mosaic with a high degree of biodiversity. I am thrilled to be able to contribute in a small way towards combining the interests of land management, and alpine pasture farming in particular, with the interests of nature conservation, thereby helping to preserve that diversity in the National Park.'*

Susanne AIGNER  
Supervisor of Nature Conservation and  
Alpine Pasture Management, Umweltbüro GmbH Klagenfurt

*'Ja!Natürlich has been working in close partnership with the National Park for many years. And it all began in 1994 with our very first products – milk and yoghurt – from the Hohe Tauern National Park region. In the meantime organic farming has become a powerful economic driver for the region. But our ties go even deeper. By supporting the Hohe Tauern National Park's*



*programme of partner schools we can help to raise the awareness and the passion of future generations for the importance of biodiversity and the cultural landscape as well as issues relating to organic farming and a healthy diet.'*

Martina HÖRMER  
Managing Director, Ja!Natürlich

*'Initially the Association was founded to combat the plans for a National Park. In the course of the discussions surrounding the National Park Act the mindset of the landowners changed in favour of a symbiotic arrangement between nature conservation and land ownership. This was made possible by sections of the National Park Act that took even greater account of the concerns of landowners. 'Promotion – co-determination – shared decision-making or protecting the natural landscape – utilising the cultural landscape' – these are all elements in the legislation that were confirmed by the legislator in the 2015 National Park Act. As they say here, 'Mit'n Red'n kemmand' Leit zom' [Talking helps bring people together], which has to be seen as a guarantee of successful co-operation and further development of the National Park.'*

Georg ALTENBERGER  
Chairman of the Association for the Protection of Landowners in the Hohe Tauern National Park

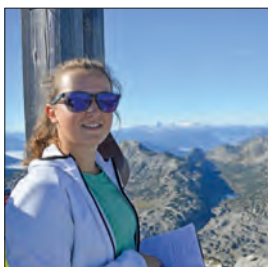


*'Pupils of the Bramberg Tourism School were invited to help design the project for the walk-in ecological footprint in Hollersbach. I was able to experience first-hand the very daring way in which those in charge of the National Park allowed the pupils to go about their creative work as part of the project lessons. Rather than being mere handymen, they were allowed to contribute their own ideas, sometimes make mistakes and gain*



*valuable experience as a result. Opportunities such as these on projects of this size that are then actually implemented make schools practical facilities and serve to enhance the school's education programme.'*

Renate HOLZER  
Teacher at the Bramberg Tourism School,  
a partner school of the Hohe Tauern National Park



*'In my work as a member of the support staff for the information huts I experienced first-hand how the National Park succeeds in opening our eyes to nature, not just for us young locals, but also for older people and tourists, involving us in the idea of nature conservation. Our environment provides us with food, water, air, but also recreation, great experiences and a holiday job – it's our greatest resource and part of our identity! As a guarantee that things will be good for us also in the future, I'm pleased that there is such a thing as the National Park and that I'm able to work for this important institution as a seasonal trainee.'*

Leonie HASENAUER  
Student of geography, economics and English at teacher training college

*'For me the National Park is an identity for our region and our homeland. A landmark umbrella brand that's enormously important not just for awareness in our region but also for its impact on tourism. The National Park is a USP for every National Park community. It's a guarantee that the unique natural and cultural landscape that Creation has given us and which our ancestors nurtured and shaped for centuries is also preserved for generations to come. Beyond that, the National Park is also a natural force and a source of energy for all those who find themselves inspired by this wonderful landscape.'*

Hannes LERCHBAUMER  
Mayor of the Municipality of Uttendorf, member of the National Park Board of Trustees



# Preface



*'When I was a child, I was taught the names of all our panoramic mountains. It was only at secondary school that I became aware of the umbrella term Hohe Tauern as a continuous mountain range along the main arc of the Alps. It was a name you associated all sorts of beautiful things with: alpine pastures, glaciers, crystal-clear waters, nature, hiking and mountaineering, hunting, crystals, and mountain huts. As a child I didn't really understand the vast treasure lying out there on my doorstep. Today I know that all these values I mentioned above are my home and my homeland. And we have to protect them and use them with the utmost care.'*

Michael OBERMOSER  
Mayor of Wald im Pinzgau

*'Europeans are rediscovering Europe's nature and wilderness. The Untersulzbach Valley is such a unique place worth protecting. The European Wilderness Society verified that the Hohe Tauern Wilderness meets the stringent requirements of the European Wilderness Quality and Audit System. We were impressed by the emerging biodiversity that appeared after the melting of the glacier. The Hohe Tauern Wilderness in the National Park Hohe Tauern is a very positive example of how the management,*



*the regional governments, the public and the NGOs can work together to protect a large unfragmented wilderness in the heart of Europe; and will surely motivate Europeans to increase the efforts to protect their last wild places for future generations to explore, research and enjoy.'*

Vlado VANCURA  
Wilderness Director European Wilderness Society

*'The region is all about intensively used agricultural and tourist areas complete with mountain railways and cableways, leisure amenities, etc., on the one hand and, on the other, a vast high-alpine protected area, i.e. the Hohe Tauern National Park. Multi-faceted natural treasures rarely to be found in Europe delight visitors and local residents alike, day after day. For me, that combination is one-of-a-kind, and its development comprises many risks but above all many opportunities to give the region something unique and to bolster the quality of life of the population in the long term.'*

Georgia WINKLER-PLETZER  
Managing Director, Hohe Tauern National Park LEADER Region



*'Without the Hohe Tauern National Park there would be no Hohe Tauern National Park Holiday Region and no National Park Centre in Mittersill. In recent years the National Park Administration has created numerous amenities that contribute hugely to our holiday region's USP. And the trend in overnight stays alone shows just how much these joint efforts are beginning to pay off. And still we have lots of projects and tasks ahead of us.'*



*In the coming year we will be generating new momentum in our local public transport with the launch of MOBIL, the new National Park Summer Card.'*

Christian WÖRISTER  
Managing Director, Hohe Tauern National Park  
Holiday Region



*'An unspoilt natural setting is one of the trademarks of the Hohe Tauern National Park – and a major attraction for the research community. With human intrusion excluded there, the impact of global changes on the climate or on substance inputs can be detected over a long period. The National Park is also planning to implement a monitoring scheme with a timeline of 100 years, focusing on undisturbed high-alpine uplands. Such long-term thinking is exemplary. The National Park is therefore establishing a stock of environmental data for generations of park managers and researchers to come.'*

Thomas SCHEURER  
Member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the Hohe Tauern National Park

*'Nowadays we talk about the need to preserve our homeland and our culture even though we're unable to associate anything concrete and consistent with those notions. By contrast, there is something touching, but also risky about the relationship between mankind and nature. It's this tangible primaevial relationship founded on mutual respect and, simultaneously, mutual threat that's worth being preserved – preserving and communicating stories that are otherwise at risk of extinction, and that tell the tale of an entity, a symbiosis. Providing space for those stories together with the National Park is a wonderful task.'*

Andreas ZANGL  
Exhibition planner and graphic artist





## Mission Statement

### Facts & Figures

The Hohe Tauern National Park is the largest national park in the whole of the Alpine region and one of the largest nature protection areas in central Europe.

	Core zone (km <sup>2</sup> )	Outer zone (km <sup>2</sup> )	Special conservation areas (km <sup>2</sup> )	Total (km <sup>2</sup> )
Carinthia	291	113	36	440
Salzburg	507	266	32	805
Tyrol	347	264		611
<b>Total, National Park</b>	<b>1145</b>	<b>643</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1856</b>

- ▶ Distance east to west 100 km
- ▶ Distance north to south 40 km
- ▶ Elevation above sea level 1000 m to 3798 m
- ▶ Mountain peaks above 3000 m > 300
- ▶ Glaciation 155 km<sup>2</sup> / approx. 8%
- ▶ Glaciers 342
- ▶ Near-natural mountain streams 279
- ▶ of which glacial streams 57
- ▶ major waterfalls 26
- ▶ Mountain lakes between 35 m<sup>2</sup> and 27 ha 551

### Alpine natural and cultural landscape

In the Hohe Tauern National Park all the main alpine ecosystems are preserved intact, over a large area. More than a third of all plant species known to exist in Austria are to be found in the National Park. For mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians, the proportion is around 50%. The National Park also provides a secure habitat for those animals considered to have been eradicated throughout most of Europe in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.

This impressive biodiversity is the result, firstly, of the diverse climatic, geological, geo-morphological and hydrological site conditions in the high mountain region and, secondly, of differentiated adaptation strategies by the fauna and flora. Anyone hiking from the valley floor up to the highest summits in the National Park is certain to cross virtually every single climate zone from central Europe to the Arctic as they pass from one elevation to the next.

The 'Hohe Tauern window' – a tectonic window unique in shape and size anywhere in the world – provides insights into

the deepest nappe stacks of the Alps and is key to deciphering the geological structure of the Alps themselves. Rocks of different ages, origins and chemical compositions conceal a treasure trove of up to 200 different minerals.

The landscape shapes of trough and hanging valleys, cirques, horns and kettle lakes, of defiles and gorges, etc., reflect the moulding force of ice age glaciers as much as the unrelenting impact of weathering and erosion caused by gravity, frost and water.

The transition from the natural alpine ecosystems within the core zone of the National Park to the cultural landscape of the outer zone is a harmonious one. Here century-old mountain farming has given rise to communities whose diverse lifestyles are to be sustained and preserved in the long term.

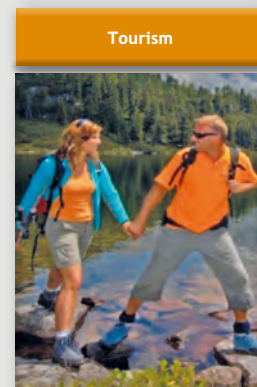
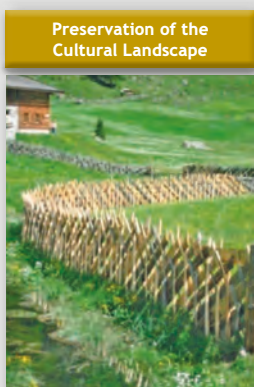
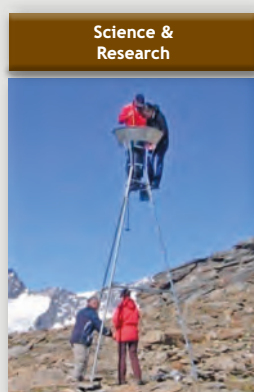
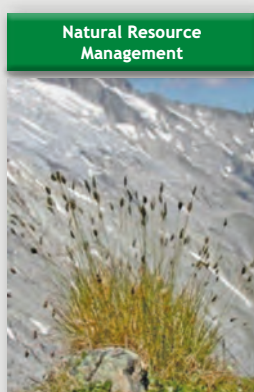




## Management within the National Park

It is not just size and stringent protection and preservation objectives that make a protected area a National Park, but more importantly the establishment of professional management resources. The objectives of National Park management are as diverse as the natural and cultural alpine landscapes that are to be preserved, protected, and showcased. Six 'business areas' characterise the main tasks carried out by the National Park Administration:

Natural Resource Management including preserving the cultural landscape, Science & Research, and Education & Visitor Information are the main duties of any national park anywhere in the world, as set out by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). In the full awareness that the Hohe Tauern National Park does not exist in isolation, but is instead embedded within a vibrant National Park region in which people live, work, and drive the economy, it is also the National Park Administration's duty to contribute to regional development and, in particular, to devote itself to supporting the development of the tourist offer. With regard to 'Regional Development' and 'Tourism' we have succeeded in outsourcing a range of tasks and setting up shared facilities and agencies (LEADER Association, Ferienregion NPHT GmbH) with other stakeholders, ultimately guaranteeing their implementation to a high professional standard.



## *We, the six Austrian National Parks, pledge ...*



**... to protect and explore nature, inform, and offer rest and recreation. We preserve the habitats of rare animal and plant species, some of which are endangered or threatened with extinction.**

Our National Parks are committed to the objectives set out by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), specifically:

- ▶ conservation and preservation, protection and nurturing of (cultural) landscapes declared as National Parks
- ▶ unconstrained development of nature (protection of the wilderness) without human intervention
- ▶ recreation and education

**... to invest today in nature's precious assets for the benefit of tomorrow.**

Our task is to secure and safeguard selected representative areas in Austria in the long term. Our nature protection areas are characterised by their unique landscape and diversity.

Securing and safeguarding means:

Ensuring and promoting the course of natural development, and consciously reducing the use we make of these areas.

We want to be able to pass on a piece of unspoilt nature, and even wilderness, to our children.

**... to make nature an experience, and to offer the highest level of rest and recreation.**

Our visitors share a common interest in nature and the environment. They choose to take time to explore,

experience, and enjoy nature's diversity and its ecological cycles. They have the opportunity to explore the Parks alone or in the company of our specially trained National Park Rangers and to avail themselves of our wide range of programmes.

**... to conduct research benefiting scientifically founded nature conservation.**

Thanks to long-term observations at our National Park field laboratory our scientific research gains insights into and knowledge of natural cycles and the development of our nature protection areas.

**... to guarantee modern partnership-based nature conservation.**

Our National Park Administrations represent the position of nature conservation first and foremost. Our highly qualified and dedicated staff carry out the tasks of the National Parks in a transparent way and attend to the concerns of the population.

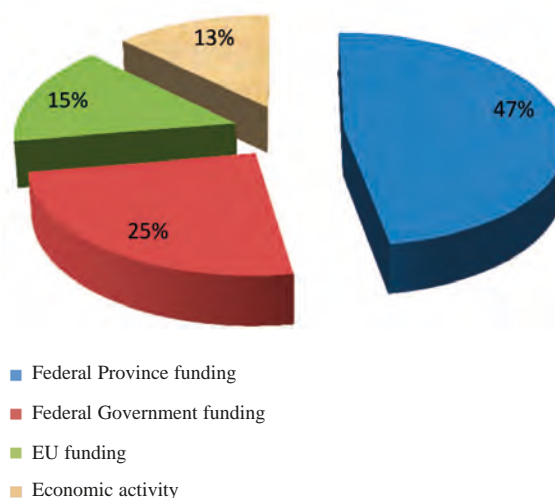
**... to protect microcosms while driving the region as a whole.**

Our people work hand in hand with the people who live in the regions themselves. We offer the opportunity for sustainable development of rural areas while lastingly securing jobs.

## Budget for the 2015 National Park Year

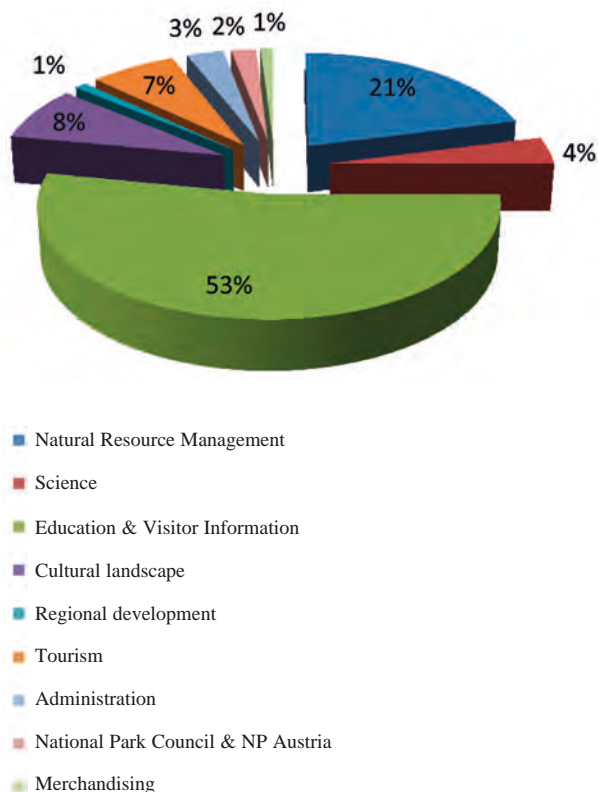
### 2015 budget income

	Euro	Per cent
Federal Province funding	2,103,000.00	47
Federal Government funding	1,110,000.00	25
EU funding	664,000.00	15
Economic activity	546,000.00	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,441,000.00</b>	<b>100</b>



### 2015 budget expenditure

	Euro	Per cent
Natural Resource Management	929,000.00	21
Science	167,000.00	4
Education & Visitor Information	2,383,000.00	53
Cultural landscape	346,000.00	8
Regional development	23,000.00	1
Tourism	308,000.00	7
Administration	160,000.00	3
National Park Council & NP Austria	88,000.00	2
Merchandising	14,000.00	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,441,000.00</b>	<b>100</b>



The figures relate to regular funding received from the federal government and the federal province and to funds from the LE programme that are not delimited by a specific period. The exact absolute figures will be set out in the official statements of account for 2015.



## National Park Year 2015



**15 January 2015**

### National Park Year gets underway at Vienna's Holiday Trade Fair

The PR and marketing activities for the 2015 National Park Year got underway at the now traditional press breakfast at the Holiday Trade Fair in Vienna. As the highlight of the year Holiday Region Managing Director Christian Wörister and Grossglockner High-Alpine Road Managing Director Johannes Hörl presented the National Park Region's attendance at the EXPO 2015 in Milan. New attractions in the Education & Visitor Information business area such as the exhibition *Between Heaven and Earth* in Hüttschlag and the *Ecological Footprint* in Hollersbach were also the subject of much interest. Andrä Rupprechter, government minister responsible for National Parks in Austria, was pleased with the attendance at this major tourism trade fair in Austria.



**27 January 2015**

### With the power of the sun at the National Park Centre in Mittersill

For an institution dedicated to environmental education, making use of sustainable energy for heating and electricity is a must. Since its opening the National Park Centre has been supplied with district heating from the woodchip heating plant in Mittersill. Autonomous electricity generation from photovoltaics is now also underway. The chairs of the decision-making bodies in the National Park, Deputy Governor Astrid Rössler and Mayor Michael Obermoser, are convinced of the importance of a National Park acting as a role model in all matters relating to environmental and climate protection. So not only will the entire surface area of the roof be used to generate electricity, but the electricity production itself and the resulting reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> will be presented online to visitors in the foyer.



**1 February 2015**

### New National Park Act comes into force

The first Salzburg National Park Act of 1984 was in force for a remarkable 31 years. Austria's accession to the European Union, the National Park's international recognition by the IUCN and the merging of various institutions of the National Park management in Mittersill entailed requirements and opportunities for a number of adjustments and realignments. The National Park Administration is both an official body and the administrative offices of the Salzburg National Park Fund. This concentration of all sovereign and private sector regulatory instruments demonstrates the trust that has now emerged in the National Park Administration and represents a commitment to the most efficient and effective management possible.





**5 and 6 May 2015**

## **Partner schools fête in Uttendorf**

Our partner schools fêtes remain as attractive as ever. On these two days 1,300 schoolchildren took part in the activities at the learning stations set up around the Uttendorf bathing lake. Weeks beforehand the participating classes had worked on the creative design of a huge book on the National Park's animal species, which was presented to NP adviser and Deputy Governor Astrid Rössler at the close of the partner schools fête. Special thanks were also expressed to the market community of Uttendorf and its mayor Hannes Lerchbaumer for providing such a perfect setting. Not least the 75 staff members of the National Park Administration and the helpers, who did such sterling work under the overall management of Ekkehard Heider.



**19 May 2015**

## **National Park Day at the EXPO 2015 in Milan**

Under the tagline 'Feeding the planet – Energy for Life' the EXPO 2015 Universal Exposition in Milan explored the themes of sustainability and natural resources as well as global availability and distribution. Austria is taking part in the EXPO with its 'Breathe Austria' Pavilion, dedicated to our No. 1 means of sustenance, i.e. clean air and its 'means of production' in our forests. At the initiative of the Grossglockner High-Alpine Road, the National Park Regions of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol were invited to present themselves at the Austria Pavilion as a holiday region, featuring a National Park memory computer game. This marketing contribution was officially inaugurated by *Landtag* President Brigitta Pallauf.



**27 May 2015**

## **Exhibition in Hüttschlag *Between Heaven and Earth***

In keeping with the infrastructure programme of the National Park Administration and the idea to have a presence in every National Park municipality with a more sizeable visitor facility, the existing exhibition space at the Talwirt in Hüttschlag was adapted and re-modelled to accommodate the National Park exhibition *Between Heaven and Earth*. The interactive exhibition implemented by exhibition planner Andreas Zangl focuses on the alpine cultural landscape in the National Park, from forests to alpine pastures and meadows. Deputy Governor Astrid Rössler and Mayor Hans Toferer officiated at the opening. The exhibition itself is set up and run in close co-operation with the Talwirt venue and the National Park Association Hüttschlag.



**30 May 2015**

## **Grossvenediger exhibition at the Felberturm Museum in Mittersill**

The special exhibition by the Felberturm Museum gives a taste of the forthcoming anniversary marking 175 years since the first ever ascent of the Grossvenediger in September 2016. As in previous years the National Park Administration was invited to assist and help out. At the Felber Festival the Museum's custodian, former mayor Walter Reifmüller, inaugurated an accomplished and attractive exhibition; over the summer months, he introduced large numbers of enthralled guests, holidaymakers and locals alike to Salzburg's highest mountain and its history. Many previously little known or perhaps even unknown details are retold in an exciting way, such as the first all-women rope team to climb the Grossvenediger. Also present was Franz Brunner Sr, museum custodian from Neukirchen and author of the documentary film on the first ascent.



**8 June 2015**

## Opening of the Ecological Footprint in Hollersbach

An environmental education facility of a special kind has been created with the walk-in Ecological Footprint in the herb garden in Hollersbach. At every fork in this 70 m long labyrinth of hornbeam hedges, visitors are confronted with questions relating to climate protection. Only the right choice of answer allows them to proceed; if not, they are led into a dead-end and forced to turn back. The entire project, from the formulation of the questions to the official opening, was completed in close collaboration with the Bramberg Tourism Partner School. A joint venture was concluded with the herb garden association for the maintenance and upkeep of the hornbeam maze. Deputy Governor Astrid Rössler, Mayor Günther Steiner, Andrea Rieder and Renate Holzer and her pupils officiated at the opening.



**18 June 2015**

## Climate School at the World Energy Forum in Vienna

Likewise at the service of mitigating climate change as part of the National Park's environmental education scheme is the cross-province Verbund Climate School, which was presented to an international audience for the first time at the World Energy Forum in Vienna's Hofburg Palace. After receiving the Salzburg Regionality Award in 2014 the Climate School's appearance at the Forum demonstrates that it has an important role to play at all levels – from regional to global – and is widely recognised. For five years now the Climate School has been supported by the Verbund utility as its sponsor. At the three climate school days schoolchildren are confronted with some of the repercussions of climate change such as receding glaciers, permafrost problems, changes in biodiversity, and the gradual shift in alpine elevations.



**23 June 2015**

## 'National Park Comes to Town' at ORF studio Salzburg

The success of the partner schools fêtes in the National Park Region prompted the National Park Administration to put together a similar offer this year again for the schools in the province's capital. And, for the second time, the ORF regional studio provided support at every level. It made available not just the TV garden and the entire outdoor area, but also its indoor premises. Extensive coverage was of course all part and parcel of it, from radio spots leading up to the event to Radio Salzburg live broadcasts and even an item on *Salzburg Heute*. Around 500 schoolchildren were very much involved in the various 'stations' and at the close of the event, just like their fellow pupils in Uttendorf, they handed over a book of their own design on animal species.



**24 June 2015**

## Press trip on 'Showcasing Nature and Nature Conservation' in Mittersill and Hollersbach

In 2015 the annual cross-province press trip was dedicated to Visitor Information and Environmental Education facilities. The National Park Administration, exhibition planners and journalists from national and international media discussed the possibilities, necessities, limitations and opportunities of nature education. With ten large-scale indoor exhibitions and ten contemporary outdoor themed trails the Salzburg National Park Administration is very well endowed with such facilities in terms of both quantity and quality. Visitor numbers are proof of that, as are the many favourable reports published after the press trip.





**8 and 9 July 2015**

## **National Park partner meeting in Mittersill and Hollersbach**

The Association of Friends of the Hohe Tauern National Park invited sponsors and supporters of the National Park to its annual partner meeting. Karl Stoss, Casinos Austria Director and Chairman of the Association of Friends, welcomed numerous representatives of leading businesses to the NP Centre in Mittersill. After a guided tour through the worlds of the National Park, the programme included a hike along the stream educational trail and dinner on the Senningeralm, a cable-car breakfast with visit of the Resterhöhe National Park Panorama, and a look at the Ecological Footprint and herb garden. So whether it's public funds or generous sponsoring, the National Park Administration was able to show that investment in the National Park idea also pays off.



**27 July to 7 August 2015**

## **Wilderness audit in Krimml and Neukirchen am Grossvenediger**

The Hohe Tauern's first wilderness audit was awaited with great anticipation. In 2015 the European Wilderness Society compiled its European Wilderness Quality Standards, i.e. an audit system for top-quality protected areas in Europe. The National Park Administration opted to be among the first in Europe to submit itself to these test criteria, along with its well advanced plans for setting up a wilderness area in the Untersulzbachtal Valley. The results notwithstanding, it was positive to note that the team of evaluators led by internationally recognised wilderness expert Vlado Vancura spent almost a fortnight on full-day walking tours through the terrain and was therefore able to get a good idea of actual circumstances on the ground.



**3 August 2015**

## **Scientific Advisory Board in the Untersulzbachtal Valley in Neukirchen am Grossvenediger**

Following a resolution, the cross-province Scientific Advisory Board spent four days travelling through preselected valleys in Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol to finalise its expertise on setting up a long-term monitoring scheme in the National Park. For the Salzburg National Park Administration the Untersulzbachtal Valley is the area best suited for this purpose. Both the planned land purchase and the project to set up a wilderness area provide the ideal basis for long-term and permanent scientific observations and records. Besides the research aspects themselves the scientists were particularly taken by the original unspoilt character and conservation value in the Untersulzbachtal Valley.



**8 August 2015**

## **Contractual nature conservation secures international recognition**

The first contracts aimed at taking land areas out of use in the core zone for international recognition as IUCN Category II ended on 31 December 2015. It was a milestone for the National Park when in 2006 international recognition was achieved through contractual nature conservation with landowners. After nine years of experience for both contracting parties negotiations once again got underway with the Association for the Protection of Landowners to extend the contracts to the end of 2024. Soon after the resolutions were adopted in the Board of Trustees, Deputy Governor Astrid Rössler and Georg Altenberger, Chairman of the Association for the Protection of Landowners, were able to look forward to the signing of the new contracts aimed at continuing with the decommissioning of land use by private landowners.



## 7 – 9 August 2015

### **Biodiversity Day in the Untersulzbachtal Valley in Neukirchen a.Grv.**

After the Wildgerlostal Valley in 2008, the Seidlwinkltal Valley in 2010 and the Hollersbachtal Valley in 2012, this year it was the Untersulzbachtal Valley which 65 scientists from Austria, Germany, Slovenia and Croatia combed through with the aim of tracking down as many animal, plant and mushroom species as possible within 48 hours, ranging from valley floor up to summit elevations. This year was the 9<sup>th</sup> time now that the international team of experts got together in the Hohe Tauern National Park to record the inventory of species in as broad a spectrum as possible in survey areas that change annually. And although these Biodiversity Days are by definition one-off snapshots, they do contribute significantly to the cataloguing and documentation of biodiversity within the protected area.



## 27 August 2015

### **Shooting on location in the Obersulzbachtal Valley**

The stunning mountain landscape of the Hohe Tauern National Park is much prized by renowned filmmakers as a backdrop for location shoots. In late August 2015 outdoor location work for the popular Austrian TV series *Universum* was shot at the foot of the Grossvenediger in the Obersulzbachkees. Highlights of the day's shooting included spectacular takes inside the glacier snout and special shots of the fauna and flora in the vicinity of the former 'Turkish encampment'. The footage is to be used for the programme *Universum – Meine Heimat Salzburg* featuring international skiing legend Hermann Maier. The programme goes out in April 2016.



## 3 – 6 September 2015

### **Species conservation days at Schönbrunn Zoo & harvest festival on Vienna's Heldenplatz**

This year's Species Conservation Days were held at Schönbrunn Zoo and provided an opportunity for the Hohe Tauern National Park to present itself along with Austria's five other National Parks. The emphasis was on the importance of the protected areas for each region. A small enclosure with learning stations was set up for children to help make the National Park themes exciting and 'easy to grasp'. Also, this year's harvest festival was held concurrently on Vienna's Heldenplatz. The Federal Ministry invited the Austrian National Parks to communicate the National Park idea to the many visitors under the 'National Parks Austria' umbrella brand, along with common concerns such as species and habitat protection.



## 25 – 27 September 2015

### **Lila liebt Grün [Lila Loves Green] in Vienna**

In September, Milka and the Hohe Tauern National Park organised a day for schools and families in Vienna at the Palm House in the grounds of Schönbrunn Palace as part of the *Lila liebt Grün* initiative. The stars at the event were animals that are characteristic of the Hohe Tauern such as the marmot, the alpine salamander and the bearded vulture. Visitors had the opportunity to see typical species of the Hohe Tauern National Park close-up. The idea behind the event was to familiarise visitors with species and nature conservation and make the younger generation aware of these topics. The event also had a prominent celebrity guest, namely Salzburg skiing star Anna Fenninger.





## 30 September to 2 October 2015

### European Wilderness Days in Admont

At this year's European Wilderness Conference organised by the European Wilderness Society in Admont the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg was able to showcase itself to an international audience as a pioneer and example of best practice. The National Park's Director was presented with the Wilderness Diploma in Gold in recognition of his outstanding commitment to implementing the European wilderness policy. A mere two years after it was established, the European Wilderness Society has become a key player on the international nature conservation scene. The National Park Administration is a sought-after partner when it comes to drawing up strategies and the management of National Parks, particularly in the Carpathians and the mountain regions of south-eastern Europe.



## 29 – 31 October 2015

### National Park Administration travels to Trento and Milan

After many years without any company outings or field trips on any scale the team from the National Park Administration set off on a 'short holiday' to Italy. At the new MUSE Science Museum in Trento they were impressed by one of the largest – and best – nature exhibitions currently on show anywhere in the Alpine region, featuring professional, state-of-the-art exhibition didactics and museum education programmes. The EXPO 2015 in Milan also brought the awareness of global environmental and food problems into sharp focus, boosting the determination of the National Park Administration staff in its awareness-raising efforts beyond their own protected area, efforts which are seen increasingly as part of their education remit within the framework of Climate School, Waterschool, the Ecological Footprint, etc.



## 3 November 2015

### Ja!Natürlich partner schools sponsoring for four more school years

42 schools with more than 6,000 schoolchildren from the National Park Region: that's the key data of the highly successful partner schools programme run by the National Park Administration. Since the programme first began in the 2007/2008 school year, it has been sponsored by Austria's largest brand of organic produce. For the second time now, Martina Hörmer, Managing Director of Ja!Natürlich, has extended their generous sponsoring by a further four more school years, through to the end of the 2018/2019 school year. The sponsoring agreement, which enables partner schools to avail themselves of all environmental education programmes and facilities free of charge, was officially signed in Vienna at the general assembly of the Association of Friends of the National Park, together with the Association Chairman Karl Stoss.



## 12 – 14 November 2015

### Interpädagogica in Linz

The Interpädagogica is Austria's largest trade fair for educational science and education. From 12 to 14 November 2015, 220 exhibitors from Austria and abroad specialising in teaching, learning and work resources, media, facilities and information on extracurricular education packages showcased their innovations at the Design Center Linz. This year the focus was on teaching and learning aids; nutrition, spatial concepts & exercise; IT & digital media; travel and nature & culture. The Interpädagogica recorded a total attendance of 11,925 visitors. The Hohe Tauern National Park has been represented at the fair for many years and it too presented its extensive environmental education offer. The National Park Rangers were on hand to answer the questions of teachers and parents alike, making a huge impression on visitors to the stand featuring 'Austria's biggest classroom'.

## National Parks Austria

Web-Info: [www.nationalparksaustria.at](http://www.nationalparksaustria.at)



*Unser Naturerbe.*



*As representative and extensive protected areas the Austrian National Parks with their unrivalled diversity are of crucial importance to the preservation of the national cultural heritage. Top photos, from left to right: Ch. KOMPOSCH/Gesäuse NP, H. KEUSCHNIG/Hohe Tauern NP Carinthia, A. BARTL/Thayatal NP, F. RIEDER/Hohe Tauern NP Salzburg; bottom photos from left to right: R. POLAY/Neusiedler See – Seewinkel NP, BODO/Hohe Tauern NP Tyrol, E. WEIGAND/Kalkalpen NP, Z. KUDICH/Donau-Auen NP.*

### Umbrella brand and network

Under the National Parks Austria umbrella brand, all joint activities are fine-tuned as part of the co-ordination session led by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. Its members are comprised of representatives of the federal government, the National Park directors, and the forestry directors of the three National Park forestry operations. Acting in an advisory capacity, the National Park Advisory Board, which is made up of members of the federal government, the federal provinces and selected NGOs, evaluates the extent to which objectives are met. The general assembly of the National Parks Austria Association convened once in 2015 and was chaired by its chairman Erich Mayrhofer.

In implementation of the 2010 Austrian National Park Strategy, the Austrian National Parks carry out joint measures. They include the specific further development of the National Parks themselves and achieving a greater awareness among the general public. All eight National Park Administrations are actively involved at both the project management level and in various working groups overarching the National Park. The cross-regional National Park teams worked on the following activities and projects in 2015:

The co-ordination session and the Environmental Agency are currently working closely on the **National Park Strategy Austria 2020+**, which will set the course for the dynamic development of these priority protected areas. As they continue to plot the strategy for the future of the Austrian National Parks, everyone is pulling in the same direction in their pursuit of the clear-cut objective of broadening co-operation between the National Parks under the National Parks Austria umbrella brand, significantly improving it, and enhancing it in many areas through close co-operation, efficiency and effectiveness.

#### SEZUM Project: Service, Co-operation, Implementation

The project (2015-2017) is structured into three modules: service, education, and knowledge management & research. Its aim is to strengthen co-operation between the eight Austrian National Park Administrations in these areas and streamline processes. The project aims to achieve the following results, among others, by the end of 2017:

- ▶ **Service Module:** draw up a consistent shop concept and carry out an analysis of the potential of the National Parks Austria;
- ▶ **Education module:** draw up an education programme, set up the National Parks Austria Education Academy for further



training in-house, and organise employee days and annual conferences;

- Knowledge Management & Research Module: draw up a basic concept for shared knowledge management, develop a research agenda, and organise a research symposium.

- Total project costs: EUR 600,000.–
- Financing: Rural development 2014-2020, National Parks measure 16.5.2

## Project on National Parks Austria PR Work 2015-2018

The aim of the project (2015-2018) is to boost people's awareness of the Austrian National Parks, especially in Austria. The National Parks, the values and contents they stand for are to be publicised among the general public. A first step in boosting people's awareness is to draw up and establish the National Parks Austria umbrella brand. The vision, mission, pledge and brand personality were drawn up as part of a concerted process:

- **Vision:** 'Together we will anchor National Parks Austria in the minds and hearts of the Austrian population as their national heritage so they lead their lives with closer bonds with nature.'
- **Mission:** 'With our vision, competence, strength of character and passion we will ensure that future generations too are proud of Austria's natural environment – and that's more than a job; it's a vocation.'
- **Pledge:** 'By harnessing our combined forces we promise to create security for the future of Austria's natural heritage and, by preserving natural oases, to make a major contribution to people's health and well-being.'
- **Brand personality:** 'Naturally exceptional. Two words that generate a fascinating and sustaining tension. They also open up lots of possible interpretations, all of which apply to the many unique aspects of National Parks Austria.'

The umbrella brand is a key element of all the measures planned throughout the term of the project. Besides developing the umbrella brand, in 2015 we also implemented the following measures:

- Presence of all NPs and of NPA at the harvest festival on Vienna's Heldenplatz
- Presence of NPA at the BIORAMA Fair in Vienna
- Presence of all NPs and of NPA at the *Interpädagogica* in Linz
- Press release on the Employees' Day
- Press release on the National Holiday
- *kurz und gut* and *short and brief* information packs

- Total project costs: EUR 1,500,000.–
- Financing: Rural development 2014-2020, National Parks measure 16.5.2



## International Affairs

The Hohe Tauern National Park enjoys a great deal of recognition at the international level, whether it's in science & research, nature conservation and species protection, education & visitor information, or National Park & natural resource management. The following international events and joint ventures were attended in 2015:

### International delegations & meetings at the Hohe Tauern National Park

#### ► Wilderness Audit

Experts from the European Wilderness Society toured the planned wilderness area and submitted it to an audit according to international test criteria.

#### ► Scientific Advisory Board

The Scientific Advisory Board and its international members held two meetings in 2015.

#### ► Field trip by experts

International scientists visited the Untersulzbachtal Valley to plan the future ecosystem monitoring scheme.

#### ► 9<sup>th</sup> Biodiversity Day

Species experts from a total of four countries studied the biodiversity of the Untersulzbachtal Valley.

#### ► Delegation from the Triglav NP (Slovenia)

NP management, education & visitor information

#### ► Delegation from the Swiss NP

National Park and natural resource management

#### ► Delegation from the Zacharovaniy kraj NP (Ukraine)

National Park and natural resource management, wilderness

### Attendance at international events

#### ► 2<sup>nd</sup> European Wilderness Academy Days

International conference in Admont on wilderness in Europe

#### ► Vulture Conservation Foundation & IBM steering committee

International workshop to review the European Bearded Vulture Species Action Plan, and Annual Bearded Vulture Meeting in Corte, Corsica

#### ► International Ibex Conference

23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Alpine Ibex European Specialist Group, held every three years on ibex research.

#### ► European Media Competition

The main feature film of the NP exhibition 'The Alpine Meadow – Between Idyll and Reality' was awarded the 'Master of Excellence Member of The European Masterclass' at the 2015 corporate media film competition in Stuttgart.

### International joint ventures

#### ► ALPARC

Web-Info: [www.alparc.org](http://www.alparc.org)

#### ► ISCAR-P – International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps for Protected Areas & Editorial Board of eco.mont

Web-Info: [www.iscaralpineresearch.org/iscar\\_protected\\_areas](http://www.iscaralpineresearch.org/iscar_protected_areas)

Web-Info: [www.oeaw.ac.at/ecomont/editorial\\_board.htm](http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ecomont/editorial_board.htm)

#### ► International Bearded Vulture Monitoring (IBM)

Web-Info: [www.gyp-monitoring.com](http://www.gyp-monitoring.com)

#### ► EUROPARC

Web-Info: [www.europarc.org](http://www.europarc.org)

#### ► IUCN

Web-Info: [www.iucn.org](http://www.iucn.org)

#### ► European Wilderness Society

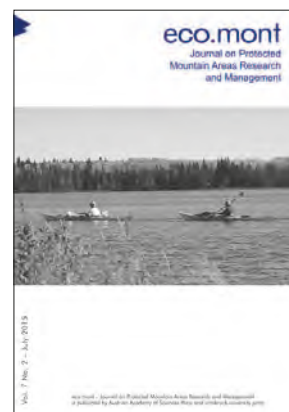
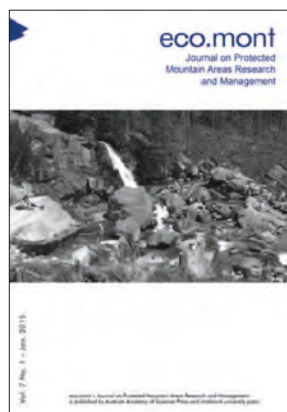
Web-Info: <http://wilderness-society.org>

#### ► VCF – Vulture Conservation Foundation

Web-Info: [www.vulturefoundation.org](http://www.vulturefoundation.org)

#### ► Platform for Biodiversity Research in Austria

Web-Info: [http://131.130.59.133/biodiv\\_forschung](http://131.130.59.133/biodiv_forschung)



*The specialist journal eco.mont publishes research studies from protected mountain areas and, besides featuring the scientific findings, pays particular attention to their practical use for the management of nature protection areas. Since 2015 current issues of the journal have also been freely accessible at: [www.oeaw.ac.at/ecomont/](http://www.oeaw.ac.at/ecomont/)*



### International Waterschool

# SWAROVSKI WATERSCHOOL

Having access to clean drinking water in a sufficient quantity is an unattainable goal for more than a billion people on the planet. Austria has more than enough water, but in many developing countries the situation is quite different, with water shortages, droughts, and environmental pollution posing major threats. The Swarovski Waterschool was first founded in the Hohe Tauern National Park in the year 2000 and much has happened since. Swarovski has now set up four more Waterschools around the world: in China, India, Uganda and Brazil. The aim of this very successful mobile school programme is to make children and young people aware of the sustainable use of water.

In all these countries the programme is implemented in co-operation with local partners to meet the requirements of communities and schools on the ground in the best possible way. Where necessary, clean drinking water and basic sanitation are also provided in the schools and communities within the Waterschool's catchment area. From the outset the Hohe Tauern National Park was committed to protecting water as a vital resource and its many different watercourses, with drinking water of the highest quality and in seemingly inexhaustible quantity in the form of mighty glaciers, raging mountain torrents, countless waterfalls and clear mountain lakes. The comprehensive education programme of the Hohe Tauern National Park Waterschool was drawn up precisely with this in mind.

The package is aimed at school classes in the National Park region. As trained Waterschool teachers our National Park Rangers go directly to the schools, bringing along all the resources they need for their lessons. During the interdisciplinary lessons spread across several days schoolchildren aged 8 to 13 are given a comprehensive and holistic idea of water as a resource at the regional, national and global level. In addition to the informative experiments conducted in the classroom they also go out on field trips in the great outdoors to take a closer look at mountain streams, pools and ponds for themselves.

Questions such as 'How does the water cycle work?'; 'Will we always have enough drinking water?'; and 'Why is drinking water under threat as a natural resource?' are explored and discussed critically with the children and teenagers. Since its founding in the Hohe Tauern National Park fifteen years ago, around 257,000 children in five countries have been introduced to this vital topic as part of the international Swarovski Waterschool.



## *Natural Resource Management*

### Wilderness audit

Primary wilderness still exists in Europe. And in the Hohe Tauern National Park, where nature and the landscape of this primeval alpine land are able to organise themselves and adapt undisturbed by mankind, according only to their own laws. Wilderness is an important element of the European cultural and natural heritage and requires our protection.



As the only pan-European NGO, the European Wilderness Society (EWS) has set itself the goal of identifying, standardising, evaluating, and certifying the protection of the European wilderness, also in terms of its quality. Based on the European wilderness policy and the co-operation with many wilderness organisations (such as the IUCN, the WWF, the John Muir Trust and UNESCO), it has drawn up a uniform European Wilderness Quality Standard and Audit System for wilderness and wilderness development areas.

Verification and evaluation are carried out using more than 500 indicators, 72 criteria and a detailed SWOT analysis. The verification system recognises four categories of interconnected wilderness core zones, with the wilderness category determined by the necessary minimum size depending on the ecosystem in question:

- ▶ Bronze Category: Core zone of at least 1,000 hectares (500 hectares for certain ecosystems such as high moors, fluvial wetland areas, etc.)

- ▶ Silver Category: Core zone of at least 2,000 hectares
- ▶ Gold Category: Core zone of at least 3,000 hectares
- ▶ Platinum Category: Core zone of at least 10,000 hectares

Wilderness areas ought to have three zones as a matter of principle, providing the best protection, potential expansions, and a flexible interaction with other forms of land use:

- ▶ The **wilderness core zone** corresponds to the 'highest' wilderness level with no or minimal human intrusion and the absence of any infrastructure whatsoever, with only natural processes predominating.
- ▶ If the wilderness core zone is too small for abiotic and biotic processes to occur fully, it should be expanded into the **restoration zone**, which is to be developed step by step into a wilderness core zone. This zone is characterised by low-level human intervention. Here the management emphasis is on ecological restoration measures. Any existing infrastructure is to be gradually dismantled.
- ▶ In the adjoining **transition zone**, management activities focus on preventing intrusion likely to have a severe impact on the landscape, i.e. major infrastructure projects, power plants, intensive land use and forestry exploitation, etc. Sustainable forms of land use such as near-natural forestry and agriculture, hunting and fishing are still permitted. The transition zone therefore represents a buffer zone that protects the core and restoration zone from negative impact from the surrounding landscape.

Wilderness core zones must have a minimum size of 3,000 hectares at the time of designation. A size of 10,000 hectares (or more) is to be aimed for by the stage of final expansion. Together, the core zone and restoration zone should total at least 8,000 hectares. A restoration zone can be dispensed with if the core zone is already 8,000 hectares in size at the time of designation. However, the establishment of transition zones is recommended in any case.

This standard can help establish a general understanding of wilderness; indeed, despite the European wilderness definition of the Wild Europe Initiative, wilderness is interpreted in different ways depending on the regional culture or individual perception. The Salzburg NP Administration is convinced that it can make a significant contribution to the protection of the last wilderness areas in Europe and is willing to participate actively in the development and implementation of uniform quality standards.

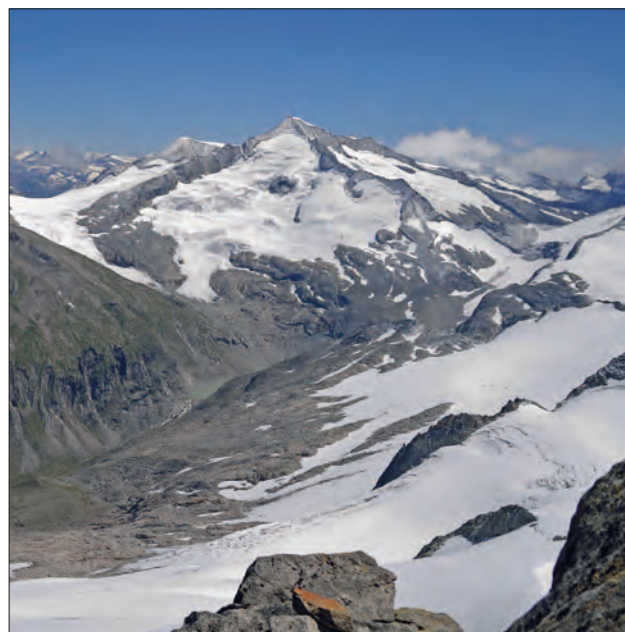


From 28 July to 6 August 2015 a group of international EWS experts examined the special protected area of the Untersulzbachtal Valley and its adjoining potential expansion areas; it also assessed the management of the protected area and based its appraisal on research and monitoring findings already available. A key aspect was aligning the various zoning systems. The wilderness core zone planned for the National Park in accordance with the aforementioned EWS quality criteria is to be designated over an area of 8,465 hectares. The two other protection zones are dispensed with as the surrounding core and outer zone areas of the National Park already fulfil the role of transition zone.

The provisional evaluation report contains recommendations and constraints listed by order of priority and timeline alongside the nine basic principles of 'minimum size and zoning, natural processes and biodiversity management, restoration, extractive uses, factors contributing to wilderness disturbance, control strategies for invasive species, fire and natural catastrophes, research and monitoring, and international relevance'.

They can be summarised as follows:

- ▶ Providing a long-term legislation safeguard for the wilderness area by expanding the existing special protection area of the Untersulzbachtal; safeguarding through land acquisition and/or by concluding long-term contractual nature conservation agreements over at least three hunting lease periods.
- ▶ Drawing up a wilderness management plan and incorporating it into the National Park management plan
- ▶ Drawing up a wilderness PR strategy
- ▶ Drawing up a wilderness education programme
- ▶ Drawing up a wilderness research programme



During their one-week stay the international assessors gained a comprehensive insight into the unspoilt natural landscape of the wilderness core zone planned in the National Park, which was commended at the European Wilderness Academy Days 2015 with the award of the EWS Wilderness Diploma in Gold. This commendation represents a long overdue boost towards quality assurance by the National Park management. Protecting untouched primary wilderness and therefore ensuring that nature is able to develop undisturbed is and remains the seal of quality of the National Park idea, a fascinating notion worldwide.

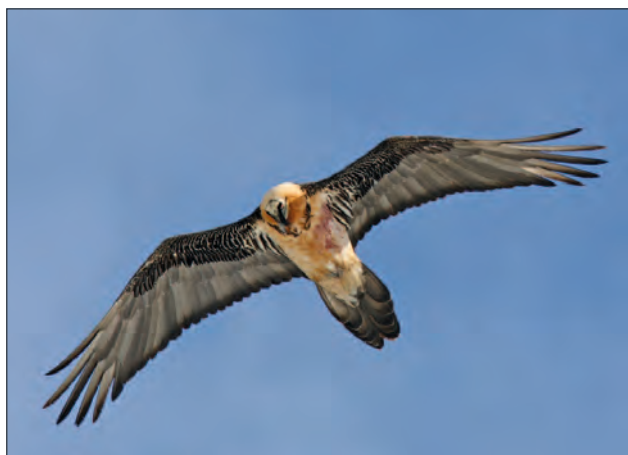


## Large birds of prey in the Hohe Tauern National Park

2015 saw the merging of what had previously been individual projects on bearded vultures, griffon vultures, monk vultures and golden eagles into the cross-province project on 'Large birds of prey in the Hohe Tauern National Park' (2015-2017). To this end a EU funding project was drawn up and submitted to the Ministry of the Environment for approval.

### Bearded vultures

2015 was a good year for bearded vultures right across the Alps. Nine juvenile vultures, two of them in Tyrol's Dorfertal Valley, were released into the wild to boost the genetic variability and, for the first time, 20 juveniles became fully fledged in the wild. In the Hohe Tauern the Krumler and Katschberger pair brooded, but only the Carinthian pair successfully raised a juvenile. The Alpine population continued to develop favourably. To date 33 breeding pairs have bonded. What's more, initial signs have been observed that a fully functioning corridor is being established between the Alps and the Pyrenees. Nonetheless, it is still of the utmost importance to monitor the population trend consistently, right across the Alps. There is also an urgent need for action with regard particularly to lead poisoning.



### Griffon vultures

Early June saw the arrival in the Hohe Tauern of the first griffon vultures; since time immemorial these birds of prey have used the carcasses of dead wild and domestic animals as a food source during the summering period. Feeding conditions in 2015 were very good. Around 60 of these birds of prey were observed continually over long periods, with a peak figure of 85 griffon vultures documented at the same time; and this year for the first time, 51 birds were counted at the Geierschlafwand in the Stubachtal Valley, compared with a maximum figure of 24 in previous years. These figures are also corroborated by the findings of the griffon vulture study. It was shown that the population in the Hohe Tauern is closely linked with the status of the brooding populations in Friuli and Croatia. Providing the

foodstock on offer remains sufficient, up to 100 vultures will fly into the Hohe Tauern in the short term. Now that broodstocks in Croatia and Italy have recovered, an increase is expected over the next few years. The amount of food on offer will be key. If seriously injured grazing animals are left out on the alpine pastures rather than being disposed of, they provide the vultures with an extremely attractive source of food. Alpine farming therefore plays an important role in the occurrence of griffon vultures in the Hohe Tauern.



### Golden eagles

As in previous years, eyrie monitoring was once again carried out by the National Park Rangers and the National Park's professional hunters in their respective jurisdictions throughout the 2015 season. The annual survey of the number of successful broods is a priority objective. This year nine juvenile fledglings were identified in the National Park and its surroundings of relevance in terms of wildlife ecology. In addition, the juvenile from the Gschlössstal Valley, which adjoins to the south, was spotted on several occasions north of the Felbertauern.



- ▶ Total project costs: EUR 287,637.60
- ▶ Financing: Rural development 2014-2020, natural heritage measure 7.6.1



## Wolves on a whistle-stop visit



International protection programmes are having an effect, with large predators slowly reclaiming their former homeland. There are now wolf packs in Germany, Switzerland and Slovakia. And there are more and more signs that wolves are on the doorstep here, too, in Austria. One thing is clear: the Hohe Tauern National Park has an unambiguous policy when it comes to the return of these large predators. The protected area management will not pursue a policy of active resettlement or release. But if wolves should one day return to the Hohe Tauern of their own accord, the territory of the National Park will be available to this internationally protected species as a 'new old home'.

There were a few wolf sightings in the Hohe Tauern in 2015. In June a hiker in the Maurertal Valley of East Tyrol was able to photograph a young wolf crossing a snow field. But it was to be the only sighting of this particular wolf in the Tyrol portion of the National Park area. There were no reports of any sheep killed or other damage. So it would seem that the juvenile wolf paid only a short visit to the Maurertal Valley.

In the Salzburg National Park area initial suspicions came from the Kolmkar in the Gastein region of Nassfeld. In mid-July six dead sheep were found there with bite wounds, causing quite a stir. However, an immediate inspection by a commission of experts was able to clarify the matter. These kills were not the result of an attack by a large predator, but by a stray dog.

However, the losses sustained by a flock of sheep in the area of the Imbachhorn between the Fuscher and Kaprunertal Valleys were due to a wolf. It was there, on August 21, that a young wolf walked into a camera trap. And while there were no fresh traces of 'lupine activity', numerous missing and scattered sheep were reported over that same period. Their carcasses had in the meantime also been exploited by crows, foxes or vultures. The young wolf remained in the area for some time. Its tracks were spotted time and time again. Moreover, following the early drive of the cattle herds back down to the valleys, the game did display abnormal behaviour. In the autumn another report came in of a wolf spotted in the area of the Felbertauern Road, but it could not be corroborated by experts.



In total, three discrete individuals were confirmed in the province of Salzburg this year: besides the juvenile wolf in the Imbachhorn area, one wolf was also identified in the border area between Salzburg and Styria and one in the border area between Salzburg and Upper Austria. These wolves are most probably young roaming males. There are no indications at present of any packs forming. It is impossible to say whether the wolves are still in these areas or, if they are, how long they will remain there. It is in the nature of young males to leave their packs and roam. In central Europe wolves are capable of covering territories of approx. 150 km<sup>2</sup> and more. A single roaming wolf can cover extreme distances of more than 1,000 km.

The wolf is listed in Annex II of the Berne Convention and in Annexes II and IV of the Fauna-Flora-Habitats Directive as a species in need of strict protection and a priority species respectively. Given that, in Austria, hunting and nature conservation come under the jurisdiction of each individual province, international commitments to the protection of wolves have been incorporated into the relevant provincial hunting and nature conservation legislation.

### Literature at the Mittersill National Park Library:

Co-ordination agency for brown bears, lynx and wolf (2012): Wolf management in Austria. Basic principles and recommendations. Research Institute of Wildlife Ecology, Vienna University of Veterinary Medicine, 24 pages.

**Web-Info:** <http://tinyurl.com/wolfsmanagement>

## Science and Research

### Long-term ecological monitoring

National Parks have one main objective: to preserve nature in a state as unspoilt as possible. But nature is never static, but constantly changing. Recessive land use, nitrogen input and climate change all leave their mark even in protected habitats. Changes such as these are not immediately discernible and need to be highlighted through measurements and quantitative observations. In high-mountain regions it takes a long time for actual changes to become traceable, which is why long-term ecosystem research particularly for mountain areas is a priority concern – also at the international level.



So as one of the largest alpine protected areas the Hohe Tauern National Park has chosen to establish a long-term ecological monitoring and research programme for the systematic observation and documentation of chemical-physical and biological properties as well as the development of near-natural aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems over a longer period of time. Key parameters describing biotopes at the fundamental level – e.g. microclimate, soil/water physics, soil/water chemistry, soil microbiota, soil/water biocoenosis, plant diversity and productivity – are to be recorded on a regular standardised basis.

Under the expert guidance of renowned mountain ecologist Christian Körner of the University of Basel and of the Scientific

Advisory Board, a core programme was drawn up for monitoring terrestrial ecosystems as part of a discussion process lasting two years, during regular Advisory Board meetings, several theme-based workshops involving selected experts, and a reconnaissance field trip in early August 2015, complementing the existing freshwater monitoring scheme. The project and process management is the responsibility of the Salzburg National Park Administration. Work on setting up the monitoring scheme is set to begin in 2016.

If an ecosystem observation scheme such as this is to succeed, it has to fulfil certain basic requirements:

- ▶ Selection of a group of practicable and highly indicative observations (feasibility, impact)
- ▶ Reproducibility of the observations even after many years (traceability)
- ▶ Replication on a large scale in a target area, such as the Hohe Tauern (generalisability, large-scale models)

The monitoring concept now in place is structured around these prerequisites and the expectation is that, in future, other research projects will gravitate around such standardised programmes replicated in both time and space, projects which see this monitoring concept as an important biological reference, comparable in a way to a weather station. Three catchment areas in the Hohe Tauern National Park were earmarked for setting up this core programme: the Salzburg Untersulzbachtal Valley, the Carinthian Seebachtal Valley and the East Tyrol Innerschlöss. ‘Life at the boundaries of existence – temporal and spatial variation of boundaries’ was defined as the overarching long-term research objective.

Different spatial scales are covered as a result:

- ▶ Permanent plots (areas under permanent monitoring) in standard alpine ecosystems
- ▶ Micro-catchment areas at the same elevation
- ▶ Large herbivore monitoring scheme along altitudinal gradients above the tree line
- ▶ Glacier forelands that follow receding glaciers and are highly dynamic habitats shaped by natural disturbances

It will also be about recording and evaluating complex interactive effects in the catchment areas, particularly with regard to the glaciological, geomorphological, climatological and phytosociological circumstances and processes as well as the historical and current land use, also using remote sensing data.



## Freshwater monitoring



Top photos, from left to right: Taking a growth sample (photo: B. HECHENBLAICKNER), biofilm of the algae species *Hydrurus* (photo: G. NIEDRIST); bottom photos, from left to right: WTW MultiLine probe for measuring hydrochemical parameters (photo: G. NIEDRIST), taking samples of macrozoobenthos (photo: S. SCHÜTZ).

Climate change is expected to bring about significant changes first and foremost to the glaciation, hydrology and geomorphology of mountain regions. It will also result in a significant alteration of the ecology of water bodies. For this reason a long-term freshwater monitoring scheme was carried out under the scientific leadership of limnologist Leopold Füreder of the University of Innsbruck.

For the **physico-chemical characterisation** of the water bodies, the annual recording of parameters such as temperature, O<sub>2</sub> saturation, O<sub>2</sub> concentration, pH and conductivity was carried out in 2015 along with the quantification of organic and inorganic constituents and growth chlorophyll content to determine food availability, and measurements of flow rates and water depths to determine run-offs. Readings from the permanently installed measuring equipment were logged and the equipment itself serviced and replaced where necessary.

Extensive analyses of typical communities are now available for the **biological characterisation** of the water bodies. Mayflies, stoneflies, sedge-flies and sand flies are the dominant insects in mountain streams. In these very cold, nutrient-poor and highly dynamic water courses they are perfectly adapted to the extreme conditions of temperature, nutrient and flow, which means they have only a very narrow tolerance range for certain environmental parameters.

Thanks to the hydrological, geomorphological and habitat-specific characterisation and the biological parameters obtained as part of comparative analyses over time, increasingly accurate statements can now be made about the spatial and temporal patterns of ecologically relevant structures (species composition, diversity, colonisation densities) and functions (composition of nutritional types, vulnerability, resistance) of mountain water courses and how they alter, as well as the underlying causes.

The longer this continual environmental monitoring according to uniform standards is carried out, the more telling and therefore valuable the data collated will be. Changes to ecosystems are complex long-term processes. If, ultimately, these evaluations of the extensive and ever-growing volumes of data are to yield a proper interpretation, it is important not only to have a well defined methodology, but also to maintain the continuity of the data series over a long period of time. In 2015 the repeat cycle for the period 2015-2018 was again awarded to the University of Innsbruck based on a nationwide invitation to tender.

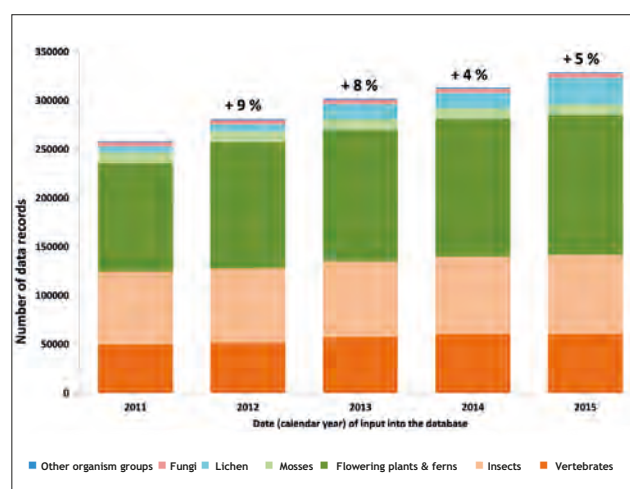
- Total project costs: EUR 190,926.04
- Financing: Rural development 2014-2020, preservation of the natural heritage measure 7.6.1



## Biodiversity at the National Park

### 'Bookkeeping' biodiversity

Since 2002 a binding joint venture between the National Park Funds of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol and the *Haus der Natur* in Salzburg has ensured the comprehensive documentation of all available data on biodiversity in the Hohe Tauern National Park. The biodiversity database specifically collates, standardises, administers, evaluates and supplies as required the data on the occurrence, distribution, ecology and endangered status of animal, plant and mushroom species.



As at December 2015, 329,266 data records had been registered on 11,045 different taxa (species, subspecies, hybrids, varieties) along with 23,579 sites from 512 data sources (commissioned projects, biodiversity days, collections, publications, expertises) and 1,118 observers. The data pool has therefore increased by 15,800 data records year on year, an increase of around 5%.

### Trend in the data pool

In 2015 the largest increase in data volume in terms of figures was for the lichen species group. With 11,391 newly entered data records, the increase corresponds to 42% compared with the previous year's figure. This was made possible by an extensive research project over the entire territory of the Hohe Tauern National Park carried out by leading lichen expert Roman Türk from the University of Salzburg over the period 2009 to 2013, commissioned and financed by the Carinthian and Salzburg National Park Funds. All the potential lichen habitats from valley to summit elevations were systematically examined; as a result, for the first time we now have an almost complete overview and comprehensive collection of specimens for this species group featuring lichen species occurring in the Hohe Tauern.

The diversity is enormous: more than 1,100 different lichen species occur in completely different to extreme sites within the protected area, i.e. around 40% of the previously known lichen diversity in Austria, which is currently estimated at around

2,500. This important foundation work on one of the largest protected areas in the Alps is to be published in spring 2016 as a popular science publication in the *Scientific Studies* series issued by the Hohe Tauern National Park. It will also represent a standard reference work on lichen biodiversity in the eastern Alps and is certain also to be of interest to experts in the field outside Austria, too.

The level of knowledge about the occurrence and distribution of species in the Hohe Tauern varies greatly from one group of organisms to the next. By comparison birds, mammals, butterflies, grasshoppers and dragonflies were relatively well documented in the Hohe Tauern. And by contrast, very little to nothing is known about most insect groups in the protected area, by far the largest group of organisms, or about arachnids, and even the specialists can only make assumptions about the number of species, the diversity and the distribution.



*Clouded Apollo (Parnassius mnemosyne), a typical species found in extensively farmed transition areas between forest and open terrain. This species is listed in Annex IV of the Fauna-Flora-Habitats Directive and is therefore among the species deemed particularly worthy of protection right across Europe (photo: P. GROS).*

Flowering plants are relatively well documented. Most of the data comes from the distribution atlas of Salzburg vascular plants, observations made by the Botanic Working Group at the University of Salzburg, biotope mapping, moorland mapping and the mapping of alpine pasture use. Thanks to the efforts of Thomas Rücker, mycologist at the *Haus der Natur Salzburg*, aimed at keeping as complete a record as possible of the mushrooms of the province of Salzburg, well documented findings also exist for the area of the National Park for this major species group. However, we still lack anywhere near complete species lists and knowledge of species distribution for groups such as ferns, mosses and algae for example.



Expert mycologists Michaela and Gernot Friebe from Graz regularly attend the Biodiversity Days; this year they were out foraging in the deadwood-rich humid forests of the Untersulzbachtal. Top photos, from left to right: *Neolecta vitellina*, *Rimbachia bryophila*; bottom photos, from left to right: *Pleurocybella porrigens*, *Pholiota subochracea* (photos: G. FRIEBES).

## National Park Biodiversity Day in the Untersulzbachtal Valley

The Biodiversity Days in the Hohe Tauern National Park were launched, among others, to offset the knowledge deficits on biodiversity in the National Park. They have been held annually since 2007, focusing each time on a selected National Park valley in Carinthia, Salzburg or Tyrol. The experts carry out the stock-take on the ground on a voluntary basis, along with the follow-up studies under the microscope, which for many species groups can be very time-consuming. Besides the overall organisation the National Park also provides the transport on site as well as room and board. 32,752 reports of finds have so far been generated through these interdisciplinary inventories alone, resulting in an increase of 5,100 different taxa from 22 different species group. In 2015 it was Salzburg's turn once again, and this time the Untersulzbachtal Valley was given a closer look.

And this year the search conducted by the mushroom experts was particularly satisfying. One highlight was finding *Neolecta vitellina*, or egg-yellow earth tongue, the first such find in Austria. Molecular biological analyses showed that these ascomycetes, or sac fungi, can rightly be regarded as living fossils. The egg-yellow, club-shaped fruiting structures grow in symbiosis with the root tips of spruce trees. It is thought that these fungi live as a plant-parasitic species, although their precise lifestyle has yet to be researched.

Two other very rare species for Austria were also found, presumably a first for the province of Salzburg: *Rimbachia bryophila*, a small white cup-shaped or disc-shaped fungus with a wrinkly veined underside, growing in permanently humid patches as a parasite on moss-covered banks, and *Gymnopilus josserandii*, which occurs on decomposing coniferous tree stumps. Two other very rare mushrooms were discovered, which also depend on heavily decaying dead coniferous wood with a dense moss covering: *Pleurocybella porrigens*, or angel wing, and *Pholiota subochracea*. The occurrence of these rare wood-decay fungi is an indicator of how near-natural the forests in the Untersulzbachtal Valley actually are.

Overall, the mycologists secured a remarkable yield, recording 192 different species. To date 2,321 different fungi and mushrooms are documented in the biodiversity database. The scientific estimate is of around 4,000 mushroom species in the Hohe Tauern, which would be 50% of the 8,000 species of mushrooms estimated so far in Austria. The complete findings report will be posted online in 2016.

- Total project costs: EUR 5,440.91
- Financing: National Park Council



## Survey of alpine pasture use completed

In spring 2015 the research project on the 'Survey of alpine pastures in the Salzburg portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park' was completed after a term of just one year. The project was co-financed by funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. eb&p Umweltbüro GmbH Klagenfurt/ Salzburg emerged as the best bidding contractor. The contract comprised a current survey of alpine pastures and a comparison of today's findings with those from the first survey of alpine pasture use conducted 15 years ago.

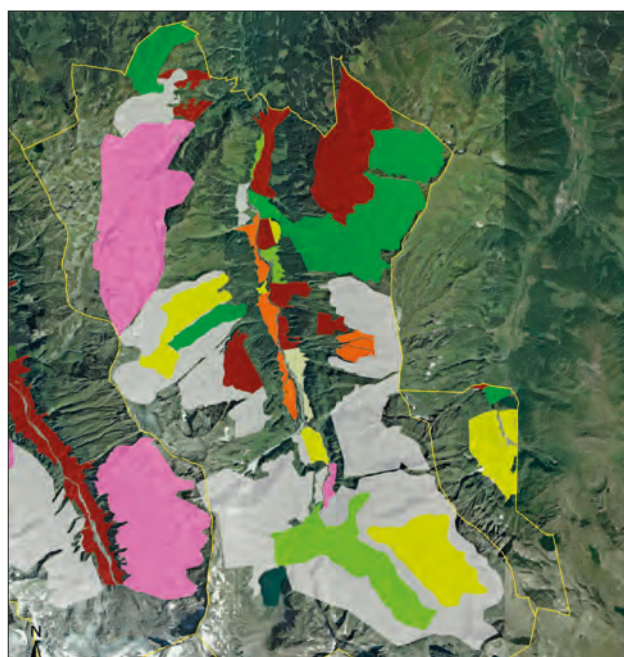
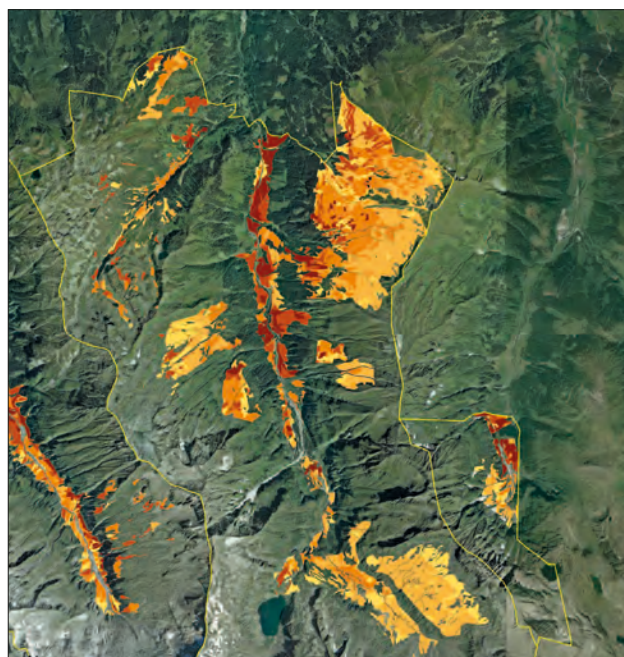


### Findings:

#### Current alpine pasture use

The starting point for recording the 106 alpine pastures was to conduct an extensive survey among the alpine pasture farmers themselves. The current grazing boundaries, the actual distribution of animals driven up to the pastures (cattle, horses, sheep, goats) and the existing alpine pasture infrastructure were ascertained in personal conversations, along with the specific management methods and the vision for the future of alpine pasture farming operations. At present 7,670 sheep/goats, 365 horses, 5,620 young cattle and calves, and 1,200 dairy cows are taken up to alpine pastures to graze in the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg, i.e. a total of 7,000 livestock units or 12% of all animals grazing in alpine pastures across the entire federal province of Salzburg. At present 24% are left to graze in the outer zone and 13% in the core zone of the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg.

Of the 106 alpine pastures in the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg 45 are managed as dairy herd pastures. Here the focus is on the wider trough valleys. Only young cattle is driven up to a total of 95 pastures in all 18 National Park valleys; horses are currently grazed on 32 pastures; 38 pastures are used for grazing sheep, and 17 pastures for goats. Two thirds of the alpine pastures in the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg have shepherds on site, with only just under one third managed from the home farm. More than 68 pastures are accessible by vehicle and 20 pastures only on foot. 8 pastures are reached using a materials ropeway.



*Fig. above: Livestock density (units/ha) for cattle. The lighter the colour the lower the units/ha. Fig. bottom: used energy yield (%) for cattle in the same area section. The lighter the colour the lower the use (maps: Umweltbüro Klagenfurt).*

#### Grazing forms and grazing intensities

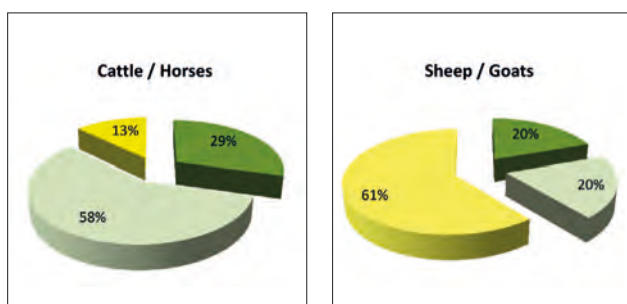
The survey results provided the basis for a model simulation to calculate the current data for the alpine pastures in the National Park. The following results were mapped out:

- ▶ Gross energy yield per pasture area
- ▶ Utilisation intensity per pasture
- ▶ Livestock density per pasture and valley in units/ha per grazing period



The gross energy yield in MJ NEL/ha is calculated for each area of pasture using yield curves standardised throughout Austria in conjunction with each particular feed quality. It indicates in each case the maximum amount of fodder that is available to the animals on a particular pasture. The utilisation intensity is the proportion of the gross energy yield that is actually grazed by the animals driven up to the pastures. It is indicated in percentage stages. The livestock density indicates in livestock units per hectare how the grazing animals turned out to pasture in each case are actually distributed on the pasture areas.

Pastures for which the utilised gross energy yield is 40% or below are regarded as extensively managed. Values above 40% and below 80% are regarded as balanced in their use, and pastures for which the utilised gross energy yield is 80% or more are regarded as very intensively grazed. The results of the model simulation show that, in the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg, more than half the cattle pastures are utilised in a balanced way, 13% extensively, and just under 30% very intensively. Of the sheep pastures, just under two thirds are used extensively, with one fifth used in a balanced way and one fifth very intensively (see also charts):



## Interplays with the ecosystem

In summer 2014 the results of the model simulation as part of terrain surveys in all the valleys of the National Park were checked, with the FFH habitat type, conservation status, and utilisation intensity ascertained for around 150 to 200 individual areas per valley. In addition, 192 vegetation-based ecological monitoring areas were set up to observe in the long term the connections between grazing and plant species composition and record them for future spatial and time-based comparative analyses.

The evaluation of the data showed that, for example, the mat grasslands priority FFH habitat type benefited from moderately intensive grazing with regard to a high biodiversity and therefore a favourable conservation status. But on the sub-areas where this habitat type is either not used or is intensely grazed, the biodiversity declines significantly. With regard to the species on the Red List it has also been shown that they only occur in areas with extensive to balanced use. Likewise, boreo-alpine grasslands or alpine and subalpine lime grasslands depend on at most moderately intensive grazing for a positive development in terms of nature conservation.



## Changes over the past 15 years

A comparison of data from the survey of alpine pasture use from the 1990s with current findings showed that, in the outer zone of the Hohe Tauern National Park, the extent of the areas grazed by cattle has risen marginally from 5,436 hectares (20 %) to 5,446 hectares (20%). Similarly, the intensity of cattle grazing in the outer zone has increased first and foremost in the valley floors. By contrast, in the core zone, the extent of cattle pastures has decreased from 4,072 hectares (8%) in the 1990s to 3,531 hectares (7%) at present, and the intensity of cattle grazing has also diminished. Similarly, the extent of sheep grazing has decreased in both the outer zone (from 2,005 hectares (7.5%) in the 1990s to 1,848 hectares (7%) at present) and in the core zone (from 4,311 hectares (8.5%) in the 1990s to 4,092 hectares (8%) at present).

## Management requirements and implementation suggestions

Based on these findings this current study also makes a number of suggestions for measures relating to a differentiated, ecologically minded alpine pasture management. The National Park Administration relies on a form of protected area management which, from the very outset, is implemented on a partnership basis with the landowners. That is why the findings have already been presented to, and discussed with, the stakeholders involved: the project steering group (May 27), the 74<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees (July 9), the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Fund Advisory Board (October 13), and the meeting of the Association for the Protection of Landowners (December 14). The findings are also to be incorporated into the reorientation of the subsidy guidelines.

- Total project costs: EUR 152,286.09
- Financing: Rural development 2007-2013, nature conservation measure 323a

## Forest mapping completed

In spring 2015 the research project on the ‘Survey of forests in the Salzburg portion of the Hohe Tauern National Park’ was completed after a term of just one year. The project was co-financed by funds from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The best bidding contractor was the bidder consortium comprised of WLM Büro für Vegetationsökologie und Umweltplanung Klosterhuber & Partner OG Innsbruck and the Institute of Silviculture at the University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences in Vienna. The contract was for a representative initial survey of the occurrence and distribution of current and potential-natural forest communities, an analysis of their conservation status, and the establishment of monitoring areas for the long-term documentation of the natural development of all the forest groups occurring within the region.



### Findings:

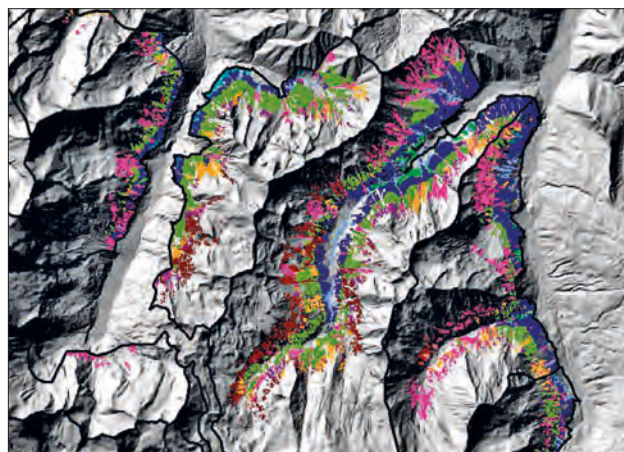
#### Data

Just under 13,800 hectares, or 17%, of the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg are forested. In summer 2014 extensive terrain surveys were conducted in this regard: data on location, vegetation, stand, deadwood and exploitation as well as the impact of game and grazing was recorded on 160 sample plots, using a stratified, representative approach distributed across all forest groups in the region. A more in-depth sampling of stand parameters as part of the initial establishment of monitoring areas was carried out at 30 survey points.

#### Maps

The survey data was then used to draw up, for the first time, an area-wide map of potential-natural forest communities for the protected area using a model simulation. Besides the data surveyed by terrestrial means, area-wide GIS data and reference data from other research projects on the region were also incorporated into the model simulation.

The distribution of the current forest communities was initially deduced from the existing interpretation of CIR aerial photographs and then corrected on screen using the current terrain findings, the data from the Salzburg biotope mapping and a visual interpretation of current ortho-photos for tree species that are clearly distinguishable such as larch versus spruce or Swiss stone pine. As a result area-wide information is now also available for these particular species.



*Map of potential-natural forest groups (graphic: R. KLOSTERHUBER).*

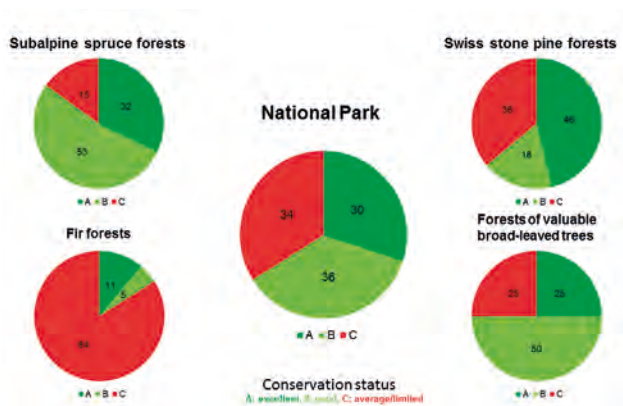
#### Conservation status

An ecological and nature conservation evaluation was carried out on all 160 survey areas using the following indicators: area size, tree species composition, structure, utilisation, deadwood, disorder indicators, game impact, and hydrology. On the basis of this representative sample the overall conservation status was then determined for each forest group using a combination of these individual indicators.

Forest groups are units of forest communities that differ in terms of phytosociology and location and are determined by the lead tree species of a particular elevation: Swiss stone pine forests, larch forests, subalpine spruce forests, fir forests, high-value broad-leaved deciduous forests of maple, ash and mountain elm, grey alder forests, beech forests, and spruce-fir-beech forests, green alder and dwarf pine shrubbery. As a result we now have area-wide indicative data on the conservation status of the forests in the National Park. The network of 30 monitoring areas will be used to monitor the overall conservation status on a regular basis.

The evaluation of the data with regard to the potential-natural forest communities in the region shows the following picture: globally, 30% of the forests in the National Park also correspond to the potential-natural forest type and therefore qualify as ‘excellent’ in terms of conservation status. 36% is attributed a conservation status of ‘good’ and 34% a conservation status of only ‘limited’, bearing in mind that the tree species composition represents a key indicator with the highest weighting.





Conservation status of forests with regard to the potential-natural forest communities in the region. Middle chart: Overall evaluation for the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg (graphic: H. VÁCIK).

The results differ depending on the forest groups, as the following examples illustrate:

- ▶ 46% of Swiss stone pine forests correspond to the potential-natural condition, therefore achieving the highest relative proportion of stands with this excellent rating.
- ▶ 15% of subalpine spruce forests are rated as having a limited conservation status, which corresponds to the lowest relative proportion in this category.
- ▶ 84% of fir forests are attributed only a limited conservation status with regard to their potential-natural occurrence in the region. This mostly poor rating is due to the absence of fir trees as lead tree species in most of the potential desired locations in the region. This noted deficit is attributable on the one hand to historical circumstance following a radical area-wide exploitation of these forests for mining and saltworks. On the other, the massive impact of game alongside the lack of seed trees prevents any occurrence of sensitive fir tree rejuvenation.
- ▶ 11% of fir forests still present an excellent conservation status. The Kötschachtal Valley in particular proved to be particularly abundant in fir trees. Occurrences to be preserved at all costs are also to be found in the valleys of Untersulzbachtal, Habachtal, Hollersbachtal and Seidlwinkltal.

## Naturalness

Hemeroby as a measure of the anthropogenic impact on an ecosystem indirectly provides information about the level of naturalness. It represents a key criterion for the current conservation status of the forest communities. The classification was raised in qualitative terms and in terms of expertise based on the following criteria of the study entitled 'Hemeroby of Austrian forest ecosystems' at the survey points: current and potential tree species, deadwood ratio, influences of felling operations, damage caused by game, and disorder indicators in the vegetation. Of the subalpine forest communities 21% were classified as natural and 40% as near-natural. 12% of the forest communities in the high montane altitudinal zone were rated as moderately altered due to

the absence of fir trees and frequent instances of rejuvenation deficits. 5% were considered severely altered.

## Pasture usage

Currently approx. 2,700 hectares of the 13,800 hectares of forest and elfin woodlands in the National Park are shown as grazing land. The relative share of forest pasture grazing is highest in the Hüttwinkltal Valley, at 79%, followed by 51% in the Wildgerlostal Valley. By contrast there is no forest pasturage in the Kötschachtal Valley, and also very little in the Anlaufstal Valley, at 2%. The differences in relative shares are due first and foremost to the offer of grazable locations and the quality of the soils. The intensity of the grazing impact was surveyed on the sampling areas using direct (e.g. trampling damage, pasturage) and indirect characteristics (e.g. grazing indicators in the ground vegetation) and then used to determine the disorder indicator. The impact of grazing is at its greatest in subalpine spruce forests.

## Management requirements and implementation suggestions

Based on the results pertaining to the conservation status and the evaluation of naturalness in the tree species composition as it stands, this current study has drawn up specific conservation objectives and associated recommendations for action. The project report contains an ecological and nature conservation description of all the forest groups along with specific measures for near-natural and functional forest management. The National Park Administration relies on a form of protected area management which, from the very outset, is implemented on a partnership basis with the landowners. That is why the findings have already been presented to the stakeholders involved: the project steering group (May 7), the 74<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Board of Trustees (July 9), and the 52<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Fund Advisory Board (October 13).



- ▶ Total project costs: EUR 155,307.–
- ▶ Financing: Rural development 2007-2013, nature conservation measure 323a



## Education & Visitor Information

**Web-Info:** [www.hohetauern.at/de/bildung-hohetauern.html](http://www.hohetauern.at/de/bildung-hohetauern.html)

**Web-Info:** [www.hohetauern.at/de/bildung-hohetauern/bildungshaeuser.html](http://www.hohetauern.at/de/bildung-hohetauern/bildungshaeuser.html)

**Web-Info:** [www.nationalparkerlebnis.at/de/](http://www.nationalparkerlebnis.at/de/)



The Education & Visitor Information business area is all about publicising and conveying the following contents in a way that is accessible to all:

- ▶ the global idea of the National Park
- ▶ the significance of the Hohe Tauern National Park as a nature protection area
- ▶ the ecological connections in high mountain regions and the impact of mankind's intervention
- ▶ nature conservation as a societal responsibility

The environmental education methodology at the National Park is based on contemporary educational and didactic approaches that combine for instance the dissemination of knowledge with experience opportunities. In this way the content specific to the National Park is to be consolidated while creating awareness of a need for action.

Visitors:	Participants
▶ Information events, other events, lectures	2,987
▶ Admissions to National Park visitor attractions	864,721
▶ Guided tours & indoor tours	7,474
▶ Visitors to National Park valleys	1,053,460
▶ Visitors to the Grossglockner High-Alpine Road	846,551
<b>Visitor information, total</b>	<b>2,775,193</b>

Education:	Participants
▶ 42 partner schools with total number of schoolchildren	6,015
▶ Partner schools fête	1,182
▶ The National Park Comes to Town	496
▶ Youth camps	17
▶ School excursions, outdoors	6,579
▶ Indoor tours	1,471
▶ Mobile National Park school (Waterschool, Climate School, Drinking Water Days)	4,922
▶ NP workshop and Science Centre	1,980
▶ Lectures	102
▶ National Park Academy	161
▶ Foreign delegations	19
<b>Education, total</b>	<b>22,944</b>

Other projects in environmental education and visitor information:	Circulation
▶ National Park Magazine, 2 issues	408,930 copies
▶ Rudi the Ranger – National Park Report for children, 4 issues	20,000 copies
▶ Hohe Tauern News – special newspaper	330,000 copies

## National Park seasonal trainees

28 pupils aged 16 or more from the Hohe Tauern National Park Region were once again given the opportunity of a holiday work placement in 2015 giving visitors first-hand information about the Hohe Tauern National Park. During the months of July, August and September the seasonal trainees are stationed at the information huts at the National Park's valley entrances, ensuring direct contact with guests and locals alike.



These Junior Rangers acquire their extensive knowledge during intensive induction courses with experienced National Park Rangers. The majority of them also benefit from their previous year's assignments. With 41 permanent members of staff, one person on alternative civilian service, and 28 seasonal trainees the Hohe Tauern National Park Salzburg is one of the region's largest employers. For a number of years now the Junior Ranger Programme has been sponsored by Sparkasse Mittersill and by the sports article manufacturer '2117 of Sweden'. In fact, the seasonal trainees are allowed to keep their '2117 of Sweden' work uniforms even after completing their practical course.

Our warmest thanks to all our sponsors who supported the projects of the Salzburg National Park Fund in the Education & Visitor Information business area in 2015!

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Snowshoes

## Alternative civilian service



From July 2015 to March 2016 the team of the National Park Administration will be assisted by Harald Vorreiter, who is doing his alternative civilian service there. His field of activities will range from infrastructure maintenance to organising and booking visitor programmes and education offers. Between December 2015 and March 2016, Harald was also a big help to the professional hunters, particularly when it came to show feeding.

## National Park Rangers



The National Park Rangers are key ambassadors for the protected area; their role is to convey the National Park idea to others as part of the many education and visitor offers available at the National Park. During the summer and winter tours to the National Park they enthral guests and locals alike; they explain complex correlations to pupils using the mobile Waterschool and Climate School; and, at the National Park workshop at the Klausnerhaus or the Science Centre in Mittersill, they teach fun facts about nature and the cultural landscape of the National Park to entire families. In addition to their extensive and varied education work they also take charge of regional supervision in the National Park valleys and are closely involved in developing other education offers.





## Partner Schools

The conclusion of the 2014/15 school year signalled the end of four years of excellent partnership between the schools of the National Park region of Salzburg and the National Park Administration. The partner schools programme is now aimed at around 6,000 schoolchildren to whom all the National Park's education offers are available free of charge over four years. Financially this has been made possible thanks to our exclusive sponsoring partner *Ja!Natürlich*, who as Austria's largest brand of organic produce once again extended its agreement by a further four years in November 2015. It means that 42 partner schools will be able to continue with their many years of education co-operation with the National Park through to the 2018/19 school year.



## Partner schools fête

In 2015 the National Park Administration once again invited the partner schools of the National Park Region to attend the communal school fête for the fifth time now – and this time it was held in the National Park Municipality of Uttendorf. Due to popular demand the fête once again had to be held over two entire days.

A total of 69 classes comprising 1,182 pupils and 119 teaching staff took part. Various theme-based stations were set up on the lakeside grounds by the National Park Administration, giving pupils ample opportunity to get involved in a fun way and at their own initiative with topics relating to the sparing use of nature and natural resources and finding out lots of interesting facts about nature and culture at the National Park.

This year the topics spanned a wide arc from wildlife ecology to herbology and mobility, nutrition, consumption and living, with the newly opened ecological footprint seeing plenty of action. The Hohe Tauern National Park is keen to make young people in particular especially aware of themes such as nature conservation and environmental protection and give them an insight into the correlations. The physical well-being of all the visitors at the event was well catered for thanks once again to our sponsoring partner *Ja!Natürlich*, who laid on healthy snacks and refreshments to support the partner schools fête.



### The National Park Comes to Town

On 23 June 2015 the National Park Administration in co-operation with the ORF (Austria's public service broadcaster) organised the schools event entitled 'The National Park Comes to Town' for the fourth time already. The aim of the event is to introduce schoolchildren in the city of Salzburg to the National Park's huge diversity. 25 schools in total with around 500 pupils and 55 teaching staff took part in this year's interactive information day on the outdoor grounds of the ORF.

The National Park staff used a wide array of hands-on stations to introduce the children to topics such as the National Park itself, ecology, biology and sustainability. The schoolchildren then took part in an entertaining quiz and skills events designed to put their newly acquired knowledge to the test. The pupils responded particularly well to the topic of wildlife ecology, which the National Park's professional hunters and the wolf expert Gudrun Pflüger of the European Wilderness Society were able to illustrate very vividly with a number of fascinating exhibits.

They also had the opportunity to practise the correct use and handling of indigenous medicinal and crop plants by making their very own herb-flavoured salt and aromatic herb vinegar. The children were also thrilled to be able to try their hand at the traditional artisanal craft of felting, which ultimately was another opportunity to convey just how precious natural resources really are, this time at the emotional level. The sponsoring partner *Ja!Natürlich* laid on healthy snacks and refreshments to make sure the children's 'batteries' remained fully charged at all times.





## Ecological Footprint



*The Ecological Footprint Module on the themes of consumption, mobility, nutrition and living can be booked by schools and groups from spring 2016 onwards. Coupled with programmes by the National Park Workshop such as 'A Taste of Nature' and 'Culture with Taste and Touch', participants are able to take away into their everyday lives all the knowledge gained. Insights into traditional handicraft skills or how to cook some of nature's tasty treats round off the offer.*

At the beginning of June 2015 a new attraction among the National Park facilities for environmental education and visitor information was inaugurated at the National Park Municipality of Hollersbach. A maze made of hornbeam hedges – i.e. the walk-in Ecological Footprint – was set up on the grounds of the Hollersbach herb garden. This new National Park installation is aimed at addressing areas of life such as consumption, mobility, nutrition and living using a Q&A game combined with right and wrong turns, encouraging visitors to question their own

habits with a critical eye. The walk-in footprint is free of charge and freely accessible, but it can also be booked with a personal guide as part of the National Park programmes.

Overall, the maze is 70 m long and covers a surface area of around 1,700 m<sup>2</sup> laid out in the form of a giant footprint. Questions appear at each fork along the correct path, on topics ranging for instance from climate change mitigation to sustainability, or on facts and figures relating to the use of resources. It is only by taking solution paths considered as ecologically harmless that visitors are able to reach the finish and find their way back out of the maze. Wrong answers lead to cul-de-sacs, forcing participants to reconsider their choices, which is also symbolic. And in some of these dead-ends they come face-to-face with distorting mirrors, an opportunity for them to take the proverbial long hard look at themselves.

According to the concept of the Ecological Footprint, if the planet's productive surface areas were distributed fairly, every single person on the planet would have 1.7 global hectares at their disposal to cover all their needs. The measurement unit used for the ecological footprint is the global hectare (gha), which corresponds to one hectare of average biological productivity on earth in a given year. Currently, every inhabitant of Austria claims a footprint that is three times





larger on average, at 5.4 gha/person. Although the majority of people still live in great poverty, 1.5 planet-equivalents more are currently being consumed than can be replenished in terms of resources, which is unsustainable in the long run. So with its new education facility the National Park Administration is aiming to explore issues and opportunities relating to a fairer lifestyle worldwide.

Many enthusiastic minds and hard-working hands were involved in planning and implementing this National Park project. 16 students of the advanced tourism training course and their teachers Renate Holzer and Christoph Hofer devoted their energies to drawing up specific questions and answers, designing the layout, and organising the inaugural event. The Bramberg Tourism School is a National Park partner school which, through this partnership-based project with the National Park Administration, contributed actively to working on the vital necessity of nature conservation with students, lastingly establishing the concept.

The area itself was made available to the Salzburg National Park Fund in co-operation with the Municipality of Hollersbach and with the consent of the landowner Siegfried Kaltenhauser. Landscape architect Gabriele Hoffmann took charge of the project planning for the Ecological Footprint, which was then

planted by the Hochwimmer landscape gardeners. The quiz and games stations were created by 'Design am Berg' in Mittersill. The gardening and upkeep of the installation is provided with great energy by the more than 400 members of the Hollersbach Herb Garden and Apiculture Educational Trail Association.

For this outdoor installation all electronic and technical special effects such as lighting and sound systems were dispensed with entirely in order not to cause light pollution and/or noise. The hornbeam hedges and the herb borders in the 'toe area' of the Footprint make up the natural basic configuration, thereby also symbolising our basis of existence. And the herbs themselves provide an intentional link to the adjoining Hollersbach herb garden. The distorting mirrors throughout the maze create surprising effects, ensuring an all-round fun experience for everyone.

**Web-Info:** [www.footprint.at](http://www.footprint.at)

**Web-Info:** [www.mein-fussabdruck.at](http://www.mein-fussabdruck.at)

- Total project costs: EUR 227,000.–
- Financing: Rural development, nature conservation measure







### Sonnblick Glacier theme trail

The Sonnblick Glacier Uttendorf theme trail in the Stubachtal Valley was entirely revamped in 2015. Its content was reviewed by Salzburg glaciologist Heinz Slupetzky. The graphic design was carried out by Verdandi. The National Park Administration itself took charge of the installation on site. A great deal of importance was attached to incorporating the information elements into the terrain in the best possible way to prevent any high-visibility 'landscape furnishing' particularly in the National Park's unforested higher elevations. This alpine trail from the Rudolshütte to the Stubacher Sonnblickkees is very popular with mountain hikers, and its new theme-based information panels provide facts on current and historical glacier-climate-weather events in the Stubachtal Valley.

- ▶ Total costs: EUR 26,000.–
- ▶ Financing: Salzburg National Park Fund

### New Seebachsee theme trail

The circular trail to the lake of Seebachsee in the Obersulzbachtal Valley, Neukirchen, was fitted out with information panels in 2015 for the first time. Theme trails are designed to draw the attention of Hohe Tauern National Park visitors to particular or characteristic natural or landscape-related phenomena in the protected area and provide more detailed information about them. At a total of six stops along the way the panels explain how the landscape was originally formed, the medicinal uses of dwarf pine, alpine farming, the Seebachsee itself as a fine example of a kettle lake in the region, the ecology of the forest of larch and Swiss stone pine, and the former mountain meadows of the 'Munau'. The content for the info panels was drawn up by the National Park Administration. Graphic artist Günter Berger created the attractive layout and high-quality design of the information elements, which blend very nicely with the overall landscape.

- ▶ Total costs: EUR 14,000.–
- ▶ Financing: Salzburg National Park Fund



### New National Park information huts

Two new National Park information huts were erected in 2015: one at the valley entrance to the Seidlwinkltal, Rauris, and another at the valley entrance to the Nassfeldtal, Bad Gastein. Timber was used consistently as the material of choice in designing these information huts – as with all the other National Park information facilities at the valley entrances – for both the construction and the façade design. Local businesses from the National Park region were commissioned with the contract. The huts are also equipped with a storage room and a WC for visitors. In the summer months from July to September all the National Park information huts are staffed by seasonal trainees, who ensure direct contact on site with guests and visitors to the National Park. The huts were also provided with easily accessible information so that important basic information on each particular National Park valley and the protected area as a whole was available even outside the summer months.



- ▶ Total costs: EUR 99,300.–
- ▶ Financing: Rural development, nature conservation measure



## On the alpine pasture – Between heaven and earth

In 2015 a new exhibition opened in the National Park Municipality of Hüttschlag in the Grossarlal Valley or ‘valley of the pastures’; it focuses on the cultural landscape and alpine pastures as a living space and habitat in the protected area. ‘On the alpine pasture – Between heaven and earth’ is now the eleventh exhibition in the series of outstanding National Park attractions designed to offer all National Park visitors an exciting opportunity to find out more about specific National Park themes in addition to their own personal experience of the great outdoors in the mountains.

This exhibition fills a gap in the National Park’s exhibition portfolio both geographically and thematically. Indeed, it is the first time a National Park attraction examines the relationship between human beings and nature as a living space, recreation space, workspace and economic space. The subject matter ranges from the diversity of butterflies and insects, which are dependent on the ecologically sustainable management of alpine pastures resplendent with flowers, to the astonishing diversity of the ‘pasture pharmacy’. Hidden among giant blades of grass, a wide array of medicinal plants found on mountain pastures are showcased in various drawers. The exhibition also guides visitors to the Alpine Walk of Fame, where the spotlight is on the specific characteristics and benefits of autochthonous domestic breeds when it comes to sustainable, cycle-based mountain farming.

But the exhibition also takes a critical look at the boundaries of these multi-faceted relations between mankind and nature. Inherent in the utilisation of natural resources is always the risk of over-use, which is why, in the National Park, contractual nature conservation for example and the zoning of the protected area into a core zone and an outer zone represent important partnership-based management instruments. The new exhibition is aimed at making visitors aware of the fact that the cultural landscape in the National Park not only represents a precious buffer zone with the untouched natural mountain ecosystems of high elevations, but also plays an important role in preserving the biodiversity and offering a recreation space in a typically traditional alpine landscape.

The design for the new exhibition was created by exhibition planner Andreas Zangl, from Graz, and he has certainly succeeded in giving the already popular open-air museum, which has now been run very successfully for many years by the National Park Association Hüttschlag, a completely new and very attractive appearance. The content for the exhibition was drawn up by lecturer and editor Gerald Unterberger from Ardnig.

- ▶ Total project costs: EUR 800.000.–
- ▶ Financing: Rural development, nature conservation measure





## *Preservation of the Cultural Landscape*



A particularity compared with other internationally recognised National Parks is that the Hohe Tauern National Park also incorporates the traditionally farmed cultural land of alpine pastures and mountain forests, alongside its largely unspoilt natural landscape. A subdivision into different protection zones was made in order to reconcile the different objectives within the protected area as best as possible.

The **core zone** comprises the areas characterised by a completely or largely unspoilt natural setting in which the conservation of nature as a whole is in the public interest. This protection zone is typified by unimpacted original alpine ecosystems. Here the foremost management objective is to ensure that natural processes are able to run their course undisturbed. In these areas the National Park Management intervenes only in instances where it is aiming to reintroduce once extinct yet native wildlife such as the ibex or the bearded vulture.

The **outer zone** comprises the alpine pasture and mountain forest areas located in the National Park in which the conservation, nurturing and shaping of the cultural landscape and the preservation of biodiversity are in the public interest. Here these original natural landscapes have been utilised by

mankind for centuries, gradually evolving into the species-rich cultural landscapes that are now also deserving of protection. So in the outer zone the National Park Management is aimed first and foremost at supporting near-natural alpine farming to secure the biodiversity.

Alpine farming in the Hohe Tauern National Park is also affected by the continual structural change and the changes in agricultural-economic concepts of an increasingly globalised agricultural sector. Here, too, a high level of mechanisation and performance optimisation in agricultural production have affected alpine farming as it used to be.

In this context, dealing with natural catastrophes particularly where water courses and wetland habitats are concerned is a major challenge. Undesirable interventions in the landscape, particularly along the main streams and the valley floors, can occur in places in the course of reconditioning work following damage caused by such events. A need for action in this regard was noted by the current study of alpine pastures, the assessment made by the Austrian National Parks, and also the initial evaluation of data from the biodiversity database of the Hohe Tauern National Park using the example of the Hollersbachal Valley.

And so, at an extraordinary working session, the National Park Board of Trustees examined the results of these studies and evaluations in detail and adopted a resolution, among others, to amend the existing funding guidelines for the 'preservation of the cultural landscape' in order to lend focus to preserving the ecological value of species and habitats in keeping with a comprehensive protection of biodiversity.

To co-ordinate all these measures the 'Alpine Pasture' project steering group will continue its work even after completion of the project on the survey of alpine pasture use. Two working sessions to this effect were convened in the autumn, with some very constructive discussions on different new funding models.

## Subsidised cultural landscape elements in 2015:

▶ Pole and Pinzgau fences, stone walls	222 linear metres
▶ Larch shingle roofs	1,149 m <sup>2</sup>
▶ Wooden roof guttering	40 linear metres
▶ Natural stone cladding	17 m <sup>2</sup>
▶ Wall shingles	51 m <sup>2</sup>
▶ Wood panelling	225 m <sup>2</sup>
▶ Wooden gates	3
▶ Wooden water troughs	1

It was very important to the National Park Board of Trustees that alpine pasture farmers should continue to have access to ÖPUL (the Austrian agri-environmental programme) subsidies while excluding any risk of duplicate funding or deadweight effects. The National Park subsidy should therefore primarily cover the ecologically effective measures over and beyond that. In the outer zone of the National Park the preservation, nurturing and shaping of the cultural landscape is in the public interest.

So far the Salzburg National Park Fund has supported the preservation of alpine pasture management through pasture-drive and acreage premiums. As a result there has been little change in the cattle drive figures in recent decades. Traditional cultural landscape elements such as stone walls, Pinzgau fences, pole fences, wooden water troughs, shingle roofs have also been subsidised, along with autochthonous domestic breeds through purchase premiums for pure bred Pinzgau cattle, Pinzgau goats, Tauern dappled goats and Austrian striped goats.

The new funding guidelines for Preservation of the Cultural Landscape are designed to offer an adequate response to the new challenges of agricultural land use within the protected area in order to reconcile, also in the future, modern alpine farming with the preservation of a near-natural cultural landscape and high level of biodiversity.





## Tourism

**Web-Info:** [www.nationalpark.at](http://www.nationalpark.at)

### Hohe Tauern National Park Holiday Region

The idea of a separate marketing company to promote tourism in the Salzburg National Park region was implemented fifteen years ago now with the founding of the company Ferienregion Nationalpark Hohe Tauern GmbH. The company has now been marketing the tourism offer in the Salzburg National Park region since 2001. Co-operation between the partners comprised of the federal province of Salzburg, the National Park Administration, Salzburger Land Tourismus GmbH, Grossglockner Hochalpenstrassen AG and the region's seventeen tourism associations has been utterly successful. Indeed the number of overnight stays in the region has risen by more than 20% since the founding of Ferienregion Nationalpark Hohe Tauern GmbH. Similarly, the Hohe Tauern National Park Centre in Mittersill, which received the Salzburg Tourism Award, has attracted around 900,000 visitors since it first opened at the end of July 2007.

### EXPO 2015



The 'ARGE Hohe Tauern – Die Nationalpark-Region' joint venture made use of the world exposition in Paris, which ended in late October, to stage its largest and most successful tourism advertising campaign of recent decades. Over the past six months 2.4 million visitors at EXPO 2015 enjoyed the experience of the show entitled 'Hohe Tauern & Grossglockner High-Alpine Road'. Around 21 million visitors from all over the world came to see the presentations and purpose-built pavilions erected by the 150 participating countries.

At the end of the EXPO's run, the Austrian Pavilion with its focus on 'Alpine Austria' was awarded Gold by an international jury for the most impressive and best EXPO contribution in the Design Concept segment. 'Alpine Austria' was represented by, among others, central Europe's largest National Park, the Hohe

Tauern National Park and the Grossglockner with its national monument, the Grossglockner High-Alpine Road. The EXPO's motto was 'Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life.' Austria, for its part, showcased its ecological and technical competence with the motto 'breathe:austria'. The country's successful participation certainly got a global audience interested not only in domestic products but in holidaying in Austria.

### National Park Card



In summer 2015 the new National Park Card gave holidaymakers in the Hohe Tauern National Park holiday region a huge choice of all-inclusive and discounted offers. The National Park Card was valid from May 1 to October 31. 38,900 cards were issued in total, resulting in 184,574 overnight stays at some 70 partner establishments.



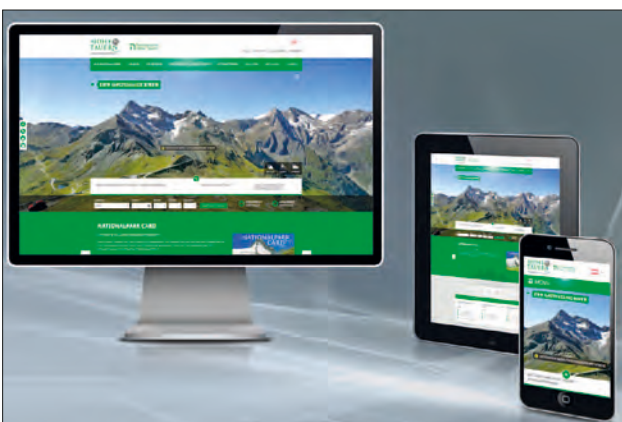
Top of the most visited attractions were the Krimml Water Worlds together with the Krimml Waterfalls, followed by the Hohe Tauern National Park Centre in Mittersill, the mountain railways and cableways of the holiday region, and the Grossglockner High-Alpine Road. The annual programme of the National Park Administration is also a key permanent fixture in the National Park Card offer.

## Trade fairs and events in 2015



Together with the partners, the Hohe Tauern National Park Holiday Region was present at all the main trade fairs for the core markets of Austria and Germany as well as the Netherlands, the Czech Republic and Italy. More than 30 trade fair appearances and events were attended in 2015. In summer 2015 the largest sales platform for Österreich Werbung, i.e. the ATB (Austrian Travel Business), was organised at the Hohe Tauern National Park with more than 500 international tour operators and journalists.

## Internet and web marketing

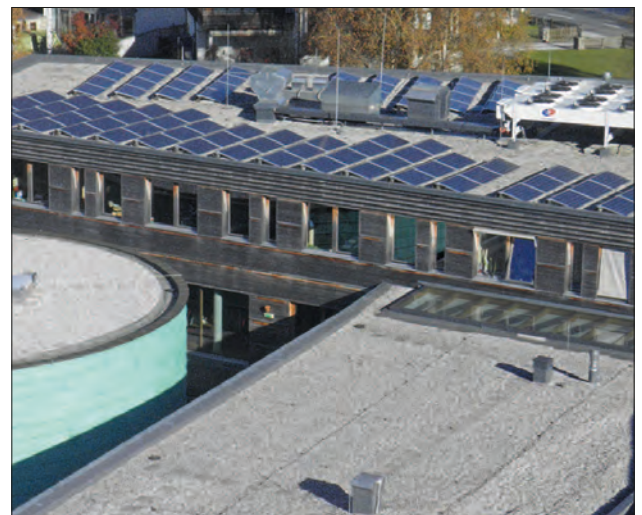


The shared internet presence of the National Park Administration and the Holiday Region at [www.nationalpark.at](http://www.nationalpark.at) is characterised by a user-friendly layout and handling. On the homepage users are able to select from five key topics and obtain a fascinating overview of the prime vantage points and environmental education in the National Park region. Around

EUR 50,000.- in total was invested over the period under review to promote the joint internet presence.

## The power of the sun for the National Park Centre

It was in February 2015 that construction work got underway on one of the largest photovoltaic installations in the Oberpinzgau on the roof of the National Park Centre. Each year the installation produces around 50,000 kWh of solar power, thereby cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by around 20 tonnes. The solar energy generated corresponds to the average annual consumption of around 15 households and is used almost entirely for the National Park Centre's very own supply of 'clean' electricity.



The partner contracted to build and operate the photovoltaic installation was SalzachSonne GmbH in Neukirchen am Grossvenediger. The total costs for materials and construction of the installation were around EUR 80,000.-. The Austrian Federal Government's Climate and Energy Fund contributed around EUR 20,000.- towards funding the project. The high-end solar panels for the installation were made by Austrian manufacturer Kioto Solar and cover a total surface area of around 330 m<sup>2</sup>. The fact that the installation was fitted to the existing flat roofs of the National Park Centre meant that no additional landscape area had to be built up to accommodate this clean source of energy production.

The National Park Centre's photovoltaic installation has a peak output of around 50 Kilowatt-Peak (kWp), which means the National Park Centre in Mittersill now has one of the largest operational photovoltaic installations in the Oberpinzgau. The solar power project – like many other ideas when it comes to generating renewable energy sources and energy efficiency measures in the building, commercial and mobility sector – was supported by the National Park Hohe Tauern Climate and Energy Model Region (KEM), which has been operating in the Pinzgau for around 18 months already. The KEM is run by LEADER managing director Georgia Pletzer with the support of the Energy Changes engineering office.



## *National Park Region*

**Web-Info:** [www.nationalparkregion.at](http://www.nationalparkregion.at)



LEADER is a European Union initiative to support innovative rural development projects initiated at the local level and designed to help achieve the set objectives of the regional development strategy for the following themes: business and industry, tourism, agriculture, education, social issues, culture, infrastructure, etc. Measures which contribute to climate change mitigation, climate change adaptation and energy efficiency are also entitled to receive support. At the same time the region is a climate and energy model region whose projects are also driven by the LEADER staff.

All private individuals, farmers, businesses, associations and public institutions based in the region are entitled to submit projects as part of the LEADER Programme. For this it is advisable to discuss the project ideas in person with the staff as early on as possible. These consultation sessions are free of charge and non-binding.

This time the Hohe Tauern National Park LEADER Region had to submit to a very complex two-stage selection process. This was due to the development strategies of each particular region for the current LEADER period 2014-2020. The new funding period runs until 31 December 2020, with project terms lasting until 2023 as an option. The aim is to make the best possible use of the available funding in the National Park Region with projects whose impact is long-lasting and sustainable.

The region-by-region distribution of the EU funding for the period as a whole was made based on a range of different criteria applied right across Austria. However, the actual project selection is carried out by the LEADER executive board as part of an ongoing process and only within each particular LEADER Region. As part of the new funding period the Hohe Tauern National Park LEADER Region itself was also restructured. The new make-up of the LEADER executive boards requires a one-third women quota. No more than 49% of board members are to come from the public sector, with the majority appointed from associations, NGOs and other institutions.

80% of the funding comes from the EU and 20% from the federal province or the federal government. There is also a separate funding pot for cross-province joint venture projects, with an additional EUR 1.5 m available nationwide. The funding ceilings, i.e. the maximum amount of funding possible, vary from one project to the next, ranging between 30% and up to 80%. Projects in the fields of education, integration, youth and women benefit from particularly high subsidies.

Over the coming nine years, then, projects in the amount of EUR 7.4 m will be eligible to receive funding in the Hohe Tauern National Park LEADER Region. EUR 3.18 m will come from LEADER subsidies, which also comprise the share for the management of the LEADER Action Group (LAG).

## Association of Friends

**Web-Info:** [www.tauernfreund.at](http://www.tauernfreund.at)

With the support of our private-sector partners, we once again completed important projects in 2015 in the areas of species protection, environmental education and the experience of nature. The Association of Friends of the Hohe Tauern National Park plays a pivotal role in this respect. The objective of this non-profit association is to support the development of the National Park in co-ordination with the National Park managers of the federal provinces of Carinthia, Salzburg and Tyrol as well as the federal government. This is done mainly with the help of private-sector businesses, but also some 3,000 individual members.

From the National Park's viewpoint a sponsor is not simply a financial backer: a sponsor is also a partner in a project. A sponsor provides the National Park with a link to an important part of modern-day society. The sponsor often has direct access to the National Park's target groups and can be an important multiplier. As a co-opted member in the National Park Council the Friends act as the National Park's official sponsoring body.

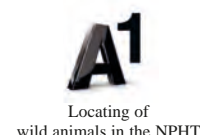
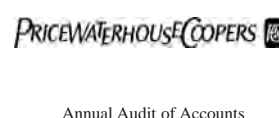
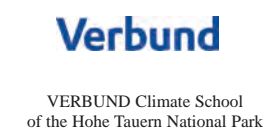
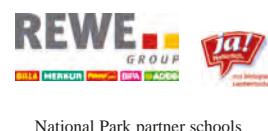
## 2015 Partner Meeting

The annual meeting of partners was held at the National Park municipalities of Mittersill and Hollersbach on July 8 and 9 at the invitation of the Salzburg National Park Administration. The programme included a hike along the Hollersbach stream educational trail, alongside visits to the Mittersill National Park Centre, the Resterhöhe National Park Panorama, the National Park workshop and herb garden, and the Ecological Footprint in Hollersbach. At the general assembly at Salesianer Miettex on 3 November 2015, Chairman Karl Stoss was able to report positive figures, with around EUR 500,000 available for projects in 2015.



## Many thanks ...

... to all our partners who supported our programmes and projects during 2015!





## *Organisation of the National Park Administration*

The many tasks and duties performed by the National Park Administration require an efficient and effective organisational structure. Statutory tasks, i.e. those where the National Park administration acts as a public authority, are ideally anchored within the organisational structure of the Office of the Salzburg Provincial Government. By contrast, for the National Park Administration's core duties – from the funding of the cultural landscape and the National Park region to natural resource management, science & research, and education & visitor information – it is expedient to have a National Park Fund, with its steering the responsibility of a Board of Trustees in which the National Park Municipalities, land owners, the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management, and the Provincial Government are represented on an equal footing.

### **Board of Trustees**

**The Board of Trustees held four meetings in 2015:  
January 20, April 8, July 9, October 20**

#### **Members and substitute members of the Board of Trustees:**

Deputy Governor RÖSSLER Astrid, Chairwoman  
ALTENBERGER Georg, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Chairman  
ENZINGER Hannes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Chairman  
HINTERSTOISSER Hermann  
BERNINGER Ulrike-G.  
LERCHBAUMER Hannes  
OBERMOSER Michael  
STEINER Hans  
Graf von MEDEM Michael

BLAIKNER Alois  
TOFERER Hans  
KÖNIG Karin  
COMES Hans-Peter  
LOITFELLNER Peter  
NINDL Peter  
HUTTEGGER Rupert  
SALZMANN Matthias

**Government representatives:**  
ZACHERL-DRAXLER Valerie

EHRENFELDNER Johannes





## Fund Advisory Board

**The Fund Advisory Board held two meetings in 2015:  
March 19, October 13**

### **Members and substitute members of the Fund Advisory Board:**

GRATZ Bernhard, Chairman  
WIMMER Harald  
GLAESER Othmar  
OBERMOSER Michael  
FITZGA Gunther  
SCHMIDLECHNER Karl  
BLATTL Rosemarie  
FUCHS Rupert  
GASSNER Manfred  
STEINER Günter  
STEINBAUER Gerhard  
HUBER Otmar  
GRIESSNER Sebastian  
SCHARLER Anton  
GEISLER Friedrich  
LOHFEYER Hubert  
HUFNAGL Dietmar  
ATZMANSTORFER Edgar  
SOMMERAUER Otmar  
NINDL Peter  
HOLZWIESER Martin  
BURTSCHER Sophia  
ZIMMERMANN Mathias  
KUTIL Hans  
ZANDL Josef  
DÖTTERL Stefan

PONGRUBER Manfred  
POSCH Wolfgang  
JORDAN Karl  
JÖBSTL Martina  
WIMMER Josef  
SCHNEGLBERGER Othmar  
ENZINGER Vital  
SCHEINAST Josef  
CZERNY Erich  
VIERTLER Wolfgang  
KANDLER Ernst Josef  
BLAICKNER Hubert  
MEILINGER Franz  
KALTENHAUSER Georg  
KALTENHAUSER Siegfried  
RETTENEGGER Gottfried  
EYMANNSBERGER Helmut  
LAIREITER Christian  
GÖSTL Rudolf  
OBERMOSER Michael  
ÜBLAGGER Hannes  
SLUPETZKY Brigitte  
HOLZWIESER Martin  
AUGUSTIN Hannes  
MEILINGER Georg  
JUNKER Robert



## Employees of the Salzburg National Park Administration

### Employees of the Salzburg National Park Administration

**46 employees and 27 seasonal trainees worked for the National Park Administration in 2015.**

#### National Park Administration

URBAN Wolfgang, National Park Director

#### Natural Resource Management

LAINER Ferdinand, National Park Deputy Director

EBNER Günter, professional hunter

GRUBER Bruno, professional hunter

KAUFMANN Anton, professional hunter

LAGGER Michael, apprentice hunter (from 1.5.2015)

#### Science & Research

BAUCH Kristina

HOCHWIMMER Barbara, Geographic Information System

BERGER Sonja, library

NEUMAYER Beatrix, Dr., veterinarian

#### Education & Visitor Information

KIRCHNER Maria (until 30.04.2015)

PECILE Anna (from 1.7.2015)

RIEDER Ferdinand

KASERER Silvia

ROTH-CALLIES Nina, *Könige der Lüfte* facility

[Sovereigns of the Skies]

HOFFER Gerhard, show mine

HOFFER Johannes, show mine

KAVELAR Christian, show mine

BREINL Christoph, show mine

BERNERT Kurt, show mine

SCHLÄFFER Valentin, alternative civilian service (until 30.6.2015)

#### Area Management

LERCH Stefan

MILLGRAMMER Hannes, trail worker

RENDL Norbert, trail worker

FEDRA Alexander, alternative civilian service (until 30.6.2015)

VORREITER Harald, alternative civilian service (from 1.7.2015)

#### Legal Department

SCHWEIGER Ariane

#### Secretariat

EBERL Katharina

KALCHER Maria

MAYER Veronika

#### Cleaning

MAIER Karin, NPV Mittersill (until 13.2.2015)

GRATZ Andrea, NPV Mittersill (from 2.2.2015)

REITER Barbara, *Könige der Lüfte* facility [Sovereigns of the Skies]

#### National Park Rangers

ALTENBERGER Stefan

HEIDER Ekkehard

HOFFER Herbert

HÖLZL Alexander

HUTTER Martha

KENDLBACHER Robert

KIRCHNER Maria

MEIXNER Patrick

MUHR Hannes

NAGLMAYR Hans

SCHMUCK Herbert

SCHUH Werner

STURM Gerald

#### National Park seasonal trainees

AICHNER Eva-Maria

AIGNER Christina

EDER Jasmin

EGGER Theresa

FOISNER Vera

GERMANN Felix

GOLLER Sebastian

GRANIG Melanie

GRODER Michaela

HASENAUER Leonie

HAUSER Lena

HÖLZL Christa

HOFMANN Pia

KAMERER Tobias

KATSIKIDES Andreas

KRÖLL Benjamin

KRÖLL Patrick

KRÖLL Thomas

LEMBERGER Norbert

MACHEINER Viktoria

NINDL Anna

OBERAIGNER Alexandra

PECILE Anna

RAINER Tanja

WECHSELBERGER Nadine

WOLLMARKER Daniela

ZEHEMAYR Lena

## Outlook



*By the last few months of 2015 the entire National Park Administration team was already very busy with the 2016-2024 Management Plan; in fact, that Plan has accompanied us seamlessly through into the new working year. Parts of the Management Plan such as the reorientation of the funding guidelines for the National Park Fund are to be elaborated on a partnership basis with the stakeholders concerned from the outset, an approach that is now tried-and-tested. And while that approach is more time-consuming by its very nature, it certainly pays off in the long run, at the very latest when it comes to a smooth implementation.*

*Other parts such as the new contractual nature conservation agreements relating to the process protection areas for IUCN II recognition were renegotiated in keeping with the objective of increased effectiveness and, thanks to our good partnership with the farming landowners concerned, are already in force. The constructive negotiations with the Austrian Federal Forests (ÖBf) are to be concluded during the first six months, and we expect that the preservation of process protection and wilderness on these lands areas will be secured even more effectively and sustainably than previously.*

*The Wilderness Gold Status awarded in October 2015 by the European Wilderness Society (EWS) following an extensive wilderness audit in the Untersulzbachtal Valley not only demonstrates that we have fully embraced our role and our potential in international nature conservation, it is also an endorsement to pursue our total commitment in the area of European wilderness policy. And I see the unique opportunity of purchasing 3,000 hectares of the most precious primeval landscape in the valleys of Untersulzbachtal and Obersulzbachtal as a genuine milestone. All the preconditions, from the purchase negotiations to securing the financing, have now been worked through and the crucial completion phase is set to go ahead very soon.*

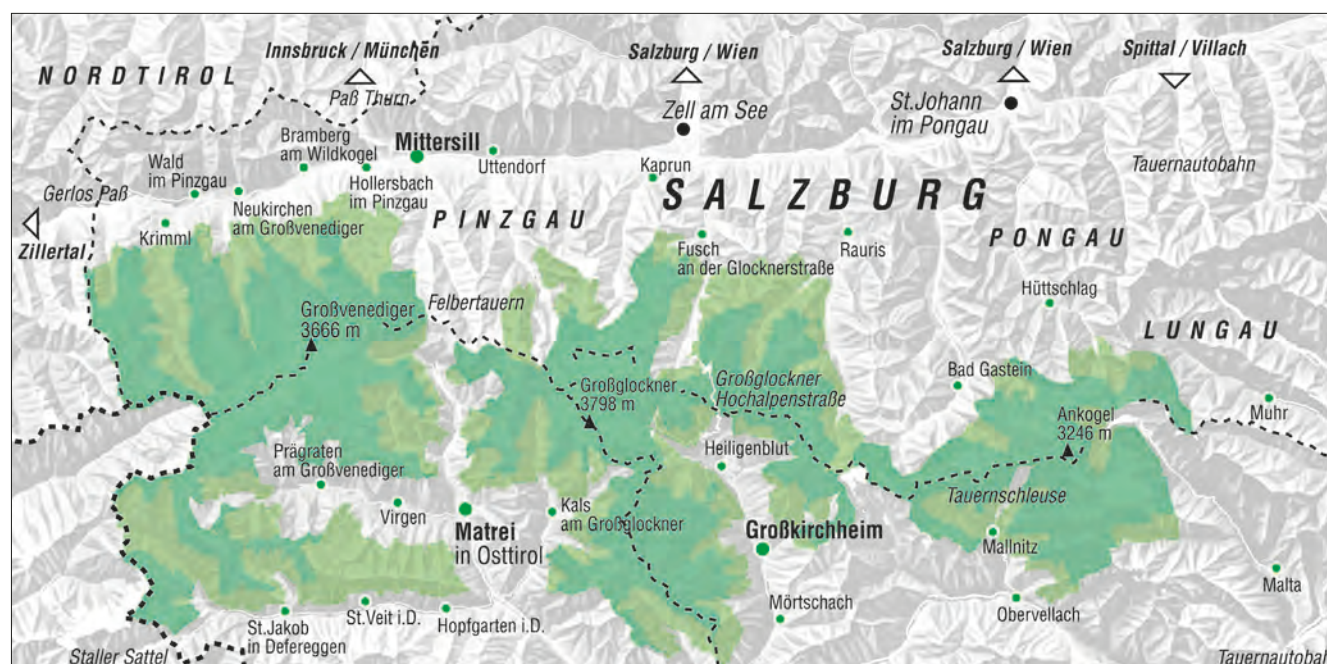
*This will also signal the start of the challenge of enhancing this extremely valuable asset also in terms of nature conservation. Our visions and ideas range from staking out a special protection area to setting up a long-term area monitoring scheme and running a wilderness school and wilderness camps, all of which we plan to realise as specific objectives and measures, jointly with our decision-makers.*



Wolfgang URBAN  
National Park Director



## Contact



### National Park Administration

National Park Centre

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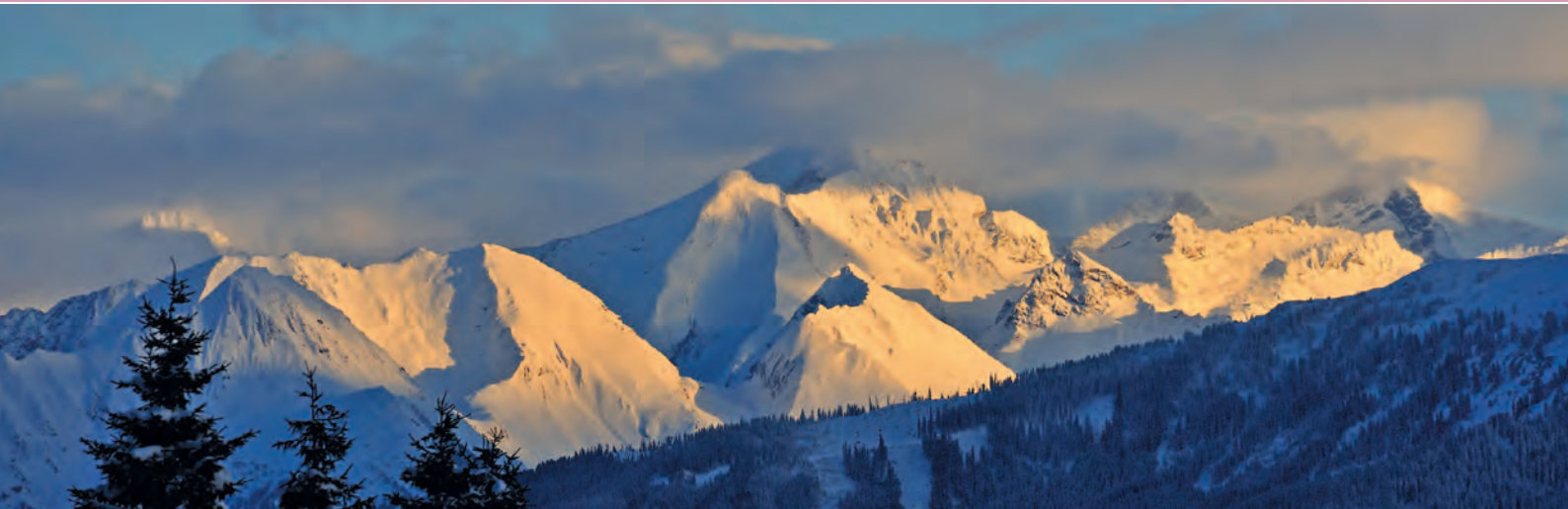
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[www.hohetauern.at](http://www.hohetauern.at)