



GUIDE

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Explorers

of Wilderness in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians



Beuşniţei waterfalls © Cătălin Gavrilă

Guide for teachers and students

GRADES 9TH - 12TH

Guide for teachers and students – Grades 9th – 12th

Explorers of Wilderness in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians

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About WWF

Established in 1961, WWF is a major international organization carrying out nature conservation projects in more than 100 countries. The WWF global mission is to end environmental degradation and to build a future where people live in harmony with nature. More details about the international work available at: www.wwf.org and about the work in the Southwestern Carpathians at: www.wwf.ro

About the German Federal Environmental Foundation

The German Federal Environmental Foundation (DBU) was established by decision of the German Parliament in 1991 and is one of the largest environmental foundations in the world. Its aim is to protect the environment and is focusing on education and environmental awareness projects. More details available at: <https://www.dbu.de/>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

The Carpathian Wilderness, Wealth for the People

- | | |
|---|----|
| 1. Natural protected areas | 9 |
| 2. The concept of wilderness | 14 |
| 3. What can we do to preserve wilderness areas? | 20 |

PART II

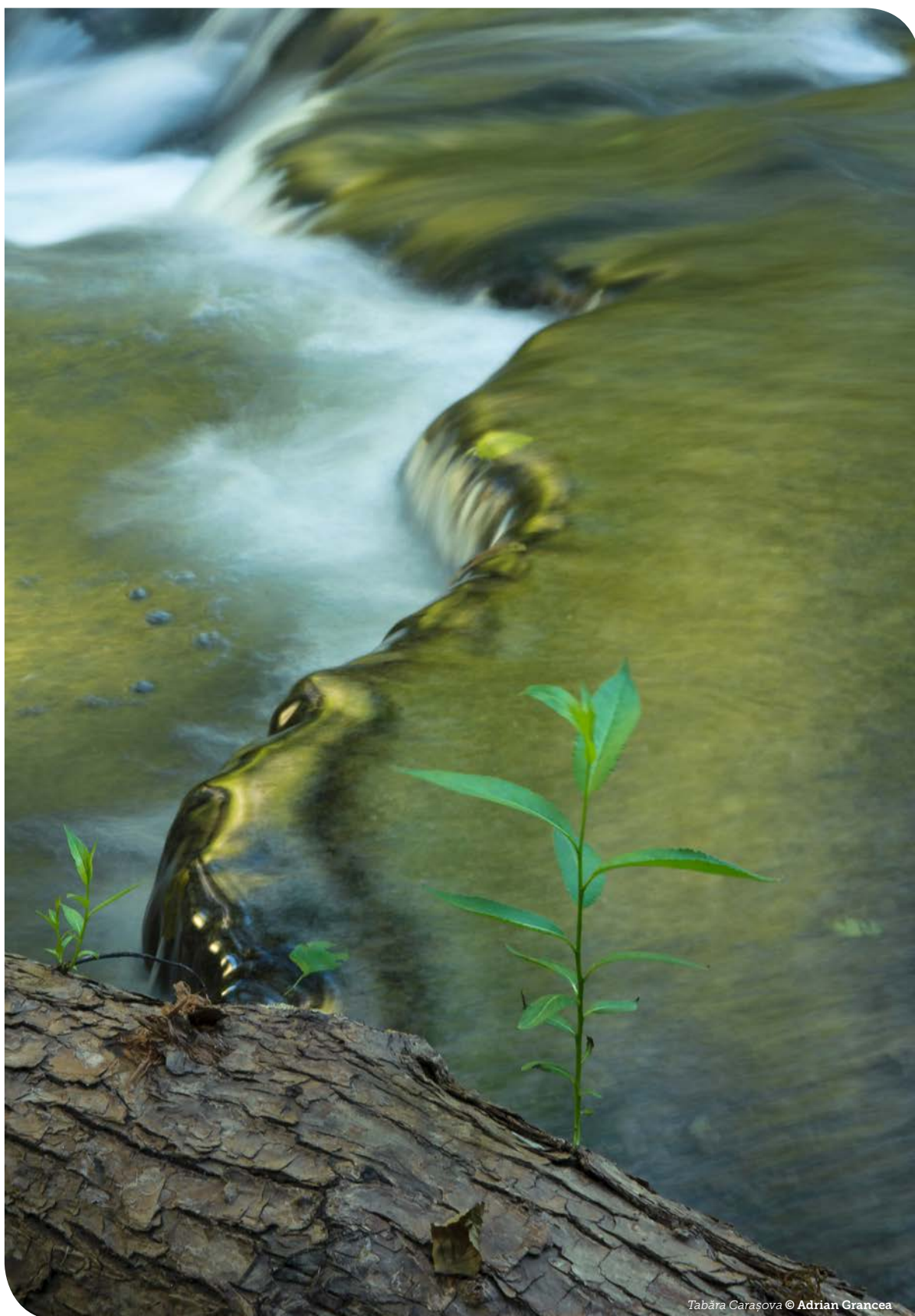
Exploring wilderness in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. How do we visit and enjoy a wilderness area? | 33 |
| 2. What to pack when hiking? | 35 |
| 3. First aid tips | 36 |
| 4. Exploring the natural wealth of our wilderness area | 38 |

PART III

The Wilderness Youth Clubs

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. About the Wilderness Youth Clubs | 76 |
| 2. What and how do students learn in the club? | 84 |
| 3. The Wilderness Youth Clubs curriculum | 104 |



Tabăra Carașova © Adrian Grancea

BEFORE WE BEGIN

Romania's Southwestern Carpathians are home to one of the most widespread wilderness areas in Europe: a territory governed by natural processes, with areas unmodified or only slightly modified by human activities, composed of native habitats and species. Very few such areas are left in Europe, making it important to know the benefits they provide, the threats they face and what we can do to preserve them. This information should be available to as many people as possible, to increase public involvement in the protection and preservation of such areas.

Schools and Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) play a key role in passing on such information. This guide represents an ESD initiative to support the mission of nature conservation in this invaluable wilderness area and is dedicated to everyone open to join this mission: teachers, students, representatives of natural and national parks and individuals.

The guide is structured in three parts: 1. The Carpathian Wilderness, Wealth for the People 2. Explorers of Wild Nature in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians 3. The Wilderness Youth Clubs.

The first part introduces the concept of wilderness. The second part describes the four national parks and one nature park located in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians, which together make up the most widespread wilderness area in Europe: the Semenic-Cheile Carașului National Park, the Cheile Nerei-Beușnița National Park, the Iron Gates Nature Park, the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park and the Retezat National Park. The third part outlines the steps recommended to open a Wilderness Youth Club and organize learning activities for young people who can get actively involved in taking action for nature and addressing the challenges faced by wilderness areas.

We wish our readers all the best on this captivating journey dedicated to education and the environment!

"Our most important task, if we are to save the Earth, is to educate".

Sir Peter Scott
Founder of WWF

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PART I

The Carpathian Wilderness, Wealth for the People

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WILDERNESS



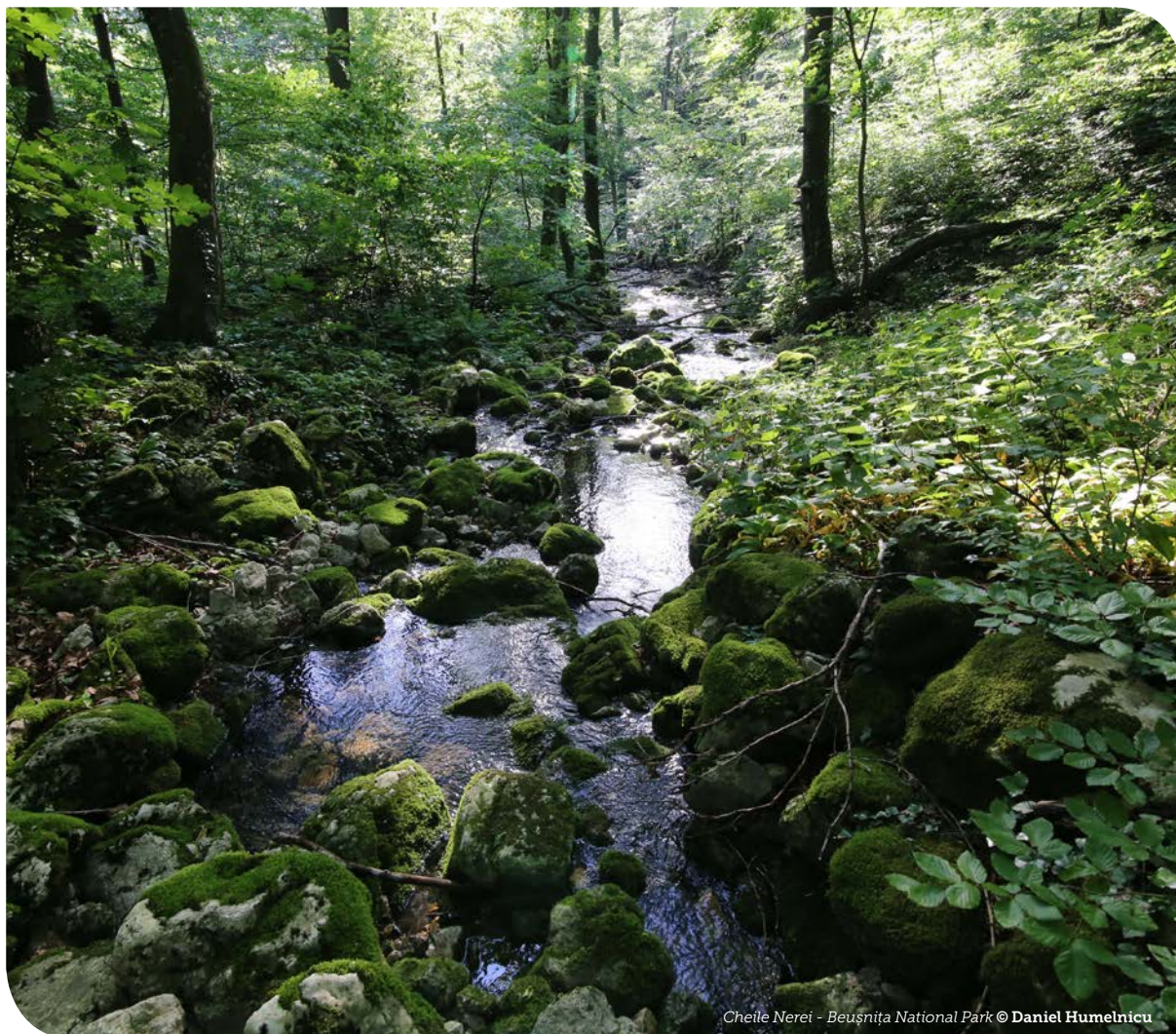
TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

1. Natural protected areas	9
1.1 Definition, distribution and surface area	9
1.2 Natural protected areas in Romania	12
2. The concept of wilderness	14
2.1 The concepts of wilderness, wild areas and wilderness areas	14
2.2 Natural processes and species from wilderness areas	15
2.3 Benefits of wilderness areas	17
2.4 Threats to wilderness areas	19
3. What can we do to preserve wilderness areas?	20
3.1 What can the authorities and non-governmental organizations do: principles and guidance	21
3.2 What can we, the readers of this guide, do to preserve wilderness areas?	25

ABBREVIATIONS

EEA	European Environment Agency
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
UN	United Nations
GEO	Government Emergency Order
UNESCO	The United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture
Wild Europe	Wild Europe Initiative
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature



Cheile Nerei - Beuşniţa National Park © Daniel Humelnicu

CHAPTER 1

Natural protected areas

1.1 DEFINITION, DISTRIBUTION AND EXTENT

According to the internationally recognized 2008 definition by IUCN, a protected area is *"A clearly defined geographical space, recognized, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long-term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values"*¹. Thus, protected areas are essential in the conservation of the natural and cultural capital. They include the most representative and significant areas of biodiversity

and associated natural and cultural assets.

Protected areas tend to host mainly species of plants and animals that need to be protected due to their environmental and scientific relevance. To ensure this protection, IUCN created classifications for species according to their conservation status (whether endangered or not). Examples of species from Romanian protected areas (in Southwestern Romania) and their IUCN classification with classification criteria are outlined in Table 1.

1. Stanciu E., Florescu F. 2009. Ariile protejate din România. Noţiuni introductive (Protected Areas of Romania. Introductory notes). Editura „Green Steps”, Braşov

Table 1.
IUCN classification of species according to conservation status

Many species are endangered due to human activities, which lead to the degradation and disappearance of habitats in which these species live. For a better understanding of the conservation status of certain species, IUCN drafted a 9-category classification system and a *Red List* of endangered species². The most recent

update of the Red List includes information on 77,340 different species, out of which 22,784 are endangered³.

A summary of the IUCN categories is presented below; note that a species can be classified into a specific global or regional category, as well as a local category. This means that one species can be extinct locally, even though there are places in the world where it can still be found. For example, the griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) is extinct locally, in the Retezat Mountains, but globally it is classified as LC (least concern) by the IUCN.

■ **Extinct (EX)**

A species is classified as "*Extinct*" if the studies carried out in its known or expected habitat found no individuals in its historical territory during the appropriate periods (daily, seasonal, annual). The studies have to be carried out during an appropriate period for the life cycle of the species. **Example:** griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) – formerly present in Retezat National Park.

■ **Extinct in the wild (EW)**

A species is classified as "*Extinct in the wild*" if it is known to survive only in captivity or as a naturalized population significantly different from the initial territory. A species is considered Extinct in the wild if the studies carried out in its known or expected habitat found no individuals in its historical territory during the appropriate periods (daily, seasonal, annual). **Example:** the European bison (*Bison bonasus*) was considered extinct in Romania, but it is currently being reintroduced to the Țarcu Mountains Natura 2000 site.

■ **Critically endangered (CR)**

A species is classified as "*Critically endangered*" if it is facing an extreme risk of extinction in the wild. **Example:** the starry sturgeon (*Acipenser stellatus*) found in the Danube along the Iron Gates Nature Park.

■ **Endangered (EN)**

A species is classified as "*Endangered*" if the available information shows that it is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild. **Example:** the red breasted goose (*Branta ruficollis*) - in the Iron Gates Nature Park.

■ **Vulnerable (VU)**

A species is classified as "*Vulnerable*" if it is considered to be at risk of extinction in the wild. **Example:** the longicorn (*Rosalia alpina*) from the beech forests of the Retezat National Park.

■ **Near threatened (NT)**

A species is classified as "*Near threatened*" if it was assessed but not included in the "*Critically endangered*", "*Endangered*" or "*Vulnerable*" categories, but may qualify as an endangered species in the near future. **Example:** the Gorges tulip (*Tulipa hungarica*) found along the Danube in the Iron Gates Nature Park.

■ **Least concern (LC)**

A species is classified as "*Least concern*" if it was assessed and not included in the above categories. This category includes widespread and abundant species. **Example:** the three-toed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*) and the white-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopus leucotus*) in the Retezat National Park.

■ **Data deficient (DD)**

A species is classified as "*Data deficient*" when insufficient information is available for a direct or indirect assessment of a species' conservation status or a distribution and/or a population status base is lacking. The species included in this category cannot be considered as "*Endangered*". **Example:** the huchen (*Hucho hucho*) in the streams of the Retezat National Park.

■ **Unrated (NE)**

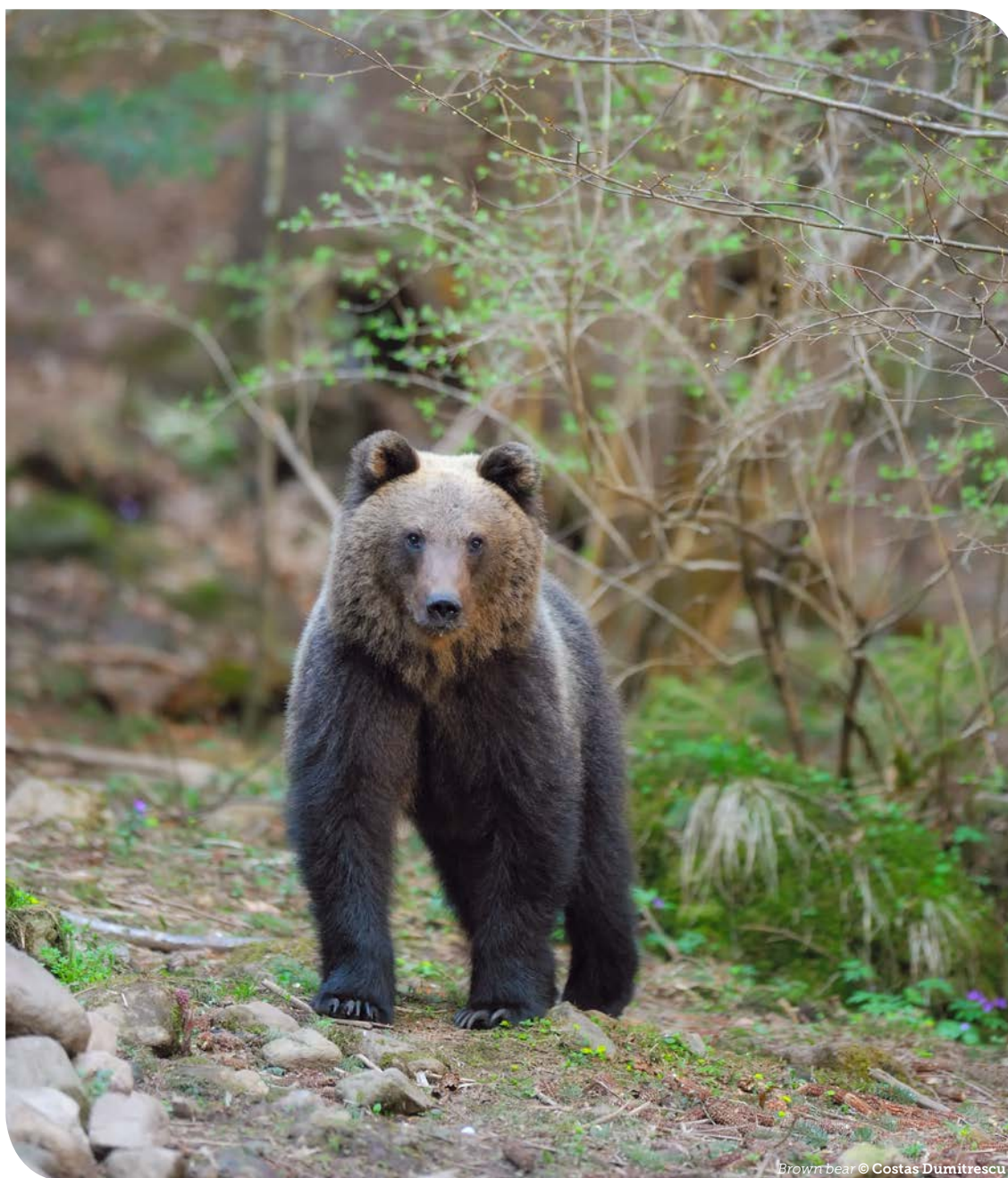
A species is classified as "*Unrated*" if it has not been assessed. **Example:** the German tamarisk (*Myricaria germanica*) in the Retezat National Park.

Note: We recommend the identification of other categories to include species from Romania's protected areas.

2. IUCN. 2015. IUCN Red List Categories and Criteria. Available at: <http://www.eoearth.org/view/article/153746/>

3. IUCN. 2015. IUCN Red List update:

http://www.iucn.org/news_homepage/?21561/Conservation-successes-overshadowed-by-more-species-declines--IUCN-Red-List-update



Brown bear © Costas Dumitrescu

Distribution and extent of natural protected areas

According to IUCN's last edition of the *List of Protected Areas*, in 2014 there were 209,429 protected areas globally covering 32,868,673 square kilometers, which covers an area larger than Africa⁴. Europe holds 13.6% of the total protected land areas and 3.9% of the total protected aquatic areas. More than 90% of the total European protected areas cover less than 1,000 hectares, while approx. 65% of these account for between 1 to

100 hectares. By contrast, protected areas larger than 10,000 hectares cover just 2% of the total European protected areas. Thus, the land area of protected areas varies significantly across Europe, starting from the smallest protected area of the continent, Kaeja smreka in Godovic (Slovenia), which focuses on individual trees, up to immense land areas such as the Vatnajökulsthjodgardur National Park (Iceland), which covers 1,291,047 hectares⁵.

4. Deguignet M., Juffe-Bignoli D., Harrison J., MacSharry B., Burgess N., Kingston N. 2014. United Nations List of Protected Areas. http://unep-wcmc.org/system/dataset_file_fields/files/000/000/263/original/2014_UN_List_of_Protected_Areas_EN_web.PDF?1415613322

5. EEA 2012. Protected areas in Europe – an overview. <http://www.eea.europa.eu/publications/protected-areas-in-europe-2012>



Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park © Daniel Humelnicu

1.2 NATURAL PROTECTED AREAS IN ROMANIA

In Romania, protected areas account for more than 20% of the country's land. To ensure special protection and conservation measures of the natural assets, the natural protected areas in our country are classified in four categories⁶:

- A. areas of national interest: scientific reserves, national parks, natural monuments, natural reserves, nature parks.**
- B. transboundary areas: World heritage**
- natural sites, geoparks, international wetland areas, biosphere reserves.**
- C. areas of community interest or "Natura 2000" sites: community-relevant sites, special conservation areas, special bird and fauna protection areas.**
- D. county or locally-relevant areas: established solely on the public/private properties of administrative divisions, as applicable.**

Protection or conservation of nature?

The protection of nature mainly implies measures taken to maintain species and ecosystems in a natural state and to protect them from the effects of human actions, which often results in restrictions against human activity.

The conservation of nature refers to a more complex and dynamic approach: it could mean the maintenance of species and habitats in a natural state without intervention in natural processes. It also allows active interventions for the safeguarding of natural values and can even call for active management of resources, especially in the case of "secondary" ecosystems resulting from century-long human activities. *(Stanciu and Florescu 2009)*

One example of active intervention is the periodic mowing of semi-natural grasslands that contain many endangered and rare species, resulting in mosaic meadows.

In certain cases, protected areas of national interest (A) and "Natura 2000" sites (C) overlap on Romania's territory. The "Natura 2000" network was adopted following Romania's accession to the European Union. It is a part of a European-wide network of protected natural areas, created in 1992 to protect nature and ensure the long term security of natural resources required for the social and economic development. In Romania, "Natura 2000" sites were established on both agricultural and forestry land and on deep wilderness areas. "Natura 2000" sites are currently well represented in Romania, covering a total of 22.68% of the land area⁷.

The responsibility and management methods of protected areas are regulated by law. As of the publication of this guide, the most important law is GEO 57 of 2007.

Of the four types of protected areas described above, this Guide focuses on Romania's Southwestern national and nature parks, which are under category A: areas of national interest.

⁶ GEO 57. 2007.

http://www.mmediu.ro/beta/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/2012-08-08_legislatie_protectia_naturii_oug57din2007regimariinaturaleprotejate.pdf

⁷ Mănoiu, T. Brânzan T. 2013. Catalogul habitatelor, speciilor și siturilor Natura 2000 în România, 2013. Fundația Centrul Național pentru Dezvoltare Durabilă, București



© Marius Vlaicu

The territory of the Semenik-Cheile Carașului National Park, Iron Gates Nature Park, Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park and the Retezat National Park makes up one of the few remaining wilderness areas in Europe.

National and nature parks in Romania

The major difference between these two forms of protected areas lies in their purpose. The purpose of national parks is the protection and conservation of representative pieces of the national biogeographical space. In case of nature parks, the protection and conservation are aimed at landscape features in which the interaction of human activities with nature created a separate, highly valuable landscape and/or cultural area over time. Only traditional activities are allowed in both cases, as practiced exclusively by the local relevant communities and regulated under the management plans.

National parks are protected natural areas aimed at the protection and conservation of some representative samples of biodiversity, including natural features with a high physical-geographic uniqueness, flora, fauna, as well as containing hydrological, geological, paleontological, speleological, pedological, etc. values, providing visiting opportunities for scientific, educational, recreational and tourist purposes. The only activities allowed in national parks are the traditional ones, as practiced by local communities and regulated by the management plan.

Nature parks aim to protect and to conserve landscape features in areas where the interaction between human activities and nature created a highly-valuable, distinct landscape and/or cultural area over time, often with a high biologic diversity.

Thirteen national parks have been established in Romania so far, accounting for 316,000 ha, and 15 nature parks, covering 562,000 ha⁹.

The list of national parks includes:

The Rodnei Mountains National Park, the

Călimani National Park, the Ceahlău National Park, the Cheile Bicazului-Hășmaș National Park, the Piatra Craiului National Park, the Cozia National Park, the Buila-Vânturarița National Park, the Defileul Jiului (Jiu Gorges) National Park, the Retezat National Park, the Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park, the Semenik - Cheile Carașului National Park, the Cheile Nerei - Beușnița National Park and the Măcin Mountains National Park.

The list of nature parks includes:

The Maramureș Mountains Nature Park, the Upper Mureș Gorge Nature Park, the Vânători-Neamț Nature Park, the Putna-Vrancea Nature Park, the Bucegi Nature Park, the Grădiștea Muncelului-Cioclovina Nature Park, the Apuseni Nature Park, the Dinosaurs' Geopark of Hațeg Country, the Mehedinți Plateau Geopark, the Iron Gates Nature Park, the Lower Prut Meadow Nature Park, the Comana Nature Park, the Small Brăila Island Nature Park, the Mureș Meadow Nature Park and the Cefa Nature Park.

The territory of the five parks included in this Guide - the Semenik - Cheile Carașului National Park, the Cheile Nerei - Beușnița National Park, the Iron Gates Nature Park, the Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park and the Retezat National Park - makes up one of the few remaining wilderness areas in Europe. To highlight the wealth of these wilderness areas, below we will outline a number of approaches of the wilderness concept, as well as some of the benefits, threats and solutions identified for the conservation of these areas.

⁸ Sustainable development is a development model which encompasses not just the economic component, but also social and environmental considerations, and which is aimed at fulfilling the needs of the present without compromising future generations' ability to cater to their own needs.

⁹ Romsilva. 2015. Protected areas - An overview. http://www.rosilva.ro/articole/prezentare_generala_p_184.htm



Semenic-Cheuke Carasului National Park © Cătălin Gavrila

CHAPTER 2

The concept of wilderness

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF WILDERNESS, WILD AREAS AND WILDERNESS AREAS

According to the Wild Europe Initiative¹⁰ (2013), wilderness is an area governed by natural processes, unchanged or only slightly changed by human activity. It is composed of native habitats and species, large enough for the effective ecological functioning of the natural processes governing it.

Wilderness means harmony and balance. Wilderness means lakes, springs, forests, diversity of animals and plants, and fresh air. Wilderness is also the home to

wild animals such as wolves and bears, the place where they live, feed, mate and raise their young.

If the word "wilderness" often conveys a feeling of unfriendliness, danger and lawlessness, it is because wilderness is "unhuman", a place where human activity has not significantly altered the natural, normal processes. Safeguarded from human intervention, nature follows its course in harmony and balance. Wilderness is the assurance that life on Earth continues its natural course.

10 The "Wild Europe" Initiative is made up of specialists representing bodies such as the European Commission, the European Council, IUCN, UNESCO, WWF, European Wilderness Society, Birdlife International etc. More details on Wild Europe: <http://www.wildeurope.org/index.php/about-us/wild-europe>



Wilderness areas, wild areas and the role of green corridors

■ Wilderness areas

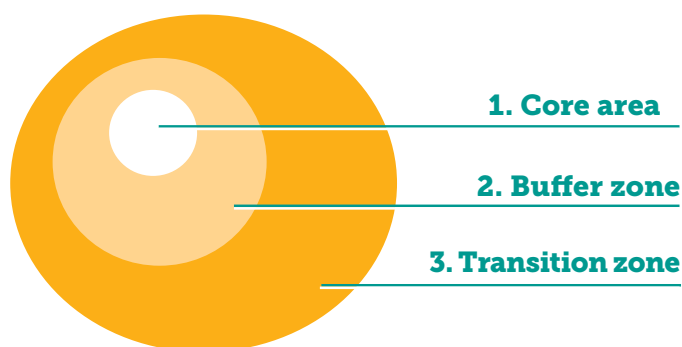
Wilderness areas consist of habitats and native species, and are large enough to ensure the functioning of natural processes. These areas are unmodified or only slightly modified and are free from any major human activity, human settlements, infrastructure or visual disturbance. Wilderness areas may consist of several wild areas connected by green corridors.

■ Wild areas

Wild areas are subject to intensive natural processes and habitats and individually tend to be smaller and more fragmented than wilderness areas, despite often covering extensive areas. They are smaller, often patchy, and surrounded by human settlements or infrastructure, therefore human influence is much greater than in wilderness areas. In Romania, wild areas may be associated with strict and full protection areas as defined under the related protected area management plans. Wild areas can be connected by green corridors, thus creating extensive wilderness areas.

■ Green corridors

Green corridors can connect wild areas allowing terrestrial and aquatic wildlife to travel, mate, and find shelter. Green corridors can be extensively used agricultural land or forests, which provide habitats, shelter, travelling routes and, at the same time, protection for wild species.



Wilderness areas can be divided into three "sub-zones": 1. Core, 2. Buffer, 3. Transition (*see the image*).

In Romania, these three sub-zones can be sometimes be part of the strict and full protection areas, sustainable management and development areas, or special conservations areas as defined under the management plans of natural protected areas.

2.2 NATURALLY-OCCURRING PROCESSES IN WILDERNESS AREAS AND SPECIES LINKED TO WILDERNESS AREAS

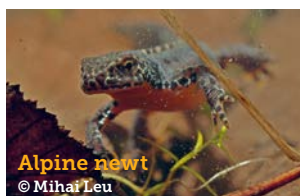
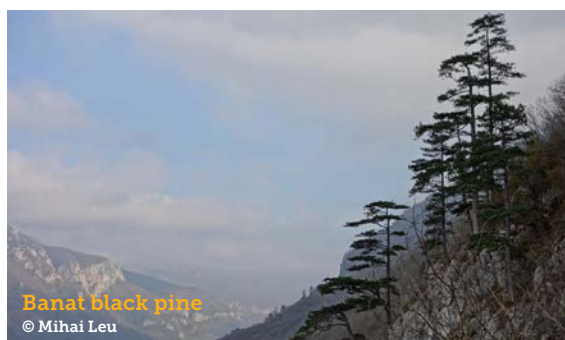
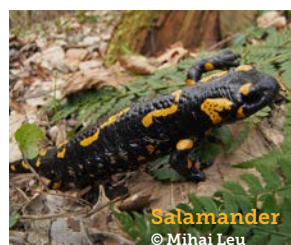
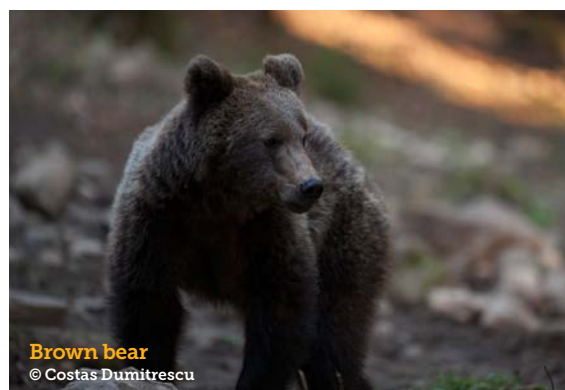
Wilderness and, less so, wild areas are characterized by natural processes that are not affected by human activities. These processes can be classified into the two following major categories: abiotic (non-living) and biotic (produced by living organisms).

Some significant abiotic processes are determined by:

- **wind** (shapes the Earth's crust, carries away soil particles, brings down trees, thus creating specific micro-habitats)
- **water** (in various states of aggregation – surface watercourses, underground waters, snow, ice)

- **fire** (typically occurring in very warm and dry habitats, with little or no rain for extended periods of time)
- **avalanches** (they occur in mountainous areas with significant snow and steep mountain faces)
- **geology** (soil and rocks)
- **other climatic factors** (temperature, rain-fall, humidity).

The biotic processes in wilderness areas are determined by the various forms of wildlife, including herbivores (small and large animals that eat plants), carnivores (animals relying on meat), scavengers (animals feeding on dead bodies), as well as a wide range of algae, moss, lichens, fungi, grassy and wood plants. Their interactions can form spectacular habitats, such as alpine pastures, forests or wetlands.





Species which reflect natural processes associated to wilderness areas

Species whose presence is indicative of natural processes in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians include:

1. Species and habitats associated with land areas

■ Mammals:

Wolf (*Canis lupus*)
Red deer (*Cervus elaphus*)
Chamois (*Rupicapra rupicapra*)
Bear (*Ursus arctos*)
Lynx (*Lynx lynx*)
Wild cat (*Felis silvestris*)
Marten (*Martes martes*)
Beech marten (*Martes foina*)
Greater mouse-eared bat (*Myotis myotis*)

■ Reptiles:

Horned viper (*Vipera amodytes*)

■ Birds:

Three-toed woodpecker (*Picoides tridactylus*)
White-backed woodpecker (*Dendrocopus leucotus*)

■ Xylophagous insects: (feeding on wood):

Stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*)
Longicorn (*Rosalia alpina*)

■ Plants:

The Banat black pine (*Pinus nigra ssp. banatica*)

2. Species, associations and habitats associated to the aquatic and semi-aquatic environment and riparian areas

■ Mammals related to the aquatic environment:

European beaver (*Castor fiber*)

■ Fish and amphibians:

Danube lamprey (*Eudontomyzon danfordi*)
Brown trout (*Salmo trutta fario*)
Grayling (*Thymallus thymallus*)
Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*)
Danube gudgeon (*Romanogobio uranoscopus*)
Salamander (*Salamandra salamandra*)
Alpine newt (*Triturus alpestris*)
Fire-bellied toad (*Bombina bombina*)
Yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*)

■ Plants:

German tamarisk (*Myricaria germanica*)
Grey alder (*Alnus incana*)
Wild celery (*Angelica arangelica*)
Cow parsnip (*Heracleum palmatum*)
Stone crayfish (*Austropotamobius torrentium*)

2.3 BENEFITS OF WILDERNESS AREAS

Wilderness and wild areas are indicators of the health and the welfare of our ecosystem, even if sometimes we fail to see it or feel it in the "asphalt jungle" around us. These areas provide us with fresh air and clean water, as well as protect us from floods and landslides. These areas are essential for the survival of some species interconnected through ecologic networks.

Being a true "living laboratory", wilderness areas ensure a place and a reference point for environmental or biological studies. Moreover, wilderness areas and areas in their close vicinity are appreciated for their recreational opportunities.

There are few such areas in present-day Europe and this is why their value continues to increase. These are the only areas where one can find species which were previously prevalent over wide areas of the continent and it's only here that the landscape



Retezat National Park © Dan Dinu

still remains untarnished and considerably untouched by the human presence.

Wild areas can generate substantial revenue. The most important sources of revenue lie in sustainable tourism, complemented by social and educational programs. As far as marketing is concerned, wilderness could be a strong brand to attract tourists eager to see such areas, to bike, to go camping or photograph species living in wilderness areas. There

exist programs for the promotion of wilderness areas that can be adapted to each protected area and local context.

Wilderness areas provide wide-scale, high-quality ecosystem services, due to their size and natural character. These areas are very important for the mitigation of climate change. Wilderness areas, peat bogs and wetlands have a significantly higher carbon storage capacity than landscapes modified by humans. Wilderness areas work similarly when it comes to the mitigation of floods, in both river basins and floodplains.

Wilderness areas are increasingly being used to address social issues such as youth development (personal and professional development programs carried out in natural environments)

and health (programs aimed at experiencing the positive psychological effects of the wilderness area, which can then facilitate a range of effective therapies). At the same time, given that these areas are very wide, a range of activities can be organized here in such a way that they do not threaten biodiversity.

In conclusion, wilderness areas are invaluable for humans in terms of environmental, social and economic benefits. Wilderness areas generate services for society, which are often taken for granted without people being aware of their true value. These services are true sources of health and wellbeing for people. At the same time, wilderness areas serve as refuge for species and ecosystems in need of protection and conservation.

Benefits of wilderness areas and their surroundings

Some of the benefits that nature and wilderness areas may provide are listed below:

- Using wilderness as a brand may lead to better promotion of local products, goods and services, and, considering how few wilderness areas are left in Europe, to attract tourists;
- Tourism-related economic benefits, which can serve as eco-tourism destinations – recreational activities in the vicinity of wilderness areas can boost the local economy;
- A non-formal setting for relaxation, mental recovery/therapy, as well as for educational activities;
- Raw materials for local communities (timber, furniture, hand-made items, firewood etc.);
- Benefits for agriculture, as well as for nearby urban areas;
- A wide range of medicinal plants, edible mushrooms and berries which can be picked in a sustainable way;
- Safe heaven for key European species;
- Connectivity by means of green corridors which link major habitats and enable the migration of key species;
- Climate change mitigation;
- Ecosystem goods and services (eg. water and fresh air);
- Improved water and soil quality, mitigation of pollution effects and improved productivity of fisheries;
- Prevention and mitigation of floods and landslides;
- Water storage in irregular-rainfall areas;
- Represent the main method of conservation of genetic resources of plants and animals.



Wind farms, Sfânta Elena, Iron Gates Nature park. © Cătălin Gavrila



Micro-hydropower plant © Adrian Grancea



Logs. © Cătălin Gavrila

2.4 THREATS TO WILDERNESS AREAS

Wilderness areas and the species living in them can be subject to pressures and threats by human activities. For instance, wild animals need wide quiet spaces in order to travel and to find shelter during the mating season, to search for food or to occupy new habitats when forced by the effects of climate change. The travel mainly takes place via corridors found within the wilderness areas. When the wilderness area is fragmented (example: the corridors are interrupted by various structures, such as motorways), the life of wild animals is seriously threatened by starvation, inbreeding (mating between genetically related individuals), accidents and disease.

Types of barriers that might interrupt a green corridor:

- **Land barriers** (example: road and rail infrastructure, tourism facilities, ski resorts etc.). Development often hinders the travelling of land species, disrupting their life cycle and turning the creation of green corridors (passageways) impossible.
- **Aquatic barriers** (example: micro-hydropower plants, embankments, dams, reservoirs etc.). If a terrestrial animal can adapt and, in some cases, go around an obstacle, the aquatic environment is far more restrictive. The damming or channelization of rivers can lead to the extinction of river-dwelling species.

- **Aerial barriers.** Some of the most frequent barriers for bird species are wind farms, overhead power lines and tall buildings. Thousands of birds and bats die every year due to collisions with such infrastructure elements.

Moreover, deforestation, mining of underground resources, excessive plant collecting, hunting, intensive farming and grazing, all make up the human intervention in nature and upset the balance of ecosystems and natural processes. Such interventions have undue outcomes that can lead to the disappearance of dozens of species of plants or animals, ultimately resulting in loss of biodiversity and contraction of wilderness areas.

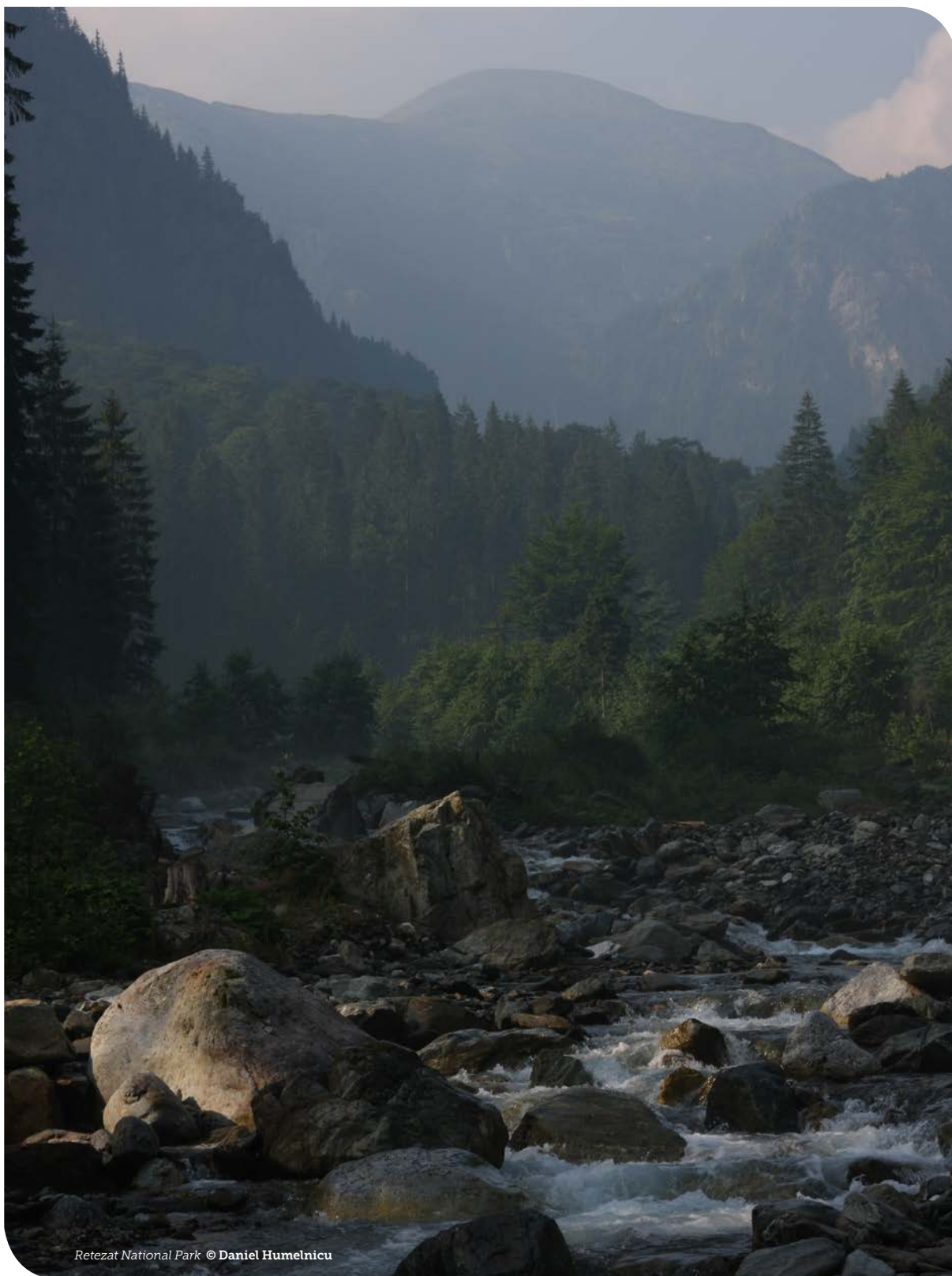
The improper management of hunting, the lack of information and awareness of communities near wilderness areas are other causes potentially leading to the decline of wilderness areas. A detailed list of threats and pressures is outlined in Annex 1.

Pressures or threats?

According to the IUCN, **pressure** refers to an action or phenomenon with negative impact in the past (usually) 5 years.

A threat is an action or phenomenon which will continue or may occur in the future, with potential negative effects in years to come.

(Stanciu and Florescu, 2009)



Retezat National Park © Daniel Humelnicu

CHAPTER 3

What can we do to preserve wilderness areas?



3.1 WHAT CAN THE AUTHORITIES AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS DO?

3.1.1 Conservation of wilderness in Europe

With so few wilderness areas remaining in Europe, it is of paramount importance to ensure an appropriate protection of the few places that remain untouched.

At the same time, opportunities to turn some areas in Europe into new or expanded wilderness areas have to be considered (e.g.: the rewilding of formal unproductive agricultural areas), taking into account the environmental and social and economic benefits of wilderness.

In order to avoid the extinction of wilderness areas and to facilitate natural processes, some European nature conservation organizations have developed a range of principles and indicators. One of them is Wild Europe Initiative, made up of specialists from organizations such as the European Commission, the European Council, IUCN, UNESCO, WWF and others. Wild Europe Initiative proposes key principles and indicators for the appropriate management of wilderness areas. For instance, it is essential for a wilderness strategy to take into account certain factors:

- Have all indigenous ecosystems represented within a protected area system;
- Maintain viable populations of all indigenous species and allow their natural diversification;
- Safeguard ecological and evolutionary processes such as non-embanked rivers, wind, fire and the impact of herbivores and carnivores;
- The system has to be designed and managed so as to ensure resilience to both short-term and long-term changes, including climate change.

Promotion of "top level consumers"

Recent discoveries show that the "large apex consumers" at the top of the food chain, such as lions or tigers are key to the normal functioning of ecosystems. The extinction of large predators – such as wolves or lynxes on land, sharks in oceans and large fish in fresh water ecosystems – together with large herbivores such as European Bisons – can result into cascading effects for the marine, land and freshwater ecosystems. This "trophic downgrading" affects processes, functions and the resilience of global ecosystems and may lead to the spreading of infectious diseases, wildfires, increased carbon emissions, invasive species and altered biochemical cycles. Thus, species that are part of "large apex consumers" group or are large

carnivores should be promoted as an integral part of a European-wide wilderness strategy.

Key principles and indicators for the appropriate functioning of natural processes in wilderness areas

Several indicators were developed to assess functioning and integrity of natural processes in wilderness areas. The first indicator relates to the size or surface area of wild areas, which should be sufficiently extensive to allow an optimum working of natural processes. The second indicator concerns the fact that wilderness areas should be as autonomous as possible (including water sources, which supply the different habitats), and the influence of external factors should be minimal (pollution, non-indigenous species, the impact of human activities). Moreover, species with a complex age structure should be as varied as permitted by the local geographic features, which generates an improved ecosystem balance. Finally, a high diversity of species would proportionally lower the risk of an ecosystem being damaged by natural disasters.

Criteria potentially enabling long-term wilderness conservation

A three-**sub zone** approach (core, buffer, transition) is regarded as offering the best protection of the key wilderness principles, whilst allowing potential for future expansion and flexible interaction with other land uses. Each sub zone is defined by a range of criteria¹¹ and European-level recommendations:

- **Core** – it has the highest quality of wilderness, with minimal impact of human activity or infrastructure and a dominance of natural processes. If the core zone is not extensive enough to secure the full scope of natural processes, it may be extended, where possible, towards the buffer zone by restoration or rewilding.
- **Buffer** – it should feature a relatively low impact of human presence. Emphasis here should be on restoration/rewilding of natural habitats and processes, and phasing out of built structures (with the exception of uninhabitable archeological sites). Where feasible, there should be plans for the buffer to be incorporated into the core zone eventually.

¹¹ Certain European-level activities are recommended for each such sub-zone (core, buffer, transition), which can then be adapted to local conditions.

A detailed list outlining the recommended activities is available at: <http://www.wildeurope.org/images/pdf/a-working-definition-of-european-wilderness-and-wild-areas.pdf>
These recommendations are aimed at defining and facilitating the conservation of existing wilderness areas.

- **Transition** – since a range of human activities are allowed in this zone, it should not be subject to development that may lead to a fragmentation of habitats or may alter the landscape (e.g. wind farms, ski slopes, industrial structures).

Any development of man-made structures in wilderness areas should be kept at a minimum and

refrain from hindering the future expansion of transition areas.

The creation and maintenance of green corridors may also enable the expansion and conservation of wilderness areas.

Protection, restoration or rewilding?

- **The protection of wilderness** seeks to safeguard the naturalness of its processes, habitat and wildlife without human intervention within a particular area, and to minimize unintended external influences – including water and air pollution. Management should be undertaken using principles of “non intervention management” which promotes natural processes and natural succession – focusing on overall ecological integrity rather than individual species.
- **(Ecologic) Restoration** involves the reinstatement of natural habitats and processes, together with the reintroduction of wildlife, appropriate to the geography of an area at the present time. Wherever possible it is implemented through natural regeneration followed by non intervention, although the process may initially involve human-centered activity. For example, where there is no local seed source of a target species, temporary human intervention is necessary. In either case, the outcome is not predictable. Restoration should not be seen in terms of turning the clock back to recreate any particular status quo from the past.
- **Rewilding** is another term for restoration, meaning the return of an area to its wild natural condition. As with ecologic restoration, re-wilding involves initiating, stimulating and allowing natural processes to occur (again), replacing human management and interference to shape new and wilder areas. It is applicable to any type of landscape and may not result in a predictable end-state, or restoration of an old state. A naturally functioning landscape that can sustain itself into the future without active human management is the ultimate goal of the rewilding approach. (Wild Europe Initiative, 2013).

CASE STUDY:

Rewilding of the Southern Carpathians by reintroduction of the bison

WWF-Romania and Rewilding Europe brought the European Bison back to the Țarcu Mountains of the Southern Carpathians¹². The bison were brought from all over Europe to Romania, from specialized breeding centres in Belgium, Sweden, Germany, Italy and France.

The bison, once widely prevalent in Europe, is even rarer than the black rhino – which is also critically endangered. There are approximately 3,400 bison remaining at large in the world. This is the largest terrestrial animal in Europe and has a specific role in nature. Bison keep the forest “open” and diversify the habitat by eating tree sprouts or young wood. The forest clearings created by bison improve conditions for species such as deer, which would otherwise not venture out in thick forests.

The bison is faster than other large related herbivores, such as the cow. But no matter how fast, the weaker individuals are removed by predators. It has to be pointed out that the bison is a herd animal and is difficult to prey while in a herd. The bison most exposed to predators or natural selection are the solitary ones, usually non-dominant males, or old, or weak individuals. They are hunted by wolves and bears, while more agile bison remain unharmed and pass strong traits on to their offspring.

¹² More information on this project is available on the WWF-Romania website: http://wwf.ro/ce_facem/arii_protejate/rewilding_europe/



Caraș Valley, Semenik - Cheile Carașului National Park © Adrian Grancea

3.1.2 Conservation of the wilderness at national level

The Romanian regulatory framework does not specifically focus on the protection of wilderness areas as defined and recommended by the Wild Europe Initiative. One challenge for the conservation of wilderness areas is the multitude of agencies that share (sometimes competing) responsibility for protected areas, and the fact that many Romanian protected areas are lacking approved and/or functional management plans. There is no single protected area manager in Romania tasked with decision making regarding wilderness areas. For instance, town halls are only responsible for land of the protected areas and related wild areas; the National Forest Administration is responsible for forests in protected areas; the Romanian Waters Administration is responsible for cadastre-registered watercourses within protected areas.

Moreover, the effective management of protected areas and the conservation of wild areas also requires a significant involvement of managers of game reserves

within those areas, and of private land owners whose land is within or adjacent to protected areas.

In practice, it is very difficult to establish specific wilderness conservation measures to be included into the management plan of a protected area. Each of the relevant institutions described above can issue their own management plans and strategies, often accompanied by different conservation goals (which may or may not include specific measures for the conservation of wild areas or interconnection thereof via green corridors).

In conclusion, all these organizations need to find a common denominator regarding the management of a protected area, in order to adapt and apply the Europe-wide principles described above. Ensuring the management of wilderness areas requires authorities to cooperate with stakeholders, specialists and the civil society in order to prepare management plans, which allow for the safekeeping of long-term natural processes, all the while considering the needs of local communities.



SOUTHWESTERN CARPATHIAN WILDERNESS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

www.wwf.ro



CASE STUDY:

The Carpathian Wilderness, wealth for the people

An example of a project for the conservation of wilderness areas through cooperation between the civil society and authorities is "Southwestern Carpathian Wilderness and Sustainable Development Initiatives"¹³, implemented by the Reșița branch of WWF Romania. The project was implemented with the assistance of the Swiss-Romanian Cooperation Program and is aimed at developing a strategy for a 300,000 ha area with the significant potential of becoming the largest European wilderness area, consisting of the five protected areas of Romania's Southwestern Carpathians: the Semenic-Cheile Carașului National Park, the Cheile Nerei-Beușnița National Park, the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park, the Retezat National Park and the Iron Gates Nature Park. The main activities of the project include:

- Developing the wilderness area management and setting up a common strategy with all stakeholders to implement a sustainable wilderness management in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians.
- Proposing a functional network of wilderness areas on the territory of the five protected areas, supported by effective policies, reliable management and informed people.
- Assessing potential wilderness areas, monitoring of species eligible for conservation and identifying wildlife transit areas.
- Supporting local and regional sustainable development by promoting the area based on its essential feature: one of the last remaining wilderness areas in Europe and part of the national program for the certification of eco-tourism sites.
- Supporting stakeholders by organizing workshops with and meetings between managers of protected areas, local and regional authorities and non-governmental organizations.
- Developing educational programs for schools and high schools, via a network of active young people involved in the protection of wild nature.

These steps are expected to lead, in the long term, to stronger measures for the conservation of wilderness and the integration of the European-wide principles proposed by the Wild Europe Initiative.

However, the authorities and NGOs are not the only key stakeholders relevant for the conservation of wilderness areas. Everyone living in and visiting these areas has a very important say. How each of us can contribute to the conservation of wilderness areas is described on the following pages.

¹³ More details on this project are available on the WWF-Romania website: http://www.wwf.ro/ce_facem/arii_protejate/salbaticia_din_carpati/



Wilderness protection Camp, Semenic - Cheile Caraşului National Park © Adrian Grancea

3.2 WHAT CAN WE, THE READERS OF THIS GUIDE, DO TO PRESERVE WILDERNESS AREAS?

People are generally fond of nature, especially what is considered wild nature¹⁴. We hike, swim in lakes, go camping or relax around camp fires. Even detractors of spending time outdoors are at some point spellbound by the environment. Nature means *Peace, Balance and Harmony*. This is why we need it and have to make sure that it is maintained for us and those after us. Each of us should be aware of our role in the short, medium and long term in conserving nature and ensuring that wilderness remains.

It is important to be actively involved in addressing the different problems occurring close to our wilderness areas. For instance, we can strive to minimize our impact on existing habitats by promoting sustainable activities, which take into account the economic

(generation of revenue) as well as the social and environmental pillars of sustainable development. Specifically, everything we do must be considered in terms of the environmental impact, especially when dealing with the increasingly sparse wilderness areas.

Protecting wilderness requires us to be informed of the many benefits provided by wilderness areas and to be connected to the nature around us and to convey this knowledge to others. A concrete example would be information and awareness-raising campaigns dedicated to both current and future visitors of these areas. Such actions could be organized at the time of certain events (e.g. May 24th – the European Day of National and Nature Parks). Here are some events that could provide contexts for wilderness-dedicated actions:

¹⁴ Assessment of level of popular awareness and attitudes towards wilderness. Nicole Bauer and Isabelle Gutzwiller. Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL

Date	Event
2 February	World Wetlands Day, the Ramsar Convention
15 March - 15 April	Forest Month
22 March	World Water Day
23 March	World Meteorological Day
1 April	Birds Day
17 April	World Health Day
22 April	Earth Day
24 April	World Day for Laboratory Animals
10 May	Birds and Trees Day
15 May	International Day of Climate Action
22 May	World Biodiversity Day
24 May	European Day of Parks
5 June	World Environment Day
16 September	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
18 September	World Geologists Day
23 September	World Cleaning Day
26 September	World Day of Clean Mountains
1 October	World Habitat Day
4 October	World Animal Day
8 October	International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction

Another method of involvement is collecting signatures or signing petitions that call for protecting the environment. An example of citizen participation is the WWF Romania initiative of 2011 for the saving of Romanian virgin forests (www.pădurivirgine.ro). More than 100,000 signatures were collected in 33 days, enough to be considered by the Romanian Parliament, and resulting into a law for the protection of such forests.

Last but not least, each of us can lay the basis of local/regional/national action groups and can implement our own projects, or develop nature-friendly business opportunities. Attracting tourists and organizing

environmentally-friendly thematic events, the selling of local products manufactured by craftsmen or at home, the selling of natural products from sustainably collected plants, etc. could generate revenue with a minimal impact on nature, which is indicative of sustainable development. The generation of revenue from such sources can mitigate the pressure on the overexploitation of resources exclusively for financial gain, which does not take into account the other two components of sustainable development (the social component, which is beneficial for the community, and the environmental component, whereby nature is protected from exploitation).



Start of Bison Marathon, 2014 edition © Adrian Grancea

Practical wilderness protection tips:

- When you talk about nature and wilderness, talk about what they mean to you!
- Promote local values and traditions, show pride in your area!
- Promote ecotourism – it is a form of tourism where the traveler's main motivation is to observe and appreciate nature and local nature-related traditions!
- Organize events to attract visitors to enjoy the natural beauties of your area!
- Supporting wilderness requires as many people as possible. Motivate your friends to join your cause!
- Understand that your efforts today will not be immediately visible and recognize that you are making a change for the long term!
- Build educational programs and set the young as your target group, they are the next generation!

Moreover, to protect the Carpathian wilderness, it may help that we develop a close connection with nature. The second part of this guide is dedicated to exploring the five parks making up the largest wilderness area in Romania: the Semenic–Cheile Carașului National Park, the Cheile Nerei-Beușnița National Park, the Iron Gates Nature Park, the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park and the Retezat National Park.

ANNEX 1

Pressures and threats to protected areas

1. Residential and commercial development within a protected area – Threats arising from the extension of human settlements or other non-farming uses of the land which significantly impact the protected area:

- 1.1 Housing and human settlements
- 1.2 Commercial and industrial sites
- 1.3 Recreational infrastructure

2. Farming and aquaculture within a protected area – Threats arising from farming and grazing following the expansion and intensification of agriculture, including forestry and aquaculture.

- 2.1 Annual and perennial crops
 - 2.1a Medicinal plant crops
- 2.2 Tree plantations
- 2.3 Animal husbandry and grazing
- 2.4 Marine and freshwater aquaculture

3. Production of Energy and mining within a protected area – Threats arising from the production of non-biologic resources.

- 3.1 Gas and oil wells
- 3.2 Mining and quarrying
- 3.3 Generation of energy, including energy from hydropower stations, wind

4. Transportation and transit services within a protected area – Threats arising from narrow, long transportation corridors and the vehicles transiting them, including the related mortality of plant species and wild animals.

- 4.1 Roads and railroads (including animals killed along them)
- 4.2 Communication lines and utilities (e.g. power lines, phone lines)
- 4.3 Navigation corridors and channels
- 4.4 Air corridors

5. Using and degradation of biologic resources within a protected area – Threats arising from the consumption of "wild" biologic resources, including the effects of farming and unintentional spreading of seeds; moreover, the persecuting or control of native species (warning, this category includes animal hunting and killing):

- 5.1 Hunting, killing and collecting of terrestrial animals (including the killing of animals due to conflict between man/wildlife)
- 5.2 Harvesting of terrestrial plants or their products (non-wood products)
- 5.3 Forestry and wood harvesting
- 5.4 Fishing, killing and harvesting of aquatic resources

6. Human intrusion and the disruption of a protected area – Threats arising from human activities which alter, destroy or disrupt habitats and related species for other purposes than utilization of resources:

- 6.1 Recreational activities and tourism
- 6.2 War, revolution and military drills
- 6.3 Research, education and other working activities in protected areas
- 6.4 Activities of protected area managers (e.g. building, driving of vehicles, irrigation stations and dams)
- 6.5 Deliberate vandalism, destruction or threats against the staff of protected areas or visitors

7. Alteration of natural systems – Threats arising from other activities which threaten or alter habitats or the functioning of ecosystems.

- 7.1 Fire and extinguishing of fire (including arson)
- 7.2 Dams, hydrological alterations and water management/use
 - 7.3a Increased fragmentation of the protected area
 - 7.3b Isolation from other natural habitats (e.g. deforestation, dams without effective aquatic wildlife corridors)
 - 7.3c Other "edge effects" on the park's natural assets
 - 7.3d Loss of key species (e.g. apex predators, pollinators, etc.)

8. Invasive species, other species and problem genes – Threats from native and non-native terrestrial and aquatic plants and animals, pathogens/microbes and genetic material which have or may have damaging biodiversity effects following their introduction, spreading and/or growing:

- 8.1 Non-native invasive plants
 - 8.1a Non-native invasive animals
 - 8.1b Pathogens (non-native or native, but leading to new/increased difficulties)
- 8.2 Introduced genetic material (e.g. genetically modified organisms)

9. Pollution introduced or generated within the protected area – Threats arising from the introduction of materials or external and/or excessive energy from various sources:



9.1 Domestic and urban wastewater

9.1a Wastewater from facilities within the protected area (e.g. toilets, hotels, etc.)

9.2 Industrial effluents of mining or military origin and discharges (e.g. discharge of low quality water from dams, such as abnormal temperature, deoxygenated water or other polluted water)

9.3 Farming and forestry effluents (e.g. excess fertilizers or pesticides)

9.4 Domestic and solid waste

9.5 Particulate contaminants

9.6 Energy surplus (e.g. thermal or light pollution, etc.)

10. Geologic events – *Geologic events can lead to disruption in many ecosystems. But they can be a threat when a species or habitat is destroyed or lost its resilience and is vulnerable to disruption. The management capacity to address such changes can be limited.*

10.1 Volcanoes

10.2 Earthquakes/tsunamis

10.3 Avalanches / landslides

10.4 Erosion and alluvia / deposits (e.g. alterations of coastlines or river beds)

11. Climate change and extreme weather – *Threats arising from long term climate change potentially caused by global warming and other climate or extreme weather events outside of the natural variation range:*

11.1 Change and alteration of the habitat

11.2 Drought

11.3 Extreme temperatures

11.4 Storms and floods

12. Specific cultural and social threats

12.1 Loss of cultural connections, traditional knowledge and/or management practices

12.2 Natural destruction of significant cultural values of the site

12.3 Destruction of buildings, gardens, heritage sites, etc.

Note: reproduced from "Ariile protejate din România. Noțiuni introductive" (Protected Areas of Romania. Introductory notes) of WWF-Romania, published under the coordination of Stanciu E. and Florescu F. (2009) by „Green Steps”, Braşov.

Other conditions potentially leading to the degradation or disappearance of wilderness areas

- Flawed and non-harmonized legislation
- The unclear legal status of protected area lands
- Lack of interest for Romania's protected areas by political forces (government agencies, politicians, agencies)
- Local policies unsuitable for sustainable development
- Lack of a compensation system to private landowners for certain use restrictions within protected areas
- Lack of reaction by authorities to current pressures
- Local conflicts of interests
- Lack of specialized studies for protected areas
- Tense relations between protected area managers and local communities and authorities
- The manner of how protected areas are designated and zonation is developed
- Lack of credibility by managers of protected areas
- Lack of specific visiting and waste collection infrastructure in protected areas visited by tourists
- Forestry interests unaligned with protected area management plans and conservation goals
- Overlapping of game reserves and protected areas
- Lack of communication between public authorities and protected area managers
- Scarce human resources
- Lack of financial resources
- Development of transportation infrastructure
- Lack of education
- Poverty and local communities' limited access to resources eg. firewood

Note: reproduced from "Ariile protejate din România. Noțiuni introductive" (Protected Areas of Romania. Introductory notes) of WWF-Romania, published under the coordination of Stanciu E. and Florescu F. (2009) by „Green Steps”, Braşov.

A photograph of a dark, cave-like opening in a mossy rock face. The rock is grey and textured, with patches of green moss. The opening is dark and deep, creating a sense of mystery. The foreground shows some green plants and brown leaves. On the left side, there is a vertical decorative bar with a pattern of orange, teal, grey, and white squares.

PART II

Exploring wilderness in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians

Author:

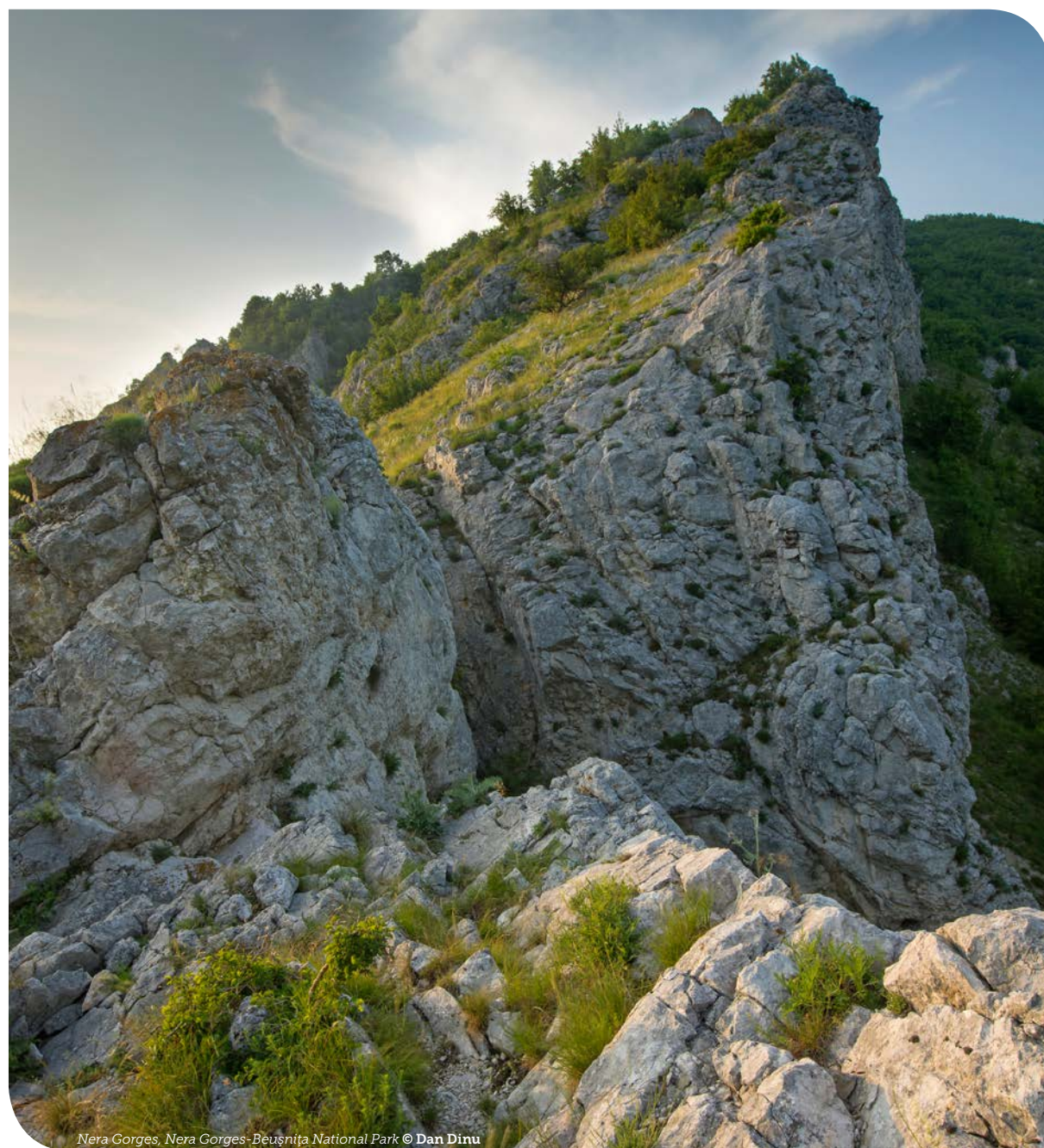
Cătălin Gavrila



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART II

1. How do we visit and enjoy a wilderness area?	33
2. What to pack when hiking?	35
3. First aid tips	36
4. Exploring the natural wealth of our wilderness area	38
4.1 Explorer in the Semenic – Cheile Caraşului National Park	43
4.2 Explorer in the Cheile Nerei - Beuşniţa National Park	49
4.3 Explorer in the Iron Gates Nature Park	55
4.4 Explorer in the Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park	63
4.5 Explorer in the Retezat National Park	69



Nera Gorges, Nera Gorges-Beuşniţa National Park © Dan Dinu

1. HOW DO WE VISIT AND ENJOY A WILDERNESS AREA?

The typical activities allowed in a national or nature park include tourism and recreation on well-marked trails provided with the required infrastructure. Tourism can take many shapes, such as: scientific, cultural, recreational, rural, ecotourism, bird watching, forestry tourism, speleological tourism, biking, etc., according to the specificity of each protected area. Activities can be complemented by educational activities for students.

Visiting wilderness areas requires respecting rules which secure the conservation of biodiversity and

ensure a minimal human impact. Thus, we have to comply with the expectations and advice of protected areas staff and displayed on information boards at the entry or inside protected areas.

When visiting a certain location within a protected area, the first step is to acquire information on the path to follow and applicable rules. Romania's Southwestern Carpathians is a remote area, and certain precautions are essential in the wild, regardless of season. Some practical tips for the visiting of wild mountainous areas are presented as follows.

"Leave no trace" Principles

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
- In popular areas: Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
- Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
- Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- In pristine areas: Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
- Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

3. Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack all trash and leftover food.
- Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

4. Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture or dig trenches.

5. Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impact on the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

6. Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young animals, or during winter.

7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.



2. WHAT TO PACK WHEN HIKING?

You definitely have a list in mind of what to pack before hitting the road. Here's a list of ten items that can be useful during trips.

10 must have items for mountain hikers



1. The map not only shows you where you are or where to go. It also shows you suitable camping sites (pieces of land to stop on), water sources and even escape routes in cases of emergency.



2. The compass is the essential companion of the map. The modern tourist would use a GPS device with digital maps. A navigation device is very useful in wild areas by pinpointing your location in any place of the planet.



3. Flashlight. A headlight is ideal, but a regular flashlight is not to be ignored either! A mini-flashlight should always be in your backpack.



4. Sun glasses. Eye protection is very important. There are well-known adverse effects of the sun on the human body, and the influence of UV radiation may be felt even with cloudy skies. The effect of such radiation is augmented by snow and at high altitudes. If you don't have them or you lost them in a ravine, do as follows (especially on snow, under a full sun): stick together two 3-4 cm wide plasters, long enough to go around your head. Cut two openings at eye level, wide enough to see through. The vision thus achieved is similar to watching with your eyes squint. Snow blindness is a temporary condition which is very painful and has cumulative effects in time.



5. Food reserve. Whether winter or summer, bad surprises are just one step away while on the mountain. No matter how careful you are, any incident, not necessarily serious, can slow you down or stop you altogether. And despite your preparations, you can run out of food. In this case, you should have some chocolate or dry fruit (raisins, dates, bananas or apricots). Glucose is also a good first aid food. In theory, water is more difficult to find in limestone areas, which is why we recommend having a water reserve, even if it becomes warm.



6. Spare clothes. It doesn't mean you have to carry an entire wardrobe! Having a few clothes just in case... is a mark of wisdom. Keep the following well protected against humidity or rain: a pair of socks, a pair of wool gloves, a warm hat, a long sleeve t-shirt. You have a choice between natural fibers (cotton, silk, wool, etc.) and synthetic ones (polyester, etc.). Wool or fleece is the most effective against cold. They remain warm even when damp. Forget cotton! It absorbs humidity and keeps the body cold, and dries slowly!



7. Emergency fuel. Also known as "solid spirit", it is the most effective emergency fuel for warming tea water or helping wet wood to catch fire. It is also used to pre-warm the burner and gasoline of gasoline stoves in cold weather or if a pressure pump is missing. It is best combined with a metallic cup.



8. Matches. They are the best solution to light up the above mentioned pellets. If they are not waterproof, the best way to protect them is by placing them in a plastic box for 35 mm photo films.



9. Pocket knife for eating or carving a branch. A simple design, such as Opinel knife or an army pocket knife – the best known military knife is Victorinox, the famous Swiss army knife.



10. Personal pharmacy. Being personal means being customized to one's individual needs. In any case, it should have bandages and Band-Aids for injuries/cuts/blisters (to prevent their opening) and sterile material for bandages or to stop bleeding.



The Semeic-Cheile Carasului National Park © Mihai Leu

3. FIRST AID TIPS

It is important to be aware of potential accidents and to know what precautions we can take. Some recommendations that may be of use while hiking are described below.

How to prevent lightning strikes

- Do not take shelter under single trees; it's better to enter the woods.
- Avoid taking shelter near haystacks.
- Descend from peaks and ridges as soon as possible.
- Insulate by any means from the ground or rock (rubber sole footwear, sit on clothing or backpack, etc.).
- Talus deposits can be one option for a safety.
- Do not take shelter under overhangs and in small caves or small ditches.

The international mountain distress signal

The international mountain distress signal consists of six sound or light signals per minute (or one signal every 10 seconds), followed by a minute of silence.

The answer consists in three signals a minute or a signal every 20 seconds, followed by a minute of silence.

To make a signal when you need it, you should carry a small whistle for sound signals, a flashlight for light signals and a watch to measure time.

A signal can also be produced with a mirror or by reflecting sun light with the emergency blanket, or by waving a bright coloured garment in a visible spot.

The international hand distress signal – used mainly for helicopter rescue.



Giving first aid in alpine areas

The main goal of first aid is to maintain vital signs. Check the following: breathe – whether breathing or not, blood circulation – whether the heart is beating or the victim is bleeding.

a. What to do when you find an unconscious injured person:

Step 1. Secure the area to prevent any other incidents.

Step 2. Check for consciousness – ask “are you feeling good?”

Step 3. Call for help – call 112 or 0-Salvamont in Romania. Check your national emergency numbers.



Step 4. Opening the airways by lifting the head.

Step 5. Check the breathing – look at the chest, listen and feel.

Step 6. Resuscitation maneuvers (which require specific training).

b. Bleeding has to be stopped by compression with bandages in the bleeding area.

c. The transportation of the victim is of utmost importance, if the victim has to be transported to receive medical care. The transport should be swift – in the shortest time possible from the accident, quick – in the quickest time possible, and correct – to prevent injuring the victim further. Choosing the transport means and method will depend on the condition of the victim, the number of rescuers and the distance. A few methods for improvised transportation are described below.



d. Viper bite. Vipers are prevalent in almost the entire Romania's Southwestern Carpathians and are protected. Viper bites can occur accidentally and are not lethal.

First aid:

- mark the area of the bite (draw a line with a ball-point pen). The bite is trapezoid-shaped.
- apply a suction cup or a suction pump to drain contaminated blood from the bite area.
- emergency transportation of the victim to the nearest hospital.
- antivenom serum is to be administered by trained personnel only!

e. Hypothermia (freezing) occurs after extended exposure to cold, frost, blizzard, including alcohol consumption or smoking, overestimation of one's strength, mental fatigue, and emotional stress. The victim first lose their energy, often shiver, then sleepiness sets in.

First aid:

- The victim must be prevented from falling asleep and should continue talking.
- The victim must be slowly rewarmed during transportation, then in a lightly pre-heated room, given lukewarm tea and covered with blankets and sleeping bag. An emergency blanket is recommended.
- The body is progressively warmed by experts.

Hypothermia first aid is administered over a long period of time.

This chapter was prepared in collaboration with Caraș-Severin Mountain Rescue team members.

Websites with information regarding the Banat mountain area:

- Tourism, accommodation - <http://turism.cjcs.ro/>
- Biking and mountain biking - www.bikeattack.ro
- Speleology, tourism - www.exploratorii.ro
- Maps, routes - www.carpati.org and www.alpinet.org

National and Nature Parks

- The Semenic - Cheile Carașului National Park - www.pnscc.ro
- The Cheile Nerei - Beușnița National Park - www.cheilenerei-beusnita.ro
- The Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park - www.domogled-cerna.ro
- The Iron Gates Nature Park - www.portiledefierpn.ro
- The Retezat National Park - www.retezat.ro

Further reading:

- Alpinet. 2015. Available at: www.alpinet.ro
- The Mountain Rescue Association of Romania. 2001. The Mountain Rescue Manual. 2001
- Carpathians. 2015. Available at: www.carpati.org
- Györfy, L., "Salvare în munti" ("Mountain rescue"), 1997
- Leave no trace - <https://lnt.org/>

Let's explore the natural wealth
of our wilderness area.

Location of protected areas





Maps: © Marius Vlaicu P.F.A.

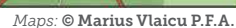




1. The Semenic - Cheile Caraşului National Park



EXPLORING





Nera Springs Reserve © Cătălin Gavrila

4.1 THE SEMENIC – CHEILE CARAȘULUI NATIONAL PARK

We are in the Banat Mountains, and the first park to explore is the Semenic - Cheile Carașului National Park, also called the "Land of endless trees". 79% of the total 36,214 ha surface area is covered by forest, 73% of which are beech trees, therefore it can be called a "national park of beech".

The truly wild part of the Semenic - Cheile Carașului National Park lies in its eight natural reserves, strictly protected special conservation areas where all forms of exploiting or utilizing natural resources are limited. We begin the exploration of the wilderness in the 1,400 metre-high Semenic plateau. It represents the "sponge" of the Semenic range, due to its many springs enabling the formation of swamps and peat bogs, and is the origin of major Banat rivers: Timiș, Bârzava and Nera. The main attraction of the plateau is the spring of the Nera River, namely the Izvoarele Nerei Reserve (Nera Springs Reserve), the largest area of virgin forests in Europe (more than 5,000 ha). These are virgin beech forests unique in Europe, with trees of all ages and exceptional sizes. This impressive forest is a landmark

thanks to its beauty, but its most important function is an environmental one.

The next attraction is the secular forest in the Cheile Carașului Reserve, which stands out by its length (19 km) and wildness. The main feature of the Cheile Carașului are the limestone slopes with rich vegetation, talus deposits, karst springs and more than 500 caves and pit caves. This is the realm of speleologists and explorers of the underground. This is the entrance in the depths of the three-layered Comarnic cave, with a 1,750 metre-long tourist trail, where many sizeable formations, galleries and halls can be witnessed. The white gallery walls are in stark contrast with the black sylex (a very hard rock), which makes up exceptional underground landscapes, while the climax of the exploration is on the active level, where the cave is crossed by the subterranean Ponicoval River. The cave is home to many very sensitive, protected bat colonies with more than 300 individuals. We continue the exploration of the underground world with the 1,121 metre long Popovăț cave, where the largest underground lake of Caraș-Severin, very large halls and galleries with many formations, chiefly among which stalactites, stalagmites and gours can be found.



The Semenic-Cheile Carașului National Park © Daniel Humelnicu



The Comarnic cave © Daniel Humelnicu



Greater mouse-eared bat © Mihai Leu

The Cheile Carașului Reserve is surrounded by limestone plateaus with many sinkholes (funnel-shaped depressions formed by the surface dissolution of some soluble rocks, some large in size) and limestone pavements (landforms resulting from the corrosion of soluble rocks by meteoric water). Besides these plateaus, the Croatian community established plantations of fruit trees and many animal shelters. The Cheile Gârliștei reserve is nearby, with 4 of its 9 km length consisting of very steep slopes in which nearly 100 caves were formed. The neighboring areas of the valley are covered with lilac, hornbeam and flowering ash.

Before long we enter the Izvoarele Carașului reserve, with a karst plateau where waters run through slopes, caves and pit caves to reemerge at the surface through the Izbucl Carașului or the Ferecul Brazilor, both with large outflows which formed massive deposits of travertine in the Caraș River bed. The Buhui – Mărghitaș reserve can also be explored here, an area characterized by fir tree forests with the exceptionally picturesque Buhui basin in the middle. This basin is more than 100 years old and was built as a water supply for the town of Anina. The Buhui River is a tributary of the Caraș River, which in forms a cave and a lake along its path: the Buhui cave and Mărghitaș Lake.

Wild life, a barometer of our health

The rich occurrence of species of the Semenic-Cheile Carașului National Park are the result of various climatic and landscape conditions. The presence of forests, rocks, talus deposits and swamps enable a very high botanical diversity and a true vegetal paradise. Up to 1,086 species of plants can be identified in the park, with nearly half of them (535) occurring in the Caraș Valley. The specific feature of this flora is the presence of significant sub-Mediterranean plants, which includes 33 species of orchids within the park territory. Moreover, 30 flora species have been designated as protected species.

These special wild areas on the territory of the park are home to mammals such as the deer, wolf, lynx, pine marten, stone marten, badger, weasel, ferret, squirrel, bent-wing bat, mouse-eared bat, vesper bat, common bat, Mediterranean horseshoe bat, greater horseshoe bat, smaller horseshoe bat, dormouse, bicolored shrew, water shrew. The bird species include the golden eagle, black grouse, nightjar, short-toed eagle, raven, white-backed woodpecker, black woodpecker, ortolan, peregrine falcon, collared flycatcher, red-backed shrike, bee-eater, woodlark, marsh tit or willow tit.



We can also find reptiles and amphibians such as the smooth snake, green lizard, wall lizard, horned viper, common lizard, yellow-bellied toad, European common frog, marsh frog and alpine newt. All these animals are vital for the food chain and play their part in maintaining the natural balance.

People of all ethnicities living in harmony with nature

For centuries, the people in the Banat Mountains lived in harmony with nature, while creating a model of multiculturalism in which all ethnicities

managed to keep their language and culture. In the Semenic - Cheile Caraşului National Park, we find German communities in Reşiţa, Anina, Văliug, Gărâna and Brebu Nou, and Croatian communities in Caraşova, Lupac, Iabalcea, Nermet, Rafnic, Vodnic and Clocotici.



The Semenic - Cheile Caraşului National Park © Daniel Humelnicu

Further reading:

- The Semenic-Cheile Caraşului National Park. 2015. Available at: <http://www.pnscc.ro/>
- Banat Tour. 2015. Available at: <http://www.banattour.ro>
- Explorers. 2015. General description of the park. Available at: <http://semenic.exploratorii.ro/cara.php>
- The Caraş-Severin County Council. 2015. The Semenic - Cheile Caraşului National Park. Available at: <http://www.cjcs.ro/turism/ro/parcul-national-semenic.php>



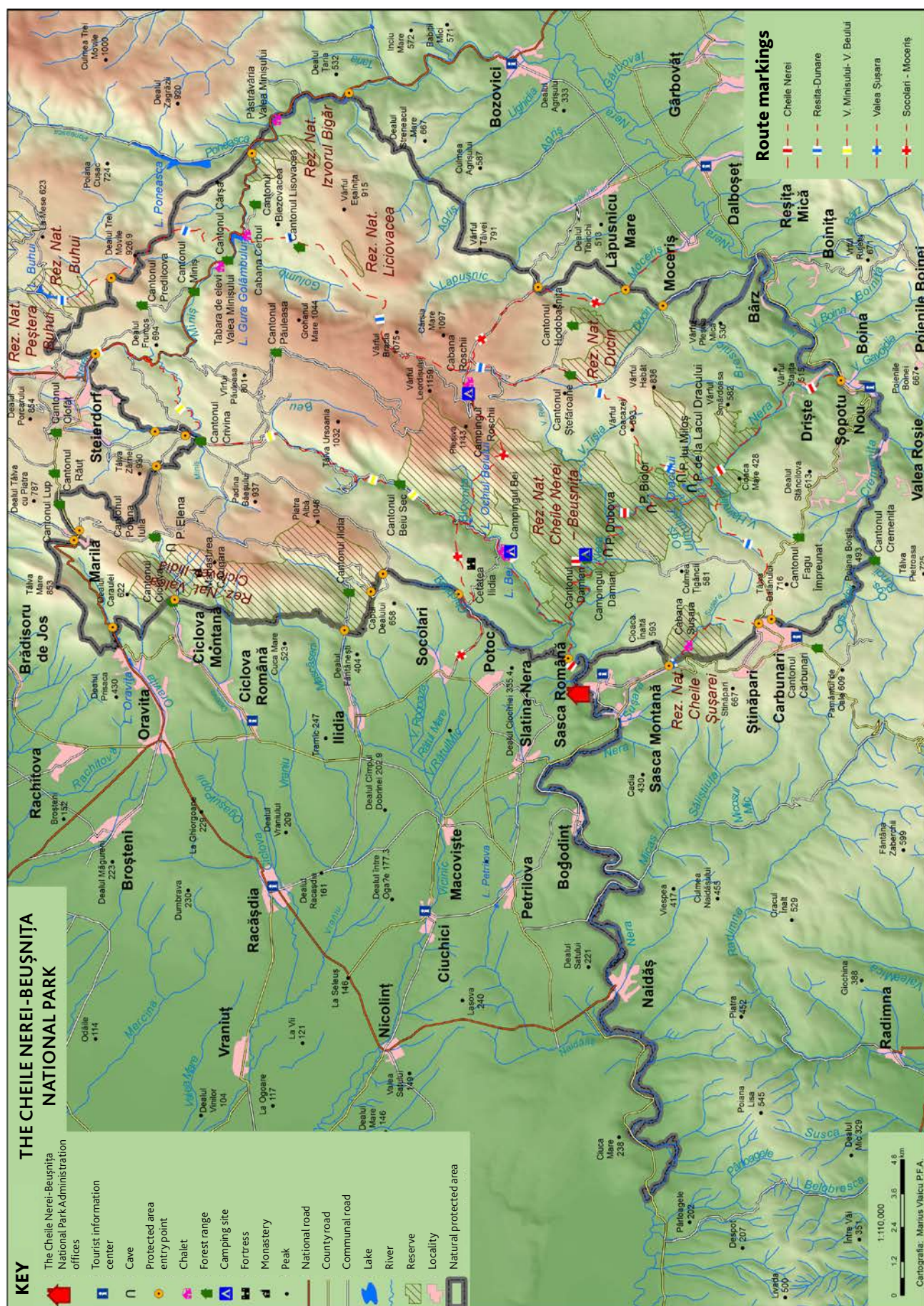


2. The Semenik - Cheile Caraşului **National Park**



EXPLORING

Beuşniţa's waterfalls © Daniel Humelnicu



Maps: © Marius Vlaicu P.F.A.



4.2 THE CHEILE NEREI-BEUŞNIŢA NATIONAL PARK

Exploring wilderness through steep valleys, shady forests, cool waters and pristine caves

The backbone of the Cheile Nerei – Beuşniţa National Park is the Cheile Nerei, a karst area where Nera River pierced the mountains and created many beautiful sights. The river is 131 km long and springs from the Semenic Mountains, under the Piatra Goznei peak in the Semenic - Cheile Caraşului National Park. It crosses the depression area of the Semenic Mountains, Anina and Almăj and takes in a number of tributaries along the way. Along its path the Nera River travels a spectacular route through the steep walls of the gorge.

The Cheile Nerei-Beuşniţa National Park has a surface area of 36,758 ha and lies at Romania's Southwestern national border of the country, in the Southern half of the Anina Mountains and on the last Northern lengths of the Gorganu limestone peak, practically splitting up the Anina and Locvei Mountains.

We start from the Cheile Nerei, one of the six reserves of the national park, characterized by the speleologist Ştefan Negrea as follows: *"The Cheile Nerei remind us of the wilderness of Cheile Caraşului (Caraş Gorges), the grandeur of Cheile*

Bicazului (Bicaz Gorges) and the delicacy of Cheile Turzii (Turda Gorges)".

The total 22 km length can be travelled by foot or boat, the latter being probably the best way to visit the Cheile Nerei. At the beginning of the route, the Nera Valley is wide, with many glades and abodes near the Dracului Lake. The Dracului Lake is one of a kind karst form in our country, which was formed by a partially collapsed cave over the lake. The legend says the lake is "bottomless", however has a depth of 13 m.

If we choose to explore this area by foot, we follow the wild trail that sometimes cuts into rock above waterline, cross the river through water, or on the hanging wood decks, and go through man-sized tunnels cut into rock. Exploring can go underground, with flashlights revealing the secrets of the Boilor, Porcului or Dubova caves. The heights and drops of the Begului Tower, the Small Tower and the Baltanului Ravine are places where legends arose, but also home to birds of prey.

Going from the Cheile Nerei through the Beuşniţa Valley will take us to the Ochiul Beiului Lake. It is a karst lake supplied by an underground water flow which sees the light of day by a phenomenon called resurgence. The lake is surrounded by a fir tree forest giving it a striking beauty. The 15 metre drop Beuşniţei

Grand Falls lie upstream. The waterfall is covered by green moss, which only enhances its beauty, and the limestone base is filled with many caverns. We continue upstream, where we find another two equally impressive waterfalls.

We leave the Nera River valley and follow one of its tributaries, the Șușara River, to reach the wilderness of the Cheile Șușarei Natural Reserve. This is easily accessible from the village of Sasca Montană. We are in the Șușarei Gorge going towards the Șușara Falls, where water falls 15 metres to form two steps.

Less commonly known to the wider public are the Valea Ciclovei – Ilidia, Lisovacea and Ducin wild reserves, characterized by limestone slopes, dolines, limestone pavements, caves, pit caves, talus deposits, gorges, waterfalls, sinkholes, meadows and forests.

Exploring these natural beauties can only end at the Izvorul Bigăr Natural Reserve. It is worth mentioning that in 2013, the Bigăr waterfalls made the top of the Most Impressive Waterfalls list on The World Geographic website. The Bigăr is a fast spring (hence the name "izbuc", or "rapid springs"), supplied by underground water flows, which collect and run through the karst plateau Ducin – Roșchii – Liciovacea, then reach the Izbucul Bigăr cave in Anina Mountains. After approximately 200 metres, the limestone-rich spring water flows magically into the Miniș River from a rocky crest, thus forming this limestone tuff waterfall, a "living" waterfall which slowly grows day by day.

The wonderful underground world of the Cheile Nerei – Beușnița National Park hides many secrets.

The Plopa, Lenuța, Bijuteria Caves, the Cave under Padina Popii and Tibi Caves or the Uteriș Pit cave wait to be discovered, studied and conserved.

On the ground, the rich flora of the area is nothing short of impressive, with many Balkan, Mediterranean and sub-Mediterranean species (lilac, smoke tree, flowering ash, hornbeam). The vegetation is very rich in trees, shrubs, grass plants and includes rare or unique plant species in the Romanian flora. The wild animals in this area include: the bear, deer, wild boar, otter, badger, stone marten and pine marten. The river and lake waters are home to: trout, chub, barbel, grayling, crucian carp, Balkan loach (rare protected species). All these species require clean, unpolluted water, but also protection against poaching. Other animals threatened by what is mostly lack of awareness and education of the general public are reptiles, which are very important in the food chain such as the horned viper, green lizard, common viper, and other snake species. Also prevalent in this area are many invertebrates, among which the scorpion (rare protected species), and the Banat firefly, which can amaze visitors by their sheer numbers during nights in certain forests.

Legends and man in harmony with nature

These places, rich in natural resources, attracted people from all over Europe over time. At times of



Lacul Ochiul Beiuului, Parcul Național Cheile Nerei-Beușnița © Daniel Humelnicu



unrest and wars giving rise to events, stories and legends. It's wonderful to sit by the fire at night and listen to local legends about the Dracului Lake, the Ochiul Bei or Nera.

Across from the Sasca Română village, perfectly fitting in the landscape and nearly invisible to an untrained eye, the explorer will find Ileana Mavrodin's Green House, one of the most beautiful buildings that is entirely made from natural materials. The main construction material is a blend of clay soils, straw or other vegetal fibers, sand and water, mixed until it reaches the consistency of dough, which is worked entirely without machines. The house is an example of

friendly, gentle and ecological architecture, providing an example of a healthier, closer relationship to nature and environmentally respectful living.

The Slatina Nera Monastery, with its Sfinții Doctori fără de Arginți (the Holy Unmercenaries) Organic Product Lab, was built in 2009 with the purpose of bringing people closer to what plants have to offer. The lab produces syrups, tinctures, vinegars, ointments and soaps, all made of natural ingredients. Extracts of plants picked from the spontaneous flora and crops cultivated on the clean, unpolluted lands in Nera Valley, complemented by honey, wax, cold-pressed plant oils, and candied fruit.



Beușnița Waterfall © Marius G. Berchi



Brown bear © Costas Dumitrescu



Green house © Casa-verde.ro



Bigăr Waterfall © Daniel Humelnicu

Further reading:

- The Cheile Nerei-Beușnița National Park. 2015. About us. Available at: cheilenereibeusnita.ro
- The Cheile Nerei-Beușnița National Park. 2015. Available at: infocheilenerei.ro
- Green house. 2015. Environmentally friendly architecture. Available at: casa-verde.ro

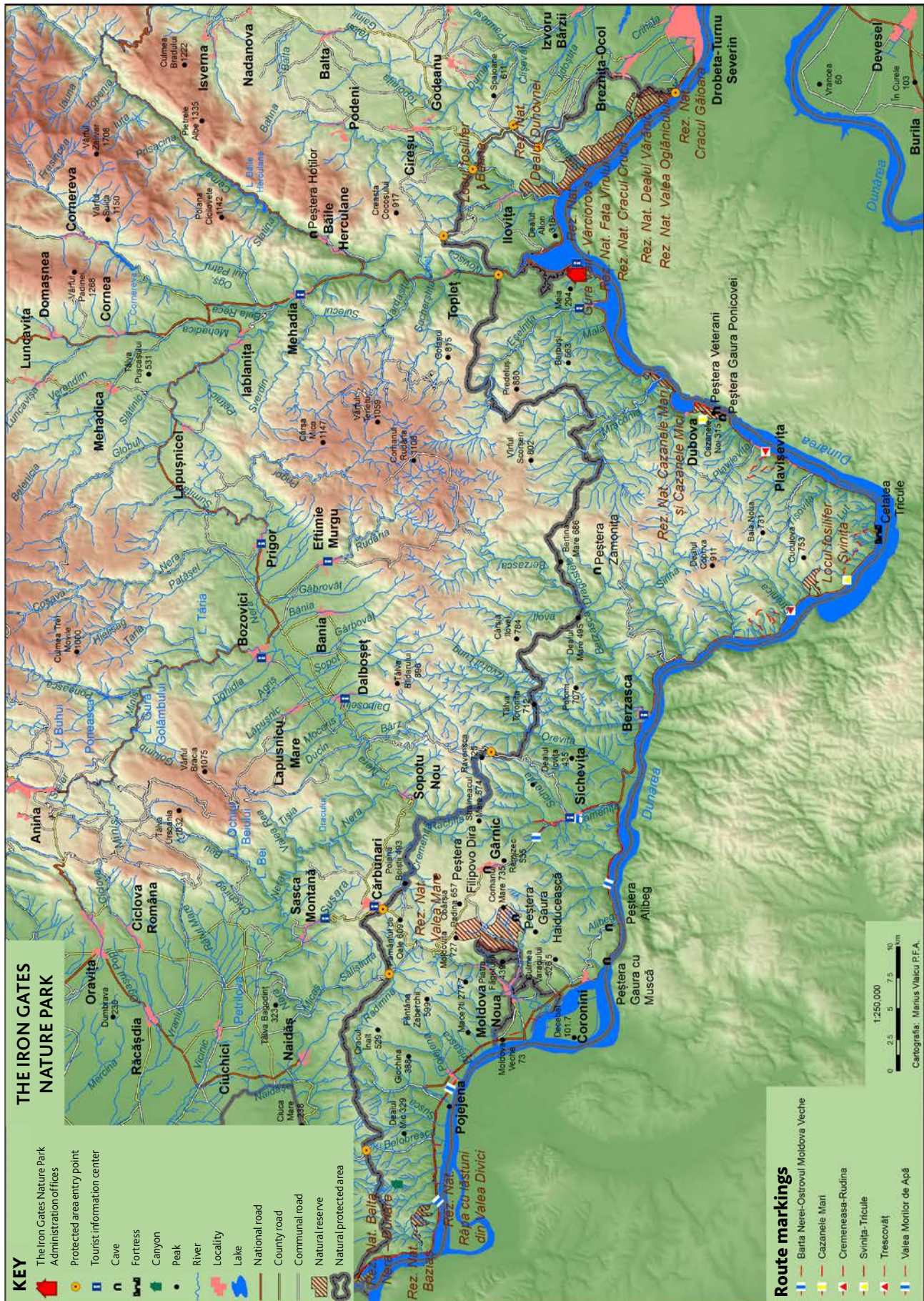




3. The Iron Gates Nature Park



EXPLORING



Maps: © Marius Vlaicu P.F.A.



Fort Ladislau, The Iron Gates Nature Park © Mihai Lupsan

4.3 EXPLORING THE IRON GATES NATURE PARK, WHERE "THE DANUBE MEETS THE CARPATHIANS"

The Danube is the second longest European river (after the Volga) and the only European river to flow from West to East. The Danube flows southeast for approximately 2,860 km into the Black Sea. After it gathers its waters in six countries (Germany, Austria, Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia and Serbia) and crosses four capitals, the Danube, eager to tell its tale, enters Romania through Caraş-Severin County, at Baziaş. Here, it meets the Nera River, which forms a beautiful and wild delta at their confluence. It then crosses the Serbian border to continue its route through the Alpine Banat (120 km) to Orşova and form its namesake gorge. This land has a special charm, with the Danube Strait delineated on the West by the Nera River and on the east by the Cerna River at Danube Gorges, dubbed "Clisura Dunării" by the locals.

Why is the Danube Strait such a charming and special place?

The Danube has the longest strait in Europe (134 km) and is home to wetlands, which are significant habitats for many internationally protected species.

Because it is the most ethnically diverse area in Romania, with a special geologic and geomorphologic diversity (a true open air geologic museum) and high biological diversity – 1,668 higher plant species and more than 5,200 animal species. At the same time, the favourable climate facilitates a high diversity of vegetal associations, with 171 associations identified up to now, of which 26 are found in Romania alone. These areas retain traces of Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic human settlements – proof of historical inhabitation are fortresses, monasteries, churches, historical and architectural heritage buildings, houses and watermills, unique in their manner of operation.

It is paramount that this place remains unchanged, which is why it was designated as the Iron Gates Nature Park.

The Iron Gates Nature Park lies in southwest Romania, at the border with Serbia on the southern part of the Locvei Mountains and Almăjului Mountains and in the southwestern Mehedinţi Plateau. It covers 115,655 ha and is split up across the territories of the Caraş-Severin and Mehedinţi counties.

The Danube River significantly influences the landscape of the Iron Gates Nature Park, as the



The Iron Gates National Park © Dan Dinu

Danube Valley changes its appearance along the 134 km between the Nera source and downstream of the Gura Văii dam. After the Gura Văii dam was built and the formation of the reservoir, the outlets of all the direct tributaries of the Danube were flooded and turned into coves of various sizes. This increased the water area and created new aquatic habitats and wetlands.

The Iron Gates Basin is the largest water reservoir on the Danube and in Romania, lying behind the 60.6 metre tall Gura Văii dam. The lake itself is 139 km long. Building the Iron Gates Hydropower and Navigation System required the relocation of three villages and the submergence of others (Tisovița, Ogradena, Plavisevița, and Ada-Kaleh). The Gura Văii basin is currently used to produce electricity, regulate the Danube's flows, navigation, and is the preferred habitat for many species of aquatic birds.

The low population density and the highly natural area characterize the Iron Gates Nature Park, has subsequently led to the expansion of wild areas. The prevalence of forests and the effective isolation from urban influence, as well as the creation of migration corridors for animals, offers the potential of it becoming an extensive wilderness area.

The Iron Gates Nature Park boasts a rich biodiversity, with currently 5,200 identified species.

Most of the reptile, amphibian and bird species from the Iron Gates Nature Park fall under a national or international protection status.

Amphibians are well represented by the salamander, newt, tree frog, garlic toad, while the most common reptiles include the Aesculapian snake, smooth snake, green lizard, slow worm.

If looking at the sky for bird watching, one has to know that 205 bird species were identified, of which many are aquatic species. This is a good indication of the important role that the basin serves during winter months. The south of the Locvei Mountains, between Balta Nera and Ostrovul Moldova Veche, is home to a string of wetlands created by the raising of the Danube level following the construction of the Iron Gates I Hydropower and Navigation system.

These wetlands (swamps, ponds) are particularly important for the waterbird populations which nest or spent winter in the Iron Gates area. A large number of aquatic birds can be seen on the lake and the adjacent wetlands in winter and spring: pygmy cormorant, great cormorant, grey heron, little egret, great egret, small duck, garganey, pintail, northern shoveler, common pochard, tufted duck, smew, Eurasian coot. Most of these species can be seen during migration periods, though some stay the winter, and a few are sedentary in the area.



The Iron Gates Nature Park is home to 34 species of mammals

The Danube has been digging its way through the Almajului and Locvei mountains over time creating areas that may seem unfriendly or repulsive. But it is merely an impression! These almost vertical slopes, mostly made of limestone, are populated by many endemic, rare species, grass, shrubs and sweet-smelling flowers.

The Danube Strait is the main corridor linking the Pannonian Plain and the Romanian Plain, with the Iron Gates Nature Park being a convergence spot of the vegetal and animal worlds in these two regions. Many endemic species of plants or species included in the National Red List have led to the designation of several nature reserves in the Iron Gates Nature Park area, including 13 nature reserves in the Mehedinți County. Seven protected areas were designated on the Caraș-Severin County, mainly for the conservation and protection of water bird species and their habitats.

The plant species with particular conservation values include four leaf clover, the Gorges tulip (*Tulipa hungarica*, endemic species noticeable by its uniqueness and habitat – the beautifully river-carved rocky slopes of the Ciucarul Mare; this plant is seen blooming in April, providing colour and perfume to the seemingly unfriendly rocks, along with other vernal species), bellflowers, Iron Gates celery, feather grass, iris, common peony, white laurel, cypress spurge, and various orchid species.

Man and nature

The Iron Gates Nature Park is home to Romanian, Serbian, Roma and Czech settlements, which harmoniously integrated other minorities (Hungarians, Germans, etc.). Before the formation of the Gura Văii basin, the Ada-Kaleh Island (currently submerged) had a sizeable Turkish community, distinctive through their traditions and activities. After 1970, the population migrated to other Romanian cities or to Turkey. Traditional activities are seen at milling facilities, chiefly among which are horizontal wheel mills. Located in the form of a string along the Camenița creek and its tributaries, these traditional facilities endured until today. The Sichevița commune had 25 watermills in the past, nine of which remain functional. Traditionally known as "bucket mills", they are in fact the first type of water-driven mills. The operation is simple: water is brought to the bucket by dikes (vălău) and by "buttons" (tree tubes) and drives the bucket by its dropping force, thus triggering a rotational movement which is transmitted to the millstone via an axle. The traditional cereal grinding process can currently be seen in any of the nine operational watermills along the Camenița River.

Representative species of the Iron Gates Nature Park

One of the illustrative species of the area is **Hermann's tortoise** (*Testudo hermani*), also known as the land tortoise, a strictly protected species given its shrinking population and limited geographic range. Hermann's tortoise is a solitary species. Individuals dig themselves more than 15 cm into the ground for a hibernation period from the end of October until

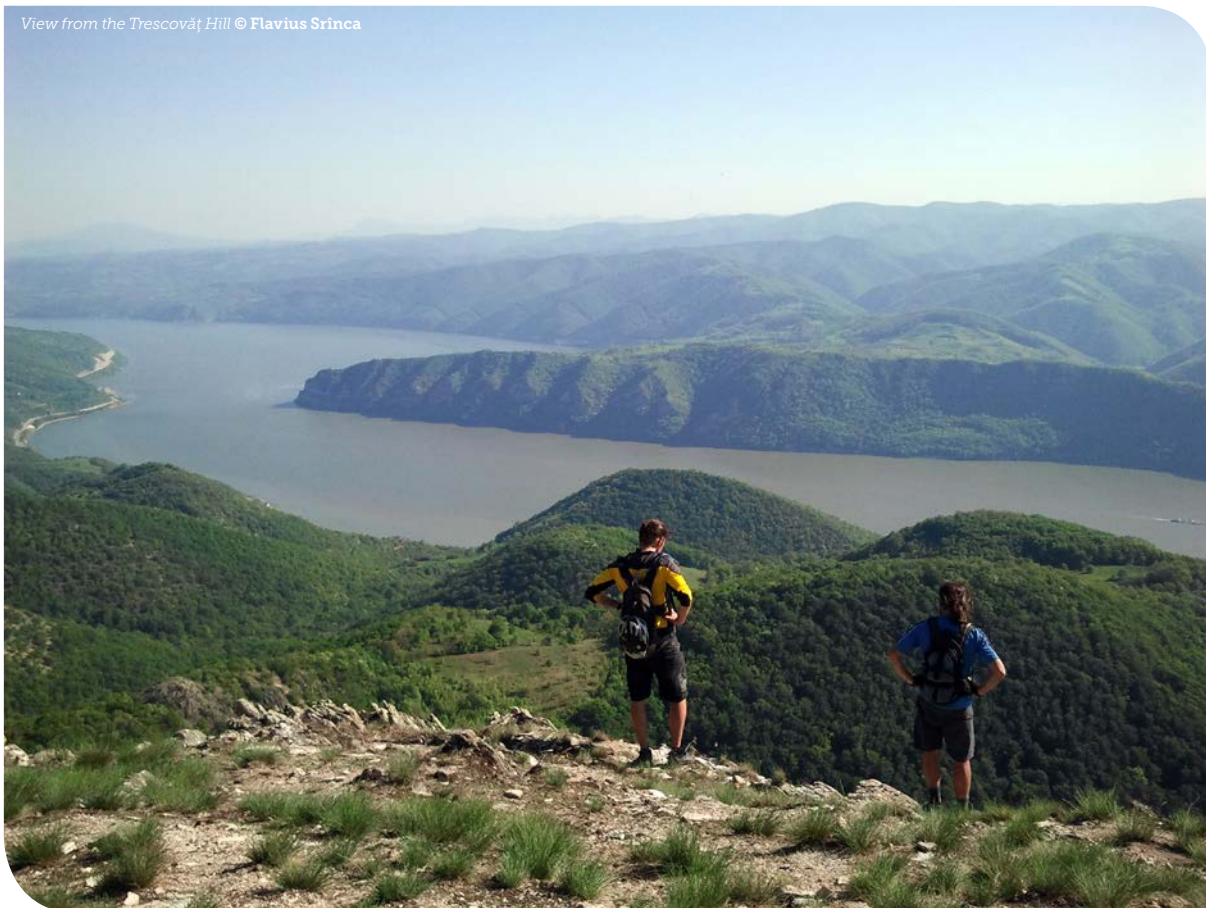


March. It is an exclusively herbivore reptile that lives in meadows and grasslands near forest edges, hiding in bushes during the day. It mates in the spring, and in May or June, the female digs a hole in a sloped area where it lays six or seven eggs. The eggs stay in the ground for approximately two months, until the hatchlings dig themselves out on their own, without any help from the mother. During this period, the nests can be destroyed by predators: martens, foxes, hedgehogs, etc. The age of tortoises can be estimated based on the rings on the shell. Tortoises typically live more than 60 years. Hermann's tortoise is a peaceful animal, loved by locals, and according to tradition, brings good fortune to anyone encountering it. The main threats are the killing of tortoises by tourists or locals for different reasons, capturing for selling them as pets or to restaurants. These activities are illegal and subject to high statutory fines.

Another strictly protected animal is the **horned viper** (*Ammodytes ammodytes*), due to its dramatic decrease in the past century and loss of habitats. In Europe, the range of this species is limited to a few regions in the Balkans and Central Europe. In Romania, the main range of the subspecies *Ammodytes ammodytes* is the southwestern part of the country (Banat).

The preferred habitat of the horned viper is typically dry, rough, rocky shrubland. The preferred food of the horned viper consists of small rodents and various species of lizards. The horned viper is a shy, slow, unaggressive animal. In the presence of people or other animals, it stays still or tries to

View from the Trescovăț Hill © Flavius Srinca



Cazanele Mici, the Iron Gates Nature Park © Cătălin Gavrilă



hide under rocks or vegetation. If cornered, it makes short, loud hisses and curls, attempting to scare the attacker away. Remember that it never attacks to kill, but only to defend itself! It acts defensively when in danger, but will become aggressive if unable to hide and will attack the potential enemy. The bite of the horned viper and any European viper in general will only put your life in danger in particular cases (bite by the neck, face, chest or if the person suffers from other serious health conditions). The most important threat to this species is illegal capturing for the so-called "viper farms" for producing and collecting venom.



The scorpion (*Euscorpis carpathicus*) is a species also found in Romania and in the Iron Gates Nature Park. There are 24 classified subspecies, most with an unclear taxonomic status. The colour of this species varies significantly. Some individuals are black with

yellow-brown feet and darker telson. Others are coloured brown to dark brown. This is why colour is not a criterion for species identification. The average length of the adults is 10 mm, but some specimens reach up to 35 - 45 mm. It is a typically digging scorpion with a robust body, short legs, and a short and thin tail. It lives in forests and under rocks, in warm and temperate climate areas. It is also found in human settlements and homes. It digs galleries where it hides during the day and is active at night. It feeds on various insects. It is harmless to humans, it rarely uses its venom, and its bite is not lethal.

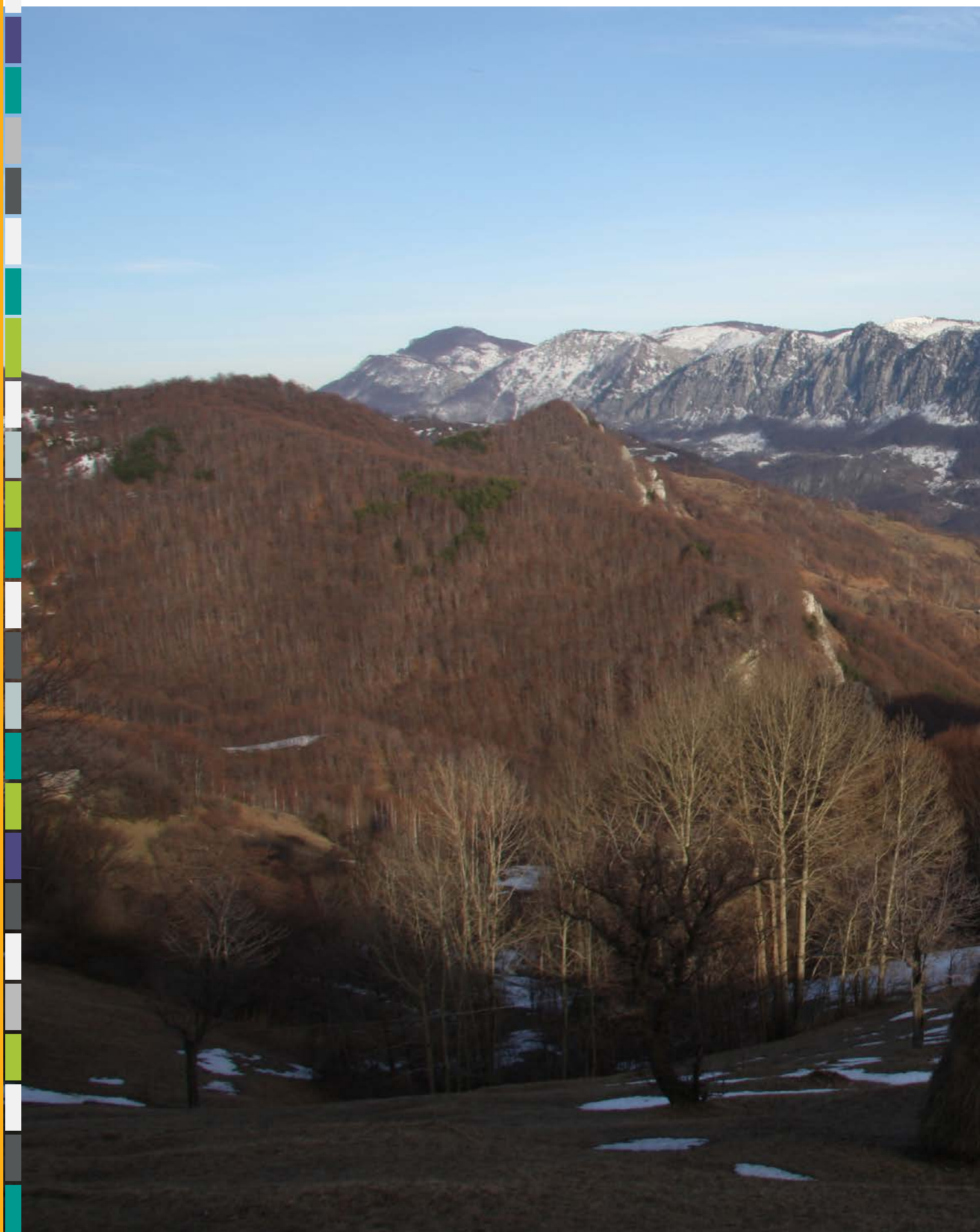
Stone crayfish (*Austropotamobius torrentium*) – Its preferred habitats are cold and fast-flowing waters (springs, creeks), but can also be found in rivers or even alpine lakes. Contrary to its popular name, it does not



live in underground waters, but can be carried there by high floods. It usually prefers galleries which it digs in embankments, but often lives hidden under submerged roots, rocks or boulders. It is active mainly at night, feeding on almost anything, which makes it a true cleanser of waters. Juveniles mainly feed on animal food such as aquatic macroinvertebrates, while adults frequently feed on vegetal fodder and even deciduous tree leaves fallen in water. It is sensitive to low levels of oxygen and chemical pollutants in villages where traditional washing in river beds is still practiced, with the populations at risk of massive losses due to release of detergents.

Further reading:

- The Iron Gates Nature Park. 2015 a. Available at: <http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/index.html>
- The Iron Gates Nature Park. 2015 b. Available at: <http://www.portiledefier.ro/index.htm>





4. The Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park



EXPLORING



Balta Cărbului Gled, Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park © Daniel Humelnicu

4.4 EXPLORING THE DOMOGLED – VALEA CERNEI NATIONAL PARK

The main points of entry into the park are the Băile Herculane resort and the Cerna Valley on DN 67 D. Other major access routes are Petroșani – Lupeni - Câmpul lui Neag through the Jiul - Cerna Pass or from Baia de Aramă, with entry on the Mazdronia Hill.

What to know before entering the park:

The Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park has a surface area of 61,211 ha and lies within the administrative territory of three counties (Caraș-Severin, Mehedinți and Gorj), stretching over the ranges of the Godeanu, Cernei, Vâlcanului and Mehedinți Mountains. It is the most widespread national park in Romania and the only one to comprise an entire river basin, which is the Cerna River. Forests account for 76% of its area. The Cerna Valley has one of the oldest reserves in the country, established as early as 1932 – the Domogled Mountain Reserve, with an area of 1,194 hectares.

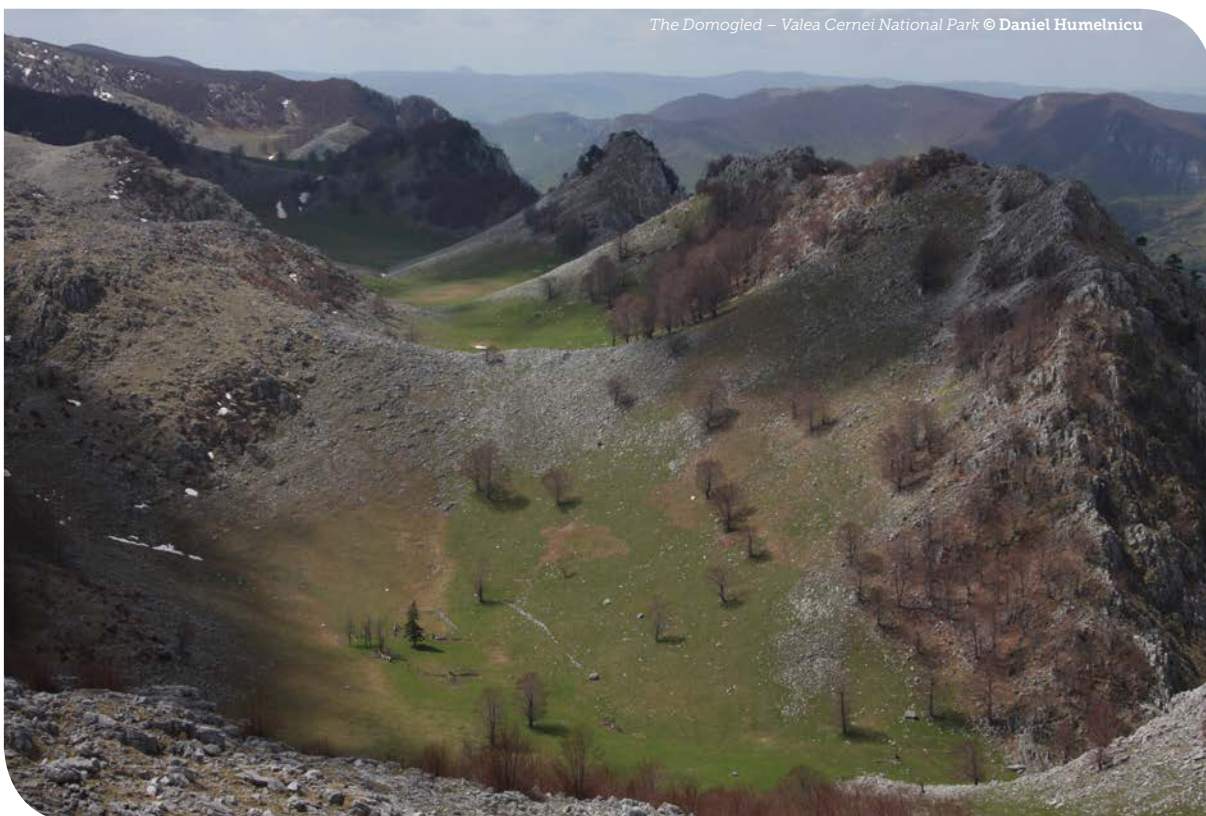
Let the exploration begin!

From the very start, the Banat pines perched along the white slopes seem to be the guardians

of the Cerna valley. The further into the park, we encounter canyons with fast flowing creeks, climb limestone peaks with lush vegetation or cross vast beech forests. After gaining altitude, we enjoy the breath-taking view from alpine plains sparsely covered with creeping pines, admire glacier lakes and wonder at the greatness of the mountains in this wild area.

The underground world attracts explorers – one of a kind in Romania and very rare elsewhere caves with thermo-mineral springs can be found here. The Steam Grotto, the Despicătura and Hercules caves, Adam's Pit Cave are hot caves in which an endemic cave fauna developed (specific to this region alone). As climbers, we explore narrow and barren ridges, or climb limestone slopes. The Cerna Valley slopes are a favourite spot of Romanian climbers, with hundreds of trails of various difficulty degrees that ascend towards the peaks of the Domogled range or Cernei Mountains.

The wilderness exploring can go on to Cheile Țăsnei or Cheile Corcoaiei, towards spectacular waterfalls, or to discover history in the archaeological site of the Outlaws' Grotto (Thieves' Cave), inhabited



The Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park © Daniel Humelnicu



The Vânturătoarea waterfall, the Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park © Daniel Humelnicu

since the Stone Age, or the archaeological site of the Băile Herculane (Middle Ages, Dacian and Roman period, Hallstatt, Bronze Age, Neolithic).

Wilderness means natural, normal processes

Beyond the spectacular landscape, the area gives the opportunity to find important plant and animal species, habitats that can only be found here and the importance of their conservation. One of the significant habitats in terms of flora, fauna, landscape and conservation is the rocky habitat. A Mediterranean pine species that grows in such habitats became a symbol of the area: the Banat black pine (*Pinus nigra banatica*).

The Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park is distinguished by a wide variety of flora, which attracted botanists ever since the late 18th century. The national park has strictly protected plant species: red orchid, globeflower, alpenrose heaths - found on rocky alpine areas, iris, yellow crocus.

The Domogled-Valea Cernei is the most biodiverse area in regards to butterflies, with nearly 1,500 butterfly species and 45% of the national Lepidoptera fauna concentrated here. Explorers can also encounter protected animal and bird species such as the brown bear, lynx, chamois, bats, bald eagle, golden eagle or endemic species like the horned viper or spur-thighed tortoise. A distinct feature of the park is the Adam's Cave, which contains the largest bat guano deposits of Romanian caves (nearly

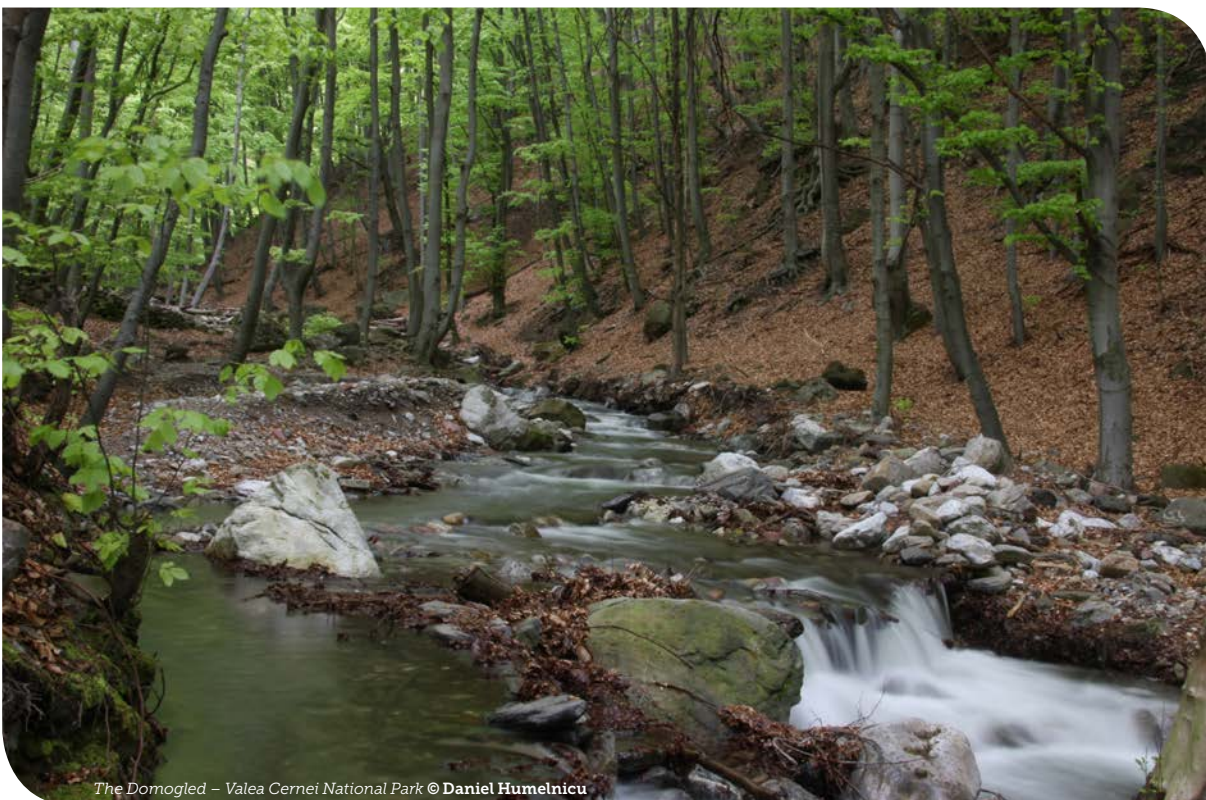


3 metre thick, these sediments were formed by the excrements of several species of bats).

Man in harmony with nature

Explorers have permanently sought to establish relationships with locals from the communities of the places they are exploring. There are 12 communities inside the Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park, of which Prisăcina is the most populous (22 families), followed by Poiana Lungă (eight families), Țațu (seven families), Ineț (six families), Cracu Mare (five families) and a few others with two or three families. The inhabitants of these places grow vegetables, corn and fruit trees, raise cattle, and, until now, built permanent household and watermills that are still in operation today. These settlements are linked by nothing more than mountain trails, travelled by horses or donkeys loaded with saddlebags. The main occupation of the villagers here is the breeding

of sheep and cattle. Small settlements emerge in all places with pastures or grassland, which are inhabited only during reaping time. It has to be pointed out that these areas, such as Dobraia, only have one primary school, and pupils have to travel 3-4 km or more on woods trails to school, even in bad weather or the cold season. Another interesting example is the Scărișoara community and its only three families, which, due to the very bad road in the area and in order not to go around the mountain for dozens of kilometers, improvised wooden ladders to climb the slopes. The popular speaking consists in Banat subdialects. Thus, there are words like "frace" (brother), "jinere" (son in law), "sânje" (blood), "dulșe" (sweet), "unge" (where), "pra" (on). There are many words inherited from Latin, common with Romanian and south-Danube dialects; "golâmb" (dove), "a custa" (to live), but also words of German origin: "crumpi" (potatoes), "goști" (guests), "zacon" (habit).



The Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park © Daniel Humelnicu

Further reading:

- The Domogled - Valea Cernei National Park. 2015. Available at: domogled-cerna.ro
- Banat Tour. 2015. Available at: <http://www.banattour.ro>



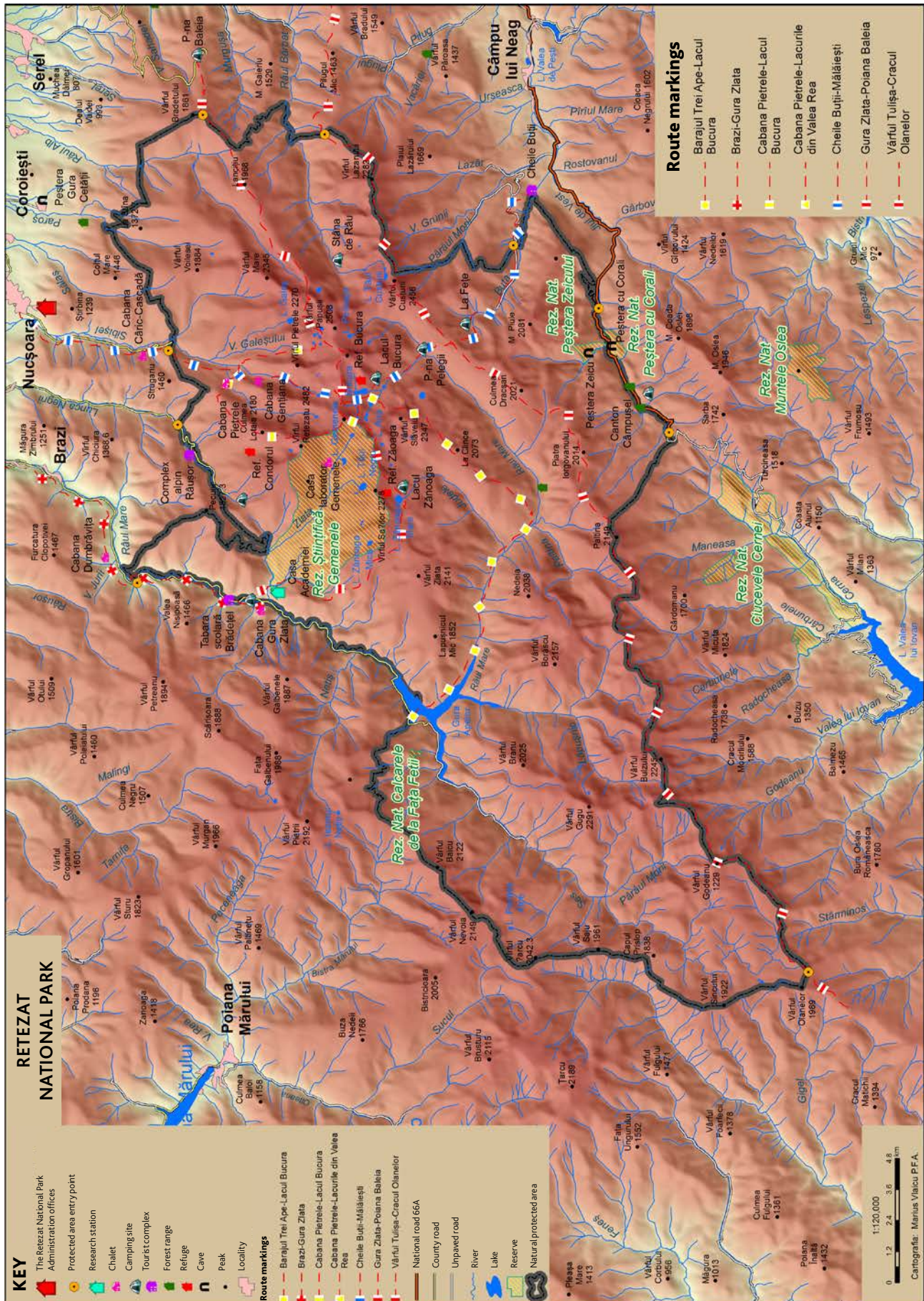


5. Retezat National Park



EXPLORING

Bucura Lake © Adrian Grancea



Maps: © Marius Vlaicu P.F.A.



Retezat National Park, Gugu zone © Daniel Humelnicu

4.5 EXPLORING THE RETEZAT NATIONAL PARK

The Retezat National Park is the first national park of Romania, established in 1935 at the initiative of Professor Alexandru Borza, founder of the Cluj-Napoca Botanical Garden, and Emil Racoviță. The park is currently a natural protected area of national and international interest and was recognized as a Biosphere Reserve in 1979. The establishing of the Retezat National Park was aimed at the protection and conservation of representative features of the national bio-geographical space, among which natural elements of particular physical and geographic, flora, fauna, hydrological, geological, paleontological, speleological, pedological and landscape value.

Why is the Retezat a special place?

Because it has 80 glacier lakes and ponds reflecting the blue of the sky. Here we find the largest glacier lake of Romania, the Bucura Lake, and the deepest glacier lake in Romania, Zănoaga. Because explorers here can climb more than 20 peaks higher than 2000 metres, and at the same time enjoy typically glacier landmarks with valleys, lakes and glacier cirques as well as limestones filled with gorges, caves and pit caves. Adventure awaits at every step, whether to unravel the mystery surrounding the Gugu peak or

the strange air of the "Tăul dintre Brazi" (the pond among the fir trees). The Retezat Mountains are source of many legends and fascinating stories about young fellows, gentle ladies, outlaws merciful with the poor, winged dragons and... dwarf dinosaurs.

This is definitely the favourite place of adventurer explorers and we have to know that the Retezat National Park spreads across 38,138 ha, of which 48% forests, 52% alpine plains (28% creeping pines, 14% alpine pastures, with the rest being rocks, talus deposits or water).

Retezat is the most complex and grandiose mountain massif of all the geographical sectors of the Romanian Carpathians. Its originality consists in the existence of spectacular, sculptural alpine ridges in excess of 2,000 metres bearing the hallmarks of two large ice ages (Riss and Würm). With an altitude ranging from 800 to 2,509 metres (the Peleaga peak), the Retezat National Park – Biosphere Reserve lies on the western side of the Southern Carpathians, including the Retezat and Godeanu massifs.

The Retezat National Park is accessed by Nucșoara – Cârnic (northern limit), the Râu de Mori – Gura Zlata (western limit) and Câmpul lui Neag – Câmpușel (East). Tourism has been practiced in the Retezat massif since the 1930's, as shown on a map made by



the Romanian Touring Club in 1936, which features the Pietrele House, a chalet owned by the Club for tourist purposes.

Why is it worth being protected?

Because here nature hasn't suffered due to human influence, because it is home to 1,190 species of plants (more than one third of all the plants species

of Romania), because there are 90 species of endemic plants here, because many rare or endangered plants can still be seen in Retezat. It is also worth being protected because animals find food and shelter in the forests and shrubs of the mountain. Here there is still a balance between carnivores and herbivores, so that bears, wolves and lynxes, together with chamois, deer, boars, hares and many other beings can still be



seen in Retezat. It is important because it's the home of 185 species of birds and it's essential this place remain unchanged for our descendants to witness.

Wildlife in the Retezat

The Retezat National Park harbours more than 55 species of mammals (of which 22 protected by the law) and provides good conditions for the survival of some of the most important large carnivores in Europe (wolves and lynxes). Chamois and deer are also well protected by the mountain, and the limestone is now used as winter shelter by bears. Wild cats are also part of the fauna in this area, recently joined by marmots (after 20 alpine marmots from the Austrian Alps were introduced in the Park, marmots are now found in all the major glacier valleys and ponds of the massif). The total number of animal species living in the Retezat Mountains amounts to thousands.

The interest of botanists for the Retezat arose as early as the second half of the 18th century. Since then, 90 kinds of Carpathian-specific plants have been discovered in the Retezat, and most of them can only be found here. Moreover, Retezat has the largest concentration of *Pinus cembra*, or the stone pine, a conifer of the pine species.

Man in harmony with nature

The Hațeg Country is an ecotourist destination overlapping the ethno-folkloric region of the same name. Geographically, it lies over the Hațeg Depression and partly over the adjacent mountains: the Șureanu, Poiana Ruscă and Retezat Mountains.

"Of all the regions inhabited by Romanians north of the Danube, Bănat and Oltenia, with their common extension into the Hațeg Country, are the only ones showing a constant geographical and historical presence of the Romanians, a beacon of Romanization for countries to the West, North and East, and indeed across the Danube, a nest always spilling over but never empty".

Bogdan Petriceicu Hasdeu

Here, you are welcome to unforgettable gatherings with true Hațegan people, eager to share local tales, entice you with tasty traditional cuisine or serve as



Red deer © Costas Dumitrescu



Bucura lake on Peleaga peak © Adrian Grancea

guides on mountains trails or among medieval fortresses, on valleys once roamed by dinosaurs or among Roman ruins. The region called "Hațeg country" has become famous due to the dwarf dinosaurs which once populated this area – an island in the Tethys Sea back then – in the Cretaceous. Several Romanian TV channels broadcasted many documentaries about these diminutive dinosaurs during the past years.

Taking into account the immense value of wilderness in this area, tourists have to turn into ECOTourists here. Ecotourism means natural, sustainable and responsible tourism which guides itself by ethical rules and specific practices: respect for natural assets (responsible hikes through the natures), support for the long term conservation of nature (a flow of revenue assisting in the conservation of biodiversity and culture) and contributions for improving welfare of the local community (by participation to tourist activities).

Further reading:

- The Retezat National Park. 2015. Available at: www.retezat.ro
- Romanian monasteries. 2015. Available at: <http://www.romanianmonasteries.org>
- Tourism in the Hațeg Country - Retezat. 2015. Available at: <http://www.turismretezat.ro/>

PART III

The Wilderness Youth Clubs

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART III

Chapter 1: About the Wilderness Youth Clubs

1.1 What are the Wilderness Youth Clubs?	76
1.2 How the club works and recommended activities	78
1.3 The team of the Wilderness Youth Club	80
1.4 The club's relations with stakeholders in the community and other clubs in the region	82

Chapter 2: What and how do students learn in the club?

2.1 What do students learn in the club?	84
2.2 How do students learn in the club?	91
2.3 The role of the club meetings facilitator in the learning process	93
2.4 Group dynamics	94
2.5 Learning by experience and debriefing	97
2.6 How to communicate inside the club?	100
2.7 Practical advice for facilitators	103

Chapter 3: The Wilderness Youth Clubs Curriculum

3.1 What is the curriculum?	104
3.2 When to use the curriculum?	105
3.3 Schedule and recommended order of club meetings	105
3.4 Structure of the curriculum	105
3.5 How do we read the meetings in this curriculum?	106
3.6 What to consider when organizing a club meeting	106



■ Meeting 1: What is the club about?	110
■ Meeting 2: My involvement in the club	120
■ Meeting 3: Discovering how to work together	130
■ Meeting 4: What are protected areas?	142
■ Meeting 5: Introducing the concept of wilderness	150
■ Meeting 6: Benefits of wilderness	160
■ Meeting 7: Threats to wilderness areas	164
■ Meeting 8: What can we do to conserve wilderness areas?	171
■ Meeting 9: Wilderness areas in our region	176
■ Meeting 10: How does the future of wilderness areas in our region look like?	180
■ Meeting 11: Introduction to project management: needs analysis in wilderness areas	186
■ Meeting 12: Needs analysis and prioritization	194
■ Meeting 13: Developing a project. Part 1	198
■ Meeting 14: Developing a project. Part 2	204
■ Meeting 15: Project writing and monitoring	212
■ Meeting 16: Evaluation of club activity and planning of next year	219
■ Meeting 17: Celebrating results and looking to the future	227



CHAPTER 1.

About the Wilderness Youth Clubs

1.1 WHAT ARE THE WILDERNESS YOUTH CLUBS?

The clubs are initiative groups made up of approximately 20 young people aged 14 to 18 years old, who are students of the host institution (usually a school), and are actively involved in addressing issues faced by the surrounding environment.

The club activities are carried out for the duration of a school year, and are resumed in the next school year with new projects and new members joining in, building on the experience of the past

year. The main activities of the club are 2-hour long club meetings in which the teachers and students prepare non-formal learning activities related to the concept of wilderness and develop nature projects for nature or national parks close to their highschool.

The activities are facilitated by teachers and by the young members of a coordinating team. The young people from a club work together with a team of volunteer teachers who act as both facilitators and main coordinators of the clubs.



Approximately 19 to 22 club meetings take place in one year. The coordinating teachers, with the help of experiential education-specific participatory methods¹, lead the students through a learning process where they develop a range of specific skills (e.g.: project management, team work, leadership and communication skills).

Besides benefiting its members, the club benefits nature, as the students develop projects for the protection of wilderness areas nearby, which is the direct and assumed mission of the club. The club carries out its mission over nine months, during which its members can implement a project dedicated to the conservation of nature in their region. To achieve this, during club meetings, students learn about the concept of wilderness, the benefits and threats to wilderness, and what can be done to protect nature. Moreover, they learn about project management: how to assess the specific needs and problems of their region, how to find solutions and how to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate a project.

In order for the teachers to guide the students through this learning process, we hereby present a curriculum, which includes 17 meetings to be organized by the clubs.

Benefits of opening a club:

The opening and existence of clubs brings benefits for both the wilderness areas in the region and for students, teachers, the school and the community.

Benefits for students:

- Learn and have fun
- Understand they are role models for those around them when it comes to nature
- Set major goals for the future
- Become aware of the benefits of cooperation
- Develop self-esteem and a sense of achievement by implementing environmental projects
- Earn the experience of a community group and one group of friends
- Develop skills required in other aspects of life
- Develop specific key skills and key support skills (see page 85)

Benefits for teachers:

- Develop skills to facilitate non-formal education methods
- In-school recognition for their extracurricular projects
- Develop leadership skills
- Become drivers of positive change in their communities
- Go through a leadership experience, which could be put to use in other educational contexts

Benefits for the school:

- The skills achieved by the students can also be transferred to other in-school projects
- The club's projects promote the school in other contexts
- The school is seen as a promoter of alternative extra-curricular activities
- Increased visibility due to project communication and promotion activities carried out by the WWF team and by the club members

Benefits for communities:

- Enhance and develop local civic action
- The projects lead to about an active participation of the community members
- Empowers local authorities when the wilderness projects are implemented in partnerships with public institutions
- Improve everyone's quality of life by boosting the local social and natural assets
- Improved student skills potentially lead to local economic development

(Adapted from the IMPACT Manual of the New Horizons Foundation)

1. Experiential education creates real experiences from which students can learn about nature and project development. According to a theory by David Kolb, this educational model enables the participation of all students to the learning process, regardless of their prevailing learning style: pragmatic, theoretician, reflexive, active.



Clubs vision

The Wilderness Youth Clubs represent:

- a learning and development context for nature-loving teachers and students seeking to be actively involved in protecting wilderness areas and other natural areas,
- a highschool community, a team of students and teachers using formal and non-formal learning methods to learn about nature and its benefits, as well as other potentially relevant topics for the future of the graduates, such as project management,
- an action- and practice-oriented setting where teachers and students meet for activities with specific learning objectives and adapted learning methods,
- a context to learn about wilderness through a range of specific skill building activities, from raising awareness for the protection of wilderness areas to the development of direct or indirect solutions for their conservation.



1.2 HOW THE CLUB WORKS AND RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

The goal is to create within the high school a learning context that can become a reference for learning activities in the long run.

In the first school year, the club foundation and the team are set, methods are tested and environmental projects are implemented, relationships are built with relevant stakeholders inside the community (representatives of regional natural and national parks, representatives of the city halls, potential sponsors and partners, such as other local or regional NGOs or members of other existing clubs) and outside of the community (such as the national and international WWF network of teachers and students involved in nature-oriented projects). During the first

year, approximately 19-22 club meetings will take place based on the educational curriculum developed by WWF and the New Horizons Foundation. The authors recommend organizing at least two meetings per club/month and allocating two hours per meeting.

The recommended period of involvement of active members is at least two years, which allows the students to develop essential skills as early as the first year and then to pass them to the new generation of members in the second year. After the first year, the students will have developed a set of skills enabling them to assist the new club members and will implement new projects.

The meetings of the second year will be organized at a similar pace, but with greater involvement from "old" members. New resources will be identified on an annual basis to help the club become more self-sufficient and self-sustainable (e.g. opportunities to fund project ideas, from fundraising events to sponsorships and partnerships).

Peer-to-peer learning, a cornerstone for the club

The educational cornerstone for the first year, as well as for the subsequent years, is the *peer-to-peer education*. In this approach, a group of no more than 4 or 5 club members support the coordinating teachers in guiding the club and also organize activities by themselves. These young people are provided with teamwork, leadership, communication and project management skills.

The coordinating team is formed based on the students' commitment. They can become role models for other group members and lead by example. The peer-to-peer transfer of experience to other members increases the quality of the learning process and helps create a common set of values and



a deeper commitment to the club's mission by the entire group, improves team work in the club, leads to better communication and improved capacity to deal with potential problems and challenges. Coordinating teachers are supported by these young people who become an invisible driving force of the club. After one year, the teachers can designate the most involved students as "Junior leaders".

According to the Edgar Dale's Cone of Learning², one of the best ways to hold on to what was learned is to pass it on to others. Thus, by using the peer-to-peer learning principle, we propose that after the first year of learning about wilderness and project management, working methods and the club's operating method, some of the more experienced students begin coordinating during the second year as many club activities as possible, assisted by the coordinating teachers. The older members or junior leaders will thus be provided with a set of new experiential learning approaches and will achieve leadership and facilitation skills.

Types of club activities

A. Preparation activities before the club opening

The club is officially launched with its first club meeting. However, the first club meeting is preceded by the following **preparation activities**:

- Setting up of the coordinating teachers team
- Signing an agreement with the school board to support the club
- Selecting the students to be part of the coordinating team with the teachers
- Promoting the club within the school
- Recruiting members
- ... and organizing the first group meeting

The club can be promoted in the school by the coordinating team of teachers and students, with the help of any of the following methods:

- Advertising the opening of the club in the teacher's room and involving other teachers who wish to support it (e.g. they can join the club activities or promote the club to other students)
- 2-3 minute visits from class to class to inform students about the club opening (e.g. sharing leaflets/information on the club created by students, sharing of past experience)
- Creating posters announcing the opening of the club and placing them in visible places inside the school and in other students' meeting points

- Advertising the club at other events on the first day of school

Recruitment of the members

The most important prerequisites of becoming a member are the following:

- Students' motivation to become involved in the club activities, love for nature, but also a high sense of responsibility
- To be students in the 9th to 11th grades, this allows them to be involved for at least two years. Ninth and tenth graders can be involved for a longer period, but this is in no way meant to limit the participation of twelfth graders

Remember! *The club membership is open to any student of the host institution, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, physical and mental capacities, etc.*

In order for the club activities to take advantage of the entire school year, the recruitment should be done at the beginning of the school year, with a membership period of one year, renewable for the following year.

The club members develop and sign a value contract which also implies their commitment to be involved in the club activities. The value contract is drafted at the third meeting of the club, according to the recommendation in the curriculum.

The value contract

The value contract is agreed upon and signed by the students taking part at the first three meetings of the club. Once the value contract is signed, students can formally become club members. Before that, they are only prospective club members. The signing of the value contract also implies abiding by certain values and work principles which help achieve both the club's mission and the individual learning goals of each member.

The signed value contract is displayed in the club meeting room. All new prospective members will be accepted only after being presented and having agreed with the full value contract. During the school year, the value contract can be amended or improved, but all amendments need to be accepted by all the club members. Besides complying with the value contract, the presence at and involvement in the activities is also a requirement. Optionally, each club can set up its own membership definition and admission rules (from signing an agreement to membership credentials). An attendance list will be used in the club in order to have an overview of the participation in each meeting.

At the end of each school year there will be a session to discuss the club's and the students' accomplishments, as well as their roles in the subsequent school year. The membership is renewed at the beginning of each year, according to the rules and

². The Dale Cone of Learning and information and communication technologies:
http://c3.icvl.eu/disc/2013/cniv/documente/pdf/sectiuneaA/sectiuneaA_lucrare8.pdf

principles decided upon by the coordinating team of teachers and students.

B. Educational activities

The first club meeting will be followed by a series of educational activities:

- **Standard club meetings (17 meetings described in the curriculum for the first year)** – at least once every two weeks. One weekly meeting is recommended for increased efficiency.
- **Half-year reflection and monitoring meetings** – to monitor the activity in the first half of the year. The template of the 16th meeting in the curriculum can be used, but adapted for the middle of the year.
- **Meetings for connecting with nature** – club trips, short walks, visits at national and nature parks in the region, visits at botanical gardens in the region, etc. These outings should take place at least twice a month and, if possible, even standard meetings could be organized outdoors.
- **Meetings for fun and celebration** – to motivate members to connect with the group. There should be at least one such meeting at the end of the project (based on the template of the 17th standard meeting). It is recommended to have at least two meetings per year. The meeting can have a creative format: a trip to an unusual place, a day of skiing, a dinner at one member's home, a picnic together, meetings with members of other clubs, etc.
- **Meetings with special guests** – to improve the specific knowledge on topics selected by the club members. You can invite a regional representative of protected areas, a project management expert, a communication specialist, a public person – they can share their experience to help you implement club projects and achieve your learning objectives.
- **Specific environment and nature-dedicated activities** – Earth Day, Forest Day, etc.

C. Activities dedicated to closing one stage

It is likely that some members will leave and new members will join throughout the year. Moreover, the end of the year means that a club cycle is concluded and a new cycle begins with new members, the following year. There is a range of activity ideas that you can implement to pleasantly and meaningfully conclude these milestones in the club member's lives.

- For students leaving the club: personal conversations with the coordinating team about their club experience so far – what they learned, what they plan to do next, preparation and formal presentation

of a participation certificate for leaving members, presentation of a letter of appreciation by the club members, presentation of a letter of recommendation describing the acquired skills, group hugs, customized messages from members, etc.

1.3 THE TEAM OF THE WILDERNESS YOUTH CLUB

Clubs should consist of at least 20 students and two teachers. Each club coordinating team is made up of two teachers and a support team of four or five rotating members.

The club is made up of:

- Coordinating teachers.
- Students who are part of the coordinating team together with teachers. They are unofficially recognized as informal leaders for peer-to-peer learning. 2 or 3 of them can be officially designated as leaders by their teachers at the end or during the first year, according to their performance and involvement. A specific ceremony can be organized for this purpose.
- Students who become club members. Together with the students in the coordinating team, they benefit of the club by achieving certain key skills and support skills (see below). These students can have different roles as well, according to their degree of involvement.

Role of the coordinating team for year one – lay the basis of the club, learn about wilderness, learn non-formal methods, learn how to implement a project.

Role of the coordinating team for year two – build on the experience gathered in the first year, recruit new members from students who begin high school, renew the value contract with old and new members alike, pass on wilderness information to new members and guide the club towards implementation of a new project and funding sources.

It is highly important that the roles in the club are rotated every 2-3 months to stimulate as many students as possible to take as many different roles as possible, so that they can develop a variety of skills. It is also highly important to ensure that someone does not stay too long in the same coordinating/leading position, because this will not encourage other members to seek leadership positions, and other students can remain complacent in their comfort zones unless challenged with specific positions in the club.



Responsibilities of teachers and students in the coordinating team

Teachers

- Coordinate club activities in cooperation with the coordinating team members. They provide support to students (as mentors or coaches).
- Organize and facilitate meetings with young people who are part of the coordinating team.
- Know the content of the guide and pass on information through different methods.
- Take care of the internal and external communication.
- **Internal communication:** Transmit information to club members (directly, by email or dedicated Facebook groups), directors and inspectors. Promote clubs and explain the benefits of club membership to colleagues.
- **External communication:** Keep in touch with partners (WWF team, parks representatives, authorities, the press, etc.) and parents. Promote the clubs and take part activities dedicated to communicating club results. Introduce the experience and educational models to other teachers nationally or abroad.
- Coordinate the logistics (meeting room, flipchart, markers, video projector, banners, etc.).
- Coordinate the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project, together with club members.
- Coordinate the narrative and financial reporting of the projects as agreed upon with the project sponsor (e.g. WWF for the first year).
- Identify new funding sources for project implementation in the second year.
- Coordinate the recruitment of new members, define roles and plan activities at the beginning of each school year, together with the student team.

Students

- Coordinate the club activities with support from teachers.
- Organize and facilitate meetings with support from teachers.
- Know the content of the guide and pass on the information via various methods (we recommend the selection of curriculum activities which the students can easily facilitate or organize on their own).
- Get involved in internal and external communication.
- **Internal communication:** Pass on information to club members (directly, by email or dedicated Facebook groups).
- **External communication:** Prepare presentations of the club activities for potential sponsors and partners, write press releases, take care of social media communication (Facebook), represent the club in the Student Councils or school board meetings, ensure that the club and project visual identity are visible (such as banners, customized t-shirts, etc.).
- Ensure meetings do take place with or without the presence of teachers.
- Provide logistic support in organizing the meetings (ensure the required materials are available).
- Ensure the planning, implementation and evaluation of the project together with teachers and other club members.
- Identify new funding sources for further implementation of projects in the second year.
- Get involved in recruiting new members, define roles and plan activities at the beginning of each school year together with teachers. Share the experience gathered in the first year with new members in the second year.
- Promote clubs and explain the benefits of club membership to colleagues.



The teachers and students also identify other roles for the club members, in addition to those stated above. These roles can be undertaken by club members regardless whether they are part of the coordinating team. Examples of such roles include:

- **Supervisor for meeting memo and attendance list:** writes down notes and sends them to club members (a useful tool particularly during the project implementation stages), and keep an attendance list for each meeting, with the contact information and the signature of each participant. Also ensures that all the club contacts are documented and centralized for easy access.
- **Logistics supervisor:** keeps all club materials and brings them to meetings, has a folder with all the club materials and documents.
- **Facilitator for specific activities:** brings a fun game to each meeting. There can be several facilitators. Examples of games are included in this guide.
- **Responsible of value contract:** prepares the value contract and updates it whenever necessary.
- **Responsible with inspiring and motivating members:** brings energy to the club and motivates disheartened members.
- **Photographer(s):** photographs and records activities, selects and edits photographs to send them to club members, sends the required photographs to the communicator, keeps a full and organized archive of all club photographs, makes a slideshow and presentation movies (video editing).

- **Fundraiser:** collects funds for project implementation (talks with potential sponsors, organizes fund raising events).
- **Technical supervisors:** in charge of internet connectivity, speakers, microphones, video projector, etc.
- **Other roles at club's discretion:** e.g. persons tasked with celebration meetings, relationships with other partners, logistics of nature trips, safety (first aid tips, ensure first aid medication and items are available), snacks or cooking, eco behavior (ensures that paper is recycled and plastic use is minimized), etc. Moreover, all students bring their own knowledge and skills to benefit the club. For instance, prospective members who were involved in previous nature activities know how to set up a tent, make a campfire, etc. All these experiences can also be shared with colleagues in workshops or nature trips.

The roles can be set in the third meeting, when the participants already know each other better and started to work as a team. See meeting 3 of the Curriculum.

1.4 THE CLUB'S RELATIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS IN THE COMMUNITY AND OTHER CLUBS IN THE REGION

Besides indentifying the strengths of the club members and their involvement, we also strongly encourage partnerships and consultation with other clubs, as well as cooperation with the local authorities, NGOs, companies, and connecting with other networks which can be of use to facilitate certain activities.

As soon as the club is established, the coordinating teachers do a research regarding other NGOs or groups in the local community. They may begin with youth organizations (e.g. Scouts groups or a Local Children Council). Many youth organizations promote similar values to the ones of the recently created club. It is valuable to regard other organizations as a resource; they can become excellent sponsors or collaborators for the club's projects.

The community stakeholders with which the club members can cooperate are the local authorities, local media, other NGOs, churches, the local business environment, other members of the local community.


Ways for other community organizations or structures to support the club's activity:

Organization/ Institution	Ways to support the club
School	Provide venues for the club activities – a dedicated room.
	Promotion of the club and its projects in the school.
	Support by the Parents Association in the school, by means of material and financial resources or human resources, namely volunteers.
	Support from the school board for specific projects, as applicable.
	Training/teaching materials made available to the club.
Local authorities	Support for project implementation: spaces for various activities, material or financial resources, local-level promotion, provision of free services such as approvals for public events (e.g. if you organize local awareness street campaigns promoting the benefits of wilderness), recognition of the club and projects towards the business environment and the press, invitations to relevant community events, etc.
Business Environment	Support for project implementation: material resources, financial resources (funds), food, volunteers, setting up donation boxes on their own, fund raising campaigns for the club i.e. selling certain products and a percentage of the sales goes to the club or a cause endorsed by the club, displaying posters of your projects in commercial spaces or hosting events in locations easily accessible for the general public, etc.
Media	Promotion of projects via press releases, developing partnerships with specific project roles. Development of local radio or TV broadcasts about the project, inviting volunteers on various shows, etc.

(adapted from the *IMPACT Manual of the New Horizons Foundation*)

**Relations with other clubs
in the region**

The clubs' power to bring change is even higher if they gather a taskforce for a common cause, such as protecting wilderness areas in the region. To this end, we recommend connecting with other clubs in the region, by organizing the following types of activities:

- Joint nature trips – an exploration trip with members of 2 or 3 clubs or all clubs combined;
- Organizing a common project after the second year of the club;
- Inviting members from other clubs to own events;
- Experience-sharing events with members of other clubs on topics relevant for common projects;
- Common fun or celebration activities;
- Organizing regional promotion events: a local running competition, a public event, campaign, etc.;
- Writing articles in the local press regarding joint activities.

Contacting young people from other similar regional clubs, such as the IMPACT Community Initiative Clubs from Caraș-Severin, Timiș, Hunedoara and Mehedinți counties. More information is available on www.noi-orienturi.ro. You can share experiences with them on the implementation of projects, cooperation with local organizations, games and learning methods, club sustainability, school relations, etc.



CHAPTER 2.

What and how do students learn in the club?

2.1 WHAT DO STUDENTS LEARN IN THE CLUB?

The club is seen as a group, and what and how students learn in a group is very important. The group is a set of people pursuing a common goal, who interact at different levels. **The group as a learning method in the club is very important because:**

- It is the most significant means of socialization and social integration
- Decisively contributes to sharing values in a society
- Provides security and visibility to its members
- Addresses needs for association and inclusion
- The group is both a context and means for learning social roles
- It enables formation of self-evaluation skills by self-comparison with other group members
- May enhance self-awareness
- It is an enabler of social affirmation.

Our standard club meetings for the students seek to allow them to reach certain learning results within the group/club.



The learning goals achieved in the club/group at an individual level represent what a person understands, knows and is able to do at the end of a learning process. The learning results are expressed in the club context by the acquired skills, which, on the long term, turn into certain specific behaviors in relation to wilderness. These skills can be acquired in various proportions by the club members, if 70% of the activities recommended in the curriculum are accomplished within the group.

What do skills mean?

SKILL = knowledge + abilities + attitudes

A skill is the proven capacity of selecting, combining and appropriately using knowledge, abilities

and other acquisitions consisting in values and attitudes, in order to successfully address certain types of situations, which help us develop on a professional and personal level.

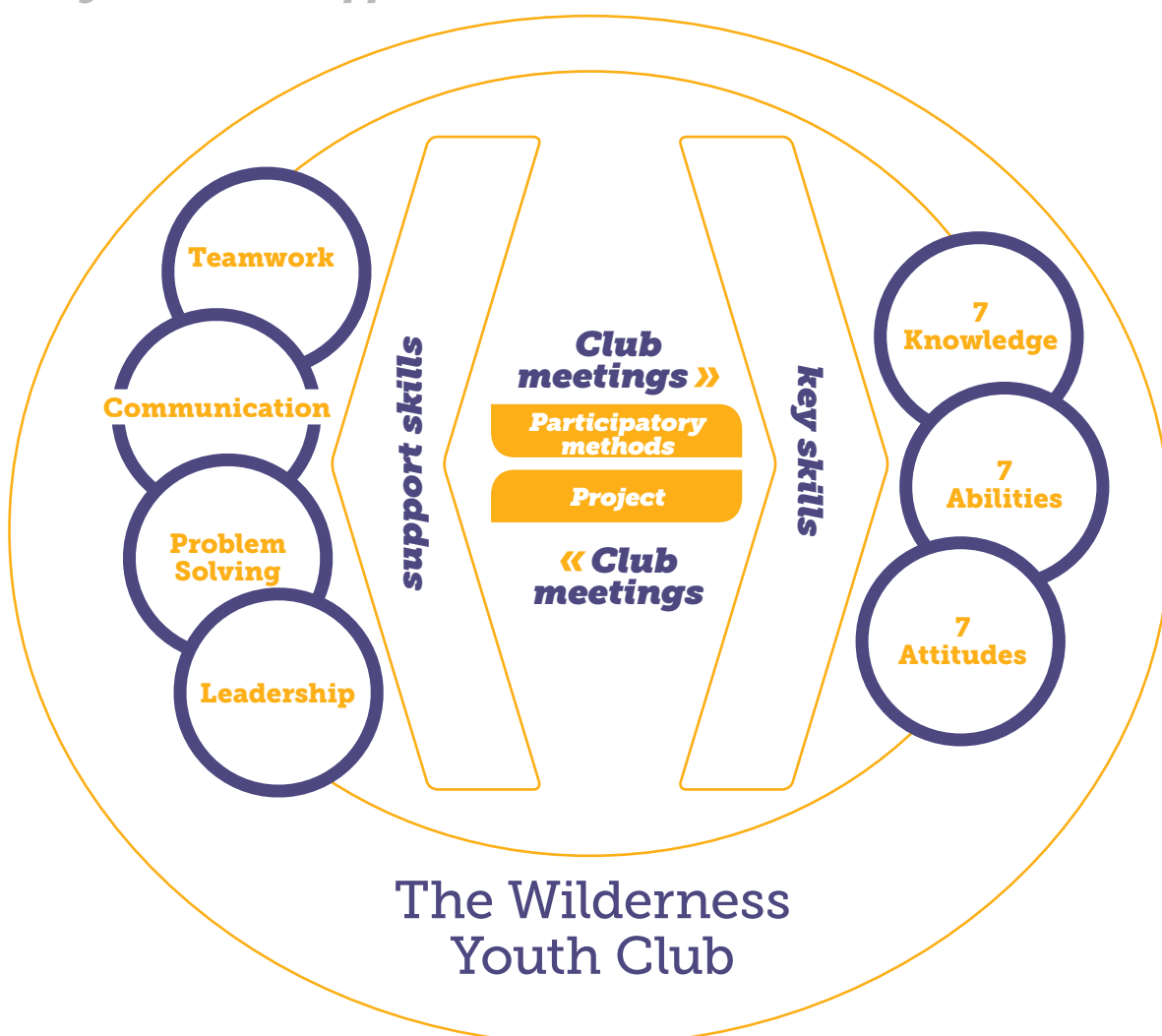
Knowledge means the result of taking up, by learning, a set of facts, principles, theories and practices related to a certain field.

Abilities are the capacity to apply and use the knowledge in order to perform tasks and resolve certain situations.

The attitudes (values) express ways to relate to certain aspects life and reality and involve affective, cognitive and behavioral reactions. They can also be defined as general and abstract principles about what matters in life, about how people should behave and assess situations, events, persons, etc.

(Concepts from the IMPACT Curriculum of the New Horizons Foundation)

Skills developed within the club: Key skills and support skills





KEY skills within the club

Knowledge. If a student takes part for one year at the club meetings, he/she could:

- Explain the concept of wilderness;
- List the benefits of wild nature;
- Identify threats to wild nature;
- Assess various solutions for the conservation of wilderness areas in his/her region;
- Describe new solutions that can be implemented by and within the club for the protection and conservation of wilderness areas;
- Define specific project management concepts applicable for club projects, adapted to his/her age range (14 to 19 years old);
- Explain what a personal learning plan is.

Abilities. If a student takes part for one year at the club meetings, he/she could:

- Assess the needs and challenges faced by wild nature in his/her region;
- Identify creative, realistic and approachable solutions for the needs and challenges faced by wild nature in his/her region;
- Draft a project for protecting wilderness areas in his/her region;
- Implement a wilderness area protection project in his/her region;
- Monitor the implementation of a project by adapting it to the current results and challenges;
- To assess the project performed by his/her club in view of its impact on the nature, community and themselves;
- Use a personal learning plan during his/her club membership period.

Attitude. If a student takes part for one year at the club meetings, he/she could:

- Become more open to understanding and exploring the concept of wilderness;
- Recognize the benefits of nature in general and of wilderness areas in his/her region in particular;
- Seek to contribute to nature conservation and a sustainable use of nature;
- Become aware that his/her region offers an environmentally-sustainable economic potential;
- Show respect to wild nature in his/her area;
- Take attitude in relation to issues in his/her region, when possible;
- Manifest patience and perseverance during the project implementation period.

SUPPORT skills acquired by being active in the club

The clubs also provide a context for personal development. Although the methods proposed for the club meetings are focused on wilderness, they are also targeted at developing a broad range of skills. Such skills will be:

- Team work
- Problem solving
- Communication
- Leadership



Wilderness Youth Camp © Adrian Grancea

2.2 HOW DO STUDENTS LEARN IN THE CLUB?

The club members best learn by taking part in the standard club meetings described in the following curriculum. The basic methodology for club activities is *experiential learning*. Thus,

most activities in the curriculum activities involve active participation.

2.2.1 Experiential learning

According to the *experiential learning principles*, facilitators suggest a range of experiential activities to participants. These specific activities are generally referred to the *experience* provided to students. However, the experience provided would never be sufficiently valuable and edifying without the *debriefing* following the actual activity.

The *debriefing* refers to a set of reflexive questions that the facilitators address to participants, in order to guide them through a structured learning process. By debriefing, the facilitators, in a first stage, will guide the students from a concrete experience to reflect on their actions, then to *reflect* on the

thoughts and feelings they experienced during the activity. From reflection, the facilitators will again guide the participants, also by questions, to the *generalization and interpretation* phase, so that they can interpret the facts and feelings, draw conclusions, identify other similar situations in their everyday life which led to similar reactions, thoughts, feelings, and ultimately draw the lessons learned/discovered/reconfirmed. The *experiential learning cycle* (Kolb) concludes in the *transfer* phase, where facilitators ask specific questions to guide the students in identifying situations in which they would apply what they learned, either in future club activities or in other life situations.

The strength of experiential learning depends on the ability of club facilitators to guide the students through the entire experiential learning cycle of *experience, reflection, generalization and transfer*. Thus, the activities described in the club curriculum are developed in a manner that helps the facilitators to follow this cycle. The activities of a meeting from the curriculum have been conceived and are described to enable facilitators to recognize each important phase, by mentioning:

- The objective(s) of the activity
- Preparation and facilitation of the activity
- Debriefing of the activity/reflection questions

More information about experiential learning is available at page 97.

Each standard club meeting has specific *learning objectives* in terms of knowledge, abilities and attitudes. All activities pursue a certain dynamic, order and flow in reaching the desired learning objectives. An activity may involve a sequence of models.

What are the effects of using interactive activities and methods during the club meetings?

- Stimulate creativity
- Stimulate communication among members
- Energize the participants
- Increase the motivation for involvement
- Take participants out of their comfort zones
- Increase self-esteem and confidence
- Stimulate cognitive development
- Enable socialization
- Facilitate compliance with the learning objectives of the meetings

Besides the main activities, the flow of each meeting integrates a series of methods, which appear as separate activities, but are integrated into and support the learning process. Each method has well defined purpose in the order of the proposed activities:

- **Energizing games/energizers** (to energize participants at the first and following meetings, if need be)
- **Icebreakers** (to energize participants and make a transition to the main activity)
- **Team games** (to guide the club members through all stages of group development, as described in sub-chapter 2.4 Group dynamics)
- **Introduction/get to know each other games** (helps students to get acquainted to each other, especially during the first club meetings)
- **Methods for learning consolidation**
- **Methods for evaluating the meeting**

The main activities that contribute to reaching most of the meetings' learning objectives include:

- brainstorming
- group work
- gallery tour
- world café
- buzz groups
- the "cluster" method
- creative writing
- case study
- simulation
- story telling



The Youth Wilderness Camp © Marius G. Berchi



Some of the above-mentioned methods are described below in order to better understand their purpose and use.

Source: The material below has been adapted from the study course of the New Horizons Foundation (Alina Mustață, Silvia Mișu).

GAMES

Icebreakers

Icebreaking techniques are particularly used at the beginning of a meeting, in order to stimulate interaction between participants, reduce shyness and increase confidence. If successfully applied, the participants are more enthusiastic and motivated to take part in the activities.

Icebreaking activities should involve physical and/or mental exercise relevant for the chosen topic.

Energizers

These are very useful techniques for the physical and mental stimulation of participants. Energizers are useful at the end of a long and exhausting session to invigorate participants or reduce boredom and tiredness.

There are two types of energizers: those requiring physical exercise and those requiring mental exercise. It is up to the facilitator to choose the type of game.

Introduction/get to know each other games

They are designed for the mutual introduction of participants in an activity. The game rules must be known before starting. Since the games are very easy, they help create a positive group environment, particularly for participants who don't know each other. An evaluation is not required for some of these games, but can be useful in deeper introduction games. It would be interesting if all participants took part in the evaluation e.g. by passing around an object and thus letting each participant say a few words. Depending on the group setup, a short generic talk about the purpose of such games could also be useful. The goals of these games are mutual acquaintance of participants and creation of a positive group mindset.

Relaxation games

In relaxation games, movement and laughter lead to mental and physical unwinding. The games are designed to release energy, humor and stimulate group exercise. Relaxation games are useful in any occasion, but can be practiced for specific purposes: warming-up, connecting with participants, break tediousness or tension, when switching to other activities or as the end point of a common activity.

They try to remove competitiveness from certain activities. An evaluation is not required for most of these games, but can be interesting to assess the effects or intensity of the relaxation, in order to compare the effectiveness of different types of games.

Communication/team games

These are games that attempt to enhance communication between participants within a group, beyond the fixed roles that they tend to take up and keep over time. These games create an environment conducive to active listening and verbal communication and stimulate non-verbal communication (expressions, gestures, physical contact, look, etc.) in order to initiate new ways of communication. The game creates a context that opens new ways to express feelings and group relationships. The game is always organized entirely on a voluntary basis. No one can be forced, not even subtly, to bend to the all-feared "peer pressure" in order to do what others do. Everyone should know their place in the game and it is likely that this will also stimulate their participation.

In our experience, three common challenges appear during these games:

- a shift towards competition (who is better, what is the most difficult...) or amusement;
- creation of an "alignment pattern". The game is a one-of-a-kind experience for both the person and the group, which means it cannot be done "right" or "wrong", but it has its own dynamics and is suited to the participants;
- ignoring the participants' abilities; the group should move as one, in order to reinforce confidence, with respect for everyone.

Unlike other activities, evaluation/debriefing is essential in communication or team games because:

- the situations experienced during the game can have repercussion on the relations within the group and can determine how the group develops on the long run;
- the game (or a certain feature of the game) can alter the mood and attitude of participants (causing frustration for "losing" the game);
- the evaluation/debriefing is designed to explain the tensions or emotions arising during the game and build awareness of one's personal contribution to the game.

Brainstorming

The facilitator informs the group that the purpose of this exercise is to generate as many ideas as possible on a given topic. The participants are asked to share as many ideas as possible on the topic in 10 to 15 minutes, based on their personal experience.

- All ideas are accepted and encouraged, not judged.
- The facilitator writes all the ideas on the blackboard or the flipchart.
- The collected information is discussed and analyzed by the group; all unclear aspects are discussed.
- The priorities are set based on agreement, vote or negotiation.
- During the process, the facilitator assists participants in identifying key ideas for continuing the activity.

Brainstorming rules:

- unusual or eccentric ideas? They are welcome!
- don't be negative, be positive!
- build on ideas
- do not reject ideas
- no outside interruptions (including mobile phones)
- take a short break when needed
- the facilitator of the activity reads the main objective, encourages the first ideas and writes them on the blackboard or the flipchart in order to be seen by all.

Role of the facilitator in brainstorming:

- contributes to the conversation, does not hinder dialogue
- refrains from being over controlling
- encourages everybody's participation
- does not let one participant to monopolize the conversation
- brings strayed conversations back on track
- introduces "idea generators" when the group energy or enthusiasm wear off
- introduces "creative games" whenever suitable
- takes a mid-session break for a short evaluation of ideas brought up so far.

Case study

Case studies provide participants with an insight on facts and bring up a topic for discussion. The case

should be concise, include all the necessary real-life information and allow participants to resolve a certain issue. A case consists in a short story, which fully develops a situation.

Conditions to consider for this method:

1. pay attention to the result; the case has to fit the topic of the meeting, and the facilitator must be aware of the sought result
2. the case should be carefully described to provide enough information for resolving the issue at hand
3. the case is not relevant in itself; it is a means of raising an issue that requires participants to employ the very abilities tested by the facilitator
4. the case study and questions can be written on a blackboard or flipchart or handed out to participants in writing; the case study can be resolved individually or in small groups
5. the case study is followed by discussion in the larger group.

Steps:

Step 1 – Introduce the case: the facilitator will first pick a relevant "case" for the topic discussed and goals defined, which will describe general aspects; the presentation has to be as clear, accurate and complete as possible.

Step 2 – Let participants become familiar with the case i.e read it.

Step 3 – Ask questions to start a debate:

- What is essentially the problem?
- What caused the situation?
- What are the underlying factors of the situation and why do they matter?
- Whose problem is it actually?
- What can be done?
- What are the effects of the solutions that you found?

Step 4 – Give the participants time to think and come up with a solution to the problem.

Step 5 – Ask the participants to describe some of their solutions.

Step 6 – Discuss all possible options.

Step 7 – Ask the participants what they learned.

Step 8 – Draw conclusions.



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2.2.2 Learning by taking part in a project

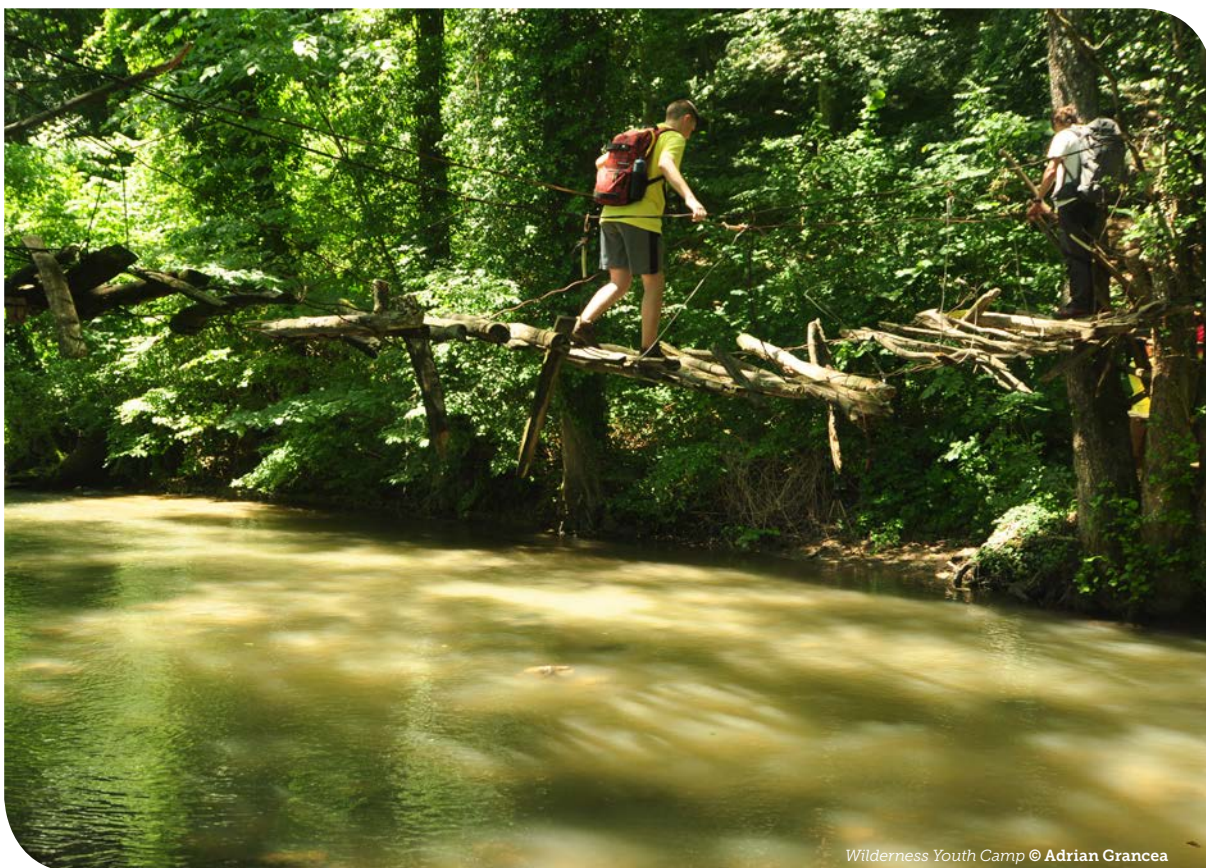
Besides the above methods, the main learning method in the club is the project implemented by the club members.

The basic model used in this case is active citizenship, which emphasizes learning to acquire knowledge, abilities and attitudes/values by the students while preparing, implementing and assessing community-targeted projects. This form of learning seeks to develop a sense of community among students and, in the long run, to facilitate the development of local communities in harmony with nature.

Thus, you will note that six meetings in the curriculum are built around the needs assessment and the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the club's project.

Therefore, the following principles for project work are encouraged:

- the evaluation of needs and threats to wilderness should focus on protected areas in the vicinity of the club.
- the project topic and activities should be selected by the students, with assistance from teachers.
- the students should be encouraged to find creative solutions and ideas for the project topic.
- although the decision-making processes will be guided by teachers, the students should make most of the decisions as it is an essential prerequisite of the learning process.
- facilitate reflection meetings aimed at monitoring the progress of the project (see meeting 16 in the curriculum). A mid-year monitoring meeting is recommended to assess the progress of the club.
- the facilitators are encouraged to let the students make mistakes during the project work, since this is an effective and quick way of learning.
- the club members are encouraged to seek success in implementing the project, but success should not be their main target. The steps the club is going through while implementing the project are the most important for the learning process.



Wilderness Youth Camp © Adrian Grancea

2.2.3 Other learning principles in the club

a. Flexibility in choosing objectives and activities

This curriculum is a *flexible proposal for activities*, but not exhaustive. The coordinating team can come up with different suggestions and methods to reach the learning objectives for a specific meeting. Moreover, the students and teachers have a wide array of methods to research on both wilderness and project ideas.

Thus, each student can pick what he/she sees fit, according to his/her own learning style (searching on the internet, interviews, case studies, experimenting, etc.).

The guide provides a selection of working methods for certain learning objectives, but this is not meant to limit the way the activities are organized in the club. For instance, in addition to the meetings defined in this guide, should the club members decide they need to practice their public speaking abilities in order to pitch their projects to sponsors, they can do so in cooperation with teachers and partners such as NGOs, i.e. to invite a speaker to a public speaking learning session.

At the beginning of every meeting, the facilitator shares the learning objectives with the club members, so that they can come to own conclusions regarding the lessons learned. This facilitates a debriefing where

other lessons can be learned, as well. If, for instance, the club is unable to make progress with the project because of conflicts among members, the facilitators will focus on debriefing team activities with lessons to be learned on communication.

b. Autonomy, initiative and self-confidence

The teachers encourage the club members to be self-sufficient, carry out activities on their own and learn from each other within the club. Promotion of the club, organizing and facilitating meetings, project planning and implementation within the club, identification of resources and key stakeholders that could support the implementation of the project, self-evaluation processes – all these are features of experiential learning that help students develop *autonomy, initiative and self-confidence* in order to perform complex tasks.

The students have an active role, by seeking and providing information.

The partnerships between students and teachers is one of *partnership in learning*, where the students have greater responsibilities and are encouraged to become *self-sufficient*.



All the activities in the clubs are focused on active participation and empowerment of students. The coordinating team is encouraged to delegate as many tasks as possible to club members, to provide them with as many learning experiences.

c. Assignment of roles in the club, complementarity between students' abilities and tasks

The role of teachers in the clubs varies according to the context. In other words, teachers wear different "hats" at one time – from trainer preparing and facilitating an activity to facilitator of the debriefing, reflection and generalization after an activity, from expert in their specific field (e.g. geography, biology) to coach for applying lessons learned in the club, from group leaders in outdoor trips to role models based on their attitude towards nature.

These "hats" can be worn at different times by all teachers involved in the club coordination. One teacher may be a good facilitator, another one may be skilled in debriefing, while another one may be an excellent coordinator of the administrative and logistic aspects of the club. These roles can also be shared with students from the coordinating team who may be better at some activities, for instance at facilitating energizing games. It is important that the club coordination is shared until all club members become as autonomous and independent as possible. However, it has to be noted that the students' level of independence is less high in the first three stages of the club's development (forming, conflict, norming) and will increase in the two subsequent stages (performance and transformation), with teachers being more likely to empower and encourage the students.



The Wilderness Academy © Mihai Lupșan

2.3 THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR IN THE LEARNING PROCESS

The club facilitators (leading teachers) have certain roles in preparing and facilitating a club meeting:

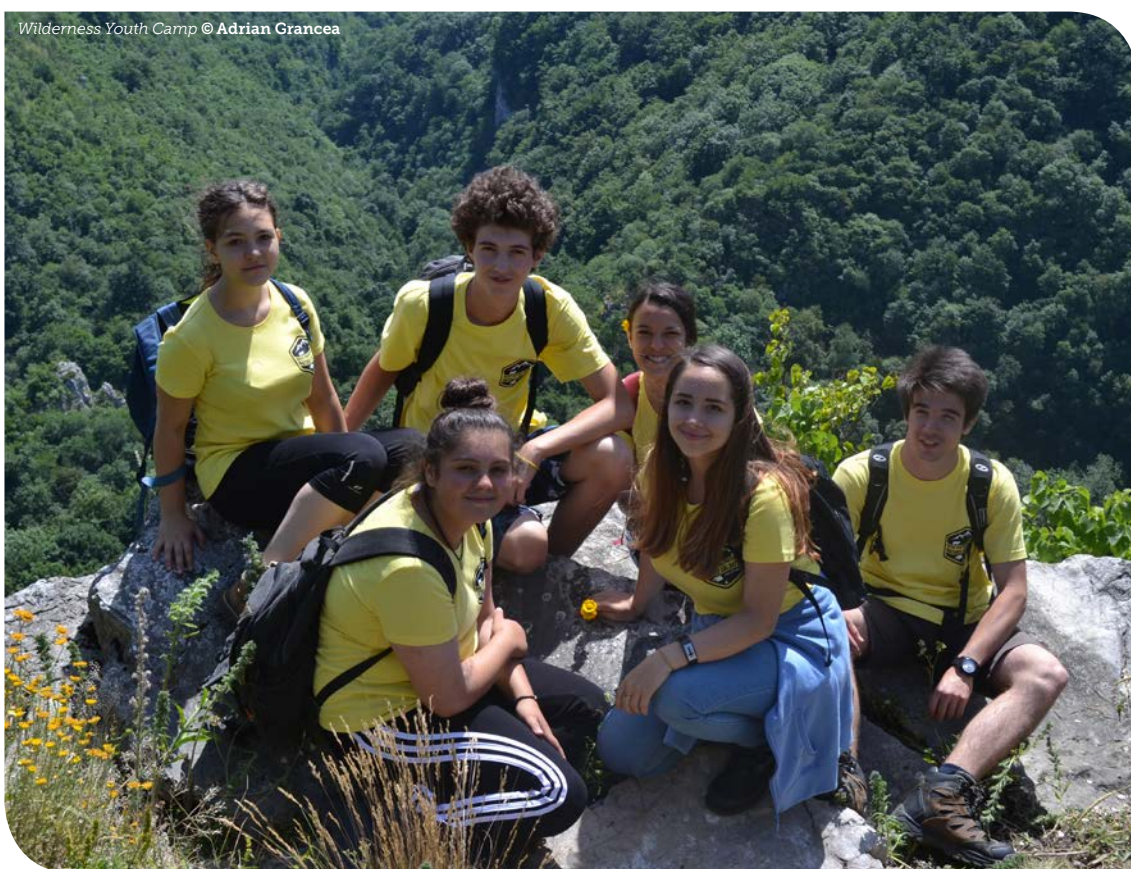
- Announce the objectives of the meeting, but without giving away specific activities in order to keep the participants curious and interested
- Assist participants in achieving the learning objectives of the meeting
- Facilitate methods and activities to involve the participants in the learning process
- Ensure the deadlines and objectives are met
- Raise participants' interest: enthusiasm + passion = interested participants

- Monitor participants' level of understanding
- Actively listen to participants' needs
- Create a healthy learning environment
- Ensure a safe space during activities
- Keep the balance between learning and having fun
- Follow the group dynamics and encourage authentic learning
- Adapt activities to accommodate the participants' learning styles and the respective

development stage of their group

- Consolidate the lessons learned from each activity and ensure that they are integrated in the club both on the long term and in every-day life.

Please find below a few theoretical examples to assist you in your role as facilitator, for the preparation, facilitation and debriefing of activities within the club, as detailed in the educational curriculum proposed in this guide.



2.4 GROUP DYNAMICS

Stages of group development

Adapted from the group development theory – Tuckman & Johnes 1965. The material below is adapted from the study course of the New Horizons Foundation (Alina Mustață, Silvia Mișu).

A group consists in a number of people who gather for a common purpose and interact at different levels. We already know the purpose of our clubs. But what are the stages of group development and what do

we, as group facilitators, have to consider to ensure a smooth process?

Each group has its own dynamics. The word “dynamics” comes from Greek and means “force”. Thus, each group has a life of its own, and the dynamics of a group means the driving forces within a group that we always have to be aware of. “The calm and the winds in our group” tell us how far we have come in achieving our defined purposes and activities.

Most groups go through five stages in their lifetime:



forming, storming (conflict), norming (resolution), performing (completing the task) and adjourning (dissolution) (Tuckman and Johnes).

Forming: it is a stage where group members focus on setting common objectives, become acquainted to and accept each other; the group members are easily motivated, have high expectations from the group, show some anxiety about their role, what they and others will do and what are they good at. Most of the times, they depend on the leader (which is you) and you as a facilitator have a major role in building familiarization and confidence.

The facilitator's role at this stage

- Share relevant information about the club and its mission.
- Encourage open dialogue between club members via introduction (getting to know each other) games, open communication and a fun and relaxing setting.
- Ensure structure by setting clear objectives for each specific meeting.
- Create a climate of confidence and respect by way of own example.
- Facilitate as many introduction and team games as possible.

Thus, you will notice that the first three or four meetings in the curriculum are designed to introduce the students to the club concept, club mission, what the club means, how to work as a team, how to know each other better, what is wanted from the club, what can be learned at the club. You will find many introduction activities, team games and nature- and wilderness-centered stories in the curriculum, which will enable the completion of the club's forming stage.

"Storming" or conflict: it is a stage where you may encounter conflicts arising from task assignment within the group, different individual behaviors which are hard to accept for some club members; the club members may experience discrepancies between initial expectations and the actual situation, become unhappy, frustrated or even confused regarding the purpose or tasks of the group; some members may even leave the group.

All these manifestations are not reasons for concern, but incentives to help the group overcome conflicts regardless of whether they are related to conflicting tasks or contrasting values. Furthermore, if these issues are related to contrasting values, this

is the best time for you, as a facilitator, to help the group find the most convenient solution – accepting diversity.

The facilitator's role at this stage

- Approach issues with the intention of solving them.
- Set up rules in order to identify conflicting points of view.
- Discuss the decisions and procedures of the group.
- Facilitate cooperation in the group by means of team games.

The method we highly recommend during this stage is drafting a club value contract at the third club meeting (as described in the curriculum). The reason for leaving the value contract until the third club meeting is to allow time for students to decide whether or not they want to be part of the club. Therefore, if you manage to navigate a "storm" and facilitate a conflict resolution with the help of a value contract or of team games, the group stands a higher chance of going to the next stage. You will find a set of helpful activities suitable for this stage in the third meeting in the curriculum.

"Norming" or Resolution: it is a stage focusing on cooperation, where contrasting opinions are accepted and realistic solutions are sought; it is a stage of improved group cohesion, where clear rules are set, feedback is given and cooperation is established; there are less unsatisfied members, less animosities, and more feelings of mutual respect, confidence, higher self-esteem as group member; it can last very little or a very long. This stage is an indicator that the dynamics of the group is going in the right direction.

The facilitator's role at this stage

- Talk openly about any issues or concerns within the club.
- Involve club members in the group processes by assigning them clearer roles.
- Give positive and constructive feedback to participants.
- Share as many tasks as possible with club members.
- Draft and complete the club's value contract.

As shown in the curriculum, the third and fourth meeting consist in approximately 6 hours of activities dedicated to designing the club's value

contract, discussing the qualities and skills of the team members and delegating as many tasks as possible to the team, so as to build autonomy and self-confidence within the club. Giving constructive feedback to participants is equally important. More information on how to offer feedback is available at sub-chapter 2.6 How to communicate inside the club?

“Performing” or completion of the task: it is the stage where the group proves that it is capable of accomplishing a task; the group members start feeling good about being in the club, work well together, do not feel dependent on leaders, feel autonomous, support each other; they focus on their task, not on dissatisfaction, the tasks are clear, conflicts are easily solved, the leadership is participative. It is a stage where your role as a facilitator decreases and you let the group take charge of the current activities or projects. Your role is to stimulate and reward results. This stage may appear only during the implementation of the project, since the project is their main task and the most challenging one.

The facilitator’s role at this stage

- Give feedback when asked by members.
- Accept new/creative ideas from members, especially with regards to the project, even if you might have had a different approach.
- Encourage members to make use of all their skills.
- Encourage members to take chances and allow them to make mistakes.
- Search for new ways to build capacity in the team by launching even greater challenges.
- Change roles and responsibilities among team members, in order to stimulate learning by challenges.
- Encourage personal development and self-evaluation.

Adjourning: any group may reach this stage, regardless if working together for a few days or for much longer. The adjourning may happen at the end of the 1st year of the club due to the completion of a cycle and the addition of new members in the fall. The arrival of new members means new group dynamics, which may require the group to go through

all the same stages as before.

The facilitator’s role at this stage

The role of the facilitator at this stage is to help the group into a new beginning: they could start together a new activity or project, or may break up. At this point, you should help the group to realize what they learned during the common activities and to choose a new direction to embark on. The meetings in the curriculum dedicated to creating a project are designed to take place after the norming stage of the club has been completed and the group can go smoothly with the project implementation stage. However, the mid- and end-project evaluations have a crucial role at this stage. We recommend adapting meeting 16 half-way into the project and give the students space to assess their projects and reflect on their own progress up to that point.

General considerations on group dynamics:

- If you accept that each group may go through these stages and that each stage involves taking on a specific role, your work as a facilitator can be more effective and have long-term effects.
- A group can spend a very long time in one stage (e.g. “storming” or conflict) and it is up to the facilitators to help them start norming.
- A group can reach the performing stage and then reverse to storming (conflict), which in turn needs norming again; that is only possible by renegotiating of the value contract.
- The adjourning of a group and creation of a new group at the beginning of the second year is a good thing, and old members can have a major contribution in guiding the new group through the same stages, particularly if they are aware of them and the normality of their occurrence.



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2.5 LEARNING BY EXPERIENCE AND DEBRIEFING

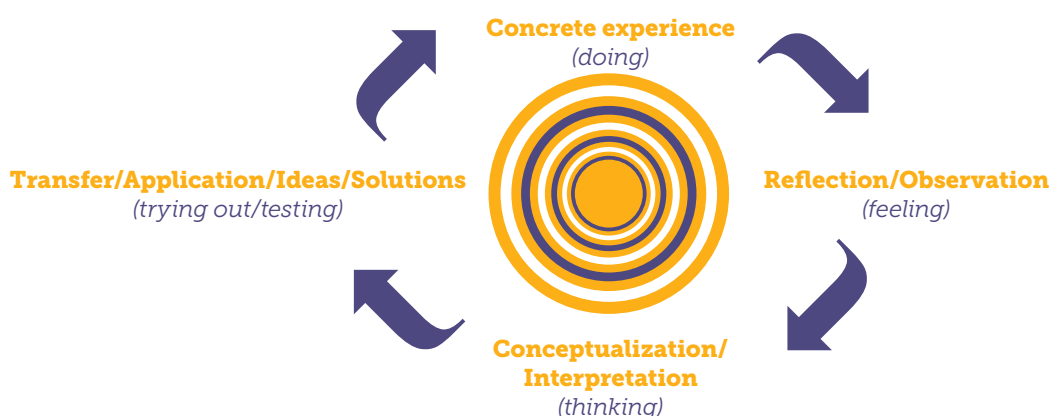
In the context of club meetings, “debriefing” means reflecting together on the experiences brought up by the facilitators in a club meeting. This activity consists in a group discussion intended to clarify the reactions, thoughts and answers of the participants following their experiences. An experience (activity) brought up by

the facilitator, but not followed up by debriefing is too insignificant to be considered as learning experience. The learning takes place when the facilitator creates the opportunity for reflection regarding an experience (activity).

There is a set of stages in the debriefing process which follow the experiential learning cycle by Kolb.

The material below is adapted from the study course of the New Horizons Foundation (Alina Mustață, Silvia Mișu).

Kolb's learning cycle



The experiential learning cycle requires the participant to go through the four different stages of the learning process. Effective learning calls for an ability to apply what you learned in stage 3, where you state principles based on the analysis done in stage 2 on the experience which you gained in phase 1. This is not easy for everyone, especially for those who learn by reading. Learning requires active participation, involvement of the participant in the learning process.

In this context, the role of the facilitator is to guide the participants through this process called *debriefing*.

A good club facilitator has to be skilled enough to make participants understand what each stage represents, thereby facilitating the learning process.

After going through all the four stages, one would be able to identify for each stage:

- Appropriate learning techniques
- The roles of the club facilitator
- Types of questions that the facilitator asks the participants.

What happens in stage 1: THE EXPERIENCE

The participant discovers new information that requires answers, finding solutions, teamwork, etc.

Role of the club facilitator:

The main role of the club facilitator in stage 1 is to *structure*. He or she has to introduce the goals of the activities, clarify rules and principles and set time limits. The information is presented in a form accessible to participants (who come with different learning experiences). Some effective ways to stimulate interest within the group include using visual aids and calling for questions from the group, in order to render the short presentation of the activity as active as possible.

For small group activities, the facilitator has to ensure that the task is clear for everybody. Moreover, small groups work better when their members assume responsibilities: discussion leader/moderator, time keeper, secretary and spokesperson.

Since debriefing will occur mainly in the subsequent stage, in the current stage, the facilitator can ask a few questions to the small group to facilitate understanding of what has to be done. These questions may include:

- Do you have questions about the task/what has to be done?

- Are there are other things that you need to know in order to do your task/duty well?
- How is it going?
- Did you think of....?
- Could you be more specific?
- Could you say more about....?
- Would you consider an alternative?
- Are you ready to put your work on paper?
- Do you need more time to finish?

What happens in stage 2: Reflection on experience (REFLECTION)

At this stage, the participants follow up on the information developed/acquired in stage 1. They will use this information to develop cues for a more in-depth exploration of the topic during the next learning stage, but they need to first analyze the experience.

Roles of the club facilitator:

The most significant role in stage 2 is to help participants reflect on what happened in stage 1. This means that participants need to focus on the meaning of the experience, and the facilitator has to ensure that important aspects related to that experience do pass by unnoticed. An effective method to help participants reflect is to ask questions about what happened and how the participants reacted. In stage 2, the participants share ideas and reactions.

Some examples of questions asked by the facilitator in the debriefing (processing by reflection) stage are listed below:

- What happened?
- What did you feel when....?
- Did you feel something else/different?
- What did you notice about....?
- How do you feel about this experience?
- Are there others who felt the same?
- Do you agree/disagree to what they say?
- Can you defend your idea?
- Does anyone want to add anything?
- Is this surprising for you?
- Do you realize that....?
- Why did you (not) do...?

Remember that the facilitator asks open-ended questions to stimulate discussions about the experience from stage 1.



What happens in stage 3: Conceptualization/ interpretation of the experience (CONCEPTUALIZATION)

At this stage, the participants have to interpret what came up during the discussions from stage 2 in order to determine the lessons learned (the "moral"). This means that participants focus on the information and decide what it meant for them; in other words, participants extract the principles or lessons learned ("moral") from experience (stage 1) and their discussion (stage 2).

Role of the club facilitator:

In stage 3, the role of the facilitator is to guide the participants. More than in any other stage, the facilitator now needs to be very well informed about the topic, to master all the facets of the subject and to be considered by the group a credible source of information. This does not mean that the facilitator should come up with all the answers during this stage, because participants will better internalize what they learned if they have to find the answers and draw the conclusions by themselves.

In his/her position as a guide, the facilitator helps the participants focus on the implications of what happened during the experience (stage 1 and stage 2), so that they realize that they learned something new. The facilitator asks questions to help participants reach their own conclusions.

The facilitator could ask some meaningful questions, such as:

- What did you learn/confirm/discovered/reconfirm about (students, others, the discussed topic)?
- What does all this mean to you?
- How does everything that we talk about fit together?
- Did you perceive anything new about...?
- What really changed? What do you make of that?
- Is there a lesson to be learned here?
- How does it relate to anything? Is it connected to...?
- Have you gone through a similar situation before when you did/thought/felt the same? Can you give examples? What does it say about you?

What happens in stage 4: Application (TRANSFER):

In order for the participants to feel the club activities meant something, they have to report what they learned: the new knowledge, abilities or attitudes towards own life situations in or outside the club. During stage 4, the participants make connections between the situations described at the meeting and real life situations. The connections can be strengthened by practicing what has been learned and applying an individual plan for implementing the new abilities, knowledge and attitudes, in situations which will happen after the club meeting.

Role of the club facilitator:

The major role is that of a coach for the participants. The participants attempt to apply the new experiences, while the facilitator approves, stresses, corrects, and especially encourages participants to improve their new abilities. The key question of this stage is: "What could I do differently next time?" (to improve).

The questions which the club facilitator may ask also include:

- What did you like best about it?
- What was the most difficult thing?
- How could you apply this at home, after the meeting?
- Can you see yourself doing this two weeks from now?
- What do you think you will practice most after the club meeting?
- What do you think will be most difficult when applying/using the new abilities?
- What did you do differently than you have done so far?
- How could this experience/activity be even more significant for you? (so that putting it into practice would make even more sense)
- Do you expect any resistance in practicing/using the new abilities after the meeting?
- Are there areas where you feel you need more practice?
- How would you do it better?



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2.6 HOW TO COMMUNICATE INSIDE THE CLUB?

Assertive and empathic communication between the club facilitators and club members, and also among club members, is very important. Below you will find some basic recommendations regarding feedback, which will help you maintain effective and open communication during the club activities. The club is open and uses informal communication between members and facilitators. However, this requires that facilitators view the club members as peers, and that members do not see facilitators as teachers, but more as friends and companions in their own learning process and in achieving the club's mission. One of the biggest challenges of club communication is to give and receive feedback, regardless of the group development stage. Feedback is of particular importance during the norming and performing stages of the club. A club where members communicate openly and give and receive feedback stands a great chance to become a successful experience.

The material below is taken and adapted from the study course of the New Horizons Foundation (Alina Mustață, Silvia Mișu).

What is the feedback process?

Giving and receiving feedback means describing someone's behavior towards a person and what the person felt as reaction to the behavior. A successful feedback process is meant to offer help and learning.

Giving and receiving feedback represents a learning process for both the emitter/sender and recipient. Constructive feedback determines better awareness of the subject, provides options and the possibility to choose, promotes personal development. Constructive feedback does not necessarily mean positive feedback; negative feedback, when offered in a diplomatic and skillful manner, may be an effective and useful learning tool. Destructive feedback is uninspired and, instead of passing useful information on to the receivers and enabling them to use such information in the learning process, leaves them with a bitter taste and little or no useful information for the learning process.



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The feedback process takes different forms, such as:

- conscious – approval by body signs
- unconscious – staring at the window, dozing
- spontaneous – “excellent”, “thank you very much”
- grateful – “yes, it was useful”, “I had something to learn”
- verbal – “no”, “yes”
- non-verbal – leaving, continuing to learn
- formal – an evaluation activity
- informal – applauding, patting on the back

Characteristics of correct feedback

- **Be descriptive instead of evaluative (describe not evaluate):** focus on what the subject did, not on the interpretation of his/her behavior.
- **Be specific:** general comments are not very useful for developing someone's abilities because they do not provide enough details to assist the learning process. Comments such as: “you were great” are not useful in terms of learning unless they are aimed at a specific person. It is very difficult to act based only on general information or comments.
- **Describe your own reactions by telling the subject what you saw or heard and how that affected you,** simple comments such as: “good”, “bad” are not informative and trigger

a defensive stance. E.g.: “I feel you are truly interested and preoccupied by the tone of your voice and by the way you listen” is more likely to elicit more positive feelings than “it was good, I was satisfied”.

- **Talk about things that can be improved:** giving feedback to someone who is unable to make changes is not helpful and does not make any sense. E.g.: “I don't like your nose or that you are bald” does not provide information which the subject can act upon and are even disconcerting, making a constructive feedback all the more difficult. Thus, information such as “A smile would have helped...” highlights something that a person can improve.
- **Be timely:** the feedback process is much more useful when it occurs immediately after the event, so that it is easily recalled. It is important to make sure the receiver is ready to receive feedback; this is why sometimes it is better to defer feedback.
- **Provide alternatives:** if you have to give negative feedback, suggestions on how things should have been done are most of the times better than simply criticizing. Turn the negative feedback into a positive suggestion. For instance: “The fact that you kept on working after Dan joined you seemed off-putting of you. I think that had you stopped for a moment and introduce yourself would have made it much easier for him to integrate in the group.”

- **Verify:** do not assume beforehand that your feedback was well understood and the message was received as you initially meant it. It would also be useful, if possible, to test the accuracy of the feedback process by verifying whether an entire concept or merely an opinion is shared.
- **Own your feedback:** giving an all-embracing opinion such as “you are...” is a trap often experienced in a feedback process. What we can actually give someone is our own experience with that person at a certain point in time; it is important to take responsibility for the feedback we gave. Starting with “I” or “In my opinion” will avoid making you sound judgmental.
- **Do not overdo it:** it is important to give feedback gently. When asked to comment, you may be tempted to overwhelm the subject with excessive information instead of picking the most useful and relevant advice. Leave a door open for the subject to ask themselves for more information if needed.
- **Give the receiver a second chance:** feedback that requires change or constrains the subject will trigger a defensive reaction or, in extreme cases, damage personal relations. Giving feedback does not mean telling people to be like you. Good feedback provides information on how people influence each other, taking into account their rights and likelihood of choosing whether to act based on the feedback received. The feedback process should not prescribe change at any cost, but lead to an evaluation of the effects of the decision of whether to change or not.
- **Ask questions first:** rigid feedback is a barrier and is unhelpful since it forces a different standpoint. It is much more useful to help the receiver think about their behavior by asking reflection-triggering questions rather than giving mere statements.
- **Make sure you understand** – before answering, make sure you understand the question being asked. If you jump into conclusions, become defensive or offensive, you prevent people from giving feedback or cannot harness the feedback received. Check if you understood the feedback received; a good method would be to summarize or repeat what the issuer said.
- **Check with others** – relying on a single source of information could lead you to a conclusion that you think is shared by everyone. Checking a feedback with others will show you whether they think different of you; thus, you get a more accurate opinion about yourself and can keep the feedback for the future.
- **Ask for feedback** – if you don't receive feedback, you will have to ask for it and help the receiver give you useful feedback. Sometimes, you can receive specific feedback on a certain feature of your behavior, but you may need more useful feedback that you do not receive. Do not think that everyone is capable of giving successful feedback; giving feedback can sometimes be unpleasant and hard for people not used to it, and who may need help with this themselves.
- **Don't waste it** – we all need to know how others judge our behavior, or else we will have just our own version to rely on. Feedback is a major contributor to personal development. When receiving feedback, it is important to value it, the consequences of ignoring or using it, or how to follow it up. If we fail to take active decisions based on it, the feedback is wasted.
- **Don't forget to thank** – you only stand to gain from the feedback received, and the issuer might have found it hard to give it; strengthening this practice is of great value for any relation and in any club.

Receiving feedback

When receiving feedback, we can help ourselves by encouraging the issuer to use the skills above. We can help ourselves by better managing the feedback process by the following:

- **Listen** – receiving feedback can be disagreeable, but it is more useful than not knowing what others think or feel about you. People have opinions about you and your behavior and it may help to be aware of them. Thus, you should remember you are entitled to your own opinion and that you can choose to ignore information that is insignificant, irrelevant or referring to a behavior that you want to maintain for other reasons.



2.7 WHEN PREPARING A CLUB MEETING, I SHOULD...

- Meet with other facilitators 10-15 minutes in advance to go through the agenda.
- Remain another 10-15 minutes after the end of the meeting, to assess the meeting and plan for the next one.
- Check if heating works, if the meeting room is comfortable, if the tables and chairs are arranged in a circle or half-circle.
- Check the materials for participants – if any, if they are printed and ordered – if necessary.
- Make the most of resources made available by this material.
- Body language – don't look defensive (crossed arms, hands in pockets).
- Involve all participants in activities – the group should be committed and take part in all activities – those who do not take part can be assigned observers and may have a major role in the debriefing part.
- Ask as many questions in debriefing as possible – see the debriefing questions in the curriculum; the facilitator accounts for 30% - the participants account for 70% (does not take part in the group work and does not give solutions).
- Be lively – especially in games – and particularly play enthusiastically. IT IS ESSENTIAL to pass your energy to participants.
- Plan back-up activities – there are games/activities that may not turn out well – that's ok – get over them gracefully and introduce an energizing game.
- Watch the time – however, if the group discusses something important, then you shouldn't abruptly stop it.
- In case of controversial topics – do not contradict your role as a facilitator – pass the responsibility to the group and watch their reaction and/or if they ask questions (like devil's advocate...what if...?).
- Avoid embarrassing questions.
- Be able to give constructive feedback.
- Be able to receive constructive feedback.
- Have fun, feel good.
- Enjoy the transformations you see in the club and yourself.

Further reading:

- New Horizons Foundation, 2008, *IMPACT Manual*
- Alina Mustața and Silvia Mișu, 2008, *Study course – Training of trainers, New Horizons Foundation*
- Council of Europe and European Commission, 2005 *T-kit no.6 Training Essentials*



CHAPTER 3.

The Wilderness Youth Clubs Curriculum

3.1 WHAT IS THE CURRICULUM?

This curriculum is a planned educational experience aimed at developing skills among the young members of the club, based on experiential learning, in order to achieve the project's goal to create a network of active young people for the protection of wilderness areas.

The curriculum seeks to:

- ensure a learning experience for a wide group of students aged 14 to 18 years old;
- provide a structured, yet flexible working tool for easy learning in non-formal context;
- reach the objectives of the educational project



- dedicated to protecting wild nature;
- reflect the WWF mission and that of its partners in this project;
- be based on what the students will know, do or be (knowledge, skills, attitudes);
- use the best resources to cater to the beneficiaries' needs;
- to be a qualitative working tool, emphasizing what the students achieve in terms of skills, not the amount of information they receive.

3.2 WHEN TO USE THE CURRICULUM?

The meetings of the club will be mostly held in a classroom, but also in parks or outdoors, according to local possibilities and distances. We recommend setting up a specific room for club meetings, if possible. If the meetings take place in a classroom, we recommend:

- the chairs should be arranged in a circle (very important for relaxed communication and exchanges)
- the tables should be arranged behind chairs
- the meeting should last for approximately 2 hours, with at least one 10 minute recess.

3.3 SCHEDULE AND RECOMMENDED ORDER OF CLUB MEETINGS

The guide proposes a schedule of meetings. The topics and activities were designed to cover one school year with two meetings a month. The proposed schedule does not limit the number of meetings you can organize, as this depends on the time available, the activities and topics that the students want to organize in addition to what was proposed.

Considering the group development stages presented above (from introduction to forming, norming), we propose that the first meetings be dedicated to making up the team, presenting the members and the objectives of the club.

Then, since the implementation of a nature project is one of the main activities of the club, we recommend to first get familiar with topics on wilderness areas in order to better understand these areas and define the project topic. After grasping wilderness concepts (definitions, benefits, threats),

you can pass to the project implementation meetings. After completing the project part, it is important to organize reflection, evaluation and celebration meetings. And the last meeting of the year will be dedicated to continuing the club activity in the following year.

A schedule of meetings is presented below:

- 1.** Formation of the team, opening the club, presentation of activities, assignment of roles: **3 meetings – September, October, November**
- 2.** Organize meetings on wilderness: **6 meetings – November, December, January, February**
- 3.** Planning, implementing and evaluation of the project: **6 meetings – February, March, April, May**
- 4.** Evaluation of the club activity, planning for next year and celebration of the results: **2 meetings – May, June**

3.4 STRUCTURE OF THE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is structured in 4 MODULES and 17 meetings:

Module 1: Opening the club – 3 meetings

Module 2: Wilderness and natural and national parks in Romania's Southwestern Carpathians – 6 meetings

Module 3: Project management and implementation – 6 meetings

Module 4: Evaluation and celebration of the results – 2 meetings

3.5 HOW DO WE READ THE MEETINGS IN THIS CURRICULUM?

For an easy reading, the structure of each meeting is shown in a table at its beginning. The table includes:

- The name and number of the meeting
- The specific learning objectives of the meeting
- Key concepts achieved during the meeting
- The schedule of activities for each meeting: activities, methods to achieve the objectives, the duration, the supporting materials required for each activity and an estimate of the time required for each activity
- Description of each activity: the purpose(s) of each activity which plays a part in achieving the specific meeting objectives, the preparation and facilitation of the activity and debriefing questions
- Further reading
- Supporting materials included as attachments to each meeting

3.6 WHAT TO CONSIDER WHEN ORGANIZING A MEETING

- Age of the participants (club members)
- Learning goals for each meeting
- The venue of the meeting
- Facilitation style/facilitator's abilities (moderator, facilitator, coach, teacher)
- Sequence and logic of the proposed activities
- The development stage of the club/group
- The learning styles of participants
- The required materials
- Duration of the meetings: no less than 2 hours – no more than 3 hours and 40 minutes. One option would be to divide a meeting into 1 hour and 30 minute parts. 1 hour and 30 minutes is the recommended minimum.

**TABLE: WILDERNESS YOUTH CLUBS CURRICULUM**

Module	Name of meeting	Learning objectives			Proposed methods	Meeting duration
		Knowledge	Abilities	Attitudes		
Let us get to know each other?	1. What is the club about?	Describe what a wild nature protection club is about: mission, objectives, activities, methodology, etc. Describe, in short, what nature and wilderness means.	Become aware of the own role and the club's role in protecting wild nature (the mission of the club).	Show interest and curiosity in the club dedicated to the protection of wild nature. Shows eagerness to be involved in the club activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Name game ■ Presentation ■ Buzz group ■ Introduction game ■ Group game ■ Brainstorming ■ Creative writing ■ Movie viewing ■ Storytelling ■ Evaluation game 	3 hours
	2. My involvement in the club	Describe active citizenship and the role of active citizens in relation to community and nature. Describe sustainable development starting from the win-win principle.	Identify the strength of win-win types of actions in relation to nature, which will be organized in the wild nature club.	Show involvement as an active citizen in the club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Introduction game ■ Energizing game ■ Team game ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Group work ■ Simulation 	3 hours, 30 minutes
	3. Discovering how to work together		<p>Identify the benefits and effects of getting involved in the wilderness club.</p> <p>Practice teamwork and open communication with other club members.</p> <p>Identify possible roles in a group with a common mission.</p> <p>Become aware how love of nature is found and manifested in their value system.</p> <p>Builds the group's full value contract.</p>	Show curiosity and interest for what they may learn in the club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Icebreaking games ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Gallery tour ■ Letter to myself ■ Team game ■ Individual work ■ Group work 	4 hours, 20 minutes

Module	Name of meeting	Learning objectives			Proposed methods	Meeting duration
		Knowledge	Abilities	Attitudes		
Connecting to wilderness	4. What are protected areas?	Describe what a protected area is and its purpose. List endangered species of animals at national level.	State the categories and distribution of protected areas. State protected areas (natural and national) in the region.	Show openness, curiosity and interest towards the importance of protected areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name game Energizer Group splitting game The cluster Quiz Facilitated discussion Group work Consolidation game Presentation 	3 hours
	5. Introducing the concept of wilderness	Present species, associations and habitats linked to their region. Describe the concepts of wilderness, harmony and balance. Define natural processes, which may occur in wilderness areas.		Identify the uniqueness and show appreciation and pride in the wilderness areas in the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Group work Team game Case study Connection exercise Association exercise Team game 	3 hours, 25 minutes
	6. Benefits of wilderness		List benefits of wilderness.	<p>Show recognition for the benefits of wilderness in their own life and that of the local communities.</p> <p>Show appreciation and pride for the nature in their region.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Icebreakers Individual work Group work Facilitated discussion Evaluation exercise 	3 hours
	7. Threats to wilderness areas	Describe the links between different features of the environment.	Identify and list threats against wilderness areas due to human interventions. Reason from cause to effect and foresee how human action can influence natural processes occurring in the wilderness.	<p>Show an interest in environmental issues and do research on environmental issues in the region.</p> <p>Show a proactive attitude for protecting nature and wilderness areas.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentations Role playing Team game The snow ball Storytelling Evaluation game 	2 hours, 30 minutes
	8. What can we do to preserve wilderness areas?	Explain the importance of taking care of wilderness areas in the region. Define sustainability and sustainable development. Describe types of solutions and models of sustainable development.	Describe how one's own lifestyle could play a part in the protection of wilderness areas in the region.	Believe that people and the club can bring change in the protection of wilderness areas in their region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Storytelling Brainstorming Group work Facilitated talk; Summarizing game Group discussion 	2 hours, 40 minutes
	9. Wilderness areas in our region	Describe a natural or national park in the region and the specific features of wilderness areas.	State specific features in their area	Show interest in better knowing their area and the regional species	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation Energizing game Mosaic Pair work Mime Consolidation game Group talk 	2 hours, 40 minutes



Let's get active for wilderness	10. How does the future of wilderness areas in our region look like?	Imagine likely scenarios for the near future starting from the sustainability and social cohesion principles.	Identify and share aspects related to sustainability and social cohesion in regard to the protection of nature.	Optimism about the future and how one's involvement could bring positive change regarding the environment and local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Energizer ■ Group exercise ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Evaluation game 	2 hours, 50 minutes
	11. Introduction to project management: needs analysis in wilderness areas.	Define the steps of the project to be developed together with other colleagues in the club. Describe the importance community involvement in wilderness area preservation projects.	Build a strategy to find the needs and issues in one's community	Optimism about the future and how one's involvement could bring positive change regarding the environment and local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Team game ■ Team work ■ Group discussion 	2 hours, 10 minutes
	12. Needs analysis and prioritization	Define what an issue/need is for the purpose of a nature conservation project.	Examine the needs and issues in the own community. Prioritize the needs and issues identified. Take group-level decisions to address the needs that have been identified, are realistic and can be approached by the project to be implemented by the club.	Optimism about the future and how one's involvement can bring about positive change for the environment and local community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Community visit ■ Presentation of results ■ Group work ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Group discussion 	2 hours, 40 minutes
	13. Developing a project. Part 1	Describe the project's goal, objectives and activities.	State the project's goal and objectives. Identify the project's impact on the long term.	Recognize the importance of planning and preparing of a project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Storytelling ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Evaluation game ■ Group discussion 	2 hours, 30 minutes
	14. Developing a project. Part 2	Define the target group and ways to identify project beneficiaries. Describe the project activity plan and budget.	Set up a project activity plan. Set up a project workplan and budget. Identify the project risks and alternatives.	Responsibly contributes to the process of planning a project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Group work ■ Evaluation game ■ Group discussion 	2 hours, 30 minutes
	15. Project writing and monitoring	Describe the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the project implementation.	Compare the project status and progress against the initial work plan; match the resources with the schedule. Adjusts the resources, timetable or anything else necessary to achieve the project goals.	Show perseverance and complete what was started, notwithstanding setbacks and difficulties.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation / Storytelling ■ Reflection game ■ Gallery tour ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Team work ■ Evaluation game ■ Group discussion 	2 hours, 30 minutes
	16. Evaluation of club activity and planning for next year		Identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes exercised and practiced within the wilderness club. Set a future action plan within the club. Find ways to apply the lessons learned in everyday life	Show eagerness to reflect on the impact of the club's project on the environment, community and one's self. Show gratitude and recognition for what has been learned and practiced within the club.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Association exercise ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Group work ■ Solo moment 	2 hours, 45 minutes
	17. Celebrating results and looking to the future	Describe what continuity and sustainability mean in the club context. List fundraising methods for the continuation of other projects in the wilderness club.	Find ways to keep the club going after its first year.	Identify themselves as ambassadors for wilderness protection. Show appreciation for the learning process experienced at the club. Show appreciation for club facilitators and for each member's contribution to the results achieved. Show gratitude for the club's supporters: school, partners, sponsors etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Presentation ■ Individual reflection ■ Group exercise ■ Facilitated discussion ■ Group work ■ Presentation 	2 hours, 35 minutes

1. What is the club about?



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (A)** Show curiosity and interest for the wild nature club
- (A)** Show willingness to be involved in club activities
- (K)** Describe what a wild nature club means: mission, objectives, activities, methodology, etc.
- (K)** Describe, in short, the meaning of the concepts of nature and wilderness
- (S)** Be aware of your own role and that of the club in protecting nature (club mission).



Key concepts:

Wild nature club Nature Wilderness

PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome!	Presentation	10 minutes	Flipchart sheets, felt-tip pens, photographs, etc.
2. One to another	Name game	10 minutes	One small ball
3. Objectives and meeting agenda	Presentation	2 minutes	Flipchart sheets, felt-tip pens
4. Check your knowledge	Buzz group/ Presentation	30 minutes	A4 sheets, ballpoint pens, flipchart sheets, Club presentation
5. Human bingo	Introduction and energizing game	25 minutes	Annex 1 handout for each participant
6. Flying saucer	Group game	45 minutes	Four plastic saucers, colored sheets of paper, for start and end
7. Nature	Brainstorming Creative writing Movie watching	40 minutes	Flipchart sheets, felt-tip pens in two colors, A4 sheets of paper, ballpoint pens
8. Wiseman's story	Story	15 minutes	Story text, colored sheets of paper, felt-tip pen
9. My involvement	Evaluation game	10 minutes	Colored sheets with numbers and an explanation of the scale
10. Next steps	Presentation	5 minutes	Attendance list and participant contact data

Total estimated time: 3 hours



1. WELCOME! (presentation of facilitators)

10 MINUTES

After all prospective members arrived, they will be invited to sit (preferably in a circle or half circle, on chairs). The facilitators will introduce themselves through relaxing or dynamic methods. There could be several ways of self-introduction: free, spoken presentation, photographs and images from the leader's life in order to underline a few characteristics of the leader (projection), or drawing could be made on flipchart sheets which are representative of the facilitator. The presentation should include a set of elements: name, occupation, reason for being at the club meeting, a few traits and an encouraging message for the prospective club members. The purpose is to make all participants feel comfortable and interested to know you as a club facilitator, role model and possibly friend. After the presentation, the participants will be told it is time to introduce each other. After presentation of the participants, let everyone know that the members will know each other better after each activity and club meeting.

2. ONE TO ANOTHER

10 MINUTES

Purpose

This is a name game aimed at energizing participants and help them learn other participants' names.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be invited to sit in a circle. They will be asked to say their first names very quickly. After the circle is complete, they will be asked to sit again in a circle, but in alphabetical order, from left to right, with the letter A starting at the facilitator.

After discussing among them and sitting in a circle in alphabetical order (which involves knowing others' names), a ball is introduced. State that each participant has to receive the ball at least once and toss it at least once at another member. For demonstration, the facilitator will toss the ball at any participant. But before tossing the ball, he/she will have to say the name of whoever the ball is tossed at, such as: "*Here you go, Mihai!*", and toss the ball at Mihai.

Mihai receives the ball and says: "*Thank you, Andreea!*" (the one who tossed the ball) and will pass the ball to someone else in the circle. But before tossing the ball at someone else, he/she will have to warn that person by saying: "*Here you go, ...!*" and the name of the one who is tossed at. He/she who receives the ball says: "*Thank you,!*" and so on.

The game goes on until the facilitator notes that everyone received and passed the ball at least once and that the participants know most of each other's names. They do not have to know all the names. After the activity is completed, they will be asked how they feel and if they know now at least seven names of the group. Someone may even be asked to name a few names.

3. OBJECTIVES AND MEETING AGENDA

2 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the introduction is to raise the interest of participants and set their expectations for the meeting. It will be announced that this is a meeting where members can know each other better, find out what a wild nature club is and what everyone can do at the club. It will be said that the group will sit in a circle at such meetings to know each other better and that will interact by games, fun, active participation and mutual respect.

NOTE:

- Make sure you let the participants know how long the meeting will be. You should write the time interval of the meeting on the opening poster to set everyone's expectations accurately.
- It is important to ensure a relaxed mood at the first meeting. Let the participants know this is not one of those meetings where they get marks for what they do, but a space where they can be themselves. Facilitators may have their own style, but the meeting as a whole should be as relaxed and friendly as possible. Moreover, the relaxed mood must also allow mutual respect and active listening, without interruptions. Do not be afraid to set these expectations from the very first meeting of the club.
- It is important that facilitators have a club meeting file where they keep an attendance list and other important documents.

4. CHECK YOUR KNOWLEDGE

30 MINUTES

(about the motivation of taking part at the wild nature club)

Purpose

This activity is designed to help you, as facilitator, to probe into the existing knowledge of potential members, what their expectations from the club and what excites them the most when learning about this type club in their high school. Ask participants, in a laid back manner, whether they ever heard about such a club and what brought them to this meeting. The purpose is to feel like there are not wrong or right answers, but to convey encouragement to speak their mind on what they expect of such a club.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be asked to team up with first person nearby (at their right or left) and talk for 2 or 3 minutes to answer to the following questions: how did they arrive at this meeting, why (what drives them) and what are their expectations of the club.

Each pair will receive an A4 sheet of paper cut in the shape of an animal, to write down the conclusion of the discussions. After discussions time is up, a representative of each group will present their answers, with the facilitator writing them down on a flipchart sheet. After all the expectations were summarized, point out the most realistic ones, while irrelevant expectations may be dismissed as unnecessary for the club.

Go on with the presentation of the club and project you are involved in. For this, prepare a flipchart sheet or other visual method (blackboard, a Power Point slide or colored sheets of paper stuck on walls) to outline the general structure of a club meeting, the club members, the frequency of meetings, the schedule of club activities (e.g. the time of the project writing and implementation) and the principles and methods to be used at the club meetings, etc. (all this information is described in the Guide, under the club operation concept).

You will also introduce the general intervention plan of the club for a minimum 1-year period of the project and the assistance provided by the WWF, program partners and donors. Explain that these clubs are part of a wider WWF program and introduce briefly the WWF and its mission¹. Tell participants this is the time to ask any questions they may have.

5. HUMAN BINGO

25 MINUTES

Purpose

This is an introduction game aimed at getting participants to know each other better in a funny way.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator prepares the materials for the game – a survey with questions like: *Has anyone recently redecorated their home? Does anyone like to grow plants? Who lives together with other family members? Does anyone read the press on a regular basis? Does anyone recycle paper? Does anyone have pets? Does anyone play an instrument? Does anyone speak a foreign language?*

Each participant must be given a survey and a ballpoint pen/pencil (see the game in annex 1). At the sign of the facilitator, each person starts talking with as many different persons as possible to learn who can answer yes to the questions on the bingo sheet. The participants must walk in the room and whisper to each other (not shout or speak loudly, to prevent others from finding the answers without asking).

For each question, they must single out at least one person and fill in at least one name. When the sheet was completed with at least one person on each field, they may shout "Bingo". The first three to shout "Bingo" win the game. Sitting again in a circle, the participants present the results: one student name found for each question. At the end, the participants will be asked how they felt or if they had fun.

1. You may ask for a presentation of the WWF from the club coordinator or you can use the information in the Guide or at wwf.ro



6. FLYING SAUCER

45 MINUTES

Purpose

This team game is aimed at introducing participants to the idea of compassion to other people, nature, to stimulate solidarity in reaching a common purpose or mission, such as helping a community or support efforts for the preservation of nature around them.

Preparation and facilitation

The general group will be divided in two, three or four groups (no less than five and no more than seven participants in a group). Tell participants that *a long period of drought in their county was followed by a forest fire in a national park that left hundreds homeless in remote areas. On top of leaving hundreds homeless and without food, the fire is spreading quickly to a wilderness area where many species of animals live.*

You, as a group, have the option of sending water for fire-fighting and food for the stranded families with a flying saucer (the latest amazing invention of mankind). You don't know each other well for now, and only within these groups you can send the flying saucer from your community to the affected villages.

Draw a square on the floor for each group representing the community where the participants come from (start point) and a square representing the community/area in the national park that needs help (finish point). Each group will be handed a plastic saucer of similar shape and size. The plastic saucer will be placed on the starting point on the floor. The purpose of each team will be to raise the saucer from the start point by touching the saucer edge with nothing but their index fingertips.

Each team member need to have one index finger under the edge of the saucer, but no more than 5 cm, with the finger tips facing right or left instead of up or down. The index fingers need to be in permanent contact with the saucer during the entire way from start to finish. The purpose of the team is to lift the saucer and move it from their community to the community affected by fire, based on the rules above.

The starting and finishing points need to be different for each team and not overlap along the route. All teams start at the same time and have no more than 15 minutes to complete the task. If the saucer fell on the floor while lifting or moving it, the team will start again from the beginning. A facilitator will supervise compliance with the rules and will restart the game should any infringements occur. If the fingers are not in permanent contact with the saucer as per the rules, the game will also be restarted.

After all the groups completed the task or the time expired, the activity will be processed.

The rules can be more flexible if a group does not make any progress at all, to encourage success, but not every group has to necessarily complete the task. If you don't see any progress in completing the task, you may increase the working time to ensure that at least one team fulfills the task in compliance with the rules. Each team must be supervised by a facilitator to ensure compliance with the rules.

Part I: Debriefing on teamwork and task completion

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What was the task you needed to complete?
- How did you find a solution to this exercise? What other solutions have you tried?
- What difficulties did you meet along the way?
- How did you feel during the exercise? What were your feelings? What were your thoughts?
- How did it feel to successfully complete the task? How did it feel to give up? (if applicable)
- What did you need to succeed? Or, if you failed, what would you have needed to succeed?
- What did you learn from this game – about yourself, others or the group?
- If you were to play again, what would you do differently, yourself or the group?
- What is more important for you? To make it individually or as a group or to do everything you can, no matter if you reach your purpose or not?

Part II: Continued – Processing with emphasis on task completion and the power of the common mission in completing a task

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you feel about helping other community facing such problems?
- Does anything in your life resemble this exercise? Are there situations like this in your everyday life? Communities facing natural disasters? Who should help such communities? How could people help each other in situations like this?
- What does it mean to get involved when faced with a problem in your community? What makes an active citizen? Desire to get involved, commitment to a cause?
- Do you know anyone in your community who got involved in nature protection? Do you know anyone who undertook a role of active citizen and changed things for the nature around us?
- Have you ever been in a situation where you could help someone in need or prevent something bad from happening? Can you exemplify?
- How hard is it to be helpful to anyone – whether a community of people or nature and animal species?
- How do you usually feel when managing to be helpful to someone or contribute to nature around you?
- How would you practice what you learnt from this exercise?
- Is there a connection between this exercise and our wild nature club?

At the end of the exercise, after debriefing, make a connection between the exercise and the mission of the wild nature club and how we can contribute to our club's common mission – i.e. to protect wilderness areas in your region. You can use the statements below and select information from the club presentations, then put it on colored sheets of paper and stick them on the wall for everyone to see.

Facilitator's mention

About wild nature clubs:

- *I'm in nature, I work for nature* – The club is part of a string of five nature clubs open in five high schools in Romania's South Western Carpathians. These clubs enable us to work for increasing awareness, promoting and preserving wild areas in southwestern Romania and to implement a wild nature-dedicated project.
- *I learn at school, but not as in school* – We do non-formal education to develop, acquire and practice a set of skills: team work, public speaking, project management, leadership... a framework conducive to experimentation, where you can learn what you like to do, your strengths, and what to improve
- *Learning while doing* – We will create a set of learning experiences together. Experience is one of the best teachers!
- *Take part in camps, expeditions and nature trips* – We organize nature trips and adventure camps in wilderness areas in Romania's South Western Carpathians.
- *I'm in the wild... Am I afraid or am I happy?* – We understand the benefits of wilderness and how one can live in harmony with nature.
- *Think globally, act locally* – The club is part of the five club project network and of the international network of schools cooperating with the WWF – thus, you get the opportunity to meet new people, exchange ideas and good practice.
- *How do I do everything?* The activities you consider for club activities can be informed by specialist advice from various fields, depending on their topic (specialists in non-formal education, environment or communication specialists).
- *Do I have time for fun?* Fun is a major part of these activities. Some methods used include learning through play and creation of a non-formal learning framework as close to nature as possible.



7. NATURE (what is nature/my favorite place in nature?)

40 MINUTES

Purpose

This set of methods is aimed at defining nature and wilderness together with the participants, and challenge participants to become aware of the emotional impact of nature memories, which in turn make them more aware of the natural assets around them.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be asked what they think the definition of nature and wilderness is or what is included in the definition of nature. The facilitator will write all the words said by participants in one color on a flipchart sheet. It will be said that all ideas are good and do not need to be argued or rejected by others, as everyone will speak their mind in terms of nature. After reading the words of the participants, the facilitator will present one of the definitions of nature and of the concept of wilderness and will point out any similarities and differences from the participants' opinions.

Facilitator's mention

"Nature" means the entirety of things and beings in the Universe, the surrounding physical world, including vegetation, land features, climate, physical phenomena and life in general. It also refers to what we call wilderness.

Wilderness means harmony and balance. Wilderness means lakes, springs, fish, forests, diversity of animals and plants, and fresh air. Wilderness is also home (the habitat) to wild animals such as wolves and bears, the place where they live, feed, mate and raise their young. If the word "wilderness" often conveys a feeling of unfriendliness, danger and lawlessness is because wilderness is "inhuman", a place where human activity has not significantly altered the natural, normal processes. Safeguarded from human intervention, nature follows its course in harmony and balance. Wilderness is the assurance that life on Earth continues its natural course.

After presenting the definitions, the facilitator will ask the following question: *Nature not only **IS**, nature is also **Felt**: What feelings, senses, emotions, feelings cross your mind and your soul when thinking of nature or after being recently in the nature?*

Everything said by the participants will be written down on the flipchart sheet in a different color. At the end, they will be read out loud by the facilitator.

Preparation and facilitation

After listing words related to emotions and feelings, the facilitator will assign the following task. The facilitator will hand out an A4 sheet of papers and a ballpoint pen to participants and ask them to write by themselves, for 7 or 8 minutes (until stopped by the facilitator), a description of a favorite place in nature they've seen/like/would like to see or an imaginary place in nature where they would like to be.

After the time is up, the participants will be asked to group in pairs and read each other's paper, word for word. The time available for this task is 5 minutes. After reading their texts, the facilitator will do a short debriefing.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How was it to write about your favorite place in nature?
- What thoughts, emotions, and feelings did you experience when imagining that place?
- How did it feel to tell somebody else about it?
- How did it feel to listen to the story of the favorite place? What did cross your mind? What did you feel?

After debriefing, the participants will be asked to review their text and try to rewrite it in just 50 words. The time will be 5 minutes. After the 5 minutes end, they will be asked to share what they wrote with the partner, and the partner will mention whether the 50 words managed to convey the same meaning as before. The group talk will be followed by another short debriefing:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do you think this exercise helped you in your relation with nature?
- How does it help us occasionally remember beautiful places in nature?
- How does it help us to keep connected with and aware of nature in our everyday life?
- How is the connection with nature significant for our mind, body and soul?

Alternative

After defining nature and wilderness according to the method above, use a video projector and speakers to watch the movie below and talk about the health of the planet and the impact of human activities².

http://www.wwf.ro/resurse/living_planet_report/

After watching the movie, participants will be asked what they think about the health of the planet. After the participants give their presentations, the facilitator will say:

The needs of mankind are well above the capacity of the planet to sustain them. In other words, we consume more than the Earth can provide: in 2015, we consumed all the natural resources the Earth can provide in a year in less than eight months, as the sequestration of carbon required more than half of the nature's resources. We can then safely say that we are living on credit and borrow from the resources of future generations.

8. WISEMAN'S STORY

15 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this story is to make participants aware of the following facts:

- The fate of nature around us depends on each of us
- If people want to contribute and make decisions that may affect nature in the long term, they should know, understand and be aware of the benefits and threats against nature, and particularly understand that change comes first with us and how we relate to nature.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator let everyone know he/she will read a story and discuss it over the next 20 minutes. He / she will ask a participant to read the story.

Once upon a time, there was a wise man. He was so wise that he could answer any question from anyone, no matter how hard the question was. One day, two young men spoke to trick the wise man.

They said: "We will catch a bird and go to the wise man and ask: What we are keeping in our hand is a living or dead thing? If he says Dead, we will let it fly. If he says Living, we will kill it."

So they caught the bird, took to the wise man and asked: "Wise man, are we holding something living or dead in our hand?" And the wise man looked at the young men and smiled: "It's in your hands!"

After reading the story, the facilitator will ask the participants the following:

2. The health of the planet and the impact of human activities on it are described in the Living Planet Report, prepared by WWF in cooperation with the Zoological Society of London and Global Footprint Network. The report was first published in 1998 and is reprinted once every two years. The debriefing time of research data is 3 years – e.g. the data presented in the 2014 edition were recorded until the end of 2010. The report is available at: http://www.wwf.ro/resurse/living_planet_report/



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- We have four characters – who are the characters in our story?
- Who could summarize the story?
- What did you think when you heard the end of the story?
- What do you think is the moral of our story?
- What is the connection between the moral of the story and the realities of today's life – in terms of the man-nature relationship?
- To what extent can we decide the fate of nature around us?
- To what extent can we influence the past? To what extent can we influence the present? To what extent can we influence the future?
- What makes the difference between the good decisions that we take in life as compared to our behavior towards nature? How does it help being more aware of the benefits and threats against nature?
- What can we do on a personal level to take the best decisions for a harmonious relationship with nature?
- What can we do at group level (club, school, community) to take the best decisions for a harmonious relationship with nature?

After the participants answered, the facilitator will point out the main ideas:



Facilitator's mention

- The future of many generations and the natural resources at their disposal depend on us.
- We can make a change by informing ourselves and being more aware of the benefits and threats against wilderness areas. We can raise awareness on the role of nature for anyone around us.

The activity may be concluded with the quote below, written on the flipchart or a piece of colored paper:

*"Our most important task, if we are
to save the Earth, is to educate",*

Sir Peter Scott, founder of the WWF

9. MY INVOLVEMENT

5 MINUTES



Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to identify the degree of interest for the club and the desire for involvement of the participants at the time. This activity also provides facilitators with feedback on the course of the meeting and is an indicator of their motivation and commitment for the future.



Preparation and facilitation

After presenting the quote above, the participants will be asked to stay in a straight line facing the facilitator. The facilitator will place numbers from 1 to 5 on the floor and inform the participants he/she will be reading some questions. Each participant will have to answer each question by staying in front of the appropriate number on this scale: 1 (very little), 2 (little), 3 (somewhat), 4 (much), 5 (very much).

They will not be allowed to talk, just to take a position. Another facilitator will write down how many persons stood in front of what number, in order to assess the initial motivation for getting involved with the club. The questions are:



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *How curious am I about the future meetings/activities of the club?*
- *How involved do I want to be with the club?*
(remind the number of club meetings in a month as a reference point)
- *To what extent am I able to help with the preservation of nature in my region?*
- *How much did I like today's meeting?*

10. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will remind the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, where they are unable to attend the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do in the next meeting to arise curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to fill in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone) to be later contacted by the facilitator.

If it helps, the facilitator or one of the participants – the club's communication supervisor – can create a Facebook page for the entire group, which would also include meeting dates and places, pictures from each meeting, etc.

Further reading:

- Neagu M. 2009. *IMPACT Curriculum, Active Citizenship*. New Horizons Foundation, Bucharest
- WWF Romania. 2014. Living Planet Report. Available at:
http://www.wwf.ro/resurse/living_planet_report/

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Human bingo



1. What is the club about?

ANNEX 1: Human bingo

My favourite color is green	I speak two foreign languages	I know many good jokes	I read more than 3 books a year
I have family in the country side	I like living in Romania a lot	I recycle paper	I often shop at the market
I have a brother/sister	I play a musical instrument	I have a pet	I can play at least one board game
I often go hiking	I planted a tree	I like to dance a lot	I'm a vegetarian
I get involved in extracurricular activities	I like to cook	I can't swim	I practice a sport
I grow plants at home	I have never travelled abroad	I know many medicinal plants	I travelled abroad

2. My involvement in the club



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (A)** Show eagerness for involvement in the club as an active citizen
- (K)** Describe what active citizenship is and the role of an active citizen in relation to the community and to nature
- (S)** Find the power of win-win actions in relation to nature, actions which can be organized at the Youth Wilderness Club
- (K)** Describe the concept of sustainable development starting from the win-win principle



Key concepts:

☉ Active citizenship ☉ Win-Win ☉ Sustainable development

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Objectives and meeting agenda	Presentation	2 minutes	
2. Time to meet	Introduction game	35 minutes	Flipchart sheets, markers, A4 sheets, ballpoint pens
3. Balance in nature	Energizing game	8 minutes	
4. Killer handkerchief	Team game	30 minutes	Paper tissues – same number as participants
5. Active citizenship	Facilitated talk, group work	40 minutes	Flipchart sheets, 3 color markers, colored paper
6. It is useless and too late	Debate (the trial)	80 minutes	Roles, paper notes with roles, sheet of paper with argumentation times, Annex 1
7. Evaluation	Evaluation, with plant and animal species	10 minutes	Flipchart sheets, 2 color markers, A4 sheets, ballpoint pens
8. Next steps	Presentation	5 minutes	Attendance list and participant's contact data

Total estimated time: **3 hours and 30 minutes**



1. OBJECTIVES AND MEETING AGENDA

2 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the different activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the introduction is to raise the participants' interest and set their expectations for the meeting. If there are new participants, the facilitator will welcome the new participants and summarize the previous meeting.

At this meeting, we will explore the concepts of involvement and active citizenship and find out whether we, as young people and club members, can do anything as active citizens for the conservation of nature.

2. TIME TO MEET

35 MINUTES

Purpose

This is an introduction game aimed at helping participants get to know each other better after the first meeting.

Preparation and facilitation

Draw a clock on the blackboard or flipchart sheet. The participants will get half an A4 sheet to draw another clock (similar to the one on the flipchart sheet or different, what matters is that it shows the hours). The facilitator will circle six of the hours on the clock. The facilitator will select six random hours on the clock (e.g., 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11 o'clock) and mark them on the flipchart. The participants will do the same on their clock, with the exact same hours selected by the facilitator.

At the facilitator's signal, the participants will rise and negotiate certain meetings on each of the six hours selected with other participants (preferably, members they don't know too well). Now, each participant will write at the corresponding time on the clock the name of the person they will meet for a 4 minute talk. After setting the meetings and each participant was assigned who to meet, the facilitator will start the meetings by saying: now it's time for the 9 o'clock meeting – you have 4 minutes (together) to talk what is your favorite movie and why? After the 4 minutes expired, the second meeting will be announced, and each one will go to meet the assigned partner (4 minutes of talking about other topic set by the facilitator). See the topic below:

1 o'clock	Three personality traits that define me
3 o'clock	How I spend my free time and what are my favorite pastimes
5 o'clock	My favorite childhood memory
7 o'clock	Something I am proud of - a recent accomplishment
9 o'clock	What I wanted to be when I was a child
11 o'clock	My favorite hero/ a character who inspires me a lot by his/her behavior and values (doesn't have to be a public person)

After the meetings ended, the facilitator will ask the participants how they felt and will ask a few questions about the most interesting things they heard about their colleagues.

3. BALANCE IN NATURE

15 MINUTES

Purpose

The main purpose of the game is to energize participants. We can also use this exercise to indirectly prove that nature is in balance only when animal and plant species have enough food without having to threaten the welfare of other species.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants are divided into three groups: grass, mice and cats. During the game, the players will be set apart by the fact that "grass" group members make no sound, the "mice" squeak and the "cats" meow.

During the game, the "mice" group has to catch the "grass" group members, the "cats" catch the "mice", while "grass" members catch the "cats" (considering that when cats die, the body is decomposed into mineral salts in the ground, which in turn become nutrients for grass). It will be mentioned that this is a symbolic food chain.

When a participant is touched on the wrist by another participant (the one chasing them), the first participant will change groups and "become" the species of the participant who caught them. After a few minutes, the game is stopped by the facilitator, who counts how many participants are in each group. The game is resumed with the participants as they were. After a few minutes, the game is stopped again and the participants of each group are counted. It will be discovered that the species threatened with extinction is back to the previous numbers (e.g. many mice, little grass; the mice will have more "food" in the second round of the game and their number will increase again).

Therefore, it is inferred that each species is important and they all influence each other. After completing the activity, the facilitator will ask the participants how they felt about the game and what ideas crossed their mind during the game. The facilitator will point out the main idea of the game: all species are important, influence each other and rely on one another.

4. KILLER HANDKERCHIEF

30 MINUTES

Purpose

This method is aimed at helping participants to understand the principle on which the club is founded as a methodology they will use when preparing wilderness projects. The basic principle is win-win.

Preparation and facilitation:

Each person will leave a tissue hanging from their back pocket, from their pants or skirt. It should be placed so that other participants can take it out easily.

Facilitator's mention

The facilitator sets the stage and says the following (just these words, without further explanation): *"The tissue represents everything you need to live in this world (food, shelter, money, love, relationships, nature, etc.). If the tissue is taken away from you, you're out of the game."*

If the task was not understood, explain it once again in the same exact words. Without further ado, the facilitator will say: *"On your marks, get set, go!"* Inevitably, everyone will try to steal each other's tissue. When only one person remains alive, stop the game, sit in a circle and ask what happened.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What was your task in the game?
- What happened? What were the first steps?
- How many tissues does everyone have?
- Who is left without a tissue?

After a few answers, the facilitator will repeat the rules and another round will start. They keep playing until some will realize there is no point in dying and that no one needs more than they already have. Immediately, everyone will get the idea. Some participants may even gather in groups to better defend themselves.



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What happened now? What was different?
- Who/how many have tissues?
- Who is left without a tissue?
- How did you feel remaining without a tissue?
- How did you feel having more tissues?
- What was the purpose of the game? Was it to take someone else's tissue? If not, why did we try to take other people's tissues? Where do you think this instinct come from? What does it say about us?
- What could we have done differently?
- What would have happened if everyone kept their tissues?



Facilitator's mention

The facilitator will explain: *No one should feel bad for running after someone else's tissue, and no matter where this activity takes place, so would do 90% of the people, because it is our nature to want more than nature, the Universe or whatever higher power gave us. It is our nature to act like predators at times. Fortunately, these behaviors may change, and the good part is that change may begin with us.*

After these words, the facilitator will ask the participants whether they heard of the "win-win" principle. After hearing a few opinions, the facilitator will introduce this theory.



Facilitator's mention

The "win-win" theory says that by cooperation and compromise, two parties can win together, unlike the situation where one part wins (+1) and the other loses (-1), which leads to zero (0) results. Most likely, most participants will either guard their tissue or try take other participants' tissues during this game (if the instructions are followed accurately). Most of the time, people will try take others' tissues, leaving some with too many, others with too little tissues (win-lose situation). The exercise is meant to emphasize that we aim to create win-win situations in the club.

The fact that we learn about wilderness and develop projects for its conservation is a win for nature but also for us, the club members, as we acquire skills, experience in the development of projects, personal development, opportunities to become involved and include these experiences in our CV, which may lead, in the long run, even to economic development in the region, especially if we become more skilled and more prepared to address the issues faced by people or nature in our region.

The fact that we act to protect nature can mitigate the problems of our region on the long term, and positively impact other regions in our country and abroad on an even longer term. This will make us not only active citizens in our community, but also global citizens.

The facilitator's input will be followed by the last stage of debriefing for this activity:



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Do you remember times in your life when you used the win-win principle? Can you give examples? What exactly did you do? What did you and others win from your actions?
- Do you remember times in your life when you or others used the win-lose principle? Can you give examples? What exactly did you do? What did you win/lose and what did others win/lose from those actions?
- Do you find it easy or hard to use the win-win principle in your life?
- What are the benefits of applying this principle to our everyday life?
- How do you think we can use this principle in the future in our Youth Wilderness Club? Can you give examples?
- How do you think the win-win principle and sustainable development are connected or similar in any way? How does this apply in relation to nature and wilderness?
- Who could define sustainable development? After the students define sustainable development, the facilitator can give this definition: **"development which seeks to fulfill the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".**

5. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

50 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at exploring the concepts of citizenship and active citizenship and show us how we act as active citizens in our Youth Wilderness Club.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be asked whether they can explain the term "citizen". After giving a few ideas, the most simple definition of the citizen will be given.

The term "citizen" means the status of being a member of a state.

Ask each participant to give examples when they acted like citizens.

Their answers can range from "I paid taxes" to "I have an ID card", etc. They realize that being a citizen (i.e. the member of a country) involves both rights and responsibilities.

Based on the answers from the participants, ask them to state whether it's a right or a responsibility. E.g. "I used my passport to cross the border" is a right, while "I paid my taxes" is a responsibility.

Then, ask each participant to give an example of them acting as active citizens. After a few examples, ask if they can define what an active citizen is and the difference between an active citizen and another citizen. After a few answers, you can mention the following:

Active citizenship can be defined as the commitment by citizens to take opportunities to become active and democratically involved in defining and addressing the issues in their communities in order to improve their quality of life.

The term "citizenship" also means something else besides describing a status. Being a citizen means being involved in community life. Anyone can be a "citizen", but only those who are actively involved in constructive activities (for communities, nature) can be called "active citizens".

The concept of active citizenship can also be defined as the voluntary involvement of citizens in addressing issues in their communities and improving the quality of life. The active citizen has rights and responsibilities and takes an active role in the community. A person can be involved in several ways in community life. For instance:

- *A person can be an active citizen when they know their rights and know who to call when these rights are violated. A violation can be against their rights or certain laws (e.g. the environment protection law). An active citizen is a person who can stand up against the violation of laws.*
- *They may be active in the civil society as a volunteer within a NGO (may take direct action to contribute to the community – e.g. tree planting actions organized by environmental NGOs).*
- *Oftentimes, several active citizens can associate and implement their ideas through indirect activities (indirect projects), defending a common position before the relevant decision-makers. This is why it's extremely important to understand who makes decisions affecting us, our natural resources, our rights and responsibilities, and how we can fight abuse. For instance, if we do an environmental project, it is important to know what institutions we have to cooperate with to facilitate change.*

An initiative is frequently more successful if citizens come together to support a common cause. A team effort will increase the chances for their voice to be heard. That's what our club is about.

Further on, the participants will be asked whether they ever took part **voluntarily** to an activity/project/action where they could achieve something by using the win-win principle. The ones who took part in such a project will be asked to raise their hands.

Then, the participants will be divided into three groups so that each group contains someone who raised their hand in the previous step. Each group will be asked to give examples of active citizenship by a creative method: the first group will use theater, the second one, a piece of news they heard on the radio and the third



one, a video report they saw on TV. The time available is 15 minutes for preparation and 3 minutes for the presentation. After each group made their presentation, the facilitator summarizes the main elements of active citizenship on a flipchart, together with the group.

Active citizenship is an act of good will or good neighborhood; is a conscious, mindful action which requires a certain amount of effort (to develop a project or set up actions for nature protection requires an ability to associate, find partners and supporters, negotiate with public authorities and other decision-makers, etc.).

Later on, the facilitator will ask:

Are you prepared to experience active citizenship in your club?

According to the answers, the facilitator will encourage club members in their future actions with the club, emphasizing that the project they implement will be the best proof of active citizenship, and the measure of their involvement as citizens will be reflected by the changes they make (in their personal life, in community, in relation to nature, etc.).

6. IT IS USELESS AND TOO LATE TO GET INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS – THE TRIAL **80 MINUTES**

Purpose

The following method is aimed at stimulating debate about the utility or futility of getting involved as an active citizen in environmental issues.

Preparation and facilitation

Before assigning roles, remind everyone this is a very fun activity that requires active volunteers (at least 14). Count the available participants and assign tasks according to their number. Write down roles on pieces of paper; each one will take one piece of paper. The roles are: President (one person), the Pro Team (four persons), the Con Team (four persons), Jurors (five or seven persons), Observers (the remaining participants).

After extracting the pieces of paper, the facilitator will read out loudly the roles below. The facilitator will ensure that the participants will also receive a hard copy of the activity to better prepare themselves. See Annex 1.

The President facilitates based on the following rules: he/she opens the session, keeps the time, gives the floor to speakers according to a schedule. He has a table, a chair, the times written on a flipchart sheet/blackboard and the order of the speeches, a silencing tool (e.g. a gavel/hammer). We recommend them to take the role seriously, just like in real life.

The Pro Team argues that YES – IT IS USELESS TO BE INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BECAUSE..... Each of the four members of the Pro Team will have to argue at least once during the debate, for a few minutes. They will be seated right in front of the Con Team. They will have to find concrete arguments and examples to support their statements. The arguments need to be as documented, logical and real as possible and defended in a consistent manner. Use your persuasion skills!

The Con Team will argue that that NO – IT IS NOT USELESS OR TOO LATE TO BE INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BECAUSE..... Each of the four members of the Con team will have to argue at least once during the debate, for a few minutes. They will be seated right in front of the Pro Team. They will have to find concrete arguments and examples to support their statements. The arguments need to be as documented, logical and real as possible and defended in a consistent manner. Use your persuasion skills!

The Jurors Team (five or seven people) will listen to the arguments, take notes, and at the end of the statements will decide the winning team based on the following criteria: the logic of the argumentation and arguments, the capacity to motivate, the realism of the arguments, the plausibility and seriousness of arguments, the persuasion skills, the documentation, etc. They are impartial and have to rely solely on these criteria instead of their personal bias. Then, the jurors' team will have 10 minutes to select a winner. At the end, a member of the juror's team will have to defend their choice of the winning team and list once again what were the most compelling arguments (they will be listed along the way).

The Observer's team will supervise the entire process in silence. The observers will write the arguments down. At the end, they will give an opinion about the arguments and how they were presented.

Describe the trial starting with the allocated times (see Annex 1). Write all the times down on the flip-chart as shown in the annex. After everybody understands the rules of the trial, allow 10 minutes for each team to prepare their opening statements with all possible arguments. The observers will take notes on the preparation of the teams. The juror's team will get ready by deciding on how to take notes, and the president gets ready to take his/her role. After the preparation time ends (10 minutes), the facilitator will announce the beginning of the trial.

Before the trial begins, take all the participants out for three minutes. Arrange the room as if for a trial – you may also let the teams prepare outside to allow more time to arrange the room. The teams will be seated as follows: the president takes a table with a clear view to the teams; the Pro and Con teams will be facing each other, while the jurors will be seated to have a better view at each speaker. The observers will be seated in a circle around the Pro and Con teams. After everybody is ready, the facilitator calls the jurors in. Then, each team enters when called by the facilitator. Everybody remains standing until the president enters. When the president sits down, everybody else also sits down and the president opens the process, facilitates each team and counts the times according to Annex 1. The president will give a warning 30 seconds before the time expires, so that the speakers have the time to end their statements.

After the activity ends (by presentation of the final decisions by the jury and the list of compelling arguments), the participants will be asked to get out of their roles. This will be done by all participants standing up and, at the facilitator's signal, clapping their hands three times and shouting their name. This is the cue for getting out of their role. The participants will then sit down in a circle for debriefing, so that each role category answers the questions below:

? REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What was your task?*
- *What did you think when you received the role?*
- *How did you prepare the arguments?*
- *How was it to argument/judge/preside/observe? What were the challenges?*
- *How did you feel during the trial? Did you feel nervous? What were your thoughts at each stage?*
- *What was the most difficult? What was the easiest?*
- *What did you find out about yourselves, about others or about the task during the activity?*
- *What did you learn or confirm about yourselves, others, the new things you found out?*

The observers will be further asked what were the pro and con arguments they wrote down and what convinced them to take one side or the other.

The arguments held by the observers will be written down by the facilitator on the flipchart or blackboard.

After all the arguments were gathered from observers, collect once again the main arguments from the jurors. All the arguments will be collected in order to support:

- *The benefits of getting involved in projects/environment activities for us, the youth (what we stand to win in knowledge, skills, attitudes)*
- *The community benefits from our involvement*
- *The nature benefits from our involvement*
- *How we can be involved on the long term in order to bring about a positive impact for community and nature*

The final questions to participants after collecting benefits will be:



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How do you think this exercise could help in the future when you will implement a project and you will have to persuade someone in the community that your work matters and their support would be welcome?
- What could you do on a personal level to be well prepared/documented about the environmental issues in your region?

The ideas are collected and summarized by the facilitator as conclusions of the activity, strongly emphasizing that involvement in the club and a future project will benefit the nature, community as well as themselves on the long term, thanks to the development of skills such as team work, planning, communication, budgeting, fundraising, negotiation, PR, decision making, etc. It will also be emphasized that members will further increase their experience with every game and activity at meetings, resulting in acquiring as many skills as possible.

7. MEETING EVALUATION

10 MINUTES

The facilitator will summarize the meeting, then will ask the participants to think of a species (plant or animal) and evaluate the meeting in terms of that species' characteristics. For instance: *For me, today's meeting was like a -chamois – because they are lively, live at a high altitude and are brave. That's how I felt today – lively, brave - I didn't talk too much, although I wish I had, but didn't have the space.* Each participant will have 30 seconds to share their experience.

8. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

If it helps, the facilitator or one of the participants – the club's communication supervisor – can create a Facebook group for the club, which would also include meeting dates and places, pictures from each meeting, etc.

Further reading:

- Neagu M. 2009. *Curriculum IMPACT, Cetățenie Activă (Active Citizenship)*, New Horizons Foundation, Bucharest.
- British Council. 2012. *Active Citizenship Guide – Facilitator's Manual*
- *Fii Pregătit – Dezvoltarea de Competențe Cheie (Be prepared – How to develop key skills)*. 2015. Available at: www.fiipregatit-dru.ro
- Chelbea D.G., Fala M. 2011. *Cetățenia activă și voluntariatul (Active citizenship and volunteering)*. Available at: http://www.ccdcs.ro/uploads/1/0/8/2/10821265/publicatie_isbn_2011_didactica_tehnic.pdf

Support materials:

- Annex 1: The trial

2. My involvement in the club

ANNEX 1: The trial

Is it too little too late!?

The following method seeks to stimulate a lively debate on the usefulness or futility of getting involved as an active citizen in environmental issues.

The roles are:

President (one person), the Pro Team (four persons), the Con Team (four persons), Jurors (five or seven persons), Observers (the rest of participants).

President

The President facilitates based on the following rules: he/she opens the session, keeps the time, gives the floor to speakers according to a schedule. He has a table, a chair, the times written on a flipchart sheet/blackboard and the order of the speeches, a silencing tool (e.g. a gavel/hammer). We recommend them to take the role seriously, just like in real life.

The Pro Team

The Pro Team argues that YES – IT IS USELESS TO BE INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BECAUSE..... Each of the four members of the Pro Team will have to argue at least once during the debate, for a few minutes. They will be seated right in front of the Con Team. They will have to find concrete arguments and examples to support their statements. The arguments need to be as documented, logical and real as possible and defended in a consistent manner. Use your persuasion skills!

The Con Team

The Con Team will argue that that NO – IT IS NOT USELESS OR TOO LATE TO BE INVOLVED IN ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES BECAUSE..... Each of the four members of the Con Team will have to argue at least once during the debate, for a few minutes. They will be seated right in front of the Pro Team. They will have to find concrete arguments and examples to support their statements. The arguments need to be as documented, logical and real as possible and defended in a consistent manner. Use your persuasion skills!

The Jurors' Team

The Jurors will listen to the arguments, take notes, and at the end of the statements will decide the winning team based on the following criteria:

1. **the logic and seriousness of the argumentation**
2. **the logic, documentation and realism of the arguments,**
3. **the capacity to motivate, the persuasion skills, etc.**

They are impartial and have to rely solely on these criteria instead of their personal bias. At the end, the jurors' team will have 15 minutes to select a winner. A member of the juror's team will have to defend their choice of a winner and list once again what were the most compelling arguments (they will be written down along the way).

The Observers' team

The Observer's team will supervise the entire process in silence. The observers will also write the arguments down. At the end, they will give an opinion on the arguments and how they were presented.

Preparation time for team and jurors before the beginning of the activity: 10 minutes

Allotted times: 60 minutes total

President: Introduction and welcome, introduction of the rules (1 minute)



Round 1- 10 minutes

Pro representative – opening statement (4 minutes)

Con representative – opening statement (4 minutes)

Break - 4 minutes

Round 2 - 8 minutes

Con representative – continuation of argumentation and answering questions (3 minutes)

Questions from the Pro Team to the Con Team – all the questions to the Con Team that can be asked within 1 (one) minute. The questions need to be related to the previous presentations. The Con representative assigned for the 2nd round will answer.

Pro representative – continuation of argumentation and answering questions (3 minutes)

Questions from the Con Team to the Pro Team – all the questions to the Pro Team that can be asked within 1 (one) minute. The questions need to be related to the previous presentations. The Pro representative assigned for the 2nd round will answer.

Break - 3 minutes

Round 3 - 6 minutes

Pro representative – continuation of argumentation and answering questions (2 minutes)

Questions from the Pro Team to the Con Team – all the questions to the Pro Team that can be asked within 1 (one) minute. The questions need to be related to the previous presentations.

Con representative – continuation of argumentation and answering questions (2 minutes)

Questions from the Pro Team to the Con Team – all the questions to the Con Team that can be asked within 1 (one) minute. The questions need to be related to the previous presentations.

Break - 5 minutes

Round 4 - 6 minutes

Con representative – closing statement (3 minutes)

Pro representative – closing statement (3 minutes)

Jury deliberation time - 10 minutes

Jury deliberation and presentation of arguments - 6 minutes

3. Discovering how to work together



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (A) Show curiosity and interest for what they may learn in the club
- (S) Find the benefits of getting involved in the wilderness club and the effects of that involvement
- (S) Practice team work and open communication with other club members
- (S) Find possible roles in a group with a common mission
- (S) Learn how loving nature is embedded in the own system of values
- (S) Build the value contract of the group



Key concepts:

○ Values ○ Personal learning plan ○ Value contract

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Meeting agenda and objectives	Presentation	5 minutes	
2. The circle of my values	Ice breaker	15 minutes	Chairs
3. Quotes for the soul	Facilitated discussion	30 minutes	Printed quotes for each participant (Annex 1), flipchart sheets, markers, ballpoint pens, sheets of paper
4. The benefits of being an active citizen	Facilitated discussion, gallery tour	30 minutes	Flipchart sheets, three-color markers, colored paper, Annex 2
5. Personal learning plan	Letter to myself	30 minutes	A4 sheets, ballpoint pens, paper envelopes, Annex 2
6. The surprise swamp	Team game	60 minutes	Paper scotch tape, twine or colored chalk
7. My strengths, my team	Individual work	35 minutes	A4 sheets, ballpoint pens, flipchart sheets, markers
8. The value contract	Group work	40 minutes	Flipchart sheets, markers
9. Evaluation	Color-based evaluation method	10 minutes	Colored sheets
10. Next steps	Presentation	5 minutes	Attendance list and participant contact data

Total estimated time: **4 hours and 20 minutes**



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the different activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the introduction is to raise the participants' interest and set their expectations for the meeting. If there are new participants, the facilitator will welcome the new participants and summarize the previous meeting.

This meeting is aimed at finding common values in relation to nature, pointing out the benefits of involvement with the club and environmental projects, defining a personal learning plan and building a value contract with the group.

2. THE CIRCLE OF MY VALUES

15 MINUTES

Purpose

This group game is aimed at discussing our common values in relation to nature and how they are beneficial to us.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be seated in a circle. All chairs have to be in use. One participant has to stand inside the circle. He/she will make a statement related to own personal values (e.g.: "I believe in friendship", "I do not believe in global warming", "I believe in the power of personal examples", etc.).

The other group members who agree with the statement have to change seats very quickly (but not move to the next chair if it's free). They must always sit at least two chairs away from their initial seat. The person in the center will also have to take a seat. Then another participant will be left in the center, who will have to do the same as the first person.

After most of the group members passed through the center and gave their statements, you may stop the activity. Before beginning, allow 2 or 3 minutes for everyone to think about at least three things they believe or do not believe in, so that they can quickly mention them while being in the center.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did you think of this activity?*
- *How did you feel when other persons share similar values as you?*
- *How hard is it to find people who share similar values as you?*
- *How do you think that different values will have positive outcomes for you and the society as a whole?*
- *How do you think we can benefit from our common values and faiths regarding nature?*

3. QUOTES FOR THE SOUL

30 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at proposing and analyzing our individual and common values regarding nature. This will bring consistency within the group and help us to further build the value contract of the group.

Preparation and facilitation

We recommend some relaxing background music for this activity (i.e. including nature sounds).

Each participant will receive a quote, a piece of paper and a ballpoint pen. Each participant will have 3 minutes to read the quote several times and write down all the ideas that cross their mind in connection with that quote. It can also be a drawing or some words.

NOTE:

This meeting can be completed in two sessions. Activities 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10 in one session, and activities 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 in another session.

After the three minutes ended, each participant will be asked to read the quote twice, loudly and clearly. The others can listen in silence and write down their own ideas, words and messages that come to mind after hearing the quote. Thus, after each reading, the participants will be given 30 seconds/ 1 minute to write down their ideas.

The activity may continue until all quotes have been read. At the end, the participants will be asked to share what they wrote down and what came to their mind or heart, if they want.

The facilitator will write the ideas of personal examples on a flipchart sheet/blackboard, and remind participants that this topic will be resumed in a future meeting (*Meeting 8. What can we do to conserve wilderness areas?*).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How are the values inferred from these quotes similar to your own values? Give examples!
- Can you give examples of your personal actions to protect nature as a reflection of your values?

You may conclude the activity with the following:

Facilitator's mention

Anyone who has a harmonious relationship with nature, trees, plants, animals, the soil and every living thing is healthier and happier. Any good deed is rewarded, and this someone who protects nature will be rewarded by nature. Thus, do not take from nature more that it can provide, show respect and recognition and give back to nature as much as you can.

4. THE BENEFITS OF BEING AN ACTIVE CITIZEN **30 MINUTES**

(in the Youth Wilderness Club)

Purpose

This activity is aimed at a general identification of the benefits of active citizenship within the club, and the benefits of involvement for local communities and wilderness areas.

(Note: The benefits for us, the community and nature and wilderness areas will be also pointed out after implementation of the project).

Preparation and facilitation

The members of the club will be asked if they know what environmental social/community/service is, and to give examples. After examples are given, the facilitators can give some of their own examples, without going into details (see the examples under chapter 3.2 "What can we do" in the Guide).

Preparation and facilitation

Further on, the club members will be divided into 3-4 workgroups. Write a question on a flipchart sheet and place it on the wall. There will be three questions on three flipchart sheets. At the facilitator's signal, each group will sit in front of a sheet and attempt to answer the written question, and write down all the main ideas being discussed.

The facilitators will go from one group to another to make sure the task is clear and that answers are being sought in the small groups. One group will sit in front of a sheet/question for no more than 5 minutes.

After 5 minutes, at the facilitator's sign, the groups will pass to the next questions for another 3-4 minutes, and add what they think should be added. Continue like this until each group has answered each question. The questions to be written down on flipchart sheets are the following:



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What do I stand to gain from getting involved in the club and doing an environmental project with the team (what new knowledge, skills or attitudes would I acquire? Other, etc.)*
- *What/how will the community and nature gain from such a project?*
- *What could be the long term effects if such an involvement on nature?*

At the end of the 12-15 minute time, one representative of each group will give their answers to the questions, and the facilitator will summarize the benefits of being involved as an active citizen in the club. At the end, a general conclusion will be drawn, emphasizing that a club project can bring a great deal of benefits for both the community and anyone implementing it. Moreover, the facilitator will greatly emphasize the skills that a club member can acquire by getting involved in such a project (e.g. skills such as team work, planning, communication, budgeting, fundraising, negotiation, PR, decision making, etc.). The participants will be given a list of competences they could acquire in the current year at the club (Annex 2). This list will be used for the next activity.

5. THE PERSONAL LEARNING PLAN IN THE YOUTH WILDERNESS CLUB: "LETTER TO MYSELF"

30 MINUTES



Purpose

The purpose of this exercise is to help the young participants to draft a personal learning plan for their time in the club. The plan is aimed at motivating them to stay active for longer in the club as a means to achieve this personal development plan.

The facilitator will provide each participant with a sheet of paper and a list of competences (Annex 2).

Each participant will have to write no more than six pieces of knowledge, skills and attitudes they want to develop/acquire in the club in the next year, or what they would like to learn and to gain at a personal level from their involvement with the club. On a flipchart sheet, the facilitator will write the following guiding questions that the participants will have to answer on paper:

- *What new knowledge do I want to gain at the club? (I would like to know more about...)*
- *What new skills would I want to develop? (I would like to have the ability/capacity to....)*
- *How could I evolve after one year in the club (I want to be more...) – values, attitudes*
- *How could I make sure that I reach these objectives (what is up to me?)*

The facilitator reminds participants it is also up to them to reach those objectives – take part to and organize meetings, suggest interactive activities, be proactive, get involved in implementing the project, etc.

The facilitator should give an example in order to clarify the exercise. They are reminded they should prioritize no more than three items from the proposed list for the next year, in order to make it a more realistic choice.

This is an individual task and each participant will have to find a space in the room to sit quietly for 10 minutes and think about the questions. The paper with the answers will become a letter to himself/herself. After the task has been fulfilled, each sheet will be placed into an envelope with his/her name and address. After one year, these letters will be brought to the club evaluation meeting and returned to their authors in order to assess whether they achieved their intended goals.

Before closing the envelopes, the facilitators will ask each participant to share the top three objectives of their list. Further, the facilitator will say:

- *Everyone is responsible for achieving these personal objectives*
- *Achieving these personal objectives depends on the consistent attendance to meetings and their active involvement in the activities*
- *Achieving these objectives depends on the manner in which the group stimulates each member to improve themselves through the club activities. If everyone pursued this goal for themselves and for their colleagues, the plan will be successful.*

6. THE SURPRISE SWAMP

50-60 MINUTES

Purpose

This is a quite complex team game with multiple objectives. They will not be revealed to participants before the game begins.

The objectives are intended for club members to:

- Become aware of the importance of team work and communication within the club
- Become aware of the importance of perseverance and empathy when they work with other team members
- Become aware that failure is an asset that you can learn from without giving up (especially when they will have to do difficult projects together)
- Become aware that everyone has an important role in the team and that taking responsibility for the assigned roles is equally important
- Become aware of how to change/transform/improve after each activity together
- Become aware that team work will be both good/pleasant and challenging, and that challenge itself is essential for development in the club

Preparation and facilitation

Use chalk or tape to draw a 10x10m matrix on the floor. In the end, it should look like a chess board (see below). At the same time, draw a similar table on a piece of paper for your eyes only. Decide which squares can be used by the participants and write a number on each square. Write the number in the table on your piece of paper and describe the rules to the participants. Do not write the numbers on the table on the floor.

Story setting: *Your region has a very wide wilderness area. You are on a trip with your Youth Wilderness Club, you get lost and reach a swamp. The only way to return home is to cross the swamp. But the swamp can only be crossed on nine big rocks which do not sink. If you step on any other place in the swamp, you would sink. The swamp is represented by this table on the floor. You can't see the nine rocks. Only a local ranger who is with you can confirm whether or not you found the floating rocks.*

- The entire team has to cross to the other side of the swamp, but just one person at a time.
- The swamp can only be crossed by stepping on the specific squares (floating rocks) – only the facilitator knows where the special squares are.
- Each special square/floating rock is numbered 1 to 9 (see the model below).
- From the beginning, participants don't know which squares are floating, only the ranger/facilitator does. They are decided in advance and do not change; they can be found one at a time.
- After the game starts, if a participant steps on the wrong square, the facilitator will give a signal (i.e. NO) and the entire team has to start from the beginning.
- If a participant steps on the right square, but not in the order known by the facilitator (1 to 9), all the participants start from the beginning.
- If a participant steps on the right square in the right order, the ranger/facilitator will not give any sign of denial, which means the participant can go on.
- The swamp can be crossed in whatever order the team decides, but the game is over only after each member of the group has crossed.
- The floating rocks can be found in ascending order only straight ahead and in lateral, not backwards (the road goes on the side and straight ahead, there can't be any curves back).
- The team is only allowed to stay behind the start line, not on the sides of the swamp.
- The team has 10 minutes to come up with a strategy before starting.
- After the start, the team can only communicate by signs, not verbally or in writing.



Allow 10 minutes to devise a strategy, then start the game. This game may get frustrating after a while, but make sure you give them the opportunity to talk to each other after each participant returns in order to come up with a better strategy.

	9								
									8
	6			7					
							5		
	4								
						3			
			2						
							1		

The game will be followed by the debriefing stage:



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What was your task?
- What did you do right after the game started?
- What happened during the activity?
- What challenges did you face? What solutions did you find?
- What did you feel? What emotions did you experience? What thoughts did you have?
- What was the hardest moment? What was the most touching moment?
- What were your roles in the team? What other roles would have been good to have in the team?
- What did you do to be successful? What conditions for success should you have used?
- What did you find during the game about: yourselves, the others, task, the group?
- What did you learn about yourself, the others, task, group?
- What do we need to consider as a team when embarking on a task/activity together?
- Why does everyone have to take certain roles in a team? And what are the roles required and functional in a team?
- What happens in a team when people fail to accomplish the roles they set for themselves?
- What happens in a team if we fail to be successful in the timeframe that we set?
- How is failure useful in life and at the club?
- What would you do differently if you had to redo the exercise to accomplish the task, but also feel good in the team?
- What did you take from this game to future meeting and activities at the club?
- What are the values that our group would need to achieve its purpose and at the same time feel good in our team?

It is likely that the debriefing will lead participants to the same lessons learned/conclusions or even more. It is important that, in the end, the facilitator summarizes and describes both the lessons learned and the objectives they failed to accomplish, and asks the participants whether such objectives were accomplished in their opinion.

7. MY STRENGTHS, MY TEAM

35 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at revealing the strengths, talents and skills of each member that could serve the purpose and objectives of the club.

Preparation and facilitation

Using the exercise above, the participants will be asked to imagine working together within the club for a project, just like in the game above, and will have different roles: roles for accomplishing the tasks and roles enabling improved team work.

The roles for accomplishing the purpose and mission of the club will include very practical tasks such as: photographer, secretary (tasked with keeping the minutes of the meeting), attendance supervisor, the communication supervisor (internal communication among club members and external communication with non-member stakeholders – representatives of national/nature parks), those tasked with organizing the next meeting, those tasked with graphic design, filming and video editing, etc. A list of roles is available in Part III, chapter 1, section 1.3 Club team.

Participants will be asked what other roles do they see fit for the smooth functioning of the club, until the implementation of the project, when more specific project roles will be assigned.

After the participants respond, they will have another 5 minutes to think about the strengths, talents and skills that could prove useful for a smooth functioning of the club. Moreover, it is also important to think whether they have a specific skill they would like to develop within a certain role. For instance, he/she can't take beautiful pictures, but wants this role precisely for learning how to take beautiful photos.

Everyone will have 2-3 minutes to think about both aspects. Once the participants have reached a conclusion, the facilitator will ask everyone and write down on the flipchart, under the respective name, what strengths, talents and skills they have, and what roles could they take from the roles listed earlier by the facilitator and members. They will further decide together what roles to take on in the following two months, reminding that after two months, these roles will be rotated to give others an opportunity to exercise as many roles as possible.

They are reminded of the importance of choosing their roles to reflect their personal learning goals, or rather add new skills to the personal learning plan, if any, after they selected their roles, in order to follow them up as well during the club activities.

8. THE VALUE CONTRACT

40 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at encouraging participants to build together a full value contract of the group to help them achieve the purpose of the club, accomplish their personal learning objectives and work efficiently as a team, for the best level of satisfaction for all the members of the club.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will point out the next activity has to be carried out bearing in mind each one's personal development/learning plan as well as the success elements of the previous exercise.

The participants will be divided into two groups, and each group will be given a flipchart sheet with the drawing of a 3-color traffic light (green, red and yellow). A blank space will be left on the flipchart to later fill in with text. For each question there will be a question to be answered by the participants from each group. The questions will be written clearly on colored A4 sheets of paper.

The participants will be asked:

Green: What principles or rules should we accomplish at personal and group level to enable each group member to achieve as many of their personal goals as possible and to experience the highest possible satisfaction during the year?

RED: What do you think we should not do at club meetings this year so that we can achieve our personal goals and have a successful club with good impact on nature in our region?



YELLOW: What do you think we should negotiate the most among the club members in order to accomplish the mission of our club?

Each team has to take their roles very seriously. This activity is very important for the club. Each team will present a flipchart sheet with explanations for every color, and the others will have to agree or negotiate these elements. The items that the club did not entirely agree to will be removed. At the end, a club member will be asked to take the two sheets home and combine all the answers on one sheet of paper (with a beautiful drawing).

At the next meeting, this member will present the full value contract once again, and the members will sign it, committing to adhere to it as much as possible. It will be stated that the contract has to be displayed on a wall and the compliance with it will be checked at every meeting. It can be supplemented with additional values or rules if need be.

9. EVALUATION

10 MINUTES

Place 5 or 6 sheets of paper of different colors on the floor. The participants will be asked to evaluate today's meeting by sitting in front of the color for the respective day. After sitting down, each one will say a few words explaining their choice of the color for that day.

10. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will thank everyone for their participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Neagu M. 2009. *Curriculum IMPACT, Cetățenie Activă (Active Citizenship)*. New Horizons Foundation, Bucharest

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Quotes, Annex 2: My Competences in the Club

3. Discovering how to work together

ANNEX 1: Quotes

1. *"The Earth is what we all have in common."*
Wendel Berry
2. *"To find the air and the water exhilarating; to be refreshed by a morning walk... to be thrilled by the stars at night; to be elated over a bird's nest or a wildflower in spring – these are some of the rewards of the simple life close to nature."*
John Burroughs
3. *"Reading about nature is fine, but if a person walks in the woods and listens carefully, he can learn more than what is in books, for they speak with the voice of God."*
George Washington Carver
4. *"Our generation has inherited an incredibly beautiful world from our parents and they from their parents. It is in our hands whether our children and their children inherit the same world. We must not be the generation responsible for irreversibly damaging the environment."*
Richard Benson
5. *"The more clearly we can focus our attention on the wonders and realities of the universe around us, the less taste we shall have for destruction."*
Rachel Carson
6. *"For the first time in history, each human being on Earth is more or less exposed to damaging chemicals from birth until death."*
August A. Bush
7. *"Water and air, the two essential fluids on which all life depends, have become global garbage cans."*
Jacques Cousteau
8. *"If we continue at the same pace, we will destroy in the next century everything that the poets have been singing about for the past two thousand years."*
Fred Bodsworth
9. *"Is it too late to prevent us from self-destructing? No, for we have the capacity to design our own future, to take a lesson from living things around us and bring our values and actions in line with ecological necessity. But we must first realize that ecological and social and economic issues are all deeply intertwined. There can be no solution to one without a solution to the others."*
Jean Michael Cousteau
10. *"Man is endowed with creativity in order to multiply that which has been given him; he has not created, but destroyed. There are fewer and fewer forests, rivers are drying up, wildlife has become extinct, the climate is ruined, and the earth is becoming ever poorer and uglier."*
Anton Chekhov
11. *"We can use our scientific knowledge to improve and beautify the earth, or we can use it to... poison the air, corrupt the waters, blacken the face of the country, and harass our souls with loud and discordant noises, or we can use it to mitigate or abolish all these things."*
John Burroughs



12. "No one person has to do it all but if each one of us follow our heart and our own inclinations we will find the small things that we can do to create a sustainable future and a healthy environment." **John Denver**

13. "I really care that so many species have been wiped out, like genocide of entire races. I believe in the divine right of all species to survive on this planet. So I decided I want to be active as an environmentalist. I learned. I asked experts. I got active. The truth is our planet's alarm is now going off and it's time to wake up and take action in any way you can." **Leonardo DiCaprio**

14. "When the last tree has been cut down, the last fish caught, the last river poisoned, only then will we realize that one cannot eat money." **Indian saying**

15. "Adopt the pace of nature; her secret is patience." **Amish proverb**

16. "Nature constantly begins the same things over again, years, days, hours. This is what creates a sort of infinity and eternity." **Blaise Pascal**

17. "We can escape, for a while, the rules of man. But nothing escapes the laws of nature." **Marie d'Agoult**

18. "I always started from an idea, from nature." **Constantin Brâncuși**

19. "Human subtlety...will never devise an invention more beautiful, more simple or more direct than does nature, because in her inventions nothing is lacking, and nothing is superfluous." **Leonardo Da Vinci**

20. "Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop away from you like the leaves of Autumn." **John Muir**

21. "We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." **Aldo Leopold**

22. "For me, and for thousands with similar inclinations, the most important passion of life is the overpowering desire to escape periodically from the clutches of a mechanistic civilization. To us the enjoyment of solitude, complete independence, and the beauty of undefiled panoramas is absolutely essential to happiness." **Bob Marshall**

23. "Nature understands no jesting; she is always true, always serious, always severe; she is always right, and the errors and faults are always those of man." **W.F. Goethe**

24. "The beauty of nature is only matched by the beauty of the soul." **Victor Hugo**

25. "Trees are the earth's endless effort to speak to the listening heaven." **Rabindranath Tagore**

3. Discovering how to work together

ANNEX 2: My competences in the club

Step 1: Select (by circling) no more than 3 pieces of knowledge, 3 skills and 3 attitudes that you wish to develop in your club over the next year.

Knowledge-wise, I would like to do the following after one year with the club:

- Explain the concept of wilderness;
- Introduce the benefits provided by wild nature;
- Describe the threats against wild nature;
- Be knowledgeable of ways to protect and conserve wilderness areas;
- Be able to explain specific project management concepts to any young man who would like to join my club;
- Explain to other club members how a personal learning plan can be useful;

Skill-wise, I would like to do the following after one year with the club:

- Assess the needs and challenges of wilderness in my region;
- Find creative, realistic and approachable solutions to the needs and challenges to wilderness in our region;
- Devise a wilderness conservation plan with colleagues in my region;
- Implement a wilderness conservation and preservation project in our region;
- Monitor the implementation of a project with my colleagues, in accordance with the existing results and challenges;
- Take part in the evaluation of the project carried out at our club by following up its impact on nature, community and on myself;
- Use a personal learning plan during the club, which I will update on a regular basis;
- Keep encouraging the members of my club team when faced with project implementation challenges;
- Better communicate with members in my team in connection with my needs, challenges at the club, etc.;
- Constantly look for creative solutions for the protection of wild nature in my region;

Attitude-wise, I would like to do the following after one year with the club:

- Be more open to understanding and exploring the concept of wilderness;
- Be more grateful for the benefits of nature in general and my wilderness area in particular;
- Contribute to preserving the wilderness in my area by becoming more actively involved in the club's project as a whole;
- Become more respectful to wild nature in my area;
- Frequently take attitude against wilderness issues in my region;
- Become more patient and perseverant in implementing the wilderness protection projects of my club;
- Show more initiative and take clear-cut roles in the preparation and facilitation of a club meeting;
- Be more responsible when assigned certain team roles for implementing the project of my club.



Step 2: Out of the nine pieces of knowledge, skills and attitudes selected, select another 6 items you intend to achieve in the following year.

Step 3: Prioritize from 1 to 6 in the order of their importance. Circle the 3 most important objectives for you. They are your main targets.

Step 4: Think of means to achieve these 3 items. What will you do at a personal level to be able to achieve at least these three objectives of your personal learning plan? You can aim higher if you want!

4. What are protected areas?



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K) Describe protected areas and their purpose
- (K) List categories and distribution of protected areas
- (K) List endangered species of plants and animals at national level
- (K) List protected areas in the region (nature and national parks)
- (A) Show openness, curiosity and interest for the importance of protected areas



Key concepts:

⊙ Protected area ⊙ National parks ⊙ Nature parks

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Meeting agenda and objectives	Presentation	2 minutes	
2. The mystery wall	Name and energizing game	10 minutes	A blanket or colored bed sheet
3. Three animals	Group splitting game	5 minutes	Pieces of paper with three names of animals
4. Protected area	The cluster	40 minutes	Flipchart sheets, 3-color markers, colored paper
5. Distribution of protected areas	Quiz	50 minutes	Pieces of paper with the names of the five parks, 5 A4 sheets, 5 markers, 1 flipchart sheet, the winner's prize
6. Nature and national parks	Facilitated talk	5 minutes	Colored sheets of papers with definitions
7. National and regional distribution of nature and national parks	Group work	40 minutes	Pieces of paper with park names, map of Romania, a map of each of the 5 parks, flipchart sheets, markers
8. Classification of species according to their conservation status	Facilitated session	15 minutes	Printouts with names of species related to wilderness areas in the Guide, for home study
9. Hot potato	Recap / consolidation	10 minutes	Small ball
10. Next steps	Presentation	5 minutes	

Note:

Total estimated time: **3 hours**

Before this meeting, the facilitator will read the "Natural protected areas" chapter in the Guide.



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the different activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the introduction is to raise the participants' interest and set their expectations for the meeting. If there are new participants, the facilitator will welcome the new participants and summarize the previous meeting.

This meeting will be about protected areas, the reason for protection, the difference between nature and national parks, their distribution, the classification of species according to conservation status and examples of species in our region.

2. MYSTERY WALL

10 MINUTES

Purpose

The activity is aimed at energizing participants, introducing them to the topic (species), helping them memorize the names of the participants. If there are new participants, they will be easier integrated into the group.

Preparation and facilitation

Since the participants already know each other, we will divide them into two teams. They will be divided by a wall made of textile materials (e.g.: blanket, bed sheet). The participants in one team sit behind the wall so they can't be seen by the other team. The facilitators will keep the wall up. One player from each team will sit on both sides of the wall.

When the facilitators lower the wall (at a predefined signal), each player on each side has to quickly say a plant or an animal whose name begins with the initial of the other player's first name. Those who make a mistake or fail to say the name in time will join the opposing team. The game continues until each participant reaches the wall at least once.

The team with the most "hostages" wins. The other participants will have to remember as many plant and animal names that were said by the players as possible. In the end, as many names of plants and animals as possible will be collected from the participants.

3. THREE ANIMALS

5 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at energizing participants and grouping them for the next activity.

Preparation and facilitation

Before beginning the activity itself, the participants will form three different groups. They will be divided by the following principle: choose three names of animals. These names will be written on small pieces of paper, so that they are easily divided by three. Each participant will receive a piece of paper with an animal's name, will read it, and without speaking, will try imitating that animal with the body and voice. The purpose of each participant is to find and go to his/her group, so that in the end there will be three different groups of animals with approximately the same number of participants. After each participant performed their task, the facilitator will ensure they are assigned to the right group. The participants will sit so as to have a clear view of the flipchart/blackboard.

4. PROTECTED AREA

40 MINUTES

Purpose

The activity is aimed at encouraging participants to find the definition of protected areas by themselves and understand why such areas need to be protected.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will write NATURAL PROTECTED AREA on a flipchart sheet or the blackboard. The club members will be invited to say out loud (one at a time, as much as possible) all the words that come to mind when hearing/reading "protected area", without worrying if they are right or wrong. There can be words directly related to the term "protected area" or other words related to words connected to protected areas. The facilitator will write them down on the flipchart in no particular order, around the words "protected area". The activity stops when the time ends or the participants exhausted their ideas. The recommended time is 3-4 minutes.

Three volunteers, one from each group, will be asked to step up. Each of them will be handed a marker of a different color (green, red and black) and will be asked to draw a straight line or even a curved one across the flipchart sheet with their eyes closed. Each volunteer will do this at one time. Further, according to their work groups (green, red and black), they will be asked to find the simplest definition of a protected area using at least three quarters of the words touched by their team's marker pen. They can use connection words and other words as long as they use at least three quarters of the words touched by their team's marker pen. The time available is approximately 10 minutes. After the time is up, a representative of each group will be invited to give their definition or explanation of a protected area and why they think is important to protect a certain area.

When each group presented their explanation, the facilitator will give (either on flipchart or colored sheets) the established definition of a protected area, as defined by the IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature (see the definition in part I of the Guide).

5. DISTRIBUTION OF PROTECTED AREAS

50 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at stimulating participants to identify and remember as much information as possible on the distribution of protected areas in the funniest way possible.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be divided into 5 groups, by the following algorithm: write a number of notes equal to the number of participants, with five categories of notes: the Semenic – Cheile Carașului National Park, the Cheile Nerei - Beușnița National Park, the Iron Gates Nature Park, the Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park, the Retezat National Park.

The notes will be spread facing down without the participants seeing what is written on them. The participants will then hold the notes at their foreheads, with the text visible to the other participants. At the facilitator's sign, without talking, they will have to form five groups belonging to the same national/nature park.

After being divided into groups, they will be allowed to speak and will be shown a place to sit. Each group will receive a sheet and a pen and be told they will take part in a very serious competition. The competition rules are:

- The facilitator will read a series of questions, one at a time (from the displayed sheets, or a note with each question and the answer variants can be given to each group, one at a time).
- Each question has several options as answers.
- They will have one and a half minutes to find the right and full answer by discussions within the group.
- Some questions can have several correct answers.
- Each team will receive a point for any correct and full answer. Failing to do so, they receive no point.
- After each question is read one at a time by the facilitator, only after the end of the thinking time (one and a half minutes), at the sign of the facilitator, a representative of each group will raise the sheet with the answer written in large letters for easy reading by the facilitator.
- The facilitator will draw a table on the flipchart sheet or on the blackboard and write the score received by each team after each question.
- At the end of the questions, the facilitator will count the points, rank the teams and announce the final scores. The winning team receives a prize (which is not announced before the competition).



Surprisingly, the winning team will have the least points because they learned the most. The prize can be anything at the facilitator's choice: a hug from the rest of the group, a hand-written diploma, some candy, a pot flower they will have to look after, etc.

The award ceremony (very short) will be followed by a short debriefing:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Which of the information you found out so far is new to you? What did you already know?
- What does the statistical data say? How does it help us as active citizens in our club?
- What do you think about Romania's potential in connection to protected areas?
- How do they help us to be aware of worldwide, European-wide and national protected areas?
- Based on what you knew or found out, what else do you want to know about protected areas?
- If there is anything else you want to know – who would want to do some research about the topic before the next meeting? (you can assign specific roles here, set up a meeting with the representative of the national or nature park in the region or a WWF representative, etc.).
- What is the connection between protected areas and national and nature parks?

Facilitator's mention

To better understand the relation between protected areas and national and nature parks, introduce the four types of protected areas in our country, as detailed in sub-chapter 1.2 Natural protected areas in Romania:

- A. areas of national interest:** scientific reserves, national parks, natural monuments, natural reserves, nature parks.
- B. transboundary areas:** World heritage natural sites, geoparks, international wetland areas, biosphere reserves.
- C. areas of community interest or "Natura 2000" sites:** community-relevant sites, special conservation areas, special bird and fauna protection areas.
- D. county or locally-relevant areas:** established solely on the public/private properties of administrative divisions, as applicable.

6. NATURE AND NATIONAL PARKS

5 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of the activity is to define nature and national parks and the difference between them.

Preparation and facilitation

Facilitator's question: What is the difference between nature and national parks in your opinion?

The participants will be left alone to give answers that they think fit, after which the facilitator will write the two definitions on colored sheets of paper for easy reading by all participants. (The definitions are available in the Guide - Part I).

Facilitator's question: In what park are we – a nature or national one? Why? Of the other four project parks, how many are national and nature parks?

Answer: There is only one nature park – Iron Gates.

Facilitator's question: What is the connection between these five parks and wilderness?

Answer: They are home to one of the very few remaining wilderness areas in Europe.

7. DISTRIBUTION OF NATURE AND NATIONAL PARKS IN ROMANIA

40 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at the identification of Romania's national and nature parks by participants, their distribution and the parks in their region.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be divided into four equal groups. They will write the names of each national and nature park in Romania on a note. (See the list of parks in the Guide - Part I). A participant from each group will be assigned to extract seven names of national or nature parks from a bowl. Extract three names of national parks and four names of nature parks. Read out loud the names of the parks in front of everyone.

In 15 minutes, each group will:

- Pinpoint the approximate location of each park on the Romanian map (in physical format or on a screen);
- Find the limits of the five parks in the project;
- Write on a piece of paper everything they know about their park (the plants, the height of the mountains in the area, particular land features, specific plants, issues with the respective parks, how to reach them, touristic landmarks, etc.);
- Present everything they know or would like to know about each park. (*Tell them that a separate meeting will take place to learn more about the park in their region.*)

8. CLASSIFICATION OF SPECIES ACCORDING TO THEIR CONSERVATION STATUS

15 MINUTES

The activity is aimed at expanding the participants' knowledge on the classification of species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), examples of species in their region and their conservation status.

Question to the group: Why do you think that certain species of animals and plants require protection measures?

After collecting some answers, state that the species requiring protection are included in nine categories by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), which drafted a Red List of species according to their conservation status.

Question to the group – How many species do you think were included on this Red List?

Answer (*after collecting answers from students*): The most recent update of the Red List includes data on 77,340 different species, of which 22,784 are threatened by extinction. What do you think about this number?

Then, without going into detail, present the nine IUCN categories and an example for each category – the species and the park where it is found (*see the categories in the Guide - Part I*). They can be written on a flipchart sheet. A detailed description of each description is contained in the Guide.

Further on, the facilitator will give to each club member a card with an example of each of the species described under the "IUCN classification of species according to conservation status" section of the Guide. Write enough cards, so that each club member will receive one. Each member will have to research on that species until the next meeting and present more information to the group, including pictures where possible.

Facilitator's mention

The species to be researched until the next meeting are linked to the wilderness areas in our region. The pictures of some species can be found in the Guide, and the members can look at them in the Guide after the meeting (*Part I*).



? REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *How much of this information did you already know?*
- *Is it helpful to know the classification of the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN)?*
- *Would it be useful for those around you (family, friends, and colleagues) to know these things?*
- *Can you think of anything to personally take part in the protection of such species? (the ideas are written on a flipchart and are reviewed at the next meeting or project meeting, if the project is about the protection of certain species)*

9. HOT POTATO

5 MINUTES

The participants will sit in a circle. The facilitator will have a small ball. It can be improvised from a used/ folded piece of paper. The facilitator will say a word or expression that was discussed/analyzed in today's meeting and then will throw the ball at someone in the circle.

The person who caught the ball will have to hold it as if it were a hot potato (for at least 5 seconds), in which time they will have to explain, in their own words, everything they remember about that concept. After five seconds, they will throw the ball to another participant, who will continue explaining or rephrase it, but in no less than 5 seconds. Carry on until the facilitator introduces another concept, term, etc. The recommended terms for this meeting are: protected area, a national park name, a nature park name, IUCN, etc.

10. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Greeninitiative, WWF, Viitor Plus. 2015. *Culegereea Verde. Platforma Școli Verzi (Green Digest. The Green Schools Platform)*

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Quiz

4. What are protected areas?

ANNEX 1: Quiz

1. What percentage of the total land and aquatic protected areas are found in Europe?

- a. 13.6% of total land areas and 3.9% of total aquatic areas
- b. 23.5% of total land areas and 12% of total aquatic areas
- c. 17.5% of total land areas and 9% of total aquatic areas
- d. 34.2% of total land areas and 2.5% of total aquatic areas

2. According to the latest update of the Protected Areas List of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), protected areas consisted in 2014 in the entire world in:

- a. 8,217,168 square kilometers, i.e. less than the size of Europe
- b. 32,868,673 square kilometers, i.e. more than size of Africa
- c. 65,737,566 square kilometers, i.e. twice the size of Africa

3. What percentage of the total protected areas in the world is found in Europe?

- a. Europe has 38% of the total protected areas in the world (around 60,000 protected areas)
- b. Europe has 17% of the total protected areas in the world (around 30,000 protected areas)
- c. Europe has 69% of the total protected areas in the world (around 120,000 protected areas)

4. What percentage of the protected areas in Europe have less than 1,000 ha?

- a. 90%
- b. 40%
- c. 30%

5. What percentage of the protected areas in Europe have 1 to 100 ha?

- a. 65%
- b. 70%
- c. 75%

6. What percentage of the protected areas in Europe have more than 10,000 ha?

- a. 9%
- b. 10%
- c. 2%

7. Protected areas cover how many percents of Romania's land?

- a. 20%
- b. 30%
- c. 15%

8. Into what categories have been classified the protected areas in our country?

- a. national interest
- b. transboundary
- c. areas of community interest or „Natura 2000” sites
- d. county or local relevant areas

9. Which of the following are protected areas of national interest?

- a. scientific reserves
- b. national parks
- c. natural monuments
- d. nature reserves
- e. nature parks
- f. geoparks



3

10. Which of the following are trans-boundary protected areas?

- a. biosphere reserves
- b. international wet areas
- c. geoparks
- d. World heritage sites
- e. scientific reserves

11. Which of the following are areas of community interests or Natura 2000 areas?

- a. areas of community interests
- b. special conservation areas
- c. special bird and fauna protection areas
- d. natural monuments

12. How many national and nature parks are found in Romania?

- a. 16 nation, 12 nature
- b. 13 national, 15 nature
- c. 10 national, 18 nature

The correct answers are:

- 1. a.
- 2. b.
- 3. b.
- 4. a.
- 5. a.
- 6. c.
- 7. a.
- 8. a. b. c. d. (all answers are correct)
- 9. a. b. c. d. e. (all answers are correct, except f.)
- 10. a. b. c. d. (all answers are correct, except e.)
- 11. a. b. c. (all answers are correct, except d.)
- 12. b.

ACTIVE

5. Introducing the concept of wilderness



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (A)** Acknowledge the uniqueness and show appreciation and pride in the wilderness areas in the region
- (K)** Describe the concepts of wilderness, harmony and balance
- (K)** Define natural processes in wilderness areas
- (K)** Present species, associations of species and habitats linked to wilderness in their region



Key concepts:

- Wilderness
- Harmony and balance in nature
- Food chain
- Ecological balances and imbalances
- Natural processes

PLAN OF ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Meeting agenda and objectives	Presentation	5 minutes	
2. What is wild?	Group work	30 minutes	Definitions of Annex 1 on cards, pens, paper
3. Species in our wilderness areas	Presentation	45 minutes	Cards with names of species, small ball
4. Wilderness: harmony and balance	Team game Case study Presentation	50 minutes	Printout of Annex 2 for facilitators
5. Explore the perimeter	Connection exercise	40 minutes	
6. Core, buffer and transition areas	Association exercise	15 minutes	
7. Owls and crows	Team game	15 minutes	Printouts of questions
8. Next steps		5 minutes	

Total estimated time: **3 hours, 25 minutes**

Notes:

This meeting will be organized outdoors.

Before this meeting, the facilitator will read the "Wilderness Concept" chapter in the Guide and Annex 2.



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

Once outdoors, the participants will be told they will interact as much as possible with nature, in order to learn more about how it works, and particularly in order to explore the concepts of wilderness, harmony and balance. Moreover, the facilitator will announce that each activity is designed to involve observation, attention, connection with nature. Same as in previous meetings, the facilitator will announce the objectives, duration and types of activities.

2. WHAT IS WILD?

30 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is for participants identify the multiple meanings of the word "wild", in order to eventually find out the meaning used within the club and how we will relate to the concept of wilderness.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be asked what they think is the meaning of "wild/wilderness"? They will be asked to give some definitions of the word. After presenting their ideas, the participants will be asked – How many meanings do you think the word "wild" has in Romanian/your language? After a few answers, the facilitator will state there are at least 16 meanings, and probably more. To discover these meanings, the participants will be divided into three groups. Each group will receive five or six cards from the facilitator with definitions of the word "wild" (see Annex 1). They will have ten minutes to make up a story with characters and events showing the 5 or 6 meanings of the word wild. The story will have to include all the meanings of the word "wild" written on the cards. After preparation, each group will tell its story. In the end, the facilitator will review all the meanings of the word "wild". Later on, the participants will be asked:

- Did you know all the meanings of the word "wild"?
- Why do you think this word became negative when referring to people?
- What do you think is the basic feeling which gave this disparaging meaning?
- Which of these definitions are targeted by our project? The facilitator will exemplify the most relevant definitions for the project - 1,2,3,4,5.
- Do you think we should fear wilderness – as nature unspoiled by human intervention?
- Which words best describe wild nature without being disparaging (negative, unfavorable, despising)? Write down all the words on a sheet of paper and fill in with the definition of wilderness from the Guide:
 - *The wilderness is an area governed by natural processes, unmodified or only slightly modified by human activity, composed of native habitats and species, large enough for the effective ecological functioning of the natural processes governing it.*
 - *Wilderness means harmony and balance. Wilderness means lakes, springs, fish, forests, diversity of animals and plants, and fresh air. Wilderness is also home (the habitat) to wild animals such as wolves and bears, the place where they live, feed, mate and raise their young.*
- What do you think is the difference between "wild" and "wilderness areas"? After collecting the answers, present the definitions from part I of the Guide.

Facilitator's mention

Wild areas

Wild areas are subject to intensive natural processes and habitats and tend to be individually smaller and more fragmented than wilderness areas, despite often covering extensive areas. In Romania, wild areas may sometimes be associated with strict and full protection areas as defined under the relevant protected area management plans. Wild areas can be connected by green corridors, thus creating more extensive wilderness areas.

Wilderness areas

Wilderness areas consist of habitats and native species, and are large enough to ensure the ecological functioning of natural processes. Wilderness areas may consist in several wild areas connected by green corridors. Green corridors can ensure contiguous wild areas that allow the travel, mating of, and offer shelter for, land and aquatic wildlife. Green corridors provide habitats, shelter, travelling routes and, at the same time, protection for wild species.

- Why do you think wilderness areas need to stay as untouched as possible? (for instance: because all natural elements are in balance in the wilderness, and any negative human intervention gives rise to imbalances. You can make a connection to the club's mission to protect wilderness areas and maintain the natural balance). Go from this activity directly to the next!

3. SPECIES IN OUR WILDERNESS AREAS

45 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to stimulate participants to learn as much information as possible about species that could indicate the presence of natural processes linked to wilderness areas, to understand the connection between these species and the concept of harmony and balance specific to wilderness areas. Also, participants will understand that the presence of such species is instrumental in the good functioning of their ecosystems.

Preparation and facilitation

In meeting 4, the participants received cards with species they had to present. Each participant will step up and talk about the five or six species assigned for 4 minutes. There may be two participants with the same species, who will have 4 minutes to prepare a common presentation.

The facilitator will take notes during the individual or common presentations. The other participants will have to be careful and take in the information about each presented species, then make a connection between those species and the wilderness areas. After each presentation, the facilitator will ask a few specific verification and assimilation questions about the presented species.

Do the same for each participant/group of participants.

After the presentation, the participants will be seated in a circle. A ball will be thrown from one participant to another. The receiver will have to say what they remember about a certain species presented by the colleagues. Do this until something was said about each species.

The ball may reach the same participant several times, but each time will have to share other information about other species not mentioned before.

In the end, all the participants will be asked:

- *What do you think about the information on the species? Did you know them already or did you find out something new?*
- *Did you see them in the region?*
- *What was the most interesting thing you found out?*
- *How do you think this helps you to know more about the species in your region?*
- *What does it say about the health of their ecosystems? Why are these species representative for the wilderness in our region?*

4. WILDERNESS: HARMONY AND BALANCE

50 MINUTES

Purpose

The aim of this activity is to explore the idea of balance and harmony in nature, to understand what balance and imbalance in nature means and how we positively or negatively impact this balance.



Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be asked to make groups of two, stand back to back and take each other's arms. After each group of two is in position, they will be invited to sit slowly on the ground leaning on each other and without releasing their hands, losing balance or sitting at the same time. After they sat on the ground, the participants will be asked to keep their hands together and try to stand up at the same time. After trying this several times in groups of two, the participants will be challenged to join two groups and try stand up four at a time. After trying in four, they will try again in six, then eight, then the whole group. The activity will continue until the facilitator sees the participants are feeling good and motivated. The recommended exercise time would be no more than 15-20 minutes.

The end of the activity will be followed by a debriefing:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How was the task? Was it easy or hard to keep balance?
- How was it in pairs? How was it in four? How was it in eight?
- Did you manage to work in harmony when there were more of you? What did you need to be harmonious and in balance?
- What do you think harmony and balance mean in nature? How would you describe harmony and balance in nature?
- How do plants and animals succeed at maintaining a balanced relationship?
- How would you define a food chain in the wild? Could you give examples of food chains in the wild that reflect a balanced relationship? Write down the ideas of the participants on a piece of paper/notebook for later reviewing.

Further on, a participant will be asked to read the **case study of Annex 2** and find out with other participants ways to ensure balance in the wild by answering the following questions:

- What do you think are the negative effects of an excessive number of herbivores in a natural park? Loss of vegetation, insects, rodents, predators, etc.
- What happens if the number of predators is balanced in this case (e.g. wolf)? *They will hunt herbivores.*
- What happens if herbivores decrease by being hunted by predators? *Will the vegetation on meadows and hills be restored?*
- What happens if the vegetation on meadows and hills is restored? *There will be an increase in the number of trees, insects and rodents, the river banks will be strengthened.*
- What happens if insects and rodents increase? *The number of birds and small predators will increase.*
- What happens if the number and size of trees increase? *There will be an increase in the number of beavers.*
- What happens if the number of beavers increases? *Beaver-made dams will appear.*
- What happens if the number of dams increases? *There will be an increase in the number of fish and amphibians.*
- What happens if the number of fish increases? *There will be an increase in the number of fish predators, birds and bears.*
- What happens if the vegetation grows back? *The banks stabilize, the water flows increase, etc.*

Ask the questions one after the other until arriving again at predators and making a connection with balance and harmony in nature. Continue with the second set of questions:

- How do you feel to better understand these things and how a food chain works? Did you think of it before?
- Why do you think wilderness needs to be kept as much as possible in its original state?
- How do you think people upset the natural processes occurring in wilderness areas?
- How do imbalances appear? Can you give an example of a natural imbalance occurring in our region? *Write down the imbalances brought up by participants for later consideration.*

After the participants give examples of imbalances, the facilitator can present a few causes and examples of natural imbalances and their effects in Romania (see Annex 2 and the Threats chapter in the Guide). A few general causes and examples will be given.

The participants will be asked later:

- What can we do as part of the food chain to prevent imbalances in wilderness processes (a few basic ideas)? *The ideas will be written down by the facilitator to review at the end of the meeting and to relate them to later project meetings, when they will seek together ways to intervene by means of the project to be implemented within the club.*

At the end of the activity, review the following with the participants:

- What did you understand about the concept of wilderness?
- What do balance and balance and harmony in nature mean, in short?
- What is the food chain and how does it influence the balance in wilderness areas?
- What is an imbalance in the wilderness and the causes of its occurrence?

Introduce the following activity by specifying that: *Now, since I understand more about the concept of wilderness and an element which could mean balance and harmony in nature, let's go further to better connect to it.*

5. EXPLORE THE AREA

40 MINUTES

Purpose

By this activity, the participants should identify biotic and abiotic processes and get in contact with nature to identify traces of these processes.

Preparation and facilitation

Before beginning, the facilitator will say the following: Wild areas feature natural processes that occur free from human intervention. These processes can be classified into two large categories: abiotic processes (non-living) and biotic processes (produced by living organisms). The facilitator defines them (see explanations under the chapter on the Concept of wilderness in the Guide).

The facilitator will further ask the participants whether they can give examples of a process in nature/wilderness, which is non-living (abiotic), as well as a biotic process produced by living organisms. After all the participants answered correctly, they will be introduced to the next activity, where they are challenged to observe natural elements resulting from both abiotic and biotic processes.

The participants will be divided into pairs. Place a stone in the middle of the place to be explored by the participants. Each member will be sent to find a fallen branch (not longer than 1 m), bring it and place it with one tip towards the rock. The available time is 2-3 minutes. After the branches are in position, the participants will imagine this is a map, and grouped in pairs, they will choose one branch tip from the map. At a sign of the facilitator, they will proceed in the direction indicated by the tip of the branch in order to explore, on a distance of no more than 100 meters, as many plants, animals and natural features as possible (rocks, etc.) in that direction. The participants will be encouraged to refrain from talking, to observe every detail, touch the plants and natural features they encounter with all their curiosity, but without ripping or damaging them. As they discover something captivating, they easily touch the shoulder of their exploration partner and show them what to look very carefully at. Encourage them to be as alert as possible at those moments and to not think of anything else other than they are observing, sensing, smelling, hearing, to experiment everything with the enthusiasm and curiosity of a child. The time allotted for this activity can be 10 minutes or longer, according to the participants' reaction to the activity. When you feel the participants have explored enough, they will return around the map at a pre-determined signal.

After all the participants finished observing, the activity will be debriefed:



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How was the activity for you?
- Can you name a few natural features that surprised you? How many details have you noticed?
- What natural features have you identified with your senses (sight, hearing, smell, tactile sense)? Which result from biotic processes and which from abiotic ones? The answers of the participants will be written down on paper cards. After being listed by the participants, the facilitator will add the rest of the features previously written on paper cards, which were not mentioned. See the relevant content in the chapter on the concept of wilderness of the Guide.
- How did you feel during this activity? What thoughts, emotions, and feelings did you experience? Have you succeeded to leave your other problems or concerns at home?
- How did you feel to share what you observed with a partner?
- Name a word which best describes this experience.
- How often are you aware of the nature around you in your daily life? To what extent do you manage to stop and observe a plant or enjoy the blowing wind in your daily routines and activities?
- To what extent do you think this helps us to be as aware as possible of the nature/wilderness around us?

The reflections and lessons learned by the participants will be reviewed, after which the facilitator ends the activity with a quote:

"I'd sit for hours watching the birds or squirrels, or looking into the faces of flowers. When I discovered a new plant, I sat beside it for a minute or a day, to make its acquaintance and try to hear what it had to tell me". John Muir: My life with nature.

John Muir (21 April 1838 – 24 December 1914) was a Scottish naturalist who lived in the United States. He was an author, philosopher and an early defender of wilderness protection in America. He wrote many books, essays and letters about his relationship with nature.

6. CORE, BUFFER AND TRANSITION AREAS

15 MINUTES



Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to better comprehend the concept of wilderness and one way in which wilderness areas can be structured.



Preparation and facilitation

Draw a circle with rope on the ground, at least 5 meters in diameter. In this circle, insert another two rope circles, 4 meters and a one and a half meter in diameter.

In the first step, the participants will be asked to sit together in the first circle (the outer one). After they all sat in the circle, they will be asked how they felt, if they fit in, and what percent they think they took from the total surface of the circle?

Next, they will all be asked to move inside the next circle and asked the same things one more time.

Afterward, they will be asked to move and fit in the last circle (the smallest one) and will be asked the following:

- Did you all fit in?
- What happened to the grass you are sitting on?
- If you stayed there for several months, what would happen to the vegetation under your feet? What would happen to the insects and microorganisms under your feet?
- What connection do you think there is between this exercise and the wilderness areas around us?

The facilitator asks the participants to sit in the large circle and will explain how wilderness areas can be structured:

Wilderness areas can be divided into three "sub-areas" (see page 15 in the Guide): 1. Core, with the highest level of wilderness dominated by natural processes, 2. Buffer, with a relatively low impact of human presence, 3. Transition, an area where some human activities are allowed. In Romania, these three sub-areas can be linked, in some cases, to strict,

full protection areas, the sustainable management areas or special conservation areas defined under the management plans for natural protected areas. Thus, to list the activities allowed in each area, read the specific management plans of each protected area (national or nature park).

7. OWLS AND CROWS

10 MINUTES

Purpose

This is a recap game.

Preparation and facilitation

Split the participants into two groups: the Owls' and the Crows' teams. Tie a piece of rope to split the space in two and have the teams in front of each other, but 2 meters behind the rope. About 20 meters behind the rope and behind each team, place a bandana (scarf) of different colors for each team to indicate the house of each team.

The facilitator will read one statement on nature at a time. If the statement is true, the crows will chase the crows. If the statement is false, the crows will chase the owls. If a player is touched by a member of the opposing team before reaching behind the scarf of his/her own team (home), he or she will become a member of the opposing team. Once they reached behind their house, they cannot be touched anymore by the members of the opposing team. They can only be touched only in the territory between the rope and the scarf of their team.

Before beginning, you should ask the first question for demonstration purposes and ask the participants to say whether the statement is true or false and what is the direction they should run to. After you confirm they understand the rules of the game, you can start giving your statements. After each statement, the game is resumed from the start line and the teams changed according to how the members were touched and ask the next question. Say that the teams start to run only after the facilitator finished reading the statement twice, during which they have to keep silent to hear it.

The facilitators can prepare the questions, but you can also use the following:

1. *The ecologic balance is the state of a natural ecosystem (aquatic or terrestrial) with a well-balanced food chain. (True)*
2. *The Hungarian tulip is found in the Retezat National park (False). Correct answer: it is found in the Iron Gates Nature Park.*
3. *The shrinking of natural habitats of animal species is a consequence of ecologic imbalances. (True)*
4. *Excessive hunting does not disrupt the natural balance. (False)*
5. *The rainbow trout is a land mammal. (False)*
6. *The mammal Martes Martes (Latin name) is not found on the Romanian territory. (False)*
7. *The core area is an area with the highest degree of wilderness, the most valuable area characterized by deep isolation, where native habitats and species are found, and natural processes are governed by nature. (True)*

8. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

He/she will also remind the participants about the assigned work for the preparation of other information related to protected areas.

Further reading:

- Natural balances and imbalances, Project co-funded by the European Social Fund under the "Human Resources Development" Sectoral Operational Program 2007/2013 Invest in People!, 2015. Available at: <https://multitouch.wikispaces.com/file/view/tema1.pdf/152857353/tema1.pdf>
- Albi I. 2015. *Lupii care au schimbat cursul apelor (The wolves that changed river flows)*. Available at: <http://www.zooland.ro/lupii-care-au-schimbat-cursul-apelor-5011>

Support materials:

- Annex 1: 16 Meanings of Wild, Annex 2: Natural balances and imbalances



5. Introducing the concept of wilderness

ANNEX 1: 16 Meanings of Wild

Group 1

1. WILD = (About animals) Not tamed or domesticated.
2. WILD = (About nature) Created by nature without human intervention; natural; non-artificial.
3. WILD = (About land, fields, etc.) Not influenced by human intervention; unworked, uncultivated.
4. WILD = (About plants) Which grew by itself, uncultivated, ungrafted.
5. WILD = (About places, territories, etc.) Barren, uninhabited; lacking civilization.

Group 2:

6. WILD = (Person) belonging to groups of people in the early stages of the human society; primitive (human).
7. WILD = (Characteristic to the primitive man) Rudimentary, backward, primitive, unevolved.
8. WILD = (About hair) Dense and coarse, messy.
9. WILD = (About people) Hard to master, unsettled, fierce, shy, coy.
10. WILD = Manifested with utmost intensity, unusually strong, violent, fiery, fierce; scary, unyielding.
11. WILD = (Person) who behaves like a primitive man; uncivilized, backward, rude (man).

Group 3

12. WILD = (About human manifestations or actions, etc.) Which shows lack of humanity, inhumanity, cruelty, brutality; fierce, merciless.
13. WILD = (About eyes, gaze, etc.) Which conveys uneasiness, fear or violence, wildness.
14. WILD = (About people and their manifestations) Uncontrollable; fierce, impulsive, unruly, unyielding.
15. WILD = (Man) who shuns the world and does not abide by (social) conventions; (man) withdrawn, isolated, lonely, unsociable, aloof.
16. WILD = (About movements or moving bodies) Fast, headlong, passionate.

Source: dexonline.ro

5. Introducing the concept of wilderness

ANNEX 2: Balances and imbalances in nature

Source: *Natural balances and imbalances*, available at <https://multitouch.wikispaces.com/file/view/tema1.pdf/152857353/tema1.pdf>, Project co-funded by the European Social Fund under the "Human Resources Development" Sectoral Operational Program 2007/2013 Invest in People

Man is an integral part of nature. All natural features are interdependent, which in turn leads to the natural balance.

The (natural) ecological balance is the state of a natural (aquatic or land) environment where the food chain is correctly balanced.

This balance is maintained, as long the environment is free of any disruptive factors. The set of relations and exchanges between man and nature and their interdependence impact the ecological balance determine the living conditions and, implicitly, the working conditions for people and the development prospects for society as a whole.

The evolution of human society brought changes at first insignificant, then with larger impacts, as people used natural materials and created others without realizing they would damage the environment. Today's world needs to minimize any actions leading to natural imbalances, with disastrous effects on people, animals, the vegetation and the weather.

The consequences of environmental imbalances caused by people include:

- Pollution of the water, air and soil (through wastewater discharge channels, flue gas chimneys, agricultural pesticides or fertilizers, etc.).
- Climate change and all their consequences, through expansion of dry areas and the creation of situations conducive to extreme floods.
- The intentional or accidental introduction of new species threatening local species (e.g. Chinese carp species escaped from fisheries to natural waters and bred to the detriment of Romanian carp species).
- Overexploitation, i.e. excess hunting and fishing, deforestations, overgrazing, etc. lead to the destruction natural balances between different species (e.g.: loss of vegetal species due to excessive logging/deforestation or overgrazing, decrease in the numbers of various animal species – fish, due to overfishing, or birds or mammals due to excessive hunting, etc.).
- Loss of living space or shrinking natural and semi-natural habitats.
- Fragmentation of habitats, which in turn disrupts communication between the network segments (can be generated by the expansion and development of human settlements).

A particular feature of the relations between the environment and the societal development is the understanding of the significance of sustainable development. This involves the protection and conservation of the environment, on one hand, and the reasonable quantitative and qualitative use of natural resources, on the other.

Should we fail to mitigate the effects of the man-made natural imbalances, the scenarios of the European Environment Agency show that:

- Romania will face, a few decades from now, with desertification, land submerged under water, extreme weather events and extinction of animal and plant species.
- Specialists also claim that lest we mitigate global warming, the level of the Black Sea could face an alarming raise.
- The Danube Delta could be totally inundated, while cities such as Tulcea, Galați, Brăila and Sulina could be partially submerged.
- The Black Sea coastline between Sulina and Vama Veche is in danger.



- Global warming brings extreme weather, which also started to occur in Romania, where around 10 tornadoes happen every year, albeit of lower intensities than in the United States.
- Our land will also experience desertification. The most affected will be the western Oltenia and the southeast Banat, where this phenomenon is already underway.

The European Environment Agency published a report showing the following years will be subject to major temperature increases in the south and east of the continent. Drought will be felt in all seasons by a 5 – 7 degrees Celsius warming and a 20 to 40% drop in precipitations. The most affected Romanian regions will be Dobrogea, Oltenia, south Muntenia and Banat. Any failure to take urgent measures may see the desertification of the south part of the country, particularly in Dolj county and Dobrogea.

Together with Spain, Italy and Greece, Romania is among the first to bear the effects of such changes as early as 2020 - 2030. Climate change will impact ecosystems, human settlements and infrastructure in all Romania's economic and social walks of life.

CASE STUDY

Rebalancing the food chain

Source: <http://www.zooland.ro/lupii-care-au-schimbata-cursul-apelor-5011>

Recommended video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ysa5OBhXz-Q&feature=youtu.be>

Not everybody understands why it is so worrying that some animal species become extinct. How does this impact the ecosystems and, implicitly, us?

The above video explains this phenomenon very well, but using an example that illustrates quite the opposite: what happens when reintroducing a long extinct animal into a nature park?

Specialists describe how wolves reintroduced in the Yellowstone National Park in the US have impacted the entire food chain and restored the ecosystems and even the geography of the rivers in the region. The park was repopulated with these wild animals in 1995, after 70 years of absence, and the first major positive changes emerged in less than 10 years:

- Balancing the number of deer by hunting them. Their feeding habits balanced because they were afraid to be exposed to wolves, which led to a regeneration of vegetation in open meadows and valleys. The height of the affected trees increased five fold and entire areas were reforested, providing more food for bears.
- Reforestation also led to an increase in the number of birds and beavers – these engineers of river flows, which build habitats for fish, ducks and other animal species around rivers.
- Wolves cut down the population of coyotes, which in turn increased the number of rabbits and mice, which are the food of vultures, ravens, foxes and other small predators.
- But the largest impact was on the rivers: since the restored vegetation stabilized the soil, lowered erosion and strengthened the banks, thus stabilizing the water flows.

An apparently minor element, a link in the natural chain which changes everything – the presence of an essential element which worked perfectly for thousands of years – shows that nature can adapt to negative change, the protection and restoration of the environment are not impossible.

6. Benefits of wilderness



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

(S) Identify the benefits of wilderness

(A) Show recognition for the benefits of wilderness in their own life and that of their local communities

(A) Show appreciation and pride for the nature in their region



Key concepts:

⦿ Benefits of wilderness

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual support materials (flipchart paper, blackboard, paper etc.) according to available resources
2. Mission impossible	Introduction game	20 minutes	Tasks written on blackboard/ flipchart paper
3. Benefits of wilderness I	Individual work, Group work, Facilitated discussion	50 minutes	Flipchart, felt-tip pens, tape, cards with the benefits of wilderness
4. Benefits of wilderness II	Individual work, Group work, Facilitated discussion	50 minutes	Post-its, flipchart paper/blackboard
5. Hot potato	Evaluation game	20 minutes	Small ball
6. Next steps	Presentation	10 minutes	Attendance list

Total estimated time: **2 hours, 35 minutes**

Note:

Before this meeting the facilitator will read the chapter about the Benefits of wilderness in the Guide.



1. OBJECTIVES AND MEETING AGENDA

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the introduction is to raise the interest of participants and set their expectations for the meeting.

The purpose of this meeting is to identify the advantages of wilderness areas.

2. MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

20 MINUTES

The purpose of this activity is to energize the team and introduce the topic of the meeting to the participants. The activity is also aimed at strengthening the team and preparing it for the project implementation stage.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be split into two – four groups. One group should have at least 5-6 participants. Write on a flipchart sheet/blackboard a set of tasks that every team should fulfill together in a record time (8 minutes). Each team will have the same tasks, but written in a different order on the team's flipchart. The tasks are:

- Write a four line poem about nature;
- Bring an object made with water and a mineral;
- Trace an animal or something left behind by an animal. List a few traits of that animal and explain how it could influence the life of other living things, including humans;
- Bring something that reflects sunlight and say what it is made of;
- Bring something that has a smell inspired from nature and say what it is made from;
- Bring some kind of waste left by people and describe its effects on nature;
- Make a rain dance with the entire team (a dance with moves and lyrics which bring forth the rain).

After the time ends, each team will have four minutes to present the result of each task. After the groups completed the task, they will be asked:

- How did you feel during this task, how did you organize yourselves? What helped you complete your task?
- How can your experience with this activity (task sharing, communication, mainstreaming, assignment of skill-based roles) help you with your wilderness projects to be implemented by the club in the future?

3. BENEFITS OF WILDERNESS I

50 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at enabling students to pinpoint the different benefits of wilderness areas.

Scenario 1:

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator reads the chapter "Benefits of wilderness" in the Guide and prepares cards with quotes.

The facilitator draws on a piece of flipchart paper or the blackboard three columns with specific categories of benefits: social, environment and economic benefits. Each participant takes one card with a benefit. He/she will think about it for 30 seconds, then place it on one of the columns on the flipchart sheet or the blackboard, then asked to explain this choice – Why do they think that benefit is economically, socially or environmentally relevant? Moreover, they will say whether they had anything to gain from that benefit before and how.

After taking all the cards, the participants will be asked whether they think there are other types of benefits and which. If other benefits exist, they will be written down on cards and included under the relevant category.

When the activity is completed, the participants are asked:

- How difficult was it to group the benefits into categories?
- Which of the benefits were unknown to them before?
- How many benefits do you think you are personally taking advantage of? What do you think about this? What conclusion can be drawn?
- Are your benefits any different from those of young people in different regions (e.g.: Iași, Bucharest)?
- What are the main lessons learned from this activity?
- What would you do on a personal level after finding these benefits?
- How would you make someone in your close circle of friends aware of these benefits?

Scenario 2:

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will write down on a flipchart sheet: Benefits of Wilderness. The participants will be asked what they think these benefits are, and will be specifically asked to think of them from a personal angle – how they benefitted from nature/wilderness in general. The participants will be split into three groups, and each group will write as many benefits as possible. After 10-12 minutes of working time, one representative from each group will present the benefits. The facilitator will have three markers in 3 different colors: green for environmental benefits, blue for social benefits, yellow for economic benefits. After each presentation by the three groups, the participants will be asked to what extent the benefits have an environmental, social or economic character. In the end, there will be 3 flipcharts with benefits broken down on color-coded categories. Further, the participants will be given a pen, and the facilitator's signal, each participant will walk to the three flipchart sheets, which will be placed on the floor, and write down their name near a benefit they were using up to then. This will be followed by a debriefing:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did you observe during this activity? Were you expecting to find out about so many benefits?*
- *How many benefits do you think you are personally taking advantage of? What do you think about this?*
- *What are the main lessons learned from this activity?*
- *What would you do on a personal level after finding these benefits?*
- *How would you make someone in your close circle of friends aware of these benefits?*

4. BENEFITS OF WILDERNESS II

60 MINUTES

Purpose

The next activity is aimed at enabling participants to prioritize the benefits of wilderness and raise awareness on their importance.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will prepare cards with benefits of wilderness areas as identified by the previous activity or under the "Benefits" chapter of the Guide. There will be as many cards as participants at the meeting, but the facilitator will have ready more cards with benefits.

On the blackboard or flipchart, the facilitator will draw a triangle pointing down. Ten levels will be drawn inside the triangle. The participants take a card with a benefit, then stick it on a level where they think it belongs in terms of significance for people's lives, starting from the upper part of the reversed triangle (the most important benefits) down to the triangle tip (on the lower part) with the benefits which are relatively of lower significance in their opinion. Each level will include no more than one benefit. The number of cards stuck per level (and benefit) will be larger in the upper part of the drawing (where the base of the reversed triangle will accommodate a higher number of cards), which reveals the importance of those benefits in everyone's life.



Once they stick the cards, the participants will support their choice with arguments. The answers will be most likely different. In such situations, the students can agree on changing the level of certain benefits. It is important that the facilitator point out that there are no wrong answers, just different perceptions and certain general trends – some benefits are essential to life, while others are optional. You may even agree to remove the separating lines and keep just two large categories of benefits.

After reviewing all the benefits of wilderness areas, the facilitator will bring up the historical perspective:

- Did the people change their mind on the significance of these benefits over time?
- What remained equally important, what lost importance?
- What are the first two most important and relevant benefits of wilderness at your personal level? With which one are you most often in contact and which do you consider to be the most relevant for your personal life?
- What are the first two benefits of wilderness for your community and for the economic and social characteristics of your community?
- What would happen if, all of a sudden, you'd lose access to wilderness areas? What does this say about wilderness around you? What should we all pay attention to?

The facilitator will summarize the opinions of all participants in order to assimilate the answers to the questions above. (*adapted from the Forest in the context of sustainable development, supporting material for teachers and students, ENPI EAST FLEG, pg. 14*)

5. RECAP AND EVALUATION: HOT POTATO

10 MINUTES

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator throws a small ball to a participant, a "hot potato", which means the receiver has to answer quickly or will "get burned". After speaking, they will throw the "potato" to another colleague of their choice. It will be tried to involve as many participants as possible in the assessment activity, even if not all will answer to all three aspects.

The three aspects considered for the final evaluation are usually the mood of the participants, the new knowledge and the transfer of knowledge to everyday life. Thus, the questions or instructions for participants will be designed considering the following:

1. Evaluating the mood of participants: *What did you like about this meeting? How do you feel at the end of the session? Say it in one simple sentence.*
2. Evaluating the participants' knowledge: *Say a keyword from the new things you learned or what you learned today.*
3. Evaluating the participants' reactions and potential changes in behavior: *Say something that you would do differently from now on in connection with the benefits you learned?*

(*method adapted from the Forest in the context of sustainable development, supporting material for teachers and students, ENPI EAST FLEG, pag. 43*)

6. NEXT STEPS

The facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Papp D. J., Kelemen K. 2013. *Copiii și natura – Culegere de jocuri în natură*, POS MEDIU: „Pentru natură și comunități locale - bazele unui management integrat Natura 2000 în zona Hârtibaciu - Târnava Mare - Olt”, cofinanțat din Fondul European de Dezvoltare Regională (Children and Nature – Collection of outdoor games, SOP ENVIRONMENT: „For nature and local communities – the basics of a Natura 2000 integrated management in the Hârtibaciu - Târnava Mare – Olt area”, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund), „Milvus Group” Association, Târgu-Mureș
- Greeninitiative, WWF, Viitor Plus. 2015. *Culegerea Verde*. Platforma Școli Verzi (Green Collection. Green Schools Platform)
- Murariu C., Melu R. 2015. *Pădurea în contextul dezvoltării durabile (The Forest in the Context of Sustainable Development)*. Chișinău
- Wilderness. 2015. Available at: <http://www.wilderness.net/NWPS/values>

7. Threats to wilderness areas



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Describe the links between different features of the environment
- (S)** Identify and list threats to wilderness areas caused by human activities
- (S)** Establish causalities and how human action can influence natural processes in wilderness areas
- (A)** Develop interest for environmental issues and do research on the environmental issues in the region



Key concepts:

⦿ Food web ⦿ Green corridors ⦿ Natural processes

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual support (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.) according to available resources
2. Who am I?	Role play	20 minutes	Labels with animal and plant names, adhesive tape or paper clips/ pins
3. Food web	Team game	35 minutes	A rope
4. The cake	Team game	15 minutes	A rope, a stick
5. Threats to wilderness	Snow ball	35 minutes	Paper, pencils, flipchart sheets, markers
6. The city that disappeared	Storytelling	20 minutes	Story from Annex 1, printed
7. Recap and evaluation: Ball of knowledge	Evaluation game	10 minutes	Ball
8. Next steps	Presentation	10 minutes	Attendance list

Total estimated time: **2 hours, 30 minutes**

Notă:

Before this meeting the facilitator will read the chapter about the Threats to wilderness areas in the Guide.



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will present the objectives, activities and duration of the meeting (without going into details). The purpose of the meeting is to find threats to wilderness areas caused by human activities and their effects on plants and animals.

2. WHO AM I?

20 MINUTES



The purpose of this game is to create an energizing atmosphere and help participants feel at ease.



Each participant will have a card with the name of an animal from the guide's list of species, as presented in meetings 5 and 6, placed on his/her back. The participants are split into pairs, and the player shows his/her back to the pair and then asks questions to guess the name of the animal on the back. The colleague answers only by "yes" or "no". If the one asking the questions received a "yes", he/she may ask an additional question until the first "no". Then the roles are switched. Whoever guesses the animal stuck on their back will stick the label on their chest (adapted from *Who am I? of "Children and Nature 2000 – Collection of outdoor games"*).

? REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What did you think of the game?
- How did you feel?
- What happened during the game?
- How hard was it for you to identify the animal? Why?
- What lessons can we learn from this game?

3. FOOD WEB

35 MINUTES



The purpose of this activity is to make students aware of the interconnection between the components of the food web and the importance of maintaining the species' habitats in their natural state.



The participants will make a circle and receive a card with the name of a species. The cards have to include producers, herbivores, predators and decomposers (they can use the cards from activity 2 and fill them in with examples of species representing a food web). We also need a rope - its end is held by a producer (a plant). The facilitator asks questions which facilitates the activity and uses the rope.

Who can consume this *plant*? We throw the rope to the *herbivore*. The participant holds the rope and throws it further, according to the facilitator's next questions. Who preys on this animal? We also throw the rope to that *predator*. Thus, we will pass by each link of the food web, and after the apex predator dies (it has no more natural enemies), it decomposes and re-enters the natural cycle, and the substances are absorbed from the ground by a plant, i.e. a producer.

The game ends when the rope is held by all participants. The result is a food web, which looks like a spider web. This chain ensures the natural balance.

What would happen if predators disappeared? Each predator leaves the network and drops the rope. The web is no longer as stable as it was. What happens if a forest is cleared or a meadow is excessively plowed? The participants with names of trees/plants written on their cards will drop the rope and will exit the web. The web becomes even more unstable. The game continues with the exclusion of all links, until the entire web is destroyed. State the importance of decomposers, without which there will be no circuit of substances in nature.

Depending on the number of participants, the food web can be created out of several food chains. We have to be careful that each link of the chain is provided with food. The decomposers can be quite numerous, as they may follow any category, not necessarily apex predators, since all living things are, after death, decomposed into inorganic substances that can be absorbed by plants.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did you think of the game? How did you feel?*
- *What happened?*
- *How did it feel to see the web in danger?*
- *What are the relations between human beings and nature?*
- *Can you still recall what are the natural processes occurring in wilderness areas? Can they still occur if the habitats are altered by human intervention?*
- *How are humans influenced by this web? Do they also belong to the web?*
- *Of all beings and natural phenomena, which do you think has the greatest impact on nature? What about the food web?*
- *Who do you think is responsible for protecting the environment and wilderness areas?*
- *What could happen if we don't look after the environment and wilderness areas?*

4. THE CAKE

15 MINUTES

Purpose

This game is aimed at informing participants about green corridors and the effects of the shrinking and fragmentation of natural habitats on the life of animals in the wilderness.

Facilitator's mention

Green corridors can ensure contiguous wild areas that allow the travel, mating of, and offer shelter for land and aquatic wildlife. Green corridors also provide habitats, shelter, travelling routes and, at the same time, protection for wild species.

Preparation and facilitation

Use rope to make a circle large enough for all participants to fit inside. It has to be large enough to fit everybody in, but not too large. Then, 25% of the circle area is marked with rope and made to resemble a slice of a birthday cake, and the group will be asked to fit in the remaining three quarters. After the participants managed to fit in the remaining area, another 25% of the circle will be marked, and the participants asked to fit in the remaining area.

Since the available area of the circle is limited, the participants may want to find all kinds of funny ways to remain in. After the participants take over the space, give them 30 seconds, then go on and mark out three quarters of the area. The participants will be asked to fit in the remaining area. This time, some participants could be left outside the circle. If they manage to stay together, give them another 30 seconds, then congratulate them and applaud them for completing the game. Invite them to sit in circles, on chairs (or on grass if outdoors), and start the reflection activity.

Note: *at any time during the game, they can also be separated and split into groups inside the circle, with another rope, to show that sometimes buildings may separate the species of animals, which will no longer be able to travel freely and meet.*



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What happened? What did you have to do?
- How did you feel during the game?
- What did you think when you felt so cramped?
- What happened when you were separated and couldn't meet and communicate with each other anymore?
- How does it feel like living so close to each other?
- What would be the space where you would feel comfortable?
- What do you feel about this experience?
- What significance does all this have? What do we learn from it?
- What does lack of space mean to people? What about animals?
- How would animals react to lack of space?
- How would they be affected by it?
- What lessons can we learn from this game?
- How could we transfer these lessons into everyday life?

5. THREATS TO WILDERNESS

35 MINUTES

(group exercise)



Purpose

This activity seeks to stimulate participants to creatively find threats to wilderness.



Preparation and facilitation

Ask the questions: 1. *What are, in your opinion, the threats to wilderness areas and species?* 2. *Which of my activities can be a threat to wilderness?*

Hand out pencils and sheets of paper, and invite the participants to identify threats in the next five minutes, by individual work. After the time ends, ask the students to form pairs and to discuss the threats identified in the previous stage and make up a common list in the next five minutes. The next stage involves making up some groups, this time by joining two pairs (four persons in each group).

Repeat the procedure for another five minutes. Then, form two large groups with an equal number of participants, who will compare their answers, try to agree on and combine the ideas previously stated. The last stage of the exercise consists in the presentation of results by a representative of each group. The facilitator will write down the participants' answers on the flipchart, then completes the list of threats that are missing and are described at the "*Threats possibly leading to the extinction of wilderness areas*" subchapter in the Guide.

Note: The facilitator can prepare in advance, on a flipchart sheet, examples of threats from the Guide.

Additional questions the facilitator may ask after the presentation:

- What would be some of the effects of these threats on wildlife?
- How do these threats prevent the travel, foraging and mating of animals and birds in wilderness areas?
- Have you heard of micro-hydropower plants being built in a park in our region? Have you seen one?
- Do you think such threats are possible for fish in nearby rivers or animal species in forests?

Note: The facilitator will use images from the Guide (e.g. images of micro-hydropower plants which destroyed river ecosystems).

6. STORY: THE CITY THAT DISAPPEARED

25 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this story is to show the impact of actions that only take into account the economic side, with considering the social and environment components.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator or one of the participants will read or say the story in Annex 1, asking the group to get comfortable. It is important to read the story expressively, so that the listeners are captivated by it.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you feel listening to this story?
- What happened in the story?
- What do you think about what the local authorities did?
- What can be inferred from this story?
- How is this story connected to the topic of our meeting?
- Can you name a few lessons that can be learned from this story?
- What can we take with us from this story?

7. RECAP AND EVALUATION: THE BALL OF KNOWLEDGE

10 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at stimulating the students to reflect and evaluate what they learned during the meeting.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator throws a ball to one participant. He/she has to share something they learned during the meeting, then they throw the ball to another colleague. This is repeated until each participant has the opportunity to share what they learned.

The facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Papp D. J., Kelemen Katalin. 2013. *Copiii și natura – Culegere de jocuri în natură*, POS MEDIU: „Pentru natură și comunități locale - bazele unui management integrat Natura 2000 în zona Hârtibaciu - Târnava Mare - Olt”, cofinanțat din Fondul European de Dezvoltare Regională, Asociația „Grupul Milvus”, (Children and Nature – Collection of outdoor games, SOP ENVIRONMENT: „For nature and local communities – the basics of a Natura 2000 integrated management in the Hârtibaciu - Târnava Mare – Olt area”, co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund), Târgu-Mureș
- Greeninitiative, Viitor Plus. 2015. *Culegerea verde, Auxiliar didactic pentru opționalul Ecoeducație pentru Școli verzi*, editat în cadrul proiectului Platforma Școli verzi
- Pasaniuc J, 2015, *Metode creative folosite în activitățile de tineret*, Fundația Life – Centrul de resurse și informații pentru organizații (Green collection, Supporting material edited under the Green School Platform project)
- Nwabia K. C. 2011. *Orașul care a dispărut*, (The city that disappeared), Coresi, București
- National Wildlife Federation. 2015. Available at: <https://www.nwf.org/Wildlife/Threats-to-Wildlife.aspx>

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Story: The city that disappeared



7. Threats to wilderness areas

ANNEX 1: The city that disappeared

Many years ago, in a far, far away land, there was a large and flourishing city surrounded by a deep forest. The city had been blessed with natural riches, which made its inhabitants very wealthy. One day, seeking to increase the wealth of the city, the mayor decided to start exporting timber in other cities and countries in the whole world. The mayor and most residents thought it would be a fairly easy way to make more money, since the trees were from nature, and they assumed they could live without them.

After managing to convince the city residents of the benefits of selling timber, they all went to the woods and started cutting down the trees. Selling wood brought unspeakable fortune to the people, so they continued and for a while, and everything seemed fine.

After many years of cutting down trees, the people suddenly realized their massive forest was gone. Soon after, the rainy season began, and since the rain was very heavy, the massive amount of water carried away most of the land where the woods once stood, thus triggering a landslide that went through the city, destroying roads and houses. Shaken and concerned, the residents went to the mayor and complained about the damages, saying: *"What's going on?"*, *"This has never happened before"*, but the mayor answered, *"This is nothing, it's just something unusual from nature, we shouldn't worry. Our city is rich and we can easily afford to pay for repairing the flood and landslide damage"*. Reassured by these explanations, the people went home, while the mayor spent lots of money to repair the rain damage.

Shortly after this, a group of citizens came to the mayor's office bitterly complaining: *"All the animals are gone, not even a wild hare is to be found. Where have they gone?"*, they asked. The mayor looked at them in awe and replied, *"Why do you ask me? Am I the father of all animals?"* Visibly annoyed, he continued, *"I don't have the slightest idea where all the animals went, but I can definitely tell you they are not at my house!"*. Not having received the answers they wanted, the people left the mayor's office disappointed and concerned, trying to figure out where all the animals went after they were everywhere in the woods not long before.

In the next few months, the city couldn't feed its people anymore and since the landslides had destroyed the fertile land, agriculture had also become impossible. The mayor had to import food for his people, which cost the city a lot. After a while, the city ran out of money due to the many damages caused by floods, repairs, landslides and constant food imports. As if it wasn't enough, for reasons the residents could not explain, the temperature had risen and the heat became unbearable. Even worse, dry winds carried tons of dust and sand from distant places, which settled everywhere around the city. Because of this, the city, which enjoyed lush vegetation not long ago, now looked like a desert.

The mayor decided to turn to experts for answers. *"Why is our city dying?"*, he asked the researcher. The latter looked back to the mayor and replied: *"Well, he said, because you cut all the trees from the forests"*. Upset by this answer, the mayor asked: *"What do you mean? How could cutting trees do so much damage to our city? Please explain!"*. The scientist started to tell, with a serious voice, how cutting down the woods unleashed a chain of events, which led the city to where it was.

"Well, mayor, he started, it seems that the forest and trees play a much more important role in our survival than we ever thought", he carried on. *"You see, the roots of the trees kept the soil together, and when there were no more trees, nothing stopped the rains to take away the soil and create landslides and loss of fertile land, which in turn caused damages and made growing food impossible"*. The mayor sat in his chair baffled, but kept listening.

"The cutting down of trees also led to animals losing their natural shelters, and while some died, others left looking for new dens somewhere else". Wiping his cold sweat, the mayor then asked: *"And why the high temperature and heat wave?"*.

The researched replied: *"The leaves and branches of trees protected the earth against the sun heat and also kept the air cool and fresh. After cutting them, nothing was left to protect us against the sun heat, which hastened the desertification".*

Realizing that his idea to make a profit by selling timber was the main cause of the city's problems, the mayor asked in despair: *"Can we do anything to repair the everything?"*, to which the researcher answered, *"There could be a chance, but we have to plant many seedlings and restore the forest, but before that, we should buy tons of fertile land, otherwise the trees won't grow"*. Seeing the grim look of the mayor, the scientist asked: *"We have some money left from selling timber, don't we?"*, but the mayor shook his head and said softly: *"The city is broke, we have no money and we are in a great deal of debt. It seems we spent everything we had to fix the problems we caused ourselves. There's nothing left we can do!"*. Devastated, the researcher then asked: *"Then what we gained by cutting down the forest and the rest?"* to which the mayor answered in a deep voice *"Nothing! Absolutely nothing..."*

Since he couldn't stand being blamed by the city residents for all the trouble caused, that night, the mayor packed up silently everything he had, got in the car and drove as far from the city as possible, without ever returning again. Days passed and since they couldn't find the mayor, the residents left the town one after another until it became deserted.

Many years later, a group of tourists who heard the legend of a once thriving city followed a map where the city should have been. But when they got there, all they could find were the remains of a city almost entirely covered by the desert dust. While exploring one of the long abandoned buildings, one tourist found a diary lying on the ground. After cleaning the dust that covered it, he opened the diary and read this on the first page.

"To anyone reading this diary: I was responsible for this once green and thriving city, and the one who exchanged the natural riches for quick profit and ended up paying dearly for this. Don't make the same mistake!"

THE END

Adapted from **The city that disappeared, Kingsley Chibuzor Nwabia**



8. What can we do to preserve wilderness areas?



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Explain why it's important to take care of wilderness areas in the region
- (K)** Define sustainability and sustainable development
- (K)** Give examples of solutions and models of sustainable development
- (S)** Describe how your lifestyle could play a part in protecting wilderness areas in the region



Key concepts:

☉ Lifestyle ☉ Sustainability ☉ Sustainable development

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual support (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. The boy and the little starfish	Storytelling	25 minutes	Printout of the story (Annex 1)
3. Activities for the conservation of wilderness areas	Group work Facilitated discussion	75 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers, colored pencils, glue, old magazines, scissors
4. Lifestyle, sustainability, sustainable development	Group work Facilitated discussion	35 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
5. Recap and evaluation: I learned...	Evaluation game	15 minutes	Printout of Annex 2
6. Next steps	Group discussion	10 minutes	Attendance list
Total estimated time: 2 hours, 45 minutes			

Note:

Before this meeting, the facilitator will read the chapter "What can we do to preserve wilderness areas" in the Guide.

1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will present the meeting objectives, the types of activities to be held (without getting into details) and the duration of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to identify solutions that could promote the conservation of wilderness areas in the region.

2. STORY: THE BOY AND THE LITTLE STARFISH 25 MINUTES

Purpose

The following story, even if it's fiction, presents a hypothetical situation that stresses the importance of personal involvement leading to major change.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator or one of the participants will read or tell the story in Annex 1, asking the group to sit as comfortably as possible. It is important to read the story expressively, so that the listeners are captivated by it. After listening to the story, the participants are invited to reflect upon its meaning with the help of the following questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you feel listening to the story?
- What happened in the story?
- What do you think about what the boy did?
- Was his gesture enough to save the first little starfish?
- What is the significance of this story?
- How does this story connect to the topic of our meeting?
- Are there any lessons that we could learn from this story?
- Can you give examples about something you could do to protect the environment/wilderness areas?
- Can you see yourself doing something similar in two weeks from now?
- What do you think would be the hardest when trying to do this?

3. ACTIVITIES FOR THE CONSERVATION OF WILDERNESS AREAS

75 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to identify, together with the participants, a set of solutions that could lead to the conservation of wilderness areas.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator writes down the following question on a flipchart sheet: *Who is responsible for protecting our park and the wilderness areas?*

The role of the facilitator is to write down the participants' ideas on the flipchart/blackboard. After 10 minutes, the facilitator will summarize the ideas expressed by participants and then the activity will continue with splitting the participants into four work groups.

For the next 10 minutes, each group will be invited to think about different types of activities for the preservation of wild areas by the authorities (European or local). After collecting the answers, the facilitator will fill in the list of information from the chapter "*What can we do to preserve wilderness areas? What can the authorities and non-governmental organizations do?*" from the Guide.

Moreover, the facilitator can ask the participants about the differences between "Protection of wilderness", "(Environmental) restoration" and "Rewilding", and may lay down, on a piece of flipchart sheet, the definitions from the Guide. For Rewilding, the case study about the reintroduction of the bison in the Țarcu Mountains in the Southern Carpathians can be presented.



After this activity, the same work groups are invited to assess what the participants would do, individually or as a group, to protect wilderness areas. The groups receive flipchart sheets and markers and have 15 minutes to answer the question “*What could we do?*”. At the end, each group is invited to present the results. After the presentations, the facilitator will draft a summary of the results and will fill in the list of activities from the “*What can we do?*” subchapter of the Guide.

The facilitator may prepare examples of activities from the Guide on a flipchart sheet, as shown below:

- Information on the many benefits provided by wilderness areas.
- Performance of information and awareness-raising campaigns dedicated to both people travelling to this areas and prospective visitors.
- Setting up groups of local/regional or national initiative groups.
- Implementation of educational projects.
- Compliance with certain rules and principles when visiting wilderness areas. Examples:
 - Travel and camp only on sustainable soil
 - Manage your waste appropriately
 - Leave everything as you found it
 - Mitigate the impact of camp fires
 - Show respect for wild flora and fauna
 - Show respect for other visitors.

For a detailed presentation, see the “*Leave no trace*” principles in the Guide.

After the participants made observations and comments on the list above, the facilitator asks: *Which of the activities above can influence the implementation of projects by our club?*

The facilitator will write down the participants' answers. These can be ideas of projects that can be implemented by the club members in the future.

4. LIFESTYLE, SUSTAINABILITY, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

35 MINUTES

Purpose

The participants will have the opportunity to better understand the connections between our own lifestyles and their effects on the environment and wilderness areas in the region.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will split the flipchart sheet into three columns on which he/she will write: lifestyle, sustainability, sustainable development and then invites the participants to define each of these terms. After the participants' contributions, the facilitator will share the definitions of these terms, which will be ready at hand on a separate flipchart sheet.

Facilitator's mention

Sustainability – the quality of not exhausting natural resources or having a detrimental impact on the environment, thus supporting the long term environmental balance and ensuring that people benefit from the resources and services of the ecosystems.

Lifestyle – habits, attitudes, tastes, moral standards, economic level, etc. which altogether define how an individual or group lives.

Sustainable development – development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland report, 1987).

The facilitator will then split the participants into smaller groups of three or four and invites the groups to think how their lifestyles affect nature. The task of each group will be to draw a map of influences or another representation which outlines the wave effect of different human actions (like when throwing a rock in the water forms a ripple effect that reaches the shore). Each group is invited to think about a set of activities. The facilitator can give them a few examples: waste of paper, failing to recycle plastic containers and pollution, consumption of food produced and imported from all over the world, which dissuades local

producers and inhibits the local economy, very long showers and leaving water running while brushing one's teeth, computer left on at night, etc.

The groups receive a flipchart sheet, marker pens, colored pencils, glue, old magazines and scissors. After 20 minutes, the groups are invited to send a representative to present the results of the work. After presentation, the rest of the participants are asked to contribute remarks, comments or additions. In the end, the facilitator will close the activity with a set of reflection questions:

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did you think of the activity?*
- *What have you found about the effects of daily human activities on wilderness areas?*
- *How are the individual habits and sustainability interlinked?*
- *How does lack of sustainable thinking affect wilderness areas in the region?*
- *Can you name a few sustainable development activities which could be promoted in our region and promote the conservation of wilderness areas?*
- *Can you name an individual lifestyle decision that would lead to a change in the current situation?*

5. RECAP AND EVALUATION: TODAY I LEARNED... 15 MINUTE

Purpose

This activity is aimed at stimulating the students to reflect and assess what they learned during the meeting.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will print and cut assessment cards in advance (see Annex 2: I learned...), on which unfinished sentences are written (e.g.: Today I learned..., I discovered..., I found out that..., I was surprised when..., I was a little disappointed..., I seek to..., Next week, I'd like to..., I felt that..., something I would do differently from now on..., It was interesting for me that... etc.).

The participants are asked to take a card, take two minutes of time to think, then share their completed sentence with the group.

6. NEXT STEPS

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Dictionary.com, „sustainability”. 2015. Available at: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/sustainability>
- Dictionary.com, „lifestyle”. 2015. Available at: <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/lifestyle>
- Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future. Available at: <http://www.eytv4scf.net/wced-ocf.htm>
- 50 Ways to Help the Planet. 2015. Available at: <http://www.50waystohelp.com/>
- Pro Alpin. 2014. Cele 7 principii ale “nu lăsa nici o urmă” – sau cum să nu ai un impact major asupra naturii, când o vizitezi. (The 7 “do not leave any trace” principles or how to minimize your impact when in nature). Available at: <http://www.proalpin.ro/blog/cele-7-principii-ale-nu-lasa-nici-o-urma-sau-cum-sa-nu-ai-un-impact-major-asupra-naturii-cand-o-vizitezi/>

Support materials:

- Annex 1: The boy and little starfish, Annex 2: I learned...



What can we do to preserve wilderness areas?

ANNEX 1: The boy and the little starfish

A mighty storm hammered the sea. The freezing wind was blowing, cutting the water and giving rise to giant waves that pounded the shore and created currents plowing the deeps like steel. The waves tore marine beings, crustaceans and mollusks and carried them dozens of meters on the shore.

When the storm subsided as quickly as it started, the water ebbed and dwindled. The beach was now a huge stretch of mud where hundreds of starfish twisted in agony. There were so many that the beach now seemed to have a pinkish hue.

This attracted many people on that side of the coast. There were also teams from various television channels who had come to film the strange phenomenon.

The starfish were almost still. They were dying.

In the crowds there was also a boy who looked sadly at the little starfish. Everybody looked and nobody did anything. All of a sudden, the child removed his shoes and ran on the beach. He leaned over and picked up three starfish with his little hands, then took them to the water. He then returned and to do it again.

Someone shouted at him from the embankment:

- What are you doing, boy?

- Throwing the starfish in the water. Otherwise, they'll all die on the beach, said the child without stopping from running.

- But there are hundreds and hundreds of starfish on this beach! You definitely can't save all of them. There are way too many!, shouted the man. Not to mention the other beaches along the coast! You can't change things!

The child smiled, bent over, picked up a starfish, looked at it, looked at the man and threw the starfish back to the sea. Then said:

- I changed things for this one, didn't I?

The man remained silent for a moment, then bent over, removed his shoes and socks and descended on the beach. He started to gather starfish and throw them in the water. A minute later, other two girls descended and now there were four people throwing starfish in the water. After other few minutes there were fifty, then hundreds of people threw starfish in the water. By the end of the day, all starfish were all rescued". (Bruno Ferrero)



What can we do to preserve wilderness areas?

ANNEX 2: I learned...

I learned...	I found out...	I understood that...
I was surprised when...	I was a little disappointed when...	The most interesting was to...
I want to...	Next week I wish I...	I felt that...
Something I would do differently from now on...	I believe this meeting helped me to...	I think that...
The most important thing for me was to...	I wish I...	I considered that...
I liked it when...	What I would like to change is...	What I want to apply in my life is...
For me, the conclusion of the meeting is...	The most important lesson I'm taking with me is...	I believe that what I can do in my life from now on is...

9. Wilderness areas in our region



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Describe the wilderness areas in their national or nature park based on predetermined characteristics
- (S)** Identify specific characteristics in their area
- (S)** Show interest to better know the area and area-specific species



Key concepts:

⦿ National park ⦿ Natural park ⦿ Species characteristic to wilderness areas

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. Elephant, giraffe, palm tree	Energizer	10 minutes	
3. Ambassadors of wilderness areas in our region	Mosaic	55 minutes	Copies of the park descriptions in the Guide, flipchart paper, post-its, markers, old magazines, glue, scissors
4. Let's explore together	Work in pairs	30 minutes	Maps of the national / nature park in the region
5. Summarizing... with mime	Mime	35 minutes	Notes with geographic details, living things, species of plants, tourism activities specific to that national/nature park
6. Recap and evaluation: Group wall painting	Evaluation game	15 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers/colored pencils
7. Next steps	Group discussion	10 minutes	Attendance list

Total estimated time: **2 hours, 40 minutes**

Note:

Before this meeting, the facilitator will read information about his/her own park from part II of the Guide.



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will present the meeting objectives, the types of activities to be held (without going into details) and the duration of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to identify the characteristics of parks in the region.

2. ELEPHANT, GIRAFFE, PALM TREE

10 MINUTES

Purpose

This is an energizing and attention building game.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants are invited to stand up and form a circle. Someone will stand in the middle. They will point to a member of the circle who, together with their neighbors, will have to form what is being said. For instance, if they say elephant, the person in the middle will form the body of an elephant by placing the arms in front, crossed at the wrists, while the persons on each side will form the ears, bending over with the hands at their mouth as if whispering something. Giraffe: the person in the middle will raise the arms stretched, and with the fingers clenched over the head; the neighbors will hold the person in the middle by the thighs and bend over. Palm tree: the person in the middle will raise their hands over the head in the shape of the letter "y", with fingers open; the neighbors will do the same by bending over on the outside.

The game has to be played at a fast pace and you can use names of other species too (e.g.: the Banat black pine, the bear, the stone crayfish), objects, etc. (game from *100 ideas of non-formal education*, The Romania's Scouts National Organization).

3. AMBASSADORS OF WILDERNESS AREAS IN OUR REGION

55 MINUTES

Scenario 1

Purpose

The activity is aimed at supporting participants to discover the main characteristics of national or nature parks in their region in an interactive manner by using the mosaic method. According to this method, each group member becomes an expert in a certain park issue being analyzed, so that they can later serve as ambassadors of that park.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator prints out or makes photocopies of the relevant pages from the Guide's with descriptions of the park in the region of the wilderness club. The group is split into three subgroups and the facilitator distributes one copy with the description of the park to each group.

The facilitator will mention that the participants from these subgroups will have to become experts in one of the following park-specific themes: **Group 1** – experts in the General description of the park (limits, localities, access points), **Group 2** – experts in wilderness (the park flora and fauna – species characteristic to wilderness areas), **Group 3** – experts in human activities and the area-specific tourism. They will have to discuss the topic assigned to their group and better understand it because they will later have to present the lessons learned to their colleagues in other groups, thus being responsible for the group's overall learning results.

The experts have 20 minutes to study and assimilate together the distributed material and to think about efficient "teaching" methods and how to verify the understanding by the colleagues from the collaborative group. They will have supplies (flipchart sheets, post-its, markers), which they will be able to use to reach the "teaching" objectives for that content.

Once the time is up, new groups will be set up, which will include a representative from the other groups of experts. Now, each expert will teach the content corresponding to their topic, and each member of the group has to assimilate the knowledge passed on by their colleagues, experts in various issues.

The working time is 25 minutes. The facilitator monitors the process to ensure that the information and knowledge is conveyed and assimilated correctly. If the participants get stuck, the facilitator will help them overcome the stalemate. It is important that all group members take part in the discussions.

Scenario 2

Purpose

The activity is aimed at enabling participants to find out, in an interactive manner, the main characteristics of national and nature parks in their region.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants are split into groups and have to develop a advertising campaign to attract visitors to their park. One of the activities could be to develop a slogan and a poster. For this, they are asked to think of the most representative elements that could be promoted (what is special about their park and what other parks don't have), what activities can they ensure for visiting tourists (spotting of key species, bicycle tours, selling local hand-made souvenirs, etc.). After finding the park's "strengths", they can design the slogan and the promotional poster. For the poster, they can use old magazines or pictures of species and other natural features (e.g: dry leaves). The poster can then be handed to representatives of the parks in the region or may be displayed at public places in the community.

The activities are concluded with a session of reflection questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did you have to do during the activity?*
- *What did you think about this working method?*
- *How did you feel as experts?*
- *What was the hardest thing? And the easiest?*
- *What did you learn about the park?*
- *What other information would you have needed? Where can you find this information?*
- *How are you going to use what you learned in this activity?*

4. LET'S EXPLORE TOGETHER

30 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to provide the participants with means to explore some of the specific elements of the park, based on its map (such as main tourist trails, localities, the boundaries of each park, the location of the park, etc.).

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will prepare maps of the park (the map of each park is presented in the Guide). The participants will be split into pairs. Each pair receives a map and has to identify over the next 20 minutes:

- Tourist trails
- Tourist objectives/Landmarks
- Localities
- The limits and boundaries of the park, roads and access points

After the time expires, the facilitator will name a few pairs to present the above elements to the entire group.



5. SUMMARIZATION... WITH MIME

35 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at stimulating the students to recap what they learned in an entertaining way.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator prepares in advance cards with details about their parks, which can be mimed by the participants (e.g.: geographic details, living things, species of plants, tourism activities promoted). The group of participants is split in half. The tickets are placed in a container, and the groups will delegate a representative to take one card, take a minute of thinking, then will try to mime it for the other team members. If the team members fail to guess it within 3 minutes, the opposing team will be invited in their place. Each card guessed accounts for one point. The operation is repeated for the other team, until all the cards are exhausted. In the end, compare team scores.

6. EVALUATION: GROUP WALL PAINTING

15 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at stimulating the young to reflect upon and evaluate what they learned during the meeting.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will stick a large piece of paper on the wall (long enough so that all participants can write on it at the same time). Each participant will have to draw a picture representing what they learned during the meeting. Then, the facilitator will invite the participants to guess the meaning of every image.

7. NEXT STEPS

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Dumitru I. 2000. *Dezvoltarea gândirii critice și învățarea eficientă (Development of critical thinking and efficient learning)*, Editura de Vest, Timișoara
- Inner Space Journal. 2012. Metode și tehnici de învățare prin colaborare (interactive) – mozaicul. (Collaborative learning methods). Available at: <https://innerspacejournal.wordpress.com/2012/10/15/metode-si-tehnici-de-invatare-prin-colaborare-interactive-mozaicul/>
- The SEMENIC – CHEILE CARAȘULUI National Park. 2015. Available at: <http://www.pnscc.ro/>
- Cheile Carașului. 2015. Available at: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheile_Cara%C8%99ului
- The SEMENIC – CHEILE CARAȘULUI National Park. Tourist trails. 2015. Available at: <http://www.pnscc.ro/trasee-turistice>
- The Cheile Nerei – Beușnița National Park. 2015. Available at: <http://www.cheilenereibeusnita.ro/>
- Cheile Nerei – Beușnița. 2015. Available at: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheile_Nerei_-_Beu%C8%99ni%C8%9Ba
- The Cheile Nerei – Beușnița National Park. Tourist attractions. 2015. Available at: <http://www.cheilenereibeusnita.ro/index.php/attractii-turistice>
- The Iron Gates Nature Park. 2015. Available at: <http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/>
- The Iron Gates Nature Park. 2015. Available at: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parcul_Natural_Por%C8%9Bile_de_Fier
- The Iron Gates Nature Park. Tourist trails. 2015. Available at: <http://www.pnportiledefier.ro/trasee.html>
- The Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park. 2015. Available at: <http://www.domogled-terna.ro/>
- The Domogled – Valea Cernei National Park. Tourist trails. 2015. Available at: http://www.domogled-terna.ro/traseele_turistice.html
- The Retezat National Park. 2015. Available at: <http://retezat.ro/>
- The Retezat National Park. 2015. Available at: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parcul_Na%C8%9Bional_Retezat
- 10 Great Ways to Close a Session. 2015. Available at: <http://www.rttworks.com/www.rttworks.com/images/downloads/Closers.HTML>
- Greeninitiative, WWF, Viitor Plus. *Culegerea verde*, Platforma Școli verzi (Green Digest the Green Schools Platform)
- Organizația Națională „Cercetașii României”. 2010. 101 idei de educație non-formală. (The Romanian Scouts National Organization. 101 non-formal education ideas). Available at: <http://www.scout.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Manual-100-de-idei-de-educatie-non-formala.pdf>

10. How does the future of wilderness areas in our region look like?



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

(K) Imagine likely scenarios for the near future starting from the sustainability and social cohesion principles

(S) Identify and share aspects related to sustainability and social cohesion in regard to the protection of nature

(A) Optimism about the future and how one's involvement could bring positive change regarding the environment and local community



Key concepts:

☉ Lifestyle ☉ Sustainability ☉ Sustainable development ☉ Social cohesion

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. The storm	Energizer	10 minutes	Not required
3. Future quotes	Group exercise Facilitated discussion	20 minutes	Annex 1: Future quotes
4. Scenarios for the future	Group work Facilitated discussion	80 minutes	Annex 2: Scenarios, examples of benefits and threats in the Guide
5. Architects of the future	Group work	35 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
6. Recap and evaluation: Something which changed how I think	Evaluation game	15 minutes	
7. Next steps	Group discussion	5 minutes	Attendance list

Note:

Before organizing this meeting, the facilitator will read the chapter "What can we do to preserve wilderness areas" in the Guide.

Total estimated time: **2 hours, 50 minutes**



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will present the meeting objectives, the types of activities to be held (without going into details) and the duration of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to build hypothetical scenarios for the future, based on certain indicators, and to identify examples of good practice regarding the protection of the environment and natural areas.

2. THE STORM

10 MINUTES

Purpose

This is an energizing game.

Preparation and facilitation

The number of the players has to be divisible by 4 (3+1). Two raise their arms to form a house, and in the house lives a rabbit. The fourth student does not have any role for now. When the facilitator shouts "house", the "rabbits" remain still, and the two players who formed the house will move and build new houses over the rabbits. The only rule is: they have to change their pair and the fourth player enters the game. When the animator shouts "rabbit", the houses remain still, and the rabbits look for new houses. When the animator shouts "storm", everybody runs and new houses are built for new rabbits. By alternating the words – house, rabbit, storm – the mix-up and elation will increase.

*We recommend to adapt the game with local species, relevant to the topic of wilderness eg. fox, burrow, storm; hawk, nest.

3. FUTURE QUOTES

20 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at preparing participants about possible scenarios regarding a future world and their impact on wilderness areas.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator prints and prepares quotes about the future from Annex 1. The chairs will be arranged in a circle to create a friendly setting and let participants sit in front of each other during the talks. Place the printed quotes in the middle of the circle and ask the participants to pick up a quote one at a time, and read it in front of the group. Ask the students to share their thoughts and comment on what they just heard. Repeat until the last quote. Close by summarizing the activity results.

4. SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE

80 MINUTES

Purpose

In this activity, the participants will understand we are connected to the environment in thousands of ways, and the decisions taken and actions undertaken in the present will have effects in the near or more distant future.

It is important to understand the fact that the future depends on our attitude of today, and if mankind keeps on consuming natural resources unsustainably, the future may bring a growing number of problems.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator splits the group into four teams (with at least four participants in a team) and will distribute flipchart sheets and markers to each group, plus a sheet of paper with the profile of a society of the future, also described in Annex 2. Tell the group they are about to play a team game, which will help them better understand how present action have multiple effects in the future.

The profiles of future societies are based on two major features: on one hand, how they use natural resources, and social cohesion between people, on the other. These characteristics underpin four models of societies:

1. A world where natural resources are plentiful, and the cohesion between people is manifested by solidarity.
2. A world with natural resources almost exhausted, which led to cohesion between people in solidarity.
3. A world with natural resources, but lacking social cohesion, where people are dominated by selfishness and own interests.
4. A world with exhausted natural resources, with people lack social cohesion and are dominated by selfishness and personal survival.

Each team receives a sheet of paper describing one of the above situations. Starting from this, the four teams are asked to:

- Give details on the country they are representing: name, flag, other political, social, cultural, economic details or other relevant data;
- Build a scenario for the future and describe how certain factors influence the environment;
- Establish the difference between the present-day situation and the proposed scenario, and the causes for such a difference;
- Establish the causes for the changes (all elements contributing to the respective scenario: global warming, deforestation, lifestyle, globalization, consumerism, pollution, etc.).

The working time for preparing the scenarios is 30 minutes.

The participants are reminded that after the scenarios are built, a Supreme Council, made up of representatives of all these countries, will meet to discuss the issues faced by all societies and the situation of the environment.

Before the meeting of the Supreme Council, remind the teams they have to pay attention to the other countries' descriptions, because they will have to analyze how the situation they are presenting could change things in their own countries.

The presentation time allotted to each country is no more than 5 minutes.

After the presentations within the Supreme Council, ask the groups to reflect for 5 minutes to the information they heard about the neighboring countries, and use this information to ask two questions to the Council, whose answers could play a role in mitigating/removing the potential effects on the environment.

The participants will think for 5 minutes about questions to be asked to others, after which the Supreme Council meets again for a 15 minute discussion.

Then, the delegates return to their teams and have another 5 minutes to think how the answers will help them to solve the issues in their country.

The delegates meet again for a final round of talks in the Supreme Council, and try to agree a final solution for 5 minutes.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did you think of the game?*
- *How did you feel?*
- *What happened during the game?*
- *How difficult was it to prepare a scenario for your country? Why?*
- *What did you think of the other scenarios?*
- *What did you find about those scenarios?*
- *How plausible do you think the respective scenarios were?*
- *Can you name a few lessons we can learn from this game?*



5. ARCHITECTS OF THE FUTURE

35 MINUTES

Based on the experience acquired in the previous activity and the benefits and threats presented in previous meetings, the facilitator invites the four work groups to draw two basic lessons from the scenarios presented and:

- Build a positive scenario they want for the future of the wilderness area in their region.
- To take into account, for this scenario, the development of the region based on the principle of being "in harmony with nature".
- Identify a set of actions that can be organized in the club and which may allow the preservation of wilderness areas in their region in the long run.

Work time: 15 minutes, time for sharing results: 5 minutes per work group.

6. EVALUATION: SOMETHING WHICH CHANGED HOW I THINK

15 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at encouraging students to reflect and share what they learned during the meeting.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator asks the participants sitting in a circle to think about something they learned today and changed their way of thinking. Before beginning, the group is asked to keep a minute silence before sharing.

7. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Brainy Quote. Future Quotes. 2015.
Available at: http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/topics/topic_future.html

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Future quotes, Annex 2: Possible future scenarios

10. How does the future of wilderness areas in our region look like?

ANNEX 1: Future quotes

"Life is divided into three terms - that which was, which is, and which will be. Let us learn from the past to profit by the present, and from the present, to live better in the future".

William Wordsworth

"If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people".

Confucius

"Tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today".

Malcom X

"Destiny is no matter of chance. It is a matter of choice. It is not a thing to be waited for, it is a thing to be achieved".

William Jennings Bryan

"You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today".

Abraham Lincoln

"It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves".

William Shakespeare

"Plan for the future because that's where you are going to spend the rest of your life".

Mark Twain

"God gives the milk, but not the pail".

Romanian proverb

"Many hands make light work".

Romanian proverb

"Future is a mysterious edifice that we build today for tomorrow; let's build it this with the best in our heart, let's build it with love".

Victor Hugo

"I am tomorrow, or some future day, what I establish today".

James Joyce

"The past cannot perish, for future will be born of it".

Anatole France

"Future is the sum of steps that you take, including small, ignored or derided steps".

Henri Coandă

"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time".

Abraham Lincoln

"As you bake, so shall you eat".

Romanian proverb

"Future begins now, not tomorrow".

Pope John Paul the Second

"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams".

Eleanor Roosevelt



10. How does the future of wilderness areas in our region look like?

ANNEX 2: Future scenarios

Scenario 1	Scenario 2
A world where natural resources are plentiful and the cohesion between people is manifested by solidarity	A world with natural resources, but no social cohesion and with people dominated by selfishness
Scenario 3	Scenario 4
A world with natural resources almost exhausted with cohesion and solidarity between people	A world with exhausted natural resources with people lacking social cohesion and dominated by selfishness

11. Introduction to project management: needs analysis in wilderness areas



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Define the steps of the project to be developed together with other colleagues in the club
- (K)** Describe the importance of community involvement in wilderness area preservation projects
- (S)** Build a strategy to find the needs and issues in one's community
- (A)** Optimistic about the future and how one's involvement could bring positive change regarding the environment and local community



Key concepts:

○ Needs ○ Issues ○ Project ○ Project management

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. Introduction in project management	Facilitated discussion	20 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
3. The blind square – The importance of community involvement	Team game	35 minutes	Rope - 8-10 meters long, blindfolds 7-8 people
4. Methods of data collection in order to identify needs/issues	Facilitated discussion Presentation	30 minutes	
5. Preparation for a community research visit	Team work	35 minutes	Annex 1, Annex 2, Annex 3
6. Next steps	Group discussion	5 minutes	Attendance list

Total estimated time: **2 hours, 10 minutes**



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration of the meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to introduce participants to the stages of project management and how to consider the community needs/problems when preparing wilderness area conservation projects.

2. INTRODUCTION TO PROJECT MANAGEMENT 20 MINUTES



Purpose

The next activity is a short introduction to project management.



Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator asks the club members whether they can define a project and give examples of projects from day to day life. The answers are written down on a flipchart sheet. After the participants' contribution, the facilitator will give the definition of the project, then fills in the list of examples of projects with the suggestions below or other examples he/she will find relevant.



Facilitator's mention

(The facilitator can prepare the definitions below in advance on a flipchart sheet)

A project:

- Attempts to do or change something
- Has a beginning and an end
- May take hours, months or years
- Is unique and different, not repeatable

(definition from European Schools for a Living Planet, p.51)

Examples of projects form daily life:

- Organizing a party
- Preparing a dinner
- Building a garage
- Organizing a trip

After the facilitator's mention, the participants are split into four groups, each group being tasked with finding the steps of a project starting from the previously mentioned examples. The groups receive a flipchart sheet and marker pens. The working time will be 10 minutes, after which each group delegates a representative to present the results. The presentation time should not exceed 4 minutes.



Facilitator's mention

After the presentations by the groups, the facilitator will summarize the proposed results and lists the project stages. As seen from the presentations, a project seeks to answer to the following question: How could we act on a problem/need?

A summary of the results proposed by the work groups should include the following:

- **Design** – we know the problem/need that we can realistically address, we have a purpose and objectives, a target group and beneficiaries.
- **Planning** – we have a good plan, we know what to do, know who deals with it and what resources we need to succeed, we have monitoring methods to ensure we are on the right track.
- **Implementation** – we act, accomplish what has to be done, we are at the same time aware of the project progress and or any issues that could arise along the way.
- **Evaluation** – we have reflection and assessment methods to ascertain whether we managed to achieve the desired objectives.
- **Celebration** – we celebrate together the results of our work.

3. THE BLIND SQUARE - THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PROJECTS

35 MINUTES

Purpose

The next activity is a game following which participants will better understand the importance of community involvement in projects impacting wilderness areas.

Preparation and facilitation

This activity requires an open space as large as possible, a cord/rope and blindfolds for 7-8 people. The facilitator will place the cord/rope somewhere on the floor and will call 7-8 volunteers to put both hands on the cord and make a circle around it. Each participant will be blindfolded so that they cannot see each other. Then, the students receive the following instructions: "Your mission is to make a square. You can talk to each other, but you can't let the rope go during the game. You have 15 minutes to complete the mission. You may not remove your blindfolds during the exercise. You can start now".

After the game began, urge the remaining participants to observe the process and see what they can learn from what is going on. After the 15 minutes expire, ask the participants to sit in a circle and run a short reflection session about what was going on.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What did you think of the game?*
- *How did you feel?*
- *What happened during the game?*
- *Did you manage to complete the mission?*
- *How was it like for the observers? What was more interesting? What did they learn?*
- *What is the connection between this exercise and the projects we would like to carry out?*
- *Why was this game needed?*
- *Did the observers help those building the square? Why not?*
- *If this were real life, who would be the game's actors? And who would be the observers?*
- *Can you name a few lessons that we could learn from this game?*

Facilitator's mention

Practical experience shows that most groups that played this game did not ask for help from the observers (who are not blindfolded). This tendency to refrain from asking for help can also be seen in projects carried out by various organizations or community groups. They become so absorbed by their own project that they forget to involve the community in the process, even when the project could be achieved much more efficiently with the community's help.

The game is resumed after the reflection questions.

This time, the observers will be most likely asked by the blindfolded players to support the building of the square. With the help of the observers, the game will be completed in no more than 10 minutes.

4. METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION IN ORDER TO IDENTIFY NEEDS/ISSUES

30 MINUTES

Facilitator's mention

The first step of a project is the design stage.



This stage consists in:

- identifying the needs/issues to be addressed by the project
- clarification of the purpose
- setting the objectives
- setting the target group and beneficiaries

The facilitator will describe how the selection of a project is also largely influenced by how it defines the needs and issues it seeks to address. The most important step before identifying a need/issue and develop an action project is to collect information or research.

On a flipchart sheet, the facilitator will write the question: "How do we collect information relevant for identifying needs/issues?" and asks the club members to look for answers to this question.

Facilitator's mention

After the contribution of the participants, the facilitator lists some simple methods that can be used by students:

- Case studies about business models that take into account the three pillars of sustainable development (economic, social, environment) that can be adapted to the local context;
- Direct, on-site observations to witness the negative impact of certain human activities (e.g.: pollution, massive deforestation, illegal buildings which destroy the habitats of birds and animals, etc.);
- Reflections at club level about the status of wilderness areas and their unique character, in conjunction with their poor promotion and development opportunities;
- Research about the promotion of the wilderness concept abroad and a comparison with their region;
- Analysis of other projects and environmental actions impacting wilderness areas in the country and abroad: the programs that other countries build to attract tourists and how those models can be adjusted to their region (e.g.: thematic trails for observing certain key species only native to our country);
- Research on the status of wilderness areas by means of surveys, polls, analysis of mass-media articles, specialized publications and websites, etc.;
- Community visits and interviews or talks to community people (citizens who wish to say their mind about the protected areas in the region, representatives of institutions/organizations, business people, representatives of environmental organizations who work for the conservation of protected and wilderness areas, experts, teachers, etc.).

5. PREPARATION FOR COMMUNITY RESEARCH VISIT

35 MINUTES

Purpose

The following activity seeks to enable students to prepare to collect community information and identify needs/issues that can be approached by their wilderness club and solved by the project they are going to implement.

Preparation and facilitation

Based on the proposals put forward in the previous activity, the facilitator will split the participants into three work groups:

- Observers
- Interviewers
- Analysts of press articles

For the next 30 minutes, the work groups will have to prepare a work strategy for the collection of information, which will be useful for the selection of a project idea.

The group of interviewers in the community will make up a list of people they wish to interview (city hall representatives, local environmental experts, business people, citizens, teachers, etc.), then will draft a short interview guide with the questions they will ask to those people. It is important to contact them in advance and to get their agreement to be interviewed.

The interview guide should include at least the following:

- The purpose has to be clearly stated, answering the following question: Why is this interview performed? What purpose does it have? What are the information needs?
- The interviewer will be ensured that the information received will not be disclosed, but say what you will do with it (without giving away any names).
- All questions have to be justified (for the interviewer).
- Ensure the interviewee knows and is interested in the field the questions refer to.
- The recommended interview time is 30 minutes.
- At the end, thank the interviewee.

Additional details on drafting the interview guide are available in Annex 1.

The group of observers who will research in the community on various environmental topics to be later discussed at the club will draft an observation sheet. There are many things to consider afterwards, and besides taking a close look at the issues, the participants are also encouraged to talk to the people and ask them questions in order to complete their understanding about the issues at hand. The list below is indicative and only includes a few issues possibly encountered during data collection (*also see Annex 2*):

- **The national/nature park.** Is it visited by different types of people? What is their impact on wilderness areas? Are these areas promoted?
- **Rivers crossing the community.** The lake, stream or river water is clean? Is there waste dumped in the water? If so, are there ways to solve this situation?
- **Forests around the community.** Are there any forests around the locality? Are there any special recreation spots and hiking trails? Are there ways to maintain the cleanliness of forests and educate visitors?
- **Commercial activities.** What kind of commercial activities are carried out in the community? How do they impact nature and wilderness areas? Are there business models for sustainable development?
- **Air quality.** What is the air quality? Are there any specific smells in the locality (smoke, waste, chemicals, etc.)? Are there any industrial polluters?
- **Environmental organizations working for nature preservation.** Are there such organizations? How many are they and what is their coverage? What are their ongoing projects?
- **Other remarks, strengths or weaknesses in the community**
- **Overall picture of the community-nature relationship.** What is the general impression on the community-nature relationship?

The group that analyzes press articles. Some questions are suggested below, which could complete the understanding of the issues and community needs as described in the local press (*Also see Annex 3*):

- What are the most important mass-media articles about the environmental problems in the region?
- Is there any local daily/weekly news on environmental issues?
- What are the most frequent environmental issues raised?
- Are there any local environmental initiatives announced in the press? Is the community involved in these initiatives?
- What are the actions proposed by the authorities and organizations and how are they reflected in the local press?
- Do these articles talk about the regulatory side of environment protection?
- Are there any articles with examples of projects and good practices?
- Are there articles featuring sustainable business ideas?



For the next 30 minutes, the groups will prepare their work strategy so that the next meeting is fully dedicated to collecting information.

After collecting information, the work groups will give a 10-minute presentation in which they will emphasize the main environmental needs and issues that can be addressed by the club projects, as resulting from the activity of each group (interviews with community representatives, community feedback, analysis of mass-media articles).

6. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Bopp M., Bopp J. 2006, *Recreating the World, A Practical Guide to Build Sustainable Communities*. Four world Press, Canada
- Neagu M. 2010. *Curriculum IMPACT. Cetățenie activă*. (Curriculum IMPACT. Active citizenship) Fundația Noi Orizonturi

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Interview Guide, Annex 2: Observation Guide, Annex 3: Press articles analysis guide

11. Introduction to project management: needs analysis in wilderness areas

ANNEX 1: Interview guide

Suggestions for an interview guide

1. Assure the interviewee you will not disclose the information received, but state what you will do with it (without giving any names).
2. Do not judge the quality of the answers.
3. The purpose has to be stated clearly by answering the following questions: Why is this interview held? What is its purpose? What do you want to find out?
4. Start by winning the interviewee's attention, taking into account that no one can be forced into answering the questions.
5. After the answer, you can ask short questions requesting additional information about what is of interest to you.
6. Each question has to be justified (for the interviewer).
7. In the beginning, make sure the interviewee knows and is interested in the field of the questions (protected areas/wilderness areas).
8. The questions are asked taking into account the defining features of the key concept and the key question.
9. Do not ask personal questions.
10. Closed questions (Yes or No answers) should be avoided.
11. In the question sequence, consider the answer from the previous question.
12. The interview can also be performed online, preferably by email, because it allows thinking and answering time.
13. The interview should not have more than 10 questions.
14. Thank them for their time at the end.

11. Introduction to project management: needs analysis in wilderness areas

ANNEX 2: Observation guide:

The observers' group

Examples of topics that can be observed:

- **National or nature parks in the region.** Who are the visitors? What is their impact on wilderness areas? Are the wilderness areas and species promoted?
- **Is the lake, stream or river water clean?** Was waste dumped in the water? Who is responsible for this? Are there any ways to address this?



- **Forests around the community.** Are there any campsites and hiking trails? Do the tourists follow them? Are there any information and education campaigns for visitors? Do you think they are aware of their impact on the forests and all the benefits provided by forests?
- **Commercial activities.** What kind of commercial activities take place in the community? How do they impact nature and wilderness areas? Are there any sustainable development models (which also take into account the impact on the environment and the community, not just the turnover)?
- **Air quality.** What is the air quality? Are there any specific smells in the locality (smoke, waste, chemicals, etc.)? Are there any industrial polluters?
- **Environmental organizations working for nature conservation.** Are there such organizations? How many are there and what is their coverage? What are their ongoing projects?
- **Other remarks, strengths or weaknesses regarding environmental quality**
- **The overall picture.** What is the general impression on the community-nature relationship?

11.

Introduction to project management: needs analysis in wilderness areas

ANNEX 3: Press articles analysis guide:

The research of mass-media articles and stories can build on at least the following:

- a. What are the most important mass-media articles about the environmental problems in the region?
- b. Is there any local daily/weekly news on environmental issues?
- c. What are the most frequent environmental issues raised?
- d. Are there any local environmental initiatives announced in the press? Is the community involved in such initiatives?
- e. What are the actions proposed by the authorities and organizations and how are they reflected in the local press?
- f. Do these articles talk about the regulatory side of environment protection?
- g. Are there any articles with examples of projects and good practices?
- h. Are there articles featuring sustainable business ideas?

12. Needs analysis and prioritization



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Define what an issue/need is for the purpose of a nature conservation project
- (S)** Examine the needs and issues in the own community
- (S)** Prioritize the needs and issues identified
- (S)** Take group-level decisions to address the needs that have been identified, are realistic and can be approached by the project to be implemented by the club
- (A)** Optimism about the future and how one's involvement can bring about positive change for the environment and local community



Key concepts:

⦿ Desires ⦿ Needs ⦿ Issues

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. Community visit	Community visit Presentation of results	60 minutes 15 minutes	Work guides, flipchart paper, markers
3. Community map	Group work	25 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers, colored pencils
4. Desires, needs or issues	Group work Facilitated discussion	30 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
5. Prioritization of the needs/ issues and selection of the project idea	Facilitated discussion	20 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
6. Next steps	Group discussion	5 minutes	Attendance list

Total estimated time: **2 hours 40 minutes**



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the meeting is to analyze the community needs/issues for the purposes of preparing nature conservation projects.

2. COMMUNITY VISIT

60 MINUTES (visit)**15 MINUTES** (presentation of results)

The three work groups will visit the community to collect information on the needs/issues of wilderness areas and the environment in their region (if Internet access is available, the group that analyzes press articles can carry out this activity instead). Some of the interviews and the article assessment can be carried out before this meeting, too).

Based on the information collected, the work groups will give a 5 minute presentation emphasizing the main needs and issues of nature that can be approached by the wilderness club, as shown by the activity performed by their group (interviews with community representatives, community feedback, analysis of mass-media articles).

3. COMMUNITY MAP

25 MINUTES

Purpose

The following activity enables the club members to draw a map in an inclusive and fun process, building on the information collected following the visit and providing an overall picture of the problems and needs faced by nature around them.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will give the participants 3 flipchart sheets and ask them to draw a community map in the next 15 minutes, which will include:

- Significant places and buildings
- Access roads
- Rivers crossing the community
- Green areas, parks, forests
- Commercial activities and businesses which impact wilderness areas
- The city hall and its representatives, the offices of the national or nature park management bodies and their representatives, environmental organizations, other institutions directly connected to environmental protection and wilderness areas in the region
- Other elements directly connected to wilderness areas
- The issues and needs identified by the work groups

The community map gives the students an overall picture of their community's needs and will drive them to think and decide on issues to be addressed by their project and the main stakeholders they have to involve.

4. DESIRES, NEEDS OR ISSUES?

30 MINUTES

Purpose

One first step of building a project is the identification of what needs to be changed.

For this, knowing the difference between desires, needs and issues will facilitate the group members' decision regarding the project to be implemented.

The purpose of the activity is to help the students tell the difference between the three concepts.

Preparation and facilitation

20 MINUTES

The facilitator will distribute flipchart sheets and markers to the three work groups. The task of the groups will be to show which of the aspects identified by the data collection visit are desires, which are needs and which are issues. The groups have 10 minutes of time to think and find the right answers.

When the time is up, the work groups will present their answers in front of everybody. In the end, the facilitator invites the participants to define the three terms. Separately, the facilitator will present the following work definitions on a flipchart sheet:

Facilitator's mention

(the facilitator can have the definitions below ready on a flipchart sheet):

- The issues are those aspects with a negative impact on people or the environment.
- The needs are the aspects which would improve the current situation.
- Desires are considered something that would be nice to have, but not mandatory.

To conclude these activities, the facilitator will ask the participants what would be some implications of this differentiation between desires, needs, issues and which of these three should be addressed by the projects to be implemented.

5. PRIORITIZATION AND SELECTION OF THE PROJECT THEME

20 MINUTES

Following the documentation, the students identified a set of needs and issues. Each of these could be likely directions of the project they wish to develop. But now is the time for the group to decide on a single issue which motivates them the most and could be realistically achieved with the available resources (it has to be reminded that the budget of the club is limited and they may need to consider additional resources sourced from the community for their projects). It is important that each of the club members felt they had a chance to express their point of view and that the decision was taken democratically and inclusively.

So, how to select an issue of concern for everyone and how they think they can solve? Two simple methods are described below:

- 3 votes – once the issues identified by the group were pinpointed on the map or written down on a list, each of the members can express three options by picking up the three issues they want to address. They can vote with a sticker or by drawing an X near the specific issue. The final count will immediately reveal the preferences of the group; starting from these three choices, and one final selection can be eventually made.
- Sometimes, a quick vote will suffice: who is for or against a certain issue will raise their hands.

In the case of different opinions, the club members should have time to express their opinions. Otherwise, some members can become disappointed or angry at this process! Find out why they feel like this ... they may have a point.

When taking a decision about the future project, it is also important that the club members consider the following:

- How much time do we have?
- When should the project be completed?
- What are the costs?
- What resources do we have?
- Who can support us?
- Who do we want to cooperate with?



6. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Peace Corps. The New Project Design and Management Workshop Training Manual.
Available at: http://files.peacecorps.gov/multimedia/pdf/library/T0107_projectdesign.pdf
- Neagu M. 2010. *Curriculum IMPACT. Cetățenie activă (IMPACT Curriculum. Active Citizenship)*, New Horizons Foundation
- Greeninitiative, WWF, Viitor Plus. *Culegerea verde*, Platforma Școli verzi (The Green Digest, the Green Schools Platform)

13. Developing a project. Part 1



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Describe the project's goal, objectives and activities
- (S)** State the project's goal and objectives
- (S)** Identify the project's impact on the long term
- (A)** Recognize the importance of planning and preparing of a project



Key concepts:

- Project
- Problem tree
- Solution tree
- The project's goal
- The project's objectives
- SMART Objectives

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. The tale of the people in danger of drowning	Storytelling	20 minutes	Annex 1
3. Defining the issue/ problem	Facilitated discussion Presentation	20 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
4. Problem tree	Facilitated discussion Presentation	35 minutes	Problem tree
5. Solution tree	Facilitated discussion Presentation	45 minutes	Solution tree
6. Evaluation: Steps towards action...	Evaluation game	15 minutes	Footprint printouts (A 4 papers) – as many as participants
7. Next steps	Group discussion	10 minutes	Attendance list

Total estimated time: **2 hours, 30 minutes**



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The goal of the meeting is to familiarize the club members with the steps of the environmental and wilderness community action project.

2. STORY: THE TALE OF THE PEOPLE IN DANGER OF DROWNING

20 MINUTES

Purpose

The goal of this story is to help participants understand that direct involvement in the environmental problems is the opposite of indifference and disregard and addressing certain issues requires acting on their causes, in order to prevent their occurrence on the long term.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator or one participant will read the story (Annex 1), asking the group to make themselves comfortable. It is important to read the story expressively, so that the listeners are captivated by it.

After reading the story, the facilitator will conclude the activity with a set of reflection questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *What is the story about?*
- *What solution did the people find when many others were at risk of drowning?*
- *Why did someone suggested to go upstream?*
- *Why would it be better to go upstream?*
- *What situation from real life does this resemble to?*
- *What do you think is the significance of "upstream"?*
- *How can our club go "upstream", through the projects that we do?*

3. DEFINING THE ISSUE/PROBLEM

20 MINUTES

Purpose

After having selected the problem in the previous meeting, the next project steps consist in defining the issue/problem, defining the goal, stating the objectives and establishing the target group and beneficiaries.

Defining the issue/problem is a very important step because it sets a guideline to be followed throughout the entire project. It should be expressed in a single sentence, which summarizes the essence of the issue.

In this activity, the participants will clarify what to consider when defining a problem and will work on the defined problem in the previous meeting.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will present a few examples of problems already defined (by using the flipchart, power-point, or other methods at hand).

A few examples are presented on the next page:

Description	Issue/problem incorrectly defined	Issue/problem correctly defined
Many trucks haul wood from the local forests; the media announces massive logging in the region; the statistics show an increase of timber exports in excess of 30%; there is no reforestation plan.	Too many forests are cut in our community.	30% increase in deforestation in our region, without a reforestation plan.
Each year, 300 tons of waste is dumped in the river crossing the locality; the wastewater dumped in rivers is not treated, placing the river ecosystem at risk.	The local river is polluted.	The river water quality is below environmental standards.
The locality and the school lack sufficient resources; there are no dedicated spaces for the club activities.	We don't have a youth center.	The youth in our economy lack a dedicated space to perform recreational and educational activities.

After presenting these examples, the facilitator and the club members will try to identify the characteristics of a well defined issue:

Facilitator's mention

A well defined issue:

- Reflects a real issue/problem
- Involves several solutions
- Leaves room for finding the causes
- Summarizes the project justification in just one sentence

Based on these examples and characteristics, the facilitator will invite the group to correctly define the selected issue.

4. PROBLEM TREE

35 MINUTES

Facilitator's mention

Once the central problem has been identified and defined, the club members should know more about, its cause, its different sides, the stakeholders, the people affected by it, the relevant authorities, if it's a known problem in the community, etc.

A very useful and easy to use tool in this regard is the "Problem tree", which is used as follows:

- The selected issue is written on the tree trunk.
- The roots are the causes of the problem.
- The branches are the effects of the problem: what happens, what will continue to happen and what are the consequences of failing to address the issue?



Preparation and facilitation

On a flipchart sheet, the facilitator will draw a tree with roots, trunk and branches.

- On the trunk, write an example of a problem: "River water quality is below environmental standards".
- The relevant factors (causes) will be written at the root of the tree:
 - *300 tons of waste are daily discharged in the water*
 - *the wastewater discharged in rivers is not treated*
 - *the populace is not aware of the danger of dumping waste in rivers*
 - *40% of homes and 20% of businesses are not connected to the sewer.*
- On the branches, write the potential **effects** of this issue:
 - *The river area is neglected by residents*
 - *The river ecosystems is in danger*
 - *The water quality is diminished*

(Taken and adapted from http://www.iom.md/attachments/110_Project%20development%20Guide.pdf)

The facilitator will split the group in two teams. Each team will receive a flipchart sheet and markers (or a printout of Annex 2: Problem tree) and will have to build their own tree and write the issue selected by the group on its trunk.

The first team will have to answer the question "Why does this problem occur?" and will write the cause of the problem on the roots.

The second team will have to answer the question: "What happens, what will continue to happen and what are the consequences of failing to address the issue?" and will write the effects of the selected issue on the branches.

The participants have 15 minutes to complete the task and then will present the results before the entire group.

5. SOLUTION TREE

45 MINUTES

One method to establish the project goal is the "Solution tree", which restates the negative situations from the "Problem tree". Thus:

- The positive reinforcement (reversal) of the problem gives the goal of the project.
- The reversal of the causes lead to the objectives of the project.
- The positive reinforcement of the effects lead to the results (impact) of the project.

In our example,

Issue/problem: "The river water quality is below the environmental standards" becomes

Project goal: "Increase the river quality environmental standards"

The goal of the project is the description of the situation after the problem was solved. The goal describes a fact you would like to happen in the future, it is a wider, overall picture. When defining the project goal, answer these two questions: "What do we want to do with our project?" and "What do we want to have at the end of our project?"

Project objectives (roots of the tree):

- Reducing the volume of solid wastewater dumping by 50%;
- Informing the populace about the dangers of dumping waste in the river;
- Treatment of the wastewater discharged in the river;
- Connection of 40% of homes and 20% of businesses to sewerage.

The objectives are the steps taken to reach and achieve the goal. The objectives are more specific than the goal, have a clear beginning, a certain time frame and an end point.

Facilitator's mention

It is paramount that the objectives are stated according to what project management already called the "SMART objectives". Thus, the objectives have to meet certain criteria:

- **Specific** – they have to be specific, easy to understand and answer the following questions: "What?", "Who?", "Where?", "For whom?"
- **Measurable** – they have to allow measurement, assessment, answer the question "What will we achieve?", "How many will be affected?"
- **Accessible** – they have to be attainable, answer the question "Does the club have the resources to reach this goal?"
- **Realistic** – allow a successful completion within the timeframe and the means at hand, answer the questions: "Are our resources available", "Is the work time realistic?"
- **On time** – they have to have a completion timeframe, answer the question "What is the timeframe to complete?"

The project deliverables or impact (the tree branches) will be:

- The river area is watched by the inhabitants
- The river ecosystem features favorable conditions

Based on the example provided, the facilitator invites the two work groups to build a solution tree, one of the groups will work to identify the project objectives and write them on the roots, while the other group will assess the project impact and write it on the branches. After the groups established their project objectives and deliverables, the facilitator invites a representative from each group to present their work, after which the participants can give comments and remarks on this presentation.

Recommendations regarding the objectives:

- The club members should work on the causes which the club could solve/mitigate, taking into account the resources available and that can be sourced from the community.
- The project to be developed should have no more than 3 or 4 objectives.

6. EVALUATION: STEPS TOWARDS ACTION...

15 MINUTE

This activity is aimed at stimulating the students to reflect and assess the lessons learned at the meeting.



Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will place cards in the shape of a human foot (real size) on the floor, in line or as a horseshoe. The group is asked to stand before the first footmark. To make a step forward, the facilitator will ask the participants to share something they will do next week and which is related to what they learned at this meeting. Then, the facilitator will say this was the first step towards action, a promise they will do something.

7. NEXT STEPS

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Bulat V. 2011. Ghid de reguli și principii de bază de scriere a unui proiect. Ediția II (Rules and basic principles of project writing) 2nd edition.
Available at: http://www.iom.md/attachments/110_Project%20development%20Guide.pdf
- Neagu M. 2010. *Curriculum IMPACT. Cetățenie activă (IMPACT Curriculum. Active citizenship)*. New Horizons Foundation
- Păsărin J., *Metode creative folosite în activitățile de tineret (Creative methods used in youth activities)*. Life Foundation
- Greeninitiative, WWF, Viitor Plus. *Culegere verde*. Platforma Școli verzi (Green Digest. The Green Schools Platform)

Support materials:

- Annex 1: The tale of the people in danger of drowning, Annex 2: Problem tree, Annex 3: Solution tree



13. Developing a project. Part 1

ANNEX 1: The tale of the people in danger of drowning

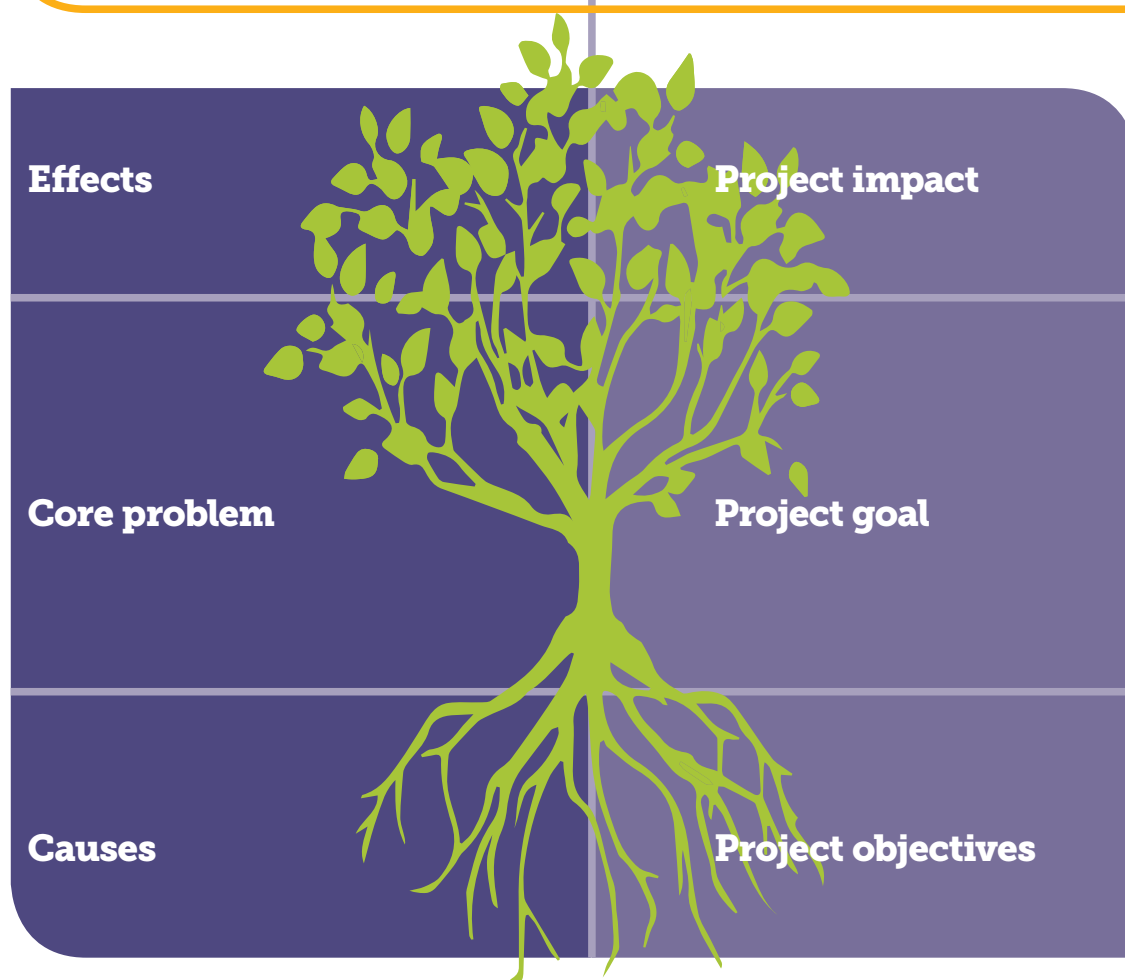
A man saw someone drowning in a river and jumped in to save him. The next day, someone else was caught in the current, and the brave rescuer jumped once again in the river to save the struggling victim. The following day, there were three people about to drown, at which time the rescuer had to ask for help to save the people in danger. The next day, ten people had to be rescued, and many locals had to join the rescue teams. Soon, the river was filled with people in danger of drowning and the entire city worked to save them.

In the end, someone said: "We should go upstream and see where these people come from". But other replied: "We can't! We are much too busy saving lives here, downstream".

13. Developing a project. Part 1

ANNEX 2:
Problem tree

ANNEX 3:
Solution tree



14. Developing a project. Part 2



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Define the target group and ways to identify project beneficiaries
- (S)** Set up a project activity plan
- (K)** Describe the project activity plan and budget
- (S)** Set up a project workplan and budget
- (S)** Identify the project risks and alternatives



Key concepts:

☉ Target group ☉ Beneficiaries ☉ Project activities ☉ Tasks ☉ Methods ☉ Budget

ACTIVITIES

	Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1.	Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2.	Target group and project beneficiaries	Presentation Group work	20 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
3.	Defining activities and tasks	Presentation Group work	40 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers, Annex 1
4.	Budget estimate	Presentation Group work	40 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers, Annex 2
5.	Risk assessment	Presentation Group work	30 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
6.	Recap and evaluation: What I learned...	Evaluation game	15 minutes	Small ball
7.	Next steps	Group discussion	10 minutes	Attendance list

Total estimated time: **2 hours, 40 minutes**



1. MEETING AGENDA AND OBJECTIVES

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The facilitator will remind that the meeting seeks to continue what was begun at the previous session, namely to teach how to establish the project beneficiaries, the target group and how to set up the activity plan and the budget of the environmental project.

2. TARGET GROUP AND PROJECT BENEFICIARIES

20 MINUTES

Purpose

This part builds on the information from the previous session (identification of the objectives and project impact), will help the club members to define the target group and identify the direct and indirect beneficiaries of the project to be developed.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator asks the group whether they know the meaning of the terms "target group" and "beneficiaries", and assigns 10 minutes for answers and discussions. After the participants had their say, the facilitator presents the working definitions below.

Facilitator's mention

- **Target group** – a group of people the project is designed for and who are directly and positively impacted by the project
- **Beneficiaries** – everyone who benefits from the project
- **Direct beneficiaries** – those who directly benefit from the project, including the target group (without limitation)
- **Indirect beneficiaries** – everyone impacted by the project results, but not directly involved in the project activities

An example of how to define a target group and beneficiaries is found below. The facilitator presents the example using the flipchart, blackboard or a PowerPoint slide.

Goal	Objective	Target group	Direct beneficiaries	Indirect beneficiaries
Raising the water quality in the local river to environmental standards	Before the end of the school year, 200 local middle school students will be informed of the dangers of dumping waste in the river	Local middle school students	200 local middle school students	30 teachers from local schools, 500 family members of middle school students, 500 community members

Based on the definitions above and the example provided, the facilitator invites the work groups to look at the problem tree drawn at the previous meeting – particularly the goal and the objectives, and build on them to identify the target group and the beneficiaries of the project (state that the project beneficiaries can only be estimated at this point). The two target groups have 10 minutes work time to agree on the target group and project beneficiaries.

3. DEFINING ACTIVITIES AND TASKS

40 MINUTES

Purpose

This is where the Design stage is replaced by the Planning stage. The activities and tasks contribute to completing the overall picture of the project, while at the same time it empowers the club to begin working on it.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will present definitions below, after having written them on the blackboard or a flipchart sheet:

Facilitator's mention

- **Planning** is a step-by-step breakdown of all the stages required to achieve the project objectives. Planning has to address the following questions: What?, How?, When?, Who?
- **The Activities** are the steps taken to achieve an objective.
- **Tasks**. The activities are divided into a series of tasks that have to be performed within a certain timeframe, while the methods explain how the respective tasks will be carried out.

The facilitator explains the example below in order to more clearly explain how to set up the activities, tasks and methods. Based on this example and the definitions above, the participants are split into three or four work groups (according to the number of project goals). The groups are asked to pick one project objective and state the activities, tasks and methods using the template in Annex 1. The work time is 20 minutes, after which the groups are invited to present the results. The work groups are asked to provide feedback and comment on the activities proposed, so that they provide together a single picture of the project objectives and activities.

Objective	Activities	Tasks	Methods
Before the end of the school year, 200 middle school students will be informed about the dangers of dumping waste into rivers.	Seek approval from the management of the schools taking part in the project.	Contact school headmasters and present them with the project.	Assign club members to talk to school headmasters.
	Design and edit brochures and leaflets regarding the dangers of dumping waste in rivers.	Describe key-elements (text, pictures, etc.) to be included in the brochure/ leaflet.	Internet research; study similar brochures; group discussions.
		Edit and print the brochure, leaflet, etc.	Use specific desktop publishing software for editing the brochure, leaflet.
	Organizing information seminars and workshops.	Describe the topic and content to be presented at seminars and workshops and establish the methods and means to be used.	Group discussions, consulting local experts, Internet research.
		Establish the place where the activities will take place.	Talk with school headmasters and choose appropriate place for the meetings.
		Identify and contact moderators to facilitate the seminars and workshops.	Make up lists of potential facilitators from among teachers, youth workers, local experts, and select and contact eligible candidates.
		Prepare notices and invitations for students of participating schools.	Team work, typing and printing.
		Make up the project agenda and work folders for all participants.	Purchase the folders, print the agenda and all supporting materials.



The facilitator will present the example below to illustrate how to set up the activities, tasks and methods. Based on this example and the definitions above, the participants are split into three or four work groups (according to the number of objectives in their project). The groups are asked to pick one project objective and define the activities, tasks and methods like in the facilitator's example, based on the template in Annex 1. The work time is 20 minutes, after which the work groups are asked to present the results. The work groups are asked to provide feedback and comment on the activities proposed, so that they provide together a single picture of the project goals and activities.

4. BUDGET ESTIMATE

40 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity will enable the students to indicate the financial resources required to develop a project.

Preparation and facilitation

Using a blackboard or a flipchart sheet, the facilitator presents the definition of a budget and provides explanations to participants as in the example below:

Facilitator's mention

- A budget is a document which assigns financial costs to certain activities.
- A budget estimates the required resources, costs and payment schedules.

Drafting a budget for a project involves an estimation of all the costs of a respective project. These costs can be expressed as categories of expenditure (e.g.: transport or supply costs etc.). One method to draft the budget of a project is to plan all costs for each activity, then assign these costs to a general budget. In such a case, the budget can be defined as "Activities expressed as in the form of money".

The facilitator will then invite the work groups to use the activity planning to estimate the costs as types of expenditure (see Annex 2: Costs estimate).

Now is the time for the club members to answer the following questions: "What are the materials required by each activity?", "What materials are already available?", "If they are not available, how can we find them?", "Can we borrow them?", "Can someone donate them to us?", "Can we raise money to buy them?", "Are all of them necessary?", "What can we give up without compromising the project?".

Activities	Types of expenditure				Total
	Transport	Supplies	Services	Other	
Activity 1					
Activity 2					
Activity 3					
Activity 4					
Etc.					
Grand total					

After 15 minutes, the groups will be asked to share their results with the other participants. After the presentation by each group, add up the budgets of the three (or four) groups to get an estimate for the entire project budget.

The facilitator reminds the participants that the club has a limited budget and all the money spent for projects has to be supported by documents (receipts, fiscal invoices, travel tickets, etc.).

If the club members intend to seek help from abroad, sponsors or donations, they have to follow the guidelines below:

Facilitator's mention

Guidelines for requesting sponsorship:

- *Make a list of possible sponsors.*
- *Plan to contact them.*
- *Be polite and careful to explain what the help is for, keep everybody updated on how you used the resources and invite them to take part in the activities.*
- *Very importantly, thank them during the activities and after. Once the project is completed, prepare a presentation with images from the project to show them you achieved the project's purpose and their help went where you said it would.*

Guidelines for requesting donations:

- *If you are after funds from small donations, you should be creative and organize fundraisers related to your project.*
- *When organizing an event, make sure that you explain why you need the funds. This is useful for your initial purpose to inform as many people as possible.*
- *Ask the buyers/donors to leave their contact data to keep them updated about your project, just like described above for sponsors. (Guidelines from the Student's Manual, coordinated by Cătălina Murariu, prepared under the EcoEducation for Green Schools project, Greeninitiative, WWFRomania, ViitorPlus).*

5. RISK ASSESSMENT

30 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at providing the club members with an opportunity to identify the possible risks of the project they wish to implement, as well as the measures to avoid and solve any events likely to impact the project quality.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator invites the participants to define risks and how it impacts their project. After the participants gave their contribution, give the working definition.

Facilitator's mention

A risk is an event likely to occur during the project, and impact the project in a positive or negative way. There is always a certain level of uncertainty about risks, but anticipating them may mitigate any negative results.

- **Known risks** – *can be identified and planned in good time*
- **Unknown risks** – *cannot be identified and planned*

Examples of risks: due to bad spring weather, an outdoor activity has to be canceled; the students may be so absorbed with the preparation of the national evaluation so that they will not have the time to attend the project activities. (Guidelines from the Student's Manual, coordinated by Cătălina Murariu, prepared under the EcoEducation for Green Schools project, Greeninitiative, WWFRomania, ViitorPlus)

The facilitator invites the participants to picture themselves for the next 5 minutes as the fiercest opponent of the project they want to implement: what would disrupt, block or prevent the project from happening as it's supposed to?

When the time expires, the facilitator asks the group to list likely problems/risks of the project in regard to:



- The activities planned?
- The people involved in the project?
- The venue and materials to be used?

The answers are written down on a flipchart sheet, followed by a selection of the most obvious risks. The participants are then asked to gather into groups of four for the next 15 minutes. Each group receives a working sheet (Annex 3: Risk management), and based on some of the identified risks, they should mention:

The issue being addressed?

The activities required?

Who will be involved?

How will they act?

When to act?

Where do they have to act?

What resources are necessary?

How will the result be measured?

When the time expires, the groups are asked to share their results.

6. EVALUATION: WHAT I LEARNED...

At the end of the meeting, the facilitator will lead a quick evaluation round in order to close the learning cycle for the day. Participants will stand in a circle and will throw the small ball from one to the other ("hot potato" method). The one who catches the ball will say what he/she learned during this meeting, what drew his/her attention, what "revelation" he/she had. The ball should pass everyone in the group.

7. NEXT STEPS

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Neagu M. 2010. *Curriculum IMPACT. Cetățenie activă* (IMPACT Curriculum. Active Citizenship). New Horizons Foundation
- Păsărin J., *Metode creative folosite în activitățile de tineret* (Creative methods used in youth activities). Life Foundation
- Green Initiative, WWF, Viitor Plus. *Culegerea verde*. Platforma Școli verzi (Green Digest, Green Schools Platform)

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Defining project activities, Annex 2: Costs estimate, Annex 3: Risk management

14. Developing a project. Part 2

ANNEX 1: Defining project activities

Developing a project. Part 2

Objective	Activities	Tasks	Methods



14. Developing a project. Part 2

ANNEX 2: Costs estimate

The work task of your group is to estimate the costs of the various types of expenditure required for achieving the project objectives.

Activities	Types of expenditure				Total
	Transport	Supplies	Services	Other	
Activity 1					
Activity 2					
Activity 3					
Activity 4					
Grand total					

14. Developing a project. Part 2

ANNEX 3: Risk management

What is the issue being addressed?	
What activities are required?	
Who will be involved?	
How will they act?	
When do they have the act?	
Where do they have to act?	
What resources are required?	
How will the result be measured?	

15. Project writing and monitoring



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

(K) Describe the importance of continuous monitoring and evaluation of the project implementation

(S) Compare the project status and progress against the initial work plan; match the resources with the schedule

(S) Adjusts the resources, timetable or anything else necessary to achieve the project goals

(A) Show perseverance and complete what was started, notwithstanding setbacks and difficulties



Key concepts:

Project monitoring Gantt chart

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Welcome and introduction	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. Story: Everyone, Someone, Anyone, No one	Storytelling	10 minutes	Story printout
3. Question spree	Reflection game	15 minutes	
4. Project monitoring	Gallery tour Facilitated discussion	70 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
5. Filling out the Gantt chart	Team work	30 minutes	Annex 1
6. Recap and evaluation: The pizza slice...	Evaluation game	15 minutes	Annex 2
7. Next steps	Group talk	5 minutes	Attendance list
Total estimated time: 2 hours, 30 minutes			



1. OBJECTIVES AND MEETING AGENDA

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the meeting is to familiarize the club members with the environmental project monitoring principles and to fill out the Gantt chart for the project to be implemented.

2. STORY: EVERYONE, SOMEONE, ANYONE, NO ONE

15 MINUTES

Purpose

This is a short story about responsibility and the importance of taking responsibility in all the project stages, and particularly during the implementation and monitoring period.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator or one participant will read or tell the story, asking the group to sit as comfortable as possible. It is important to read the story expressively, so that the listeners are captivated by it.

*This is a story about four people named **Everyone**, **Anyone**, **Someone** and **No one**. Some important problem arose and **Everyone** had to solve it. **Everyone** was assured that **Someone** would do it. **Anyone** could do it, but **No one** did it. **Someone** got very annoyed because of it because the job was for **Everyone** to do. **Everyone** thought that **Anyone** would do it, but **No one** realized that **Everyone** would stay away. Eventually, **Everyone** blamed **Someone**, and **No one** did what **Anyone** could do.*

After reading the story, the facilitator will conclude the activity with a set of reflection questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- How did you feel to listen to the story?
- Did you enjoy the story?
- Do you think there is anything funny in this story?
- What part of it do you think is true?
- Does this happen in real life? Can you give examples?
- How is this story related to the project monitoring?
- How can we make sure this won't happen in our club?

3. QUESTION SPREE

15 MINUTES

Purpose

This is a preliminary activity for project monitoring, which will help the participants to think in terms of questions about the project monitoring process.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants are split into four columns, laid two by two, one facing the other. The general topic of the questions is about the project monitoring. The person in front of the column will ask the person in the facing column a question about the project monitoring.

He/she will answer with another question on the same topic. The questions go on until someone answers with a "yes". Then, the person who is wrong return to the end of his/her column. If there are too many questions between the two persons, the facilitator may replace them.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *How did you feel during the game?*
- *What did you like or not like about this game?*
- *How was it to phrase the questions?*
- *How was it to answer with a question? Easy? Hard?*
- *What did you find out about monitoring by asking questions?*
- *What are the most important questions about monitoring?*
- *How is this game useful for the club activities?*

4. PROJECT MONITORING: GALLERY TOUR

70 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity will enable participants to find the main elements they have to consider when monitoring the project. For this, the participants will be involved in a collaborative learning method called the "galley tour."

Preparation and facilitation

Based on the previous exercise, the facilitator asks what the most important questions about project monitoring are. The answers are written down on a flipchart sheet and should include:

- What is monitoring?
- Why do we monitor?
- What is being monitored?
- How do we monitor?
- Who does the monitoring?
- When does the monitoring take place?

The participants will be split into six work groups, and each group will receive flipchart sheets, markers and one of the questions above. The groups have 20 minutes to find the answers to the question asked. The answer can be given in the form of a chart, diagram, a symbolic representation, short sentences, etc.

When the time ends, each group will delegate a representative to give a short presentation before all the participants, explaining the sheet and taking questions. Then, the groups will display the sheets on walls. The other participants can now stop before each sheet to discuss it and write down comments, suggestions and questions. The participants return to their initial sheets and read the comments written by their colleagues. They may follow up with a group answer to the questions and comments of the other participants.

In the end, each sheet should include at least the following information:



What is project monitoring?	The systematic collection and analysis of information about all the aspects of the project during its implementation stage, in order to assess the progress of the project and bring the necessary changes/adjustments to achieve its goals. To monitor means to study what is going on, while it is going on.
Why do we monitor?	In order to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Assess the current status of the project;■ Identify the challenges facing the project and seek appropriate solutions;■ Keep the project activities on schedule;■ Measure the progress towards achieving the objectives;■ Decide on material, financial and human resources.
What is being monitored?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Administrative needs■ Materials and equipments■ Project budget■ The interest and motivation of the participants■ Roles and responsibilities
How do we monitor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Visits■ Meetings■ Observations■ Interviews■ Letters■ Surveys■ Budget analyses■ Statistics■ Research■ Reports
Who does the monitoring?	The monitoring is generally performed by the club members, but also by other stakeholders involved in the process (partners, donors, sponsors).
When does the monitoring take place?	It can be carried out on a daily, weekly or monthly basis. The club should delegate one or two members to monitor the project compliance with the success metrics (deadlines, raising certain amounts of money, etc.); these verifications should be carried out according to the established project timeframes.

Facilitator's mention

One potentially useful tool for the monitoring process is the Gantt chart. It adequately illustrates the project timeframe, including the start and end date, and the connection between the project elements. A Gantt chart model is available in the annexes (see *Annex 1*).

The group receives a copy of the Gantt chart (*Annex 1*), which is filled out based on the other documents completed so far (goals and activities, budget, etc.). The group will also write the project according to the template below (see *Annex 2*), based on the information from the previous meetings:

- **Project title** (short and creative)
- **Project motivation** (the issues addressed by the project and the reason for their selection)
- **Implementation period** (preferably in months, e.g. April-June 2016)
- **Project goal** (one short sentence describing how to address the issue/community need)
- **Project objectives** (the steps needed to achieve the goal – it has to be SMART; three to four objectives to be achieved)
- **The target group and beneficiaries** (the persons the project is designed for and who directly or indirectly benefit from it)

- **Time framing** (activity-dependent; the Gantt diagram is recommended)
- **The required budget** (the financial resources available for the project implementation, the resources to be obtained from other sources and the expenditure breakdown)
- **Partners, sponsors, donors** (state all project partners and sponsors and their role/contribution to the project).

Once the project is completed/written, the club members are ready for the implementation stage.

5. EVALUATION: THE PIZZA SLICE...

15 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at challenging the students to reflect and assess what they learned during the meeting.

Preparation and facilitation

Draw a circle on a flipchart sheet, then slice it in a number of pieces equal to the number of participants. Write the participant's name near each slice. Each participant will draw or write a message for the other colleagues near their slice.

6. NEXT STEPS

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what they will do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- Organizația Națională „Cercetașii României”. 2010. *101 idei de educație non-formală*. (The Romanian Scouts National Organization. 101 non-formal education ideas). Available at: <http://www.scout.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Manual-100-de-idei-de-educatie-non-formala.pdf>
- Neagu M. 2010. *Curriculum IMPACT. Cetățenie activă*. (Curriculum IMPACT. Active citizenship). New Horizons Foundation

Supporting materials:

Annex 1: Gantt chart, Annex 2: Project writing



15. Project writing and monitoring

ANNEX 1: The Gantt chart

Objective	Activity	Task	Responsible	Deadline	Required resources/ budget
Objective 1	Activity A	Task 1			
		Task 2			
	Activity B	Task 1			
		Task 2			
Objective 2	Activity A	Task 1			
		Task 2			
	Activity B	Task 1			
		Task 2			
Objective 3	Activity A	Task 1			
		Task 2			
	Activity B	Task 1			
		Task 2			

15. Project writing and monitoring

ANNEX 2: Project writing

Project title <i>(has to be short and creative)</i>	
Project motivation <i>(the issue addressed by the project and the reason for its selection)</i>	
Implementation period	
Project goal <i>(one short sentence describing how to address the issue/community need)</i>	
Project objectives <i>(no more than 3-4 objectives; they have to be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound)</i>	
The target group and beneficiaries <i>(the people the project is designed for and who directly or indirectly benefit from it)</i>	
Time framing <i>(activity-dependent)</i>	
Required budget <i>(the financial resources available for the project implementation, the resources to be obtained from other sources and the cost breakdown)</i>	
Partners, sponsors, donors <i>(state all project partners and sponsors and their role/ contribution to the project)</i>	



16. Evaluation of club activity and planning for next year



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (A)** Show interest to reflect on the impact of the club's project on the environment, community and oneself
- (S)** Identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes exercised and practiced within the wilderness club
- (A)** Show gratitude and recognition for what has been learned and practiced within the club
- (S)** Set a future action plan within the club
- (S)** Find ways to apply the lessons learned in everyday life



Key concepts:

⊙ Skills ⊙ Reflection

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Introduction, objectives, agenda	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper, etc.)
2. Images about us	Association exercise (image theater)	25 minutes	
3. The importance of reflection and evaluation	Facilitated discussion	10 minutes	Quotes printed from Annex 1 or written on A4 sheets
4. Our story so far	Group work	35 minutes	Coloured sheets, A4 sheets, pens
5. The scale of our project	Association exercise	5 minutes	Post-its, markers
6. Our project	Group work	40 minutes	A4 sheets, ball pens, markers
7. My skills as of now	Solo moment	20 minutes	Copies of Annex 2
8. My skills in the future	Solo moment	20 minutes	Copies of Annex 2
9. Next steps	Presentation	5 minutes	Attendance list
Total estimated time: 2 hours, 45 minutes			

1. INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES AND MEETING AGENDA

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the introduction is to raise the interest of participants and set their expectations for the meeting.

Facilitator's mention

- *This meeting is important since each of our club members can reflect on what has been done so far, assess its impact on them and the wilderness and celebrate the results achieved.*
- *This meeting is important since the club can decide what its future needs would be in terms of personal development needs, also taking into account the needs of wilderness in our area.*

2. IMAGES ABOUT US

25 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to bring the participants into a state of reflection and self-evaluation and to energize the group.

Preparation and facilitation

At the facilitator's sign, the participants will walk the room at random, without talking to each other, merely making eye contact and trying to take as little space as possible in the activity room. While they are walking, the facilitator will say at certain time intervals (30 seconds): groups of four (one number) or any other number. The participants will quickly split into groups smaller than four, according to the figure being heard. Once they split into groups, the facilitator will say a word or phrase related to their experience, story, or something they learned in the club so far, e.g.: *wilderness, project, national park, challenge, success, fun, team, communication, nature, sustainable development, petition, campaign, budget, promotion, species*, etc.

At every word said by the facilitator, the groups have to instantly build – in 10 seconds – a statue-like image representing the word being said to involve all team members. The facilitator will count down the seconds out loud (10, 9, 8, 7, 6...), so that each group will know the time left until completing the statue-like image. This image requires them to adjust their posture and body language to imitate a group statue while staying still and keeping silent for 30 seconds. Only one team member will not be part of the statue and will have to explain the meaning of the statue to the other groups in no more than 20 seconds. After each grouping and each word turned into a statue-like image, one member of each group will explain the image. After each round of explanation, at the facilitator's sign, the participants will resume moving around the room, and the facilitator will say a group number and a word. The process is repeated for every word. We recommend no more than 5 relevant words.

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF REFLECTION AND EVALUATION

10 MINUTES

The purpose of this activity is to raise the participants' awareness on the importance of reflection and evaluation in the club.

The facilitator will lay down printed (or hand-written) sheets with the quotes below, also available at Annex 1:

- *If you don't know where you are going any plan will get you there.* **Anonymous**
- *Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences and failing to achieve anything useful.* **Anonymous**
- *It is not by muscle, speed, or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character, and judgment.* **Marcus Tullius Cicero**
- *There are three principal means of acquiring knowledge... observation of nature, reflection, and experimentation. Observation collects facts; reflection combines them; experimentation verifies the result of that combination.* **Denis Diderot**



- *...And reflection time with my colleagues is a life saver; to reflect is not just a good thing to do every now and then. It is the only way to survive.* **Denis Diderot**

Some club members will read the quotes out loud and use the facilitated talk to extract the main ideas to be learned by the participants from these quotes.

The participants will be asked:

- *Why do you think it's important to reflect on what we did in our wilderness club in the past months?*
- *Why is it so important to reflect on our implemented project? How does it help us at a personal and group level?*

The facilitator will summarize the answers and connect them to the next activity, which involves reflection on what happened in the club and reflection and evaluation on the implemented project.

4. OUR STORY SO FAR

35 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to encourage the participants to remember what they did at the club so far. This reflection is important to proceed with identifying the lessons learned.

Preparation and facilitation

The club members will be invited to sit in a circle. Four types of colored sheets (red, yellow, green, blue) will be laid down in the activity room. When the facilitator says START, each participant will have to sit near a colored sheet to form similarly sized groups. Everyone who sat near a color will have to discuss in their group and remember what happened since they became members and the activities they carried out together. To streamline the activity, the facilitator will share printouts of the questions they will have to talk about and answer. Each team will have a member writing down the main ideas, which in the end will be presented to the team. The available time is 20 minutes. The facilitator will go to every group to ensure they are talking about the assigned topic and that each group has an informal leader guiding the talks according to the questions:

- *What do you remember from the first club meeting? What were your first thoughts when arriving for the first time at the club?*
- *What were the major activities/steps you did at the club this year?*
- *What made you remain active in the club?*
- *What was your favorite activity? Or what was your favorite moment?*
- *What was the most difficult time for you in the club or for the club itself?*
- *How did you manage to overcome or come to terms with that moment?*
- *What was your best memory of the club?*
- *What two words would best describe what the club experience meant for your life? Or could you find two representative words to describe your club experience so far?*

After the talk time ends, one participant from each team will summarize the group discussions and will end by presenting all the representative words selected by the members to describe their club experience so far. Each presentation will last 3 minutes.

5. RATING OUR PROJECT

5 MINUTES

Purpose

The activity is aimed at enabling participants to assign a mark to their project, which is another step prior to drawing conclusions and the lessons learned.

Preparation and facilitation

The members will be asked to imagine a 5-meter long line on the floor (numbered from 1 to 10), starting from 1 at the right and up to 10 on the left; or write the numbers 1 to 10 on post-its and lay them on the floor. They will have to stay on this line, near a mark that their project should receive in their opinion. After the participants position themselves on the line, they will say their respective marks.

Then, the facilitator will calculate an indicative average of the marks and let the participants know what this average is, then explains that this average will be further used to discuss and reflect on the success of the project and impact on participants, community and wilderness areas.

6. OUR PROJECT

40 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity is aimed at encouraging thorough reflection on the club's project.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator informs the club members of a pending set of questions they should reflect on and find answers for. The answering rules will be the following:

- *Everyone will state their answers beginning with "My opinion is....";*
- *The thoughts, opinions and feelings described by a member cannot be rejected by other members for being personal;*
- *Each member is entitled to a personal opinion and will share it when prepared to do so, without reservations.*

The facilitator will ask questions divided into categories (project events/activities, personal/myself, about others, about working together, success, impact, etc.) and may select from the questions below. They do not have to go through all the questions, but only those they find relevant for the project and the club development so far. They should ask at least two questions from each category and leave the members time to reflect and give answers.

The reflection list for a certain project is very wide; at any rate, some of the regular stances to be used as a reference point for reflection include the following: **Events, activities *Personal, about me *About others, About our team work *About the project theme, etc.*

These stances provide a wide range of fields where the reflection on the project can be used as a reference point. The questions stated are examples which can be changed, extended and supplemented in order to assess the reflection needs of your group. What matters is that the experience will enable the group to go through: reflection, generalization and transfer. The questions below are structured on categories of topics that can be addressed by processing and cover reflection questions, as well as generalization and transfer questions.

Some of these questions should also be used at least once a month, in order to encourage reflection on the ongoing community project.

A. The reflection on the events/activities reveals what happened when the project implementation began. This is used as an entry point into deeper reflection.

- a. *What has happened in the project so far? Who can describe the project purpose, goals, activities and results so far?*
- b. *How did the relevant community respond?*
- c. *What kind of problems did you encounter?*
- d. *How did you address the problems as a group or as individuals?*
- e. *What successes did you experience during the activities?*
- f. *What was the greatest challenge of this project?*
- g. *What would you do if you were to continue the project?*



B. Self reflection helps the members to become aware of the personal growth they are experiencing and assess their personal efficiency in the project.

- a. How did you feel taking part in the project?
- b. What knowledge did you use to implement the project?
- d. What parts of your activity did you find to be the most interesting?
- e. What aspects of your activity did you find to be the most challenging?
- f. What skills, attitudes or knowledge would increase your ability to make a difference in this project if you had to start again?

C. Reflection about others makes the participants develop their respect and compassion for other participants during the project.

- a. Who did you work with in this project (besides club members)?
- b. What are the values, things you believe in, hopes and dreams? What do you have in common as a group?
- c. What were the similarities and differences in terms of the work method, values, expectations and method of intervention?
- d. What were the contributions of the various people in the project, from club members, facilitators, the WWF team, etc.?
- e. What have you learned about them? What did you learn from the people you interacted with in your project?
- f. What do you think they learned from you?

D. Reflecting on the work performed together helps participants to assess the project efficient and improve their skills in the future.

- a. What do you feel you achieved by working on this project? Can you give specific examples?
- b. How do others benefit from your effort? How does wilderness benefit in your region?
- c. Is it hard or easy to make a difference? Why?
- d. Who or what helped you make a difference?
- e. Who or what prevented you from making a difference? And what did you learn from it?
- f. Do you think that everyone should get involved? Do you think that everyone can get involved? Explain.
- g. What values or things do you think are most important in terms of protecting the wilderness?

E. Their thoughts on the issue addressed by the project.

- a. What issue does your project address?
- b. If your project is successful, what difference will it make for the people or wilderness area?
- c. What new knowledge/skills do you think you acquired from this experience?
- d. Does it solve anything in the community and wilderness problems and needs in our region?
- e. When do you think the effects will be visible?
- f. In your opinion, what are the best means to change anything about the issue addressed by the project?
- g. What did you experienced/learned so far that can be further put into practice in your club?
- h. What of the things you've done in the project should be kept for other future projects?

(These questions have been taken from the IMPACT Manual of the New Horizons Foundation)

The main processing ideas will be written down by the facilitator on several flipchart sheets as the processing progresses. If the group is larger than 10 people, the processing should take place in two groups, based on the questions above, with each participant from each group going through the same process. After the processing is complete (approx. 40 minutes), each facilitator will summarize the talks for the other group, emphasizing the lessons learned and practical experience for everyday life, as well as for the next activities of the club.

7. MY SKILLS AS OF NOW

20 MINUTES



This activity will enable the participants to identify the skills they acquired so far at the club.

Preparation and facilitation

Each member will receive a copy of the competences that can be developed in the wilderness club (see *Annex 2: Club skills*). With the sheet in front of them, they will have to read carefully and think which of knowledge/skills or attitudes/values described were practiced at the club and after the implementation of this project.

Each participant will take 10-15 minutes alone, inside or outside the room, and will quietly think of himself/herself and the competences (knowledge, abilities, attitudes) acquired following the participation at the club and the implementation of their project. The facilitators will ensure their task was well understood and will explain the usefulness and importance of the task.

The facilitator may draw a table on a flipchart sheet to guide the club members how to evaluate the competences acquired (see the example below). Moreover, it is very important that the club members consider whether they can tell the difference between *knowledge (what they know)*, *abilities (what they can do with what they know)* and *attitudes/values (what or how they are/become)*.

My competences acquired in the club and during the project		
Knowledge (to know) <i>Now, I have knowledge about..</i>	Abilities (to do) <i>Now, I have the ability to...</i>	Values/attitudes (to be) <i>Now I am more...</i>
what wilderness means	identify a problem in the wilderness area	considerate with the members of my community
the components of a project	plan project activities	careful about other's needs
the core part of a protected area	write a press release	patient and perseverant when..

After each member thinks carefully about the competences acquired, the group will return to the larger circle, and those who want to share what they learned can now do so. It is important to maintain a quiet and respectful atmosphere in the group, since this activity can be emotionally challenging for some members. You should also make sure to thank each member for sharing what they learned. If someone does not want to share anything, do not force them. The printouts will be kept by the members for the future activity.

The third club meeting consisted in the activity called Letter to myself (personal learning plan).

The letter will be brought at the club activity and given to the members who are still active after this first project. After the letters are given, they will have 10 minutes to read the letters and observe whether they achieved all three objectives set for the entire project period or whether they managed to exceed their own expectations. The conclusions will be shared within the team – for those who want to do this.

If some of the current participants did not attend the personal planning meeting, they will have to remember whether they wanted to learn anything new when they joined the club and evaluate their progress in this respect.

8. MY SKILLS IN THE FUTURE

15 MINUTES

Purpose

In this activity, the participants will identify the skills they want to build in the club in the future – skills, which will be relevant for both the club activities and their everyday life with their families, colleagues, friends or school.



Preparation and facilitation

After they thought about the competences they developed, the facilitator will ask the members to think about the skills they would like to further develop from the list in the *Annex: Club competences*, which they can use in the club and in everyday life. They will have to think across the two dimensions. They will have 10-15 minutes to look at the skill list and think what else they would like to develop, even at a different level. For instance, some skills developed after the first project could be further developed at a higher level in the next club year. Thus, they will have to fill out the table below what they would like to develop starting from the Annex: Club competences – across the two dimensions – skills relevant for both the club and everyday life. Preferably, they should fill out no more than five or six skills, abilities and attitudes, which could be developed in the next 6 months.

My competences after the project and in everyday life

Knowledge (to know)	Abilities (to do) <i>I now have the ability to...</i>	Values/attitudes (to be) <i>I am now more...</i>
what a management plan is	write an entire project by myself	I want to be more perseverant
----	----	I want to have more courage
how to monitor a project	----	----

The club members will be encouraged to be honest with themselves. Whoever wants to share anything will be free to do so. Thank those who shared from their experience and encourage others to speak as well.

9. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

After everyone's contribution, the facilitator will thank for the participation, announce the place and time of the next meeting, the importance of taking part in all the meetings (or, if they cannot join the next meeting, how to find out the time of the subsequent meeting), what will they do during the next meeting, so as to stir curiosity and enthusiasm. Before leaving, ask participants to sign in the attendance list and leave their contact data (e-mail and phone).

Further reading:

- New Horizons Foundation, 2008, Manualul IMPACT (IMPACT Manual), Bucharest
- Neagu M. 2010. *Curriculum IMPACT. Cetățenie activă* (IMPACT Curriculum. Active Citizenship), New Horizons Foundation, Bucharest
- www.brainyquote.com

Materiale suport:

- Annex 2: Club competences

16. Evaluation of club activity and planning for next year

ANNEX 1: Reflections on learning

- *If you don't know where you are going, any plan will get you there.* **Anonymous**
- *Without reflection, we go blindly on our way, creating more unintended consequences, and failing to achieve anything useful.* **Anonymous**
- *It is not by muscle, speed, or physical dexterity that great things are achieved, but by reflection, force of character, and judgment.* **Marcus Tullius Cicero**
- *There are three principal means of acquiring knowledge... observation of nature, reflection, and experimentation. Observation collects facts; reflection combines them; experimentation verifies the result of that combination.* **Denis Diderot**
- *...And reflection time with my colleagues is a life saver; to reflect is not just a good thing to do every now and then. It is the only way to survive.* **Denis Diderot**

16. Evaluation of club activity and planning for next year

ANNEX 2: My club competences

Step 1: Stress those skills, abilities or attitudes you managed to achieve at a satisfactory level after one year of active involvement with the club.

Knowledge-wise, after taking part for one year in the club meetings:

- *I explained the concept of wilderness to someone;*
- *I presented the benefits of wild nature to someone;*
- *I described the threats to wild nature to someone;*
- *I discussed about ways to protect and preserve wilderness areas with someone;*
- *I explained specific project management concepts to someone who wanted to join our club;*
- *I explained to another club member how a personal learning plan could be helpful to us.*

Skill-wise, after taking part for one year in the club meetings:

- *I analyzed the needs and challenges of wild nature in my region;*
- *I identified creative, realistic and approachable solutions for the needs and challenges of wilderness in our region;*
- *I designed a wild nature conservation and protection project for our region with my colleagues;*
- *I took part to all the steps of implementing projects for the conservation and protection of wild nature in our region;*
- *I monitored, together with my club mates, the implementation of a project in accordance with the current results and challenges;*
- *I took part in the evaluation of our club's project, monitoring its impact on nature, the community and myself;*
- *I used a personal learning plan at least once during the club activities;*
- *I encouraged my team members when faced with challenges in the project implementation;*
- *I communicated more easily with my team members in connection with my needs, my challenges with the club, our activities, etc.*
- *I have been constantly searching for creative solutions to protect the wilderness in our region.*

Attitude-wise, after taking part for one year in the club meetings:

- *I became more receptive to understanding and exploring the concept of wilderness;*
- *I became more grateful for the benefits of nature in general and my wilderness area in particular;*
- *I contributed to wilderness conservation in my area by being actively involved in the entire club project;*
- *I became more considerate for the wilderness in my area;*
- *I took a stand more often in relation to wilderness problems in my region;*
- *I became more patient and perseverant in implementing wilderness projects in my club;*
- *I showed more initiative and got involved more in clear roles for the preparation and facilitation of club meetings;*
- *I became more responsible when taking up certain roles in my club team.*



17. Celebrating results and looking to the future



Specific learning objectives:

(knowledge, skills, attitudes/values)

- (K)** Describe what continuity and sustainability mean in the club context
- (K)** List fundraising methods for the continuation of other projects in the wilderness club
- (S)** Find ways to keep the club going after its first year
- (A)** Identify themselves as ambassadors for wilderness protection
- (A)** Show appreciation for the learning process experienced at the club
- (A)** Show appreciation for club facilitators and for each member's contribution to the results achieved
- (A)** Show gratitude for the club's supporters: school, partners, sponsors etc.



Key concepts:

Recognition Continuity Sustainability Fundraising

ACTIVITIES

Activities	Methods used	Suggested time	Materials required
1. Introduction, objectives, agenda	Presentation	5 minutes	Visual aids (flipchart, blackboard, paper etc.)
2. Gratitude	Individual reflection	30 minutes	Seven flipchart sheets, markers, post-its, pens
3. Gratitude for nature and concrete action for the future	Story Guided reflection Group work	30 minutes	Sheets of paper, pens
4. Action plan	Team work	40 minutes	Annex 1: Action plan
5. Gratitude for you	Individual reflection	30 minutes	A4 sheets, pens
6. Gratitude for partners and supporters	Facilitated discussion Group work	30 minutes	Flipchart paper, markers
7. Handing out diplomas	Group talk	10 minutes	Printed diplomas
8. Next steps	Presentation	5 minutes	Attendance list

Note:

Total estimated time: **3 hours**

This meeting can be organized in a less formal setting: a park, in the woods or in a place for celebration.

1. INTRODUCTION, OBJECTIVES AND MEETING AGENDA

5 MINUTES

The facilitator will introduce the objectives of the meeting, the types of activities to be carried out (without going into details) and the duration. The purpose of the introduction is to raise participants' interest and set their expectations for the meeting.

The facilitator states the purpose of the meeting is to recall the learning experiences in the wilderness club, but also to set out practical methods for the students to become ambassadors of wilderness and get further involved in the club's projects and activities. Remind that this is a meeting to celebrate the results of their work, as celebration is a major event in a club's life, regardless of size or the impact of its activities.

2. RECOGNITION

30 MINUTES

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to make the participants aware of the importance of each success or challenge in their project, and particularly the fact they should be grateful for the challenges and difficult times, as well as their successes.

Preparation and facilitation

The participants will be asked what their understanding of gratitude is. After setting their opinions of gratitude, the facilitator will lay eight flipchart sheets down on the floor. On top of each flipchart sheet (leaving writing space below) will be written one of the phrases below:

- Be grateful that you still have not achieved everything you want from the club... Because if you had, what would motivate you to continue? *What have you not achieved so far at the club? What motivates you to continue to seek what you wanted at the beginning?*
- Be grateful when you don't know something about what we are doing at the club... because this gives you the opportunity to learn more about what you don't know. *What have you not known about what we are doing at the club? What is the most important thing you learned because you didn't know something?*
- Be grateful for your limitations in the club... because they give you the opportunity to develop and improve. *What are/were your limitations during the year at the club? What did you improve thanks to these limitations?*
- Be grateful for each new challenge at the club... because they will strengthen your character and help you truly grow. *What challenges have you faced during your year with the club? How did you grow thanks to these challenges?*
- Be grateful for the mistakes you made at our activities... because they teach valuable lessons. *What mistakes have you made this year at the club? What valuable lessons have you learned from your past mistakes at the club?*
- Be grateful for the times when you were tired at the club... because it means you did your best to do everything right. *When have you been tired at the club this year? What are the things that exhausted you for doing the best you could?*
- Be grateful for what happened at the club... because success comes to those who are grateful for each setback or difficult step. *What are the good things that happened this year at the club?*

The participants will sit down in a circle around the flipchart sheet, and each member will take turns in reading out loud each phrase, so as to better convey the message.

After completing the activity, the participants will be asked:

- *How did you feel doing this activity: reflecting, but also listening to others? What came as a surprise and what came as a confirmation?*
- *How was this activity useful for you?*



A group member (volunteer) will be asked to take the flipchart sheets at home, type them on their computer and then send the document to all the members. This can be used (with the members' approval), as a "testimonial" for promoting the club's results.

3. GRATITUDE FOR NATURE AND CONCRETE ACTION FOR THE FUTURE

30 MINUTES

This activity is aimed at reinforcing the participants' understanding about how everybody's actions impact the environment and wildlife in any way, but also to identify practical solutions where the club involvement can result in an improved conservation of wilderness areas.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator asks the students to sit in a circle. He/she will make a connection to the previous activity and points out that the gratitude for what happened at the club this year can also be extended, besides the colleagues and mutual experience, to the nature that brought them together and gives them so much. Then read the following thoughts about how each of us can influence things for the better:



Facilitator's mention

The destruction of natural resources will spell disaster for the entire Earth's population. Without natural areas preserved in a favorable state of conservation, we will not be able to find food, fresh water, defend against flooding or other natural disasters, and cannot breathe fresh air. This is why, one way or another, we will have to find solutions for mankind to live within the natural resources of the planet.

Saving the Earth does not require grand gestures.

Saving the Earth does not require donating our last penny.

Saving the Earth does not require major sacrifices or becoming hardened activists.

Saving the Earth requires

... small things.

...small, but significant action.

...everyday.

The Living Planet Report, WWF



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- *Why is my involvement important?*
- *How does one show gratitude for nature?*
- *What does it mean to be an ambassador of the wilderness club?*
- *What do everyday small things and action mean?*
- *What does sustainable action mean?*

Starting with the answers at the last question, the facilitator splits the participants into 3 groups and invite each group to reflect on the following questions for the next 5 minutes:

- *How can I further support the wilderness club?*
- *How can the club remain operational so as to carry on fulfilling its mission?*
- *What fundraising methods can we use to allow the club to further implement projects?*

Each group will seek answers to just one of the 3 questions. The working time is 15 minutes, after which the groups are invited to present the results to everyone.

4. THE CLUB SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN

40 MINUTES

This action plan needs the contribution of the entire team. Based on the answers of the previous activity, the club members now have the opportunity to build an action plan for the period to come. It is important that everyone felt they had a contribution, regardless of whether they will remain with the club.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator prepares in advance and places on the floor a work sheet (they can consist in two or three flipchart sheets stuck together), with 6 columns for 6 questions (*see Annex 1*): *What? Who? With what? Until when? Where? How?*

The participants are asked to sit around the work sheet on the floor and fill out the table for half an hour. After this time ends, the facilitator ends the activity by repeating the proposed steps, its timeframe, the required resources and persons in charge. If there is anything to add, the participants are invited to do it at this time.

5. GRATITUDE FOR YOU

30 MINUTES

Purpose

This activity brings us back to the recognition circle and consists in challenging each member to think about at least one thing for which at least every club member is grateful.

Preparation and facilitation

Each participant will receive an A4 sheet and a pen. The participants will sit in a circle, very close to each other. Each of them will think about what happened in the last year at the club, and particularly with the project implemented by the club. The tasks are the following:

- Everyone will legibly write their names on a corner of the A4 sheet.
- At the facilitator's signal, they will pass the sheet to the person at their right.
- Everyone will have to write to the person whose name is written on the sheet they received that they are grateful for what he/she did at the club/project (from specific project roles to showing moral support, patience, perseverance, traits that proved to be useful for the project and the team).
- The writing time is 20 seconds. After 20 seconds, at the facilitator's signal, everyone will move the A4 sheet to their right, until everyone fills out for the others and the sheet returns back to him/her.
- After everyone read, the participants will be asked to stand and congratulate themselves for the good work, and then hug himself/herself. Some participants may want to hug other participants, too.
- This activity (and the others) is actively attended by the facilitators.

6. GRATITUDE FOR OUR PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

30 MINUTES

Purpose

In this activity, the participants will be encouraged to think about ways to show gratitude and recognition for everyone who supported, in any form, their project or club during the year.

Preparation and facilitation

The facilitator will write down on the flipchart, together with the participants, all the institutions and people who had a contribution, regardless of form.



This may include: everyone from the school management to the school doorman, the representatives of nature and national parks in the region, the city hall, classmates or colleagues from other high schools, teachers, parents, sponsors, partners, etc.

After listing each category, the participants will be split into three groups and will think about specific ways to thank each target group. Here are a few ideas:

- Making cards or thank you letters out of recycled paper and mailing them;
- Sending personalized emails to each supporter;
- Organizing a meeting with all the partners, where the club members cook for the guests or prepare an artistic project;
- Mailing or handing out materials made during the project (e.g.: photographs, the results achieved, case studies on the impact of the club at school and personal level, etc.);
- Calling partners to thank them in person, etc.

Together, they will decide what methods they will use, who will be responsible for each task and until when.

7. HANDING OUT DIPLOMAS

10 MINUTES

The facilitators will announce a diploma awarding ceremony, where each member will receive a diploma for his/her activity with the club. Each member will be given a diploma without knowing whose is it, or everyone will take a diploma and check the name to ensure it is not his/hers. After everyone received a diploma, they will hand it to a colleague with congratulations, a hug and kind words. Do this until everyone received and offered the diplomas. At the end, the facilitators will hold a motivational speech and will announce their intention to see each other again at the autumn meeting, old and new members alike.

Note: for the diploma design, contact one of the project coordinators.

8. NEXT STEPS

5 MINUTES

The facilitators thanks the participants for their presence at the club meetings in the past year, and set out the next steps for those interested to carry on with the club activities: the first meeting in the next school year and suggest to keep in touch during the summer. Then, they wish them a nice vacation and beautiful experiences in nature!

Further reading:

- Neagu M. 2010. *Curriculum IMPACT. Cetățenie activă* (IMPACT Curriculum. Active Citizenship), New Horizons Foundation, Bucharest

Support materials:

- Annex 1: Club sustainability action plan

17. Celebrating results and looking to the future

ANNEX 1: The wilderness club sustainability action plan

What?	With whom?	With what?	Until when?	Where?	How?
Activity 1					
Activity 2					
Activity 3					
Activity 4					
Activity 5					
Activity 6					
Activity 7					

THE CARPATHIAN WILDERNESS, IN NUMBERS:

100%
RECYCLED
PAPER



300.000 hectares

In South-West Romania there is an amazing natural wealth, a vast territory of around 300.000 hectares that has the potential of becoming Europe's largest wilderness area.

5

The wilderness area lies on the territory of 5 natural protected areas: the Semenic-Cheile Caraşului National Park, the Cheile Nerei-Beuşniţa National Park, the Domogled-Valea Cernei National Park, the Retezat National Park and the Iron Gates Nature Park.

6,75 %

National and nature parks represent 6,75% of Romania's total area.

240

240 animal and plant species of Community interest (according to EU legislation) can be found in the 5 natural protected areas where we work.



Why are we here?

Our mission is to stop the degradation of the environment and to build a future in which people live in harmony with nature.

www.wwf.ro
www.facebook.com/WWFRomania

WWF Romania

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