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Naturlandschaften Brandenburg

Die Wildnisstiftung

Potsdam Wilderness Resolution for the Wilderness Conference May 2010

The UN's Year of Biodiversity means making a noticeable contribution to the protection of species and ecosystems in your own country too. The EU conference on the topic of wilderness in May 2009 in Prague made the importance of wilderness in the protection of biodiversity in Europe clear. Now is the time to take up the topic of wilderness more strongly in Germany and to establish wilderness areas for the good of the current and coming generations.

In this resolution wilderness is defined as: large, mostly unmarred by roads areas free of human influence and therefore able to develop without obstruction.

Why we need wilderness in Germany:

- Wilderness contributes highly to the conservation of biological diversity (genes, species, ecosystems).
- Wilderness makes an important contribution to the protection of the climate, especially with the development of forests typical in Germany, by binding carbon.
- Natural ecosystems like those characteristic for wilderness perform a range of services for us humans (e.g. cleaning water and air, buffering extreme weather situations, being gene banks).
- Natural evolution can only take place independent from humans in wilderness areas.
- Wilderness offers an important reference to the cultural landscapes. Without direct human influence, we are better able to recognize whether large-scale changes are natural or man-made.
- Wilderness areas are unique laboratories for scientific studies.
- Wilderness has high tourist potential.
- The protection of tropical forests and other wilderness areas is being demanded globally. Allowing wilderness to a limited extent in Germany, supports international credibility.
- Germany has currently protected nearly 0.4% of its land area as wilderness areas according to generous calculations and is thus far away from the goal of 2% set by the federal government.

We have set ourselves the goals,

- to raise the awareness of wilderness in Germany,
- to create acceptance for vitality in the landscape,
- that wilderness be established as an integral and necessary part of a multifunctional landscape and have long-term stability as an element alongside cultural landscapes,
- to support the scientific investigation of the wilderness in an ecological, economical, ethical and social context.



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We are campaigning for

- the integration of the general concept of wilderness in environmental protection and landscape planning laws,
- the reporting of areas for wilderness development according to strategical points of view and on the basis of sound environmental protection science. Germany's characteristic environments should be represented among these areas.
- the provision of the required financial and personal resources for establishing defined wilderness areas,
- securing wilderness areas to allow the migration of animal and plant species in the course of climate change,
- the consideration of extensive wilderness areas with natural development in the European Natura 2000 guidelines,
- the inclusion of wilderness as a topic in the curricula of schools and universities.

We are calling for

- wilderness to be included as a concept in the *Bundesnaturschutzgesetz* (Federal environmental protection law) and the legislation of the German Federal States,
- wilderness areas to be exempt of any dues or fees,
- the designation of at least 2% of the land area (714.000 ha) as wilderness areas, as is set down in the federal government's strategy on biodiversity. This amount should be reached by 2015.
- the publication of an action plan with geographic, timing and financial benchmark values for the creation of wilderness development areas corresponding to the area requirements by 2011,
- the strengthening of the financial support of wilderness projects in the course of the national strategy on biodiversity,
- the immediate realization of the creation of a habitat network already regulated by law, and that wilderness development areas are especially considered in this process,
- the creation and publication of a five-year progress report by the federal and state governments.

The content of this resolution is supported by the following organizations:

- Foundation for Natural Landscapes in Brandenburg
- Frankfurt Zoological Society
- Worldwide Fund for Nature – WWF Germany
- Ministry of Environment, Health, and Consumer Protection for the state of Brandenburg
- Naturstiftung David (Foundation for Nature David)
- NABU Stiftung Nationales Naturerbe (NABU-Foundation for National Natural Heritage)
- NABU (Nature And Biodiversity Conservation Union)
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- Deutsche Umwelthilfe e. V. (German Environment Aid)
- Association of German Foundations: Working Committee for Environment, Nature, Health
- BUND (Friends of the Earth Germany)
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