



MODEL REGIONS OF WORLD STANDING

UNESCO Biosphere Reserves



National
Natural Landscapes



Biosphere reserves as a solution to structural policy challenges

Germany, like other industrialized nations, has to address a number of fundamental challenges. Demographic change will have a particular impact on less densely populated rural regions, where it will cause considerable problems with maintaining the necessary infrastructure in sectors such as education, culture, transport, administration and medical care. Furthermore, the more aggressive market competition in the wake of globalization calls for forward-looking policies on key locations for business and industry even at regional and local level, to utilize existing strengths and innovation potential to best advantage.

From the viewpoint of the German MAB National Committee, biosphere reserves as model regions can make a special contribution to solving these structural policy challenges. In contrast to other regional development instruments, e.g. drafting Integrated Rural Development Concepts or implementing LEADER processes, biosphere reserves are geared towards the long term and are thus especially well suited to consolidating regional development processes.

The adoption of the Seville Strategy has transformed the original focus of the MAB Programme as an interdisciplinary research programme. Today biosphere reserves are model regions for sustainable development.

The management of biosphere reserves must therefore be equipped with the necessary competencies to ensure that they can fulfil the aspiration to stand as sites of excellence for sustainable development. These competencies should range from contributing to planning processes, managing and allocating funding, and developing and monitoring innovative strategic concepts, especially those aimed at solving the problems associated with the demographic trend.

In the past few years, periodic reviews of the biosphere reserves by the German MAB National Committee have shown that these competencies and rights of participation vary widely from one administration to another. As a result, it is often impossible to make best use of the opportunities for an integrated approach. Furthermore, national and regional environment ministries are virtually the sole source of support. A more reasonable approach would be to make greater use of relevant support programmes across all departments of the Federal Government and regional governments, in order to stimulate further economic potential in and around Germany's biosphere reserves. Existing programmes could thereby provide impulses for a kind of regional development that is not only environmentally sustainable but also self-sustaining.



Gertrud Sahler
Chairperson of the German
MAB National Committee

Human beings are entitled to a healthy and productive life in harmony with nature.

1st principle of the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992)

Contents

- 1 Foreword
- 3 UNESCO “Man and the Biosphere” Programme
- 6 Biosphere reserves in Germany
- 10 The principal tasks of biosphere reserves
- 14 Conservation of species and habitats
- 18 Economic sustainability
- 30 Research and education
- 38 Partners and networks
- 41 Addresses

IMAGE CREDITS

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PROJECT WORKING GROUP

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Vital places

The reality of the global challenges

If polar ice melts, polar bears will die out. The polar bear has come to symbolize the dramatic impacts of climate change. Coastal regions around the world will be submerged. Along Germany’s coasts, the sea level is already rising.

Climate change and the loss of biodiversity are two of the major global environmental problems. International programmes are required to meet these challenges. Regionally focused projects are being launched around the world to test new methods and practices for preserving the quality of the natural environment for all of humankind over the long term. The UNESCO “Man and the Biosphere” programme is the first global programme for human-environment relationships.



There have to be places where trends are set. It’s the only way we can address the impacts of climate change. The World Network of Biosphere Reserves can create these places.



Prof. Carlo Jaeger
Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

Biosphere means habitat

First global programme for human-environment relationships

In 1970 UNESCO launched the "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB) programme. The purpose of this programme is to establish model regions, the biosphere reserves, for testing out ways in which humans can live and work in harmony

with nature. The underlying idea of the programme, that of combining conservation with sustainable use of natural resources, was taken up by the Rio Earth Summit in the form of AGENDA 21. The first German biosphere reserves –

Vessertal and stretches of the Middle Elbe valley – were designated as long ago as 1979, only three years after the nomination of the first biosphere reserves in the world.



'Designation as a UNESCO biosphere reserve means much more than protection of the natural landscape, because it also envisions sustainable development of the region. Economic development should be promoted whilst the cultural value of the landscape should be preserved.'



Walter Hirche
President of the German Commission for UNESCO

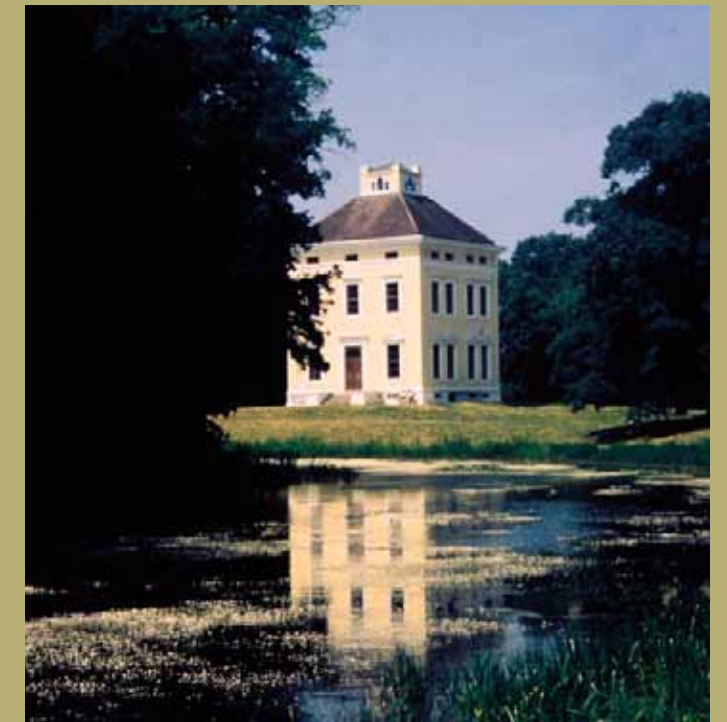
Germany takes a lead

Political decisions in favour of sustainability

Germany sees the designation of biosphere reserves as a means of taking responsibility. The approval procedures are regulated by UNESCO's binding Statutory Framework.

Forty national criteria underpin the required quality standard. Compliance with the criteria, and ongoing development of the reserves, are regularly reviewed by the German MAB National Committee.

Currently there are 13 biosphere reserves throughout Germany, with another three areas working towards UNESCO approval.



In 1979 UNESCO approved the Vessertal Nature Reserve as a biosphere reserve in response to the application submitted by the former German Democratic Republic. Today, over an area of 17,000 ha, it encompasses a characteristic section of the Thuringian Forest. As this cultural landscape has evolved, close linkages have formed between more cultural and more natural habitats. This is all the more evident in the astonishing abundance of species. To date, 1,117 plant species, 2,442 animal species and

54 fungus species have been discovered. Likewise in 1979, UNESCO designated the Steckby-Lödderitz Forest Biosphere Reserve, which was extended in 1988 to incorporate the Dessau-Wörlitz cultural landscape. In 1990, the area was redesignated as the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. The reserve extends along the courses of the rivers Elbe and Mulde. Central Europe's largest contiguous riparian hardwood forests have been retained in this area.

Today the biosphere reserve is part of the transregional Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, which is managed cooperatively between biosphere reserve administrations in Saxony-Anhalt, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein.

Paths for the future

World Network and “National Natural Landscapes”

The UNESCO “Man and the Biosphere” (MAB) programme revolves around a central question: how can humankind reconcile and achieve the long-term objectives of conserving biological diversity, striving for economic and social development and preserving cultural values?

Improvement of people’s economic and social living conditions needs to be achieved in harmony with long-term protection of the natural resources that support all life.

One of the principal features of the MAB programme is the establishment of a global network of model regions known as UNESCO biosphere reserves.

In the year 2007, there are already over 500 such reserves in existence in 100 countries around the world. These are representative landscapes, designated for the purpose of ecosystem conservation,

and as areas where sustainable economic use of the landscape should be combined with preservation of the population’s cultural identity.

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves is an integrative instrument, which also helps to foster solidarity and understanding between people and nations.

Biosphere reserves, along with national parks and regional or nature parks, are one of the three categories of large-scale conservation area in Germany. Under their collective profile as “National Natural Landscapes”, they represent Germany’s natural and cultural landscapes of most outstanding value and beauty. 14 national parks, 13 biosphere reserves and over 90 nature parks are brought together under this umbrella brand.

The specific role of biosphere reserves is to combine and integrate the following principal tasks:

Nature conservation

The aim is the protection of natural ecosystems and their long-term productivity and functional capacity.

Economic sustainability

Support should be targeted towards sustainable development options in the various sectors of the economy, e.g. organic farming, ecologically adapted forest management, and environmentally and socially compatible tourism.

Research, education for sustainable development, and public relations

The aim of hands-on education for sustainable development is to develop skills for constructive participation. Research projects with an interdisciplinary outlook lay the foundations for this work.

‘By taking active steps to protect nature, we are not only helping to safeguard prosperity and employment but also conserving the natural resources that we, and our children, depend upon.’



Sigmar Gabriel
Federal Environment Minister



Living landscapes

Model regions in Germany



① South-East Rügen Biosphere Reserve
Where bank swallows feast on herring
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
Approved 1991; 23,500 ha



② Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve
Sea floor meets the horizon
Approved 1990; 443,085 ha



③ Wadden Sea of Hamburg Biosphere Reserve
Sea floor meets the horizon
Approved 1992; 11,700 ha



Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve – Lower Saxony
Lower Saxony
Approved 1997; 56,800 ha



⑧ Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve
Where barges glide among trees
Brandenburg
Approved 1991; 47,492 ha



⑨ Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve
Carp pools in heathland
Saxony
Approved 1996; 30,102 ha



④ Wadden Sea of Lower Saxony Biosphere Reserve
Sea floor meets the horizon
Approved 1992; 240,000 ha



⑤ Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve
Rest site for migrant birds
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
Approved 2000; 30,899 ha



⑥ Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve
Crane country with far horizons
Brandenburg
Approved 1990; 129,161 ha



⑩ Vessertal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve
Splashing streams in still forests
Thuringia
Approved 1979; 17,081 ha



⑪ Rhön Biosphere Reserve
Land of boundless vistas
Bavaria
Approved 1991; 72,802 ha



Rhön Biosphere Reserve
Hesse
Approved 1991; 63,564 ha



⑦ Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve
World heritage on wild shores
Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve
Saxony-Anhalt
Approved 1979; 125,743 ha



Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve – Brandenburg
Brandenburg
Approved 1997; 53,300 ha



Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve – Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania
Approved 1997; 39,738 ha



Rhön Biosphere Reserve
Thuringia
Approved 1991; 48,573 ha



⑫ Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve
Vines caressed by forest
Rhineland-Palatinate
Approved 1993; 179,800 ha



⑬ Berchtesgaden Biosphere Reserve
Alpine nature – all-pervading health
Bavaria
Approved 1990; 46,742 ha

Models of excellence

'Biosphere' reserves – more than representative landscapes

Biosphere reserves are model regions. Lessons learned here are potentially transferable to similar areas in other parts of the world. Therefore biosphere reserves are representative of typical landscapes, e.g. coastal, river and lake

landscapes, forests and heathlands or mountain landscapes.

They are ideal settings in which to develop and test exemplary solutions to challenges facing society, for instance,

problems of structural transformation, urban-rural relations or processes of demographic change.



Studies confirm that nature conservation creates jobs and generates income even – and most importantly – in regions that are structurally weak.



Prof. Dr. Horst Köhler
Federal President

Extract from the speech given at the German Environmental Award ceremony in Dresden in 2006

On the timber trail

Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve

Forestry and timber production are particularly important in the Palatinate Forest Biosphere Reserve. The forests act as the drinking water store, air purifier and local recreational area for a region that is home to several million people. For these reasons, the forest needs to be kept in good heart, now and for the future. The aim is a varied and species-rich mixed forest with better resilience to storm damage and pest attack than the coniferous forest monocultures that are still so prevalent in the region. To this end, deciduous trees are planted, including beech and oak but also ash, maple and other species. And natural regeneration of the forest is promoted wherever possible. Massive old trees ("ecological gold dust") are left in the forest as homes for woodpeckers and other animals. Clear-cutting is an absolute taboo. When selected individual trunks are harvested, only horses are used to remove them from the forest. Forest restoration is a process that can take many generations. To see the results in our own lifetimes, we need to start work today. Sustainable forestry preserves this valuable landscape so that future generations will also have the chance to use the forest and enjoy the natural environment.



A godsend – the Rhön sheep

Rhön Biosphere Reserve

The Rhön sheep is a godsend for the Rhön region, and one that it might have missed out on, but for the foresight of Friends of the Earth Bavaria (Bund Naturschutz Bayern), a young farm manager named Josef Kolb, and Bavaria's first full-time conservation ranger, Jürgen Holzhausen. In the early 1980s, they decided to save this wonderful old native breed of sheep. At the time, people in the West were unaware that good stocks still existed in East Germany. The Rhön sheep is an ideal standard bearer for sustainable regional development. It is one of the oldest recorded native breeds to be named after a regional landscape. It is a fine-looking breed which very efficiently metabolizes the limited mat-grass and limestone grassland vegetation, and gives superbly flavoured meat. Originally, just two restaurateurs saw the opportunity to make their names with this speciality lamb meat. Nowadays the demand far outstrips the supply. Processed meat products from the Rhön sheep have become a byword for quality. Rhön lamb dishes lend the modern cuisine of the Rhön region its distinctive flair. Meanwhile, the Rhön region now boasts almost 100 times as many Rhön sheep as in 1984 when the story of its success was just beginning.



Rooted in tradition

Berchtesgaden Biosphere Reserve

A typical element of the rural cultural landscape, found in this form only in the region around Berchtesgaden, is the "Tratte". Even today, these sparse stands of trees, predominantly sycamore, still lend the landscape its distinctive character, particularly in the municipalities of Berchtesgaden, Bischofswiesen, Ramsau bei Berchtesgaden and Schönaun am Königssee. In autumn their magnificent displays of colour delight visitors and residents alike.

Originally planted to provide leaf litter and animal grazing, their importance to agriculture is now visibly in decline. Left ungrazed, areas of "Tratte" soon became overgrown with spruce, and fallen trees were not replaced. Gradually these unique elements of our cultural landscape threatened to disappear altogether, along with valuable habitats for plants and animals.

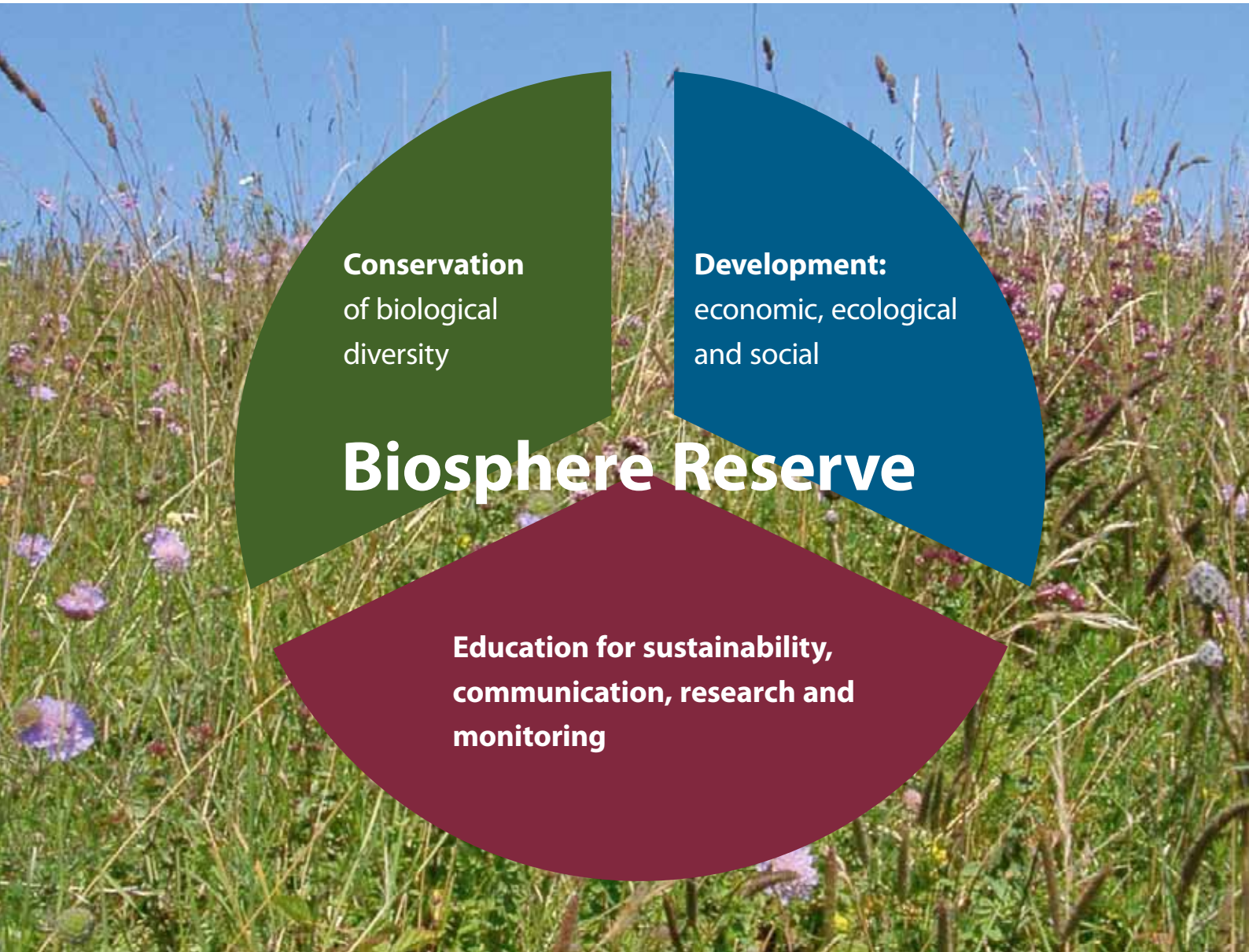
Maintenance programmes are therefore being organized in collaboration with local farmers. A delicious portion of mountain cheese from the region's vibrant meadows is the best advertisement for the project – mountain farming and sustainable tourism, a perfect partnership.



To develop and conserve

The principal tasks of biosphere reserves

Conservation of natural systems and biodiversity:	Economic sustainability:	Education for sustainable development, research and monitoring:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preservation and restoration of natural and near-natural ecosystems• Development and preservation of diverse cultural landscapes• Sustainable use of the natural resources of water, soil and air• Safeguarding genetic resources and the diversity of ecosystems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use of environmentally sound technologies• Establishment of regional value chains• Ecologically adapted and site-appropriate land use, with due regard for a region's distinctive characteristics• Production and marketing of sustainably produced products• Environmentally and socially compatible tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Development of the skills to shape a sustainable future• Public relations work, practice-based information and education• Promotion of sustainable lifestyles• Advancement of interdisciplinary research in ecological, social and economic disciplines• Long-term ecosystem research and environmental monitoring

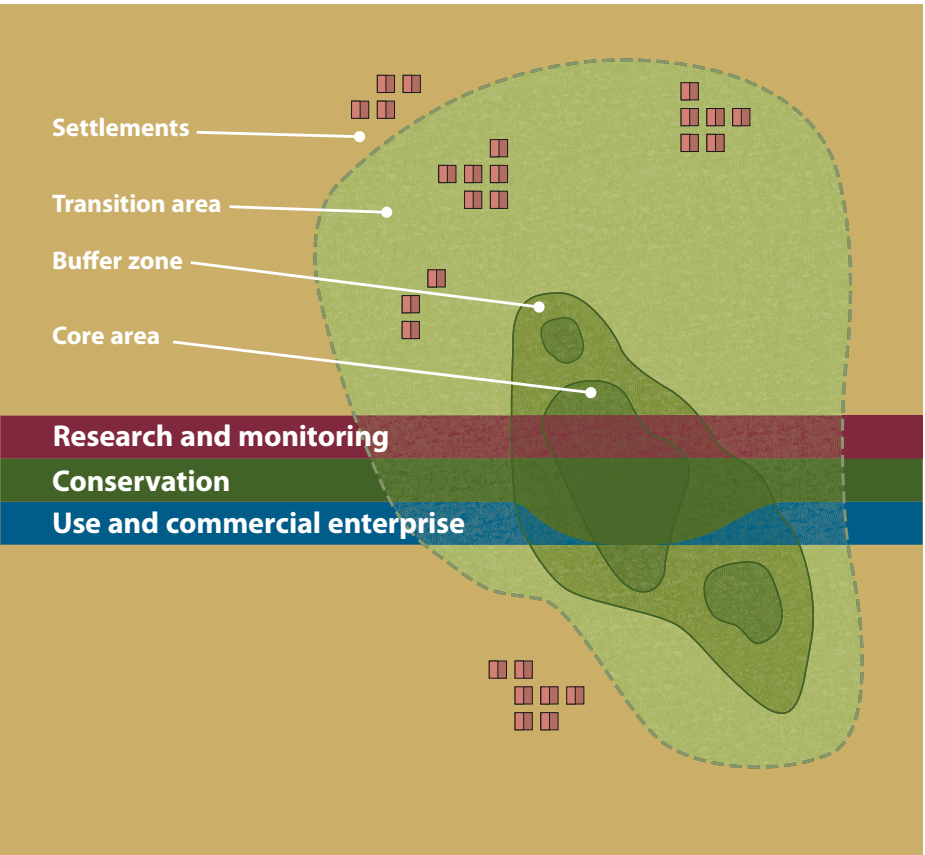


Economics and ecology

Three zones, one objective

Biosphere reserves are an attempt to preserve the beauty and value of the landscape whilst also giving due regard to the needs of the region's human population. To fulfil this task, biosphere reserves are structured to have three zones, in which different intensities of use are permitted. In the core area, natural development unfolds at its own inherent pace. Human access is permitted purely for research and monitoring purposes. In the buffer zone, commercial activities are permitted if they are environmentally compatible, e.g. organic farming, ecologically adapted forestry and nature tourism.

In the transition area there are no special restrictions. The emphasis is very much on encouraging environmentally friendly concepts such as the reorganization of public transport or the use of renewable energies.



Our federal state has retained large areas of its unspoilt natural environment. From this diversity and beauty, Brandenburg draws its potential for the future. Brandenburg's biosphere reserves are renowned far beyond the boundaries of the region. They are a visible sign of the federal state's genuine will to preserve its most valuable landscapes for the long term and thus to foster the coexistence of people and nature.



Matthias Platzeck
Minister-President of the Federal State of Brandenburg

Wild to the core

Three percent of pristine nature

Chosen for their diversity of habitats and wealth of species, biosphere reserves are representative landscapes. By allowing nature to take its course, free from human intervention, in the core areas of biosphere reserves, knowledge is gained which can be used for

the management of ecosystems in the buffer and transition zones.

To ensure that genetic assets remain available in future to be used for the benefit of humanity, active conservation of biodiversity is important. With

every species that we lose, we lose a resource which might potentially yield innovative products or medical cures.

Biosphere reserves exemplify the principle of accepting wilderness as an element of modern cultural landscapes.



Nature means unique, yet endangered diversity. The human fingerprint and footprint is now detectable everywhere on the globe. This nature, however, is vital to our continued existence. We therefore have a special responsibility to preserve the integrity of creation for the sake of our children. Humankind and nature are inseparable. Biosphere reserves are places where human-environment interactions take centre stage. Sustainable patterns of production and consumption generate growth to the benefit of the region – and for the welfare of coming generations. Our actions today determine tomorrow's world!



Dr. Günther Beckstein
Minister-President of the Free State of Bavaria

Biodiversity is quality of life

Conservation of species

More than 16,000 species are on the 2006 Red List of Threatened Species issued by the World Conservation Union (IUCN) – 530 more than in the previous edition published in 2004. Worldwide one in eight bird species and one in four mammal species is threatened with extinction.

The diversity of landscape forms in biosphere reserves and differentiated levels of permitted human use safeguard habitats for many animal and plant species that are becoming rare. The existence of cultural landscapes side by side with wild areas, and the interlinkages between

these zones, provide living conditions to meet a wide range of demands.

Because of their large-scale nature, biosphere reserves are important elements in the European NATURA 2000 habitat network.



The Elbe beaver – a success story

Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

After 1945 the beaver population between Wittenberg and Magdeburg – the last in Germany – dwindled to about 200. Today it is back up to around 5,500, some 1,200 of which live in Saxony-Anhalt in the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve. This gratifying trend led to natural recovery of the population in its former range, and even permitted the release of Elbe beavers for re-introduction projects elsewhere. Former habitats in Germany and the Netherlands, and also Denmark since 1999, have been successfully recolonized by animals originating from Saxony-Anhalt.

Landscape at work

Nature conservation through use

Biosphere reserves protect threatened animals and plants by reversing human influences but also by means of environmentally benign land use. Some species depend for their survival on landscape forms which need to be maintained and managed, e.g. meadows or open coun-

tryside. For millennia, habitats have been shaped partly by human activity. A multitude of landscape forms that arose in this way are high in species diversity. Consequently, the creation of balanced cultural landscapes also furthers the cause of species protection. To this end,

traditional methods of management are practised and innovative models developed to maintain the balance between the conservation of natural resources and their use, for the benefit of future generations.



‘People living in the ‘Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape’ Biosphere Reserve’ have always had an instinct for managing their landscape and natural resources. Their lifestyles and labours have shaped a cultural landscape that is truly unrivalled for the special richness of its ecology, the charm of its villages and its outstanding natural beauty. And this holds true whilst encouraging moderate use of fields, forests and ponds, and whilst achieving positive growth in tourism and industry.



Prof. Dr. Georg Milbradt
Minister-President of the Free State of Saxony

Hardy breeds “maintain” the Sude plain landscape

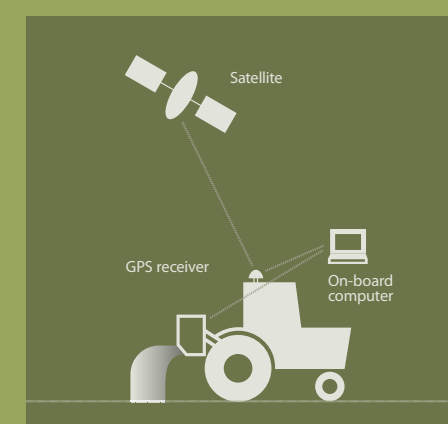
Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve

The River Sude plain between Pretzen, Besitz, Blücher and Bandekow is evolving into a pasture landscape over 1,000 ha in area. With extensive year-round grazing of the meadows beside the River Sude by hardy cattle and horses, the conservationists behind this initiative hope to keep the alluvial landscape “open” enough to maintain and create habitats for the white stork, meadow breeding birds and typical plant communities. A private foundation, “The Stork Foundation – Storks for our children”, has set about purchasing land in the Sude meadows in the municipality of Neuhaus, Lower Saxony. By developing grasslands and grazing them with back-bred aurochs (Heck cattle) and Konik horses, it has already established the vital core for subsequent development of the broad-scale pasture landscape. This is being linked with areas of polder land near



Blücher to create a transregional habitat network between Lower Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, in keeping with the conservation objectives of the biosphere reserve. Flora and fauna find superb conditions to evolve naturally in this species-rich environment. In certain areas, endangered domesticated animal breeds will also be used in addition to Heck cattle and Konik horses. To assist the project to become

self-sustaining one day, strategies are also being developed for the marketing of meat products. In future, visitors will be able to enjoy the pasture landscape from a designated cycle route, complete with information boards. The transregional project coordinated by Friends of the Earth Germany (BUND) is being developed jointly by the biosphere reserve administration, the Stork Foundation and farmers in the region.



Innovative technology

Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve

Optimizing the input of fertilizers makes good environmental and financial sense. But how do farmers know whether applying soil fertilizers will disturb sensitive areas? In the Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve an elegant solution has been found. Work on the ground is

supported by satellite technology. Tractors are equipped with computer link-ups, giving them a direct line to the skies. The satellite tells the farmer with metre-precision exactly where the fertilizer needs to be applied.

Living from the landscape

'Biosphere' livelihoods

Regional value chains generate jobs and prospects for local people. In biosphere reserves, economics and ecology are not in conflict. Step by step, modern and sustainable forms of land use are being developed and applied over the long term.

Regions are emerging in which people can dependably earn their living, now and in the future, by using natural resources sustainably. This may of course involve modern and innovative ideas, from biomass energy generation to the

development of new products using renewable raw materials or the marketing of regional products.



'In view of the implications of global climate change, we are called upon to bring economics and ecology into harmony, to be sure of preserving our natural environment for future generations. We therefore need biosphere reserves as model regions for the successful coexistence of human beings with nature.'

'A good example of this is the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve with 400 kilometres of river and the largest contiguous riparian forest in central Europe.'

'Five federal states along the river Elbe, including Saxony-Anhalt, organize their regional development efforts and interests as a contribution to the conservation of nature.'



Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhmer
Minister-President of the Federal State of Saxony-Anhalt



Aquaculture protects the pond landscape

Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve

In the biosphere reserve there are 12 commercial enterprises dealing exclusively with the breeding of fish, principally carp. Management and maintenance of the near-natural ponds are of fundamental importance to this cultural landscape. The sheer number of pools within the richly structured landscape supports its species-rich flora and fauna.



High quality organic wines

Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve

Healthy, living soil is the basis for high quality wines. In organic viticulture, diverse ground-cover vegetation between the vines is used to improve soil structure. The fact that no pesticides are used protects water and soil resources.



Fruit-tree avenues in the Elbe valley

Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Lower Saxony

Pomona was the Roman goddess of fruit growing and gardening, and her devotees have created a paradise in her honour in the alluvial plain of the River Elbe in Lower Saxony. 60 kilometres of roadsides are lined with 6,000 fruit trees in the municipality of Amt Neuhaus and in Neu Bleckede on the right bank of the Elbe, part of the biosphere reserve. They include gnarled, hundred-year-old veterans and prime fruit-bearing specimens interspersed with newer saplings.



Rediscovering old varieties

Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve

Extensive agriculture protects the environment and produces high quality food. Strategic production will ensure that threatened crop plants and old fruit and vegetable varieties can be conserved.

Successful by nature

Healthy and wholesome

Investments in ecology-conscious projects and companies pay off. Environmentally sound production and the use of natural ingredients and processes are increasingly seen as persuasive indicators of quality. The popularity of brands like BIONADE, Schildetaler mineral water

or Spreewald pickles derives partly from the biosphere-reserve provenance, and is proof that economic sustainability can be commercially successful. In sensitive segments such as baby food, the use of natural organic ingredients is a key quality criterion. Farmers in many biosphere

reserves have joined their farmland together to form GM-free regions, to ensure their ability to offer safe foods in the future.



The Rhön region is at the centre of Germany, and not just geographically. The successful combination of tradition and modernity, the balance of economics and ecology, the vigour with which the issues of the future are tackled, these are what sets Germany apart today and what the Rhön Biosphere Reserve has achieved in exemplary fashion.



Roland Koch
Minister-President of the Federal State of Hesse

Tasting nature – high-quality palatine Glanrind beef

Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve



Restaurateurs in the Palatinate Forest and the Northern Vosges are taking increasing pride in regional products. Under the slogan “Tasting nature”, they take turns throughout the year to offer dishes featuring beef from the Glanrind, a traditional palatine breed. Upholding tradition yet sparing no creativity, selected chefs prepare delicious set menus of regional specialities.

The native Glanrind was once widespread in the Palatinate as a triple-purpose cattle breed (a dairy, meat and draught animal). Today it is known as a domesticated breed at risk of extinction. The Glanrind beef originates from Karlstal valley in the Palatinate Forest, where a small part-herd is reared in very natural conditions on herb-rich meadows, to maintain the cultural landscape.

The main herd consists of 27 animals in total and is kept for breed conservation purposes at Hofgut Neumühle experimental farm near Kaiserslautern.

During transportation as well as subsequent processing, great care is taken over handling of the animals and the meat so that the resulting product is especially high quality, healthy and flavoursome.

If the initiative stimulates demand for Glanrind beef, thereby convincing more farmers to keep the breed, a crucial step will have been taken towards expanding the stock of Glanrind cattle.

Schildetaler mineral water

Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve



In 2003, “Schildetaler” mineral water made by the firm Fruchtquelle Dodow was awarded the regional label “Biosphere Reserve Schaalsee – for body and soul”. The label signifies quality and environmental awareness. The company, which also contributes to the biosphere reserve as a sponsor, was awarded the label to a large extent for its environmental management.

Spreewald gherkins

Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve



They come from Germany’s single largest cucumber field and are, for many, the epitome of quality – Spreewald gherkins. Their fine reputation enhances the region’s image, while the image of the healthy, intact landscape certainly contributes to the market success of all products from the Spreewaldhof farm enterprise.

Products and services branded with the biosphere reserve’s label have to meet stringent quality and environmental criteria.

Healthy and wholesome

'Biosphere' reserve regional labels

Biosphere reserve regional labels give an assurance about the origin and the quality of products. They encourage value creation in the region and are an indicator of quality of life. Where biosphere reserve administrations and local enterprises work together, everybody

stands to gain. Since users of the label see themselves as partners of biosphere reserves, it is in both parties' interests to promote regional and environmentally sound products. The companies benefit from the know-how, image and marketing of the biosphere reserves.

Regional labels are popular because they signal to consumers that they are buying a product from their home region, which has been produced subject to high quality standards.



Living the biosphere reserve philosophy

Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve



One of many examples of regional economic sustainability is the biosphere reserve's own quality label. It is awarded to entrepreneurs and service providers who work to high environmental standards and team up in local networks to support regional economic cycles. Label users in and around the biosphere reserve now number almost one hundred, earning significant regional recognition for the scheme.

The name of Biesenbrow, a small village in Uckermark, is familiar to many from the book by Ehm Welk entitled "Heiden von Kummerow" (The heaths of Kummerow). Today the village has 270 inhabitants, one of whom is Peter Kloss. On his first visit to Biesenbrow, not so many years ago, he discovered an old, empty farmhouse with a good amount of land at the bottom of the village. He bought the farm in 1997. In 2001, at the age of 56, he lost his job. But for Peter Kloss this was no cause for despair. He set about converting his barn into a holiday home. And as a farm of that size requires a certain amount of upkeep, what better idea than to purchase a few four-legged lawnmowers?

Skudde sheep – a small but incredibly robust breed – are at risk of dying out as a commercial livestock breed. Since buying his first stock, Peter Kloss has joined the local shepherd's association and the flock has grown to over 50 animals who ably assist with landscape maintenance in the neighbouring nature reserve.

Peter Kloss has made holiday accommodation the first pillar of his new livelihood. Twelve beds in the holiday apartments and room for another twelve to sleep on the floor adds up to enough space for class trips and group excursions. Peter lets the children help with sheep-shearing and with dyeing the wool. They are also allowed to go riding and give free rein to their creativity. Peter has become a popular local character in Biesenbrow. Many families and touring cyclists have got to know his farm, and return again and again. He also enjoys cooking for his guests and makes consistent use of regional produce. For him, the biosphere reserve's quality label is more than just a promotional device. The new sign on his gate bearing the biosphere reserve logo sums up his whole philosophy of life.

Rhön quality label

Rhön Biosphere Reserve

The Rhön quality label is awarded to products and companies for production and marketing in harmony with the principles of the Rhön Biosphere Reserve. In addition to meeting the strict statutory regulations applying to a mineral water company, for instance, Förstina Sprudel also had to fulfil a series of additional criteria. These requirements range from initial vocational training and continuing education to packaging in ecologically superior re-usable crates.



Functioning landscapes

Benefits of nature conservation

A key objective of work in biosphere reserves is to maintain and restore the productivity of the landscape ecosystem. In the long run, functioning natural landscapes also deliver economic benefits. For example, the flood on the River Elbe in 2002 caused damage valued at

EUR 9 billion. Many people lost the fruits of many years' work, including a significant number of homes. Wide natural floodplain areas, intact riparian forests and natural river courses would have mitigated the flood disaster. The setting back of flood bank systems lowers both

the water level and the peak flood level. The gain in floodplain area also means a gain in habitat area for specialised animal and plant species. Nature conservation and flood prevention complement one another.



Present generations have an obligation to manage the assets of nature prudently enough to leave future generations every reasonable prospect of a decent life. In this respect, the biosphere reserve sees itself as a model landscape for environmentally and socially sustainable development of a region, as an ecological and social counterweight to areas of settlement and commercially exploited landscapes.



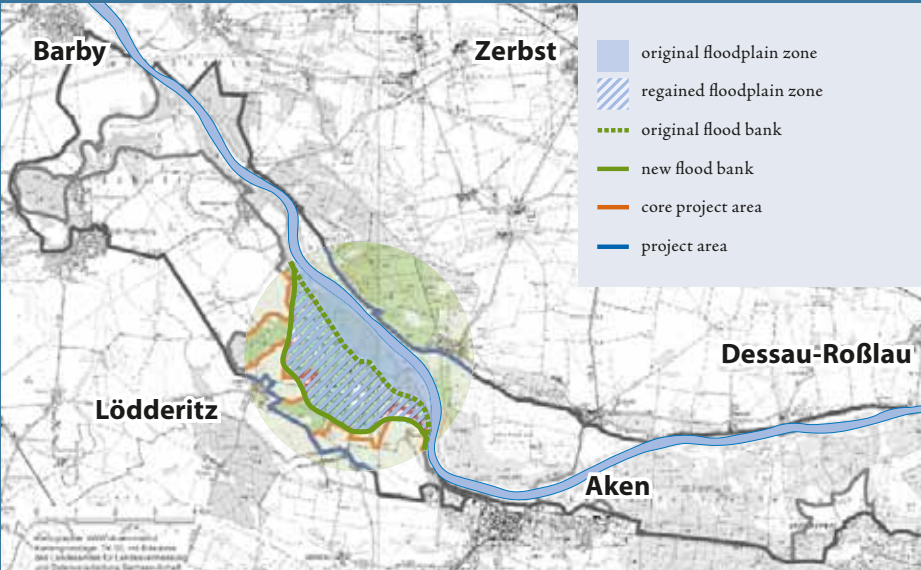
Christian Wulff
Minister-President of the Federal State of Lower Saxony

Dike setbacks

Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve

The goal of a joint project of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve, the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) and the German Federal Government is to reclaim floodplain areas by restoring a continuous strip of riparian woodlands from the River Mulde to the mouth of the River Saale.

The first and foremost concern is the safety of the people living here. A facilitated process has been used to get the population actively involved in implementation. A similar project is being carried out near Lenzen in Brandenburg, part of the Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve.



Riparian zone programme

Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve

Strange though it may sound, the Spree Forest with its labyrinth of rivulets suffers from water shortage. Stabilizing management of water resources is therefore one of the most important tasks in the Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve. Since the year 2003, this has been the mission of the Spree Forest Riparian Zone Programme. Over 100 individual measures are aimed at improving water retention in the Spree Forest. Some 25 km of watercourses are being restored and 50 weirs upgraded to an ecological, permeable design, while a 250 ha area of floodplain is being regained. Good news for the many animal and plant species of

the Spree Forest which rely on the rivulets and damp meadows as both a habitat and a larder. And good news for the tourists who seek recreation and memorable encounters with nature in the species-rich landscape.



Restoration of wetlands and bogs

Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

Although bogs and other wetlands account for only about 3% of the Earth's land area, bog peat contains 16-24% of all the carbon held in soils. Bogs therefore play a very major role in the global carbon balance. A particular issue is the release of the greenhouse gas carbon dioxide (CO₂) as a result of bogland drainage. In view of the large amounts of carbon accumulated in bogs, clearly these ecosystems act as carbon sinks and are highly relevant to current and future climate change.

In model regions like the biosphere reserves, strategic action taken now might result in measures which could restore the landscape's water storage capacity. Pilot implementation is currently taking place in the Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve, with restoration projects on the River Schilde, in the bogland around Tessin and Neuendorf, and on several small watercourses. At the same time, these projects are an important contribution to the conservation of species and habitat diversity which, even in this region, are increasingly under threat.



The place to bathe

Tourism in the biosphere reserve

Enjoying the natural surroundings is one of the main aims of a holiday in this region. In Germany, nature tourism is a trend in the making. Holidaymakers are looking for safe destinations, recreation and relaxation in an unspoilt environ-

ment and, most importantly, activities for the whole family to enjoy. Biosphere reserves tick all these boxes. Visitors find not only a delightful landscape but also a wealth of culture and a varied programme of recreational activities.

Environmentally sustainable tourism creates jobs, which makes it a major factor in regional structural change – a factor that holds out further potential for future developments.

Sellin Pier (Isle of Rügen)



I was born on Nordstrand Island and grew up directly behind the flood bank. Life in harmony with nature, the tides, the migration of the birds, the departing fishing boats – all of this made a deep impression on me. The conservation of nature and the sustainable development of this region are matters close to my heart. That is the purpose of the Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands Biosphere Reserve.



Peter Harry Carstensen
Minister-President of the Federal State of Schleswig-Holstein

The Rennsteig bus project

Vessertal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve

After a strenuous day's hiking, back to the hotel by the most express route. Or in winter, a ride up the mountain in comfort before careering down the valley on skis. These would sum up the holiday expectations of many visitors to the Thuringian Forest, one of Germany's most famous holiday and hiking regions. In the Rennsteig region along the ridge of the mountain range, there are numerous waymarked footpaths and cycle routes. In winter, hundreds of kilometres of cross-country ski paths are laid out. Excursions into the natural landscape are often tied in with other cultural and sporting activities.

The bus is the ideal complement – comfortable and environmentally friendly. The "Rennsteigbus" is a

joint project by bus companies, tourism institutions and the biosphere reserve administration. The objective of the project is to link the existing bus routes to the region's diverse tourist destinations. At the heart of the project is targeted promotion of the bus routes to holidaymakers. For instance, the bus services have been incorporated into numerous tourist trade publications, special route leaflets have been printed and visitors can check the current timetables on the Internet. Since the spring of 2006, cycles can even be carried thanks to special bus trailers.

In future, the project also intends to coordinate bus and rail timetables even better, so that the region is served by an integrated transport system.



Dream holiday on the Wadden Sea

Wadden Sea Biosphere Reserves

Millions of holidaymakers every year seek out the North Sea coast of Germany with its bathing resorts and islands. Lots of excursion destinations are in very sensitive natural landscapes with rare animals and plants, principally the tidal mudflats, the dunes and the salt marshes. Here it is especially important to encourage visitors to behave responsibly, for the ongoing protection of the sensitive natural environment.

A system of routes and information boards is therefore in place. The routes are designed so that holidaymakers who have come to go bathing, hiking, cycling or riding can enjoy the natural surroundings without any risk of straying into bird nesting areas or trampling on rare and sensitive plants. Information centres and staff of the biosphere reserves can tell people everything they need to know about the natural environment itself, and how to act responsibly while visiting it.



Come and stay

Nature, culture and health

What does recreation in biosphere reserves mean: a sense of health, enjoyment of nature and culture, discovery of the new and rediscovery of the familiar... Besides the fascinating landscapes, more and more visitors are attracted by gems of world heritage and natural settings for

sports and recreational activities. Environmentally compatible tourism can take a huge variety of forms. To address this, biosphere reserve administrations sit down with actors from the local tourism industry to formulate their strategic vision and work

closely with regional partners to come up with effective methods of visitor management. Information centres give intriguing insights into each biosphere reserve's special features.



The biosphere reserves in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania have become a trademark of the region twice over – both for nature conservation and for tourism. Right here it is evident that nature conservation in tandem with economic development of the region is possible and necessary. We must therefore preserve these model regions of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, so that future generations can also sample the same quality of life: tranquillity, expansive landscapes, unique experiences of nature, and sustainable regional development.



Dr. Harald Ringstorff
Minister-President of the Federal State of Mecklenburg-West Pomerania

The Dessau-Wörlitz Garden Realm as a tourist attraction

Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

Towards the end of the 18th century, under the reform efforts of the prince of Anhalt-Dessau, a spectacular cultural landscape was brought into being. Structures, gardens, avenues, agricultural fields and planted dikes are embedded in the alluvial plains of the Mulde and Elbe rivers. Guided by the maxim of "Combining beauty with utility", the project anticipated the ideas we have about sustainable use today. Since 1988 the Garden Realm has been part of the Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve, and was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2000.



Treetop walkway

Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve

The treetop walkway zig-zags through the crowns of the trees. At a height of 18 metres it weaves through the branches – to a viewing platform 35 metres above the ground. As a member of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism, the Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve combines the chance for visitors to explore nature with the aims of nature conservation and regional development.



Enquiring and attentive

Research and monitoring

Scientific research in biosphere reserves spans economic, ecological and socio-cultural issues. While research strives to obtain results that are applicable to concrete problems, monitoring projects record developments and trends. The model character of biosphere reserves

is reflected in the diversity of research themes. For instance, monitoring of summit vegetation is being carried out in Berchtesgaden, studies on regional marketing and acceptance of regional products are taking place in the Rhön; research programmes in South-East

Rügen are looking into climate-change-related sea level rise, and in the Wadden Sea of Hamburg, a supply and demand analysis for tourism is being developed.

White-tailed eagle



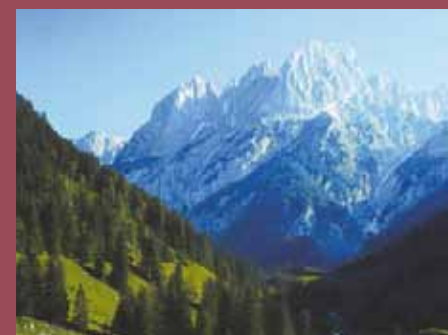
The Vessertal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve and the Thuringian part of the Rhön Biosphere Reserve are two of seven National Natural Landscapes in Thuringia, to which the regional government accords great importance. Biosphere reserves provide indispensable and sustainable impulses for tourism, nature conservation and regional economic development. The Free State promotes them in a number of ways, including the establishment of administration offices to serve the region by supporting, initiating or advising on projects.



Dieter Althaus
Minister-President of the Free State of Thuringia

Golden eagle project

Berchtesgaden Biosphere Reserve



Under the “AHP Steinadler” conservation action plan for golden eagles, a monitoring project keeps detailed records of all breeding pairs in Germany. The study area spans the Chiemgau, Berchtesgaden and Salzburg Alps. Six golden eagle territories are found within the biosphere reserve, covering an area of 210 km².

The objective of the project is the conservation of a vital golden eagle population and the implementation of concrete measures for the protection of this rare bird of prey in Bavaria.

- The main focuses of the project are:
- Timely location of golden eagle eyries that are currently occupied
 - Monitoring the results of agreements with helicopter associations and kite and gliding enthusiasts for the minimization of disturbances in sensitive areas, e.g. around eyries
 - Documenting breeding progress and breeding success
 - Noting changes of mate with reference to an index of individual eagles
 - Documenting changes to the spatial range of territories
 - Analyzing remnants of prey and feather material to identify the kinship relations within the Bavarian subpopulation of golden eagles
 - Carrying out targeted environmental education measures, e.g. guided tours, and intensive public relations work, such as talks or press releases
 - Analysing the results with the help of a geographic information system

Studies on the marketing potential of regional products

Rhön Biosphere Reserve

In 2004 Friedrich Schiller University of Jena analysed the marketing potential of agricultural products in the Rhön Biosphere Reserve. Consumer surveys revealed a high level of acceptance, not least because consumers associated aspects like security, quality of life and unspoilt nature with the products, which were perceived as high in quality and environmentally sound. Based in part on these findings, in 2005 two quality labels were introduced under the umbrella brand – one for organic and one for conventional products.



Visitor monitoring

Vessertal-Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve



A visitor monitoring programme was launched in the Vessertal Biosphere Reserve in 2004 to answer the question: where do conflicts arise between tourism and nature conservation, and how can these be resolved? The project objective is to answer unresolved questions relating to visitor management, and to use the insights gained to back up the long-term socio-economic development of the area.

Education for sustainability

Skills for constructive participation

What is the relationship between fertilizer use, groundwater pollution and the quality of agricultural products? How can fossil fuels best be replaced with renewables? Why can forest restoration contribute to raising the groundwater table?

Education for sustainability is more than learning about nature and the environment. The key objective is to develop the capability to shape the future sustainably. In this regard, biosphere reserves are always conscious of their role as laboratories for social learning.

The educational activities on offer are not purely for children, but do appeal to children in particular. They learn about taking responsibility for their future – in an intact natural environment and as part of a constructive community.



As a country at the heart of Europe we consider that cross-border cooperation on the conservation and development of cultural landscapes is indispensable. A thriving example of this is the Palatinate Forest – Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve, managed in cooperation between Germany and France.



Kurt Beck
Minister-President of the Federal State of Rhineland-Palatinate



Why river otters smack their lips...

Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve

One of the projects that most admirably fulfils the ideals of education for sustainability is the nature book “Warum Fischotter schmatzen” (Why river otters smack their lips). Between 2003 and 2005, around 1,500 schoolchildren from schools in the Lower Spree Forest took part in almost one hundred events at the biosphere reserve, observing animals and plants and getting better acquainted with nature. Back at school, or at after-school clubs, they produced more than 1,300 drawings and texts – the source material for the book, which is all about a mother river otter and her cubs. Not only do readers learn a great deal about the habits of otters, but through the children’s drawings and writing, they also discover the characteristic Spree Forest habitats – its watercourses, meadows and forests – through the changing seasons. Thanks to the high quality of the nature book and the accompanying workbook, it has earned a firm place in the curriculum for grades one to six at many of the region’s primary schools.



Sustainability on the river

Elbe River Landscape Biosphere Reserve, Brandenburg

“Kinderland Elbtalau”, a residential centre for school groups, is set in a river landscape of austere beauty. Former floodplains are being restored to the River Elbe in an exemplary large-scale conservation project. Children and young people who come here can see for themselves how sustainable development works in a rural region. The 200 ewes of the “Schafhof Rademacher” sheep farm maintain the countryside and dikes in the historic cultural landscape. This in turn contributes to flood protection. But the economic interests of the organic farm are equally important. The lamb meat is marketed throughout Germany by a large retail chain. In the viewing compound of the sheep farm, old breeds such as the Rhön, the Moorschnucke (white polled heath) and the Pomeranian coarsewool can be admired. Depending on the season, children and young people can follow the shepherd out to the lambs, or help out with sheep-shearing. The wool is marketed at outlets including the felt-making workshop in Lenzen, where young people can learn the old technique of wool processing.



House of Sustainability

Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve

The “House of Sustainability” is located in the Palatinate Forest/Northern Vosges Biosphere Reserve. Visitors have a chance to look around a prime example of an ecological house. The construction materials and the fine air quality also guarantee a healthy living environment. All the processes are explained in detail and can be seen at first hand. The “House of Sustainability” is a good example of environmentally sound construction, combining traditional materials with modern technology. Ecological building conserves the vital natural resources of soil, air and water, and is good for the climate.

Taking responsibility

Active involvement in biosphere reserves

Young people around the world are inspired to get involved with nature reserves as junior rangers. Side by side with rangers, young people gain hands-on experience of biosphere reserves. They learn to take responsibility for the tasks assigned to them and to work construc-

tively with others. This helps them to form their own views and defend them in debate. But above all, the group creativity is simply great fun.

In projects supported by the biosphere reserve administrations, the main thing children should learn is that every indi-

vidual makes a difference, and everyone can contribute in all kinds of ways to recognising, identifying and resolving conflicts between humans and nature.



Children adopt the River Schilde

Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

Schoolchildren at Wittenburg primary school have officially befriended a small river. They observe and record the changes in “their river” and also help actively, e.g. with tree planting. The children realize that straightening rivers, drying

marshes and draining damp meadows can result in floods, and have modelled it for themselves. Now that they understand the ecological implications, the children are keen to take care of “their” River Schilde.



Biosphere junior enterprise

South-East Rügen Biosphere Reserve

Developing and realizing ideas as part of a team: in Sellin on the Isle of Rügen, five enterprising school pupils founded the bicycle firm “Fahrradfritze”, offering cycle repairs and second-hand bike sales. They work together with a “real”

cycle dealer, who supplies them with spares and knowledgeable support. Many school-leavers who took part in junior enterprises found apprenticeships as soon as they left school.



Hallig schools report on their biosphere

Wadden Sea and Hallig Islands of Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve

The biosphere is alive! The 24 pupils of the five inhabited hallig islands in the Wadden Sea of Schleswig-Holstein have demonstrated as much, in a project called “Hallig schools report on the biosphere reserve”.

Working with their teachers and with experts from the biosphere reserve, the five- to fifteen-year-olds created information material on all aspects of the biosphere theme.



The fisherman and his wife

Upper Lausitz Heath and Pond Landscape Biosphere Reserve

The philosophy of biosphere reserves, that of making sustainable use of natural resources, is put across in the form of a play set in the Lausitz pond region. The puppet theatre form was chosen deliberately, and the production designed to appeal to young people aged seven and

over. The plot follows the storyline of the well-known fairy tale of the “Fisherman and his Wife”. An experienced performer and puppet master was commissioned by the biosphere reserve administration, and adapted the story into an imaginative and entertaining production.

With the region, for the region

Fundamental principle of public participation

Biosphere reserves live off the ideas and the active involvement of all actors. If local people contribute to developing their living environment, it encourages them to identify with their region. Biosphere reserves work to facilitate this process, by initiating and coordinating

projects, and developing and supporting networks. They maintain close cooperation in partnership with landscape management associations and other regional alliances and working groups. A variety of structures develop in accordance with the region's particular features.

For example, the Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve joined forces with the Lower Lausitz-Spree Forest farmers' organization to coordinate the LEADER+ project "Transparent Production" in 21 agricultural enterprises in the region.



To ensure the future viability of life on our planet, economic sustainability will be indispensable. In the Wadden Sea of Hamburg Biosphere Reserve around Neuwerk Island, the free Hanseatic city of Hamburg is rising to the challenge not only of developing model approaches but also working with residents to see them through.



Ole von Beust
First Mayor of the free Hanseatic city of Hamburg



Lower Havel large-scale conservation project

Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve

The Middle Elbe Biosphere Reserve includes the mouths of tributaries such as the Havel because the River Elbe is fed by an extensive river basin system. Restoration measures on the feeder streams therefore produce positive impacts far beyond the site of the actual intervention. In 2005, a large-scale conservation project was launched in the Lower Havel lowland with a view to restoring the Lower Havel. Ecological degradation in this area dates back to river engineering works in the first half of the 20th century. Problems have worsened over the last 15 years due to declining water volumes, with the result that numerous valuable species of fauna and flora are threatened with extinction. Restoration measures aim to reinstate near-natural conditions on the Lower Havel river. The project was approved by the region's municipal parliaments and district assemblies. Aspects of the project include the reconnection of old river arms, the removal of bank reinforcements and the installation of fish ladders.

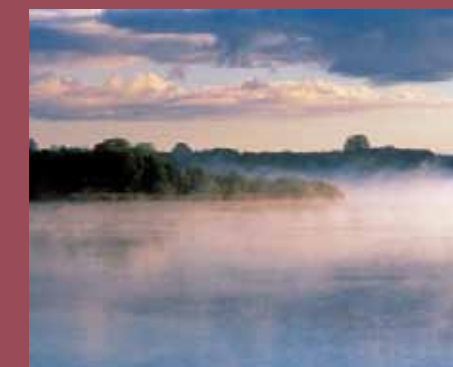
The executing agency for the project, the Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union (NABU Germany), is implementing it jointly with the Federal Government and the federal states of Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt.



Hallig biosphere community

Wadden Sea of Schleswig-Holstein Biosphere Reserve

The Hallig Programme, set up in Schleswig-Holstein in 1987, was prompted by the specific problems of agriculture. In order to preserve the original, near-natural character of the Hallig Islands and to secure long-term sources of employment for the local population, the programme supports extensive agriculture and new jobs in coastal protection and tourism. The programme was designed with input from the population and is continuously developed. In an exemplary process, the Hallig Islanders have realized their idea of making the halligs part of the designated transition area. The "Halliggemeinschaft Biosphäre" (Hallig biosphere community) instigates projects and studies in the transition area. To sum up, after 20 years: the Hallig programme is an example of sustainable coexistence between agriculture, nature conservation, and an administration in close contact with the local community.



Regional Agenda 21 framework concept

Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve

At Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve in the period from 2001–2003, an implementation-oriented framework concept was prepared in the form of a Regional Agenda 21. This was not a concept drafted solely by a planning office. Rather, it was developed in collaboration with interested citizens and regional actors (on the "bottom-up" principle) in different working groups open to everyone. From the outset, this made it possible to debate and pull together the often divergent interests and aspirations. The goals and visions developed here have since been the benchmark for all regional activities and projects. One successful outcome of this process was qualification as an independent LEADER+ region. This provided a secure basis for initiating and implementing ecological, economic and social concepts and projects. In future this integrative approach will be put to use again, drawing on the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Rewarding investments

Business and industry commitment

Biospheres have to fulfil demanding UNESCO criteria which attest to the intrinsic qualities of the biosphere reserve “brand”. Other brands are keen to affiliate themselves with this concept. The partnership between HONDA and the German biosphere reserves has adopted the shared slogan “Responsible

ity for the world of tomorrow”.

The Allianz Environmental Foundation finances and supports exhibitions and restoration projects, for example in the Spree Forest, which it has sponsored since 1990. Commerzbank is also contributing by financing student work placements in biosphere reserves.

It is increasingly recognized that it is immensely image-enhancing to be associated with biosphere reserves, and that investment in biosphere reserves lays the foundations for long-term returns.

Hideo Tanaka (HONDA) and Dr. Eberhard Henne (Chairman of EUOPARC Germany)



For us it means enhancing people's quality of life with products and services which testify to true respect for the environment.

Hideo Tanaka
Former President, Honda Europe North
On his visit to Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve in May 2004

Burg's clock-shaped sensory garden Work of the Allianz Environmental Foundation

Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve



In 1990, Allianz founded the Allianz Environmental Foundation to mark its 100th anniversary in business. Since then the foundation has supported work in many locations around Germany, including numerous projects in the Spree Forest Biosphere Reserve. In 1995, a visi-

tor and information centre was built in Lübbenau. Here visitors can learn about the Spree Forest as a place for living, working and recreation. At the information centres in Burg and Schlepzig, the focus is on environmental education. In Schlepzig, everything revolves around the theme of “Under water on the move”. In Burg, visitors get an idea of how agricultural development has transformed over the centuries.

The newest attraction is the clock-shaped sensory garden in Burg. Although it is designed with blind people in mind, it will heighten anyone's senses and bring people closer to plants and local natural materials.

Elevator over the forest canopy

Schorfheide-Chorin Biosphere Reserve



On this site, a British couple – Sarah Phillips and Richard Hurd – invested in the renovation of a former water tower and created a “biorama” (so named because of its location in the biosphere reserve).

The publicly accessible viewing platform is located on the roof of a former water tower, now a protected monument. It enables a wonderful panoramic view of the beauty of the glacial landscape of the UNESCO biosphere reserve of Schorfheide-Chorin. The new staircase designed by the Berlin architect Frank Meilchen and the adjacent elevator tower provide two exhilarating ways up to the platform. At the top, visitors are greeted by a 360° panorama of one of Europe's largest contiguous areas of forest, including views across the German-Polish border 35 km away and a glimpse of Berlin's television tower (70 km).

Authentic biosphere reserve film locations

Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve



The Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve earned a very special accolade in the summer of 2005. Film director Detlef Buck and his team hit upon the Schaalsee landscape, formed by the glaciers and meltwaters of the last ice age, as the perfect setting for the children's film “Hands off Mississippi”.

The film's heroine, ten-year old Emma, enjoys adventurous summer holidays in the countryside. Mississippi is a horse that Emma and her friends are determined to rescue from the slaughterman. The Boje-Buck production, in which friendship and wit triumph over financial greed, is a fantastic advertisement for the biosphere reserve region. Not only did the film reinforce the region's positive image, it also actively contributed to the local economy by employing more than 100 people from the region. All these factors played a part in the decision to award the film the regional label “Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve – for body and soul”. “Hands off Mississippi” won the German Film Award in early 2007 in the category “Best Film for Children and Young People”.

Seizing opportunities

Progress needs passionate supporters

A committed team is the best prerequisite for fulfilling the demanding objectives of biosphere reserves. But strong national and international partners are also needed. Local government, regional governments and the Federal Government are called upon to work with supporting organizations and sponsors. Biosphere reserves are not intended solely for the protection of an intact environment. Nor are they purely meant to provide the impetus for structural development in rural regions. First and foremost, they are a wellspring for public involvement and community spirit.

Opening of the climate and weather station in Schaalsee Biosphere Reserve, 2005 • K. Jarmatz (Biosphere Reserve Director), J. Krantz (HONDA), J. Kachelmann (METEOMEDIA AG), W. Methling (then Environment Minister for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania)



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