

Der Beitrag der Waldwirtschaft zum Aufbau eines länderübergreifenden Biotopverbundes

Summary

(Übersetzung: Faith Gibson-Tegethoff)

Forest management's contribution to the establishment of a nationwide habitat system

Section 3 of the Federal Nature Conservation Act (BNatSchG, March 2002) stipulates the establishment of a nationwide functional habitat system of a magnitude of at least 10 % of the total land area. There is a need for discussion of the character of the core and connecting areas required for this. Forest management already makes a contribution to the habitat system, which, however, needs to be further extended and expanded. The National Forest Programme recognizes, for example, *sustainable management* of the forest and preservation of biological diversity and cites action recommendations for their implementation.

Therefore, the German Council for Land Stewardship (Deutscher Rat für Landespflege, DRL) held a public conference of experts with selected topics on 6 and 7 November 2003 in Freiburg i. Br. and extensively discussed the presentations held there with the attending experts from science and practice.

The DRL evaluated the conference findings, did further research and reached the following conclusions and recommendations:

More important than setting down specific standards or minimum requirements (in federal nature conservation or forest laws) is to *develop a trusting relationship between forest owners and nature conservationists*. This can be achieved, for example, with discourse methods, mediation and, in particular, with increased cooperation.

The *model of future-oriented forest management* involves not only the sustainable production of timber as a raw material, but also comprehensively guarantees the forest's protective and social functions. These tasks for the common good include forest management's contribution to forming a nationwide habitat system, which is becoming ever more important due to increasing land use, agrochemical pollution

in open fields and diverse effects of fragmentation. Many areas important to nature conservation both within and outside of forests can only be linked with semi-natural managed forests, stands of trees or shrubs or forestation and succession areas.

These habitat systems should be planned on the national, state and local levels. They must

- intensify the concern for a *nationwide* habitat system by being more clearly aligned to *Land planning* for this aim,
- improve the joint effects of existing instruments of *landscape* and *landscape framework plans*, *forestry establishment* and *forest functional plans* on the *regional level* and
- adequately include nature conservation objectives in the *forest production plans* on the *local level*.

The *central concern* must be to link together the *core areas* of quality (if in doubt, unused) habitat areas with semi-natural managed forests, as well as with the establishment of woody plants, open-stocked tree stands and structured forest borders, waterside forests and other *system elements*. The strict forest reserves, which are particularly important for the local habitat system, should be enlarged to an average size of 100 hectares.

The habitat system areas should be handled according to the *principles of semi-natural forest management* at the least. These are

- the selection of suitable tree species for the location,
- to convert non-local purely coniferous stands to mixed deciduous/coniferous stands,
- to improve the age structure and increase the quantity of deadwood,
- to develop and care for a variety of forest structure types,
- to promote nature regeneration and
- to increase the structural diversity of the forest.

Demands that go far beyond reasonable management aligned to the principles of semi-natural forest management should be *appropriately financially* rewarded. These demands include, for instance

- preserving historic aged forests (composite forests, coppices and grazed forests)

- considerably increasing deadwood quantities,
- permitting certain age phases (e.g. decomposition phases) or forest conditions (open stands, glades, the preservation of habitat trees, etc.).

New establishment of forests is especially important for regions with *little forest area* and/or intensive agricultural use. Either *new forestation* or allowing *succession* should be expressly promoted and aimed in an ecologically desirable direction by early involvement of land owners in landscape planning processes. It is necessary that this is alignable to predetermined nature conservation models, for example in landscape planning or in a federal landscape programme yet to be realized.

Undisturbed development of *regenerating forests* is particularly important for *military training areas* and should be promoted. In *former mining landscapes* recultivation is neither economically nor ecologically wise, therefore as many areas as possible should be earmarked as development and priority areas for nature conservation.

The following are *indispensable* for *implementing* a functional forest habitat system:

- greater *compliance with habitat system plans in infrastructure measures*, in particular the elimination of further fragmentation,
- *implementation of the policy declarations to guarantee functions for the common good* in spite of attempted reforms in public forests (i.e. restricting one-sided economical claims – „black zero in the forestry budget“),
- development and sufficient *funding of contractual nature conservation programmes* in forests in all of the federal Länder based on compliance with minimum standards in forest treatment,
- the *introduction or further development of eco-account provisions* in the forests to balance out area claims outside the forests, in particular in highly forested regions,
- *promotion of accompanying research* and implementation of monitoring programmes and
- prioritized promotion of forestation and succession forestation to carry out a function for the forest habitat system.

Furthermore, the DRL recommends:

- Harmonization of regional and Land planning, landscape planning and forestry planning is needed to ensure improved planning and implementation of the nationwide habitat system. Competing plans should be mutually harmonized.
- The DRL supports the demand for the establishment of a federal landscape programme or a federal landscape scheme, which should also contain provisions for the nationwide habitat system.
- The Federal Transport Network Plan must be made public in due time in order to examine whether it is compliant with the demands of the nationwide habitat system.
- All levels of landscape planning should speak out for habitat systems. Landscape programmes and landscape framework plans in particular should take the establishment of a nationwide habitat system into consideration and contain proposals for such. This should be included in all new landscape plans and requires the continuation of older landscape plans.
- Forestry framework plans, the establishment of forests as well as forest function mapping should be supplemented with statements on the establishment of habitat systems; this is of importance at least for state forests. Statements should also be included in the Federal Forest Inventory.
- The function of „forest habitat system“ should be included in the use and ground cover plans for military training areas. Planting for the purposes of landscape design or erosion protection should also be linked with the habitat system.
- It should be noted that the desired increase of riverside forests result in important outflow delay effects, which benefit flood protection as well.