

COST ACTION E33: FOREST RECREATION AND NATURE TOURISM

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Abstract

Cost Action E33, Forest Recreation and Nature Tourism has run for 4 years, starting in January 2004. It is a network of 26 countries from all around Europe, bringing together researchers, policy makers and practitioners working in the field from over 50 individual institutions including universities, forest services, tourism ministries, NGOs and others. Some 60 people have taken part and contributed to the outputs. The action has been organized around three main themes, into three working groups. These are: values and benefits of forest recreation and nature tourism (Working group 1), Supply and demand for forest recreation and nature tourism (Working Group 2) and Planning, design and management (Working group 3). The Cost Action funded a number of meetings which enabled the participants to get together twice a year and to work in a way that brought their expertise and research or practical projects together. The meetings were organized in different locations around Europe and with field trips to forests, enabled issues to be explored which are relevant to the region to be discussed. Once preliminary survey work about the situation of each theme in each working group had been completed – some by country reports, some by special expert questionnaires – the working groups started compiling materials which could not have been prepared outside the Cost Action and the networking facilitated by it. These included Europe-wide assessments of different aspects of forest recreation and nature tourism which have been developed into a number of important outputs, including one publication by each working group, one of which is to be a commercial book and two which are more in the nature of specialized research reports, a final book which will be a very important handbook of the action covering the work of all working groups and also a commercial book and finally the action website with a searchable database of examples of good practice in planning and design for forest recreation. In this way the action has provided valuable information for all the target audience – forest owners, policy makers, planners, designers, forest managers, recreation managers and students.

Key Words

Forest recreation; nature tourism; Cost Action; research network.