

SOCIAL ROLE OF THE FOREST AND RECEPTION OF THE PUBLIC. WHICH CONTRIBUTION OF PRIVATE FOREST OWNERS ?

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Abstract

Since the last decade, the multifunctional role of forest is taking weight. In Europe, it is more and more often linked to its social dimension and particularly to the reception of the public in the forest. The study targets more precisely Wallonia and the north of France. In both areas, actions are undertaken to promote the reception of the public. Both countries inherited the Napoleon Code and circulation in forest is subjected to specific regulations. The paper is focusing on the offer from private forests owners. The study tries to determine their feelings, visions and interests regarding to the reception of the public in their forests. The work consists in administrating qualitative interviews in a comparative aim. Private owners as well some forest professionals from Wallonia and France have been questioned. In both countries, the studied forests are peri-urban. Despite some interesting initiatives, the results show the weak interest of the owners and the professionals for the reception of the public. According to them, it remains the role of the public forest. Financial incentives should thus be granted to promote the development of actions in the field of social forestry. What's more, differences appear between Wallonia and France. Lastly, a typology of private owners is presented according to their perception of the forest, their vision of the public's reception and the characteristics of their forests.

Key Words

Social role of the forest – public's reception – urban forests – private forest owners – forest recreation.

Key References

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