

JOINT GOALS IN MANAGING FORESTS FOR RECREATION AND TOURISM;
RESULTS OF A REGIONAL APPROACH

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Abstract

European forests, forest culture and traditions of use for all sorts of timber and non-timber forest products are very diverse. Some countries are heavily forested and have low population density (for example Finland), while others have small amounts of forest and high population density (for example the Netherlands). This is reflected in the relative importance given to different forest functions, in particular recreation versus timber production. In some countries, such as the Baltic States, there has been a transformation of ownership from 100% state owned in Soviet times to something approaching 50% private ownership, as land has been restored to its former owners. This has a profound effect on recreational possibilities, especially near cities. There are also major differences in accessibility, ranging from “Everyman’s right” in the Nordic countries to non-accessible private forest in others. Thus a European overview has to take these different perspectives into account. On the other hand the similar socio-economic and natural conditions, such as the overall amount of forests present, the population density, legal foundations, and especially the conditions of access to forests have led to the identification of regional groups of countries regarding forest recreation and management in Europe. We found 5 different clusters: the Atlantic countries (for example Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom), the Nordic countries (for example Finland, Norway and Sweden), the Central region (for example Austria, Germany, France, Switzerland), the Eastern countries (for example Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia) and finally the Mediterranean countries (for example Bosnia, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Portugal). This regional approach helps to identify similar problems and to enhance the cooperation in the field of planning and management significantly.

Key Words

Regional approach, forest functions, comparison

Key References

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