

# Annual Report 2018

FOUNDATION CONSERVATION CARPATHIA







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Barbara and Christoph Promberger  
Executive Directors

# Foreword

## Nine years of conservation

**If we need to describe the year 2018 in a few words, it is likely we will describe it as the positive calm before the storm. 2018 has been a year of consolidation, planning and preparation for a major development of our initiative in 2019.**

It started in February, when we received the news that CARPATHIA has been selected for the final round of proposals as part of the Endangered Landscapes Programme (ELP), a conservation programme administrated by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and financed by Arcadia – a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. This gave us the opportunity to apply, together with our specialist partners ProPark Foundation for Protected Areas, Conservation Capital, and Bath Associates, for a US\$ 5m grant and at the same time forced us to sit back and re-analyse our initiative from every possible angle. Owing to the demands of Cambridge University, the proposal had to be very analytical and academic, and the 4 months, which we had available for preparing a full proposal, passed by faster than we could imagine. Yet, this analytical work came just at the right moment as we were approaching a new phase of the project: We finalised the EU funded LIFE project in autumn 2018 and needed to wrap up this important phase, where we had moved our initiative from a pure land acquisition project to new activities such as restoration of degraded habitats and communication of our project ideas. Now, the next step would be to enlarge the area of direct re-wilding activities to the entire Făgăraş Mountains, to develop new wildlife conservation activities such as bison and beaver re-introduction, include local communities and the Romanian civil society much more closely into the various project activities, and to actively develop a conservation enterprise programme.

During the project planning phase, we also decided that this \$5m grant could be a great asset to co-finance a new EU-LIFE project, use the ELP project

structure as the master plan of activities for the coming 5 years, and use both ELP and LIFE funding to develop it. In June, parallel to the final month of the ELP proposal writing, we also developed a project concept for a new LIFE project, which was approved and resulted in the invitation to develop a full LIFE project proposal up to the end of January 2019.

In August, we were told that Cambridge Conservation Initiative had approved our project proposal and that implementation work should start in January 2019. Only eight projects were eventually funded out of an initial 47 projects, which had been invited to participate in the selection process.

With all these new activities and developments, we also realised that we would need to enlarge our team: Hire new staff for activities which FCC would be doing directly, and partner with organisations, which have the expertise that we still lack. With this, our team grew to about 60 staff up until the end of the year with a good dozen additional jobs in the selection process. At the same time, we have signed partnership contracts with ProPark Foundation for Protected Areas, Conservation Capital (UK), and Prof. Bath from Memorial University of St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada.

2018 has marked an important change in the Board of Directors of FCC. After leading FCC for almost 9 years, our president Hansjörg Wyss has resigned from his position and was replaced by Sir Charles Burrell. We wholeheartedly thank Mr. Wyss for his leadership of the CARPATHIA project and are delighted that he will remain on the board and remain an important supporter of FCC's work. We also look forward to being guided by Sir Charles in the upcoming development of the project throughout the following years.



01

Conservation





# Introduction

**Last year was a very difficult year for conservation in Romania. Throughout the last few years, the Romanian government showed little effort to develop a functioning administration system for protected areas and to allocate resources from the state budget to administrating National and Natural Parks, Natura 2000 sites, or other categories of protected areas. A big burden of what should be really a public task was carried out by the various Romanian conservation NGOs, who allocated personnel and raised funds for protected areas.**

In 2016, first steps were taken to set up a National Agency for Protected Areas (ANANP) in order to support the ongoing work and to take responsibilities for the over 100 protected areas, which didn't have any administration whatsoever. In 2017, with a new government in place, ANANP was set up, but it very much seemed this was not done in a way to develop the protected area system, but to rather weaken it, a situation similar to that found under the US/Trump government or in Poland.

In summer 2018, ANANP fired a full broadside against conservation NGOs and proposed an Emergency Ordinance, which would not allow NGOs to administrate protected areas anymore. Yet, ANANP was obviously lacking the capacity to even administrate the 100+ protected areas, let alone taking on several hundred additional Natura 2000 site administrations. The consequence is, that the protected area system in Romania, which nevertheless did not function very well, has been weakened even further. Most of the conservation NGOs were also hit very hard financially, as their funding concepts were usually based on the administration of protected areas and consequently they will be obliged to dismiss most of their employees. 15 years of experience in administering protected areas might be lost through this.

FCC is one of the few Romanian conservation organisations which is not organisationally affected by this move, as we have always had a very broad funding basis and do not depend on money for protected area administration, however the two Natura 2000 sites Râul Târgului - Argeşel - Râuşor and Leaota, which we have administered so far, might suffer from a lack of functioning administration.

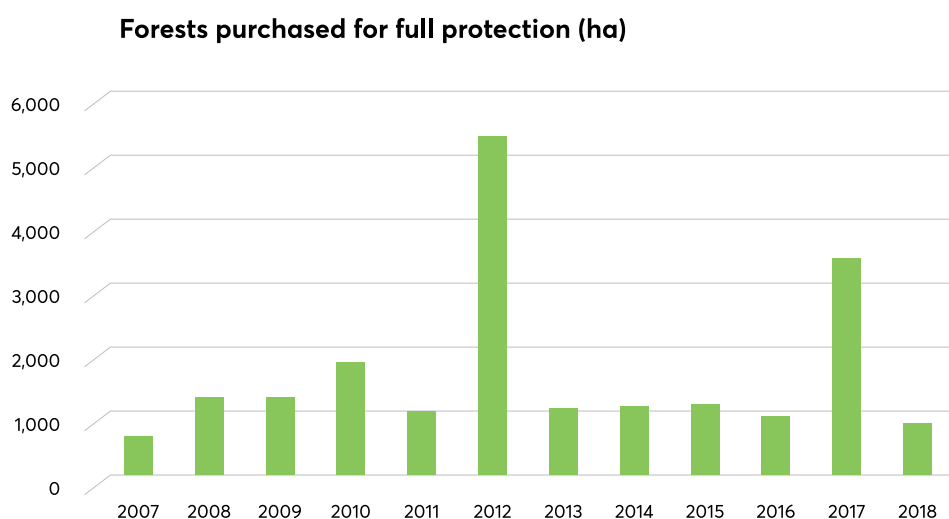
For our own little world in the southeastern Făgăras Mountains, however, the situation with respect to conservation has developed in a positive direction. Restoration work once again progressed well, and wildlife recovered in both our hunting concessions. You can find out all the details on the next pages.

# Land purchase

**Land purchase slowed down throughout 2018 since most of the properties within the Upper Dâmbovița Valley, Lerești Valley, Piatra Craiului, and Leaota have been purchased and the rate of new properties being restituted has decreased substantially.**

In the southeastern part of the Făgăraș Mountains, we purchased an additional 285 ha and in Leaota we purchased 574 ha for our partner organisation Wildland. Yet, although the overall size we purchased was only about a quarter of what we purchased in 2017, we still signed a total of 79 different contracts throughout 2018 (compared to 118 contracts in 2017), which shows that the average parcel size shrank from almost 29 ha to less than 11 ha.

There is still a lot we can do to secure the forests of the Făgăraș Mountains, some of the few wild remaining forests of Europe. We will continue our conservation efforts in offering correct, competitive prices to private landowners who may still be interested in selling.





# Forest watch and firewood crisis

Conservation does not work without a functioning system of guarding the forests, which is provided by our CARPATHIA Forest Service and its rangers.

In 2018, during the autumn and winter seasons, the forest watch activities were intensified. Around poor communities, especially those with a high percentage of Roma, the pressure on forests was significant. Nevertheless, there has been a decrease of the pressure on forests compared to 2017, even when the fire wood prices are still high. In 2017 the forest code (main forest law) was changed and the transportation loads of illegal wood transports can no longer be confiscated if the illegally transported quantity is below 5 cubic meters, instead only a fine can be applied. Generally, this popular measure has encouraged the illegal small trade of firewood within the communities. Such firewood dealers together with corrupt foresters have thus supplied local firewood markets. In addition, since 2017 the State forest administration was forced to sell firewood from thinning in State forests within the local communities.

In 2018, our forest engineers executed 24 thematic verifications on all forests administered by the CARPATHIA Forest Service. The verifications aimed to identify all illegal removal of trees and any other aspects affecting the integrity of the forests: In total, 115 m<sup>3</sup> of timber were illegally cut in our forests, 22% less than in 2017. From this total amount, 12 m<sup>3</sup> of wood have been found abandoned on the spot and confiscated; for 80 m<sup>3</sup> complaints were made to police forces; and for the remaining 23 m<sup>3</sup> of wood the tree fellers remained unidentified and the material was not found. Given a total of over 21,000 ha of forests, we consider the actual problems insignificant.

In 2018, CARPATHIA Forest District has provided a total of 757 m<sup>3</sup> of firewood from Leaota and Făgăras Mountains within Argeş County communities. In Dâmboviţa county, from the Leaota Mountains, 505 cubic meters firewood were provided for the communities. The firewood came mainly from trees broken by wind and snow, which were close to local communities.









# Leaota Natura 2000 site

ROSCI0102 – 1,393 ha

**During 2018 we continued to implement the Management Plan and the protected area regulations of the Natura 2000 site. Based on the custody contract, we prepared and sent to the Ministry reports focused on our activities and the assessment of the conservation status of the protected area.**

The activities conducted this year, include biodiversity monitoring, patrolling and public awareness meetings.

In 2018 we continued the biodiversity monitoring programme, focused on identifying trends in Leaota Natura 2000 site's biodiversity and on assessing whether the management actions are successful. The scientific monitoring of the alpine and subalpine meadows and dwarf shrubs did not show any significant changes, compared to the previous year.

We continued, as in the previous year, collaboration and meetings with the local communities for the implementation of the management plan and for the preparation of new projects proposals, to finance the activities included in the management plan.

As custodians of the Natura 2000 site ROSCI0102 Leaota, we have participated and supported a traditional event that marks the descent of the sheep from the alpine pastures, of neighbouring communities: Moeciu de Jos, Moroieni, Fundața. The FCC communications team was present at the event with a stand concerning the Natura 2000 site ROSCI0102 Leaota and the work of the Foundation. Discussions took place with the participants at the event; we also distributed promotional and educational materials regarding the protected area, the importance of the habitats and the conservation of certain species.

During summer of 2018, the Carpathian Marathon, a major running competition and the Carpathian MTB Epic, the most important cycling event in South-East Europe were organised also in the Natura 2000 site Leaota. FCC, as custodian of the site, was partner of the events and encouraged outdoor activities, as a means to facilitate visitation and tourism, in concordance with the conservation objective of the site.

# Leaota

## Wildland protected area

### **FCC finalised the preparation of the Conservation and Restoration Plan of Leaota area, based on the results of the biodiversity research activities conducted in 2016. The conservation plan was designed according to the CARPATHIA Masterplan, vision/mission and main objectives.**

This year, we started the implementation, in the field, of the Conservation and Restoration Plan of the Leaota area. The conservation plan was designed according to the CARPATHIA Masterplan, vision/mission and main objectives.

We continued the identification of the landowners, and of the forest and grasslands which could be further purchased, for conservation.

We continued the biodiversity inventory, mapping and evaluation of the conservation status focused on protected species and habitats, in order to obtain accurate data to support the management decisions. This year we focused on riparian forests and large carnivores.

The grey alder and *Myricaria germanica* habitats border the main valleys of the Leaota area. These habitats play an important ecological role, preventing the erosion of riversides and also representing important niches for fauna and flora species. In the past, these habitats were highly degraded. Many areas were identified where the grey alder has regenerated well (from around six years ago), mainly on Bădenilor, Vâja, Tâncava and Râiosului Valleys. We can already conclude, that following forest purchase by FCC and stopping of the forest cutting, the alder trees have regenerated and the riparian habitats have started to recover naturally.

The Leaota area is an important shelter for large carnivores, and an important corridor for their dispersal (between Piatra Craiului and the Bucegi Mountains). The bear and wolf populations are studied by non-invasive genetic sampling (hair, scat, urine), which is used to identify unique individuals.

Over 50 bear and 10 wolf samples were collected from the field, and sent to the laboratory. The lynx population is studied using camera traps and genetic samples analysis. Both methods are useful in identifying unique individuals, but the camera traps are the most efficient for lynx. Six out of 12 camera traps were already installed in the field. The large carnivores' study is ongoing in the Leaota area.

Given that the identified pressures and threats on habitats and species are mainly caused by human land-use practices (e.g. deforestation/illegal cutting, grazing in forests, tourists' pressures) our rangers' ongoing patrolling activities have contributed to a better conservation of the area.

Projects are being prepared on Beaver and European Bison reintroduction in the Leaota area.

The local communities are an important partner for the conservation of the area. We have engaged land owners and local/regional authorities in discussions about the development and conservation plan of Leaota. However, with the political, administrative and law changes in Romania, it is a challenge to start again, so there is still work to do regarding the design of a comprehensive, integrated plan of conservation, development and tourism in Leaota.





# Râul Târgului - Argeșel - Râușor

**In 2018 we continued the implementation of the project “Elaboration of the management plan of the protected area ROSCI0381 River Târgului - Argeșel - Râușor” - SMIS-CSNR 102086, co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the Large Infrastructure Operational Program 2014 - 2020.**

The start date of the project was June 2017 and the completion date is November 2019. The total value of the project is RON 2,079,895.88, out of which RON 1,575,399.65 is non-reimbursable financing.

During this year, the most important activities of the project were completed: all the field studies were finalised and the first drafts of the monitoring plan and the management plan were developed. As part of the management plan, a database of species and habitats within the site and the distribution maps were also developed. Innovative methods, such as genetic analysis, used to assess the conservation status of large mammals have been used during the realization of field studies. Camera and hair traps have also been used to determine the population number.

We had meetings with monitoring specialists and management specialists, who proposed some additions to both the management plan and the monitoring plan, so that the final versions of the two plans have been improved. These plans will be subject to public debate in the communities in site area.

CARPATHIA team was responsible for a student's guide about the protected area, short videos about the species and habitats of the site, informative leaflets and posters, materials used in awareness-raising activities in the four main communes of the Natura 2000 site, during educational and communities' public caravans.

After the loss of custody, taken over by ANANP, and despite some adverse legislative changes, the project continued and will be implemented until the end. The results of the project will be transferred to ANANP.







# Făgăraș Mountains

**The scientific community, environmental organisations and the Romanian civil society are increasingly preoccupied by forest conservation, education and awareness concerning the value of the natural environment.**

As recognition of the high biodiversity and natural importance, the Bucharest Biology Institute of the Romanian Academy dedicated its annual conference to the Făgăraș Mountains. We have a unique natural heritage in Europe and the time has come, 100 years after the unification of the Romanian historical regions, and more than 10 years after the land restitutions began, to unite and to choose the easiest (best?) path forward, regarding a future development strategy: the conservation and sustainable use of our natural heritage, biodiversity and of our authentic local culture.

The international conference, entitled "Făgăraș Mountains – scientific arguments for creating a new National Park", was organised in collaboration with Foundation Conservation Carpathia, The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Food Industry and Environmental Protection of the "Lucian Blaga" University in Sibiu and with the support of the National Union for Nature Conservation (IUCN WCAP).

The event brought together 250 participants interested in the area of the Făgăraș Mountains or in similar mountain areas, from diverse fields: researchers, university professors, conservationists, local community, local and national government and European representatives. During the 2 days we covered aspects of science, economy and conservation, the involvement of local communities and the impact and advantages of a National Park on these aspects. Scientific papers were presented, covering the results of complex research in the area of the Făgăraș Mountains (biodiversity, geography, geomorphology, sociology studies, etc.). Open discussion sessions with representatives from different fields also took place: economy, local sustainable development, conservation and local communities. Speakers came from Romania, but also from other countries: Austria, Canada, Switzerland, France, Germany, UK, Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary and Ukraine.

The creation of the Făgăraș National Park is a long process and encompasses a lot of team work involving not only conservationists, but also local communities, scientists and lawyers. If this vision is to become reality, the Făgăraș National Park would become a park of global importance, especially from the perspective of sustainable development and the relationship between humans and nature.



The scientific community supports the research and the studies, which will be the basis for the creation of the National Park. The idea of establishing an advisory board, which would support the necessary administrative and technical procedures needed for the long consultative process of declaring the Făgăraș Mountains a National Park, has already been discussed at the conference.

For detailed information about the event, please access the links below:  
[http://www.ibiol.ro/ibb/Book\\_of\\_abstracts.pdf](http://www.ibiol.ro/ibb/Book_of_abstracts.pdf)

**On the properties protected by FCC in Făgăraș Mountains we continued the monitoring program of alpine and subalpine meadows. The aim of the study is to assess the vegetation changes following grazing abandonment on FCC owned pastures. The study is focused on three meadows: Cățunu, Tămaș and Comisu, containing a total number of 15 permanent monitoring sample plots, five in each meadow.**

Comparing the data of the surveys conducted in 2017 and 2018 we already observed some slight changes in the vegetation pattern and species. The area of alpine and subalpine dwarf shrubs regenerating from the abandoned pastures is increasing in all of the three analysed meadows. The nitrophilous plant species (like nettle and alpine dock), which thrived in the previous year following overgrazing in the past, started to disappear. This is proof that the excess organic matter in the soil is naturally consumed and removed over time, and the original vegetation will eventually recover.

These areas will be monitored each year, to document the rewilding process of these areas following the removal of the human disturbance.













# Ecological restoration

**While safeguarding significant areas of forests and pastures in the Făgăraş Mountains is our main priority, we realised the need to restore degraded areas to their full capacity.**

Restoration activities have improved the quality of the forests, have created new living space for autochthonous species, and have contributed to a more balanced and healthier ecosystem. Repairing degraded habitats also had a positive impact on the public view of nature. While for years, huge areas of forest have disappeared right in front of their eyes, leaving them with barren land, FCC has set out to repair the damage. Many members of the local communities joined in during the replanting sessions, which created a new sense of responsibility and pride for these forests, as well as a greatly needed income source, for the locals hired for ecological restoration activities.

As in the previous years, ecological restoration was mainly focused on forest areas, clear cuts, spruce monocultures and alder galleries. In 2018 most of the clear-cut reconstruction areas were situated at high altitude above 1,200 meters. In the Dâmbovița Valley, we reconstructed 109 hectares of clear-cut with scattered nature regeneration through 58 hectares of effective plantations. In the Valea Vâlsanului Valley, at an altitude between 1,400-1,600 meters high we replanted 40 hectares and thus reconstructed almost 70 hectares of clear-cut. In this area, there was a high risk of grazing of the saplings by the hundreds of sheep and cows in neighbouring alpine pastures. In May 2018, a 4.5 km long wooden fence was built to temporarily protect the reconstruction area. Valea Vâlsanului was the most complex and difficult reconstruction site in 2018.

In 2018, 430,300 saplings were planted in the Făgăraş Mountains.

63 hectares of spruce monocultures were thinned in the Dâmbovița Valley. Almost 5,000 spruce trees were cut and left debarked on the slopes, while 5,900 saplings of beech and fir were planted afterwards. This is part of our spruce monoculture conversion programme, where we aim to convert the artificial monocultures into the initial mixed forests.

The rangers checked the alder gallery reconstruction areas within the Dâmbovița Valley and 3,000 alder saplings were installed in places where recorded losses occurred in 2017.

In summer, the grass was more than 1-meter high in the reconstructed clear-cut areas. Therefore, we have cut the grass around the saplings in over 300 hectares, to avoid suffocation. More than 150 workers worked for the Făgăraş Mountains area in reconstruction activities.

In the Leaota Mountains we continued to reconstruct the last remaining plots: 12 hectares were reconstructed with a total of 45,600 saplings. We have also replaced the dry saplings planted in the previous seasons. In summer, on over 20 hectares of reconstruction plots previously planted we have cut the grass around the saplings, to avoid suffocation.

In the autumn, the rangers performed the final monitoring of the Life project reconstruction areas and overall for all the reconstruction plots. On Dâmbovița Valley at 1,500 metres altitude, some spruce saplings were lost due to improper climatic conditions during the planting season and were immediately replaced in autumn with 30,000 spruce saplings.

On Vâlsanului Valley 30,000 saplings were affected, especially above 1,500 meters, and we plan to replace the dry saplings in spring 2019.

Overall, FCC has started restoration of degraded habitats in several areas:

- FCC has so far purchased over 600 hectares of clear-cuts, some of which have been cut over ten years ago. FCC has replanted annually ca. 100 ha since 2013, .
- We have eight three nurseries and one greenhouse and we grow more than 50% of the saplings we need. So far, we have planted more than 1.8 million saplings.

- The extraction of timber on provisional tractor tracks has left deep wounds in the top soils and after heavy rains, the water runs off the mountains and is channelled along these tracks resulting in ever growing ravines. Over the past few years, FCC has restored the forest floor on over 25 km of logging tracks by filling up ravines with wooden debris, gravel, and soil from the ramparts along the tracks. As a final step, the tracks were replanted and as such we have managed to completely halt erosion on these disastrous erosion zones.
- FCC has introduced several of the missing species within over 400 ha of spruce monocultures in order to convert these artificial monocultures slowly back to a mixed and healthy mountain forest.
- We have restored over 23 km of alluvial forests along the mountain streams with their original alder vegetation.
- We have started to restore shrubland on some selected alpine grasslands, where grazing with livestock has been abandoned.

In 2019, we will start a programme to remove alien invasive species from the valley vegetation.





# 70 ha

of clear-cuts restored in Valea  
Vâlsanului

# 109 ha

of clear-cuts restored in the  
Dâmbovița Valley

# 63 ha

of artificial spruce monocultures  
have been converted to mixed  
mountain forests

# 430,000

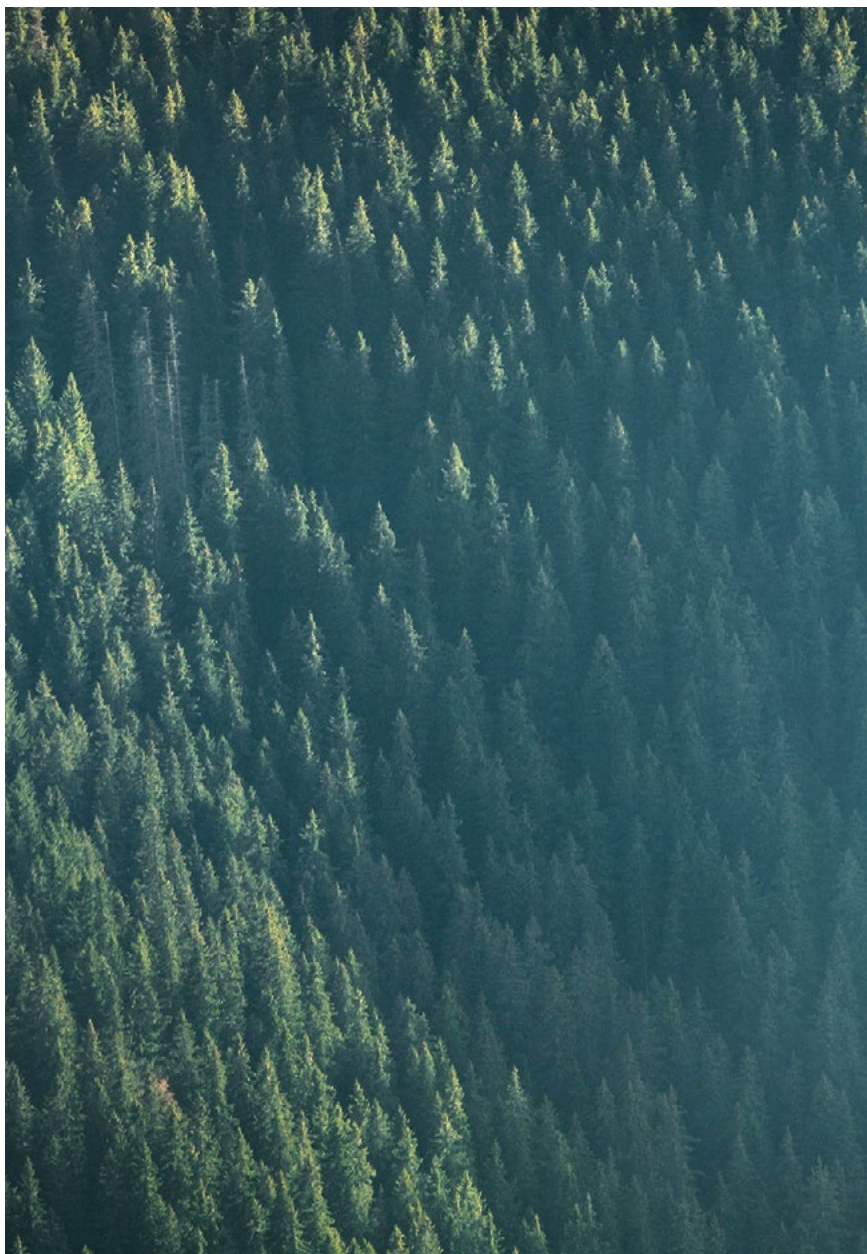
saplings planted in the Făgăraș  
Mountains

# 150+

workers involved in restoration  
activities in the Făgăraș  
Mountains area

# 12 ha

restored in Leaota Mountains



# Life+ Project

## Ecological Restoration of Forest and Aquatic Habitats in the Upper Dâmbovița Valley LIFE11/NAT/RO/823

### Final results 2012-2018



Ecological Restoration of Forest and Aquatic Habitats in the Upper Dâmbovița Valley LIFE+ project has been part of CARPATHIA's restoration activities for the past six years and came to an end in June 2018 with outstanding results, mostly exceeding the proposed objectives by far:

#### Forest purchase

Altogether, we purchased a total of 990 ha of managed forests and 359 ha of clear-cuts and secured them for future restoration activities. In addition, we identified and purchased 294 ha virgin and semi-virgin forests, 1.5 times that which was originally foreseen, and introduced most of it into the National Catalogue of Virgin Forests for protection as such in perpetuity.

#### Habitat restoration

Based on surveys on all clear-cuts we produced technical plans for the restoration of the skidding tracks and regeneration plans for the restoration of the forest cover. Throughout the past 5 years, we restored the forest floor on almost 17 km of eroded tractor tracks, about 70% more than originally foreseen. We also planted over 1.1 million saplings on 404 ha of clear-cuts within the frame of this project – double the surface and more than 11 times the number of saplings proposed in the original plan!

For the rejuvenation of managed forests, we had to be a bit more inventive as forest management plans usually do not allow these kinds of interventions, justly so, in order to prevent overuse of forests of younger age. With the support of the Faculty of Forestry at the Transylvania University Brașov, we could run this activity as a scientific experiment and as such initiated the process towards a more natural species

composition on 405 ha of spruce monocultures by planting over 62,000 saplings.

The project foresaw also the restoration of alder galleries along 20 km of water courses – the results exceeded expectations and we actually restored this priority habitat on a river length of more than 23 km.

There was, however, one conservation objective – the rehabilitation of tributary streams and restoring connectivity for the aquatic fauna along the Upper Dâmbovița River – that we could not fulfill. Bureaucratic hurdles lead to a massive delay of this activity, which required a further prolongation of the project period by one year. Once we were finally able to start, the law changed at the last moment and made it impossible for FCC to implement any work on the river structures.

#### Monitoring

We developed an initial monitoring system to look at the results of the conservation activities and to understand long-term effects of the re-wilding process, based on yearly surveys of indicator species such as woodpeckers, hazel grouse, or European otter, and vegetation surveys. We have also monitored socio-economic parameters, which help us to understand and demonstrate the impact of the changes from an unsustainable extraction economy to a non-extractive, sustainable economy in terms of revenues and jobs for local people.











## Dissemination

An active communication programme led to a high number of regional and national media articles about our project and especially about the restoration work in the frame of the LIFE project. This has been accompanied by a number of site visits of local, regional, national and international groups, and workshops for local stakeholders to keep the public informed about FCC's restoration work and to increase exchange of experiences.

Overall Ecological Restoration of Forest and Aquatic Habitats in the Upper Dâmbovița Valley LIFE+ project was of significant importance for the creation of a future National Park in the Făgăras Mountains, demonstrating best practice examples of restoration, which is a pioneering process in Romania, changing public views about FCC, and at the same time triggering additional funding for further forest purchase and other follow-up activities.

For more details and results, please access the final report at [www.carpathia.org/life](http://www.carpathia.org/life)

Financed by the  
**LIFE+ programme**

2,917,624 € (50%)  
European Commission

2,917,624 € (50%)  
FCC and project partners

# 990 ha

of managed forests purchased

# 359 ha

of clear-cuts purchased

# 294 ha

of virgin and semi-virgin forests  
purchased

# 1,1 million

saplings planted

# 17 km

of eroded tractor tracks restored

# 23 km

of alder galleries restored along  
water courses



03

Wildlife





# Wildlife programme

**All efforts to design a new world class wilderness reserve in the Carpathians would be incomplete without the conservation of Europe's most charismatic mammal species that largely depend on these diverse contiguous forests. Therefore, by the end of 2011, FCC began leasing hunting concessions in the core of the project area to protect and manage wildlife populations on over 36,000 ha and to embark on a strategy that is composed of protection, scientific monitoring and conflict mitigation.**

## Conflict mitigation

Full protection of species that interact with humans or local communities and potentially cause damage to properties, livestock or even lives, can be very controversial. With the (temporary) ban on trophy hunting of large carnivores in autumn 2016 and the ever-milder winters that favour the growth of wild boar populations, the challenge has increased to provide solutions for preventing damage caused by wildlife. FCC has dedicated a whole team of rangers, collaborating with the local gendarmerie, to deal exclusively with the elaboration and implementation of best practice methods to avoid livestock depredation in sheep camps in the mountains and damage of hay fields and agricultural areas caused by wild boar in the vicinity of settlements.

Throughout the last year, the rapid intervention team has had numerous missions concentrated around and sometimes even inside the local communities, which basically can be divided into two different conflict situations:

- wild boar conflicts
- bear conflicts



## Wild boar conflicts

The number of wild boars around the local communities has increased significantly throughout the past two years, mostly due to the lack of a good beech fructification in the forests and the fact that in some orchards the plums and apples were no longer collected by the local people. Hundreds of hectares of pastures and gardens were ploughed by wild boars that probably gathered in the area from the neighbouring mountains.

In order to keep the wild boars away from gardens, almost 30 litres of olfactory repellents and 200 kilograms of gustative repellents in combination with acoustic deterrents were used to protect private properties and crops. As proven in many other studies, no single method is wild-boar-proof, but using several techniques in combination with hunting can be very effective. To reduce conflicts, FCC rangers together with some local hunters, organised hunts in private orchards, gardens, and pastures in close vicinity to local communities and hunted altogether 20 wild boars.

FCC, through its hunting association, established a private compensation system to adequately compensate local farmers for the damages caused by wild boar, resulting in more than 20 farmers receiving payments in addition to the official compensation payments, as these are extremely low. The farmers receiving compensation payments have agreed to improve fencing of their properties to stop the wild boars and three electric fences were distributed temporarily to exceptionally affected farmers.

## Bear conflicts

Several serious attacks on livestock happened in the outskirts of Rucăr, with more than 15 pigs ending up being killed by bears throughout the summer and autumn months. Characteristically for all the attacks was the fact that almost no fence or wooden animal shelter was sufficient to keep the bears away, which understandably frightened people.

DNA analysis of biological samples collected at the conflict sites revealed that in fact all of the attacks were produced by only two bears. After obtaining the official approval from the Ministry of Environment, our team tried to translocate the bear to the back of the Dambovită valley. Despite several attempts to capture a specific bear in different locations we did not succeed, the incidents however became scares after the bear got disturbed several times and the team organised a series of actions during the night time to scare the bears away from the settlements. A different, more appropriate type of bear trap will be developed this year and the rapid intervention team will also benefit from additional training.

FCC rangers were also part of the Commission for damage evaluation and compensation, helping affected farmers to receive the official compensation payments foreseen by the state in such cases.





# Wildlife monitoring

**FCC is one of the few initiatives in Romania that provides reliable population size and density estimates for large carnivores. These however, are prerequisites for national wildlife management strategies, especially in countries where decision-making regarding large carnivores still relies on biologically unrealistic data, putting pressure on the long-term viability of their populations.**

To become a demonstration site for sustainable wildlife management based on objective data, FCC has conducted monitoring of the brown bear, wolf and Eurasian lynx since 2017 on an area of 100,000 ha, effectively collaborating with two neighbouring hunting units.

Our monitoring programme is based on modern, non-invasive tools, such as genetic analysis of scat and hair samples and the use of camera traps, in combination with powerful statistical models that allow for good approximations on real population sizes. At the Făgăraș Mountains International Conference in December 2018, we could present our first results on the density estimates of large carnivores, which further emphasised the capability of this initiative to act as a pilot for a monitoring program on a national level.

Most samples were collected for bears, with 783 scat, urine and hair samples being genotyped in the specialised genetic lab at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. As such, a total of 126 different individuals, 68 males and 58 females, could be identified, though the detection probability for males was much higher than for females. After running the data through two different Capture-Mark-Recapture models, the results reveal an abundance of 183 to 196 brown bears that can be found in the study area at all times.

For wolves, almost 61% of the collected samples genotyped successfully, which is comparable to similar studies in Europe. Parentage analysis enabled us to reconstruct pedigrees and as such to

identify family groups/packs: the identified 22 wolves belonged to 4 different packs of 5-7 wolves per pack. Also, a couple of single individuals that were not related to the residential packs, could be identified, probably belonging to other packs or dispersing young wolves. Altogether, after running two different Capture-Mark-Recapture models, we could show that 32-33 wolves are roaming the study area at all times.

For the lynx, the most elusive large carnivore, we decided to combine genotyping with the use of camera traps to increase the probability of detecting individual lynx based on their unique coat pattern. Therefore, we installed 48 camera trap stations with two cameras at each site in an area of about 70,000 ha. During the 60 days of the survey, we captured lynx on 20 of the sites and altogether had 37 lynx encounters. Unfortunately, image quality did not always allow an identification of individuals, such making the use of mark-recapture analysis impossible, but a minimum count of 11 different lynx is a first result.

Analysis for the 2018/19 sampling season, in which sampling effort was increased once more, is already underway. For 2019 we will concentrate our efforts on wolf and lynx monitoring and intend to estimate population densities of red deer based, for the first time, on genetic analysis.









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Alături de noi, în  
marea parte a  
craierului, a  
luminoasă, pe  
sunt și  
crea că, mai  
edificat, în  
Europa.



# Outreach and Communications

**Local communities are the key to protected areas and the Făgăraș Mountains are one of the few remaining large areas without human settlements on our continent. Yet, they are surrounded by 28 communes, who have an important connection to the mountains.**

In the context of a future National Park an intensive dialogue is necessary. Opinions, beliefs, and fears, the economic situation of the local communities, a new sustainable economy that can replace the current, extractive one - all these need to be taken into consideration, in order to develop measures, which fit the local conditions. FCC together with its own communications team and external partners are building a communication strategy and implementing activities so that people see and believe in this concept of development through conservation.

Our outreach and communication plan include human dimensions' research, a dialogue platform, organising local and national events, ecological education programmes, volunteering and ambassadors' programmes, job opportunities and day-to-day presence in the communities. Communication is also a basis for our conservation enterprise programme, to make people hear about the unicity of Făgăraș Mountains.

You can subscribe to receive our monthly field report and keep in touch with our conservation project: [info@carpathia.org](mailto:info@carpathia.org).

# Protected Area Strategy

## The vision

About two years ago, we organised a workshop on the future of protected areas in Romania with a number of conservation NGOs. We soon realised that there was no uniform opinion. Some thought we should first strengthen the existing protected areas before we talk about new ones, others felt we should develop one good model, others again said we will be losing all the valuable nature we still have if we don't push for protecting much more surface now. As a consequence, FCC and ProPark organised a series of workshops on which we developed a vision for protected areas in Romania until 2050 the latest. The vision turned out to be quite ambitious with the request for 12% of the Romanian surface to become a National Park, 30% of the surface to achieve a protected area status, and 75% of all National Parks to be under full protection according to IUCN standards. In order to finance a functioning protected area system, our idea is to set up a trust fund of € 500 million, which should be fed both by public and private sources.

In late October, we invited the conservation world, the political world and the business world to a Gala "Regăsește România" ("Re-discover Romania") in the Hilton Hotel in Bucharest. It was for the first time that conservation organisations would present themselves in such an ambience and it was interesting to see the positive reaction of many members of the civil society.

Due to the success of the event we decided we would establish this Gala Regăsește România as an annual event to continue to promote such a vision. Everybody is aware that it will take many steps to realise such a big vision, but the first step is done and now we need to do many more steps.







## Round table discussions with timber industry

The round table between timber industry and conservation NGOs has moved on throughout 2018 and the plan at the end of the year was to establish a small secretarial office with a part-time worker to improve the work efficiency. After developing the vision, we intend now to identify concrete steps for a better policy in respect to sustainable forestry and in respect to protected area management including the set-up of a Trust Fund for protected areas. The group still works well together and through this series of meetings we have established mutual trust and understanding.





# A glimpse of major events during the past year

## Forest carnival

February 2018

In February 2018 we organised the first edition of the Făgăraş Mountains Forest Carnival in our project area. It was a special day to celebrate with locals and authorities from four of our neighbouring communities, about 320 people, the importance of the forest and of the people.

## Făgăraş Experience Auction

March 2018

All the funds raised at the auction are used by YouthBank Făgăraş to support young high school students from Făgăraş to implement small local projects. For the second year, FCC has donated an experience at the foundation's farm in Cobor: a guided tour of the farm, an experience at the bird hide and a delicious dinner for two.

## Education

April-September 2018

An increasing number of gymnasium students and high school students are interested in finding out more about the CARPATHIA project. For some we organise activities in their classrooms, and others come and visit us, accompanied by our rangers or local guides, when they have the opportunity, to see: tree nurseries, thematic trail "Forest History", and the restoration sites.

## Romania Untamed

May 2018

A few years ago, natural history film producer Off the Fence produced, with financial help of a big Columbian retailer, a cinema movie about the natural wonders of Columbia. Due to the promotion of the film through this retailer, the film became the most successful domestic cinema film in Columbia of all times. President of The European Nature Trust and FCC trustee Paul Lister picked up this idea and asked Ellen Windemuth, owner and director of Off the Fence, to try something similar for Romania. With Paul's help, Off the Fence got in contact with Auchan, one of Romania's largest retailers, who showed great interest in such a project and decided to co-fund this film together with The European Nature Trust.

Throughout 2017, Off the Fence filmed for almost a year in various parts of Romania and came on several occasions to film in the FCC project area. The film not only showed the beautiful nature of Romania, but also ended with a call to action to protect this fragile nature for generations to come. On March 21st, the premiere of the film took place in the National Theatre amongst the presence of President Klaus Iohannis and in the weeks and months thereafter, the movie was shown in most cinemas of Romania. Auchan did a great deal of publicity for the film and we are proud that we were able to take part in such an important movie for the whole of Romanian society.

## **EcoMarathon**

May 2018

Foundation Conservation Carpathia was a sponsor of the ninth edition of the EcoMarathon and was also present with informative flyers about the importance of forest, grassland and alpine meadow conservation. EcoMarathon was started as an initiative of the Centre for Mountain Ecology in Moeciu de Sus and has become one of the best-known trail-running competitions in Romania, as well as abroad. FCC was represented by Iulia Florea at the marathon.

## **Bikeathon**

June 2018

For the second year we involved the community in our ecological restoration project in the Făgăraș Mountains: People can replant simply by riding a bike and acting as Ambassadors for different projects, competing in the most important charitable event dedicated to bikers in Romania. 41 bikers supported our project and 950 Euro were raised for replanting.

## **Carpathian Marathon & Carpathian MTB epic**

June 2018, August 2018

As custodian of Leaota Natura 2000 site we were partners in these two major national and international sports competitions. We used the opportunity to promote the results of the CARPATHIA project.

## **EU meeting in Strasbourg, France**

October 2018

An FCC representative participated at the Natura 2000 seminar for the Continental, Pannonian, Steppic and Black Sea regions: the need for a common approach between EU states, correlating habitat conservation and protection objectives outside Natura 2000 sites, and sharing of good practices.

## **Protected Areas Week**

October 2018

For the second year, FCC has been part of the Protected Areas Week, a national event organised by ProPark Foundation for Protected Areas: a quiz about Brasov county's environment, school interactive workshops, field trips, Mihai Zotta, the technical director of FCC presented a short movie series about the people behind environmental NGOs and hosted a public debate after the movie. A great way to celebrate the environment, all over Romania!

## **International Conference 'Făgăraș Mountains – An inventory towards a New National Park'**

December 2018

On December 10th and 11th 2018, the Bucharest Biology Institute of the Romanian Academy dedicated its annual conference to the Făgăraș Mountains, due to their high biodiversity and natural importance in Romania and in Europe. The scientific community supports the research and the studies, which will be the basis for the creation of the National Park.



# FCC in local and international media

## Media event in Bucharest

presenting our results and the vision of the Făgăraș Mountains National Park.



## Media reports

visit from the Dutch newspaper Volkskrant for an extended report about the wildlife hides and Cobor Biodiversity Farm as a travel destination.



## Media trip

Media trip for national TV stations, bloggers and print media about the uniqueness and importance of the Făgăraș Mountains in Romania and Europe, challenges and opportunities of becoming the largest forested National Park in Europe.

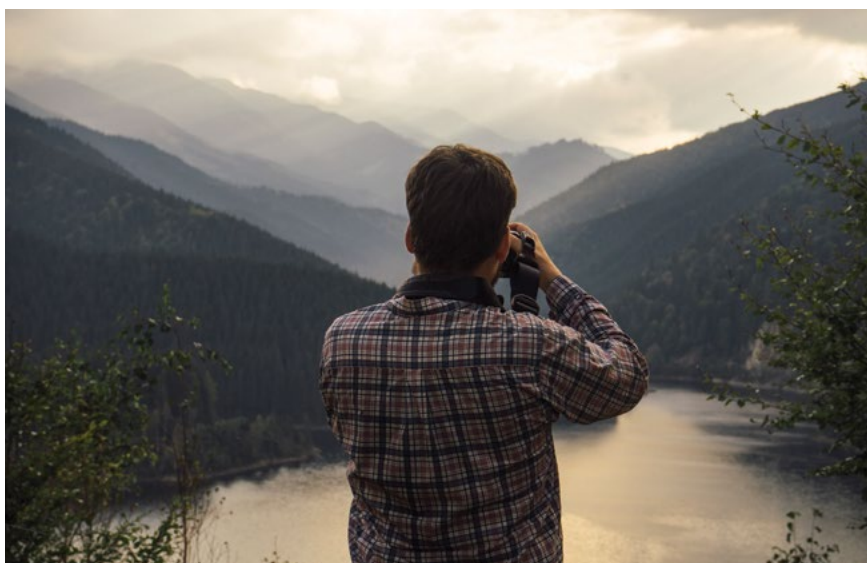






## Visit

from and cooperation with Conservation Atlas for a documentary about our CARPATHIA project. Conservation Atlas is an organisation dedicated to promoting conservation through the inspiring lens of travel.



## Dan Dinu

the Romanian nature photographer is working on a beautiful collection of photography dedicated entirely to the Făgăraş Mountains. In 2019 we will edit the first coffee table book about this unique mountain.



## Nicholas JR White

continues his series of photography, telling the story of our project and its rangers through images:

[www.nicholasjrwhite.co.uk/carpathia](http://www.nicholasjrwhite.co.uk/carpathia)









# Volunteering

## **Ursus Breweries (Ciucas division)**

has supported the CARPATHIA forest and wildlife conservation project since 2016. A team of employees from the Ciucas factory in Brasov participated in the replanting in the Dâmbovița Valley.

## **MedLife Romania**

has supported the ecological reconstruction of 10 ha of clear cuts: babies born in their private clinics will grow up together with young trees in the eastern Făgăraș mountains.

## **Arges county Gendarmerie, Forest Guard Service and Environmental Protection Agency**

helped us with replanting in the Dobroneagu Valley, the largest clear-cut site bought by FCC so far (106 ha); 40 ha were replanted this spring.

## **RTC**

a Bucharest based company, has joined our ecological restoration efforts and has donated money for the replanting of one hectare. 40 employees spent a day with the FCC team and became ambassadors of the Făgăraș Mountains National Park.



# Awards

## Winner

### **Ecotic Gala for a Clean Environment**

Foundation Conservation Carpathia  
Best Romanian NGO category

## Winner

### **Ecotic Gala for a Clean Environment**

Cobor Biodiversity Farm  
Greenest Commercial Company category

## Nominee

### **Romanian Insider Awards**

Foundation Conservation Carpathia nominated in  
the Best Rural Development category





# Conservation Enterprise Programme

**Over the last few years we started to think that local people should benefit from protected areas and conservation activities, and that we have to change the general belief that businesses developed within protected areas are threats for conservation. Thus, we started to design a conservation enterprise programme with the aim to support a new nature-based economy creating jobs and other benefits for local people, increasing their support and engagement in biodiversity conservation.**

Throughout this programme we intend to improve people's economic situation by investing in specific businesses from the field of eco-tourism, local food production, services, and small-scale processing of non-timber products to create economic advantages from conservation and by assisting regional entrepreneurs to develop conservation friendly businesses. We will set up a regional conservation trust, which will offer training and will evaluate changes in sustainable livelihood activities and the socio-economic impact of project activities.

This trust fund will be a pilot study for Romania and will be created as a financial instrument to support land conservation in the long-term, becoming a blueprint for protected areas all over Romania. We aim to integrate biodiversity into financial and business decisions and to enhance the income by delivering ecosystem services, and thus to ensure, through the conservation and restoration activities carried out, no loss of biodiversity. If successful, the system can be enlarged to the whole Făgăraş area and replicated for all protected areas in Romania.

The conservation enterprise programme, will be open to all communities around the Făgăraş area. However, we will focus on those communities, where the most activities have been developed so far, where we can guarantee specific rights, where we experience the largest openness from the mayors, and where we can create a positive impact upon the local population. We believe that once successful, neighbouring communes will become interested, too, and will want to participate. If we can help the villagers realise the benefits of intact mountain ecosystems for sensitive ecotourism and other nature-based business development, and make them understand the importance ecosystem services have for urban centres downstream, they will feel proud of their natural environment and be more willing to protect it for their own future wellbeing.





# Cobor Biodiversity Farm

**Cobor Biodiversity Farm is located in rural Transylvania, close to the Southern Carpathian Mountains, in a remote settlement first attested in 1206. We are far away from metropolitan busy lifestyle and roads.**

At Cobor Biodiversity Farm, we have restored old Saxon houses with the outmost care and turned them into beautiful guesthouses, since we are also keen to share our work and significance. Together with lodging, we offer healthy, organic meals with locally sourced ingredients, and outdoor activities exploring the stunning surrounding nature.

Our aim is to create a new, non-extractive economy around the Făgăras Mountains, for the benefit of biodiversity and local communities. This is where Cobor Biodiversity Farm comes in. We are a model of a self-sustainable green business, proving that agriculture done properly can go hand in hand with conservation of biodiversity. Our primary product is biodiversity, and that makes us unique. On our 500 ha we recently reintroduced the Hungarian Grey cattle, the autochthonous cattle breed of Transylvania, and operate a horse livery programme with over 40 horses.

## Tourism and events

In 2018 we had a 25% growth in our income, which takes us closer to our goal of a self-sustained green economy. We know from statistics, but from our own experience as well, that eco-tourism is the fastest growing "industry". Romania, with its natural heritage can become, with the right infrastructure and programmes, one of the most visited European countries.

More than 600 Romanian and foreign guests became familiarised with our ambitions and goals: Inspired by our project and wishing to build up similar initiatives, amazed by the intact nature, the quietness of the rural area, engaged in our camp and wilderness programmes, and thankful for the freedom of the Transylvanian hills and the beauty of Făgăras Mountains close by.

We have continued our series of events, with the same philosophy of promoting the village, involving the villagers and creating a network of people that receive economic benefits.

We started the year with the inauguration of our BIRD HIDE, which is also now available for our guests. Television came, and a diverse group of ornithologists could enjoy the splendid view and the beautiful diverse bird species. We continued with a Bike and Brunch, 40 km ride, in partnership with Colinele Transilvaniei Association that got together 45 guests, enjoying the rolling hills, beautiful pastures, secular oak trees forests and tasty local meals. In June we have organised an event for kids, in order to teach them and show them what farming means, to pick healthy medicinal herbs and have all the space young children need to consume their energy. And lastly, Flavours and Sounds of Transylvania visited, in partnership with My Transylvania Association, where the local communities' culture was in the forefront.

We had a vast number of important meetings, that set the foundation for important future projects, like the one of restoring the well-known and unique oak pastures that are at risk of extinction (Sir Charles and Lady Burrell, Dr. Tibor Hartel, Ted Green, Jill Butler).

Also, a milestone in renting out one of our guest houses for the winter period of 2018, for a German family (the Fauths'), that saw a documentary about our project, got inspired, came to see, fell in love, and remained here, having sold everything in Germany and moved to Cobor.

It was great to host a CARPATHIA teambuilding: All colleagues from the CARPATHIA area and the central office staff have spent a day at the farm to experience this project and get to know each other better.

## Horses at our livery

We have a beautiful green fenced pasture of 20 ha, with high nature value grass, with over 150 planted fruit trees, which not only will provide shade in the future but will also provide a home for different type of habitats. This amazing pasture means freedom and the perfect place for them to live and to socialize. Our horse livery and rehabilitation centre, includes all services needed (farrier, veterinarian, specialized personnel). We sometimes call it a horse SPA, as life is so good for our guests in the livery...

It was a record year, as by the end of the year we grew our family by 50%, closing the year with 44 horses that we look after.









## Carpathian shepherd dog programme

The Carpathian Shepherd is an ancient dog that has been in existence for many years. It has traditionally been used by Romanian farmers to herd and guard their livestock on the Carpathian Mountains. They are renowned for their bravery, tackling any predator that tries to invade their territory, often fighting them off in packs. It is a dog with a dignified, calm and balanced behaviour, but when the situation demands it turns into a really quick, agile and powerful fighter, fuelled by the desire to defend its livestock and master.

The Carpathian Shepherd can be a loving dog, very sociable and friendly with humans, in comparison to the mixed breed shepherd dogs that are being used these days.

The aim of this breeding programme is to reintroduce this traditional breed in to the Carpathian Mountains, by breeding them and donating them to the local shepherds.

In 2018 we reached a total of 5 females with certified pedigrees and also 2 males with certified pedigrees.



## Farming

April 22nd 2018 means a new 'era' for Cobor, as it marks the day 33 Hungarian Grey Cattle arrived at the farm to form a herd of 32 pregnant cows and a bull. The year ended with 52 cattle present.

The main reason for choosing this type of grazing with these cattle is that it is considered to be suitable for sustaining grassland biodiversity. Because of its lower selectivity compared to sheep or horse grazing, traditional cattle grazing systems with robust cattle breeds, like the Hungarian grey cattle, with low stocking rates are considered to be more realistic in mimicking natural grazing regimes in grasslands. It also strongly affects the species richness and composition, suppresses noxious species and creates a mosaic vegetation structure of short- and tall species, which enables the maintenance of high species richness in the landscape.

Besides the major impact on biodiversity and high nature value grassland conservation, the cattle also have huge cultural value. With its impressive appearance and high degree of tolerance, the Hungarian grey cattle is the best known indigenous domesticated animal. The grey cattle were a "true global brand" since the middle ages: driven on feet, these animals were one of the most profitable export articles in the 15th-18th centuries as their meat, processed in West European slaughterhouses, was sold at a premium price. At present, the Hungarian grey cattle are bred by combining the extensive herds that represent ethnographic and cultural heritage and hundreds of years of traditions with the requirements of the Modern Ages.

In order to take good care of them, we worked hard and had a record production of alfalfa (lucerne) of over 6 tones/ha this year, with a total surface area of 13 ha. In addition, some of the fields were cut up to four times. In 2018 we used an area of over 100 ha for grazing and 70 for hay making, for both cattle and horses.

## Management plan

Based on the results of the scientific study that was conducted in 2017, we started a meadow-monitoring programme, in order to assess the efficiency of the meadow management practices for biodiversity conservation.

FCC conducted a scientific study this year, focused on the identification and assessment of the cosmetic plant species on the farm's territory. The study was approved by the Romanian Academy, and we received the official permit for cosmetic plant sustainable harvesting. We continued the collaboration with Natura Siberica, a company specialized in luxury organic cosmetics. The extraction of the active principles from plants, as well as the harvesting procedures, has been certified for the Environmental Standards by Ceres GmbH.

## Tourism fairs

In 2018, in order to promote the tourist attraction of the Foundation, we participated at the National Tourism Fair of Romania and at ITB (International Tourism Fair Berlin). Both represented a valuable experience regarding the identification of potential partners and direct clients and a good opportunity to generate visibility for our ecotourism offer, but also for the work the Foundation is doing in general.

In September 2019, Biosphere Expeditions will organise an exciting wildlife programme in our project area, which is an interesting opportunity to join our conservation project and our field team: Wolf, bear, lynx, bison and beaver expedition to the Transylvanian Alps of Romania. Full details on: [www.biosphere-expeditions.org/romania](http://www.biosphere-expeditions.org/romania)

# Wildlife hides

During the 2018 summer season, Bunea hide hosted 66 guests. From tourists and environmental activists, to journalists and potential financiers of the Foundation, all had a unique experience and got to immerse themselves fully into the wilderness of the Dâmbovița Valley. Thanks to our satisfied guests we attracted new tourism agencies from Romania and abroad, so 2019 is set to be a busy year.





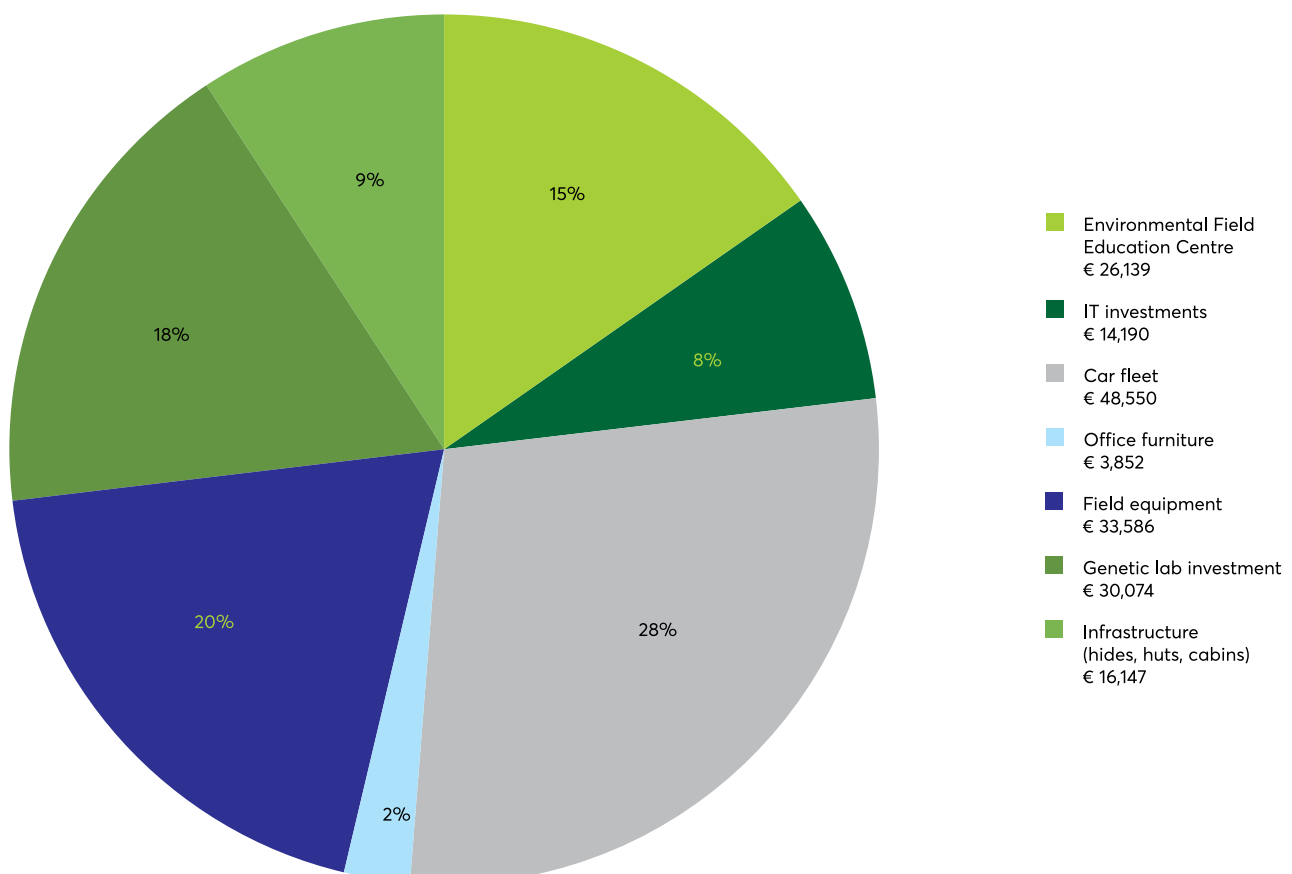


# Financial report

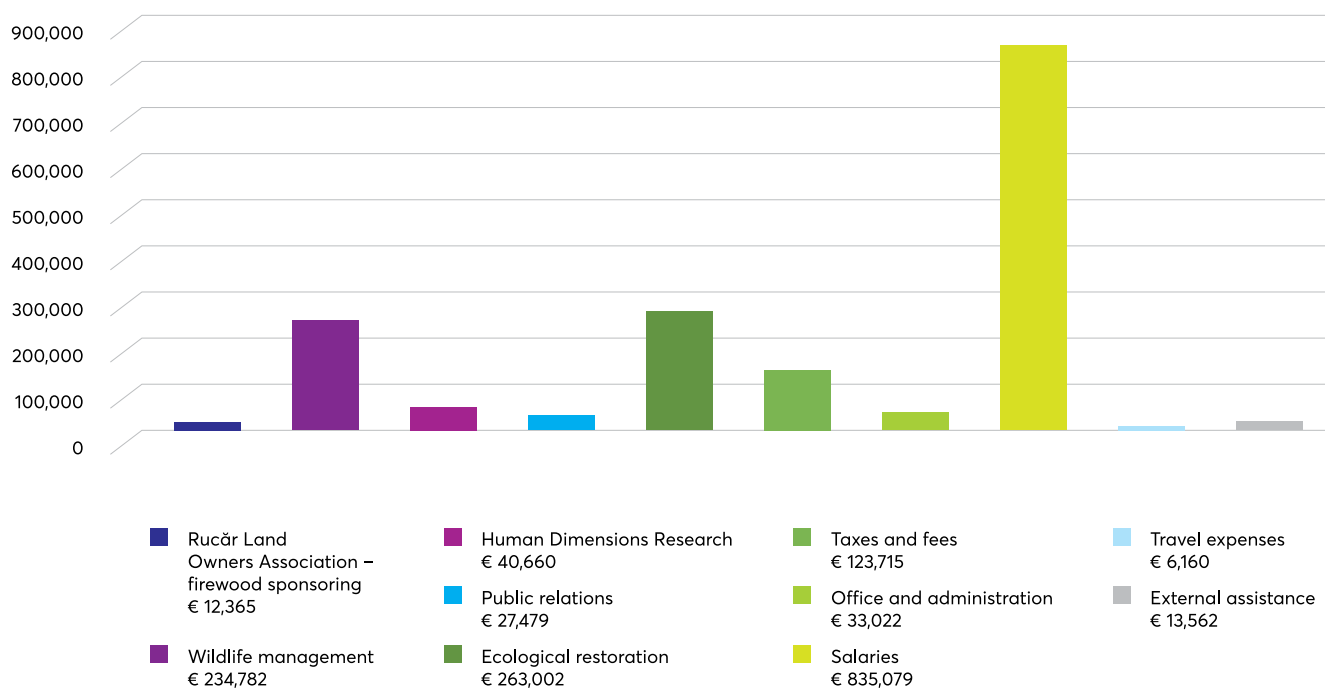
## General economic situation

The operating model of FCC, consisting of land acquisition and the lease of hunting rights with the aim of full protection of all natural elements, restoration of damaged ecosystems, communication with the outside world, and the economic uplift of local communities involves continuous economic efforts to have the necessary funds for purchasing the land and for supporting all costs of administration and conservation measures.

In the following overview, we focus only on operational costs and on conservation activities. Funds for forest purchase are not included.



### Operational costs (€)

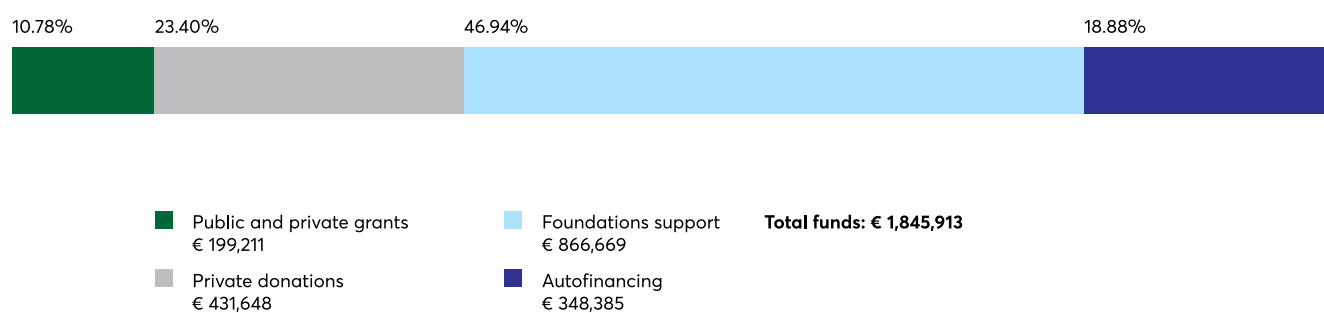




## Donations and grants

Throughout the past year, FCC has continued its cooperation with our existing partners and has found several new funding partners for its CARPATHIA project. According to our fundraising strategy we have focused our efforts on large foundations, private donations, and public grants. In 2018, FCC was awarded grants from the following organisations and sources:

### Funding sources (€)



\*for all CARPATHIA group

## Donations and grants

Grantee	Activity	Amount (€)
<b>Foundations</b>		
Wyss Foundation	Securing land for full protection & General support	4,382,000
Temperatio Foundation	Richita Environmental Field Education Centre renovation	300,000
Pancivis Foundation	Richita Environmental Field Education Centre renovation	150,000
Frankfurt Zoological Society	General support	120,000
Foresta Futura Foundation	Equipment and reforestation	75,000
<b>Total foundation grants</b>		<b>5,027,000</b>

<b>Private donations</b>		
Montaigne Long Now Funding S.A.	Wildlife conservation & General support	130,000
Mossy Earth	Reforestation	3,800
Other private donations	General support	30,450
<b>Total private donations</b>		<b>164,250</b>

<b>Public grants</b>		
POIM	Management Plan Natura 2000 site Râul Târgului - Argeşel - Răuşor	199,211
<b>Total public grants</b>		<b>199,211</b>

<b>Corporate donations</b>		
Alpha Bank Romania	General support	19,975
MedLife	Ecological restoration	9,777
Proffice Experience	General support	5,263
B&B Collection	General support	4,288
Temad	General support	3,216
Decorio Plus S.R.L.	General support	2,144
Ecologic 3R S.R.L.	General support	2,144
Sagitaris Service S.R.L.	General support	1,072
Servelect	General support	1,072
Other	General support	2,151
<b>Total corporate donations</b>		<b>51,147</b>







07

Plans for 2019



# Endangered Landscapes Programme

**The Foundation has the sustenance of the Endangered Landscapes Programme, an initiative which financially supports projects with the aim to restore areas that are rich in biodiversity and resilient to environmental change. The grant will be used for a variety of activities such as the reintroduction of bison and beavers, the development of a sustainable local economy built on conservation enterprises, or by creating a programme to mitigate human–wildlife conflicts.**

The project spans between 2019 and 2023 and targets 28 localities in 4 counties in the Făgăraş Mountains region in Romania: Argeş, Braşov, Sibiu, and Vâlcea. To maximise feasibility for a project of this magnitude, the funding will be split between five different areas of activities encompassing specific conservation tasks.

A strong focus is to develop social sensitivity to conservation issues while at the same time finding solutions to problems on the local communities' agenda. The project partners will have US\$ 1,500,000 available to understand the needs and opinions of residents in the project area, to organise a stakeholder platform, events, and excursions in order to come to a common conclusion about the conservation of the Făgăraş Mountains.

To reach the long-term goal of growing a sustainable local economy, the project has directed US\$ 500,000 for promoting and developing conservation enterprises.

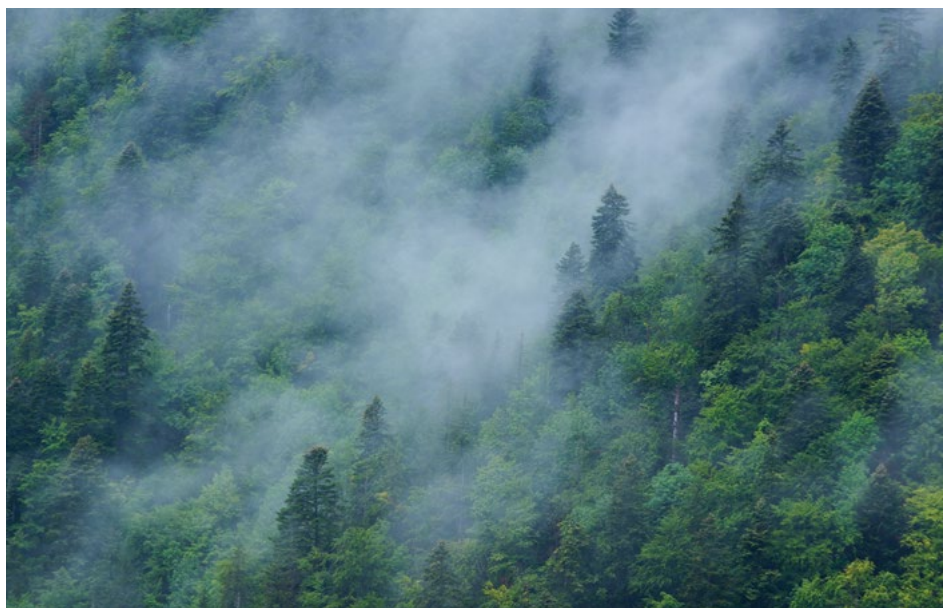
An additional US\$ 1,000,000 will be invested in reducing and mitigating conflicts between humans and wildlife, especially bears. Together with Romanian Gendarmerie, FCC will set up a rapid intervention team to deal with wildlife encounters.

For immediate restoration work to protect and enhance biodiversity, the project will also spend US\$ 2,000,000. The action plan includes restoration of cleared forest lands and degraded alpine habitats, reconversion of artificial spruce forests, removal of invasive alien plant species, as well as bison and beaver reintroduction into the wild. A new group of free ranging bison in the Făgăraş Mountains will contribute to increase the population of the existing two other bison locations in our country: Vânători-Neamţ and Armeniș, Caraş-Severin.

Foundation Conservation Carpathia and three strategic partners will implement the project. Associated in the implementation of these activities are Conservation Capital (UK), which will share their knowledge and help in developing a conservation enterprise programme, ProPark Fundația pentru arii protejate (Brașov), who contribute with their expertise in involving local communities and developing educational activities, and Prof. Dr. Alistair Bath (University of Newfoundland, Canada) who will support the project with human dimensions research to better understand attitudes and concerns of local communities.

"The Endangered Landscapes Programme is definitely the Champions League of European conservation and we are proud that a Romanian project has been selected as one of only 8 projects on our continent. This shows the high recognition, which the Făgăraș Mountains and our initiative have on an international level", Barbara and Christoph Promberger, Executive Directors of FCC.

The Endangered Landscapes Programme is managed by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and funded by Arcadia - a charitable fund of Peter Baldwin and Lisbet Rausing.





# LIFE programme

**As mentioned in the introduction, FCC was invited to submit a full proposal for a new LIFE application to the European Commission. By the end of 2018, we were still processing the proposal and we won't hear about the outcome until early summer.**

The proposal was built upon our 5 pillars of work:

- Land conservation and protection
- Restoration of degraded habitats
- Wildlife protection, reintroduction, conflict mitigation, and monitoring
- Community outreach and communication
- Conservation enterprise development

75 different activities, all the way from the protection of an additional 3,300 ha of forest, the removal of alien invasive species, the reintroduction of bison and beavers, the development of a rapid intervention team for wildlife-human conflicts, the initiation of a stakeholder platform for land-use planning, and the implementation of a conservation enterprise programme are part of this LIFE proposal.

If the proposal were to be accepted, we could start these activities in the second half of 2019.. Their implementation would catapult the CARPATHIA project into a new level and we could extend our activities to the entire Făgăraş Mountains.



# Land easement programme

**The presence of representatives of landowners' associations at our conference about the Făgăraş Mountains in December 2018 was a great opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions.**

**We were told that these landowners' associations generally do not oppose full protection of their virgin forests at all, if they would receive proper compensation.**

This is understandable, as society cannot ask private landowners to protect their land, renounce any possible profits, and cover the costs for land taxes and legally required forest management contracts from outside sources. In theory, the state is legally required to pay such compensations for virgin forests in private land ownership, but in practice this works differently, and the state has simply refused to pay these duties in 2018. Consequently, these landowners do not trust the state and do not agree to put their land under full protection.

With this in mind, FCC has started to develop the idea of a private land easement programme, where natural forests (we believe we shouldn't limit the protection only to virgin forests, but also include old-growth forests, which have the natural structure and include trees with a specific age) are legally protected and a private fund provided by FCC would secure the long-term funding of these compensation payments. We would then try to recover parts of these payments again from the state in order to allow a larger output of the programme. We plan to such a programme before summer 2019.

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Dragoş Lazarin



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