



European forests and the EU Nature Restoration Regulation

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Personal Background

- From Málaga, southern Spain



Photo: Nico_, CC BY-NC-ND 2.0



- Beaches
- Tropical fruits
- 20° C in winter
- 300 sunshine days/year

(Basically identical to Brussels)

Personal Background

- Degrees in Botany (1996) and Forest Engineering (2001)
- 2004 Civil Servant at Regional Government

2005-2011 Forest ranger in Las Villas



Sierra de Las Villas

- One of the biggest PAs in Europe
- Natura 2000 site, UNESCO Biosphere Reserve (Sierras de Cazorla, Segura y Las Villas)
- Biodiversity hotspot

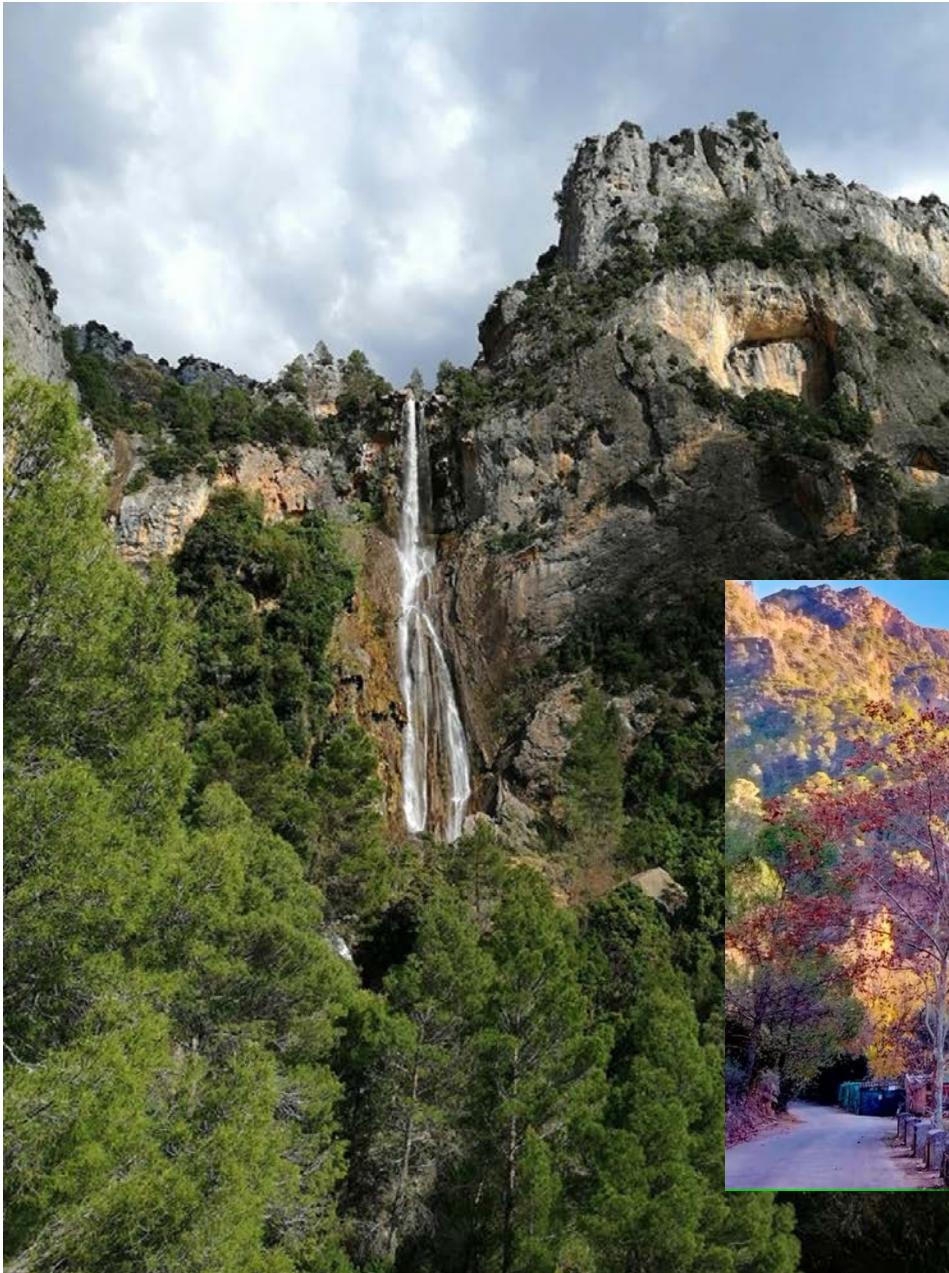


Photo: Pedro Jiménez López



Photo: <https://www.andalucia.org/listing/ruta-en-moto-sierras-de-cazorla-segura-y-las-villas/21789102/>



Lots of endemic plant species



Photo: Juandiegocano CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org>



Photo: Santiago Martín-Bravo — <https://www.inaturalist.org/photos/184249821>, CC BY 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/>

Lots of endemic plant species



Photo: Philippe.pechoux CC BY-SA 3.0.



Photo: peganum CC BY-SA 2.0.

Lots of endemic plant species



Photo: Hyacinthoides reverchonii 002 GotBot 2016.jpg by Averater CC BY 4.0.



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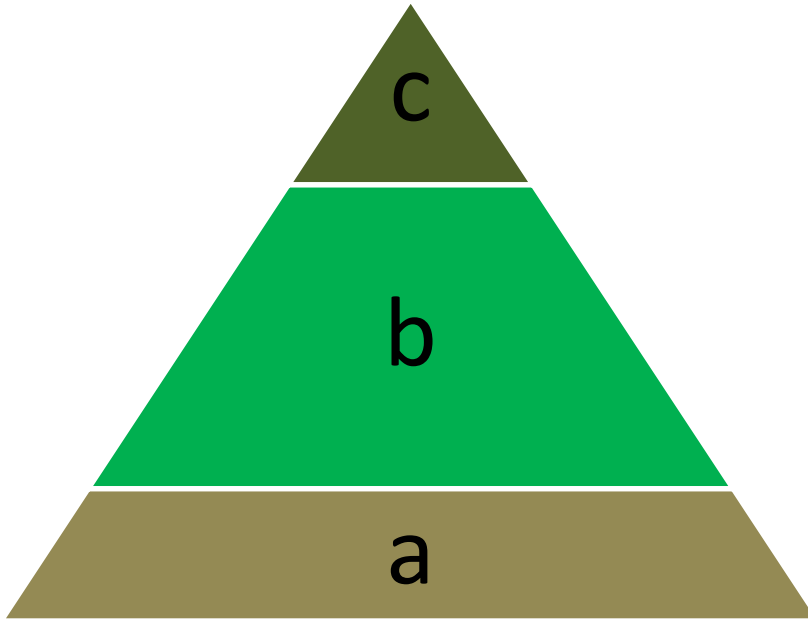


(Me when I finish my catalogue)



Photo: llamnudds CC BY-SA 2.0.

Three basic native pine forest belts



c- *Pinus nigra* subsp. *salzmanii*

b- *Pinus pinaster*

a- *Pinus halepensis*



Reforestation (50s-70s) + fire suppression =



Photo: LBM1948 CC BY-SA 4.0.

... An ocean of pines!



Photo: cabezadeturco CC BY-SA 2.0.



Photo: Ervins Strauhmanis CC BY 2.0.

A catastrophic wildfire

- August 2005: 10,000 hectares burned (about half of Las Villas)
- Very high-intensity fire (firestorms)
- Severe ecological damage (loss of pine forests and soil erosion)

Ecological Consequences

- Recovery in some areas (*Quercus*)
- Deep damage in the rest
- Loss of soil and seed bank
- Challenges in natural regeneration



Photo: Veinticuatro de Jahén CC BY-SA 4.0.

Lessons on Resilience

- Resilience is crucial for ecosystem recovery
- Difference between bouncing back and collapse
- Importance of diverse and healthy ecosystems

Nature Restoration Regulation

- Legally binding targets for restoration
- Focus on certain valuable habitat types and species (based on Habitats Directive)
- Restoration of ecosystem functions OUTSIDE these habitat types (including in forests)
- Building resilience to climate change

Article 4: Restoration of Annex I Forest Habitats

- Targets for restoring valuable forest habitats (Annex I)
- Measures on place to improve to good condition:
 - i. 30% of degraded habitats by 2030
 - ii. 60% by 2040
 - iii. 90% by 2050
- Focus on Natura 2000 until 2030

(Sub-) Mediterranean pine forests with endemic black pines



Photo: Cardioceras CC BY 4.0.

Article 12: Restoration of forest ecosystems

- Enhance biodiversity of broader forest ecosystems
- Increasing trends on key indicators:
 - ✓ Abundance of forest birds (obligatory)
 - ✓ Deadwood volume (standing and lying)
 - ✓ Uneven-aged structure
 - ✓ Tree species diversity
 - ✓ Forests dominated by native species
 - ✓ Connectivity of forest patches
 - ✓ Carbon stock

Common forest bird index



Photo: Martin Mecnarowski (<http://www.photomecan.eu/>) CC BY-SA 3.0.

Deadwood



Photo: Ruth and Dave CC BY 2.0.

Uneven-aged forests



Photo: USDA Forest Service Public Domain Mark 1.0.

Monitoring and Reporting

- Consistent monitoring protocols
- Data submission to Commission/EEA
- EU-wide progress reports and reviews

Shift in Forest Management

- Move beyond old models
- Close-to-nature forestry
- Prioritizing ecosystem health and resilience

Call to Action

- Invest in smart, science-based restoration
- Community-driven efforts
- Heal the damage and build resilient forests
- ENOUGH FUNDING

Thanks!



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