



EUROPARC NORDIC-BALTIC

Newsletter No.4:2011

www.europarc-nb.org

Dear members and friends,

as you are all aware, major changes will take place at the turn of the year: The Federation will get a new President and several new Council members. There's the collaboration between EUROPARC and Eurosite to consider. Plus, the Nordic-Baltic Section secretariat will move from Sweden to Estonia. These events may seem far away, but this month is when many important decisions will be made and, naturally, much of this issue of the newsletter evolves around the EUROPARC Conference 2011 and General Assembly. Also, you get to meet the Section's future President and coordinator. But, we'll start with a report from an inspiring summer camp in one of our Lithuanian member parks.

Young Scientists' Camp in Dzūkija NP



At the end of June this year, Dzūkija National Park and Čepkeliai State Nature Reserve organized a Young Scientists' Camp to stimulate interest in nature and our environment. Nine students from Varėna „Ažuolas“ gymnasium, Varėna „Rytas“ progymnasium and Merkinė V. Krėvės gymnasium got the chance to deepen their practical knowledge by learning about nature, in nature. The camp was sponsored by Varėna district municipality.

The Young Scientists' Camp consists of three parts. This time students learnt to recognize birds, birdsongs and higher plants. They got information about Dzūkija National Park. In addition, the young scientists learnt to be in



nature without disturbing it and without leaving traces of their activities. The students have learnt to *feel* nature, to see and hear things which they cannot get from tutorials.

Moreover, we expect that, while making discoveries themselves, students will better understand nature conservation issues.

The students were encouraged to look for answers in manuals and audio records. We studied edible, medicinal and noxious plants. At the end of the camp, all students together made an illustrated camp diary. The third part of this camp will be organized in September – October, and the same students will learn to identify the mushrooms of the Dzūkija region.

We hope to continue this project and, in the future, we would like to also organize similar camps to deepen the students' knowledge about other topics i.

Written by Emilis Tamošiūnas
Chief specialist Dzūkija National Park

SECTION NEWS and EUROPARC Conference 2011

The most important EUROPARC event of the year, the annual conference, is due in just a few weeks time. On September 21-25 in Bad Urach, many interesting events will take place. Here are some of the things you don't want to miss!

Welcome to the **Section's member meeting!** On September 21, 16.00-18.00, we meet in Stift Bad Urach, room Anna Magdalena Bach. The agenda will be sent out to all members shortly. Please find the invitation on our website <http://europarc-nb.org/what-we-do/member-meetings>. If there is something you think we should discuss at the meeting, please contact Lena Malmström lena.malmstrom@naturvardsverket.se, by September 16.

At the meeting, you will have the opportunity to **meet the Section's new secretariat!** As Keskkonnaamet Environmental Board of Estonia takes over the Section presidency in 2012, Kaja Lotman will be your new President. Nele Sober takes over as coordinator. To give you a sneak preview, we've asked them to present themselves. Enjoy!

Kaja Lotman, future President

I was born on May 10th, 1960 in Tallinn, Estonia.

I studied biology at Tartu University and I have worked in nature conservation for about 20 years. I was the deputy director of Matsalu National Park for a long time, until its administration ceased to exist as separate institution due to reforms.

I currently work for Estonian Environmental Board as the head of West-Estonia Region, which consists of three counties.



My activities in international nature conservation include:

2000-2008	National focal point for UNEP Eurobats
2003	Expert in a working group for protected areas in BDC SBSTTA-9
2006	Expert in a working group for protected areas in BDC COP-MOP
2009	Member of the Ramsar commission of Estonia.

Together with my husband Aleksei Lotman, I was awarded the WWF Elisabeth Jihde Memorial Award for nature conservation in cooperation with local communities, especially for developing a meadow management system for Estonia.

On the personal side, I am a mother of 4 grown-ups and a grandmother of 3 happy children. I live in the countryside and we have two Estonian Native Horses, 2 hens and a cat on our small farm in the nice village of Matsalu.



Nele Sõber, future coordinator

I was born on March 9th, 1978 in Pärnu. I studied international business specializing in marketing at an international university in Estonia (CIUE). At first, my work experiences were especially connected with marketing, but after moving to Lihula the job tasks have changed a bit, but not totally. For your information – Lihula is one of the municipalities where Matsalu National Park is situated and the national park centre in Penijõe is also in Lihula municipality.

I have worked in Matsalu for 6 years and the tasks have always been related to sustainable nature tourism development in the protected area. Right now, I am project manager in the project "Parks and Benefits". I have experiences in NGO and public sector level and also with EU structural fund project world.

Taking into account the signs of the zodiac and their characteristics – Pisces (my monthly zodiac) and Horse (yearly) – I can say that I am devoted, disciplined, hard-working, detailed, well-organized, flexible, will-powered, adaptable and teamworker person. I love to travel, do outdoor activities with my children, read romantic novels and crosswords puzzles. I am married and I have three children, 2 boys and 1 girl.

I look forward to good collaborations with NBS members during the next presidency years!

More conference news...

The **EUROPARC General Assembly** is particularly important this year, since you members are to elect a new president and several council members. If you cannot make it to the meeting, please arrange with a fellow member to vote by proxy. More information and proxy authorization forms are available here <http://europarc-nb.org/seminars-and-events/europarc-conference-20112> Questions? Contact Lena Malmström lena.malmstrom@naturvardsverket.se

Read **presentations and watch videos of all candidates on the web:** <http://europarc-nb.org/seminars-and-events/europarc-conference-20112> Among them, you'll find our own section's Rolands Auzins, Council candidate, and Thomas Hansson candidate for President. Here, we've asked Thomas some questions about his candidacy.

Thomas Hansson, current president of the Nordic-Baltic Section, is one of the candidates in the upcoming EUROPARC Federation President elections. We decided to ask him 5 questions.

Hello Thomas, you stand candidate in the upcoming EUROPARC President election. Why?

"To me, international cooperation is absolutely necessary to develop both nature conservation overall and our individual professional skills as managers of protected areas. And here's where I find the EUROPARC network so useful: I have very good experiences from EUROPARC activities.

With EUROPARC Federation as our 'voice', we can make a better future for the management of protected nature in Europe."

What do you consider the most important tasks for EUROPARC Federation in the next two years?

"Internally, it is to consolidate the Federation's finances - by recruiting new members and through projects and activities. Also, we should strive to influence the EU policies that affect nature conservation during the next programme period."

How would the Federation benefit from having a president from the Nordic-Baltic region?

"First of all, it is important to remember that the President does not represent any certain region, but works for the entire EUROPARC membership.

While our region may not be the most conspicuous in Europe, we have long experience from working in multinational contexts, where we collaborate between countries. We also have a lot of nature and NATURA 2000 sites. Plus, we live in border areas of the EU and know the situation on the 'edge'."

What is the most important experience you would bring to the Federation?

"I've worked with nature conservation and management almost all my life. From the local to international levels. I've been an employee and an independent consultant for governmental agencies, companies, and NGO's. Plus, since 2006, I'm involved in local and regional politics, working on issues related to nature and the environment. So, I've gained quite wide and very hands-on experiences from most aspects of the field. Altogether, these experiences will help me represent the wide and multifaceted EUROPARC membership in a good way."

Last, but not least, why should the Nordic-Baltic Section members vote for you?

"Because they want a president with a genuine interest in nature, who feels great responsibility for the organisation and wants to serve all members equally. I know how to analyze organisations and their work, and always try to find new solutions. I take pride in listening to and discussing different opinions and ideas. I make decisions and manage the results responsibly.

Thanks to the support of the Swedish EPA, at least 50% of my working time will be devoted to EUROPARC."

Thank you, Thomas, and good luck!

Also...

.. the **Working Group on Protected Areas and Health** meets on September 22nd in Stift Bad Urach, room Johannes Kullen, 19.00-20.00. This is an *open meeting*, and anyone interested in this topic is warmly welcome!

On September 5th, the Section secretariat submitted a letter to express the unanimous support of the Nordic-Baltic Section members, for the **merger between EUROPARC and Eurosite**. The decision whether to go ahead with this process or not, will be taken at the General Assembly, when all members are asked to cast your vote.



Whether or not you were among the lucky ones who attended the joint EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section and Parks&Benefits excursion to Ķemeri National Park in March, you will surely enjoy Agnese Balandiņa's account from this enjoyable and invigorating event!

Following the Healing Bonanza of Ķemeri National Park



Human health is a topical issue these days, and the healing powers of nature known to our ancestors centuries ago, but somehow forgotten in a modern urbanized world, are more and more often remembered, spoken of and appreciated. In addition to the recreation possibilities offered by seashores, forests, virgin raised bogs and inspiring wildlife in Ķemeri National Park, Latvia, the area has also been blessed with sulphurous mineral waters and curative mud. Mineral water with strong healing qualities and the very specific smell of rotten eggs, has been forming deep underneath the nearby raised bogs for many centuries, erupting as a number of open springs in the surroundings of Ķemeri and securing production of the curative mud. These curative resources brought humans to this remote and inaccessible place centuries ago and protection of their formation processes is one of the main tasks of the Ķemeri National Park managing institution, the Nature Conservation Agency.

On March 24th, 2011, within the framework of the Nature Tourism Conference 2011 held in Riga, a thematic excursion to Ķemeri National Park was organized, for the first time concentrating on the nature and health aspect. With the peculiar name „Following the healing bonanza of Ķemeri National Park”, it gave participants the opportunity to follow closely the formation and use of the unique curative resources and gave an insight into the healing powers of other nature values.

After some wading in the snow to the remote place in the raised bog where sulphurous water is formed deep beneath the surface, participants were taken to the historical resort Ķemeri and, afterwards, to facilities where sulphurous mineral water is still used for doing miracles to peoples' health. A cup of coffee in the perfectly kept, authentic Soviet interior of the sanatorium „Jantarnij Bereg” gave insight into another page of the resort history, whilst in the resort and rehabilitation centre „Jaunķemeri” participants finally had the chance to try the healing resources on their own skin. Sulphurous water and curative mud combined with other modern treatment methods are used in both medical institutions for curing wide range of diseases, e.g., gastroenerologi-

cal, skin and orthopaedic disorders, etc.

After getting to know those peculiarities that probably most strongly contribute to the unique appearance of Ķemeri National Park, the healing bonanza took everybo-



dy further to experience the curative powers of another important nature value - the local forests. A short Nordic walking exercise was organized by the recreation centre „Valguma Pasaule”, providing a healthy chance to stretch our legs after a nourishing lunch at the same place. This excursion laid the basis for further development of meeting the growing demand for health related activities. It also proved the fact that working with stakehol-

ders (one of the main principles of the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism that the Ķemeri National Park is trying to join within the "Parks & Benefits" project) is the best way to display the territory at its best and fullest.

Written by

Agnese Balandiņa

Nature Conservation Agency, Latvia

Related

Parks&Benefits project for sustainable tourism in protected areas in the Baltic Sea Region <http://www.parksand-benefits.net/>

European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas <http://www.european-charter.org/home/>

Sulphurous mineral waters and curative mud

The town Ķemeri lies in the very heart of the National Park and is home to the Park Administration. First mentioned in 1561, and thanks to its healing resources, Ķemeri gradually developed into a well-known, flourishing resort, officially recognized in 1838. It is embellished by exquisite buildings used for healing procedures, housing and entertainment, and perfected by a wonderful landscape park with many kilometres of picturesque paths and romantic bridges over the small river Vēršupīte.

Ķemeri has been a place in the spotlight both before and during the Soviet Era. Widely known for its sparkling night life and exclusive pastimes, it was honoured by regular appearances by „the cream of society”. Some of the glamour can still be felt today and healing treatments, although on a much smaller scale, are still available.

MISCELLANEOUS

Spaces available for fall seminar

“Labour of Love – Volunteering for Parks” takes place on October 5-7 in Tikkurila (near Vantaa airport, Helsinki, Finland), and there are still a few spaces available.

Learn more about practical volunteering working models and exchange experiences of why, how, where and when to encourage volunteers in protected area management. Speakers and participants come from the Nordic and Baltic countries, plus the UK, Italy and Russia.

September 16th is the very last day to register. Please find the invitation here <http://www.europarc-nb.org/seminars-and-events>

Executive leadership seminar in the USA

The third National Parks Institute Executive Leadership Seminar is a 12-day intensive seminar on leadership, innovation, and organizational renewal. It takes place in April 2012.

If you work in the field of protected area management and wish to lead strategic change by anticipating change, reinvigorating your organisation, and incorporating innovative thinking into their management you can apply for a place until **7th October 2011**. Scholarships are available if you cannot afford the fee.

More information <http://parkleadership.ucmerced.edu/>

Upcoming events

- 21-25 Sept** **EUROPARC Conference 2011. EUROPARC Federation Members Assembly. Swabian Alb Biosphere Reserve, DE.** <http://www.europarc2011.com/>
- 5-7 Oct** **EUROPARC Nordic-Baltic Section seminar: “Labour of Love – Volunteering for Parks”. Tikkurila (Vantaa), FI.** <http://www.europarc-nb.org/seminars-and-events/>
- 19 -21 Oct** STEPPA 4th Network Meeting and Sustainable Tourism Conference 2011. Savonlinna, FI. <http://www.uef.fi/mot/stc>
- 2012**
- 21-24 Aug** 6th International Conference on Monitoring and Management of Visitors in Recreational and Protected Areas, MMV2012. Stockholm, Sweden. <http://www.mmv2012.se/>

This is a selection of upcoming events. Find more events in our calendar: <http://www.europarc-nb.org/calendar>

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