The WWF Cork Oak Landscapes Programme - a future for cork land: protect, manage and restore cork oak forest landscapes in the South West Mediterranean.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEDITERRANEAN EXCHANGE

Welcome to the second issue of the WWF Cork Land newsletter. We invite all those interested in issues related to cork oak forests in the Mediterranean to take this opportunity to make use of, share and contribute to the information in this bi-monthly publication.

One of the objectives of the Cork Oak Landscapes Programme is to promote networking and information exchange around the Mediterranean. The WWF Exchange Programme seeks to facilitate this information flow, to make good practices and current projects known to every organisation and institution working on similar issues. The development of a common strategy for Cork Oak Landscapes restoration, protection and management will be vital to ensuring the continuity of this habitat. The first exchange activity of the Programme took place last November. A group of management and technical staff of forestry directorates and NGOs from Morocco and Tunisia were guests in Portugal. There they visited several forest restoration pilot projects run by WWF Mediterranean and partner NGOs ADPM and Vicentina, the University of Lisboa and the Regional Forestry Commission of Monchique, all of them in southern Portugal. It was an important opportunity for the exchange of ideas and expertise in work on forest restoration.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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A joint project run by WWF Mediterranean and the Spanish Instituto para el Desarrollo (IPADE) has started in the Western Rif Mountains and Oued Lao watershed (Morocco) and in the Kroumerie-Mogod area (Tunisia) to promote and encourage the sustainable use of natural resources in forested areas. The project aims to build the capacity of local stakeholders in biodiversity hotspots in north-west Africa on forest conservation, management, and restoration. Activities will include pilot initiatives linked to forest restoration and management, with a special focus on non-timber forest products such as cork, pine nuts, aromatic plants, and honey, and the initiation of income-generating initiatives that are managed by, and benefit grassroots communities, and are linked to the sustainable use of natural resources. While setting up these initiatives, the project aims to build up the capacity of local stakeholders in order to secure the success of the previous actions and also raise the awareness of local communities and contribute to their environmental education. Finally, lobbying and advocacy work targeting local and national decision-makers will help to establish strong partnerships with the authorities in charge of nature conservation and management.

The project is funded by AECI, the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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WWF’s project SurfIberia concentrates on the Southwest Iberian Peninsula (Portugal and Spain) and on two types of habitats: Cork and Holm Oak forests and freshwater ecosystems. The project has been developed to evaluate the impact that EU policies and funding schemes have on natural resources and to present proposals to change current policies in order to reconcile nature conservation and sustainable development in the medium and long term. During the first phase of the project in 2003 the main natural resources in the area were identified, their conservation status was appraised and the main threats were analysed. The second phase is now being developed in the field, with two pilot case studies for each country. In Portugal these focus on the Serra do Caldeirão (Almodóvar) and Barragem de Odelouca (Monchique), while in Spain on the Guadiana, Guadalquivir and Almonte rivers, and the Parque Natural Sierra Norte (Sevilla). As an outcome of these case studies, recommendations for the current and future policies affecting protected areas under the Natura 2000 network will be produced.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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PEOPLE IN THE CORK OAK LANDSCAPES PROGRAMME

PROFILE: LUIS NEVES SILVA, PORTUGUESE CORK PROGRAMME CO-ORDINATOR, WWF MEDITERRANEAN

WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND?
I’m a Forest Engineer who has always worked freelance for different organisations and projects in Portugal, linking conservation and forestry production. I started my professional career with research in cork oak forests management.

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE WWF CORK OAK LANDSCAPES PROGRAMME?
I was appointed one year ago by WWF Mediterranean to implement the Cork Oak Landscapes Programme in Portugal. My work is much related to Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) and the implementation of pilot projects on certain techniques. I also do advocacy work for the programme.

WITH WHOM DO YOU USUALLY WORK?
First of all with WWF’s partners in Portugal (regional and national NGOs). This year we have also started to work with the Portuguese administration at a regional and national level. We are now also working with big cork producing industries in Portugal and with some landowners.

WHAT PROBLEMS DO YOU WORK ON?
Last year I worked on two pilot projects on FLR techniques in southern Portugal: in Monte do Vento (Mértola), and in Herdade da Ribera Abaixo (Grândola). This year I’m working on the implementation of a new pilot project in Monchique on restoration of burned areas with the Regional Reforestation Commission. I’m also working on the presentation of these pilot projects to forest technicians and managers in other cork producing countries. Finally, I’m working on the introduction of FSC certification standards in Portugal.

WHAT WOULD YOU HIGHLIGHT IN THE CORK OAK LANDSCAPES PROGRAMME?
The best point of this Programme is that it covers all the distribution areas of cork oak landscapes in Mediterranean cork producing countries. This implies the potential to influence management and planning practices, share best practices and experiences and promote coordination between all cork-producing countries.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
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RESOURCES

**Cork Information Bureau**
Website run by APCOR (Portuguese Cork Association) and full of interesting data on the Cork Industry including press releases and publications.
http://www.corkmasters.com

**Valuing Mediterranean forests: Towards Total Economic Value**
April 2005. Edited by M. Merlo & L. Croitoru, University of Padua, Italy. A comprehensive analysis of the economic value of Mediterranean forests, including the more obvious benefits (e.g. timber), and the less commonly-measured public goods (e.g. tourism and conservation).

**International Congress: cork plantations, factories and traders; the past, present and future of the cork business.**
Organised by AECORK, Institut Català del Suro and Museu del Suro, held 16-18 February 2005, Palafrugell, Girona (Spain). This international congress focussed on cork oak landscape management practices, conservation of cork oak landscapes, economic analysis, cork quality issues and the wine sector and history of the cork sector, recent trends and future possibilities.
For more information: Ariadna Ros +34 972 300 227

EVENTS

**Cork Policy and Advocacy Workshop Iberia.**
Organised by WWF Mediterranean, to train the Portuguese and Spain teams involved in the Sur Iberia project, organized with the collaboration of the WWF European Policy Office through its CAP Initiative and LPN (WWF partner NGO based in Lisbon).
22 - 24 March 2005, Lisbon (Portugal)

**SuberWood 2005: New challenges for integration of cork oak forests and products.**
Scientific and Technical Conference organised by Universidad de Huelva and Centro de Estudos Florestais (Universidade Técnica de Lisboa).
20 - 22 October 2005, Huelva (Spain)