



PROTECTING HIGH CONSERVATION VALUE FORESTS IN THE CARPATHIAN REGION



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High Conservation Values (HCV) are biological, ecological, social or cultural values which are considered outstanding or critically important at the national, regional or global level, according to the High Conservation Value Resource Network.

Forests are home to important ecological values - economic and social, but some forests have certain values, which are considered to be of outstanding or critical significance. They need to be managed in such a way, so as to preserve their incredibly high conservation value, as well as the right to be defined as High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF).

High Conservation Value Forests have one or more of the following attributes:

- Contain significant concentrations of global, regional or national biodiversity values (e.g. endemism, endangered species).
- Provide basic services of nature in critical situations (e.g. watershed protection, erosion control).
- Contain large landscape level forests of global, regional or national significance, where viable populations of most if not all naturally occurring species exist in their natural state.
- Fundamental to meeting basic needs of local communities (e.g. subsistence, health).
- Contain rare, threatened or endangered ecosystems.
- Critical to local communities' traditional cultural identity (areas of cultural, ecological, economic or religious significance identified in cooperation with local communities).

Source: Forest Stewardship Council, www.fsc.org



CLOSE TO 500

**VASCULAR PLANTS
IN THE CARPATHIANS
ARE ENDEMIC**



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HCVs and FSC forest management certification

In an effort to curb the unsustainable exploitation of forests, certification systems in the forest management sector have emerged worldwide. Through these systems, which require compliance with certain principles, we aim to verify the origin of raw materials used in the timber industry. In this way we "certify" that the raw materials come from forests where the principles of responsible forest management are applied.

The HCVF concept was defined for the first time by Principle 9 of the Forest Stewardship Council standard (FSC), a certification system which WWF helped set up. According to the FSC standard, preserving High Conservation Values is a basic requirement in order to obtain FSC certification.

As of September 2014, almost 183 million ha of forest worldwide are certified to FSC standards, distributed in 80 countries. This represents the equivalent of more than 7 percent of the world's productive and semi-productive forests.

WWF's work to protect High Conservation Value Forests in the region

The Carpathian Mountains host Europe's largest area of old-growth forests as well as the largest remaining natural mountain beech and beech-fir forests ecosystems. One-third of all European vascular plants (3,988 plant species) can be found in this region, a remarkable 481 of which are endemic. The unique diversity of habitats of the Carpathians makes them a haven for globally threatened species such as the European bison and the Imperial eagle. The Carpathians are the last region in Europe to support viable populations of large carnivores. An estimated 8,000 brown bears, 4,000 wolves and 3,000 lynx can still be found here.

However, current legislation does not always safeguard High Conservation Value Forests in the Carpathian Mountains. Thus, WWF's strategic objective is to support preserving and improving the High Conservation Values of the region. To achieve this objective, since 2013 the WWF Danube-Carpathian team has:

- Coordinated the development of national guidelines in Romania, Bulgarian and Ukraine for identifying and managing High Conservation Value Forests. Practical guidelines are recognized by key stakeholders, with forest administrators in the region already implementing them.
- Performed field evaluation and contributed to proper management of more than 300,000 ha of High Conservation Value Forests.
- Supported state and community forests during the process of certification as a way of promoting the principles of responsible forest management. Currently more than 2,5 million ha of forests have been FSC certified.
- Offered awareness raising activities in the form of trainings, seminars and the creation of information materials.

WWF's current focus is the development of a legal framework not only at the national, but also at regional and European level that will enable the protection and maintenance of high conservation values.

Our goal in forest certification is not to remove the man from the forest or to create sanctuaries of nature where peoples are not present, but to provide "environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial and economically viable" model for forest management .



183 MILLION

**HECTARES
OF FOREST
WORLDWIDE ARE
CERTIFIED
TO FSC STANDARD**



Why we are here.

To stop the degradation of the planet's natural environment and to build a future in which humans live in harmony with nature.

www.panda.org/dcpo