



2019

Annual Report

PROPARK FOUNDATION FOR PROTECTED AREAS

Overview of the year

Our small, but very dedicated team was involved in many and various activities in 2019, despite the difficult times for protected areas and for all those who, until August 2018 were protected area managers.

Besides continuing the ongoing projects and organizing the Propark branded annual activities, like the Propark Adventure Race, the Protected Area Week and the annual protected area Gala, we decided to have more of our time dedicated to long term, practical conservation projects. Hence our commitment for active involvement in the conservation of the still existing wilderness areas in the Făgăraș Mountains and to start a truly participatory process, with active community engagement in informed debates about the establishment of a large national park in this area.

This year proved to be very challenging for capacity building activities: with no custodianship for protected area management as a result of the changes in the protected area governance system, imposed by the National Agency for National Protected areas, very few projects were still active and providing opportunities for training events.

We like to believe that we are capable to draw valuable lessons from the challenges faced in 2019 and to find new opportunities for the future of Propark.

Tiberiu Chirichș
Executive Director





OUR STRATEGIC THEMES:

1.Capacity Building

Capacity Building Department

2019 was a very challenging year for pursuing our core mission, capacity building. Resources available for capacity building were very scarce, mainly because of the major changes imposed by the new National Agency for Natural Protected Areas. Many project activities in protected areas were put on hold or cancelled, including planned training events. Still, our trainers were continuing to transfer knowledge and develop skills related to protected area management and communication, community outreach, ecological networks, forest and agricultural land management, ecological footprint.

Results

- 1 Master University Program
- 3 Online courses
- 5 Different contracts
- 9 Face to face trainings
- 7 Themes
- 15 Trainers
- 153 Participants





LIFEedu

As part of this LIFE Preparatory project we have developed an online Training Needs Assessment Tool for Natura 2000 managers across Europe. Faithful to our mission, we are promoting through the tool a list of competences needed in the management of these biodiversity rich sites and we are encouraging them to learn about knowledge and skills they need to improve their job related performances.

Results:

- 1 report: Identification and assessment of competencies for management of Natura 2000
- 1 Training Needs Assessment platform

FINANCED BY:

- LIFE financial instrument of the European Community

LEAD BENEFICIARY:

- Europarc Federation

PARTNERS:

- Fungobe, TESAF, ELO, Kullaberg Nature Reserve

Rediscover Romania

15-16 May 2019

Rediscover Romania Gala 2019 was the new brand under which we organized the 5th edition of the protected area gala, the only national event dedicated to protected area managers and nature conservationists in Romania. For the first time, representatives of the business sector were participating and learning about the rich and challenging work of people working nature conservation. The main aim of the gathering was to bring together these two sectors and to discuss about practical solutions for conservation in Romania. We launched at this event the Mentoring Programme for Nature, giving the start for joint work of the first six trainees and five mentors.

Results:

- 5 workshops
- 150 participants
- 5 mentoring programs

FINANCED BY:

- Temperatio

PARTNERS:

- Foundation Conservation Carpathia





OUR STRATEGIC THEMES:

2. Model approaches for efficient PAs

Wilderness reserve in the Făgăraș Mountains

2019-2023

Through this project, initiated by FCC, we aim to actively engage local communities in the process of creating a world-class wilderness reserve in the Southern Carpathians, large enough to allow natural processes to take place, to benefit biodiversity and local communities, and to serve as a model for a future National Park movement in Romania. We started with a rough stakeholder analysis carried out for the South-Eastern part of the Făgăraș Mountain range. This is but the first step in our long term commitment to contribute to the conservation of the still large tracks of wilderness areas in this region.



Results:

- 1 Stakeholder Analysis focused on the S-E Fagaras Mountains
- 3 meetings organized with stakeholders from 3 counties
- 1 National Event called Fagaras Fest, organized in September with over 1000 participants
- 3 Environmental education programs developed for the schools surrounding the Fagaras Mountains

FINANCED BY:

- Managed by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and funded by Arcadia

LEAD BENEFICIARY

- Foundation Conservation Carpathia

PARTNERS

- Conservation Capital, Memorial University of Newfoundland



Together with our partners from the Milvus Group Association we provide technical expertise and we facilitate the participatory process for the development of four new Natura 2000 site management plans, for sites situated along the upper course of the Mureş River, in Transylvania: ROSCI 0210, ROSCI 0367, ROSCI 0368, ROSCI 369.

FINANCED BY:

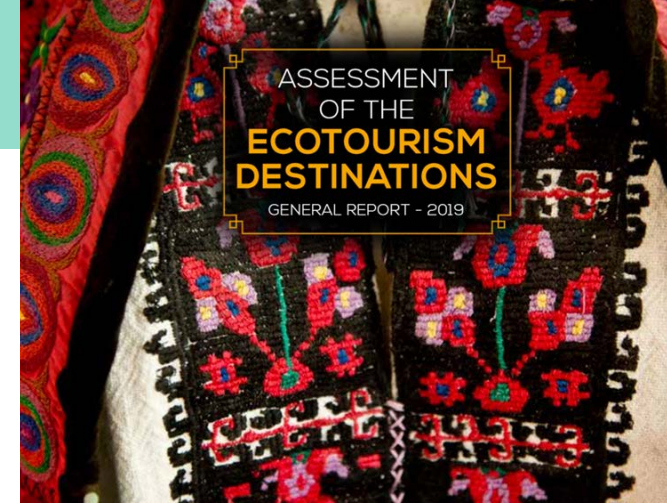
- Ministry of European Funds - Large Infrastructure Operational Program

LEAD BENEFICIARY:

- Milvus Group Association

Assessment of the Ecotourism Destinations

2018-2019



The assesment documented by the ProPark team presents the current state of development and management of seven Ecotourism Destinations: Bison Land (Ținutul Zimbrului), Pădurea Craiului, Eco Maramureș, Băile Tușnad and the surroundings, Țara Hațegului Retezat, Țara Dornelor and the Transylvanian Highlands (Colinele Transilvaniei). Hopefully our assessment report will contribute to the design of future grants and projects for developing the contribution of the tourism sector to nature conservation.

Results

- 6 analysis tools were developed in order to collect and analyse data
- 7 individual reports on the ecotourism destinations were drafted
- 1 analysis of the Association of Ecotourism in Romania as moderator and coordinator of the network of destinations

FINANCED BY:

- Romanian American Foundation and Environmenal Partnership Foundation





The Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro commissioned us to prepare management guidelines for the management of the future Natura 2000 sites. During two intense work-periods in Montenegro, after learning about the protected area system and interacting with various stakeholders, we prepared guidelines with a very practical approach to site management, building on our experience in Natura 2000 management planning and protected area management.

Results:

- Management Guidelines Natura 2000 Montenegro

FINANCED BY:

- The Delegation of the European Union to Montenegro



The background of the slide is a soft-focus photograph of a calm lake reflecting the surrounding landscape. In the distance, there are rolling hills and mountains under a hazy, overcast sky. The overall color palette is muted, with earthy tones of brown, grey, and blue.

OUR STRATEGIC THEMES:

3. Education and awareness raising

The aim of the project was to develop innovative and transferable educational materials regarding the conservation, awareness and acceptance of large carnivores in Europe. These materials were tested through educational projects about achieving compatibility between wildlife and human activities. The group of young people, playing roles as future decision makers, had the opportunity to meet and discuss with foresters, farmers, hunters, biologists, to learn about their work and about their actions that are influencing the habitats and the populations of large carnivores.

Results:

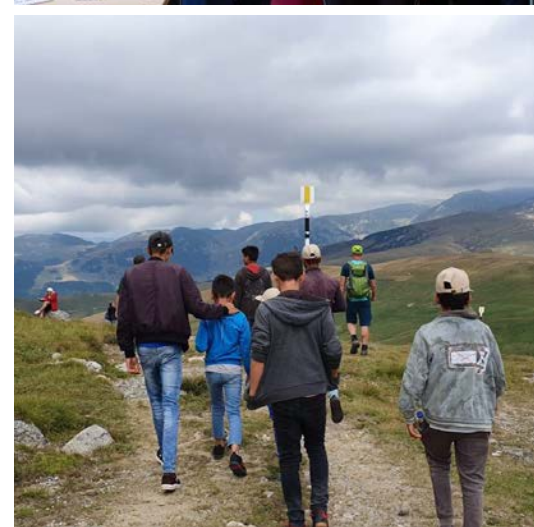
- 20 school lessons
- 10 field excursions with the 2 Wildlife clubs
- 1 networking experience for the Romanian wildlife clubs with the German wildlife clubs
- 2 Wildlife clubs with 30 children
- 1 Fundraising campaign for the Bear Orphanage cause in Romania (500 euro raised up by the children for the cause)

FINANCED BY:

- SCHUBZ Umweltbildungszentrum e.V.

PARTNERS:

- Mioritics Association, SCHUBZ Germany, Babes Bolyai University, Zarand Association, ACDB, Romanian Wildlife Society, Piatra Craiului National Park



2019-2020



We have now the chance to contribute to a new nature education initiative, the establishment of the Richita Educational Centre, a model environmental learning resource for children, teachers and researchers in Romania planned and built by FCC. Our role is to develop the programme for this centre, hence in 2019 we started the strategic plan, aiming for a programme that will foster understanding and love for the natural world and will help maintain a sense of pride and understanding amongst the members of local communities regarding the values that they still poses in their region.

Results

- 1 Draft strategy of educational programs developed for the Center

FINANCED BY:

- Foundation Conservation Carpathia



People for Nature

May-October 2019

New episodes were added to the existing five from the series of short movies initiated and promoted by Propark, featuring dedicated nature conservationists and their work for protected areas and biodiversity conservation. The overall aim of the project is to raise awareness on the importance of the dedicated work of people with various backgrounds and jobs for nature conservation and to promote protected areas through the annual Propark event "The Protected Area Week".

Results:

- 1 Protected Areas Week (15 counties, 25 partners, 65 activities, 4000 participants)
- 3 "People for Nature" episodes
- 1 Blog about the people that are working in nature conservation

FINANCED BY:

- Environmenal Partnership Foundation, MOL Romania

PARTNERS:

- Centre for Bat Research and Conservation,
Mehedinți Plateau Geopark, The Transylvanian Carpathian Society



Wild Kingdome education initiative

2019 – onwards



The Wild Kingdom initiative of the TENT is present since 2013 in Romania with two mobile education units, i.e. two double decker buses, serving as moving "education rooms" for school children of rural Romania, teaching them about the importance of protecting the last untouched forests of Europe. In September 2019 the double-deckers and the programme brand was donated to Propark. We started to develop a plan for a mobile educational centre and the associated nature education programme and started to transform the still functional double decker for the programme.

Results:

- 1 mobile educational unit (double decker bus) transferred to the ProPark team

FINANCED BY:

- The European Nature Trust



Propark Adventure

13-15 September 2019

This year participants to the 5th edition of the Propark Adventure Race were invited to the Făgăraș Mountains. They had the chance not only to compete in this very challenging race through vast areas of still wild landscapes, but also to offer to friends and families who accompanied them, the possibility to participate at the events of the Făgăraș Fest Festival, organized by us. The combination of these two great events allowed participants and volunteers from all over the country, as well as locals from nearby communities to enjoy and learn about the natural and cultural values of the Făgăraș Mountains.

Results:

- 64 participants
- 25 volunteers
- 30 supporters
- 250 km of adventure
- Thousands of friends fascinated by the brave stories participating

FINANCED BY:

- Endangered Landscapes Programme

PARTNERS:

- Club for Nature Protection and Turism Brașov,
Foundation Conservation Carpathia





2019 – onwards

Wild Romania

Wild Romania is the largest photography and documentary film project dedicated to nature in our country. Through these two vectors we would like to have natural values so highly valued by our partners NTD Films and us, to be recognized by those who live in Romania as an essential part of our identity and as an opportunity for sustainable development.

PARTNERS:

- NTD Films made of: Photolife, Filmexplorer Network





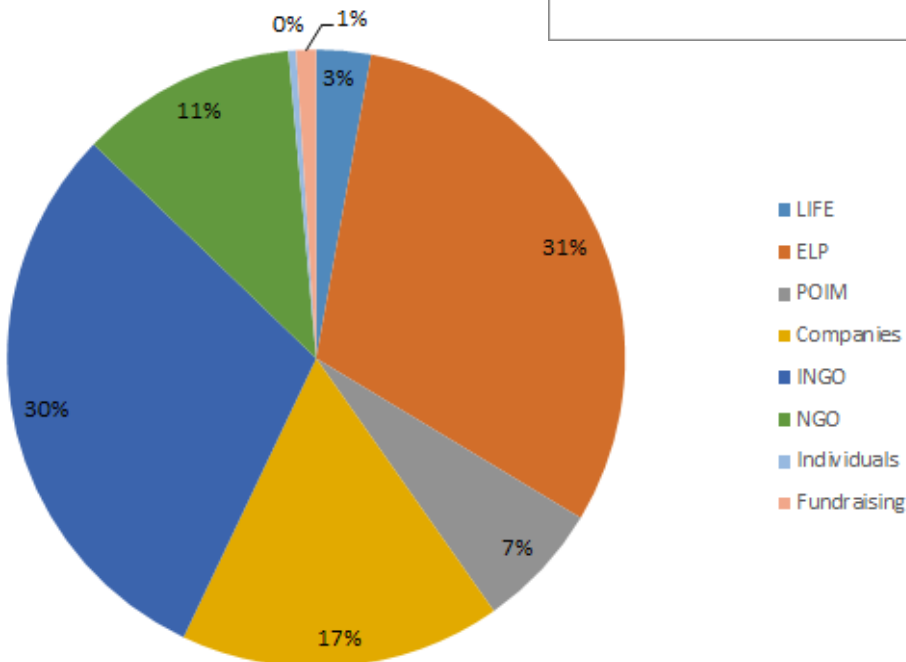
OUR STRATEGIC THEMES:

4. Organizational development and management

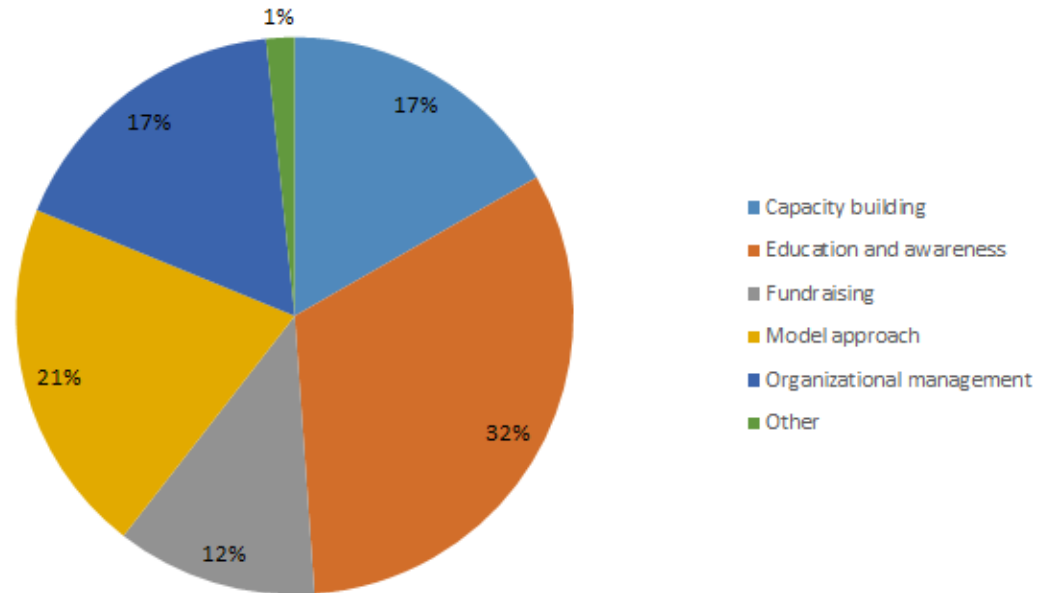
Human resources

Our team has now 6 members and in 2019 we worked closely with 15 external trainers. Our work was also supported by 35 volunteers.

Funding sources



Expenses on strategic themes



Financial resources

Propark and networks

EUROPARC FEDERATION

The annual Conference, "Nature on your mind", organized in Latvia, was a good opportunity for networking and for learning about the Latvian nature conservation initiatives.

NGO COALITION NATURA 2000

This year was a very challenging one, special efforts are needed to keep the Coalition active in the future. We continued to promote the Vision for the Protected Area Network, developed with our partners from the Coalition.

TIMBER AND NGO GROUP FOR CONSERVATION

Active participants to the discussions of this informal platform, in 2019 we were the organizers of a session about the National Forest Inventory.

A VISION FOR THE FORESTRY SECTOR

We were part, through our forestry specialists, of the group that contributed to the "Vision and principles for the development of the Romanian forest policy 2020-2030" developed by a group of Romanian forestry experts.

Our Team



TIBERIU CHIRICHEȘ

Executive director



LAURA FLORESCU

Financial Director



ERIKA STANCIU

Protected Area
Specialist



ANDRA CROITORU

Education department
Coordinator



MARA BULEA

Capacity Building
Coordinator



MIHAELA TOMA

Human Resources
Expert



**ROXANA
IORDĂCHESCU**

Project Manager

Our Board Members



PAUL HOTHAM

President



ROGER DE FREITAS

Board Member



TOBIAS GARSTECKI

Board Member



BOGDAN MICU

Board Member



CĂTĂLIN
GHEORGHE

Board Member

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