

#### **DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT**

Propark had a very strange, but also a very interesting year. I think that this is a statement that is being made or might be made by most, if not all the NGOs around the world.

What were the "specifics" of our experiences, how did we perceive and adapt to the limitations imposed by the pandemic?

Well, in most of our activities we tried stubbornly to do things as we know best, observing only the adaptations that were absolutely necessary. We postponed all of our training events during the spring lock-down, and performed them face to face during the summer and autumn months.

We have learned how tiring is to work day by day in "home-office" for long weeks. Yes, we met almost daily by zoom, but we now are even more convinced that being together, sharing an office space is very valuable and important.

We had the chance again to be involved in international work, developing a register for global competences and a transboundary biodiversity action plan.

It was not our best year in attracting financial support from grants, but we are happy to say that our expertise was considered valuable by several organizations who invited us to partner for the implementation of 2 new projects. In terms of approaches to delivering capacity building events, perhaps this is the year when we made most progress to adapt the content and activities of our capacity building events to the needs of the beneficiaries. And this was a year of opening windows for a new target group, one that we really want to work with in the future: employees of the National Agency for Natural Protected Areas.



#### **CAPACITY BUILDING DEPARTMENT**

We postponed all of our training events during the spring lock-down, and performed them face to face during the summer and autumn months, sometimes outside, in the open or in large ball-room-like places.

New "participants" to our events brought in some hardship, but also fun: the wind tried to stimulate us by blowing away cards and papers, birds or, sometimes, annoying machinery were testing our capacity to speak up and to concentrate. But even so, we did manage to capture attention and to provide interactive, fun training event – many, for a lot of people.



**Protected** area specialist GIS Ranger **Biodiversity Biodiversity TRAINING** monitoring management **THEMES** Climate **Ecoturism** change Citizen Sience Institutional Landscape organization Management

#### LIFEedu

This year we developed a new training event for biologist and early graduates who have perspectives for being engaged in practical conservation work in the field. The training included a theoretical online session and a face to face one including inspiring field work.

#### Results:

1 online moodle, 8 sections, 24 hours3 days face to face training24 participants

Financer: LIFE financial instrument of the European Community

Lead beneficiary: EUROPARC Federation











## CREATION OF A WILDERNESS RESERVE IN TJE SOUTHERN CARPATHIAN MOUNTAINS

Through this project, initiated by <u>FCC</u>, 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 for the entire area associated with the Făgăraș mountain wilderness
- 473 children participated at the school educational program
- 5 educational programs, including filed trips and wilderness camps developed
- 8 school teams selected for excursions and camps
- 1 Expert Platform with 13 members initiated and 1 meeting organized
- 1 study trip in the project area with 25 experts in nature conservation Some activities, including 2nd Făgăraș Fest edition and a study tour programmed for Bavarian Forest National Park in Germany for local decision makers postponed for 2021.

Financers: Managed by the Cambridge Conservation Initiative and funded by Arcadia

**Lead beneficiary**: Foundation Conservation Carpathia



# NATURE CONSERVATION IN EUROPE - APPROACHES AND LESSONS -

Propark: co-author and coordinator of the Romanian Country Chapter.

The Cambridge University Press will publish a book aiming to describe, quantify and critically analyse nature conservation approaches and practical actions taken and to provide a comparative assessment of 28 EU countries, as well as Norway and Switzerland.

The Romanian chapter, developed mostly in 2020 (150 hours of work), is being now reviewed. It looks into the history of biodiversity conservation in the last 40 years of so. The work was done in cooperation with colleagues from universities and NGOs, involving people from the Ministry (informally).

# SMART COMPETENCE REGISTER

The SMART Partnership commissioned us to develop a comprehensive set of global competences for the use and application of the SMART (Spatial Monitoring and Reporting Tool) system.

We participated in a series of rapid trainings to get familiarized with SMART. Interviewed 22 people from 15 countries from 5 continents.

Developed the first draft and organized 2 online working sessions with SMART users to discuss the proposed list of competences.

Expected to finalize the register by early January.





# JOINT ACTION PLAN FOR THE PROTECTED AREAS ALONG THE ROMANIAN AND HUNGARIAN COURSE OF TUR RIVER

Hortobágy National Park Directorate (Hungary) commissioned the development of a biodiversity action plan to guide future cooperation for the management of PAs along the Tur River on the Romanian – Hungarian Boarder.

A workshop with biologists from both sides of the border was facilitated.

Eighteen biodiversity inventory reports were analysed and an action plan proposal for a Transboundary Protected Area was developed.



#### **NEW MANAGEMENT PLANS**

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.

**Financer**: Ministry of European Funds - Large Infrastructure Operational Program

Lead beneficiary: Milvus Group Association





### PRISTINE FORESTS FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

The aim of the project is to increase the level of awareness of children and young people with regards to biodiversity conservation and pristine forests through an environmental education program that aims to prepares responsible adults, supporting nature protection within the Carpathian region of Romania.

ProPark will develop an educational program for schoolchildren and a thematic trail in the Sinca Pristine Forest, part of the UNESCO World Heritage. The programs will be implemented both in schools and on the field. We are going to build capacity of the forest administrators to implement the educational programs using the thematic trail.

#### **Results:**

- 1 concept for the thematic trail
- 1 concept for the school educational programme Partners: <u>Piatra Craiului National Park</u>, Padurile Sincii Forest District

Financers: NABU and VGA Foundation



#### THE WILD KINGDOME

The Wild Kingdom initiative of the TNC is present since 2013 in Romania, 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 developed a plan for a mobile educational centre and started to transform the still functional double decker for the programme.

#### Results:

- Maintenance and renovations of the buss, needed to provide better conditions of the educational programs
- Used the bus in Arges County and tested the concept in 4 school classes
- Wrote a project proposal for the educational equipment needed for the buss

Financer: TENT

#### RICHITA ENVIRONMENT FIELD EDUCATIONAL CENTRE

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 to develop 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 Strategy of educational programs developed for the Centre

Financer: Foundation Conservation Carpathia





#### PROTECTED AREAS WEEK

This year the <u>Protected Areas Week</u> was different: no exhibitions, no guided trips or lessons in schools. We followed the pandemic rules and we proposed an online event: people had the possibility to visit protected areas guided by conservation experts. But with no interaction. The proposed routes with all the information offered by the experts were available on the website and people could visit them alone or with friends or family.

#### Results:

1 Protected Areas Week online

17 routes in 9 counties

Our strategic themes:

# 4. Organizational development and management

#### **ECO GREEN SPACES**

The Eco Greenspaces Ltd was established in 2019, with support from a Start-Up program. All Start-Up project activities were successfully implemented in 2020 and a final rapport was submitted in July.

This company is meant to be a fundraising tool for the Foundation, promoting nature-friendly approach in the establishment and management of urban greenspaces. If successful, it should bring a significant core funding contribution, helping its small team to fulfil the mission of the organization.

The COVID19 pandemic affected significantly the very young ltd: the turnover was well below the expectations for the 2020 spring and autumn season and prospects for the 2021 spring are not looking better.

Financers: POCU, ADA





#### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

3

project proposals were developed and submitted for accessing funds from <u>Active Citizens Fund Romania</u>:

Act and Motivate for Nature Protection (249.997 Euro) - Reserve list Activating future leaders for Nature protection (238.771 Euro) - Reserve list NGO for Nature - A New Generation of Organizations for Nature (249.896 Euro) - In evaluation

project proposal was developed and submitted for accessing funds from Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union:

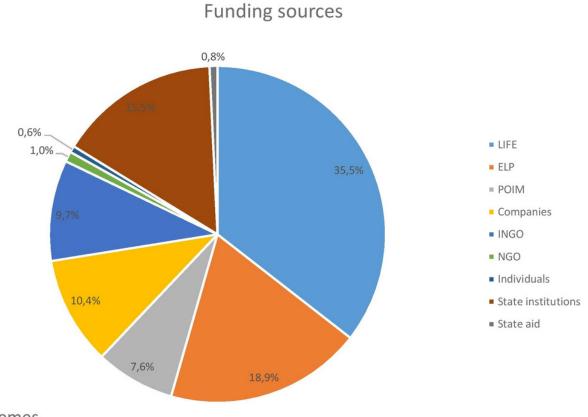
Pristine forests for future generations (30.000 Euro) - Accepted

We are partners in

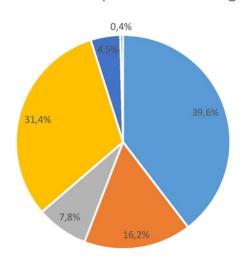


projects: LIFE Carpathian Mink (267.603 Euro) and Environmental activism for REAL natural protected areas (44.448 Euro)

#### FUNDING SOURCES



#### Expenses on strategic themes



- Capacity buildingEducation and awarenessFundraisingModel approach
- Organizational management
- Other

# **EXPENSES ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

#### **OUR TEAM**



Tiberiu Chiricheș
Executive director



Erika Stanciu Protected Area Specialist



Laura Florescu
Financial director



Andra Croitoru

Education Department

Coordinator



Mara Bulea
Capacity Building
Coordinator



Roxana Iordăchescu

Project Manager

#### **OUR BOARD MEMBERS**



Paul Hotham

President



**Tobias Garstecki** 

Board member



Roger de Freitas

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