



AN OAK TREE FOR EVERY PUPIL

Around 500 pupils from ten schools in Sighisoara and Saes, with their teachers and families, took part in the “Oak Tree for Every Pupil” campaign, each student planting at least one young oak tree in the Breite reserve. Under Tibi Hartel's coordination, the five days of planting were a success due to the efforts of the MET's local team and the Sighisoara forestry office. The campaign, which received wide local and regional publicity, was supported by a grant from EEA, the Foundation for Partnership, MOL Romania and the French hotel chain Accor under "Plant for the Planet".

CELEBRATION

The Day of the Breite Reserve was celebrated for the first time this year. The event, on 5 June, captured the public's attention and involved more than 140 local participants – especially school children and their teachers, from eight schools in Sighisoara as well as schools from another ten counties in Romania. Supported by the “Green Spaces” programme of the Foundation for Partnership and MOL Romania, activities included workshops focused on developing an ethical attitude towards the environment: species inventories and biodiversity-related discussions, „junior ranger” and practical conservation tasks, such as protecting young oak trees from grazing animals, and artistic workshops. Each pupil and school received a participation diploma.

MANAGEMENT

In May we launched a two-year project for the implementation of the Breite Management Plan, supported by a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Financial Mechanism, and with co-funding from the Sighisoara Local Council and MET own funds.



Hornbeam encroachment: 2006 vs 2009

Controlling the hornbeam “invasion” was one of our key tasks in 2009. As seen in the pictures above, the hornbeam saplings completely surrounded one of the old oaks within three years. If left unchecked, the forest would eventually engulf the plateau and the ancient oak trees would die. That is why we have cleared 10 more hectares of hornbeam, in addition to the 15 hectares cleared in 2008. We also introduced controlled grazing, with around 70 sheep and goats, while next year we will introduce ten buffalo. To prevent damages to the young oak trees, we surrounded more than 1000 saplings with protective fences. The sheepfold is moved every three days to reduce pressure on the vegetation cover.





Another conservation measure was the experimental removal of fast spreading weeds such as *Rudbeckia*. To control these weeds, they need to be uprooted and burned several years in a row. Botanist Kinga Ollerer, together with four volunteer students, tackled the first clumps of *Rudbeckia* on the Breite plateau.



INFORMATION POINT

Five information panels have been added to our visitor centre on the Breite plateau, with details about the natural heritage of the reserve, the wood pasture habitat, the ancient oak trees, flora and vegetation and temporary wetlands. The panels were funded by NatuRegio – Trainees for Nature.



TRAINING

In March we held a training course for our Breite rangers and other interested locals. ProPark Foundation for Protected Areas provided specialised trainers and offered diplomas to 11 participants. The MET also welcomed Jonathan Plowe, an experienced forest ranger of the UK's Woodland Trust, who addressed key local forestry stakeholders.



PROTECTION

One of the largest oak trees was in danger of splitting in half because of the huge weight of its two main branches. With the help of a local blacksmith we created a solid metal bond and tied the two branches together. This way we hope to extend the life of this healthy, robust tree.



We built ten stone hearths close to the football pitch, for visitors who want to have a picnic on the Breite plateau. Previously, people lit fires directly on the ground, sometimes underneath the oak trees, which increased the risk of uncontrolled fires and damaged the grass. The new hearths were placed on the sites of old fires, where the vegetation was already destroyed.



THANK YOU

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