



Friends of the Black Forest National Park, Germany

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Join people to increase the acceptance of a national park

The Friends of the German Black Forest National Park Association was established to promote with the aim of acceptance of the national park. The park itself is among the youngest in Germany, opened according to the law in 1.1.2014. The park is one of 16 National Parks in Germany, located in Baden-Württemberg in the southwest of Germany.



Figure 1.

Black Forest National Park in Germany. It covers over 10 000 hectares, comprising of two separate areas.

- The northern part is some 2400 hectares and the southern part some 7600 hectares.
- The park lies between 470-1151 m above the sea level.
- The Park is owned by land Baden-Württemberg and city Baden-Baden.

The NLP-region is surrounded by business regions and –cities: Karlsruhe, Baden-Baden, Offenburg, Freudenstadt, Pforzheim. Direct distance to Stuttgart is less than 100 km .

The establishment of a national park faced a lot of resistance by local people and businesses. The main concerns were the loss of wood supply and free movement as well as political ones, which meant that a lot of actions and events were needed until the parliament decided to vote for the park.

The Friends networked together with other associations, such as NABU (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Union), BUND (Association for Environment and Nature Conservation Germany) and

Greenpeace. Together they worked to support the idea of a national park in the region. The Friends organised several discussions with experts, put together info booths as well as designed and distributed flyers.



Photo: Freundeskreis

Figure 2.

The lobby of opponents pushed bad emotions. Much people living near to the planned park organized resistance. The theses of the opponents were: You will not be able to go to the forest. No mushrooms and berries may be gathered. You will not get burning-wood anymore. If a tree will fall over the trail of cross-country skiing by storm, the trail will be lost forever. Wood dependent businesses like sawmills, carpenters, wood forwarding won't get a supply of trees anymore and loose their jobs.

One of the founders of the Friends association, Thomas Fritz, received The Gerhard Thielcke Conservation Award given for exceptional achievements in nature protection along with other participants committed in the national park. It has been a tremendous advantage to have engaged members with professional backgrounds, skills and networks.

An association of the citizens

The Baiersbronn-based Friends Association was established two years before the park. Currently it has close to a thousand members. It consists of regional sections with regional chairmen for ease of communication, networking and organising local activities.



Photo: Freundeskreis

Figure 3.

Friends of Black Forest Association was founded in 03.12.2011. Two years before the establishment of the park itself.

Current membership ca. 900
 Male: 542 (= 64 %)
 Female: 290 (= 34 %)
 Associations: 15 (= 2 %)

Board: 16 persons
 Executive : 4
 Cashier: 1
 Assessors: 11
 Number of sections 8
 with 578 members(= 68%)

An old hotel, owned by the village it is situated in, was given to the Friends rent-free. It took a lot of voluntary work to make it usable and it is now partly used by the national park. The Friends are negotiating with the park administration and a manufacturer of shower fittings to sponsor 500.000 euros for renovation and rebuilding. There is a plan to have a wilderness kitchen for the education of young people on sustainable life with and in the nature. The sponsor would get the premium partner mark from the park for its engagement for providing clean water resources.



Figure 4.

The Friends may use an old hotel for meetings venue and for information centre. A lot of volunteer work was necessary to take out the litter and to make it usable.

Now some rooms are used by Black Forest NP.

The better renovation of the old hotel is a working option of the Friends.

Photo: Freundeskreis

The Friends association would lead the courses for young people in co-operation with the park while earning some money and publicity. To manage upcoming projects and educating young people on sustainable life, the Friends are trying to get sponsors to cover the costs.

Activities of the Friends association

Supported by sponsors, the Friends donated an electric car for transportation of material in the park and to facilitate easier movement for disabled people.



Figure 5.

Supported by sponsors the Friends bought an E-Mobile and donated it in presence of the minister for agriculture and forest Bonde to the new park for material-transportation.

The car has the label of the Friends, so Friends are now visible around the park area every day.

Photo: Freundeskreis

The Friends publish a magazine, which is distributed to the households around the park and some other areas around twice a year. The topics covered by the magazine include reports about the work in the park, special topics on animals and events for children. Together with the association's webpage, there is a considerable media for the promotion of the concept.



Figure 6.

The Black Forest National Park magazine is a key tool delivering the positive information around the park region.

Photo: Freundeskreis

In October 2014, The Friends initiated an online shop for selling several items carrying the logo of the association to collect money and generate interest.

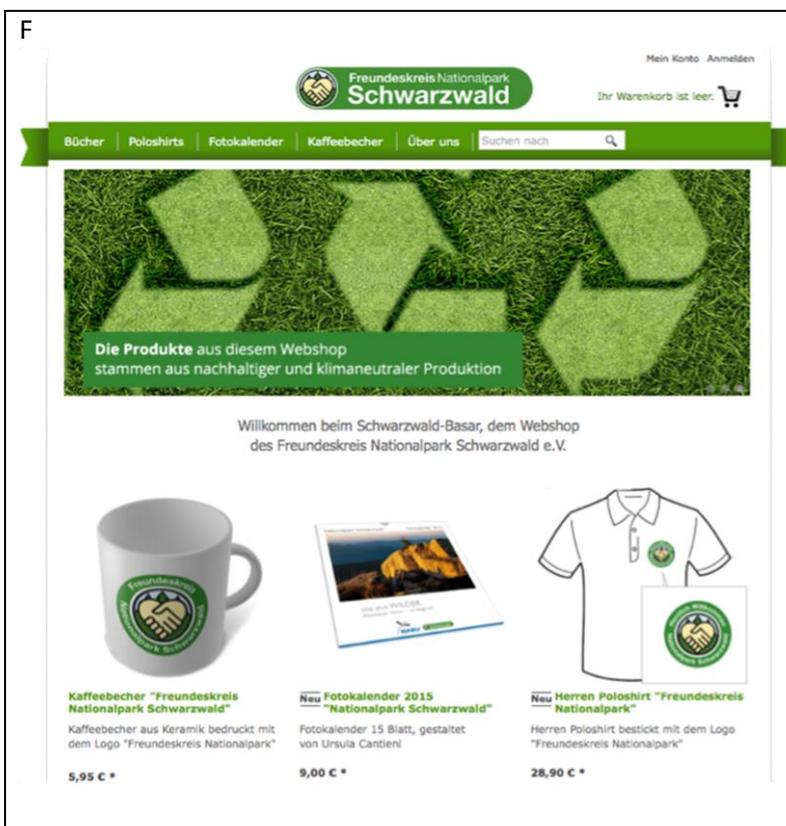


Figure 7.

In October 2014 we initiated a web-shop selling several things carrying our label like shirts, a photo-calendar etc. to collect some money and generate interest of people for our circle. Donation boxes are located at some places in the park-area. As part of the National Administration the park cannot take donations or income for the benefit of the park from the sale of goods in the Information Centre. That's why we can organise this social business and earn money for the purpose for supporting and assisting the park in delivering positive information and organising environmental education and campaigns for awareness rising.

There are donation boxes within the national park collecting money for the association as the park itself as part of national administration cannot accept or use for the benefit of the park any donations or income from the sale of goods in the information centre.

The association is setting out to reach other Friends on national parks in Europe and within Germany. For example, they've had visitors from Macedonia to learn about the Black Forest National Park, the associations work and sharing information about the situation in Macedonia. The Friends recognise that caring about regional and continent-wide networking is indispensable.

The Friends understand that the motivation and efforts of the members should be acknowledged and are therefore beginning to organise special events for them.



Figure 8.

The Friends organise events and walks together with the park workers. It is important when we try to increase the acceptance for nature and the park. Forest rangers or other experts lead and teach the groups.

Photo: Freundeskreis

Only constant in nature is the permanent changing

The main themes of the park are to learn and report on nature's own processes and the preservation of diversity. The protection objective in the mission statement of the national park is to leave 75 percent of the area to its natural processes by the 2044. The integration of Kaltenbronn region to the national park is an extension supported by the Friends.



Figure 9.

Tree-Top-Path Blackforest
Bad Wildbad „Kaltenbronn“-region.

Our plans for the nearby future:

- Individual resources and networks
- Concerted actions with other organisations
- Conservation/reconstruction of motivation
- Full-time run office by sponsoring
- Park extension "Kaltenbronn"
- European network activation

Photo: Erlebnisakademie GmbH

Within one monitoring day in autumn 2015 the park was visited by more than 8000 people. To increase the acceptance for the park, the Friends organise excursions and walks in the park. Park rangers and other experts lead and teach the groups interpreting biodiversity and the necessity of having protected areas. The association takes part in markets, fairs and other events by having an info desk and thus is trying to set positive impulses for the acceptance to the work of the park and to the extension on the protected areas.



Figure 10.
Every year we perform an info-desk at “momenTour “- a fair which promotes destinations for daytrips or short-time-holidays in Baden-Württemberg .
Photo: Freundeskreis

It has been of great benefit that the engaged members of our Friends circle had a lot of personally backgrounds, skills and networks which they made available for our task, and the board used this unprejudiced. For example: Nature-educators, accountant, speakers of nature conservation associations, biologist, experts of tourism, web-designer, actors, tv/radio presenter, mediator, etc. As well it was very supportive to cooperate with other associations, politicians, and businesses.

We try to use possibilities to promote the idea: For instance I myself lead tours on the treetop-path and tell the guests about biodiversity and the necessary of protected areas.

Tomorrow it will be most important to care about the motivation of members and members of board – we are starting with this by special events for members like cross-country skiing with overnight in a cottage in the park and storytelling about the coming wolves. May be we have to reset our own cultural preference (for a short time). We are going to invite people to an excursion with a well-known singer of folk-music to get the interest of visitor.

To manage the coming tasks and projects like to educate young people about sustainable life, we should succeed in winning sponsors for the costs. We want to keep in view the option to join the Kaltenbronn area to Blackforest NP– and we have to reckon again with the resistance of the opponents against protected areas.

It will be indispensable to care about regional and as well European networks. Therefor I am going to propose our circle, to organize a conference like this , may be in 2020!



See more:

<https://pro-nationalpark-schwarzwald.de/>
<http://www.schwarzwald-nationalpark.de/>