



European Wilderness Society Association
Dechant-Franz-Fuchs Strasse 5
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Speak up for wilderness

Enhance communication skills for wilderness advocates

Wilderness areas are unique places within the European protected areas where nature follows natural processes and human intervention is either non-existent or very limited. These areas should be large enough to allow the whole spectrum of natural processes to happen, however due to the largely cultural landscape that dominates Europe, they are rare. Designation and appropriate protection is important to reflect truly natural habitats and their long-term dynamics. As such, the concept of wilderness and wilderness areas themselves provide a big opportunity for children and adult education not only to learn about fauna, flora and natural processes, but also about key social competencies.

Communicating about wilderness is a crucial tool for making people aware of the concept, to inform and exchange with stakeholders, to raise support from groups interested in wilderness and to open the dialogue and convince critical opponents.

The European Wilderness Society is the only pan-European, wilderness and environmental advocacy organisation whose mission is to identify, designate, manage and promote European wilderness. At the European Wilderness Society we believe in the concept of living in harmony with nature through introducing wilderness to people in Europe and increase the public support for preserving the last great places of true nature.

Our communication skills allow us to:

- act as wilderness watchdog in Europe and use the European Wilderness Quality Standard to improve the stewardship of wilderness in Europe,
- organise a yearly Wilderness Academy to bring conservation professional and researchers together in a 3-day wilderness experience programme,
- start a special campaign for improving the protection of large carnivores as emblematic wilderness species in Europe,
- run an educational programme for high school students in order to increase their knowledge about Europe's precious natural habitat and wildlife.
- We aim to provide communication training that takes place outdoors which is targeted at professionals who are working for wilderness and/nature conservation issues.

Important note

„Speak up for wilderness“ is directed to adult learners. It emphasizes and explains that wilderness is an undefined open process.

Target group

Professionals working in protected areas, members of associations who are active in wilderness protection (rangers, national park / protected area employees, interested individuals)

Let's get Wild!



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Language

German, English

Dates

May – October upon request

Location

selected wilderness areas in Austria

Certificate

A certificate of participation will be provided to each participant.

Contact

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PROGRAMS

Module 1: Introduction to wilderness and individual perceptions

- Enter wilderness to find your equilibrium and take some time to find your place in nature.
- Exchange with each other about your own meaning of wilderness. How do you understand and relate to wilderness? What is your experience with wilderness? How do you recognize wilderness? Wild forests? What are the signs of wild places?
- Awareness exercises and training: Train our senses to become aware of the wilderness around us (e.g. walking barefoot, hike with mirrors, tree identification and recognition, or plant memo).

Module 2: The sounds of wilderness: How nature communicates

- Orientation exercise: Trail and off trail hiking.
- Learning to identify animal tracks, observing animals, learn to find animal tracks, practical exercises in wilderness.
- Interpretation of the sounds in nature, including animals and plants (e.g. bird songs, drum drive). Optional recording of sounds.

Module 3: The art of storytelling

- Listen to and exchange stories about nature, animals, and the interconnectedness of nature.
- Share traditional or folk stories, including news stories about nature and/or nature in literature.
- Learn the steps to building a good story.
- Create our own stories and present them to the group.
- How maintain the public interest by adding details, such as places and personalities.
- Visualize and paint the stories.

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www.wilderness-society.org





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Module 4: The use of new media

- Practical exercises on the use of digital media, how they may be used in communicating facts in the field to the public and to stakeholders.
- Use of GPS-devices during forest hikes, use of QR-Codes on wilderness trails, wilderness apps.

Module 5: Communicating with different stakeholder groups

- How to engage with local communities, politicians, the general public, scientists and nature conservationists.
- Learn general rules in communicating with stakeholders: Sending positive messages, building trust, practising personal meetings, using appropriate language, involving stakeholders in the early stages of communication, clearly stating project goals and limitations.

Final round: Feedback with participants

How did the participant's awareness of wilderness change from their experiences? .

Short term measurable objectives:

- Number of participants
- Active input of the participants
- Results of awareness training (recognition by participants of bird songs, animal tracks)
- Improvement of digital competencies
- Improving content, active listening
- Results from final round up discussion

Long term objectives:

- Improve the understanding of the wilderness concept
- Improve the awareness of
- Create a wilderness ambassador community

Reaching target groups:

- Email newsletters
- Social media postings
- Communication with national parks and protected areas

Educational forms and methods used in the programme:

- Awareness building methods
- Storytelling techniques
- Outdoor education as experiential outdoor learning method
- Parts of coyote teaching
- Communication and conflict resolution techniques

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