

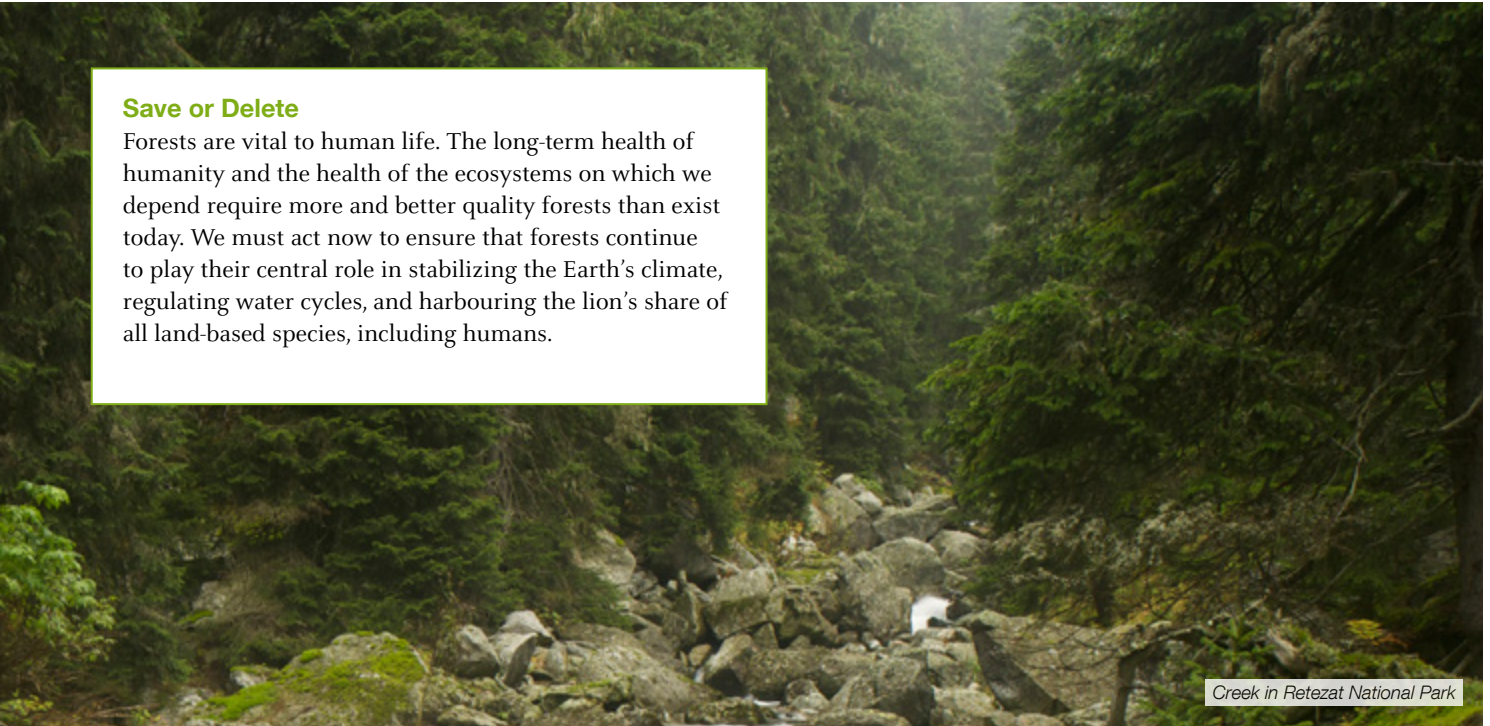


Greenpeace vision for the Romanian forests

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Save or Delete

Forests are vital to human life. The long-term health of humanity and the health of the ecosystems on which we depend require more and better quality forests than exist today. We must act now to ensure that forests continue to play their central role in stabilizing the Earth's climate, regulating water cycles, and harbouring the lion's share of all land-based species, including humans.



Creek in Retezat National Park

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Greenpeace campaigns for forest protection and responsible forest management because without healthy, thriving forests, planet Earth cannot sustain life.

Forests are a treasure chest of nature's diversity on Earth – of all of the world's land species, around two thirds live in forests. Many of these rare creatures are increasingly threatened by extinction. But the importance of forests stretches far beyond their own boundaries. Forests help to regulate the Earth's climate because they store around 450 billion tonnes of carbon in their living parts – roughly 50 times the annual greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels. The destruction of forests is responsible for up to a fifth of the world's greenhouse gas emissions – more than every plane, car, truck, ship and train on the planet combined. Forests also regulate water flow and rainfall so we depend on them to grow our crops and food.

As much as 80 percent of the world's forests have been degraded or destroyed. We need to protect what is left of these extraordinary ecosystems, especially the last remaining intact forests.

In Europe, less than 2 percent of the surface remains without major human impacts and disturbance.¹ In Romania, particularly

in the Carpathian Mountains, the biggest areas of remaining temperate primary forest outside Russia can be found. They are home to Europe's largest bear population, endangered and endemic species and large carnivores like lynx and wolves.

By nature, Romania is a country of beeches and holds the largest parts of pristine beech forests in Europe. The uniqueness of these ecosystems was acknowledged by awarding beech forests in Slovakia, Ukraine and Germany with the status as UNESCO world natural heritage site. Eight Romanian primeval beech forests are to be recognized as UNESCO sites as well, complementing a precious European natural heritage.



Romanian forests are home to Europe's largest bear population

¹ <http://www.carpathia.org/en/about/>

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Nonetheless, forests in Romania are under threat: illegal logging, irresponsible, clear-cuts even in protected areas, cuts on forested pastures as well as currently weak legislation and a lack of law enforcement, lead to forest loss and degradation. The current situation primarily serves the interests of a handful at the expense of the interests of the Romanian society as a whole. Corruption furthermore prevents an effective use of the economic potential of the forests taking into account their ecological value and fair distribution of derived benefits for the people of Romania. Instead, the forests of Romania should be protected, utilized in

a responsible manner, and developed in perpetuity with the aim of maintaining and enhancing multiple forest values, thus contributing to society's environmental, social and economic needs.

► Consequently, for the future of the Romanian forests

Greenpeace envisions:

A a large network of protected areas

B responsible forest management that ensures a close to nature forest ecosystem and

C responsible production and consumption of forest products

A. Protected areas

Greenpeace promotes establishing a consistent network of protected areas, including strictly protected core areas, allowing for natural processes to happen, corridors and buffer zones.

This means:

1. Strictly and permanently protecting all identified remaining primary forests and High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF).
2. Assuring real protection and responsible management of all protected areas, based on a strict biodiversity and conservation approach. All protected areas must have management plans,



Forests close to the village Drumul Carului, Braşov county

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- auditable specialized administrative bodies and should evaluate progress towards protection objectives.
3. Establishing «no intervention» zones in all protected areas – including Natura 2000 sites – to work towards a network of strictly protected areas where natural processes are allowed to happen. That implies that no logging, no hunting or any kind of correctional management is carried out. The state forests, serving notably common welfare, should establish strictly protected areas in at least 10% of their forest areas. To minimize external influences, these areas ideally reach a minimum size of 1.000 hectares.
 4. Establishing ecological corridors to connect the core areas, and buffer zones around the core areas and the corridors as a shield from possible disruptive external influences.
 5. Acting firmly towards the eradication of illegal logging, both inside and outside protected areas.
 6. Developing community based approaches to the management of the protected areas in order to strike a balance between peoples' and local communities' rights of ownership, and use of land, and biodiversity goals.
 7. Building a functioning payment system for ecosystem services – from local to global levels –, e.g. by funding for protected areas, especially for communal and private forest owners.



B. Responsible forest management

Greenpeace's vision of forestry is based on the belief that forests are complex and vital ecosystems and that it will never be possible to adequately describe, explain, or evaluate all the structures, dynamics, and functions of forests. Therefore, forestry should prioritize supporting sound ecological conditions. Only a healthy forest ecosystem allows for long-term economic success and can fulfil social and cultural demands.

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Small sawmill in the village of Măguri. Cluj county

This means that forest management supported by Greenpeace should reflect the following principles:

1. Ecological Principle:

A Close to Nature: Forests shall be managed as close as possible to the condition of natural forests. Therefore, all silvicultural activities are oriented towards the natural structures and dynamics of forest. Forest management supports the composition,

structure, and functions of the local natural forest species associations, since these represent the most adapted ecosystem due to millions of years of natural selection and evolution. They characterize the natural biological diversity of an area with regards to the natural past and present conditions.

B Sufficiency: The use, especially the extraction of wood, shall be way below the natural regeneration capacity of the forest, to allow for the restoration of forest carbon stocks and forest biodiversity.

C Precautionary principle: Management practices shall be reduced to the necessary minimum, and those management measures with minimum negative impact to forests and its environment shall be applied. This is due to the belief that inputs like forest management practices put the ecosystem under stress, potentially leading to a disturbance or even collapse of the forest ecosystem. Moreover, this approach reflects the precautionary principle as stated in the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development.²

In order to assure the above, management plans need to be implemented, monitored and updated according to outcomes

² <http://www.unep.org/Documents.multilingual/Default.asp?DocumentID=78&ArticleID=1163>

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of the monitoring process, promoting thus an adaptive management. Management plans should have an intelligible and publicly available summary.

2. Social Principle:

Forest management shall cover the demand for wood and non-wood forest products of the rural population, and the forest sector shall provide employment and income opportunities for the rural population. Forestry operations shall therefore maintain or enhance local communities' and forest workers' social and economic well-being, e.g. providing safe and meaningful workplaces for the local people. Timber production and processing therefore should ideally take place locally in order to maximize the benefit for the local communities. The Romanian government has to create economic incentives – within the EU legal framework – so that local, small-scale timber processing is not losing out against the large-scale timber industry.

Peoples' and local communities' rights of ownership and use of land and resources need to be respected. Forest policies should support the identity and culture of local communities, irrespective of forest ownership.

3. Economic Principle:

With consideration to the ecological and social principles, the forest sector shall aim to cover national demand for wood and non-wood forest products, maximise added value, and contribute to rural development via local and superior processing of these products. In this respect, the export of round wood is not beneficial and shall not be permitted. Forestry operations should respect and comply with all the laws, regulations, treaties, conventions and agreements. Law enforcement against forest crime is an absolute priority.



Ancient beech forest in Glodeasa, Prahova county



Forests close to the village Drumul Carului, Braşov county

4. Multifunctional Principle:

Forests shall be managed as an integral part of the sustainable development of the country, harmonizing ecological, social, economic and other relevant functions of the forest. This applies in particular, but not exclusively, to forests with special protection functions. Regarding forested pastures, it shall be encouraged to reduce the agro-pastoral use of the land to the needed minimum, and thus allow an increase of the area where natural dynamics of the forest can take place.

Therefore, management practices shall maintain and enhance long term environmental, social, economic and cultural benefits from the forest, as well as maintain or restore the ecosystem, its biodiversity, resources and landscapes.

5. Transparency Principle:

Consultation of stakeholders is a prerequisite of responsible forest management. All forest sector relevant activities shall therefore be planned and implemented in consultation with concerned stakeholders, experts and the interested public.

The guiding principles above lead to the following forest management practices:

1. Only single tree cutting with maximum canopy openings of 0.3 hectares each.
2. Regeneration of the forest is mainly achieved by natural regeneration.
3. At least 10% of the trees remain as habitat and dead trees to contribute to a functioning and diverse ecosystem. As far as comparable pristine forests are available, the number and composition of these trees can be derived from their occurrence in those forests.

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4. Only the most careful techniques and procedures are applied in order to avoid harming the forest ecosystem.
5. Construction and maintenance of forest roads and transport lines is limited to real needs and with careful processing of the soil, the forest and the landscape.
6. In forested areas, planting should be the exception and only be done with native species.
7. In areas where forest restoration, reforestation and afforestation efforts are needed, the plantings should strive to (re-)establish the local natural ecosystem.
8. Where beech or mixed forests have been replaced in the last century by spruce forests, the management plans have to request a return to the original forest composition.
9. Of each forest area 10% will remain unmanaged creating thus a network of »reference areas«. These areas are representative of the main natural forest associations in this area. The extent of the single representative area is recommended to be of minimum 100 hectares. These are intended to serve as learning areas where the observation and documentation of natural processes will be compared to managed forests. These areas explicitly serve as reference and learning areas and are not to be confused with strictly protected areas, selected primarily for nature protection purposes (see [A] Protected Areas).

The guiding principles do not allow the following forest management practices

1. clear-cuts,
2. monocultures,
3. introduction of exotic tree species,
4. application of pesticides and fertilizers,
5. soil degradation through compacting, ploughing etc.,
6. clearing of an area or burning of bio-mass,
7. drainage of moist areas,
8. disturbing activities during ecologically sensitive times in the year.

C Forest products and consumption

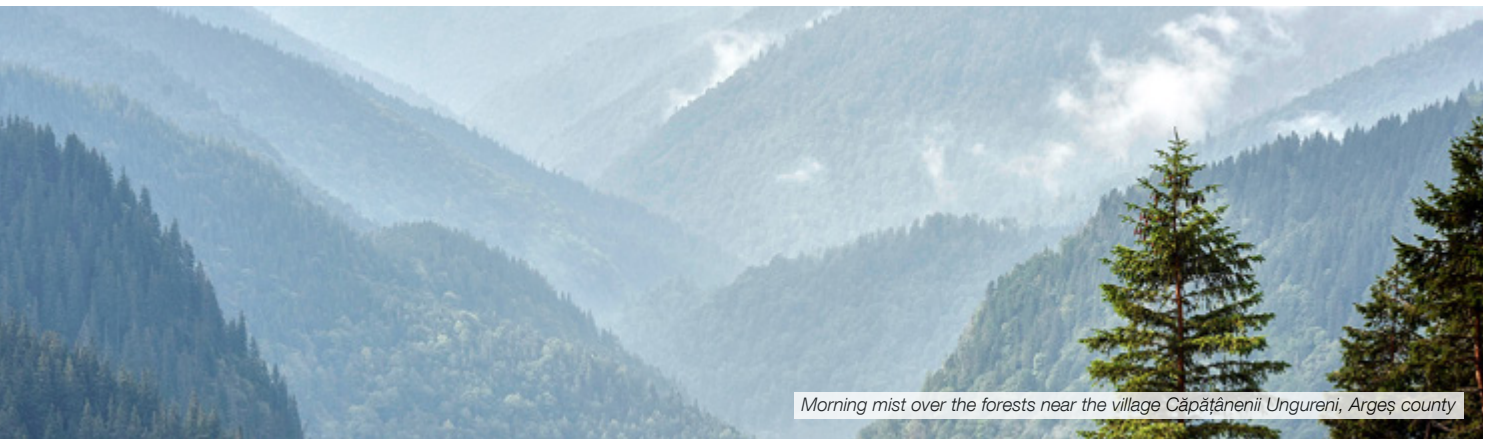
Greenpeace acknowledges the economic value of wood within the frame of sustainability and its role and relevance as an ecological and renewable material. Nevertheless, global consumption of forest related products is currently highly unsustainable, leading to continuous forest loss – into the millions of hectares each year. The main reasons for forest destruction and degradation are irresponsible forestry practices as well as weak law enforcement leading to large-scale illegal logging.

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Moreover, taking into account that forests grow and regrow slowly, the wood they produce is a valuable limited natural resource and has to be treated as such.

Therefore, Greenpeace supports the following ideas:

1. Wood and forest products should not be wasted, but used consciously and efficiently – from paper and fire wood to building materials and furniture.
2. Producing high quality, long lasting wood products should have priority over short-lived, single-use and disposable forest products.
3. Responsible consumption, including recycling, of forest products shall be encouraged and a national recycling program set up.
4. Companies that process and trade in forest related products need to check their supply chains to ensure they don't trade and sell forest destruction.



Morning mist over the forests near the village Căpățânenii Ungureni, Argeș county

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Facts and figures

- ▶ Currently, according to the National Forest Inventory, Romania's forest cover reaches only 28.95% of the country's surface (6.90 million hectares)³, well under the total EU forest cover of 42 % and even under the EU countries average of 32.4 %⁴.
- ▶ Greenpeace most recent analysis shows an average of 62 cases of illegal logging happening every day in 2013 and 2014⁵, increasing steadily from 2009 – 2011⁶ when 28 cases were reported and 2012 when there were 50⁷.
- ▶ Romanian forests are home to more than 33,000 animal species, including large carnivores like brown bear (half of Europe's population), wolf and lynx, 3,600 plant species, 300 nesting and migratory bird species, including lots of endangered and endemic species.
- ▶ According to an analysis by Greenpeace and the University of Maryland⁸, in the last 15 years Romania lost its last Intact Forest Landscape (IFL)⁹.

³ <http://roifn.ro/site/rezultate-ifn-1/>

⁴ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/forest/index_en.htm

⁵ <http://www.greenpeace.org/romania/ro/campanii/paduri/Activitati/illegal-logging-romania/>

⁶ [http://www.greenpeace.org/romania/Global/romania/paduri/Despaduririle%20din%20Romania/Taierile%20ilegale%20de%20arbori%20in%20padurile%20din%20Romania%20\(2009-2011\).pdf](http://www.greenpeace.org/romania/Global/romania/paduri/Despaduririle%20din%20Romania/Taierile%20ilegale%20de%20arbori%20in%20padurile%20din%20Romania%20(2009-2011).pdf)

⁷ http://www.greenpeace.org/romania/Global/romania/paduri/Publicatii/Illegal%20logging%20reports%20Romania%202012_AR.pdf

⁸ According to *Pădurile virgine din România*, coordinator Ing. Iovu-Adrian Biris, asbl Forêt wallone, Belgia, 2001

⁹ <http://www.intactforests.org/world.webmap.html>

Imprint

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