



EU LIFE Programme project
"Optimising the Governance and Management of the
Natura 2000 Protected Areas Network in Latvia"
(LIFE19 IPE/LV/000010 LIFE-IP LatViaNature)



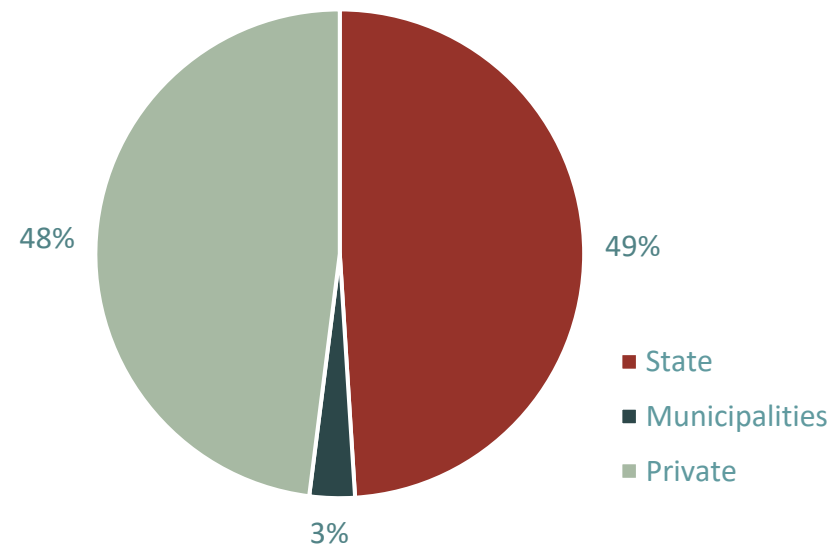
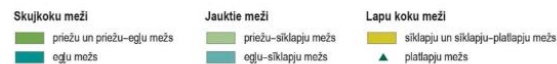
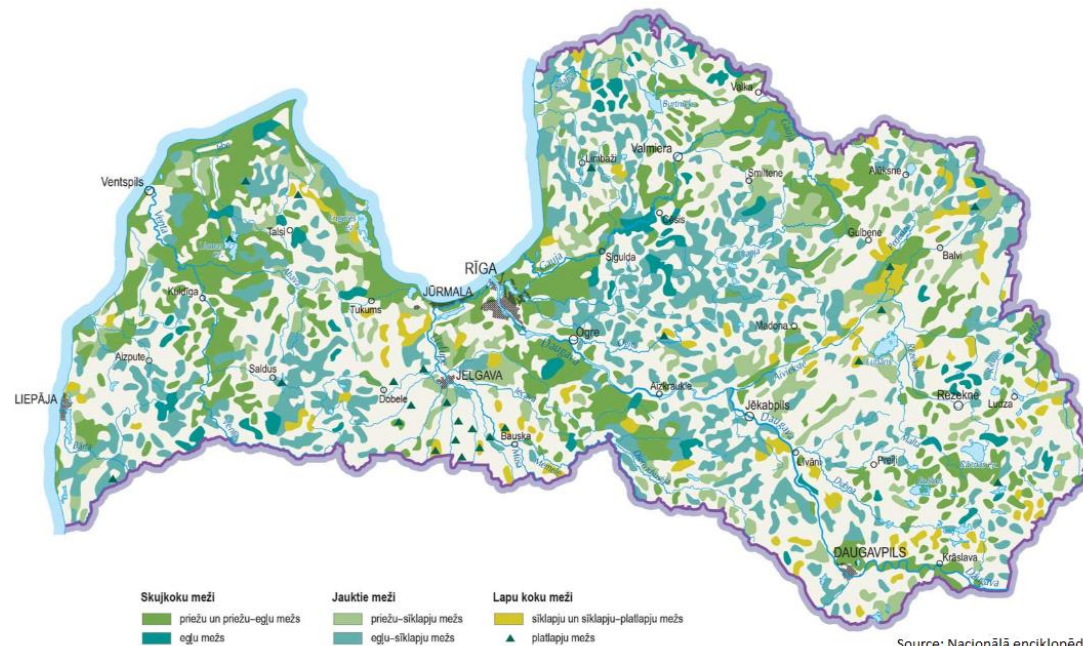
Stakeholder Engagement: Experience of LIVING FOREST

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LIFE Platform Meeting: Agriculture for the Benefit of Biodiversity
11.10.2024., Leuven

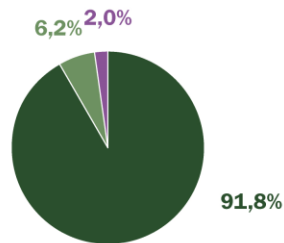


Forest in Latvia

- 3,4 million ha (52% of Latvia)
- > 110 000 private forest owners
- > 80% of them own forests that are smaller than 20 ha (50% under 5 ha)
- Most common tree species: pine (32%), birch (30%); spruce (19%)
- Total cutting volume ~13 million m³
- Wood ~20% of total export value



Biodiversity conservation in private forests



91,8% No significant forestry restrictions
 6,2% Prohibition of clear felling
 2,0% Strict forest protection

Source: State Forest Service, 2024



Forest habitats of EU importance cover ~3% of private forest area



Source: State Forest Service, 2024; DDPS "Ozols", 2024

- ❖ Regulatory conservation background
- ❖ No voluntary conservation mechanisms

Compensation mechanisms

Mechanism	Notes
Annual payments	EU funds (within N2000 and micro-reserves, Rural Support Service); National budget (outside N2000 and MR, Nature Conservation Agency)
Land purchase	Not in practice
Land exchange	Not available
One-off compensation	2006.-2010.
Tax relief	Partly. Immovable property tax reliefs. Cadastral value reduction.
Voluntary mechanisms	«Living forest» pilot programme. 366 ha.

Annual payments	
Restriction	Rate (EUR/year)
Total prohibition of forestry	196
Final felling prohibited	145
Clear felling prohibited	52

Annual payments (2020)	
Applicants	4389
Area	49 796 ha
Payments	4 415 000 euro

How to involve private landowners?

Existing biodiversity conservation framework



Opinion of forest owners

+

Best practices of other countries



Designing pilot programme for private forest owner involvement

Which factors influence forest owners' willingness to implement biodiversity conservation measures?

Survey for private forest owners

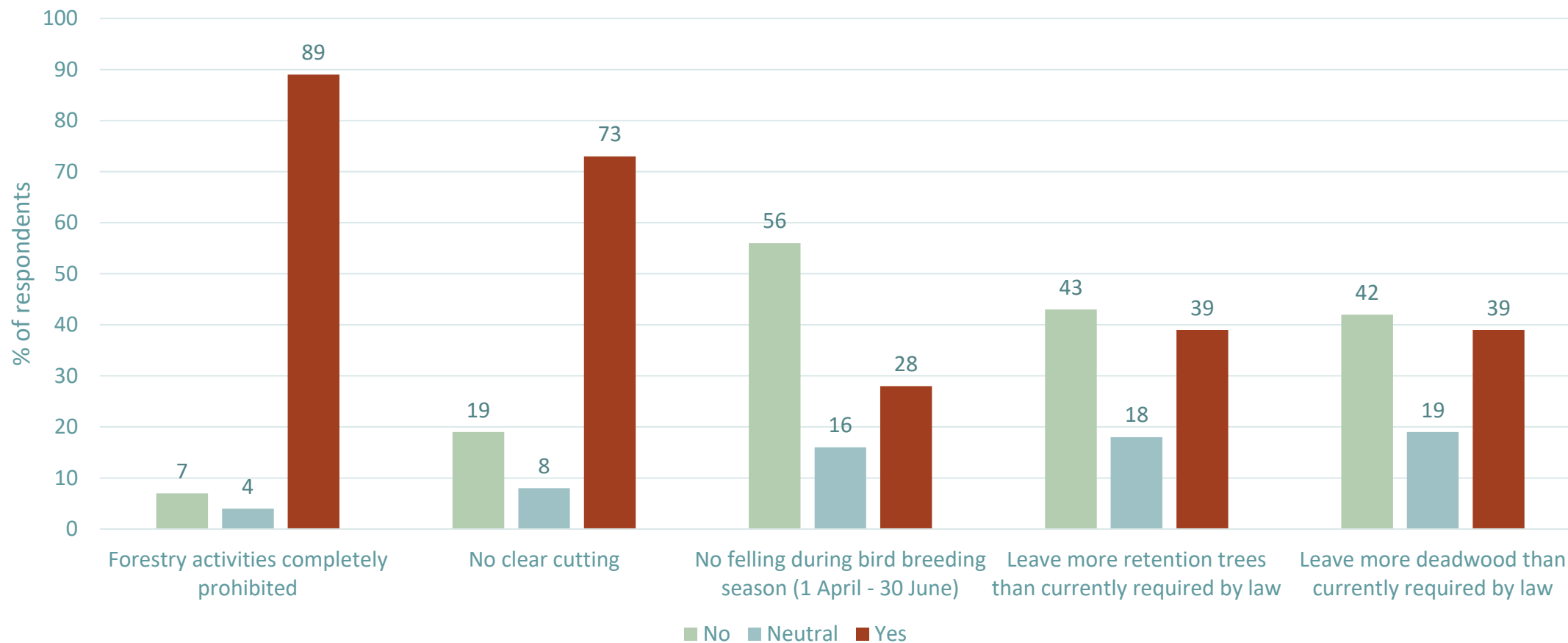
- ✘ Design of survey - cooperation between several sectors: forest consultants; nature conservation institutions; universities.
- ✘ Survey was conducted in 2021 (Latvia; proportionally all regions)
- ✘ Collection of data: Forest Advisory Service Centre (forest consultants)
- ✘ Target audience: **forest owners within protected areas and forests with significant biodiversity values** (e.g. forest habitats of EU importance)
- ✘ Mixed-mode (paper and web-based) survey (**n = 599**)
- ✘ Main approach for measuring respondent attitudes - a five-point Likert scale
- ✘ Data analysis: University of Latvia; Vidzeme University of Applied Sciences
- ✘ Main question blocks (41 questions): current forest management practices; nature values and conservation requirements; attitude regarding nature values and restrictions on economic activities; compensation mechanisms for restrictions on economic activities; other necessary support for nature conservation; nature conservation plans; importance of different sources of information; respondent profile.

Profile of respondents

- ✘ Location: protected area or micro-reserve (61%); forest habitats of EU importance (33%)
- ✘ **Forest size:** < 5 ha (16%); 5-20 ha (39%); 21-50 ha (27%); 51-200 ha (13%)
- ✘ Age: 16-25 (2%); 26-35 (15%); 36-45 (18%); 46-55 (27%); 56-65 (24%); 66-75 (11%); >75 (4%)
- ✘ **Gender:** man (68%); woman (28%); no answer (4%)
- ✘ Education level: higher (66%); secondary (7%); vocational secondary (20%); basic (1%)
- ✘ **Field of education:** related to forestry (31%); related to environmental field (11%)
- ✘ Membership in organizations: forest owners' association or cooperative (19%); hunting collective (24%); environmental NGO (3%); not a member of any (59%)

Results

Would the following restrictions on economic activities make it more difficult for you to manage the forest in accordance with your intentions?





Results

How much of the forest you own would you be willing to set aside for conservation (limited forestry activities) without compensation, while the rest would be subject to general forest management requirements?

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
53%	24%	9%	5%	1%	4%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%

Would you be satisfied with the following approaches to the calculation of the support payment (compensation)?

Approach		no	neutral	yes
The value of the compensation is determined according to the financial benefits that are lost due to the restriction of forest activities		9	16	75
Reward is paid according to the natural values present in the forest – the more natural values, the higher the reward		23	21	56



More often chosen by forest owners with larger properties, forestry education, more dependent on forestry income, members of forest owners' association



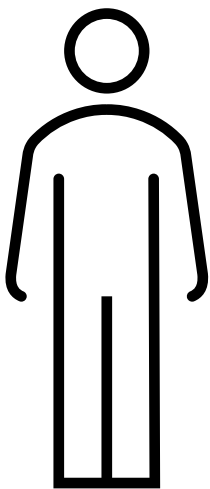
More often chosen by forest owners with smaller properties, without forestry education

Important factors

- Size of forest property ↓ 😊
- Female forest owners + 😊
- Income from forestry ↑ 😞
- Forestry education + 😞
- 80% of forest owners are not satisfied with amount of financial support regarding forestry restrictions



For a forest valued at 40 000 euro I receive 400 euro per year, which means I will receive the real value in 100 years! But I am already 63 years old!



I think it's everyone's responsibility to donate a tenth part. Being a forest owner is an honor and a fortune, so it's an ethical responsibility to leave space for creatures for whom the forest is home.

**Who are opinion leaders for forest owners?
Which institutions do forest owners trust?**

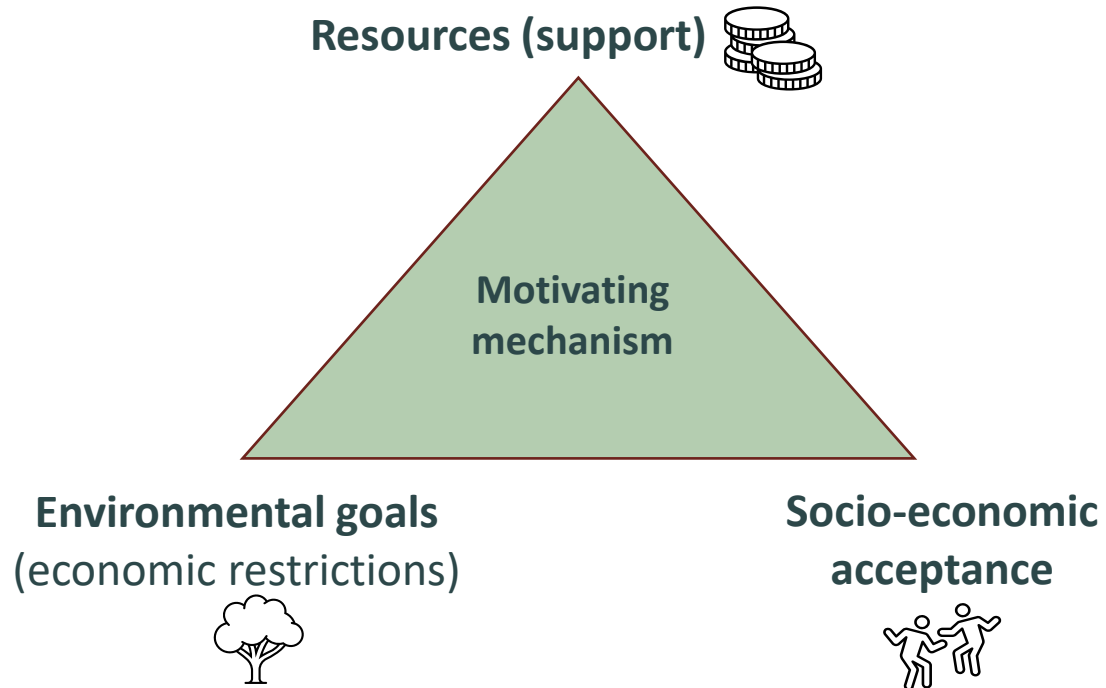
Importance of different information sources

Regarding forest management		Regarding biodiversity conservation in forest	
Source	Very important (%)	Source	Very important (%)
State Forest Service	77	State Forest Service	67
Forest Advisory Service Centre	70	Forest Advisory Service Centre	63
My education helps me to make decisions	55	Nature Conservation Agency	52
Other forest owners	52	My education helps me to make decisions	51
Nature Conservation Agency	43	Other forest owners	41
Forest owners' associations or cooperatives	32	Environmental NGOs	22

Designing pilot programme

- ✓ Voluntary involvement (initiative comes from landowner)
- ✓ Contract based cooperation
- ✓ Consultative and financial support
- ✓ Landowners involved in biodiversity monitoring
- ✓ Specific aims of programmes: (environmental, administrative, social)
- ✓ Increasing knowledge (seminars, science)
- ✓ Cooperation with project partners and other stakeholders

Designing pilot-programme



$$\text{Tree} + \text{People} = \text{Coins}$$

$$\text{Tree} - \text{Coins} = \text{Falling People}$$

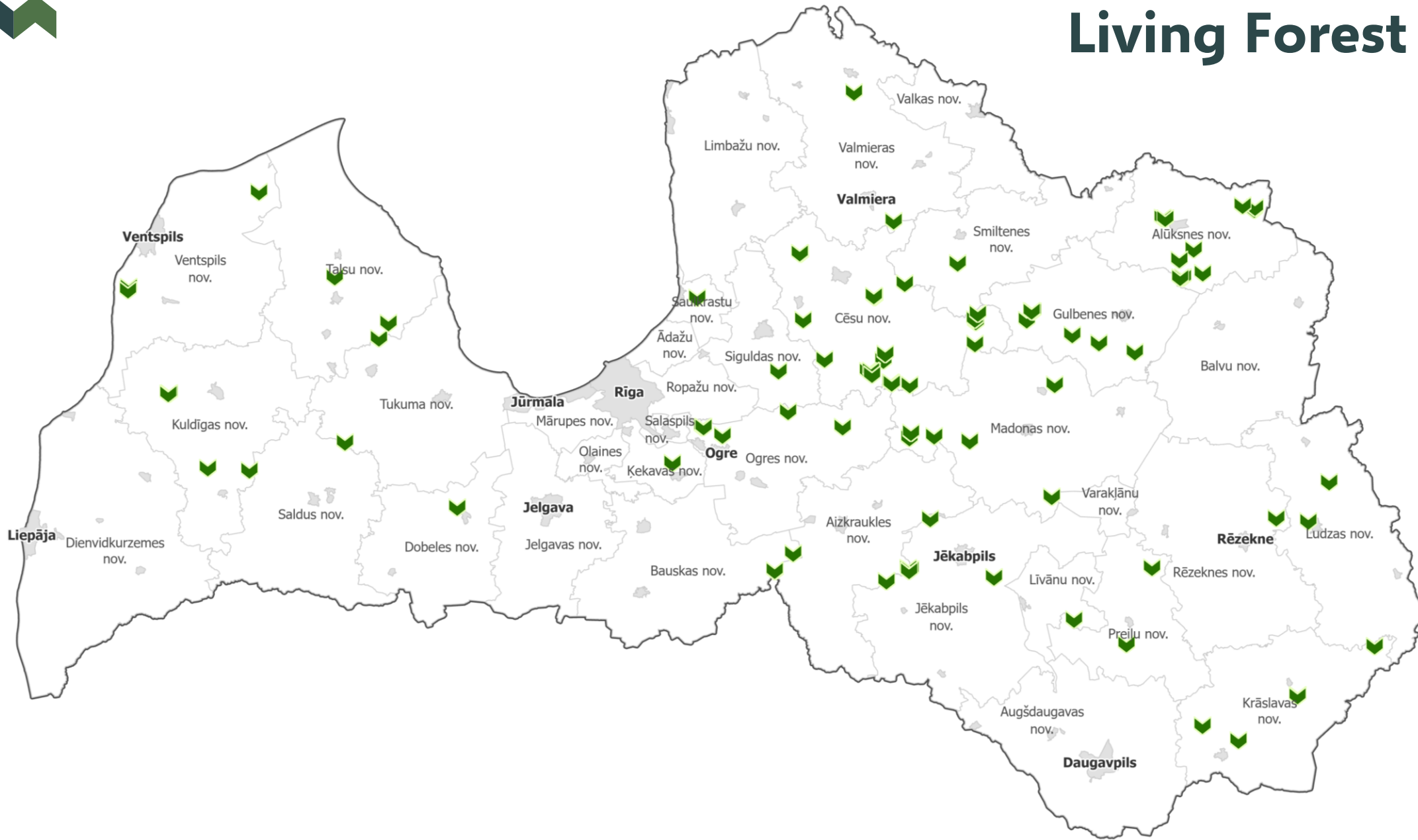
$$\text{Coins} + \text{People} \neq \text{Tree}$$

Forests and participants

- ▼ 71 contracts (4 years)
- ▼ 366 ha of forests
- ▼ private forests outside protected areas (>25 cm diameter)
- ▼ Diverse forests (0,3-15 ha)
- ▼ Forest stands of: pine (*Pinus sylvestris*); birch (*Betula spp.*); spruce (*Picea abies*); alder (*Alnus glutinosa*); aspen (*Populus tremula*)
- ▼ Significantly over final felling age
- ▼ Forest habitats of EU importance: 9050 *Fennoscandian herb-rich forests with Picea abies*, 9010* *Western Taiga*, 91D0* *Bog Woodland*, 9080* *Fennoscandian deciduous swamp woods*



Living Forest



“Living Forest” sub-programmes

Habitat conservation (A1)

- Do not interfere (no logging in the protected habitat)
- Preserve the buffer zone around the protected habitat polygons (selective logging is allowed)
- No harvesting for economic purposes



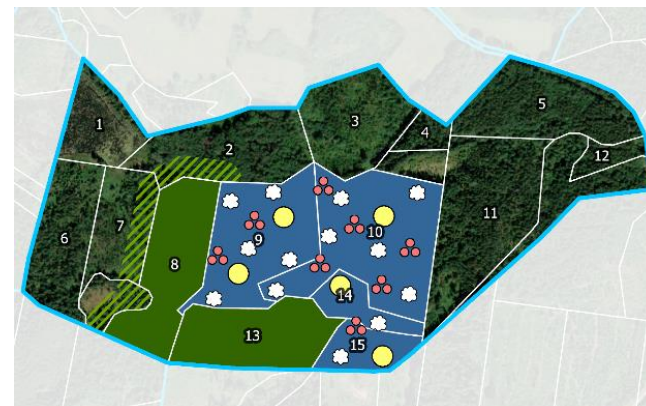
Habitat creation (A2)

- Create multi-aged forest stand structure
- Preserve and create dead wood
- Preserve the buffer zone
- No harvesting for economic purposes



Nature-friendly forestry (B)

- Preserve the oldest and largest trees (20 trees/ha)
- Preserve and create dead wood
- Selective logging to mimic natural disturbances
- Create multi-aged forest stand structure
- Seasonal forestry restrictions
- Harvesting of timber for economic purposes is allowed



Support calculation

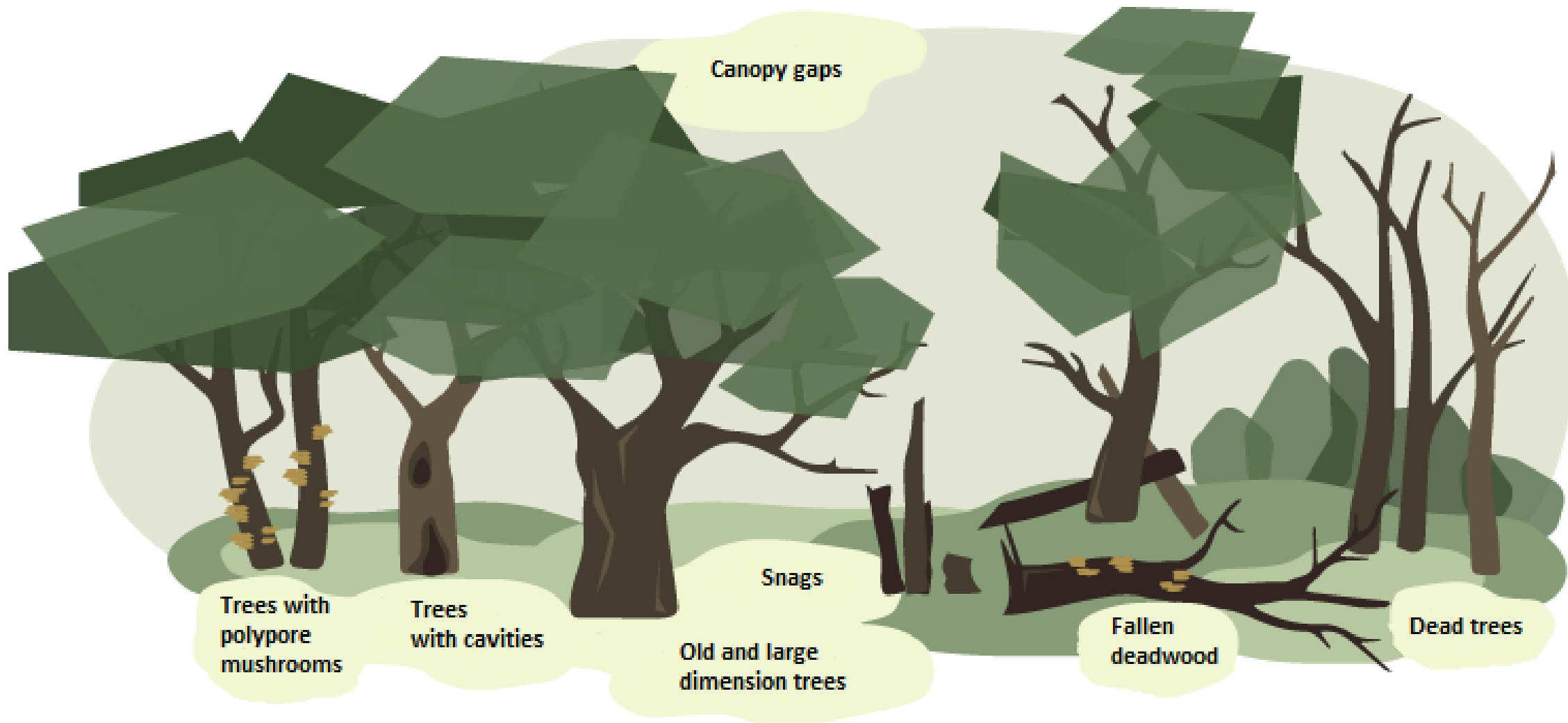
- ▼ Individual calculation of financial support:
 - composition of tree species;
 - productivity of forest stand;
- ▼ State Forest Service database
- ▼ EUR 55 260 has been paid in support payments regarding forest conservation in 2023
- ▼ Average support: **198 euro/ha**
- ▼ Annual or final payment approach

A1/A2	Support rates euro/ha year						
Site index (productivity)	Ia	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Aspen	138	116	93	43	1	0	0
Grey alder	104	89	65	33	11	0	0
Birch	221	164	130	92	33	12	0
Spruce	359	326	279	203	136	31	21
Common alder	145	96	76	54	37	16	0
Oak	631	536	516	480	0	0	0
Pine	398	363	308	224	175	114	102

B	Support rates euro/ha year						
Site index (productivity)	Ia	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Aspen	69	52	43	21	1	0	0
Grey alder	56	39	31	18	7	0	0
Birch	119	78	64	48	18	8	0
Spruce	194	159	134	97	66	23	17
Common alder	85	58	44	31	23	12	0
Oak	335	279	286	253	0	0	0
Pine	211	191	152	108	85	54	51

Mežaudzes Nr.	Mežaudzes kopējā platība (ha)	Koka suga	Bonitāte	Sugas īpatsvars mežaudzē (%)	Sugas daļa mežaudzē (ha)	Atbalsta maksājums EUR/ha gadā	Atbalsta maksājums pa mežaudzes koku sugām (EUR)
6B3E1M93	0,77	Bērzs	III	60%	0,46	92	42,50
	0,77	Egle	III	30%	0,23	203	46,89
	0,77	Melnāksnis	III	10%	0,08	54	4,16
					0,00	0	0,00
					0,00	0	0,00
					0,00	0	0,00
					0,00	0	0,00
Atbalsta maksājums par mežaudzi KOPĀ (EUR)				100%			93,56

Monitoring elements of forest structure



Monitoring

Elements of the forest structure	Amount		Quality assessment			
			Low	Average	Good	Excellent
	In polygon	Per ha	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points
Large dimension trees ($d \geq 70$ cm; $d \geq 35$)			< 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	15 <
Snags ($d \geq 25$ cm; $d \geq 20$)			1 - 2	3 - 5	6 - 10	10 <
Dead (standing) trees ($d \geq 25$ cm; $d \geq 20$)			1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	15 <
Fallen deadwood ($d \geq 25$ cm; $d \geq 20$)			1 - 10	11 - 30	31 - 40	40 <
Small canopy gaps			1	2 - 3	4 - 5	5 <
Large canopy gaps			1 or 4 <	2	3	4
Trees with cavities			1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	15 <
Trees with polypore mushrooms			1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	15 <
Points:						
Total sum (low quality 1-7; average 8-15; good 16-23. excellent – 24 ≤.):						



Monitoring is carried out by expert + landowner

Forest management plans

Nog.nr.	Programmā iekļautā platība, ha	Meža tips (MVR)	Mežaudzes sastāvs (MVR)	Valdošās sugas koku stumbra vid. diametrs, cm (MVR)	Aizsargājāmie biotopi un sugas (DDPS Ozols)	Programma	Iespējamie mežizstrādes pasākumi	Plānotie bioloģiskās daudzveidības apsaimniekošanas pasākumi
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
2	0,54	Db	10M70	31	Aluviāli meži (91E0*_1)	A1	-	1. Neiejaukšanās. 2. Buferzonas saglabāšana - 1. un 3.nogabalā vismaz 30 m platā joslā gar biotopu. Tajā pieļaujama kopšanas cirte vai galvenā cirte izlases cirtes veidā, saglabājot pēc iespējas biežāku pamežu/paaugu un audzes otro stāvu.
12	2,33	Dm	8B1P78 1Ba63	33	-	B	1. Nelielus dabiskos traucējumus (vējš, kukaiņi, slimības, vecums) atdarinošas izlases cirtes, kokus cērtot apļveida atvērumu veidā: - izcērtamo apļu izmērs: līdz 300 m ² (apļa D=20m); - pirmajā papēmiēnā cērtami līdz 20% no nogabalā koksnes krājas; - nākamajos papēmiēnos - krājas pieaugumu periodā starp cirtēm; - saglabājamā pirmā stāva koku biežība ne mazāka par 4. 2. Dabiskās atjaunošanās veicināšanas pasākumi: izcirstajos atvērumos - dabiski ieaugušo kociņu atēnošana un sugu mistrojuma veidošana, un, ja nepieciešams, papildus stādīšana.	1. Bioloģiski vecāko un lielāko koku saglabāšana - marķē bioloģiski vecus vai, ja tādu nav, vai tie ir nepietiekamā skaitā, citus mežaudzes lielāko dimensiju kokus - nogabalā kopā 47 kokus turpmākai to saglabāšanai līdz to dabiskai bojāejai. Ja iespējams, izvēlēties dažādu sugu kokus. Kāda izvēlēta koka bojāejas gadījumā, mežaudzē tā vietā jāizvēlas un jāmarķē citu koku. 2. Mirušās koksnes pakāpeniska saglabāšana/veidošana - katru gadu nogabalā nogāžami vai gredzenojami 7 koki (to stumbra diametrs vismaz 25 cm) vai 14 koki reizi divos gados (mērķis 4 gados kopā - 28 koki). Ja gada laikā minēto dimensiju un ikgadējā apjoma miruši koksne izveidojusies dabiski (nokaltuši stāvoši vai nogāzušies koki), tie jā saglabā, un to papildus speciālu veidošanu var neveikt.
13	1,10	Vr	7E3B109	50	-	B	1. Nelielus dabiskos traucējumus (vējš, kukaiņi, slimības, vecums) atdarinošas izlases cirtes, kokus cērtot apļveida atvērumu veidā: - izcērtamo apļu izmērs: līdz 300 m ² (apļa D=20m);	1. Bioloģiski vecāko un lielāko koku saglabāšana - marķē bioloģiski vecus vai, ja tādu nav, vai tie ir nepietiekamā skaitā, citus mežaudzes lielāko dimensiju kokus - nogabalā kopā 22 kokus turpmākai to saglabāšanai līdz to dabiskai bojāejai. Ja iespējams, izvēlēties dažādu sugu



Learning together

- ❖ Theoretic and field seminars
- ❖ Individual consultations





Demonstration of sustainable forest management on private lands

- 5 forest management demonstration territories
- peer-to-peer learning
- education and experience exchange platform
- nature friendly forest management practices
- forest owners, consultants, forest management companies, students
- Pasaules Dabas Fonds, Latvian Rural Advisory and Training Centre, with partners



Mobile nature education class



What are good examples of landowner involvement?

Midterm notes

- ✓ Landowners are very heterogeneous community
- ✓ Who will lead the change (top-down or bottom-up)?
 - Do landowners demand a new approach?
 - Do we wait instructions from Brussels?
 - Are state institutions ready to change?
 - Are forestry service providers capable to support landowners?
- ✓ Biodiversity conservation inside protected areas is enough?
- ✓ Importance of communication: individual consultations
- ✓ Information bubbles: do forest owners listen to nature conservation institutions?

Key messages

- ✓ At early-stage social (trust) aspects are more important than nature conservation results
- ✓ Forest owner involvement in monitoring is essential
- ✓ Biodiversity conservation integration into other disciplines (e.g. forestry courses) is crucial
- ✓ Trust building will take time (mutually: forest owners ↔ institutions)
- ✓ On-site examples: support for *closer-to-nature forestry* demonstration sites



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Thank you!

