



ZAVOD za GOZDOVE
SLOVENIJE

Slovenia Forest Service



Caring for forest to benefit nature and people.



- Forest management and forest use in Slovenia
- Main tasks and activities of the Slovenia Forest Service
- Forests in Slovenia
- Forest management planning
- Silviculture
- Forest protection
- Forestry technique
- Forest wildlife and hunting
- Hunting reserves with a special purpose
- Public relations and education of forest owners

Slovenia Forest Service

Caring for forest to benefit nature and people

Mission:

Preservation and close-to-nature development of Slovenian forests and of all their functions for their sustainable and good management and use as well as nature conservation in forest space for the good of present and future generations.

Introduction

In implementing our mission we assume responsibility for the quality of the most important natural resource in Slovenia. Our preserved, biologically diverse, cultivated, stable forests, rich in wood, together with sources of drinking water and recreational potential of forest landscape, constitute an important development priority of Slovenia.

Slovenia has a rich, well-known tradition of forest management that receives support also in the European Union, where the economic and environmental significance of forests is constantly growing.

Successful forest management requires co-operation of all those who have an important influence on economic, environmental, and social indicators of forest management; we have to raise the professional and technological level and build in all forest products the highest possible added value.

In doing so the Slovenia Forest Service as the central professional institution has to perform its duties with distinction and all responsibility.

Andrej Kermavnar, director




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Organization of the Slovenia Forest Service



The Slovenia Forest Service is a public institution, established by the Republic of Slovenia (The Act on Forests, 1993), which performs public forestry service in all Slovenian forests, irrespective of ownership.

At state level it is organized with its central unit in Ljubljana, at regional level in 14 regional units, and at local level it has 93 local units and 408 forest districts. The Slovenia Forest Service also comprises 10 hunting reserves with a special purpose whose task is sustainable management of wild animals, protection of rare and endangered animal species and they also perform activities of hunting tourism.

The organs of the Slovenia Forest Service are its council, director, and experts council.

The Slovenia Forest Service employs 813 staff, of which 688 are forestry experts.

The public forestry service is nearly entirely funded from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia whereas hunting reserves with a special purpose are mostly self-financed.

It does not itself perform any felling, extraction, transport and selling of wood, nor forest trade.

Forest management and forest use in Slovenia

Forest management and forest use in Slovenia are directed by

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food as the supreme state institution in the field of forestry and by the Slovenia Forest Service as a public forestry service.

Main national documents, that serve as the basis for forest treatment and management in Slovenia are:

- **The Act on Forests** of the Republic of Slovenia (1993) which regulates protection, silviculture, exploitation and use of forests on the basis of forest management plans;
- **The Forest Development Programme** of the Republic of Slovenia (1996), adopted by the National Assembly, which defines the national policy on close-to-nature forest management, guidelines for the preservation and development of forests and conditions for their exploitation or multipurpose use.

Besides, there are acts regulating the sphere of nature protection, environmental protection, space management, protection of plants, hunting and wildlife, building and construction, information of public interest and media.

Forest management plans include:

- regional forest management plans and plans of forest management units,
- silvicultural plans,
- regional hunting management plans.

Fundamental principles of forest treatment and management are:

- sustainability (sustained preservation of forests, sustained use of their goods and non-material functions),
- close-to-nature management (exploitation of forests to such a degree and in such a way as to ensure the preservation of all their natural constituents),
- multi-purpose management (a balanced significance of ecological, productional, and social roles of forests).

In accordance with professional foundations provided by the Slovenia Forest Service, forests are managed by forest owners, who are:

- private owners (natural and legal persons),
- local communities,
- state.

Approximately three quarters of Slovenian forests are private property.

In performing its work the Slovenia Forest Service co-operates

with numerous institutions and organizations in the field of administration, education, scientific research, with professional and non-governmental organizations and it also participates in the international field. This co-operation is based on legal regulations, contracts and agreements, on common interest in projects and other activities. Among the most important institutions are the following:

Administration: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food; Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning; Ministry of Defence; Slovenian inspectorate for agriculture, forestry and food; Environmental Agency of the Republic of Slovenia; The Agency of the Republic of Slovenia for Agricultural Markets and Rural Development; Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia; Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia; Directorate of the Republic of Slovenia for Roads; Phytosanitary administration of the Republic of Slovenia; Slovenian veterinary administration; communes and administrative units.

Education: Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Forestry and Renewable Forest Resources; Slovenian Institute for Adult Education; The National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia; Secondary Forestry and Wood Technology School Postojna; primary and secondary schools.

Scientific research: Slovenian Forestry Institute; Biotechnical Faculty, Department of Forestry and Renewable Forest Resources.

Professional field: Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation; Slovenian Geodesic Institute; Triglav National Park; Chamber of Agriculture and Forestry of Slovenia; Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia.

Non-governmental field: associations of forest owners; Slovenia Hunters' Association; Forestry association of Slovenia; Tourist Association of Slovenia; Alpine Association of Slovenia.

International field: UN-FAO, UN-ECE, ILO, IUFRO.

Main tasks and activities of the Slovenia Forest Service

Forest management planning:

- elaboration of forest management plans;
- collecting data on the state and development of forests and keeping databases;
- monitoring biological balance in forests;
- giving consent for interventions in the forest and forest space;
- co-operation in open-space planning.

Silviculture and forest protection:

- elaboration of silvicultural plans and plans for forest fire protection;
- determination of necessary silvicultural and protection work in forests;
- marking trees for felling in co-operation with forest owners;
- realisation of sanitary projects;
- extension for forest owners in connection with financing work in forests from the state budget;
- extension for forest owners in performing silvicultural and protection work;
- providing seedlings and seeds of forest trees for forest regeneration;
- accepting realized works in forests, financed from the state budget or the EU funds.

Forestry technique:

- directing and supervising construction and maintenance of forest roads;
- elaborating and keeping information system for forest roads;
- determination of traffic regime on forest roads in co-operation with forest owners and local communities;
- extension for forest owners for correct and safe work in forests;
- elaboration of technological parts of forest management and silvicultural plans;
- co-operation in introducing new technologies in felling, skidding and transporting wood from forests;
- control of felling sites in forests;
- advising on proper use of wood as an energy source.

Wildlife and hunting:

- elaboration of regional hunting management plans;
- keeping records of kill and losses of wild animals;
- determination of measures to improve living conditions of wild animals;
- monitoring the state of large carnivore populations (brown bear, wolf, lynx);
- management of hunting reserves with a special purpose;
- assessment of damage done by protected animal species.

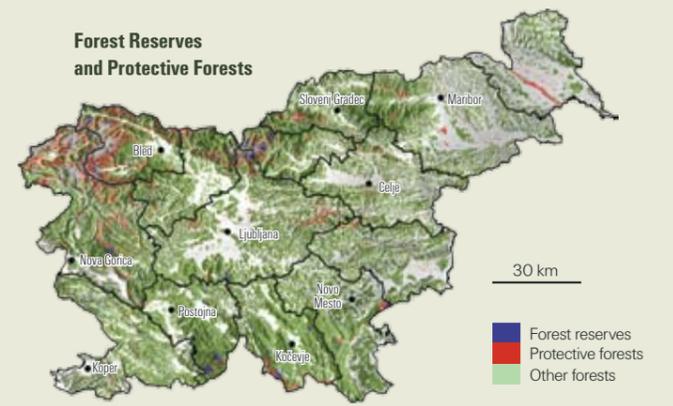
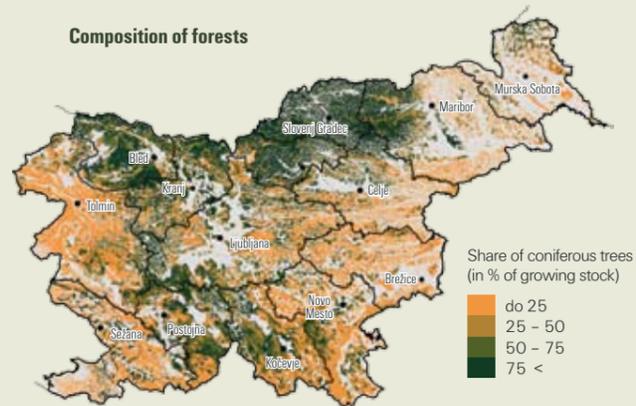
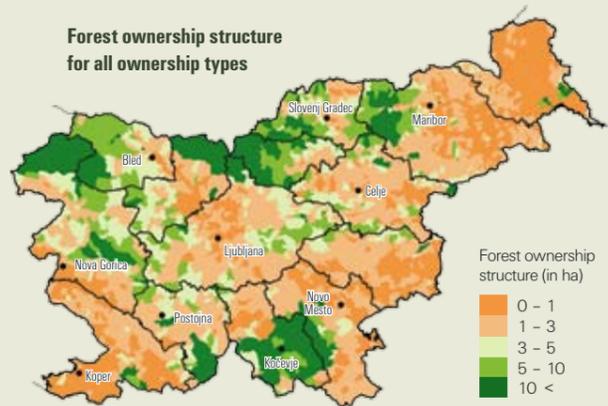
Public relations and education of forest owners:

- popularization of forests and forestry;
- informing the public about the importance of forests and nature preservation;
- education and training of forest owners;
- co-operation in activities aimed at countryside development;
- developing study circles in the Slovenia Forest Service;
- management and popularization of forest educational, tourist and other theme trails;
- informing the public about forests, forestry and activities of the Slovenia Forest Service.

Other fields:

- expert orientation in letting out work in state forests, supervising the realisation of work and accepting performed works by procurement of the Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia;
- participating in research work;
- participating in international projects.

Forests in Slovenia



Forestation and variety of forests

Slovenia belongs to the most forested countries in Europe. 1,169,196 ha of forests cover more than a half of its territory (forestation amounts to 57.7 %). Most Slovenian forests are located within the area of beech, fir-beech and beech-oak sites (70 %), which have a relatively high production capacity.

Forest ownership

71 % of forests in Slovenia are private property, 29 % of forests are public (owned by the state or communes). Larger and undivided forest estates of state-owned forests enable good professional management. Private forest estates are small, with an average area of only 3 ha and even these are further fragmented into several separate plots. For the great majority of these estates forests are not of economic interest. Private forest property is becoming even more fragmented as the number of forest owners is increasing. According to the latest data there are already 314,000 (with co-owners even 489,000) forest owners in Slovenia. The major fragmentation of forest property, the number of forest owners and co-owners, present a serious obstacle to professional work in private forests, to optimal timber production and utilisation of forest potential.

Growing stock, increment and cut

According to the data of forest management plans by the Slovenia Forest Service, the growing stock of Slovenian forests amounts to 300,000,000 cubic metres or 257 cubic metres per hectare. The share of growing stock of coniferous trees is 47.4 %, of deciduous trees 52.6 %. In Slovenian forests there is an annual increment of 7,500,000 cubic metres of wood or 6.4 cubic metres per hectare.

In recent years the cut in Slovenian forests has totalled 3 million m³ of trees annually, 60 % of which have been conifers and 40 % deciduous trees. The cut falls behind the possible one according to forest management plans and it amounts to 70 % of it and 40 % of current increment.

Disruptions endangering Slovenian forests

In addition to damage caused by weather (wind, sleet, snow), Slovenian forests have lately been endangered mostly by insects (mainly by bark beetles) that are the most common reason for sanitary cut (54.7 % of sanitary cut). On average sanitary cut amounts to a third of the entire cut, around 30 %, and in different years it ranges between 19 % and 45 % of the total cut. Such a situation reduces the share of necessary tending cut, thus making planned forest management difficult and at the same time it weakens the bioecological stability of forests.

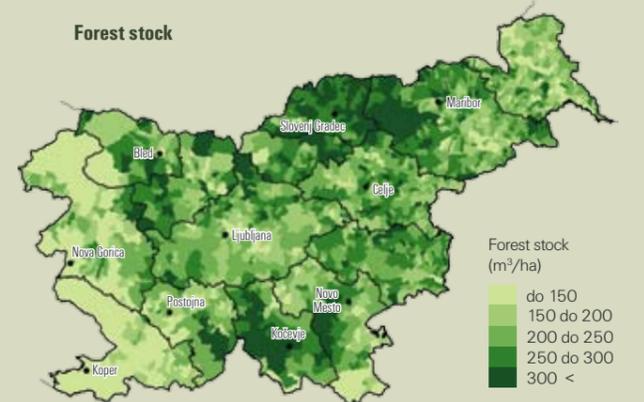
Slovenian forest in figures

Forest area:	1,169,196 ha
Growing stock:	300,750,432 m ³ (257 m ³ /ha)
Annual increment:	7,552,107 m ³ (6,46 m ³ /ha)
Possible cut:	4,316,098 m ³
Total annual cut (2005):	3,253,184 m ³
Coniferous trees:	2,047,403 m ³
Deciduous trees:	1,205,780 m ³
Realised cut represents 75 % of possible cut.	
Length of forest roads:	12,683 km
Length of forest borders:	cca 115,000 km
Budget funds (in EUR):	
- for silviculture and forest protection:	1,801,083
- maintenance of wildlife environment:	86,506
- forest road maintenance:	1,053,427
Single Programming Document (SPD)	
- for silviculture and forest protection	655,300

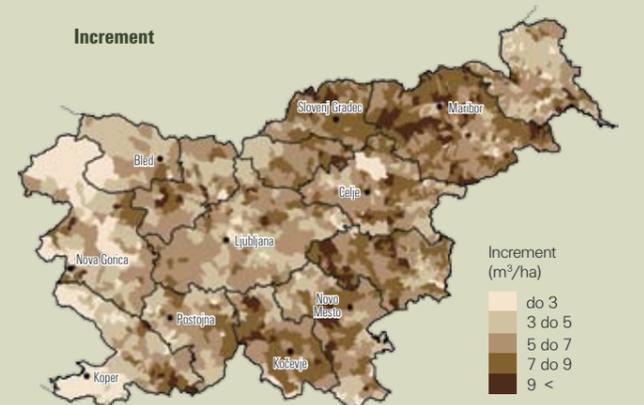
(1 EUR = 239,5914 SIT; jan. 2006)

Data source: The Slovenia Forest Service Report on Slovenian forest for 2005

Forest stock



Increment



Forest management planning in Slovenia



The beginning of forest management planning in Slovenia dates back to the first half of 18th century. The first forest management plan is Flameck's plan for Tolmin forests from 1770. Forest management planning was given a fresh impetus at the end of 19th century when two distinguished foresters, Dr. Leopold Hufnagel and Heinrich Schollmayer, started working in the Kočevje and Notranjska regions. Forest management regions were formed in Slovenia in 1948, the first systematic forest data collection was made in 1947, while the first forest management plans for all 14 forest management regions were elaborated for the period 1971 – 1980.

The principal tasks of the Slovenia Forest Service in the field of forest management planning are: collecting data about forests according to the Regulation on forest management and silvicultural plans, mapping forest functions, making decennial forest management plans for 236 forest management units and 14 forest management regions, and preparing professional foundations, expert opinions, conditions, guidelines and accords for all interventions in the forest and forest space. Besides that, experts of the Slovenia Forest Service co-operate with numerous borderline branches in the space (agriculture, water management, urbanization, nature protection) and with them they reconcile different, often also conflicting interests.

For field data capturing numerous new technologies are used that developed towards the end of 1990s. We efficiently use digital orthophotos and digital cadastral plans with which we have improved field orientation and precision in space data collecting. The Slovenia Forest Service is nowadays facing new challenges such as operative use of colour satellite high resolution photos, of Global Positioning Systems (GPS) and enabling the permanent access to space data about forests on the Internet.

Forest management plans, elaborated for a period of ten years, describe the state of forests and their development trends, set the goals of management in the future (also by taking into account the analysis of management in the past) together with guidelines and measures for the rational implementation of these goals. In the past, the principal and nearly the only objective of forest management was timber production: for building and construction, mines, wood used for heating and furniture manufacture etc. Nowadays this objective is still significant, but new ones are steadily but surely assuming importance. They are related to important forest functions such as protective, biotopic, water protective, recreational, etc. For an objective and rational assessment of these goals a map of forest functions is used, which was elaborated in 2001 and is regularly updated at renewal of plans in forest management units.



In making plans the Slovenia Forest Service also co-operates with environmental organizations. Full attention is given to forests, designated as forests with a special purpose and to all forests located in NATURE 2000 regions, which means that all planned guidelines and measures are especially carefully discussed, also considering wider interests of nature preservation.

The procedure of adopting forest management plans, as defined by law, enables co-operation of forest owners and the public in public debates. Thus everybody has the possibility of giving argumentative remarks and suggestions regarding a forest management plan which is in the case of forest management units at the end of the procedure adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food. In the case of forest management regions forest management plans are adopted by the government of the Republic of Slovenia.



The close-to-nature principle and sustainability in designing forest development have been leading forestry for more than 50 years and we keep to this tradition. The speciality of Slovenian forests lies in small-area forest treatment, where we pay attention down to the smallest detail in forest ecosystems and to external influence and interests that affect forest development. Irrespective of their ownership, all forests are given the same attention. The planning process is not finished with forest management planning. Strategic decisions on directing forest development in a forest management plan form the basis for implementational silvicultural planning used for planning immediate activities in the concrete forest.

Silvicultural planning is the link between forest management planning and carrying out work in forests. Up to a tenth of silvicultural plans are annually updated or renewed in Slovenia, ie approximately for 100 thousand hectares of forests. These plans form the basis for all activities carried out in forests for directing forest development.

Our special attention is given to **forest regeneration** when life of a tree begins that may last for decades or even centuries. Slovenian forestry is outstanding in the preservation of forest type structure. Mistakes made in this development period may long be incorrigible, therefore this process requires our special attention. As many as 99.5 % of forests are regenerated naturally, which is a guarantee of the ecological stability of the forest.

Only exceptionally is forest regeneration carried out by planting seedlings or sowing seeds, which is only an addition to natural regeneration and is carried out in cases when in forests, damaged by the rigours of the weather, it is necessary to accelerate ground growth, when the heritage of the past, ie spruce culture, started decades ago, has to be regenerated with a more natural tree species structure, suited to the site, and also in cases when a forest develops in a very particular way and there is no adequate seed production or no possibility of natural seeding of appropriate tree species. In these cases we regenerate forests by planting seedlings or sowing seeds of forest tree species, suited to individual sites. In the structure of seedlings there is a half of deciduous trees (mostly beech, oak, ash, maple, and cherry seedlings) and a half of coniferous trees (mostly spruce and larch), altogether more than twenty different species of trees. More than a million seedlings of forest trees are planted every year and they are provided by the Slovenia Forest Service.

To ensure the proper source of planting material there are more than two hundred selected seed stands registered in Slovenia where seed production is monitored. We send information about seed production to tree nurseries, supervise collecting of seed and issue attestations that guarantee the right origin. To ensure undisturbed supply of suitable seeding material, the Slovenia Forest Service runs a seed bank, where reserves of seed are kept to grow seedlings for years with no adequate seed production.

Forest development is directed throughout life, from an individual tree to the whole forest ecosystem. By tending we direct the development of a young forest from its beginnings to the grown-up stage. In the development stage of seedlings, ie in two or three decades, we carry out tending at least three to four times. By tending the young forest in Slovenia we direct the development in the area of 1 % of all forests annually. In nature selection is constantly made by eliminating less vital, less healthy and to the site less adapted trees. **Forest tending is based on the principle of selecting trees** according to the criteria of vitality, adaptability to the site, role in the ecosystem, health condition and quality. According to the same principle we also direct the forest development in adult forests by selecting trees for possible cut, which is done by district foresters in all forests regardless of their ownership, in co-operation with forest owners and on the basis of forest management and silvicultural plans. The selection of trees for possible cut is annually realized by felling of approximately three million cubic metres of wood mass.

Realisation of silvicultural work is the responsibility of the owner. Among the most important fields of activities of a district forester is co-operation with forest owners in the form of advising, educating and training for carrying out professional work of silviculture and forest protection. The most effective in this are direct contacts with owners, but besides, more than 100 seminars and workshops are organized by the Slovenia Forest Service annually to educate forest owners.

Nature and administrative procedures are two different notions, but nevertheless for all activities of silviculture (including selection of trees for possible felling) and of forest protection, the Slovenia Forest Service issues administrative decrees for forest owners (64,144 decrees in 2004).

Forest owners, despite the proved benefit for the forest, are not eager enough for long-term investments in forests, such as tending the young forest. Work and financial resources intended for forest are the investment that mostly they will not benefit from themselves. Therefore, and also due to the public interest in generally useful roles of the forest, the system of financing and co-financing investments in forests has been established from the budget of the Republic of Slovenia and the European funds, which enables forest owners who manage their forests according to the plans, to obtain some resources once their work is finished. Activities performed in forests are annually planned and regarding necessity and urgency they figure in the annual realization programme. All this great work of investing in forests, done by their owners, is directed by district foresters in their direct contacts with forest owners. Their help and guidance range from professional advice and practical demonstrations to work accounts and records by which we control the realization of what has been planned.



Forest protection in the past was mostly oriented towards fighting bark beetles and some diseases of forest trees such as Chestnut Blight (*Cryphonectria parasitica*). In the last decades the understanding of forest protection, together with the holistic view on forests, has extended to forestry as a whole. At planning measures in the forest, protection of forests is integrated in the very measure, since prevention is the cheapest and most effective protection. Of course we have not disregarded the classical forms of protection such as fighting harmful insects and diseases. On the contrary, due to climatic changes and globalization of timber and plant trade, Slovenian forests have not been spared by organisms that once were not important or did not even exist in Slovenian or European forests, but have now multiplied and started to cause damage. Forest protection and prevention planning also mean the introduction of new technologies of timber production or the improvement of the existing ones.

Realization of protective works in forests is, as other types of work, left to the forest owner. The exception are preventive protection works such as laying control bark beetle slot traps and putting up panels warning us about hazards of forest fires. These works are carried out by the Slovenia Forest Service within the scope of their regular job or by their contractors. Certainly forest owners are not left alone since protective works, as well as silvicultural works, are planned and directed by the Slovenia Forest Service. At the same time, the Slovenia Forest Service can, or better has to, impose urgent protective works on forest owners by a decree that is also followed by realization by another person if they are not performed at the stated time and as prescribed.

The care for consistent and as easily as possible performed forest protection work also includes the purchase of materials needed for its realization. Within the framework of financing and co-financing investments in forests, all the materials needed for carrying out protective works are bought with the budget funds of the Republic of Slovenia, and on the basis of issued decrees and signed consignment notes they are delivered to the forest owner free of charge. For the timely and quality realization of protective work, forest owners are also co-financed, which depends on the size of the estate, the forest owner's domicile, on emphasized forest functions and the type of performed work.

The main emphases on forest protection are as follows:

- protection against **insects**,
- protection against **forest tree diseases**,
- protection against **fires**,
- protection against **herbivores**,
- other protection (such as protection against erosion and damage done to forest trees as a result of work in the forest).

At protecting forests against insects, far and away the most important is the fight against bark beetles on spruce and fir.

Fire protection is of special importance in Slovenia. The Karst region, where there are as many as 90 % of all fires in the natural environment in Slovenia, was completely bare until 150 years ago. Owing to persistent and professional work Karst managed to be afforested, so nowadays its forest cover is higher than 50 %. Therefore the damage caused by forest fires is much greater than just the damage because of destroyed wood mass and intervention costs.

Protection against herbivores is mostly limited to protection of young forests which, in areas with large numbers of herbivorous deer, are often too exposed to damage caused by nibbling, browsing, bark peeling and rubbing.



Extension for forest owners

The major topic of extension for forest owners in the field of forestry technique is safe work in forests because in this way we want to reduce the number of accidents that occur to private forest owners during their work in the forest. The most important and intensive form of extension are courses where participants practically train the technique of safe work; other forms that have to be mentioned as well are lectures, field demonstrations and demonstrations at fairs, competitions of forest owners in cutting and publishing activity.

Besides, we also advise forest owners by organizing courses in bucking forest wood assortments so that such wood would be evaluated in the best possible way. We co-operate with other institutions in forest certifying.

Introducing new technologies into Slovenian forests

We are of the opinion that while introducing new technologies (eg mechanized cutting), it is very important for the forestry profession to find the best solution for Slovenian forests without affecting the Slovenian forestry doctrine. Our activities are therefore oriented towards:

- **educating** forestry experts and others working in forests (organization of workshops, lectures and field demonstrations);
- **linking** all those interested or concerned in mechanized cutting in Slovenia;
- **preparing data and maps** about forests in Slovenia where mechanized cutting is possible;
- **giving proposals** to change legislation.

Doing this we closely co-operate with the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, the Department of Forestry and Renewable Resources at the Biotechnical Faculty in Ljubljana, the Farmland and Forest Fund of the Republic of Slovenia and with some other forest management companies.

Advice on proper use of wood

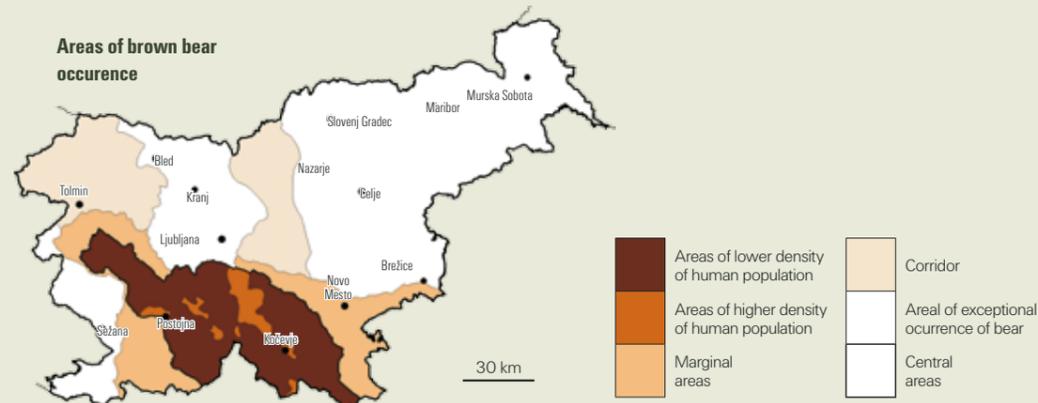
When dealing with the use of wood as an energy source we see the main role of the Slovenia Forest Service in estimating actual potential in Slovenia and for this purpose a special information system was elaborated which enables competent strategic and local decision taking in introducing this energy use in Slovenia. A network of advisers has been set up with other institutions for the effective use of wood for energy, which gives advice to all those interested in this field.

Forest roads

Work in the area of forest roads generally encompasses activities of forest road maintenance and construction, keeping data bases and planning the accessibility of forest space. The most important activity of the Slovenia Forest Service is ensuring maintenance of forest roads and its role is to prepare annual programmes of maintenance in individual local communities. It also co-operates in the selection of work performers and it supervises their work. In co-operation with forest owners the Slovenia Forest Service determines the traffic regime on forest roads, which is of special importance in those forest areas where conflicting interests occur as to their exploitation. A decree prohibiting driving in the natural environment allows driving on forest roads, but not on skid trails that are only designed for skidding wood. To have a complete review of the state of forest roads, the Slovenia Forest Service keeps records of forest roads, uniform for all Slovenia. According to these records there are a little more than 12,500 km of forest roads in Slovenia, which represents a relatively rich network of roads, intended primarily for forest management, but due to their public character they represent a good extension of the public road network.

Forest roads also include skid trails, whose preparation and construction is directed by the Slovenia Forest Service through technological parts of silvicultural plans.

Forest wildlife and hunting



With the Act on Forests (1993) game management first started to be professionally dealt with in forestry, that is by the Slovenia Forest Service.

The work of the Slovenia Forest Service is above all centred on planning - our competence is to elaborate hunting management plans. In 2002 strategic documents were made and confirmed, ie decennial hunting management plans for hunting management regions. With the new Act on Game and Hunting, passed in 2004, the Slovenia Forest Service kept its **central role in planning**, now for 15 hunting management areas, and at the same time it got many new responsibilities among which we should mention the preparation of professional bases for practically all acts from the field of game and hunting, care for work and interventions in the environment, and collaboration of hunting organizations - hunting clubs, united in the Slovenia Hunters' Association, with hunting reserves with a special purpose, united in public institutions - the Slovenia Forest Service and the Triglav National Park.

Besides hunting management planning we care for planned and proper use of budget funds for investments in the wildlife environment in private forests. By cooperating in the elaboration of regulations at the state level and by following them carefully, the Slovenia Forest Service helps to create a friendly wildlife environment. The Slovenia Forest Service keeps all necessary data bases about the state of animal populations and their environment and it performs legal duties towards state organs and the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. When monitoring the state in forests regarding game, we make a **systematic inventory of browsed forest seedlings.**

The Slovenia Forest Service has become the basic institution for monitoring the state of large carnivore populations (**brown bear, wolf and lynx**), assessing the damage done by these species (and by other protected wildlife species), proposing their necessary elimination by killing, performing measurements of eliminated animals, and for co-operating in the preparation of strategic documents (strategies, action plans ...). In 2000 the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food appointed an **intervention team for brown bear** which is led and financed by the Slovenia Forest Service. In this area of work we lead or co-operate in several international projects, mostly regarding large carnivores:

- **reintroduction of brown bears** in the countries of the European Union (Austria, France, Italy) in collaboration with hunting reserves with a special purpose in the Slovenia Forest Service;
- **international project »Bear in Slovenia«** in collaboration with the Slovenia Hunters' Association, the Biotechnical Faculty, WGM Germany, University of Vienna - Austria;
- **leading the EU LIFE Nature project - »Conservation of large carnivores in Slovenia« - Phase I (Brown Bear)** together with seven partners;
- co-operation in EU LIFE Co-op project - **»Possibilities of creating brown bear metapopulation in the Alps«.**

State hunting reserves with a special purpose in the structure of the Slovenia Forest Service

Hunting reserves with a special purpose are areas for game management in regions with the best preserved nature and diverse flora and fauna.

Preserved Slovenian forests that are the result of century-long, carefully planned work in forestry and hunting, together with cultivated cultural landscape, ensure diversity of the vegetable and animal kingdom. In the environmental sense the most preserved are those areas where game management is carried out by hunting reserves with a special purpose. The Slovenia Forest Service manages ten such reserves.

State hunting reserves with a special purpose are very suitable for all most important field researches and scientific research projects on game and hunting; at the same time, by means of data and helped by the staff of hunting reserves, numerous seminar projects as well as dissertations have been elaborated here to obtain university, master's or doctor's degrees.

In state hunting reserves with a special purpose within the Slovenia Forest Service hunting is not the end, but a means to an end, which for us signifies a harmonious relationship between game populations, other wildlife species and their environment, at the same time enabling various human activities.

The activity of our hunting reserves with a special purpose is therefore sustainable game management as well as protection of endangered and rare animal species.

Within the Slovenia Forest Service there are the following hunting reserves with a special purpose:

Prodi-Razor	Tolmin regional unit
Kozorog Kamnik	Kranj regional unit
Ljubljanski vrh	Ljubljana regional unit
Jelen	Postojna regional unit
Medved	Kočevje regional unit
Snežnik Kočevska Reka	Kočevje regional unit
Žitna gora	Kočevje regional unit
Pohorje	Maribor regional unit
Fazan Beltinci	Murska Sobota regional unit
Kompas Peskovci	Murska Sobota regional unit

Guests to our hunting reserves, either hunters or just visitors of well-preserved natural environment, often return with their families and friends, wishing to experience again or to get to know even better the natural beauties of Slovenia and to enjoy professional service of our staff.

Public relations and education of forest owners

With regard to its links with forests and forestry, the public is divided into different groups with which we communicate in different ways and organize various activities to raise awareness of the importance of forests. It is also informed about the events related to forests and work of the Slovenia Forest Service. In all types of activities intended for the public we wish, as necessary and within the scope of possibility, to approach as much as possible the two-way, symmetrical model of public relations, which means consideration and participation or partnership. All organizational units of the Slovenia Forest Service are involved in work with forest owners and the public.

Forest owners form a large group within the general public, ie all the inhabitants of Slovenia who have certain rights and duties in managing their forests. The central theme in the relationship between The Slovenia Forest Service and forest owners is orientation of forest management and related counselling, education and training. All Slovenian residents, regarded as the general public of our country, have a **free access to forests, they can move freely in them and as a recreational activity they are permitted to pick forest fruit and hunt** in accordance with the regulations.

Education and training of forest owners

The Slovenia Forest Service develops its relations with forest owners through the following activities:

- **individual counselling for forest owners** is carried out mostly in personal contacts between the district forester and the forest owner when marking trees for felling, preparing the annual forestry work plan and issuing ordinances for silvicultural work, forest protection work and others for forest owners. Advice can also be provided by telephone (the number of the Slovenia Forest Service free of charge), by email, on the Slovenia Forest Service website and by direct mail in the form of answers to forest owners' questions.
- **group training of forest owners** is performed by courses on forestry technique, in workshops on silviculture and forest protection, by lectures and excursions for forest owners, study circles, exhibitions at fairs and other events.
- **education by printed, electronic and video materials,**
- **education by media** (radio, television).

Public relations

Public relations are being developed by the following activities:

- **popularization of forests**, defined as spreading of popular knowledge and information about forests and raising awareness of the public as to the importance of forests, is determined by the Act on Forests. It is carried out by means of various activities for different target groups. On the whole, these activities can be divided into those where the staff of the Slovenia Forest Service are in personal contact with people (guiding on forest educational trails, tourist and other educational routes, excursions, exhibitions, lectures, conferences, forest week, round-table discussions and other events), media and written materials, electronic materials, video materials and the Internet,
- **informing the public** about the work of the Slovenia Forest Service and of interesting topical events related to forests. The public is most often informed by media (press conferences, communiqués, Internet). To inform internal public the internal paper is published and the Intranet is being developed,
- **providing information of public interest** in accordance with the provisions of the Act on Access to Information of Public Interest, passed in Slovenia in 2003. The system and practice of providing this information with regard to the activities of the Slovenia Forest Service are being developed.
- **business communication with associates**, these being organizations and institutions with which the Slovenia Forest Service collaborates on formal ground (regulations, contracts) or on the basis of informal mutual interests.

Development of countryside and tourism in forest and forest space

By educating forest owners, taking charge of forest educational trails and other tourist routes, with study circles and by encouraging associations of forest owners, the Slovenia Forest Service is also active in developing countryside and tourism in forest and forest space. In urban environment we are working on the popularization of forests and forestry mostly in urban forests, this being done by encouraging their administrative and infrastructure regulation as well as by interpreting forests, nature and forest management for social functions. Within the department two working teams are appointed for the development of countryside and urban forests.



Forest educational trails are marked trails through the forest, equipped with educational texts. They serve to **raise public awareness and improve understanding of the forest and help the public develop a more responsible attitude to it**. The two first forest educational trails were established in 1974 and there are currently more than 80 of them in Slovenia. We provide professionally guided tours for groups of visitors, but recently more and more attention on forest educational trails has been given to the interpretation of forest and nature.

MAŠUN Forest House Information and educational centre at the foot of Snežnik

The Mašun forest house is a new acquisition of the Slovenia Forest Service, in particular of the Postojna regional unit. The former foresters' house is now a modern, well-equipped educational and information centre, designed for various presentations of forests, forestry, wildlife and hunting on Snežnik and also in a wider area. A multimedia hall and other rooms offer possibilities for various exhibitions, educational activities and business meetings. In the Mašun forest house there is a special presentation of brown bear, created and co-financed with the EU project Life – nature: Conservation of large carnivores in Slovenia, Phase I – Brown bear. The nearby Mašun educational trail complements the mission of the centre.

Joining European trends

The Slovenia Forest Service actively participates in international forestry organizations and with its rich experience and forestry tradition it tries to contribute to a responsible attitude to forests and nature. The Slovenia Forest Service co-operates with the following organizations outside Slovenia:

- Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations (UN – ECE)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (UN – FAO)
- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- International Union of Forestry Research Organizations (IUFRO)

Financially supported by the European Union, the Slovenia Forest Service alone, or in collaboration with other Slovenian and foreign institutions, carries out numerous international projects.



ZAVOD za GOZDOVE SLOVENIJE
Slovenia Forest Service



Slovenia Forest Service

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