

The management of forests in the Vesuvius National Park: an opportunity for international cooperation

C. BIFULCO

Parco Nazionale del Vesuvio, P.zza Municipio 8, 80040 S. Sebastiano al Vesuvio (Napoli), Italy.
direttore@parconazionaledelvesuvio.it

Abstract. The Vesuvius National Park (Naples, Italy), in collaboration with several Italian and European administrative or scientific institutions, is involved in a program that has the aim to take into consideration all

problems concerning Mediterranean forests, such as models of forest management and preservation of biodiversity.

Key words: Italy, Mediterranean forests, National parks, Vesuvius

In 1999, the International Association "Mediterranean Forests" and the Vesuvius National Park, together with the Provence-Alps-Cote d'Azur region of France and the Campania region of Italy, have promoted a project within the ambit of the European INTERREG II C program, which is concerned with the problems of Mediterranean forests. This project has now reached its conclusion.

One of the most important results has been the consolidation of a network composed of all groups interested in Mediterranean forests. This network has been created to extend discussion, which used to be largely restricted to foresters, to include historians, botanists, ecologists and economists, as well as administrators, landscape painters, fire fighters, and naturalists, with the aim of exchanging information and opinions related to the Mediterranean region.

The technical, political and cultural comparison undertaken in this project has naturally produced a lot of proposals which have been analysed by the European partners within the INTERREG III B program, enriching it also with the pilot experiences of forest management planned and supervised by an international groups of experts.

The geographical ambit of this new initiative includes not only the Provence-Alps-Cote d'Azur region, the Campania region, and the Vesuvius National Park, but also other groups that have already joined: the Catalogna region (Spain), the Algarve region (Portugal) and the Umbria region (Italy).

In the case of Vesuvius National Park, we will undertake a lot of forest management that will certainly differ from that directed towards the most profitable production of timber. It is necessary to recognize the models of forest management designed for the preservation of biodiversity since these are not virgin forests in a stable ecological balance. They are formations that for centuries have suffered human interventions, whether the cutting of wood, or the elimination or introduction of various woody species.

Others geographical ambits are the identification of management models which could be very functional for other specific demands as well as the matched use of different resources as woods and pasture, that are different from only seeking the greatest productivity of timber for cutting.

The network of contacts which has been consolidated, and the exchange of information that has been carried out, allow us to identify another field of action related to forest management in which international cooperation can favour the achievement of new results.

During the past, it was usual to introduce "exotics" (arboreal species from other countries or different environments) in order to increase the economic return. Some of those species are now well acclimatised and have become invasive. Furthermore, some of the exotics form forest monocultures in which all other species disappear. For example, in Peneda Geres National Park in Portugal and also in France, and along various Mediterranean rivers, *Acacia dealbata*, the mimo-

sa, has displaced the natives species that were in the forest; and in Vesuvius National Park (and in many others areas in Italy), *Robinia pseudoacacia* (the false locust) and *Ailanthus altissima* form forests and bushy areas in which the other species, including those planted by man, cannot survive.

The possibility of studying these phenomena (of which we know only the macroscopic effects and for which we don't know antidote) by putting together our unique knowledge and common economic resources, has already been demonstrated.

Extending the study to the matter of naturalistic engineering (BIFULCO 2001) and to the diffusion of this technique throughout the Mediterranean area, already brings together four National Parks: Peneda Geres in Portugal, Vesuvius in Italy, Port Cros in France, and Bou Kormine in Tunisia.

The target of these plans is not only to know a natural phenomenon by understanding the theory of the system but also to experiment using other management patterns where our forests could be managed by man for the indefinite future.

LITERATURE CITED

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