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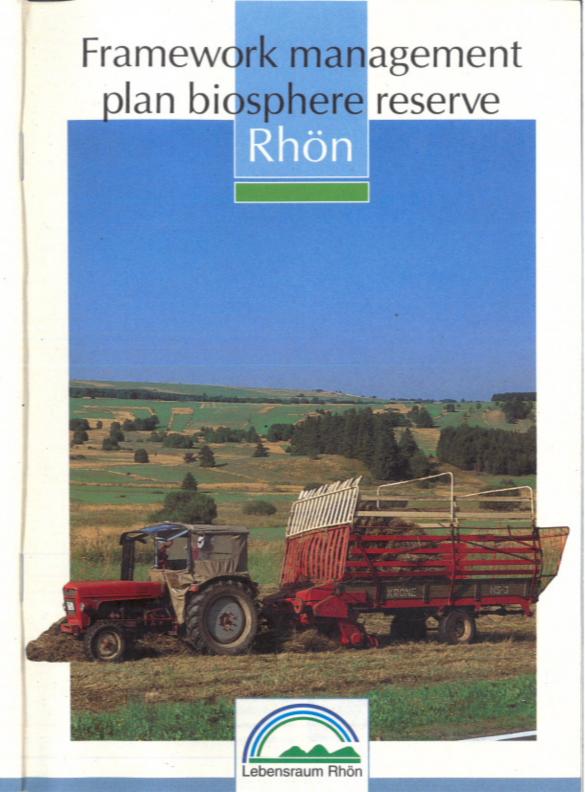
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EIN BIOSPHÄRENRESERVAT



The following text is a summary of the complete framework management plan for the biosphere reserve RHÖN, edited by the State Ministery of Development and Environmental Affairs of Bavaria, the Ministery of Development, Settlement, Agriculture, Forestry and Nature Conservation of Hesse and the Ministery of Agriculture, Nature Conservation and Environmental Affairs of Thuringia, available at the administrations for the biosphere reserve Rhon. see back cover

### Framework management plan for the biosphere reserve RHÖN

In March 1991 the RHON was adopted by UNESCO as a biosphere reserve and thus became part of the international programme "Man and the Biosphere" (MAB). The Standing Working Group on Biosphere Reserves in Germany defined (in 1994) that:

"Biosphere reserves are representative parts of natural and cultural landscapes extending over large areas. Depending on the impact of human activities, they are divided into a conservation area, a maintenance zone and a development area which may also comprise a regeneration zone. Most parts of the biosphere reserve area have been placed under legal protection.

Biosphere reserves seve to formulate and implement model

concepts of protection, maintenance and development in co-operation with the local people living and working in these areas. Biosphere reserves are used for research into the interrelationship between man and his environment as well as for integrated monitoring and environmental education. They are recognised by UNESCO under the 'Man and the Biosphere' Programme."

This definition reflects the broad objectives of the biosphere reserves. It is not a question of delimiting and protecting individual parts of landscapes from any human influence but rather of integrating claims for utilization raised by man into an integrated

general management conception. Biosphere reserves should have a model character; strategies should be developed in biosphere reserves which guarantee the long-term survival of mankind. It is to be shown that man can utilize the biosphere without destroying it, something which cannot

be shown in remote protected areas without any influence exerted by man.

Unlike national parks. biosphere reserves thus include landscapes with various degrees of utilization, reaching from very near-natural ecosystems to areas subject to intensive farming or construction work. On the basis of such a variety of utilization structures and for the benefit of harmonizing different conservation and development

targets an internal structure - so-called zones - of the biosphere reserve is

required. By dividing the reserve into different zones several development objectives may be implemented in different parts of the reserve.

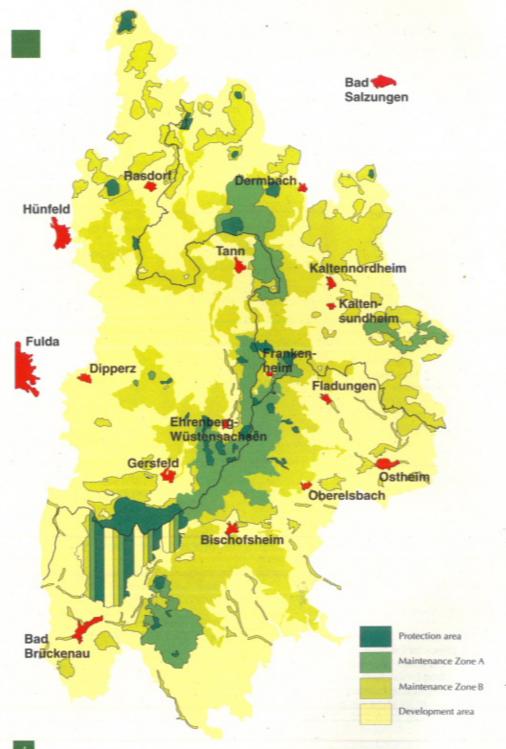
RHON from the original 132,000

hectares to almost 185,000 hectares.

The division into zones constitutes the basis for a meaningful development of the area as a whole taking into account the existing natural site conditions. The development of the above-mentioned zones was one of the most important tasks of the framework management plan. The outer delimitation was also reexamined and it was proposed to extend the biosphere reserve



UNESCO-certificate



The framework management plan for the biosphere reserve RHÖN is in its extentivity the first of its kind in Germany. In accordance with the broad range of targets it is not merely a technocratic management plan focussing on nature conservation only but constitutes an integrated holistic plan for the development of the region on the basis of its natural site conditions.

Expertises were drawn up for areas such as agriculture, forestry, tourism, settlements, economy, traffic and transport and integrated into the framework management plan.

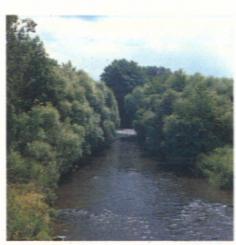
During its entire developing phase the framework management plan was discussed intensively with all communities, authorities and associations involved.

Informative events, study groups and the distribution of interim reports asking for comments ensured that all socially relevant groups were involved in preparatory work.

This procedure led to a harmonized regional management plan which is to become the basis for a future-oriented and environmentally compatible development of the RHÖN.

# Bases and fundamental conditions for the framework management plan

 The cultural landscape RHÖN is characterized by particularities of international importance with respect to the appearance of the landscape and fauna and flora. Vast parts of the RHÖN are covered by extremely valuable landscape areas, especially the extensively utilized grassland ecosystems as well as bogs, hedges and near-natural forests with vast extensions which distinguish the RHÖN from other uplands. The same is underlined by the presence of animal species which are very sensitive to any disturbances and need large interconnected habitats.



River Ulster

 The RHÖN's relief, soils and climate are very often characterized by unfavourable site conditions. This makes agricultural land-use difficult and has led to the conservation of large, extensively utilized landscape areas.



Semixeric grassland



Mat grass meadows

- The RHÖN is a rural region, not densely populated and still strongly influenced by agriculture and forestry. The commercial and industrial development is – in comparison to other areas – less intensive and primarily promoted by small and medium-sized companies since the area as such is quite remote from important traffic axes and large conurbations.
- The RHÖN is a structurally weak border region which belongs to three different Federal Länder. This leads to the separation of interconnected areas as well as infrastructural and administrative differences within the RHÖN.

 The RHON is equipped with attractive appearances of the landscape with natural and cultural highlights; these highlights have contributed to the increasing importance of tourism in recent years.

On the basis of these structural site conditions the framework management plan presents a development strategy which – on the basis of the area's natural site quality and the resources in the area – should improve regional added value by activating existing potential.

The aims defined by nature conservation and landscape maintenance are thus to be brought into line with the economic development of the RHÖN. The economic systems which are to be promoted in all sectors are those which are characterized by environmental compatibility and sparing use of resources.

This also means that the present quality of the multifaceted economic structure of the Rhön should be maintained. Hopes are thus not focussing on a few large-scale projects; rather the many positive approaches in the sectors agriculture, crafts and tourism are to be strengthened.

The linkage of different partial interests as well as a strong internal integration are of great importance to the framework management plan. Regional economic synergy effects are to be created in such a way that the added value can be increased on a broad basis in the region.

Optimum preconditions exist in the RHÖN for such a type of regional development plan.

The capital of a well-functioning nature and landscape which is confirmed by

designation as a biosphere reserve may be the point of departure for a futureoriented development of the region. By means of an integrated strategy, which for example covers the sectors nature conservation, agriculture, tourism and crafts, the strong points of the region can be promoted and considerable stimulating effects achieved.

One good example for such a strategy is the increased utilization of products in restaurants stemming from local agriculture which are grown-under environmentally compatible conditions. Farmers can find guaranteed and attractive sales opportunities, restaurants may advertise as providing a healthy cuisine typical of the region and at the same time the maintenance of valuable cultural landscape within the meaning of nature conservation is guaranteed.

Such a management plan requires private voluntary initiatives and a high degree of cooperation by all persons concerned. Intensive information campaigns and advice are therefore extremely important, in particular in the initial phase of the project.





### Zonation of the biosphere reserve

By means of the division into three different zones the varied protection and development objectives are to be harmonized within a spatially differentiated management plan on the basis of the natural site qualities.



Detail of zonation

The conservation area should develop without any human interference into primarily natural ecosystems. These areas which are distributed all over the RHÖN cover 2.1% of the entire biosphere reserve and thus constitute only a very small part of it. Primarily near-natural deciduous forests and bogs were selected which are distributed among the different site types of the RHON. Areas which are of high interest to science for comparative purposes are thus available in a landscape which is hardly influenced by man and is integrated into a worldwide network.

The small percentage of the conservation area demonstrates that this aspect does not play a central role in the management plan defining the objectives. The center of the framework management plan is rather the issue of further conservation and maintenance of valuable open landscapes.

The maintenance zone comprises those areas which are of particular importance to the character and peculiarity of the RHÖN landscape.

These are large coherent near-natural areas with an agricultural landscape rich in species and structures together with near-natural forests. The continuation of traditional land use is thus of highest importance in this area.

The phenomena of fallow land and reafforestation are to be avoided by funds for the promotion of nature conservation and landscape maintenance. In addition, model-like future-oriented types of land



Beech forest

use are to be developed which will allow further farming on an economically feasible basis taking into account the present framework conditions.

Since the maintenance zone encompasses a large amount of the total surface of the RHÖN (36.4%) it was proposed in the framework management plan to divide it in two.

Maintenance zone A with 7.8% includes the highly sensitive and low-disturbance areas of higher altitudes of the HOHE RHÖN (upper Rhön) around the LANGE RHÖN and the ROTE MOOR (red bog), the mountain range from the ROSSBERG to the WEIDBERG, the SCHWARZE BERGE (black mountains) and the southern slopes of the GEBA. The conservation of the landscape and its fauna and flora is of highest importance in this area.

Targets comprise the implementation of landscape maintenance measures as highest priority as well as the steering of visitors and a ban on construction projects and on any further development in these large sensitive landscapes.

Maintenance zone B with 28.7% includes the remaining and specially characterising cultivated areas typical for the natural and living area RHÖN which supplements and connects the conservation area with maintenance





zone A. Larger landscape complexes were delimited as far as possible. Maintenance zone B should contribute to the alleviation of the burden for maintenance zone A and measures implemented there should focus on recreational use compatible with the landscape and the environment. No settlements or commercial activities should be developed in this area.

The development zone remains the most important area for the economic development of the region. With almost 60% the development zone comprises the largest part of the biosphere reserve RHÖN. Agriculture and forestry find most favourable sites in this area and most settlements and industrial areas are also located in the development zone.

The development zone is a model region which is designed to demonstrate that man can utilize the biosphere without destroying it. The use of the development zone should therefore take place in an exemplary manner, environmentally compatible and sustainable.

From the point of view of the framework management plan this zone is most important in the biosphere reserve RHÖN. The sparing use of the earth's resources is to be put into practice here as a model since these issues are extremely important for the industrialized world.

The kind and intensity of human use will determine the quality of our landscapes not only in the RHÖN. The development zone must give the decisive inducement to protect the landscape of the RHÖN in its particularity, variety and beauty. Only the people who live here can maintain this landscape. Advisory campaigns and public relations work are therefore most important in the development zone.



Kuppenröhn in Hesse

# Targets of nature conservation and landscape maintenance in the biosphere reserve RHON

The targets of the nature conservation plan within the framework management plan follow from zoning.

It is not only the protection of individual areas by excluding utilization by man but rather the integration of nature conservation objectives into the aims and claims of different kinds of land use which is to be achieved in the biosphere reserve. Since the high value of the RHÖN is based on the traditional cultural landscape utilized by man, one must attach great importance to a common strategy of nature conservation and land use (integrated nature conservation).

This can lead to considerable synergy effects which promote activities compatible with nature conservation on the basis of economic advantages and which, therefore, strongly support the efforts of nature conservation to the benefit of landscape maintenance.

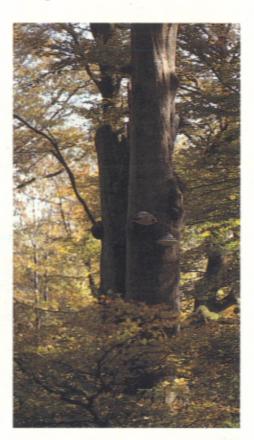
In view of the present excellent presence of species and habitats it is most important to maintain the quality of the RHÖN as it is at the moment. The central role is played by continued farming and maintenance of the extensively utilized grassland areas and the densely structured hedgerow-country by farmers. Especially the further afforestation of poor grassland areas must be avoided in order to conserve the habitats, the appearance of landscapes and the cultural and historic importance of the RHÖN.

For forests, the focus lies on the conservation of large, near-natural deciduous forests by means of near-natural or naturalistic forestry. Appropriate areas with near-natural deciduous forests are proposed as examples of representative forest ecosystems.

Managed deciduous forest

For nature conservation measures to be effective, the most valuable areas must be secured as protected areas in a sufficient size. These protected areas constitute a kind of retreat for endangered species and should be considered as central areas for the reacclimatization and propagation of formerly common species. In order to protect these areas against negative external influences (input of fertilizers and pesticides, disturbance and unrest) sufficient buffer zones must be established around them.

In order to guarantee a genetic exchange between protected areas, linking elements must be established

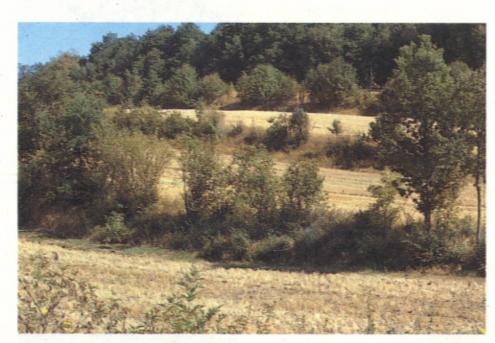


and a minimum quality must be guaranteed for intensively farmed areas as habitats for fauna and flora. The protection of the abiotic resources air, water and soil is of great importance especially in the more intensively utilized areas.

The objectives of nature conservation and landscape maintenance is put into practice by zoning on a large-scale

basis. Large-scale zoning does not, however, replace detailed examinations and plans at local level.

The biological potential of the maintenance zone is to be registered and minute conservation and management plans for the individual plots are to be developed and implemented. This is one of the most important tasks to be undertaken over the next few years.



Hedges as part of the cultural landscape

# Aims of the framework management plan for the individual utilization areas

#### Agriculture

Agriculture plays the most important role in the conservation of a cultural landscape. In addition to the production of foodstuffs with possibly high value it fulfills important functions for the conservation of the appearance of the landscape, for the protection of wild animals and plants, the resources water and soil and for the stabilization of the natural household.

One must strive for a kind of agriculture in the biosphere reserve which sustains the natural fertility of the soil in a sustainable manner and which does not have any considerable negative effects on the environmental media (such as air, water, animals and plants). Surfaces which are intensively farmed may not have any detrimental effect on neighbouring valuable biotopes and must - despite their character - guarantee a minimum of habitat quality. These conditions are met by ecological farming methods. But unlike the situation in other landscapes the present utilization intensity in the RHÖN is relatively compatible with nature.

In a biosphere reserve agricultural activities must also be preserved in areas with unfavourable site conditions. The necessary activities of landscape maintenance should – also in the future – be provided by the local farmer as the creator and custodian of the cultural landscape. These activities must be rewarded by society as a whole.

With respect to the agro-structural development it must be taken into account that the reduction in the number of farms and decreasing animal husbandry lead to a severe conflict which considerably endangers the protection target for the RHÖN, i.e., the conservation of a cultural landscape. The solution to that conflict is one of the main future tasks in the biosphere reserve.

The generally required reduction in agricultural production is to take place in the RHÖN by means of a voluntary



Agriculture - impossible today without modern equipment

extensification of farming in formerly especially intensively cultivated areas and not by large-scale abandonment or reafforestation of agricultural surfaces with marginal productivity. Economic framework conditions must be created which permit further farming without intensive fertilization and application of pesticides. In this respect the RHÖN is providing a model function for other European uplands. The aim is a graded farming intensity (cultivation gradient) reflecting site quality and capacities of surfaces; most farms are already practising such methods.

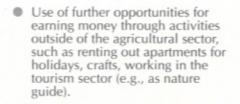
The framework management plan proposes the following targets and measures to support and promote farming in its important tasks within the framework of the conservation and maintenance of the cultural landscape RHÖN.

 Continued utilization of grassland by promoting milk cow husbandry (guaranteeing reference quantities,

- for milk, milk pooling, milk leasing) and support for extensive animal husbandry with, e.g., suckling cows or sheep.
- Promotion of direct marketing by farms, shops on the farm, delivery services and gaining restaurants, clinics etc. as partners and purchasers of agricultural products, design of a label stating the origin of the product and/or of a quality label.
- Extension of supra-company cooperation especially in the sector of marketing, extensive animal husbandry (e.g., pasture cooperative), common machines/stables, establishment of a surface exchange for land which would otherwise lie fallow, etc.
- Optimum use of already existing programmes for the promotion of nature conservation and agriculture by giving specific advice to all farmers.



Suckler cow herd



Increasing exploitation of alternative possibilities for the utilization of grassland products, e.g., selling hay, hay-based bathes, composting, and the production of energy.

These measures should be implemented on a step-by-step basis. The strategy of measures contained in the framework management plan is primarily aimed at voluntary cooperation by farmers. In the first step farmers should be advised as soon as possible and on an individual basis on the improved use of national financial programmes.

At the same time the opportunities for further cooperation between farms and possibilities to keep the milk quota in the region should be introduced. On a short and medium-term basis a comprehensive strategy for the improved marketing of products should be put into practice which will once again require preparatory intensive counselling for farmers.







Shepherd with herd



### Forestry

Forests must be maintained as such, due to their functions within the natural cycle and as habitats for fauna and flora. Wherever necessary, they should be ameliorated and in carefully selected areas even extended.

Especially near-natural forests should be conserved as representative examples of natural ecosystems of the central European deciduous forest belt and as natural forests without any exploitation by man (conservation area). The natural dynamism of forest ecosystems including breakdown and pioneer phases can only develop in an undisturbed manner in forests without any human interference.

The majority of the forest should still be available for further production of the environmentally friendly raw material wood; forestry must take into account sustainability and long-term developments. The guiding framework for forestry in the biosphere reserve consists in the requirement to manage the whole of the forest in accordance with near-natural or naturalistic maintenance methods. The forests in public ownership play an exemplary role in such cases. As in the case of agricultural surfaces, cultivation intensities should be adapted to different site qualities, the state of the forests and its functions. Forests in special or extreme sites as well as forests with special functions in the natural household must be managed very near-naturally or in accordance with their specific function.

The forest surfaces should not be further extended in the biosphere reserve RHÖN since the unique character of "a landscape of open distances" should be preserved.



Reafforestation should not take place to the detriment of landscapes which are of value to nature conservation. Forest islands should rather be developed in cleared areas and in sites where near-natural forests hardly exist, such as in the farmed areas of the Lower RHÖN.

Cutting in the beech forest



## Tourism and recreation

The RHÖN should continue to serve recreational purposes. Attempts must be made to promote kinds of recreation which constitute a small burden to the ecosystems and protect the recreational quality of the landscape (form of the landscape, stillness, closeness to nature and variety). The intact nature and landscape of the RHÖN is the most important capital for the further development of tourism in the area. The RHÖN must preserve and constantly foster the individual character and qualities of its landscape if it wants to survive the competition by other recreational areas ("a landscape of open distances").



Hiking in a nature protection area

Holiday-makers should get to know landscape, nature, culture and people living in the RHON. The already existing variety in accommodation and catering should therefore be maintained, improved from a qualitative point of view and be extended from the point of view of quantity to medium-sized companies. The title "biosphere reserve" should set quality standards oriented towards the environment also for the infrastructure and supra-company offers at the level of municipalities and of the region. The contribution of tourism to regional added value must be increased, especially by creating a stronger link between offers

made by restaurants and products from the region:

Conflicts caused by holiday traffic and leisure time activities which are of detriment to the environment should be avoided by specific informative, controlling and shifting activities. Sensitive areas with a high value for nature conservation should be kept free of recreational activities as much as possible. Leisure time activities which constitute a heavy burden to the ecosystems, the landscape form or calm recreation activities in harmony with nature should not be promoted in the RHON and if they cannot be avoided should be controlled in a very careful manner.

The infrastructure for leisure time activities and tourism should primarily concentrate on the central tourist municipalities and the regional centres for leisure time and recreational activities. The tourism sector should be much more intertwined with services provided by local firms from agriculture, crafts and trade. The development of the RHÖN for tourism should be achieved with traffic and transport systems which are as environmentally compatible as possible.

Especially the following measures are proposed for the further development of tourism:

- Improvement or development of tourist offers, especially by improving the structure of company sizes, extending the number of holiday apartments offered, expanding and improving the quality of conference centres as well as strengthening the profile of the catering trade (gastronomy with a regional flavor).
- Strengthening marketing activities in the sector of tourism to improve

- cooperation between suppliers within the region and to increase the number of tourists, especially to open up new target groups for "gentle tourism".
- Providing a mark for the tourist area RHÖN by underlining the intact cultural landscape.
- Improving what is on offer in the field of education and the provision of information in the sectors of nature conservation, landscape maintenance, agriculture, underlining standards of an environmentally friendly catering trade and gastronomy (especially the gastronomy which is typical for the region and is based on products from local farms with naturally compatible production methods).
- Steering holiday traffic by means of broad-range public relations work, steering of visitors, offers made by local public transportation systems.



Mass-tourism in protected areas

Aviation sport at the Wasserkuppe





### Population, economy and settlements

A balanced population development must be secured to the benefit of the development of the RHÖN as a stable region. Economic activities must be expanded by activating indigenous regional potentials. The renunciation of large-scale projects can secure a balanced economic development which means in particular that those kinds of economic activities and products should be supported which use natural potentials sparingly.

The following measures are proposed by different economic sectors:

- Qualifying the labour force from the region by means of regional qualification activities.
- Providing information and contacts as well as advice to small and medium-sized companies, e.g., for the joint marketing of regional products.
- Supporting types of production, products and services which are adapted to the biosphere reserve by sensitizing companies, initiating exemplary projects and promoting cooperation.
- Accompanying processes and reducing barriers to developments by qualified accompanying processes (timely landscape plans and green space structure plans to avoid conflicts with nature conservation and as plans which constitute a basis for discussion).
- Industrial areas and securing of sites by keeping important development areas of municipalities free of inflexible plans; larger surfaces

should be assigned in those municipalities which are already equipped with a good infrastructure, a good offer of services, and good connections to the road and rail network.

 Securing a supply of goods and services close to the private households also in smaller villages, for example by pooling service functions. Villages, towns and cities in the biosphere reserve must be maintained and if need be restructured in their typically regional character as part of the landscape which has grown over the years. In addition to the internal structuring of the municipalities they must also be integrated into the surrounding landscape in a harmonious way (meadow orchards, hedges and cottage gardens). For newly built houses typical local materials should be used, structural shapes typical for the region must be buildings. The identification of plots for construction purposes must be primarily oriented towards local needs, should guarantee a possibly sparing consumption of landscape and melt into the landscape as much as possible.

More extensive developments should be concentrated in central municipalities with a sufficient infrastructure; a limited constructional development can also be permitted in smaller districts of a municipality. The supply of essential goods must also be guaranteed in medium-sized and smaller centres, if possible also in smaller villages.





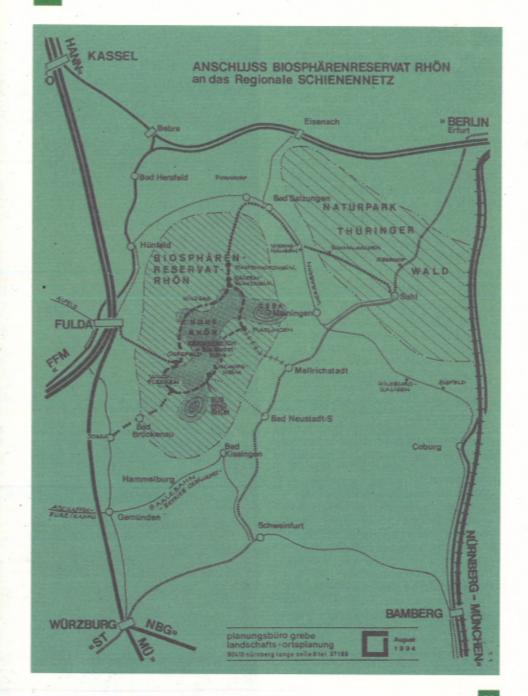
#### Traffic and transport

The burden caused by private, commercial and tourist traffic must be reduced by regional andlocal indigenous offers (jobs, shopping opportunities, internal development) and the increased utilization of public local transportation systems (combination of railways and busses). The qualified expansion of already existing roads should have priority over the construction of new roads. Supraregional traffic and transport, especially by larger lorries, should be concentrated on specific roads and railway lines. The network of railways should be maintained as far as possible, lines should at least be kept available. The network of cycle tracks is to be extended and for areas with considerable holiday traffic specific steering management plans have to be developed for traffic caused by lorries.

The following measures are proposed for the traffic and transport sector:

- Future road construction projects must be adapted to needs and specific situations. Thus, the roads are divided into a basic network which must be partly extended and a subordinate supplementary network.
- In order to make public local transportation more attractive, the different means of transport – i.e. railways, bus, passenger car, and bicycle – must be closely linked.
- Measures such as the "citizens' bus" or "group taxis" can considerably improve the public local transportation systems in the biosphere especially with respect to the general coverage of the area.

- The expansion of cycle tracks has to be accompanied by the expansion of the catering trade and of accommodations (including farms) along the tracks; at the same time, repair shops are required.
- The places which are the destination of holiday traffic must be reached in a much better way by public local transportation. On the basis of important connecting points and municipalities in the valleys commuting bus services or similar systems should be established.



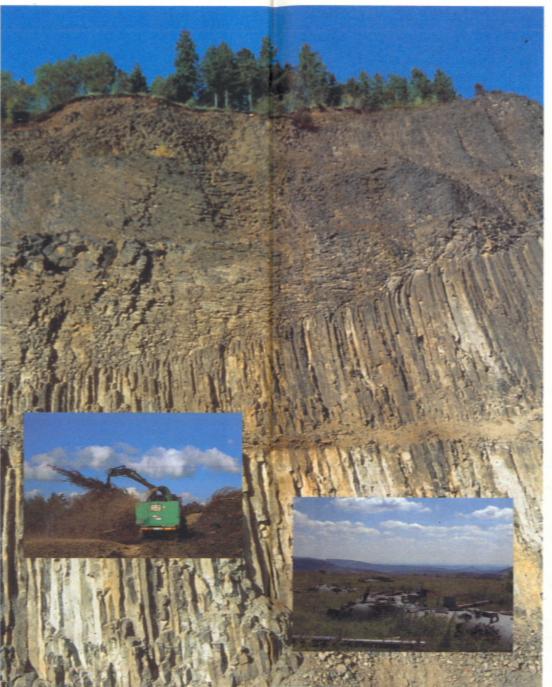


#### Additional land use

The aim of ecologically compatible land use applies also to the other utilization areas among which water management plays a prominent role. The RHÖN is rich in groundwater resources which are used on a dezentralized basis for the supply of the municipalities. This decentralized drinking water supply system is to be maintained and secured. In addition, the many flowing bodies of water in the RHON must be conserved and if need be improved. Especially the natural retention capacity of the alluvial meadows should be guaranteed and reestablished. In particular in Thuringia, there is a great need for the expansion of waste water treatment plants.

Several applications have been made to build wind-power plants in the RHÖN for the production of energy. Since such plants may have a considerable effect on the landscape and the animals (especially birds) plans must be carefully developed. The framework management plan closed some areas and proposed others for the environmentally compatible utilization of wind energy. The use of regenerative energy sources in the RHÖN should focus on the increased use of heating systems fired with wood chips and possibly the generation of biogas from organic material.

In several parts of the biosphere reserve conflicts emerged with respect to the extraction of raw materials which should be solved in the context of regional planning. Especially basalt causes considerable problems since the more interesting extraction sites are located in the higher regions of the RHÖN which are highly attractive landscapes.



Hunting in the RHÖN will also have to take place in the future to limit the population of deer to adequate numbers. The aims of near-natural forestry can only be achieved on a large surface if the main tree species of natural forest communities can be grown without being protected by a fence.

In case of those kinds of recreation which are closely linked with the landscape, conflicts occur as in the case of aviation sports, winter sports or mountain biking. It is quite problematic that for such sports very often near-natural and normally hardly frequented areas are used and that a considerable increase in all leisure type sports leads to enormous and generally felt disturbing effects.

The solution to these conflicts can only consist in spatial re-distribution of such activities and careful steering of different claims.

Among the *military installations* in the biosphere reserve the development of the former military training area "Wildflecken" is most important from the point of view of nature conservation and regional development. This part of the Upper RHÖN has paramount importance in view of the fact that most of the area is still undisturbed. Within the framework of restructuring measures the targets defined by nature conservation must be implemented to a greater extent while at the same time opportunities for the further development of the infrastructure should be used.

Large fotograph: Basalt mining-tradition in the RHON

Small fotograph left: Woodchips-energy derived from renewable resources

Small fotograph right: Impact area in the military training area



#### Research

Research plays a prominent role in biosphere reserves, Models, criteria and approaches to solutions are to be developed for the utilization of land compatible with the relevant site. This includes strategies for the protection of threatened animal and plant species and the conservation and development of their habitats. In biosphere reserves applied research and research oriented towards actual implementation takes precedence. Research in the biosphere reserve RHÖN is a task which goes beyond the individual Federal Land and must be coordinated across Länder boundaries taking into account not only the content of measures but also the areas affected.

The research methodology may fall back upon the findings of the ecosystem research MAB-6 project Berchtesgaden which can also be transferred to the RHÖN. A Geographical Information System GIS is built up for the biosphere reserve RHÖN which

allows for EDP supported processing and presentation of surface-related information.

In addition, ecological environmental monitoring takes place in the RHÖN and the information is fed into the general environmental monitoring system of the Federal Republic.



Geographical Information System as instrument for research

Permanent plots observation in meadows





#### Environmental education

Environmental education and public relations work count among the most important tasks of biosphere reserves in the Federal Republic of Germany. A large-scale acceptance of measures to the benefit of nature conservation and landscape maintenance and environmentally friendly farming can only be accepted by the general population if correlations are presented in an understandable manner. In addition to information, exemplary activities have to document the aims of a biosphere reserve and opportunities for public involvement must be created.

The framework management plan proposes a network of information centres and further information points and recommends the further development of already existing museums by including and considering the aims of the biosphere reserve RHÖN. There is one museum in

Excursion in the "Black Bog"

each of the three Länder which would be most suitable for such purposes. The educational management plan must, however, be developed further.

In addition meetings, seminars, and lectures and intensified public relations activities should also take place in houses used by school classes for short visits, youth hostels and specific attractions for outings to convey the aims of the biosphere reserve.



Information by exhibition



#### Implementation

The implementation of the aims defined for the biosphere reserve began during the development of the framework management plan. The programm to promote nature conservation, landscape maintenance and agriculture and especially the acceptance by the European Union as a project area for a model-like regional development created favourable conditions for the implementation. Rural development groups were founded in Bavaria and Hesse, Especially the charity "Verein Natur- und Lebensraum Rhön e.V." promoted the implementation of the framework management plan on a broad basis. Further funds from the structural fund of the European Union have been promised and at the same time largescale nature conservation projects were initiated by the European Union and the Federal Government.

The numerous existing supporting organisations were of great importance to the implementation of the framework management plan (such as Nature Park Bavarian Rhön, Nature Park Hessian Rhön, landscape maintenance associations and the Rhön Club) since they took quite a number of measures. Several communities started to implement the framework management plan on an exemplary basis (especially Rasdorf in Hesse).

The further implementation of the framework management plan will depend considerably on the commitment and the activities of the local population. A very important aspect is the cooperation across Länder boundaries especially in the sectors of nature conservation, tourism, and agricultural marketing. In addition, it will be most important to implement as many

measures as possible by private enterprises which will require an organisation going beyond LNnder boundaries, such as a RHÖN Agency. The establishment of a RHÖN Agency requires, however, comprehensive harmonization and involvement of all supporting organisations in the area. It is not to be an additional but rather a general and coordinating organisation which pools regional interests and renders their implementation much more effective.





