

EVALUATION OF PILOT ACTIVITIES IN KALKALPEN NATIONAL PARK

D.T2.2.3

Final Version
12 2021

Angelika Stückler, Franz Sieghartsleitner, Iris Egelseer,
Regina Buchriegler, Simone Mayrhofer
(Kalkalpen National Park)

Anna Kovarovics
(E.C.O. Institut für Ökologie)







CONTENT

1. INTRODUCTION	3
2. PILOT ACTIVITIES	4
2.1. Visitor survey	4
2.2. World Heritage knowledge transfer concept	7
2.3. World Heritage Leaflet	8
2.4. Multivision show for Schools	9
2.5. Public Relation	11
2.6. Presentation material	14
2.7. Austrian World Heritage Day	18
2.8. World Heritage Film	20
2.9. Trailer for Guided World Heritage Tours	21
2.10. Guides Ranger Tours	22
2.11. Mobile counting systems	24
3. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	27
4. APPENDIX:	30
4.1. Online Visitor Survey	30

1. Introduction

Within the work package T2 and Activity A.T2.2 (Development of requirements and strategies for bufferzone management) Kalkalpen National Park was able to implement various pilot activities concerning the topic “Visitor & UNESCO World Heritage”.

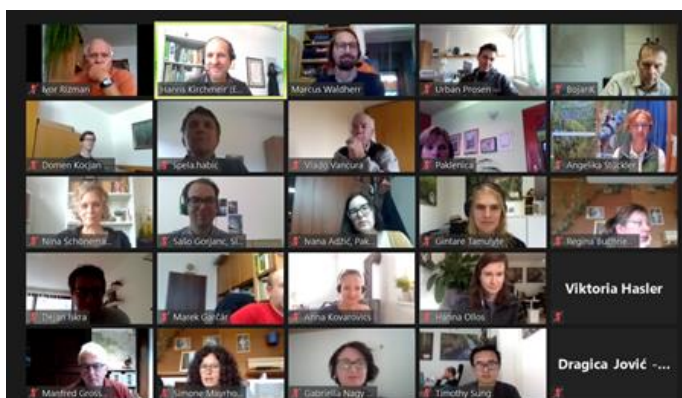
Basis for the development of the pilot measures was the international workshop on visitor information and World Heritage knowledge transfer (D.T2.2.2) that was organised by Kalkalpen National Park in October 2020. All project partners were able to participate and contribute to the workshop. Additionally, we could win also speakers from other World Heritage sites like Nina Schönemann from Dürrenstein Wilderness Area and Manfred Grossmann from Hainich National Park, who has already 10 years experience in World Heritage knowledge transfer.

WORKSHOP ON VISITOR INFORMATION AND WORLD HERITAGE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER	
Workshop Agenda, 13-14 October 2020 ONLINE WORKSHOP organized by Kalkalpen National Park	
Version 2 09 2020	
13th October 2020	
8:30-9:00	Registration at the Zoom platform, technical check
09:00 - 09:15	Welcome & Introduction (National Park Kalkalpen)
09:15 - 10:00	Intro-Movie Angelika Stückler (NPK): National Park Kalkalpen: Presentation of visitor information and programmes
10:00 - 10:15	Anna Kovarovic (E.C.O.): Existing WH templates and information/training materials
10:15 - 10:30	Questions and Discussion
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 11:45	Manfred Grossman (NP Hainich): Information and Communication in the WH component Hainich (DE)
11:45 - 12:30	E.C.O.: Introduction and training on the online workshop tool MIRO

14th October 2020	
8:30-9:00	Registration at the Zoom platform, technical check
9:00-10:30	Presentation (20") and discussion (10") of partner inputs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paklenica National Park (HR) • Slovenia Forest Service (SI) • Dürrenstein Wilderness Area (AT)
10:30 - 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 - 11:30	Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development (DE): Networking and cooperation between the WH components
11:30 - 12:00	European wilderness society (AT): quality assessment in the field of communication and information
11:30 - 14:00	Lunchbreak
14:00 - 15:30	Working Groups joint development of communication concept <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism • Local population and schools • Local stakeholders • Networking with Partners
15:30 - 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 - 17:00	Plenary session: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results of the working Groups • Feedback • Summary

Figure 1: Agenda of the visitor information and WH knowledge transfer workshop in Kalkalpen National Park

Figure 2: Screenshot from the Online Workshop





2. Pilot activities

2.1. Visitor survey

Description of activity

A visitor questionnaire on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Beech Forests in Kalkalpen National Park was created and it took place online from July to November 2021. The goal was a participation of at least 300 people.

Numerous measures were taken to achieve a high level of participation. For example, the existing online visitor feedback of Kalkalpen National Park, which all participants of guided tours receive, referred to the World Heritage survey. The survey was also communicated via the national park newsletter, the Kalkalpen website and facebook. In addition, partner organisations such as National Parks Austria and regional tourism associations etc. were asked to disseminate the survey within their sphere of influence via digital channels. The results of the survey will be incorporated into the further development of the national park education programme especially in relation to the World Heritage site.

Evaluation of activity

The questionnaire was kept short with 17 questions; it took about 3 minutes to complete. A total of 420 people took part in the online survey between July and November 2021. The previously set target of 300 people was clearly exceeded. The survey was anonymous. Only some information on age, place of residence, gender etc. was requested. Here is a brief summary of the most important results:

General information of the respondents:

53% of the participants were male, 45 % female and 2% diverse.

27% were older than 60 years, 45% between 41 and 60 years, 26% between 21 and 40 years.

36% were residents of the national park region, 39% excursion guests / day guests and 25% overnight guests (15% 1-2 nights, 8% 3-5 nights, 2% more than 6 nights) which shows a very balanced mix of participants.

82% of the participants arrived to the national park by car, only 6% by public transport.

In response to the question regarding the highest level of education completed 53% answered university/technical college/academy, 24% Matura (A-levels), 20% apprenticeship, and 3% compulsory school

75% of the respondents knew that Kalkalpen National Park has been designated a UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site for Ancient Beech Forests, 25% had not heard of it.



How would you like to experience the beech forests in Kalkalpen NP?

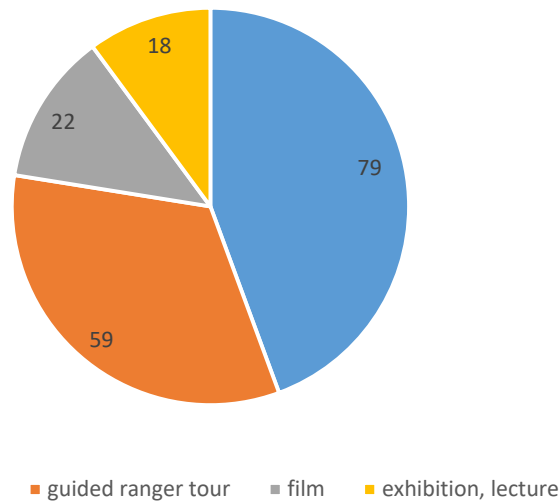


Figure 3: results of the question “Experience beech forests”; Multiple answers possible

79% would like to experience the beech forests in the national park individually, 59% on a guided ranger tour, 22% with films, 18% with exhibition/lecture. Multiple answers possible.

How much time would you spend on a ranger tour to the World Heritage site?

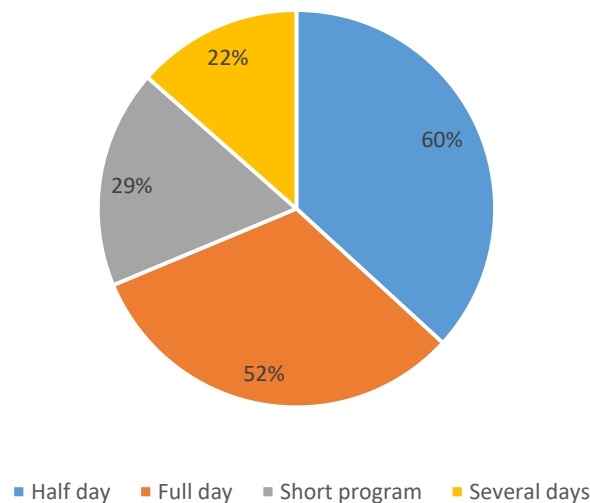


Figure 4: results of the question “Time to spend”; Multiple answers possible

60% would spend a half day tour (up to 4 hours), 52% a full day tour (6 - 8 hours), 29% a short programme (2 hours) and 22% several days on a ranger tour to the World Heritage site.



How important was the World Heritage Site Ancient Beech Forests in your decision to visit Kalkalpen NP?

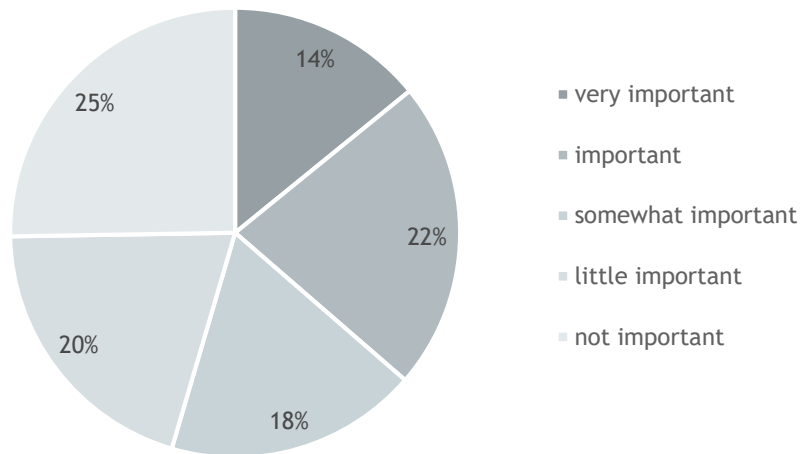


Figure 5: results of the question “Importance World Heritage”; Multiple answers possible

For 36% the World Heritage Site Ancient Beech Forests was very important or important in the decision to visit Kalkalpen National Park. For 18% it was somewhat important, for 20% not very and for 25% not important.

Another question was what a beautiful nature experience means:

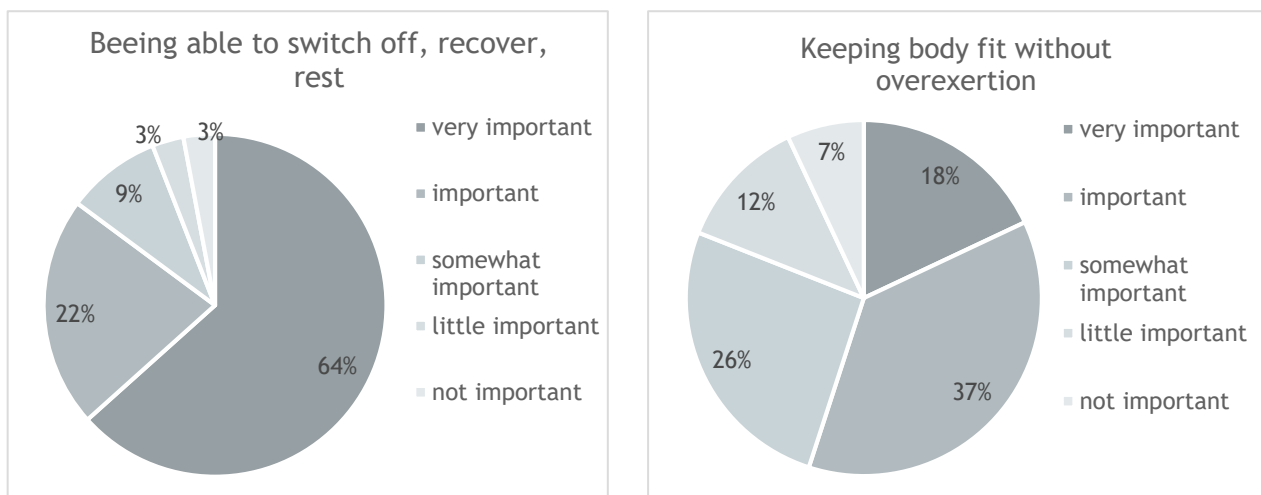


Figure 6: results of the question “switch off” and “Fitness”

To switch off, to recover, to rest in nature is (very) important for 86% of the respondents.

For 55% it is (very) important to keep the body fit without overexertion.

Adventure, action and physical challenge, on the other hand, are only (very) important for 27% (see appendix).

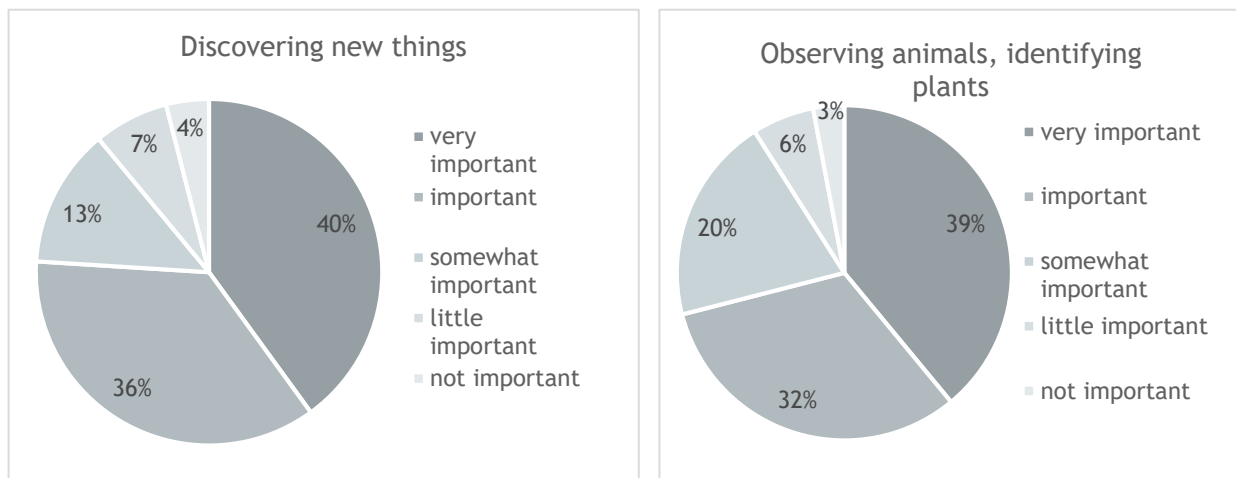


Figure 7: results of the question “discovering new things” and “observing animals and plants”

For 76% it is (very) important to discover new things. For 71% it is (very) important to observe animals or identify plants. This is also the focus of the national park's educational programmes and guided ranger tours.

2.2. World Heritage knowledge transfer concept

Description of activity

Since 2017, Kalkalpen National Park has been part of the transnational serial UNESCO World Heritage Site "Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe" and makes an important contribution to the preservation of the last primeval beech forests in Europe.

The World Heritage designation is an enormous opportunity for raising the profile of a protected area:

- World Heritage is a brand
- UNESCO World Heritage sites are known around the world
- World Heritage is a strong and understandable message and lends itself as a central message in the application as long as no other message is more significant.
- The World Heritage site represents a unique selling point alongside the numerous World Heritage sites.
- The World Heritage site underlines the worthiness of protection of a protected area and enhances its value - in terms of regional acceptance, this is a great support.
- Lynx, return of the wilderness and World Heritage as USP in Kalkalpen National Park.

The concept is a living document intended to raise awareness of the issue of World Heritage so that it is appropriately included in all entrepreneurial actions. The communication of the World Natural Heritage Beech Forests is essential for a broad acceptance and appreciation in the population. The goal of World Heritage education is to make different groups of visitors aware of the importance of the World Heritage, to make the World Heritage experienceable or accessible, and to sensitize people to the protection of Europe's last primeval forests. Ideally, this will motivate people to deal with nature and resources in a sustainable way, in line with the national park vision.

Evaluation of activity

The UNESCO World Heritage designation is like a Nobel Prize for a protected area. World Heritage mediation offers enormous touristic and economic opportunities for the entire national park region, especially for the city of Steyr and the Steyr and Enns valleys. The aim of World Heritage mediation is to make different groups of visitors aware of the importance of the World Heritage, to make the World Heritage experienceable or accessible and to sensitize people for the protection of the last primeval forests in Europe. Together with stakeholders, a World Heritage mission statement should be created. This serves as the basis for corporate action. Corporate communications should be aligned with the defined status of the World Heritage site. In the area of visitor facilities, the spectrum ranges from signage to simple information boards, World Heritage trails, World Heritage vistas, and the World Heritage centre. Visitor offerings include guided tours, packages & collaborations, school and youth programmes, a World Heritage app, and a World Heritage product line. A number of pilot measures has already been implemented in Kalkalpen National Park education programme. Marketing and public relations efforts are designed to present the World Heritage theme favourably to the public and include activities that achieve promotional goals. Collaboration with content-related people inside and outside the company, so-called World Heritage ambassadors is intended to spread the World Heritage idea. Building networks with the aim of mutual support is equally significant.

2.3. World Heritage Leaflet

Description of activity

Kalkalpen National Park
Austria • 20,850 ha • www.kalkalpen.at

Kalkalpen National Park protects Austria's largest forest wilderness and is considered the most important forest national park in the Alpine region. The protected area includes the Reichraminger Hintergebirge and Sengengebirge in the southeast of Upper Austria. The beech forests in Kalkalpen National Park are characterized by their extent and near-natural state, their old age, their diversity and dynamics. More than 10,000 species of animals, plants, and fungi occur in the various beech forest types. Old beech forests are an important refuge for primeval forest species that have become rare, such as the Rosalia longhorn beetle and white-backed woodpecker.

- Largest protected beech forest in the Alps
- 5,250 ha are World Natural Heritage
- Oldest beech tree in the Alps, around 550 years old
- 43 species of primeval relic beetles
- 6 different types of beech forest

Dürrenstein-Lassingtal Wilderness Area
Austria • 7,000 ha • www.wildnisgebiet.at

Dürrenstein-Lassingtal Wilderness Area is home to one of the largest primeval forests in Central Europe. The centerpiece is the 400 ha Rothwald primeval forest in Lower Austria. The mixed spruce-fir-beech forest has never been used for forestry purposes and has developed largely undisturbed since the last ice age. With the expansion of the protected area to Lassingtal in the north of Styria, the total size of the Wilderness Area doubled to 7,000 hectares in 2021. The protected area is recognized as IUCN Category Ia and Ib, with its mountain forests ensuring the long-term preservation of valuable ecosystems with their special animal, plant, and fungus species – because the protection of nature is the preservation of life.

- Last primeval forest in the Alps
- 1,867 ha are World Natural Heritage
- Evolutionary processes can take place completely uninfluenced by humans
- Habitat for primeval forest relic species and endemics

Beech forests throughout the seasons

The seasons set the pace in the beech forests and create a fascinating display of colours over the course of the year. The fresh light green when leaves shoot in spring signals a new beginning and blossoming. Lush middle green symbolizes the abundance of nature in summer, because of their dense canopy, beech forests provide cool and shade on hot days. Autumn is the time of change: with bright yellow-orange leaves, the beech forest shows its most colourful side in October. In the winter silence, when the beech leaves are absent, the shapes of gnarled tree personalities are clearly visible.

Guided World Heritage tours

If you want to experience the World Natural Heritage beech forests in Kalkalpen National Park in a special way, join a guided tour with our national park rangers. They know the most beautiful places in the protected area, are your companions on an exciting journey of discovery, and they convey why old, natural beech forests are so valuable.

- "Durchs Hintergebirge" World Heritage tour (Reichraming)
- "Buchenweg" World Heritage tour (Reichraming)
- "Rodingergraben" World Heritage tour (Bialle)
- "Auf den Wasserküts" World Heritage tour (Rosenau/Hengstpass)

Information and booking of ranger tours:

- Ennstal visitor centre, A-4462 Reichraming, +43 72 54 84 24-0, info-ennstal@kalkalpen.at
- Wildschützgerhof info point, A-4580 Wildschützgerhof, +43 75 62 52 66-17, info-wdg@kalkalpen.at
- Villa Sonnenwald National Park Lodge, A-4575 Rollbühnen, +43 75 62 205-92, villa-sonnenwald@kalkalpen.at

www.kalkalpen.at

Interreg Kalkalpen Nationalpark ist Kalkalpen- und Dürrenstein-Lassingtal-Wildnisgebiet. Die Kalkalpen sind ein Teil des UNESCO-Weltkulturerbes. Die Kalkalpen sind ein Teil des UNESCO-Weltkulturerbes. Die Kalkalpen sind ein Teil des UNESCO-Weltkulturerbes.

interreg CENTRAL EUROPE REGION DEVELOPMENT

NATIONALPARK KALKALPEN

EUROPE'S WILDERNESS UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE BEECH FORESTS

www.weltkulturerbe-buchenwaelder.at
www.weltkulturerbe-buchenwaelder.de



Figure 8: New Leaflet “Unesco World Heritage Beech Forests” with the joint design

The new 10-page leaflet in leporello form provides a compact overview of the transnational serial natural World Heritage Site Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests. The main topics are the post-glacial spread of the European beech, the importance of protecting the last old primeval beech forests and their fascinating display of colours in the course of the seasons. In addition, the two Austrian World Heritage sites Kalkalpen National Park and Dürrenstein Wilderness Area are presented and the offer of guided tours is pointed out. Special emphasis was placed on impressive photos of the beech forest habitat and characteristic animal and plant species.

Evaluation of activity

The leaflet was printed in German (30,000 copies) as well as in English (5,000 copies) in order to inform both German-speaking and international guests and experts. The edition was designed for an annual requirement of 4-5 years. The leaflets are available in the national park visitor facilities as well as in regional tourism offices and at national park partner businesses. You also find the leaflets for download on the Kalkalpen website www.kalkalpen.at. For staff and rangers, the leaflets have also been placed in the national park knowledge database and the SharePoint knowledge platform. In addition, the information material is displayed at national and international national park and World Heritage events.

The leaflet was distributed immediately after printing in the beech forest network. Requests for the map, which at that time was considered the most up-to-date after the 2021 expansion, began to accumulate. The map was also made available separately and was placed on the website www.weltnaturerbe-buchenwaelder.de as well as the Beech Power knowledge exchange platform.

2.4. Multivision show for Schools

Description of activity

The multivision “In the realm of the lynx” has enjoyed great popularity for years and is used especially at elementary schools. The multivision designs the first unit of a 2-hour school programme in which a national park ranger brings the wilderness into the classroom. In the second unit, the ranger opens his treasure chest of natural materials that he brought with him and playfully elaborates on the value of forest wilderness and the diversity in old-growth forests.



Through the Beech Power project, the existing ten year old multivision show was expanded and adapted according to the current situation to include the topic of UNESCO World Natural Heritage, which not only made it more topical, but also gave it more content. "On velvet paws through the World Natural Heritage" is the new subtitle of the show. The narrator, the lynx, presents its territory and its fellow inhabitants in a very lively way. The centuries-old beech forests in Kalkalpen National Park are true treasure troves. Rare birds, butterflies and beetles that are threatened with extinction elsewhere find shelter and food in the ancient forests.

Trailer : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TyAiNiyWnjg>

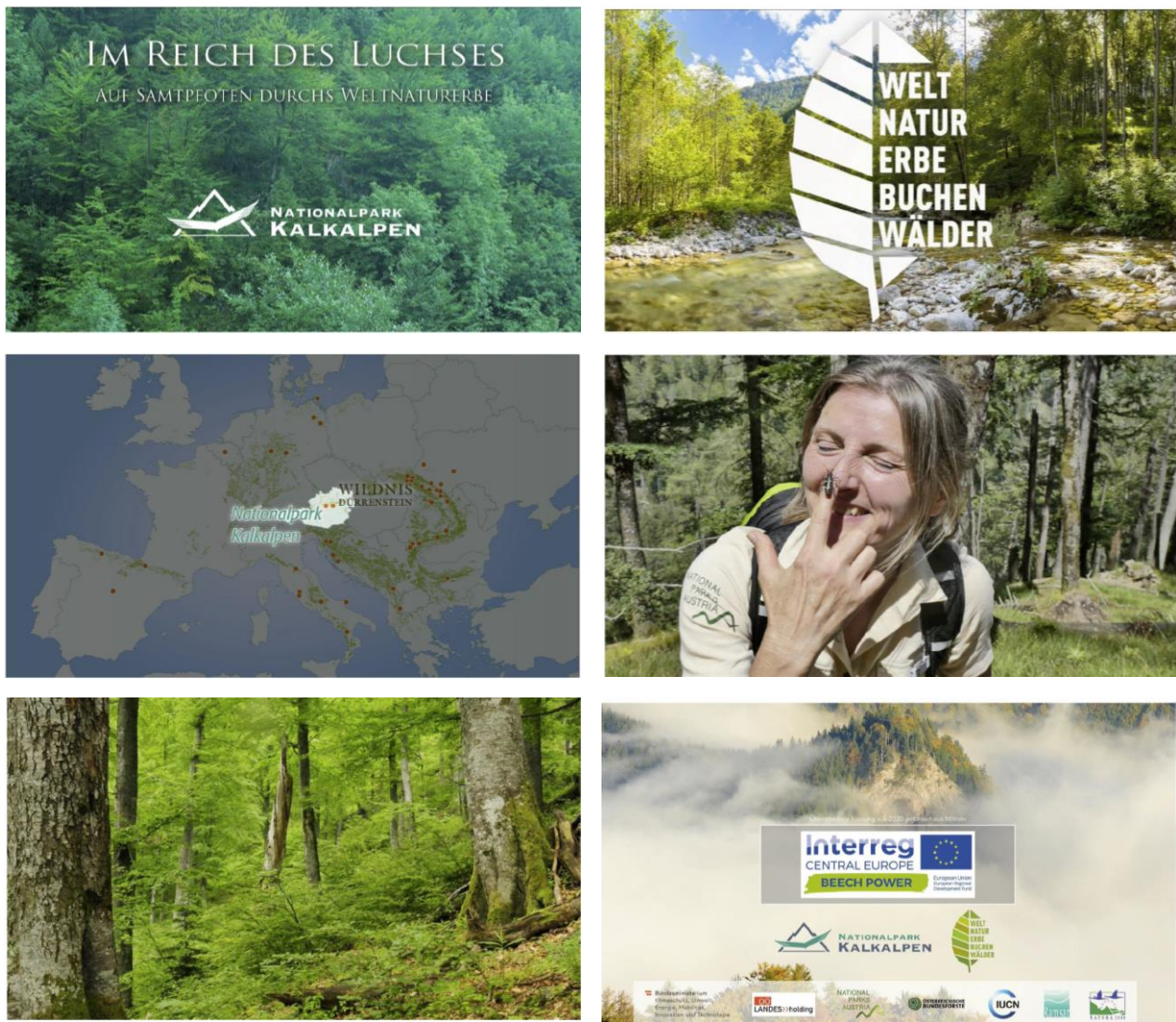


Figure 9: Screenshots from the multivision show: On velvet paws through the World Natural Heritage

Evaluation of activity

The redesign of the multivision with a focus on the World Natural Heritage site and ancient beech forests is a great addition to the school programme. Schoolchildren are one of the main target groups in the national park education programme. The topic of World Natural Heritage is thus also accessible to those who do not have the opportunity to participate in a guided ranger tour. The multivision is also popular with adult groups.



Due to the Corona Pandemic, almost no events were allowed at schools with rangers in 2020 and 2021. The multivision could be shown to the national park partner school Mittelschule Ternberg (96 students, 5 teachers). Furthermore, it was shown at a training of Upper Austrian biology teachers. The presentations were very well received.

After the Corona pandemic has subsided, the promotion of the offer for schools will be intensified again in order to catch up to the attendance figures of 2019 "before Corona" (up to 850 schoolchildren and adults saw the multivision per year).

2.5. Public Relation

Description of activity

The special value of the UNESCO beech forests has not yet been sufficiently realized by the Austrian population and in particular by the local population in the adjacent regions around the protected areas. The national park development is a long-term project, which deviates from the previous thinking and acting habits of us humans very largely. Even twenty years after the foundation of Kalkalpen National Park, not all fellow inhabitants of the national park region have identified with this idea of nature conservation. In addition, the UNESCO World Heritage brand has now made its way into the national park and the national park region. This brand is a help in the effort to attract and inspire people in the national park region for nature conservation. But for many of us, a number of additional questions arise.

Questions to be addressed by the national park:

- What is the difference between Kalkalpen National Park and UNESCO protected area?
- Why are beech trees in particular, which have been and are still being decimated in commercial forests, given such high priority?
- Are we humans being locked out of the World Heritage areas, such as in the primeval forest Rothwald in the wilderness area Dürrenstein?
- Is there a bid to stay on the roads or are the paths and bike trails through the World Heritage areas closed off?
- Do the UNESCO World Heritage areas have an impact on the management of surrounding forest areas?
- Why are the beech forests of higher value than the rare mountain oak forests or slope canyon forests?
- Can we expect a rush of visitors like in Hallstatt?
- Are we now a national park region or a World Heritage region?

Communication creates understanding, awareness and identity. The understanding of the local population for UNESCO World Heritage sites and national park on the one hand and the interested public on the other hand often gaps very far apart. For visitors interested in nature and conservation, these high-quality protected areas are sanctuaries, a health-giving, healing paradise. Many people who are gainfully employed in agriculture and forestry do not understand the excitement about these formerly used forests.

These opposing attitudes even sometimes hinder the development of partnerships between tourism and leisure industries, agriculture and national parks. In order to create acceptance for the World Heritage site and to build long-term identity with the protected area philosophy, as well as to create a mutual win-win situation between the stakeholders, lasting communication based on mutual appreciation is needed.



Only with a variety of communication measures such as brochures, magazines, advertisements, discussion events, expert lectures, film contributions, social media measures can create more awareness and acceptance for the unique World Heritage forests in the long term.

Within the Project we published four popular scientific articles to transport the following content and answer the questions above:

- Importance of the beech forests
- World Natural Heritage Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe
- The different faces of beech forests in Kalkalpen National Park
- The animal and plant species of our beech forests
- The beech - an assertive survival artist
- World Natural Heritage - Opportunities and Challenges
- Guided tours in the World Heritage Beech Forests



Figure 10: article in a local newspaper (Extrablick) in September 2020 (coverage 70.000 readers)





Figure 13: Unpaid article in the national park magazine “Vielfalt Natur” in June 2020 (coverage 450.000 readers)

Evaluation of activity

The articles (see

Figure 10 to Figure 13) placed so far in regional and in Upper Austrian daily and weekly newspapers led to the fact that almost 600.000 readers could be reached.

In view of the initial situation, the measures taken so far are by far not sufficient to increase the acceptance and to bring about a change in thinking among the local population. Unfortunately, there is no reliable data available on the acceptance of the World Heritage Forest in the different target groups. This would provide a good basis for a more efficient selection of communication measures with a limited budget. As a first step, an online visitor survey on the UNESCO World Heritage site in Kalkalpen National Park was carried out as part of the Beech Power project. Preferred communication channels were also surveyed. (see 2.1. and Appendix)

In the future, a potpourri of communication measures will be needed in order to achieve an identification of the regional population with their World Heritage forest.

2.6. Presentation material

Description of activity

Kalkalpen National Park created a range of materials for a contemporary presentation of the UNESCO World Heritage Site. Beach flags as well as mobile presentation and exhibition elements drew attention to the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Beech Forests and the Beech Power project at events, training courses, etc. With short texts, impressive photos and an attractive design, they paint a picture of the fascinating habitat

of old beech forests - a natural treasure that connects Europe's pristine wilderness as part of the transnational serial World Heritage.

Mobile presentation wall

The new print panels for an existing Expostar presentation system represent the UNESCO World Natural Heritage with motifs of lynx and a typical beech forest from the World Natural Heritage area in Kalkalpen National Park. The slightly curved presentation wall has the dimensions of 3.99 m length and 2.37 m height (floor space requirement: 3.10 meters) and is therefore also suitable for usual interior heights. In addition, the transport box was printed with two typical nature motifs: alpine longhorn beetle and autumnal beech forest. The transport box can also be used as an information desk at events and trade fairs.



Figure 14: Mobile presentation wall presenting the UNESCO World Natural Heritage Beech Forests in Kalkalpen National Park, © Kalkalpen NP

Beach flags

Two beach flags (2.35 m high) with different motifs were produced. The requirement was that these could be used in normal indoor spaces, so a system height of less than 2.50 meters was important. For the selection of the motifs, a participatory process was initiated in which all Kalkalpen National Park employees could take part. A total of 45 motifs by four different photographers were available for selection, whereby the photographer was not listed on the respective motif so as not to influence the choice. In the period from



August 24 to September 14, 2020, each employee could mark the personal five favorites. A total of 76 votes were cast. From the five motifs with the highest approval ratings, the project team made the final selection of two motifs: an alpine longhorn beetle and an old, gnarled European beech tree as symbolic ambassadors for the UNESCO World Natural Heritage site.



Figure 15: Beach flag with *Rosalia longicorn* motif and beech forest motif © Kalkalpen NP

Mobile exhibition

Furthermore, typical beech forest motifs were added to the „ISO Frame Wave“ exhibition system in 2021 in order to lend more weight to the topic of UNESCO World Natural Heritage in the exhibition. Texts were adapted and the current European map of the World Natural Heritage sites was also inserted. This makes it clear that Kalkalpen National Park is part of a transnational serial World Heritage site. In addition, a separate exhibition wall on the UNESCO World Heritage site was installed, supplemented with important key data on the special features of the World Heritage in Kalkalpen National Park.



Figure 16: Four elements of the mobile exhibition © Kalkalpen NP

Evaluation of activity

The World Natural Heritage comes to the people with mobile presentation elements. It is crucial for their regular use that the beach flags, presentation and exhibition elements are easy to transport and easy to assemble. Attractive presentation materials make you want to visit the ancient beech forests. The materials were used at events, stakeholder trainings, etc. However, due to the cancellation of numerous events because of the Corona pandemic, the presentation materials were used less often than planned.

Hopefully in 2022, more events are to take place, where the presentation material can be used. For example the Interpaedagogika trade fair in Vienna, but also events in the region to celebrate 25 years of Kalkalpen National Park and 5 years of the World Natural Heritage Beech Forests.



2.7. Austrian World Heritage Day

Description of activity

The Austrian World Heritage sites have agreed to celebrate a joint World Heritage Day once a year to focus on World Heritage. 2021 was the first year to start with the yearly celebration. Therefore, a lot of meetings took place and the homepage <https://www.welterbetag.at/> was installed. The homepage contains and describes all World Heritage sites in Austria and offers a programme for the yearly World Heritage Day.

Kalkalpen National Park offered hiking trips for locals - two guided ranger tours (one in the Steyr, the other in the Enns valley) on Saturday 17th April and Sunday 18th April 2021. Due to the COVID-19 Crisis and lockdown we were not allowed to hold the guided tours. In view of the Corona figures we were happy that we could at least publish our new “World Heritage film” (see 2.8).

Figure 17: Web page “Joint Austrian World Heritage Day”





welterbetag.at

welt
erbe
tag

18. April 2021

Film „Welterbe Buchenwälder“

Er erzählt die Geschichte der Buche in Europa und stellt die als UNESCO-Weltnaturerbe ausgezeichneten ältesten Buchenwälder und Buchenurwälder in zwölf europäischen Ländern vor.

→ zum Video

Film „Mit Nationalpark Rangern unterwegs im Weltnaturerbe“

Gemeinsam mit Nationalpark Kalkalpen RangerInnen und Ranger erleben Sie den Zauber und die Vielfalt alter Buchenwälder.

→ zum Video

→ Zum Programm

Program

oto

welterbetag.at

welt
erbe
tag

18. April 2021

Wild und artenreich

Der Nationalpark Kalkalpen in Oberösterreich beherbergt insgesamt sechs Buchenwaldgesellschaften. Es handelt sich dabei – wo nicht um Reste von Urwäldern – um naturnahe Bestände. Teile davon sind dabei, sich zur Waldwildnis zurück- oder – besser – weiterzuentwickeln.

Mit neuen wissenschaftlichen Methoden lässt sich das Alter der Bäume exakt bestimmen. Einzelne Buchen sind über 500 Jahre alt: das älteste Exemplar existierte bereits, als in Wien noch an der Stephanskirche gebaut wurde.

In den Buchenwäldern herrscht hohe Biodiversität. Der seltene Weißrückenspecht gilt als ein verlässlicher Indikator für eine intakte Umwelt und aktuell leben sechs Luchse in dem Gebiet.

→ Mehr lesen auf unesco.at

→ wildnisgebiet.at → kalkalpen.at

oto



The Austrian media was also very interested in the first World Heritage Day, so a film team of the Austrian broadcasting company came for an interview to the national park beech forests. The interview was sent twice and reached about 500.000 to 700.000 users on TV.

The World Natural Heritage of Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests in Kalkalpen National Park was also part of a radio broadcast. In March 2021, a journalist accompanied a national park ranger on a 2-day snowshoe tour in the national park. The report was broadcast in the course of the first Austrian World Heritage Day on April 18, 2021 in the travel magazine “Ambiente” of the Austrian radio station Ö1. The columnist travel report was supplemented with music from the region visited.



Figure 18: National Park Director Volkhard Maier giving an interview due to the Austrian World Heritage Day, © Kalkalpen NP

Evaluation of activity

The radio series “Ambiente” brings travel reports as features and aims to convey what is special about travel destinations. Since no guided ranger tours were possible in April 2021 due to the nationwide lockdown, the radio broadcasts as well as the TV reports for the Austrian World Heritage Day was an ideal opportunity to inform about the ancient beech forests and guided World Heritage tours in Kalkalpen National Park.

The first joint World Heritage Day - despite the Corona measures - was a great success, mainly due to the broad media coverage, and should therefore continue to draw attention to our common Natural and Cultural Heritage once a year in the future. The programme for 2022 is still not clear, but we will of course offer the guided tours again, as they allow to transport the most content.

A joint national World Heritage Day can also be recommended because it can initiate and promote cooperation and exchange with the other national World Heritage sites. In many cases, the problems and challenges are very similar and all sites can benefit from an exchange. Also, national challenges can be identified and addressed (for example, a legal anchoring of World Heritage in national law).

2.8. World Heritage Film

Description of activity

A new World Natural Heritage film was created. The nomination film from 2017 served as a template, but only contained those beech forest areas that were nominated in 2017 for the expansion of the UNESCO World Natural Heritage “Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests“. As part of the Beech Power project the new film also includes the beech forests World Heritage sites of Germany, Slovakia and Ukraine that existed before 2017. The text has been revised and updated, and high-quality images and video material have been added. The new film provides very compact information about the World Natural Heritage sites as well as the emergence and diversity of the beech forests in Europe. It is 9 minutes long and was created in both German and English in order to address national as well as international target groups.

Video link English version: <https://youtu.be/RKvCuQyatbk>



Video link German version: <https://youtu.be/yXiGyytVs70>

In the context of the publication of the two film versions, numerous advertising measures were taken and institutions were informed about the new films, including e.g.:

- Coordination office (Belgium): Newsletter to all World Natural Heritages sites „Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe“
- Embedding on the website: www.weltnaturerbe-buchenwaelder.de
- Embedding on the website www.weltnaturerbe-buchenwaelder.at
- Embedding on the Kalkalpen National Park website www.kalkalpen.at, Facebook
- Municipalities of Kalkalpen National Park region
- Kalkalpen National Park partner companies
- Wurbauerkogel National Park Panorama Tower: part of the exhibition in the visitor center (cinema)
- Dürrenstein Wilderness area: <https://www.wildnisgebiet.at>
- Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), Austria
- Austrian Commission of UNESCO, Austrian World Heritage Day April 2021: <https://www.welterbetag.at>

Evaluation of activity

The film conveys the history of beech very clearly, highlights the importance of the world's largest serial World Natural Heritage and at the same time shows the endangerment of beech forests. In 9 minutes, the outstanding universal value of the World Heritage Site Beech Forests is thus brought to the point. The film is implemented in numerous relevant websites, can easily be shown at events and is also available to other World Heritage Sites Ancient and Primeval Beech Forests.

Especially during the Corona pandemic, when many guided ranger tours and other events had to be cancelled, the film is of particular importance in the information and communication work about the transnational serial World Natural Heritage both online and on site at visitor centres.

The English version of the film has already been viewed just about 2000 times - the German version just about 1000 times (status: 10.01.2022)

2.9. Trailer for Guided World Heritage Tours

Description of activity

Even if the joint secretariat did not approve the offer film for guided ranger tours, the film was made to promote the World Heritage tours. The film was also published on the Austrian World Heritage Day with the intention to give interested visitors an insight in a guided ranger tour visiting the UNESCO World Heritage Beech Forests in Kalkalpen National Park. The film is of course also used on social media.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NpDbzdKC-p8>



Evaluation of activity

The 4 minutes film Guided World Heritage tours has already been viewed 900 times (Stand Datum?) and is implemented on Kalkalpen website, social media, Kalkalpen Youtube channel, etc. to promote World Heritage tours into the national park.

2.10. Guides Ranger Tours

Description of activity

Local schools

In order to provide local schools with information about the World Natural Heritage Ancient Beech Forests, six partner schools of Kalkalpen National Park were invited to free forest adventure days in early summer and autumn 2021. The ranger tours were financed by the Beech Power project. The elementary school in Molln and the Mittelschule Losenstein participated with several classes. In addition, a project group of the Bundesrealgymnasium Steyr (grammar school) dealt with the subject of "Making the World Natural Heritage Beech Forests come alive for young people". In the course of this, the students learned a lot about the World Heritage site on a guided ranger tour in the national park.

Stakeholder training and Action Days

Within the framework of the meeting of the economic operators of the region, an exchange of information between the Kalkalpen National Park and the stakeholders also took place. This meeting was about the presentation of the World Natural Heritage of the European Beech Forests, possibilities to integrate the World Heritage into the regional value creation. The participants were given an overview of the possibilities to use the World Heritage for themselves in the region. We also offered two days for experiencing the World Heritage within a guided ranger tour in the protected area.

Hiking trips for locals:

We offered guided hiking trips for the local population on the Joint Austrian World Heritage Day (see 2.7).

Evaluation of activity

Schools: Nine school classes (160 students and teachers) participated in the forest adventure days on the World Natural Heritage. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the month-long nationwide lockdown in 2020 and 2021 and the partial ban on school events, fewer school classes than planned took part in the World Heritage tours. It's pleasing that a new national park partner school, the Ski Mittelschule Windischgarsten, was acquired in November 2021 during the Beech Power project period. To raise the awareness of the World Natural Heritage especially for local schools remains an important task of the national park.

Stakeholder training and Action Days:

The training, that targeted small and medium-sized enterprises, accommodation providers and restaurants, was attended by 30 people. The content of the meeting was information exchange and knowledge transfer. The business operators of the region are an important stakeholder group. They act as ambassadors of the region and contribute to the acceptance of the national park. The meeting therefore could be used to raise



awareness to the World Heritage status of the national park. Due to the COVID situation it was one of the rare meetings where the produced presentation material (Beach Flags, Expostar) could be used.

Hiking trips for locals:

see 2.7



Figure 19: A new national park partner school, the Ski Mittelschule Windischgarsten, was acquired in November 2021 during the Beech Power project period, © Kalkalpen NP

2.11. Mobile counting systems

Description of activity

Kalkalpen National Park already had a traffic organisation measure and a visitor counting system on the main entrances (see also D.T2.1.3). Within the framework of the project and the intensive examination of visitor management, we have decided to purchase mobile counting systems that can also provide information about the visitor frequency of individual World Heritage offers. Kalkalpen National Park has different themed nature trails. One of them is the “Wilderness Trail Buchensteig”, a beech forest hiking trail, where visitors can individually experience the World Heritage beech forests. It is called the World Heritage trail in the text below. The trail already exists since the year 2013, but we’ve never had an idea of how many people visit this trail. Therefore in autumn 2020 we bought two different visitor counting systems. One that can be used for hiking trails and counts visitors via an optical sensor. The other one was installed on a forest road on the Hintergebirge cycle path, a forest road. The system is able to distinguish between hikers, bikers and cars when counting. The two systems were installed in summer 2021.

Figure 20: visitor counting system “Wanderweg” on the World Heritage trail, © Kalkalpen NP



Figure 21: visitor counting system “Rabenbach” on forest road (counting pedestrians, bikers and cars), © Kalkalpen NP



Evaluation of activity

The visitor counting system “Wanderweg” on the World Heritage trail counted a daily average of 10 visitors. The best visited day was on September 26th, a Sunday, with 50 visitors



Figure 22: Daily visitors measured by the counting system “Wanderweg” on the hiking trail

The visitor counting system “Rabenbach” counted a daily average of 115 visitors. The best visited day was on August 7th, a Saturday, with 775 visitors. The monitored road is the so called “Hintergebirge Cycle Path”, that is very well used.

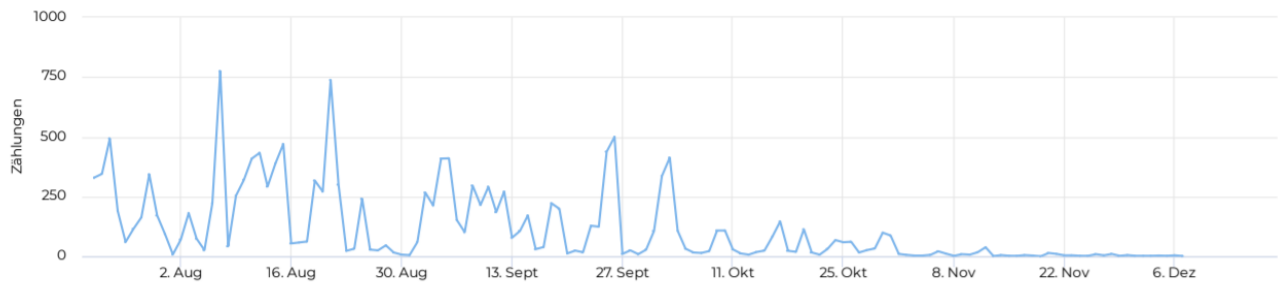


Figure 23: Daily visitors measured by the counting system "Rabenbach"

Detailed analysis of both counting systems shows that most visitors are counted on the weekend, whereby Saturday has the highest numbers. In terms of time of day, most visits are recorded from 10 am to 3 pm.

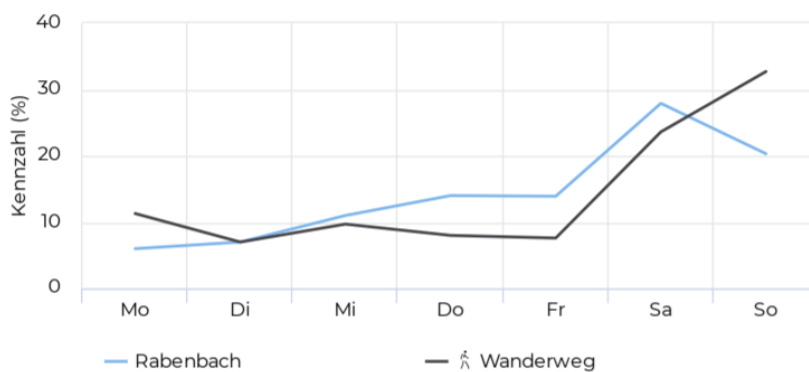


Figure 24: Visitors per weekday - blue "Rabenbach" forest road, black "Wanderweg" hiking trail

The statements from the visitor monitoring are not yet as meaningful because only one short period of data is available. Records over several years will certainly allow for more precise evaluations. Nevertheless, a first trend is emerging.

The number of visitors of the World Heritage thematic trail (Counting system "Wanderweg") can be classified as low. A risk of overuse can therefore be ruled out. Rather, visitor monitoring shows that the theme trail should be promoted much more by the national park, as the trail offers World Heritage information.

The Hintergebirge Cycle Path (Counting system "Rabenbach"), which is also used by hikers and walkers, is very well used according to the visitor monitoring. Since the path is a forest road mainly on the borders of the national park, negative impacts (e.g. widening of the path) on the neighbouring protected area are not to be expected. The high number of visitors shows the need for additional World Heritage information. The biking trail could be offered in future as some kind of World Heritage biking trail, as visitors mostly have a good view on the World Heritage beech forests. On special viewing points World Heritage information infrastructure could be installed (e.g. panorama points, selfie points, etc.)



3. Summary and recommendations

Summary:

The visitor information and knowledge transfer workshop that was organised in October 2020 by Kalkalpen National Park gave an opportunity for all project partner to introduce their visitor management activities and to discuss about gained experience and challenges all World Heritage sites are facing. So the workshop and the communication concept, that was one result of the workshop, laid the basis for the pilot activities that were implemented in Kalkalpen National Park and are evaluated in this report.

In total 11 activities could be implemented within the project duration.

Kalkalpen National Park used the Beech Power Project to intensively work on a **World Heritage knowledge transfer concept**. The concept is not an overall concept that can be used by all Beech Forest World Heritage sites - the concept takes into account very precisely the conditions and specifications in the Kalkalpen National Park and its region - but of course it can give inspiration for others. The concept, that comprises almost 60 pages, contains information about the World Heritage-site itself, the WH-communication, existing WH infrastructure and ideas for new ones, WH visitor offers, WH public relations, etc. and gives a vision for the national park and the whole region concerning the World Heritage topic. Together with other listed intangible Unesco World Heritage of valuable craft techniques of the surroundings of the national park, it would be possible to develop the whole region towards a World Heritage region. To get an idea of the importance and knowledge of the World Heritage of our visitors we created an online **survey**.

After the extension of the existing World Heritage site in July 2021 Kalkalpen National Park produced a new **World Heritage leaflet**, that conveys the most important topics of the transnational serial Beech Forest World Heritage site, but in one part also informs specifically about the Austrian Beech Forest World Heritage sites.

To emphasize the value of the World Heritage nomination some **presentation material**, that can be used for different events, was produced. So we created a mobile presentation wall, but also beach flags and a small mobile exhibition.

To transport the OUV of the World Heritage Beech Forests also to the local population **PR activities** in regional newspapers are inevitable. Popular science articles on the beech forests conveyed the importance and endangerment of the beech forests and at the same time also pointed out opportunities to experience the World Heritage in Kalkalpen National Park.

In April 2021 the Austrian World Heritage sites celebrated a joint World Heritage Day for the first time. All sites offered a free World Heritage programme, that was promoted via a common World Heritage Day website. Kalkalpen National Park offered two **guided Ranger tours**, to give some interested people the possibility to experience and learn more about the World Heritage Beech Forests. Unfortunately, the offer had to be cancelled at short notice due to the Corona measures in force. Fortunately, the **World Heritage film** adapted in the project was also released on World Heritage Day - which allowed us to draw attention to the World Heritage after all. The nine-minute film sums up the World Heritage of the Beech Forests very precisely, briefly introduces all the sites and points out the endangerment of the beech forests. Additionally, we also published on this day our new **trailer for guided World Heritage tours**.

We also organised an event where we invited local stakeholders to inform and train them about the world heritage. A guided excursion into the World Heritage Beech Forests was also offered.

To focus on young people, we adapted our existing **multivision show**. Rangers teach at schools to transport national park content and - now also World Heritage content - in a playful way. To give school classes the opportunity to visit the national park and experience the World Heritage Beech Forest in real life we also invited school classes to take part in guided ranger tours.



To get an overview of the use of individual World Heritage tours, **counting equipment** was purchased during the project and installed on our World Heritage trail.

Recommendations:

An intensive examination of the subject of World Heritage - like we did with our **World Heritage Knowledge Transfer concept** - in all its areas seems to be an important cornerstone for all planned activities and is therefore also recommended to the other World Heritage sites. This is the only way to develop an overall vision for the entire region and to work on its implementation. In order to implement a vision, not only the efforts of the World Heritage sites are needed, but also support from the region. In many cases, the importance of the World Heritage and the potentials the World Heritage brings with it have not yet reached the population. This is also the case in Kalkalpen National Park. Therefore, all measures that help to communicate the World Heritage are all the more important.

The **online survey** shows that many visitors already know about the World Heritage status of the national park. 75% of the visitors already heard of the World Heritage Beech Forests - which proves that some of the pilot activities are already having an effect. The results also show, that the World Heritage status represents a reason for the visit and that people also would spend half a day or a whole day to experience the World Heritage. This is a very important information when creating new World Heritage offers.

A **leaflet**, the **World Heritage film** and the **PR activities** in the regional newspapers can be seen as one measure to make one step forward in the World Heritage vision. The film can be used not only by the Kalkalpen National Park but equally by all World Heritage Sites, as it was produced in both English and German. We therefore took lot of effort to promote and send out the film to all sites and linked organisations.

One strategy of the national park has always been to focus on young people who will significantly influence and shape the region in the future. The national park has always had a wide range of activities for **schools** and has now been able to expand this to include the topic of World Heritage. Residents of a region naturally look at tourism offers with a different eye than tourists and usually use them less often. Therefore, it was all the more important for us to offer our World Heritage offers to the inhabitants of the region within the framework of special events (World Heritage Day, **Stakeholder Days**). Unfortunately, due to the Corona measures, only very few guided tours could actually be carried out. This fact is particularly unfortunate for the schools of the region, which would have certainly used this offer very well. However, the feedback from our guided tours shows very clearly that they are very positively received and also very well rated. Therefore, we will also use future events to offer **free guided tours** into the World Heritage sites. Our experience shows that our well-trained rangers on the site can convey the content with much more emotion than can be conveyed through brochures and newspaper articles.

In the **presentation materials** we produced, we placed great emphasis on transportability. Kalkalpen National Park participates in many events in and outside the region. Good looking, easy understandable and transportable presentation materials helps to attract people to take a closer look to the stand and to start a conversation. Especially when participating in fairs (for example the yearly education trade fair Interpädagogika) you have to stand out from other participants.

To sum up our visitor information activities we can assume that especially during the COVID pandemic digital information material became more and more necessary. But the visitor survey also shows that not all people inform themselves only via internet. We therefore always recommend a mix of digital and analogue information material.

Kalkalpen National Park already had counting systems on their main entrances to calculate the total visitor numbers, but we did not know where the people move inside the protected area. The new counting devices now can be installed also on hiking trails - and you can also change the location with not too much effort.



The **counting systems** only show results for one period, but we assume that they will be a good monitoring instrument. With a more detailed analysis of long term counting data, you may find out whether you can assume negative impairments and thus also consider measures to direct visitors away from sensitive areas. However, a high number of visitors on a certain route could also indicate the need for additional information infrastructure. So in total we assume that mobile counting equipment is a very good instrument to get an impression of visitor distribution and frequency. The results can therefore also contribute to the monitoring of World Heritage sites.

All results from our implemented pilot activities that can be useful for others will be uploaded in the **knowledge exchange platform**. The leaflet and the film can be found there. For the presentation material we uploaded photos. For more detailed information, we are of course available for inquiries.

In any case, the Beech Power Project, within the framework of the implementation of the pilot activities, gave us a great opportunity to increase the awareness of the World Heritage in the region and beyond its borders. We were able to impart a lot of knowledge about beech forests and thus hopefully also contribute to the protection of the beech forests europewide.



4. Appendix:

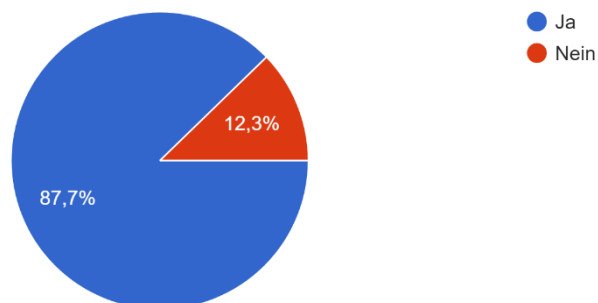
4.1. Online Visitor Survey

UNESCO World Heritage Site Ancient Beech Forests in Kalkalpen National Park within the framework of the Beech Power Project

- Period: July to November 2021
- Language: German
- 17 questions
- 420 people participated in the survey

1. Haben Sie den Nationalpark Kalkalpen schon einmal besucht?

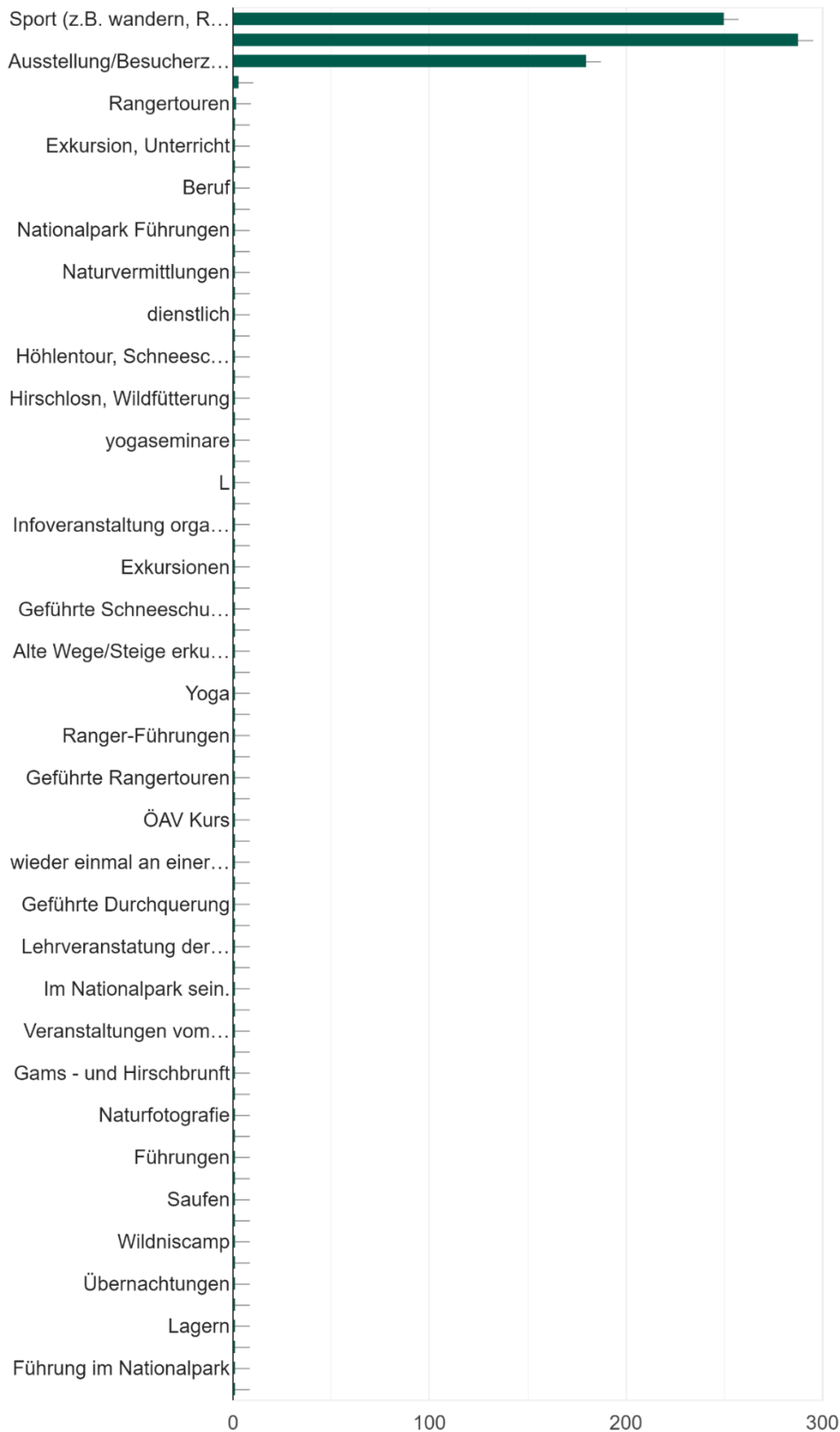
416 Antworten





2. Wenn ja, welche Aktivität haben Sie bei Ihrem Besuch ausgeübt: (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

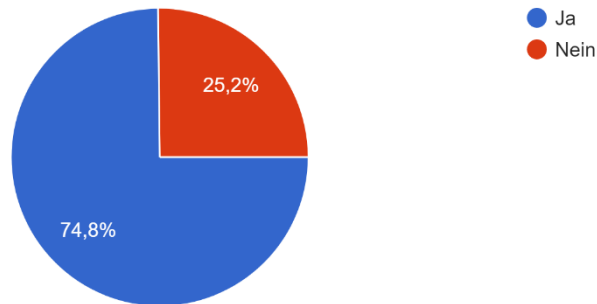
370 Antworten





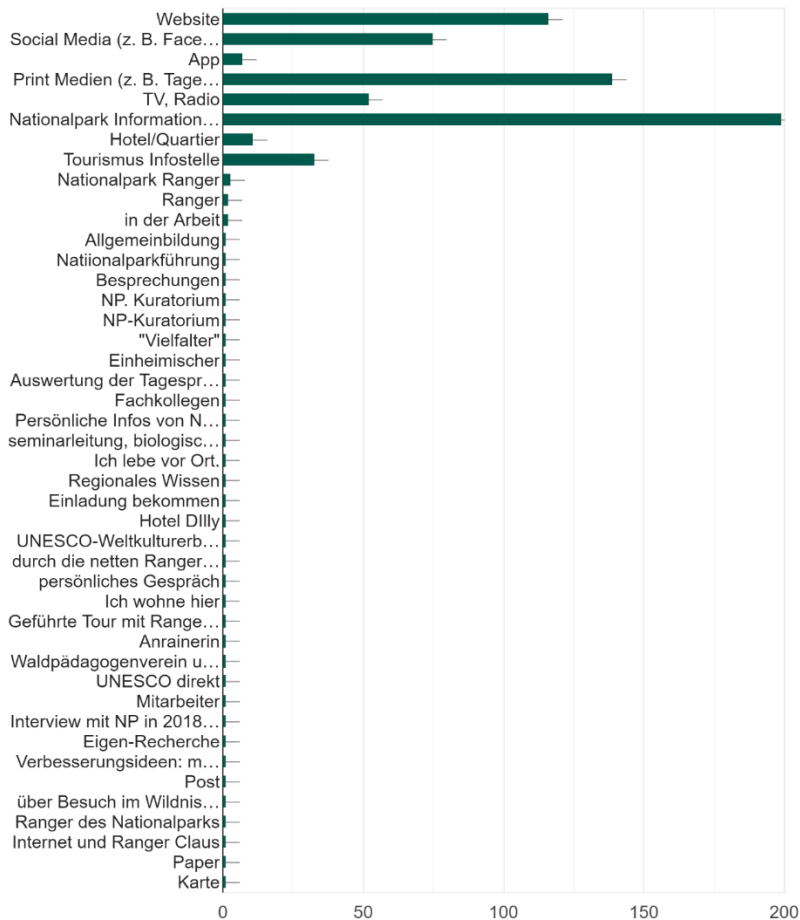
3. Wussten Sie, dass der Nationalpark Kalkalpen als UNESCO-Weltnaturerbe für alte Buchenwälder ausgezeichnet ist?

413 Antworten



4. Wenn ja, woher haben Sie Ihre Informationen bezogen: (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

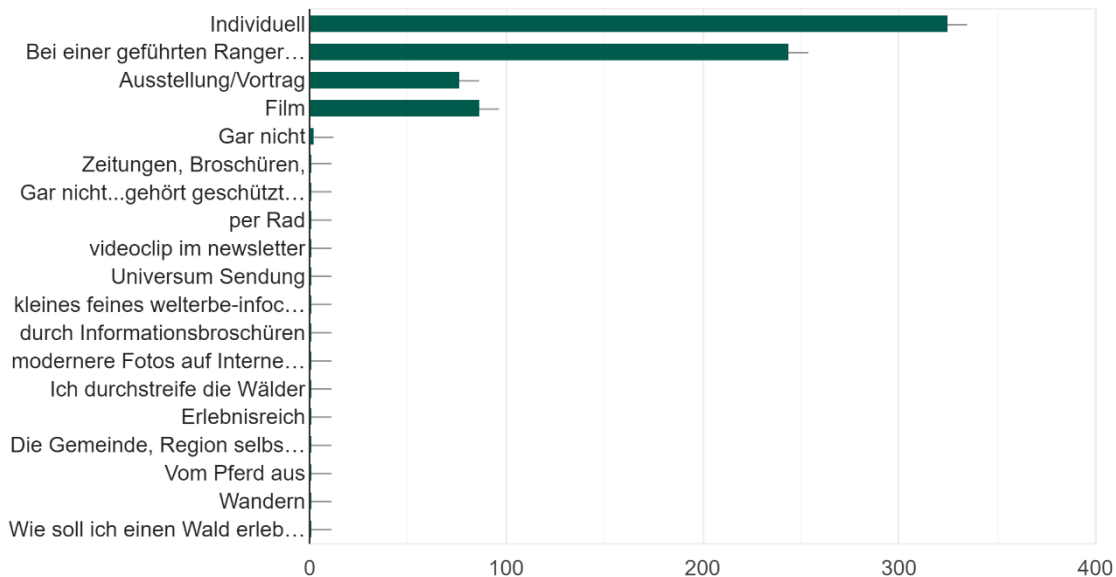
322 Antworten



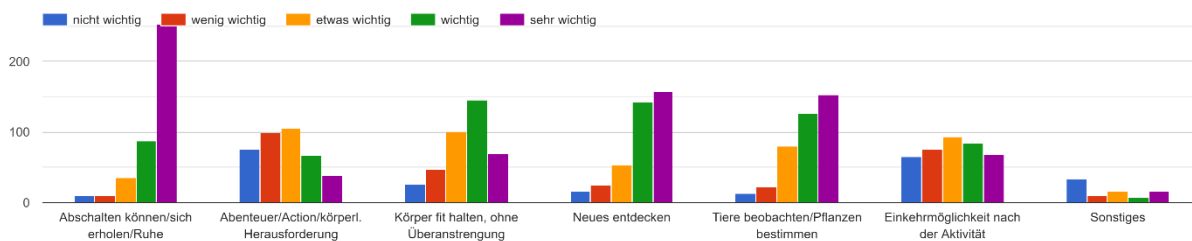


5. Wie möchten Sie gerne die Buchenwälder im Nationalpark erleben? (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

412 Antworten

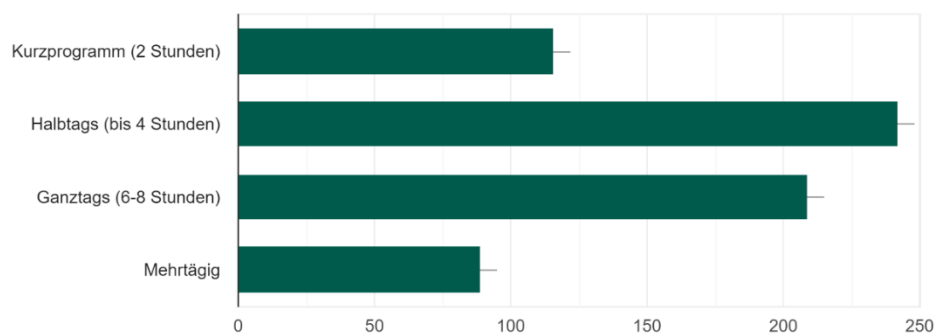


6. Ein schönes Naturerlebnis bedeutet für mich:



7. Wie viel Zeit würden Sie für eine Ranger Tour ins Weltnaturerbe aufwenden? (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

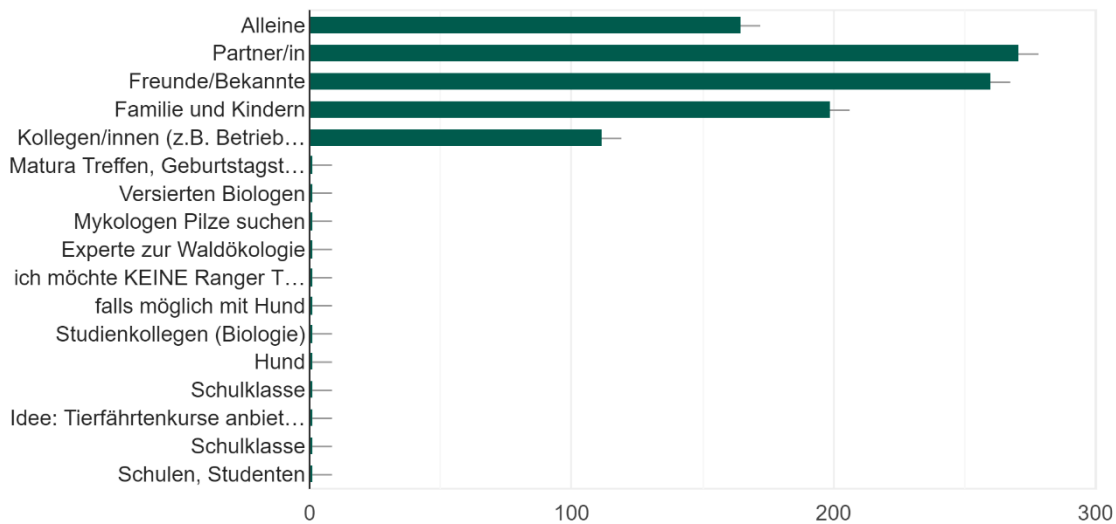
402 Antworten





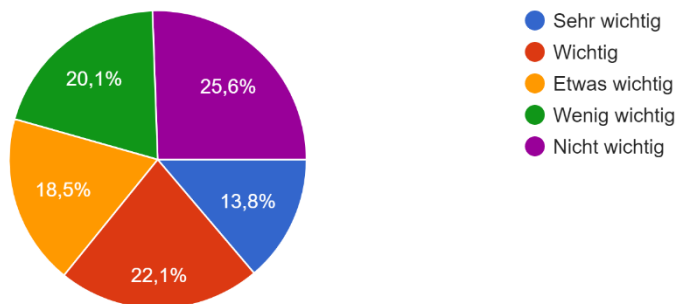
8. Mit wem würden Sie ein Welterbeangebot nutzen? (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

412 Antworten



9. Wie wichtig war das Weltnaturerbe alte Buchenwälder bei Ihrer Entscheidung, den Nationalpark Kalkalpen zu besuchen?

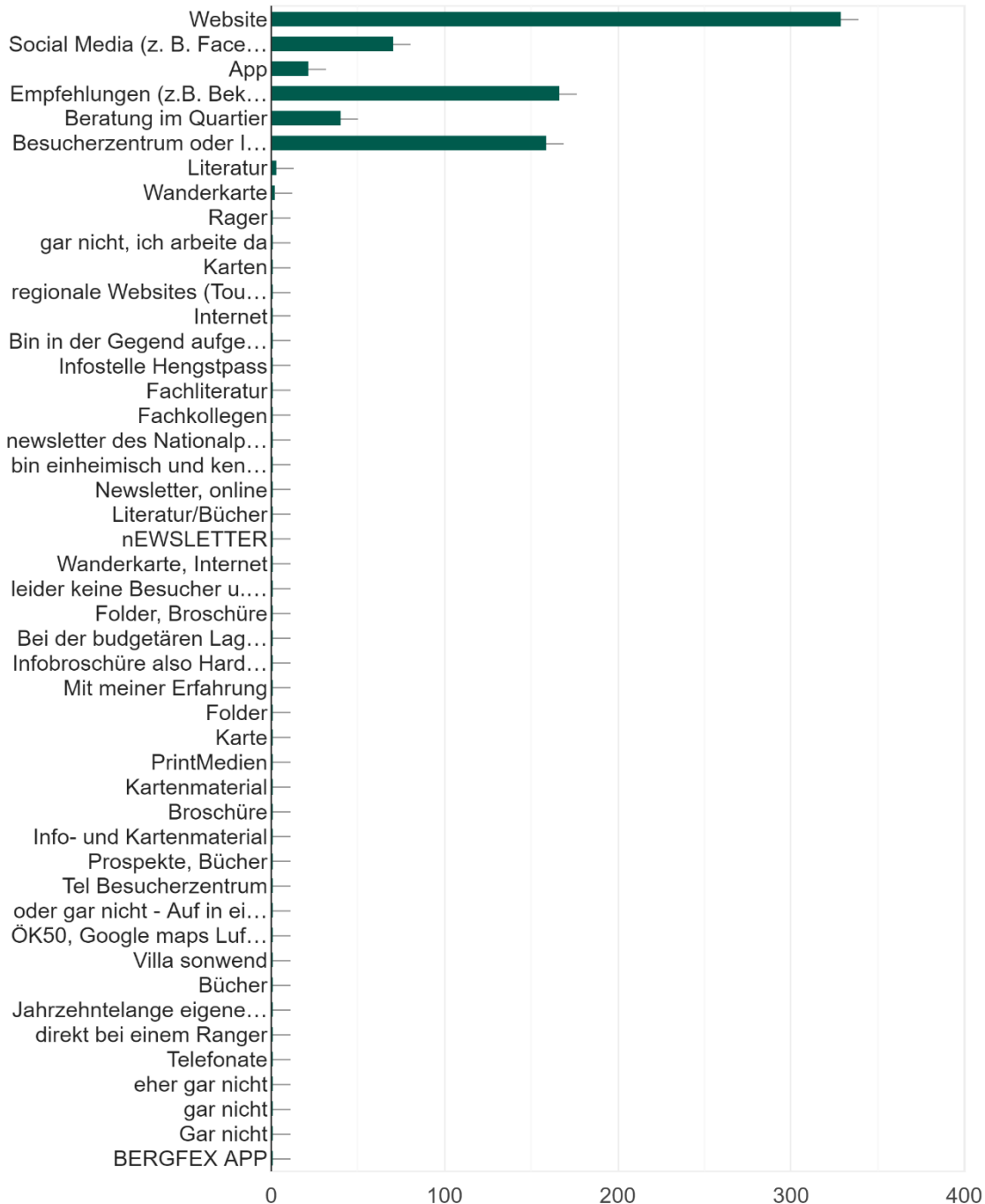
399 Antworten





10. Wie informieren Sie sich im Vorfeld über einen Nationalpark Besuch? (Mehrfachnennungen möglich)

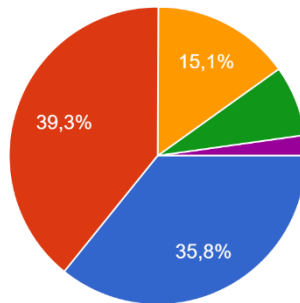
408 Antworten





11. Sind Sie

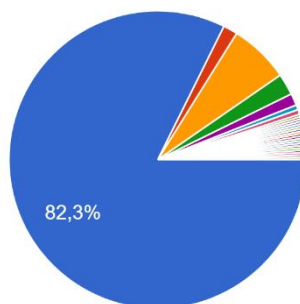
405 Antworten



- Bewohner der Nationalpark Region
- Ausflugsgast/Tagesgast
- Nächtigungsgast (1-2 Nächte)
- Nächtigungsgast (3-5 Nächte)
- Nächtigungsgast (mehr als 6 Nächte)

14. Wie sind Sie angereist?

385 Antworten

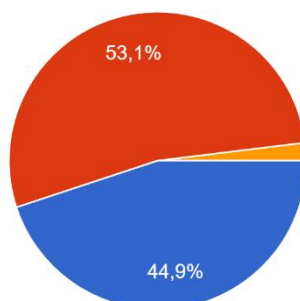


- Auto
- Bus (z.B. Gruppenreise)
- Öffentlich (z.B. Bahn, Bus)
- Rad
- Fahrrad
- Rad
- Wohne hier
- gar nicht, ich wohne hier

▲ 1/4 ▼

15. Sind Sie?

414 Antworten

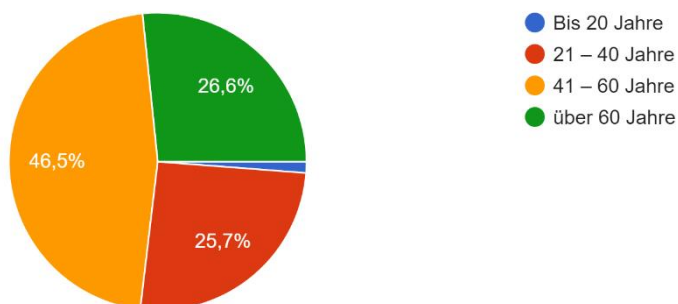


- Weiblich
- Männlich
- Divers



16. Wie alt sind Sie?

413 Antworten



17. Ihre höchste abgeschlossene Ausbildung

409 Antworten

