



Cuivré écarlate

Sustainable management

By leaving these open spaces without any management activity they will reforest spontaneously. In order to slow down this phenomenon, restored habitats will be mowed and grazed regularly. In this perspective partnerships



© Harry Mardulyn



© Harry Mardulyn

Promoting the regeneration of deciduous trees

The beech trees on the high plateau are faced with a serious regeneration problem. After a climatological incident (heavy frost), affecting the health of the trees, many of them were cut down leaving large bare spots. Furthermore, seedlings of deciduous tree species (beech, mountain ash, willow, birch...) are grazed intensively by deers. Protective enclosed areas (1 ha), that have become necessary for the development of young trees, will be installed in the most run down beech woods.

Knowledge of and respect for this natural heritage

LIFE-Nature puts the emphasis on informing and raising the awareness of the public regarding actions taken and their positive impact on water quality, beauty of the landscapes and biodiversity. A brochure presenting the development status of the project will be distributed free of charge on a regular basis. Informative signs, intended for walkers, will be erected in the vicinity of the sites where works are in progress.



© F. Degrave

In concrete terms : actions to be taken !



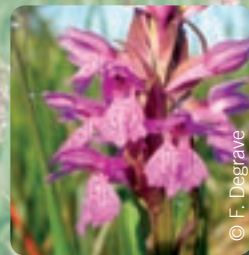
Pic cendré juvénile

Recreate open and wet ecosystems

On wettest and less productive soils, spruce trees will be removed over extensive areas. Within these open spaces, water regimes will be restored in different ways : drain blocking, creation of small dikes, etc. In some cases the landowners will receive financial compensation for the premature felling of conifer trees.



© Gérard Jadoul



© F. Degrave

Orchis des sphaignes

will be established with local farmers.

In the valley floors some of the most interesting areas will be purchased and set up as new nature reserves. In other cases an agreement will be made with the owner in order to preserve the recreated habitats.

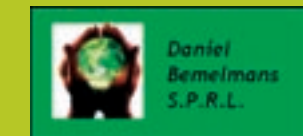


© F. Degrave

LIFE-Nature

Restoration of the natural habitats on the Plateau des Tailles

© Nathalie Annoye



© F. Degrave



Nacré de la Filipendule

© F. Degrave

What is a LIFE project ?

LIFE (the Financial Instrument for the Environment), established in 1992, cofinances environmental projects within the countries of the European Community. LIFE-Nature addresses in particular nature conservation. LIFE-Nature projects concentrate within the Natura 2000 network including a series of protected natural sites that shelter endangered habitats, plants and animals. The « Plateau des Tailles » LIFE project partners are the Direction Générale des Ressources naturelles et de l'Environnement (Walloon Region), the ASBL Reserves Naturelles-RNOB (the nature conservation association Natagora) and SPRL Bemelmans (international forestry consultant).

The **Plateau des Tailles** area, localised in the heart of the Belgian Ardennes, still supports a great biodiversity concentrated in typical ecosystems : peat bogs, heathland, beech woods and valley floors. Unfortunately, the area covered by these types of vegetation has been reduced significantly as a result of more and more intensive farming and due to the extent of spruce trees stands.



© F. Degrave

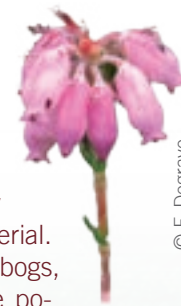


© David Doucet

This change in land use has a substantial impact on the quality of the environment. Wetlands and peat bogs in particular are like sponges that retain and filter water before it reaches brooks and rivers. The destruction of these environments considerably disrupts water flows and water quality. Moreover, tree growth in these poor and waterlogged soils is weak, and thus exploitation is not very profitable.

Three habitats to protect

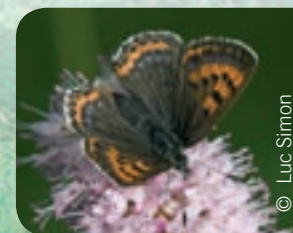
Peat bogs are formed over centuries on a waterlogged soil whereas drier areas were formerly covered with heathland (heather, blueberry bushes, etc.) Peat is produced by the slow accumulation of dead plant material. Peat moss, a typical plant species for peat bogs, is mainly responsible for this. Peat bogs are populated by plants and animals specially adapted to the harsh conditions that they have to face : acidity, cold, food shortages. Just like other sensitive environments they have suffered from human activity : drainage, spruce plantations, fires, etc.



Bruyère quaternée

© F. Degrave

Formerly **valley floors in the Ardennes** used to be mowed on a regular basis. Flooding, natural or intentional, improved vegetation growth that provided good quality fodder and enabled the installation of typical plant species. Areas that remained unmowed were colonised by alluvial forest, dominated by alder trees. Aborting ancient agricultural practices on these areas, generalisation of spruce monocultures and rectification of river banks have modified extensively the valley floors.



Cuivré de la bistorte

© Luc Simon



Cigogne noire

© Gérard Jacoul

In a large part of the Ardennes, **the beech woods** constitute the natural forest, that is to say the woodland that grows and maintains itself spontaneously. On the Plateau des Tailles numerous dying beech trees have been cut down. Moreover, grazing deer prevent young beech trees from developing and forest regeneration.



© Philippe Vanmeerbeeck

Bécassine des marais

Location of the project

The working area of the project is 2800 hectares, divided over 4 Natura 2000 sites extending over 4 communes (Houffalize, La Roche-en-Ardenne, Manhay, Vielsalm).



Contact

Projet LIFE Plateau des Tailles

Rue de La Roche, 8 | 6660 Houffalize
Tél./fax : 061 / 61 58 38

E-mail : denis.parkinson@swing.be
frederic.degrave@natagora.be
david.doucet@natagora.be

Site internet : <http://mrw.wallonie.be/dgrne/sibw/offh/LIFEPLTTAILLES>

© F. Degrave