





“Positive aspects characteristic of Latvia’s forests today:
– *not a single tree species typical of the natural forest in Latvia has disappeared due to economic activity in the foreseeable past. All forest samples can be found, if only in minor areas, however the typical biological samples are not protected everywhere or protection is only declaratory;*
– *trees uncommon for Latvia have not been introduced in appreciable areas, so Latvia’s forest is composed solely of native species;*
– *due to low population density and different historical economic developments, the forest diversity in terms of both species and soils (particularly wetlands) has remained much higher than it is in the temperate zone of Central Europe and Southern Scandinavia.”*

Normunds Priedītis, Latvian Forest: Nature and Diversity, 1999

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Roberts Stripnieks,
Chairman of Board, JSC "Latvijas valsts meži"

Environmental issues in the activities of JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" (LVM, Latvian State Forests) are just as important as the economic ones. Since inception, LVM has managed to successfully combine economic efficiency with social and environmental interests, thus creating preconditions for sustainable forest management.

In the reporting period, the company's environmental objective was the conservation of forest biodiversity and protection of related environmental values: soil, water and landscape. Over the past five years, the company has implemented environmental policy, not only taking care of protected sites, but also introducing principles of environmental impact mitigation in every area of activities. Our goal is to reduce impact on the environment everywhere, not just in the forest, but also in every workplace, including offices.

In the period that follows, the company plans to implement a more proactive environmental policy and to increase its contribution to mitigation of global climate change.

Environmental Impact Mitigation

One of the most important tasks to achieve the environmental objectives of LVM is to mitigate the environmental impact. LVM's expert working group has examined the types of LVM's economic activities and identified those with the most pronounced impact on the environment, in order to plan the necessary preventive measures for minimizing the impact.

Already in the planning process, LVM excludes those activities that could have a significant effect on the environment. In all tree-felling cases, LVM identifies and takes steps to reduce the potential environmental impact in each separate site of forest operations, by determining the most appropriate time for logging, the forest structure elements to be preserved, the presence of water and wetlands, proximity to protected areas, etc. Written opinions on the possible environmental impact and specific measures for its mitigation are prepared on the basis of expert findings, in all cases for the activities such as forest infrastructure development and maintenance (forest road construction, reconstruction, restoration of forestland amelioration systems) in accordance with LVM legislation on environmental impact assessment. Over 200 opinions are prepared yearly. Information on planned activities for which environmental impact assessments are prepared is available on LVM website www.lvm.lv, where you can also provide suggestions and ask questions.



To minimize the environmental impact as much as possible when planning and organizing forest operations, LVM takes steps to bring ecosystems to their natural structure and preserve the forest structure elements that maintain the biodiversity.

A few examples:

- 35% of forest areas for regeneration are regenerated naturally;
- when thinning is performed, coniferous forests are provided with at least a 5% admixture of deciduous trees and increase in the share of broadleaved trees;
- restoration of amelioration systems for a part of pre-drained forests is not performed, thus facilitating the recovery of natural structure in specific ecosystems;
- trees with large bird nests, wet depressions, fox and badger burrows, undergrowth, young growth, deadwood (at least 5 m³ per ha), groups of surviving and dead trees in burnt forest stands and other forest structure elements important for conservation of biodiversity are spared;
- selective felling method is used for 5% of the final felling area, while 65% of the total clear felling area is less than 2 ha;
- compared with the provisions of the law, twice as many ecological trees are preserved in cutting areas; 4 times as many trees are preserved in transitory zones between forests and open ecosystems and 6 times as many ecological trees are preserved in waterlogged deciduous forests dominated by the common alder (i.e. at least 140 thousand trees per year and by 80 thousand trees more than established by legislation).

To minimize disturbance of animals, including birds, during the breeding season, LVM does not tend young stands and does not perform the final felling in the forests in urban areas and in water and wetland protection zones from 1 April to 30 June, does not perform the final felling in the protection zones of the Baltic Sea from 1 March to 30 September and does not perform any felling in the buffer zones in micro-reserves of protected birds from 1 March to 31 August.

1. Ecological tree monitoring



To mitigate the environmental impact of the clear felling when performing the final felling, LVM retains more than 140,000 older trees of larger dimensions in cutting areas every year, i.e. twelve living trees on average per hectare of the cutting area, of which pine is 40%, aspen – 23%, oak and ash – 13%, birch – 8%, common alder – 6%, lime and maple – 3% and spruce – 2%. Five trees per hectare of the cutting area are required by law to be retained. More than 80 thousand preserved trees – this is the additional annual contribution of LVM to the conservation of biodiversity. The share of the retained viable trees decreases over time under the influence of various natural factors. Since 2003, LVM has been monitoring the number and condition of the trees retained in cutover areas. (Monitoring is a system of observing, keeping track of, analyzing and forecasting the environmental conditions.) This monitoring enables to assess changes in the number and condition of the retained trees over time. It has been found out that 96% of the trees retained in cutting areas maintain viability in the first year. Reasons for destruction: 34% – uprooting, 33% – breakage, 10% – diseases, 9% – pests, 4% – mechanical damage, 10% – other reasons. 75% of the retained trees maintain viability during three years after performing the final felling.

In five years after the felling, there are only eight living trees per hectare or 63% of the retained trees. Reasons for destruction: 70% – uprooting, 21% – breakage, 2% – diseases, 3% – pests, 4% – other reasons.

Various species differ significantly in terms of maintaining their viability: hard deciduous trees (oak, ash) – 83%, common alder and pine – 65%, aspen and birch – 55%, while spruce is the least durable, as only 35% of the preserved spruce maintain viability in five years after the felling.

Monitoring results provide justification for the choice of tree species to be retained in cutting areas and the efficiency of planned nature conservation measures. Every year there is new evidence of the rare and specially protected bird species nesting in the trees to be retained. Such trees are used not only by the black woodpecker and the stock pigeon, but also by the white-tailed sea eagle, the osprey and other species of birds.

In order to create more favourable conditions for the nesting of protected birds, LVM expects to obtain additional information on the biological importance of trees to be retained in the coming years.

2. Monitoring of beaver habitats



In accordance with the data on game animals summarized by Valsts Meža dienests (VMD, State Forest Service), the number of beavers in the last three years only has increased by almost nine thousand animals, amounting to more than 82 thousand beavers in 2008. The amount of damage to the forest increases every year.

Ingmārs Līdaka, Head of the Information Department of Riga Zoo, estimates that the number of beavers today is much higher than listed by VMD and it could reach 100 thousands.

LVM preserves beaver habitats, which, following assessments made by experts, have been recognized as habitats typical of natural forests or are located in overflowing clearings. The area of beaver habitats to be retained increased from 1.3 thousand ha to 2.1 thousand ha from between 2001 and 2008.

In order to prevent damage caused to forests by the water dams built by beavers (beaver habitats) and identify the areas that are significant for the conservation of biodiversity, LVM has been monitoring beaver habitats since 2001. In 2008, beaver habitats occupied an area of 4.3 thousand ha in the forests managed by LVM, as shown by LVM monitoring data. Out of these beaver habitats, 2.2 thousand ha are subject to elimination and 2.1 thousand ha are to be preserved. The beaver habitats to be eliminated have been found in forest amelioration ditches. Every year, LVM plans activities aimed at elimination of the beaver habitats created in the forest amelioration systems. The area of the beaver habitats to be eliminated decreased from 4.6 thousand ha to 2.2 thousand ha between 2001 and 2008.

3. Activities to mitigate possible environmental pollution in forest operations



In accordance with LVM Requirements for Environmental Pollution Abatement, anyone engaged in LVM forest operations has an obligation to use the Environmental Protection Kit in order to prevent environmental pollution with oil products, to minimize possible soil and water contamination with such products and to eliminate effects of pollution in case of necessity. The Environmental Protection Kit includes: an oil-absorbing mat, an oil-absorbing barrier, a pair of gloves and a garbage bag. To ensure compliance with the requirements, LVM organizes training sessions for cooperation partners and monitors such compliance. In case of material breach, such as finding oil or fuel leakage from forest machinery, operations are terminated immediately. By regularly assessing the information about the observed violations and the cooperation partners whose activities are found to be inconsistent with LVM requirements, the decision on dissolution of contractual relations is taken.

4. Waste



Approximately 600-700 thousand tonnes of waste are generated in Latvia each year. Waste is also produced as a result of forest management and related processes. LVM is aware of the main types of waste and it has developed a procedure for waste management. Waste containers have been placed in recreation areas, near sightseeing attractions and along cognitive trails. About 200 thousand lats are invested annually to reduce waste issues in the forests.

Waste in forests

To reduce the amount of waste in forests and promote intolerant attitudes of the society towards pollution in the forest, LVM has been involved in organization of public campaigns and cleanup events since 2005.

JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" together with the organizers of Pan Latvia cleanup events have set forth an ambitious vision: Latvia is the cleanest European country and its state forests are the cleanest forests in Europe.

To decrease production of waste in logging areas, LVM raises awareness of its contractors engaged in forest operations about LVM requirements for environmental pollution control and monitors compliance with such requirements.

Approximately 30% of discarded waste finds its way into natural environment: forests, meadows, etc. Collection of one cubic metre of waste in the forest costs between LVL 10 and 25, which is undoubtedly more expensive than waste removal from households. Calculations show that the average cost of waste collection in the forest is LVL 13 per m³.

JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" collects annually approximately 60 thousand m³ of waste in the state forests, which corresponds to a line of about 120 log trucks. Waste is collected in various ways:

- LVM enters into contracts on waste collection in forests and elimination of illegal dumps;
- waste is regularly collected in recreation areas;
- LVM and its partners hold Great Cleanup Days and other cleanup events.

Campaign Don't litter in the forest!

To address the growing problem of waste in forests, JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" has implemented the national-scale social campaign Don't litter in the forest! since 2005. The main character of the campaign is Cūkmens (Pigman). "The problem of forest pollution, in my view, lies not in the waste, but in people's attitudes towards the environment," says Roberts Stripnieks, Chairman of Board of JSC "Latvijas valsts meži", "Until people realize they were not sent to the Earth from the outer space to conquer it, but were born here to become a part of this planet, it's useless to expect them to clean up after a picnic in the forest. We may organize forest cleanup events over and over again, yet a more important and challenging task is to change people's attitudes. This is also the goal of the social campaign Don't litter in the forest!"

Main objectives of the campaign:

Cleaner forests.

A more responsible society.

Major sponsors of the campaign are Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Agriculture.



Over the last four years, the campaign has turned into a national movement attracting more and more new partners: non-governmental organizations, business entities, social agencies, local authorities and state institutions. The President of the Republic of Latvia has also taken part in the Great Cleanup Day.

As part of the four-year campaign, Cūkmens has met more than 20,000 children and participated in more than 500 forest, roadside and water body cleanup events, during which more than 10,000 m³ of waste, with 80% of PET bottles, have been collected.

After four years of work, it can be said that the campaign has been a success. Data of the public opinion research centre SKDS shows that Cūkmens is recognized by almost every person in Latvia. As a result of cleanup events, forests have become noticeably cleaner, while people have increased their awareness of the harm that waste causes to nature. After the new Natural Resources Tax Law was implemented, supermarkets have largely put an end to free plastic bags, instead offering paper and cloth bags to buyers. Preparatory work for introducing a deposit-refund system for PET bottles in Latvia is currently underway.

Empty containers and hazardous waste

We have estimated that 110 tonnes of packaging is used in the seedling production process (LVM Seeds and Plants Department places on the market more than 35 million seedlings each year). To avoid the entry of this packaging into the forest, LVM Seeds and Plants Department has introduced a provision into the seedling purchase contract that the used plastic bags, balled tree containers and other empty containers shall be returned to the supplier. This allows for an environmentally friendly way of processing and disposing of used containers for plant-protecting agents and other chemicals, as well as working solution residues.

Office waste

LVM provides for waste separation in its offices. A special place is designated for used batteries, while consumer waste, for example in the central office in Riga, is separated into three containers: for paper, for plastic and for other waste. Consumer waste recycling company provides further processing.

No plastic utensils are used in LVM offices, workshops and trainings. Absolute priority is given either to reusable utensils or to disposable paper utensils and wooden cutlery.

To minimize the impact of greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere, six LVM offices, two recreation and tourism centres of LVM Recreation and Hunting Department and tree nurseries of LVM Seeds and Plants Department use renewable fuels, such as wood pellets, instead of fossil fuels for heating, while other departments use wood chips or firewood.

Degraded area reclamation

There are various abandoned sites of the former Soviet army on the territory managed by LVM. Forests have been contaminated by a variety of buildings and structures, ammunition storage facilities and training grounds. The former military sites pollute water, pose a danger to human health and damage the landscape. Over the recent years, LVM has implemented reclamation measures in a number of degraded forests abandoned by the former Soviet army: missile stations in Nīkrāce, Embūte and Augstkalne and other sites. The areas have been freed of barbed wire, ramshackle buildings have been removed and pits have been filled up, thus creating an environment that is not hazardous to human health and life.



Nature Conservation

Conservation of biodiversity in the forests managed by LVM has always been an important component of forestry production. LVM manages 232.4 thousand ha or 14.3% of the forestland held by LVM (of which forests constitute 162.7 thousand ha or 11.4% of the total forest area of LVM) with the objective of preserving the biodiversity.

There are no economic activities or final felling planned in these areas. Nothing else but measures that are necessary for the maintenance of biodiversity are implemented here.

14.2% of LVM forestland is managed with the objective of providing public recreation and cognitive activities in the forest and maintaining the forest's role in protection of the environment, including soil, water and landscape.

The main goal of managing other forest areas is production of high quality wood.

1. Management of protected nature areas



Over 310 thousand ha of lands held by LVM are specially protected nature areas (SPNA), most of which are also included in the European network of protected areas Natura 2000. To ensure management of the protected areas in conformity with the objective of their establishment, almost 60 nature conservation plans were developed for SPNA between 2002 and 2008, and implementation of the approved plans is underway. The planned nature conservation measures are implemented in more than 10 SPNA each year. They involve restoration and maintenance of protected forest and grassland habitats, tending of wood grouse mating habitats, placing of hutches for flying squirrels and dormice and monitoring thereof. Among implemented projects is improvement of nature trails and equipping them with information stands, construction and restoration of marsh footbridges and viewing towers, improvement of recreation areas, maintenance of roads and other activities.



Participation in international environmental projects

To promote proper management of specially protected nature sites and gain experience in cooperation with governmental and non-governmental environmental organizations in partner status, LVM participated in six international environmental projects between 2005 and 2008, including four projects sponsored by the European Commission (EC) LIFE Nature programme: Implementation of Mire Habitat Management Plan for Latvia, Protection and Management of the Northern Gauja Valley, Lake Papes Management and Development, Improvement of Habitat Management of Natura 2000 site – Vestiena, as well as the project Biodiversity Protection in the North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve sponsored by the UN Development Programme and the Global Environment Facility and the project Exciting Cycling Net in the Baltic Country of Lakes funded by INTERREG.

Protected nature site area and share on the territory managed by LVM

Nr.	Protected site category	Area, ha*	Share, %**
1.	Total SPNS:	310 000	19,9
1.1.	incl. Nature reserves	136 800	8,4
1.2.	incl. Nature parks	36 700	2,3
1.3.	incl. Protected landscape areas	29 400	1,4
1.4.	incl. Nature monuments	1 100	0,01
1.5.	incl. Biosphere reserves	123 000	7,8
2.	Micro-reserves (MR)	32 300	2,0
3.	MR buffer zones	32 900	2,0
4.	Protected forest sites	15 400	1,0
5.	Woodland key habitats	57 700	3,6
6.	Protection belts of:		
6.1.	Coastal dunes of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga	6 500	0,4
6.2.	Restricted economic activities of the Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga	45 900	2,8
6.3.	Towns and cities	10 100	0,6
6.4.	Waters and wetlands	27 600	1,7

* – protected sites overlap

** – share of protected sites area in the total LVM area of 1.62 mln ha

2. Forest habitat and protected species conservation



Apart from specially protected nature sites, micro-reserves with the area of 32.3 thousand ha have been established for conservation of rare habitats and protected species in LVM forests. New micro-reserves occupying the area of over 2 thousand ha are set up each year. 90% of all micro-reserves have been established for the protection of bird species. Buffer zones designated for micro-reserves have an area of 33 thousand ha.

Nearly 80% of Latvia's black storks live in LVM forests.

More than 90% of all micro-reserves established for black storks, lesser spotted eagles, white-tailed sea eagles and wood grouse are located in LVM forests.

Black stork nesting success

The company has implemented the project Black Stork Nesting Success Monitoring since 2003. The project objectives were to develop a methodology for monitoring, train LVM personnel for monitoring performance, update the information on all historically known nests of the black stork in LVM forests, check nests unknown hitherto and assess nesting success, as well as influencing factors and trends.

Southern Kurzeme Regional Forestry became involved in the project in 2003, but in 2007 all eight LVM Regional Forestries were studying the black stork nesting. Over these years, nearly 100 LVM employees spent more than two thousand working hours researching the black stork. Thirty-five seminars were held for training the personnel and sharing the results with others.

2007 was the year when the largest ever survey of black stork nesting sites as a part of a monitoring project over one year was performed (268 sites, including 208 black stork nests were checked).

Monitoring results show that the share of unproductive nests is unfortunately increasing. The reasons are both forest operations performed when the birds are most sensitive to disturbance and feeding site condition, as well as lack of food (small rivers run dry during droughty summers and fish stocks decrease). This problem can also be attributed to carnivores (martens) and chemical contamination.

The monitoring results for 2008 showed both disturbing and encouraging facts. Nearly 40% of nests were unproductive, which, according to ornithologists, was due to chemical contamination in black stork overwintering sites in Africa, as high levels of DDT were found in eggshells.

The encouraging news is that for the first time in 30 years four nests with five hatched chicks (usually there are 1-2 chicks in the nest) were discovered.

The experience and knowledge of the black stork gained by LVM personnel involved in forest management cannot be underestimated. This expertise is used in the planning and organization of forest operations so that when storks are most sensitive to disturbance, forest operations do not affect the birds.



The black stork (*Ciconia nigra*) is a solitary nester, slightly smaller than the white stork, with a 1.80 m wingspan. Black storks are found in approximately one hundred countries, and the number of pairs is estimated at 15 thousand. There are between 500 and 700 pairs nesting in Latvia. The world's oldest stork, which is ringed Latvia, is 34 years. The luckiest storks live from 18 to 26 years. A nest serves an average of 10 years. However, 30-year-old nests are not rare, while the earliest known stork's nest is 57 years. There are usually 1-2 chicks in the nest. The black stork feeds mainly on fish. The most common nesting tree is the pine, while the spruce is the least common. Aspens also house many nests, yet the oak is the main tree of the black stork. The average age of the trees chosen for nesting is 97 years, but the record-worthy nesting tree in Latvia is a pine more than 300 years old.

During the 2008 campaign The Black Stork: Bird of the Year, LVM sponsored the making of a poster that encourages people to look out for large birds nests in the forest. During that year, seventeen hitherto unknown nests of the black stork were discovered in forests, which is the biggest number ever.

Forest habitats

LVM has identified overgrown stands covering a territory of 57 thousand ha (14.5 mln m³), which have a structure characteristic of natural forests and which are recognized as Woodland key habitats. 29 thousand ha (7.6 mln m³) of the mentioned territory are located outside protected sites in commercial forests. LVM has provided for voluntary protection of these stands since 2000, without carrying out economic activities there.



Woodland key habitats are forest stands with structures characteristic of natural forests, where survival potential is ensured for rare and endangered species with very specific requirements for residence, where the forest has been in existence for hundreds of years and where economic activities are carried out for a short period of time only or to a minor extent. These are the areas where much more endangered species live together than elsewhere, mainly flowering plants, mosses, lichens, fungi, as well as insects and snails.

In addition to that, at the beginning of 2009, JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" identified stands with a potentially higher biological value (the oldest stands), which occupy an area of 4.3 thousand ha (1.1 mln m³) in commercial forests. In these stands (which make 1.8% of the commercial forest area) logging is not planned.

3. LVM research on biodiversity



To gain new knowledge about biodiversity and to ensure targeted actions in the conservation of specially protected species, LVM in cooperation with the Latvian Ornithological Society have carried out long-term studies on the black stork and the wood grouse since 2005.

Methodology Development for Black Stork (*Ciconia nigra*) Nesting Success Monitoring and Assessment of Economic Activities Impact on Nesting Success (2005–2008).

Current Situation Analysis of Wood Grouse (*Tetrao urogallus*) Mating Site's Spatial Distribution and Proposal Development for Management of Wood Grouse Mating Habitats (2005–2009).

Environmental Education



Although the forest industry to date has progressed towards sustainable development, it has not been able to provide the public with sufficient information and awareness of the forest environment. As demonstrated in national polls over the recent years, most people in Latvia believe that Latvia's forest area is decreasing, and forest resources are used inefficiently and are not renewable.

One of the main lines of action in this respect for Latvia is building an effective and long-term cooperation between education and economic sectors for raising environmental awareness. This can be done by promoting environmental enlightenment in the diversity of its form and content via formal and informal education, fostering public and individual participation in environmental decision-making processes and by getting involved in the community action development and formation of new behaviour patterns. Effective cooperation will result in the society's common understanding of the environmental values of forests, their rational use, protection and restoration.

1. Public education



As the spring sets in, JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" and Mammadaba education program invite schools and other appreciators of nature to take part in the Forest Days throughout Latvia – to plant the forest, set up birdhouses and clear the environment of litter. The Forest Days are organized with the objective to raise public awareness of the forest and the forest sector. They provide an additional opportunity for schools to participate in a Mammadaba Master Class.

In 2009, the Forest Days opened on 24th March in the forestry stations and closed on 15th May. Every interested person had the opportunity to take part in the nature awakening activities in various districts of Latvia.

Schools, youth organizations, families, institutions, companies and other interested persons are all welcome to apply for participation in the events in the specified time and place. Participation is free. The participants are provided with seedlings, work gloves, sacks and other gear and they are responsible for their transportation to the event.

A total of 121 events took place during the Forest Days in spring 2009. The 3740 participants planted 60 ha of forest, set up 681 birdhouses and cleaned the ones installed in the previous years, collected 457 m³ of waste, cleaned up 34 recreation sites and nature trails.

2. Environmental education programme Learning about Forests

One of the cornerstones for raising public environmental awareness and consciousness is the system of general education in schools. The forest is included in the list of topics covered within the primary and secondary school curriculum. However, the interaction of its environmental, economic and social functions as a prerequisite for sustainable development is not reflected in any school subject. A number of forest and environmental non-governmental organizations, recognizing the importance of cooperation with schools for sustainable development, have implemented a range of forest environmental education activities, which, however, have been poorly coordinated among themselves.

To address this problem, JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" has implemented the environmental education programme Learning about Forests in Latvia since 2005. The main cooperation partner is the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia. Latvia's program is designed according to the programme of the Foundation for Environmental Education called Learning about Forests that has been operating in more than 15 countries worldwide since 1997.

Over 150 schools have involved in the activities offered by the programme Learning about Forests, enabling thousands of school children to participate in the Forest Days each year by planting trees and cleaning up the forest, competing in the Forest Contest and visiting Mammadaba sightseeing attractions. As of academic year 2008/2009, elementary schools may learn the whole contents of the environmental education programme Learning about Forests in a Mammadaba Master Class. Every year, JSC "Latvijas valsts meži" makes and publishes educational materials for schools. A new educational aid Maths in the Forest aimed at teaching students of grades 1-9 in the open air was given to teachers in 2008.



Training of LVM personnel and contractors

LVM organizes training sessions to increase both employees' and partners' awareness of integration of environmental and nature protection into forest management.

Topical issues: nature conservation requirements for felling area preparation, labour safety and environmental pollution abatement in felling operations, conservation of forest structure elements, which maintain the biodiversity, in forest operations, assessment of environmental impact of the planned forest infrastructure activities, status of the black stork population in Latvia, etc.

LVM employees have spent more than 400 person-days in the seminars organized by LVM, while contractors have been provided with nearly 300 person-days of training.

Recreation Opportunities

People in Latvia have been inextricably linked to the forest for centuries. The forest has been both a shelter and a source of food and building materials, as well as an important element of national identity. Even today, as the data of the public opinion research centre SKDS shows, more than 80% of Latvia's inhabitants opt for relaxing in the forest, believing provision of relaxation to be one of the most important forest functions.

Taking into account this desire of the people, LVM has developed the company's social responsibility programme by laying the promotion of recreation opportunities in the forest as one of the foundation stones. This objective can be achieved through investing effort and funds into maintenance and development of recreational, cultural, historical and environmental sites significant for the public. To promote these options, a map featuring LVM recreation sites has been designed.

LVM invests a lot of effort and funds into maintenance and development of recreational, cultural, historical and environmental sites significant for the public.



Nature trails and recreation sites

LVM manages 320 rest areas, 55 sightseeing attractions and 30 nature trails, which are located both in protected nature sites and outside. Overall, nearly 300 of the 400 sites established by LVM are improved each year, and 20 of them are managed in collaboration with local government authorities.

In recent years, the highest wooden viewing tower in Latvia has been built. This is the 32 metre-high Priedaine viewing tower near Krāslava. LVM has established and is managing a total of 5 wooden viewing towers in different Latvia's districts: Eglukalns, Ložmetējkalns, Ūdrkalns, Kamparkalns and Priedaine.

To promote cycle touring in Latgale forests, a number of cycling routes have been set up. In the area of Southern Latgale Regional Forestry alone, a total of seven cycling routes available to the general public have been opened. The routes are provided with stopping and resting points, pergolas, swings, WC facilities, benches, etc.

Over the past year, a number of sites have been improved, including the Upursala nature trail in the nature park of Lake Ciriša and the Hare Meadow, a recreation place enjoying great popularity in the Vilce nature park, to name but a few.

LVM forests are a home to the Tērvete Nature Park, which receives significant funds each year. In 2006, the park was nominated as the most family-friendly location. The Fairy-tale Train running through the park was recognized as the most successful tourism product in 2007. A new Information and Education Centre was inaugurated in the Tērvete Nature Park in 2009. The number of visitors to the park amounted to 70 thousand in 2008.

Pokaiņi forest, which is also managed by LVM, can now boast of new trails and a new parking lot. In 2009, Pokaiņi was awarded the status of the unusual cultural heritage in Europe.

The Vīciems Cone Drying Facility, where pine and spruce seeds are extracted using the equipment dating back to 1895, was included in the list of cultural heritage sites of European importance in 2002 and in 2008 it was awarded the status of the unusual cultural heritage in Europe. The Vīciems Cone Drying Facility is cherished as a unique historical monument, where over a thousand people gain insight into the ancient methods of pine and spruce seed extraction each year.





Active recreation

LVM offers opportunities for recreation at Lakes Kaņiera, Zebrus, Lielaucis, Gulbju and at the Tērvete Reservoir. The facilities provided at these lakes include boat rental stations, guesthouses and overnight accommodation. Licensed fishing is organized in all these lakes, while Lake Lielaucis and the Tērvete Reservoir are also the sites for crayfishing.

Fish stock in the lakes managed by LVM is supplemented on a regular basis. In 2008, 185 thousand pike larvae were released into Lake Lielaucis, 200 thousand – into Lake Zebrus, 400 thousand – into Lake Kaņiera and 50 thousand – into Lake Gulbju.

Recreation and Tourism Centres Ezernieki and Spāre offer a range of opportunities for active recreation. Ezernieki provides a lighted camping area, football, basketball and volleyball grounds, swimming areas and facilities for holding sports events, while the surroundings of Spāre feature excellent cycling routes.

For more detailed information on recreation opportunities in Latvia State Forests, please consult LVM website www.mammadaba.lv.