

Europe's Nature Regional Landscape Parks Declaration on Climate Change

If not now. then when?

If not us... then who?

WHAT - Climate change, biodiversity loss and habitat degradation are a major threat to life on earth.

These global challenges must be addressed through international cooperation. Common problems, require joint action and collective choices and decisions. Work to tackle these issues, have been achieved with the [European Green Deal](#), the [Paris Agreement](#), the [United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#) and the [United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification \(UNCCD\)](#). Additionally, the EU recognized this urgency in the [EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030](#), the [EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change](#), the [Farm to Fork Strategy](#) and the proposed Nature Restoration law.

New modes of thinking and delivering economic, environmental and social processes and the resources to make effective change are needed. Across Europe, a vibrant network of Nature, Regional Landscape Parks (NRL) is available that are able to implement integrated, forward-looking approaches for a sustainable rural Europe delivering for nature for people and for the climate.

The NRL Parks of Europe declare:

The resources locked into Europe's NRL Parks are a crucial component in ensuring a viable climate adaptation and mitigation response at all governmental levels. NRL Parks across Europe unite with the common goal to conserve and restore nature and to protect our climate. To amplify that potential and impact, we call upon policy makers and governing authorities at all levels to support, invest in and work with Nature Regional Landscape Parks across Europe.

WHO - The Nature Regional Landscape Parks; a natural resource

Who else, but Europe's 900 Nature Regional Landscape Parks (NRL), to be a living resource to deliver sustainable places. Being close to people and close to nature encompassing inhabited rural and periurban areas, they make up almost 8% of the total surface area of the EU including Switzerland, the UK and Norway, covering more than 370,000 km². They are essential for the conservation of biodiversity and landscapes as well as for the success of climate change and mitigation strategies. NRL Parks help prevent rural abandonment, promote community involvement in nature protection and support sustainable economic development in their regions. They offer

opportunities for education and learning in sustainable development and are leaders in sustainable tourism. The NRL Parks are a convening platform, closely tied to local authorities and regional stakeholders.

HOW - NRL Parks address climate change and biodiversity loss

NRL parks are not only adept at nature conservation and sustainable regional development but are also strongly anchored within the regional communities. These qualities make the parks well-suited to lead the way in addressing climate change by delivering nature-based solutions and adopting regenerative approaches to economic activity around their protected areas.

NRL Parks build on many strengths to implement these measures to address climate change: they have structures of cooperation at a federal and state level, are key players in local and regional networking with farmers, tourism associations, work closely with local communities, and have expert knowledge and experience in the fields of biodiversity, education for sustainable development, sustainable tourism and sustainable agriculture.

WHEN - Now is the time to invest and support in NRL Park to deliver on climate change and biodiversity loss.

To accelerate the action for climate and biodiversity, policy makers and governing authorities need to:

- Develop and invest in NRL Parks to support measures on biodiversity and climate protection, to deliver nature-based solutions at a landscape-scale and take a leading role in implementing the EU Nature Restoration Law and EU Habitats and Birds Directives, the Water Framework Directive, the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the Green Infrastructure Strategy. Each NRL Park needs adequate resourcing to tackle these challenges, including specific personnel to amplify this work within existing competent teams.
- Showcase NRL Parks as model regions for the innovative and sustainable development of rural areas and as partners for sustainable agriculture, sustainable tourism. They are ideal actors in Local Action Groups in future LEADER programs.

- Support NRL Parks in their educational and communication programs and actions that can disseminate and inspire greater sustainable choices and actions by individuals and in communities
- Support NRL Parks in promoting and adopting regenerative approaches to economic activities (e.g., sustainable and inclusive tourism, regenerative agriculture within Protected Areas.)
- Support NRL Parks to involve young, committed, climate-aware people in landscape management and nature conservation in NRL Parks.
- Involve NRL Parks at a European and regional level in climate action planning to improve climate change adaptation measures, to conduct climate sensitive spatial planning and to implement forward-looking management strategies.
- Integrate the strategic orientation of Parks and Protected Areas in funding programs and include Parks and Protected Areas as target groups in funding calls.

The time is now to support NRL Parks to play a greater role in improving the health of our ecosystems and ensuring the provision of ecosystem services for society in the long term. Collectively, we can help address and reduce the impacts of climate change and halt and reverse biodiversity loss which threatens precious life on earth.

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