



Field Report

FOR COMMUNITIES
FOR NATURE

carpathia.org

April 2024

Main activities summary

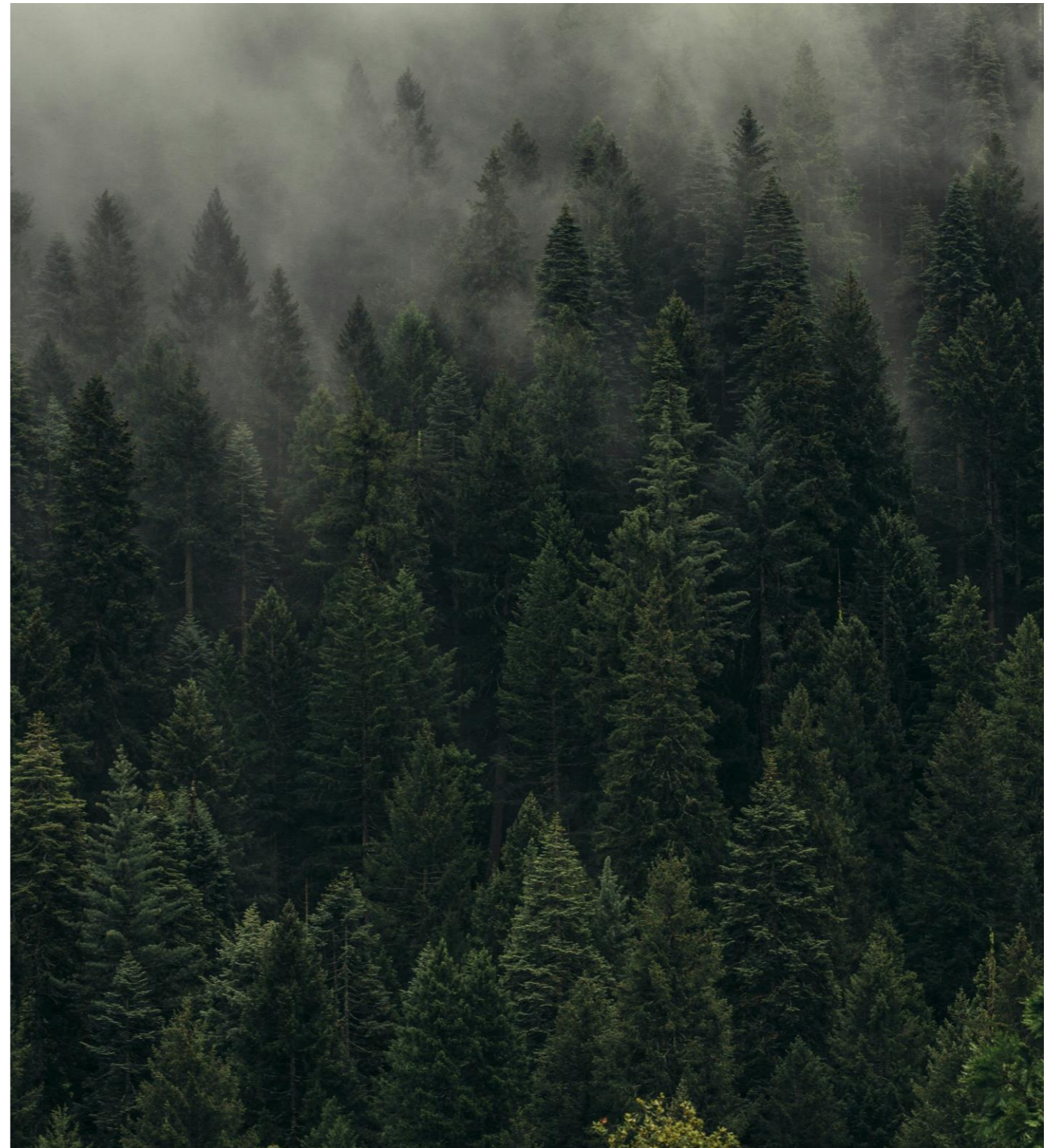
1. Forest conservation and management
2. Ecological restoration
3. Wildlife conservation
4. Conservation Enterprise Programme
5. Communication and community outreach

FOR NATURAL RESOURCES
FOR COMMUNITIES

1. Forest conservation and management

🌲 New protected forests

Recently we purchased forests in the Gruiu Negru area, situated in the south of the Făgăraș Mountains, Argeș county. We are now taking them into our custody. An additional 113 ha of forests are now under permanent protection.



An aerial photograph of a dense forest with a winding stream. The trees are mostly evergreens, and the stream is a light blue color. The text 'FOR COMMUNITIES' is written in white, bold, uppercase letters, curving along the top of the stream. The text 'FOR NATURE' is written in white, bold, uppercase letters, curving along the bottom of the stream.

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2. Ecological restoration

Replanting sites

In April, we continued the forest restoration work in the Făgăraș Mountains. We planted a total of 63,815 grey alder, spruce, beech and Swiss pine saplings, native species essential for the comeback of a healthy, resilient forest.





Leaota

In the Leaota Mountains, in the proximity of the Romanescu sheepfold there is a pilot area where we are replanting the forest that was blown down by the wind in the past. With the help of a selected company, we replanted about eight hectares of forest. In addition, our teams planted 10,000 beech saplings.

We are working to prevent the spread of bark beetles and wood beetles (Ipidae). They attack spruce, causing great damage. We've installed pheromone traps and trap trees to stop them.





Leaota

Spring storms have blown down trees in some areas of Leaota Mountain. We use drones to pinpoint their location. In April we established the routes for drone flights in the Leaota - Runcu area.



Meteo challenges



After record temperatures of almost 30°C in early April, which caused the vegetation to start growing several weeks too early, it suddenly got cold again. Our team of workers even faced snow at the end of the month. All of this didn't stop us from getting the job of replanting done.





3. Wildlife conservation

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Ongoing studies



We expected some of the deer and chamois monitoring cameras to be overgrown by the vegetation, which, this year, is growing three weeks too early. So far, we haven't experienced any problems, but we have to check now every two weeks to prevent the lenses from being covered by vegetation. The cameras will be removed from the forest in June.



We have already brought home 85% of the lynx monitoring cameras. There are 13 stations left, which will be removed by 7th May. We have extracted and tagged 90% of the data collected.



Wild boar

As part of our collaboration with Cambridge University we are testing a new AI-assisted wild boar monitoring technology. The aim is to alert our rangers about the presence of wild boar and their number. With the help of a specialist from Cambridge, we have chosen the location where we will install the test cameras.





Dr. Ruben Iosif (35) arbeitet für die *Foundation Conservation Carpathia* (FCC), ein langjähriger Partner der ZGF. Ruben stammt aus dem Süden Rumäniens und ist in der Nähe des Făgăraș-Gebirges aufgewachsen, den höchsten Bergen Rumäniens. Als Wildtierökologe beschäftigt er sich unter anderem mit Mensch-Wildtier-Konflikten und erforscht Wildtierbestände, etwa Wölfe, Luchse und Wildkatzen.

© Luki Ungureanu

Dr. Iosif, Sie sind in der Nähe der Făgăraș-Berge, in den rumänischen Südkarpaten, aufgewachsen. Wenn ich das bei Wikipedia nachschlage, heißt es „Das Klima im Făgăraș-Gebirge ist rau und weist subpolare Aspekte auf.“ Wenn Sie auf die letzten 20 bis 30 Jahre zurückblicken, hat sich das verändert?

Ruben Iosif: Ja, in den letzten zwei oder drei Jahrzehnten gab es einiges an Veränderungen, vor allem das Klima hat sich stark verändert. Ich erinnere mich, als ich ein Kind war und die Winterferien in den südlichen Făgăraș-Bergen bei meinen Großeltern verbracht habe. Damals gab es überall Schnee. Und mindestens zwei oder drei Wochen lang Minustemperaturen mit bis zu -10 oder -20 Grad tagsüber. Das war normal in den frühen 90er-Jahren. Als Kinder haben wir bei diesen Temperaturen im Schnee gespielt und sind auf gefrorenen Flüssen Schlittschuh gelaufen und solche Sachen. Es bestand nie die Gefahr, dass wir im Eis einbrechen würden. Wie gesagt, es war über Wo-

„Konkrete wissenschaftliche Daten haben wir noch nicht, aber unsere Beziehung zu Bären verändert sich aufgrund der Klimaerwärmung.“

chen eisig kalt und das Eis war stabil wie Beton. Das ist jetzt anders. Als ich im Februar in meinem Heimatort war, lag dort nicht mal Schnee und Eis gab es auch keins. Und dieses Dorf liegt ziemlich hoch auf 800 bis 900 Metern Höhe. Das Klima und die Temperaturen haben sich verändert. Heute haben wir mal für einen oder zwei Tage Schnee und am nächsten Tag kommt eine Hitzewelle. Ich nenne das so, wenn wir mitten im Winter 15 Grad plus haben und starken, warmen Wind. Das Wetter ist viel weniger vorhersehbar geworden.

Außer dem unbeständigen Wetter, was sehen Sie noch an Veränderungen?

Auch die Landschaft hat sich verändert. In den 90ern haben wir meinen Großeltern oft mit dem Vieh geholfen, beim Heu machen für den Winter, beim Obstbäume schneiden und dabei, die Bäume im Herbst gegen Bären abzusichern. Die Obstplantagen liegen oberhalb des Dorfes, dort, wo Braunbären sich aufhalten. Und wir sicherten

„Früher gab es eine monatelange Winterpause für die Wildtiere. Vor 20, 30 Jahren kam die Natur im Winter zur Ruhe und konnte Kraft schöpfen für das kommende Frühjahr.“

sie, damit die Bären keine Früchte stehlen konnten. Heute gibt es kaum mehr Felder und Vieh in diesem Gebiet. Menschen sind weggezogen, viele Obstplantagen sind selbst überlassen.

Die Art, wie die Karpaten genutzt werden und wofür, ist anders geworden. Früher waren die Karpaten nichts für jedermann. Man musste hier leben wollen und mit den Umständen zurechtkommen. Heute, mit der Entwicklung des Tourismus und den Veränderungen in der Infrastruktur, kommen immer mehr Menschen in die Berge.

Haben diese Veränderungen auch ökologische Folgen?

Sicher. Früher gab es eine monatelange Winterpause für die Wildtiere. Vor 20, 30 Jahren kam die Natur im Winter zur Ruhe und konnte Kraft schöpfen für das kommende Frühjahr. Heute gibt's in den Tälern keinen Schnee mehr, die Straßen sind passierbar für Autos und Quads, Ski- und Radfahrer. Auch im Winter erkunden Menschen die Berge und stellen auch eine Störung dar. Langlauf ist das eine, Heli-Ski ist etwas ganz anderes.

In den Karpaten gab es eine traditionelle saisonale Wanderweidewirtschaft, die Transhumanz. Auch das hat sich geändert. Wie wirkt sich das aus?

Im Sommer wurde das Vieh in den alpinen Lagen geweidet und dann wanderten die Hirten mit den Tieren im Herbst und Winter bis hinunter an die Donau und die Schwarz-

meerküste. Das wird heute nicht mehr gemacht. Obwohl das Klima wärmer wird, wollen die Hirten im Sommer nicht mehr in die Höhenlagen und geben die Weiden dort auf. Das Vieh wird heute viel näher an den Dörfern gehalten. Und wir sehen, dass das die Landschaft umformt und dass es Konfliktsituationen zwischen Menschen und Wildtieren begünstigt. Große Fleischfresser kommen den Dörfern näher, weil hier die Herden sind. Selbstverständlich nehmen die Menschen Zwischenfälle mit solchen Wildtieren, etwa Bären, sehr viel mehr wahr, wenn sie unmittelbar neben ihrem Haus stattfinden als weit oben in den Bergen.

Wenn ich es richtig weiß, dann hat Rumänien die größte Braunbärenpopulation Europas, oder?

Außerhalb Russlands, ja. Wir haben zwar keine exakten Daten, aber es ist auf jeden Fall eine große, gesunde Population. Im Projektgebiet der *Foundation Conservation Carpathia*, im Osten des Făgăraș-Gebirges machen wir seit sechs Jahren ein genetisches Monitoring. Und basierend auf diesen Daten schätzen wir die Bärenichte auf 17 bis 22 Bären pro 100 Quadratkilometer. Das ist vergleichbar



© Călin Șerban

Ranger Călin Șerban und sein Kollege Zsolt waren an einem verregneten Sommertag in den Făgăraș-Bergen unterwegs, als ihnen dieser junge Braunbär gegenüberstand. Sekunden später war er wieder in der Vegetation verschwunden.



Preventing conflicts with bears, a topic in the German press

An interview with Ruben Iosif, our Wildlife Monitoring specialist, is the starting point of this article published by the German publication Gorilla Magazin.



European Bison

The reintroduced bison are thriving and spreading all over the Făgăraș Mountains.

In the commune of Lerești these majestic animals have inspired the local football team to change its name to ACS Zimbrii Lerești. Moreover, the players have taken on some of the determination typical of the bison and are scoring remarkable results in the Argeș League. Two of the players have been noticed and invited by the amateur football national team to take part in a training camp, at the end of the month.

It is no coincidence, then, that we are building a bison-themed visitor centre in Lerești. The connection between the community and the bison is growing stronger, to the benefit of all.



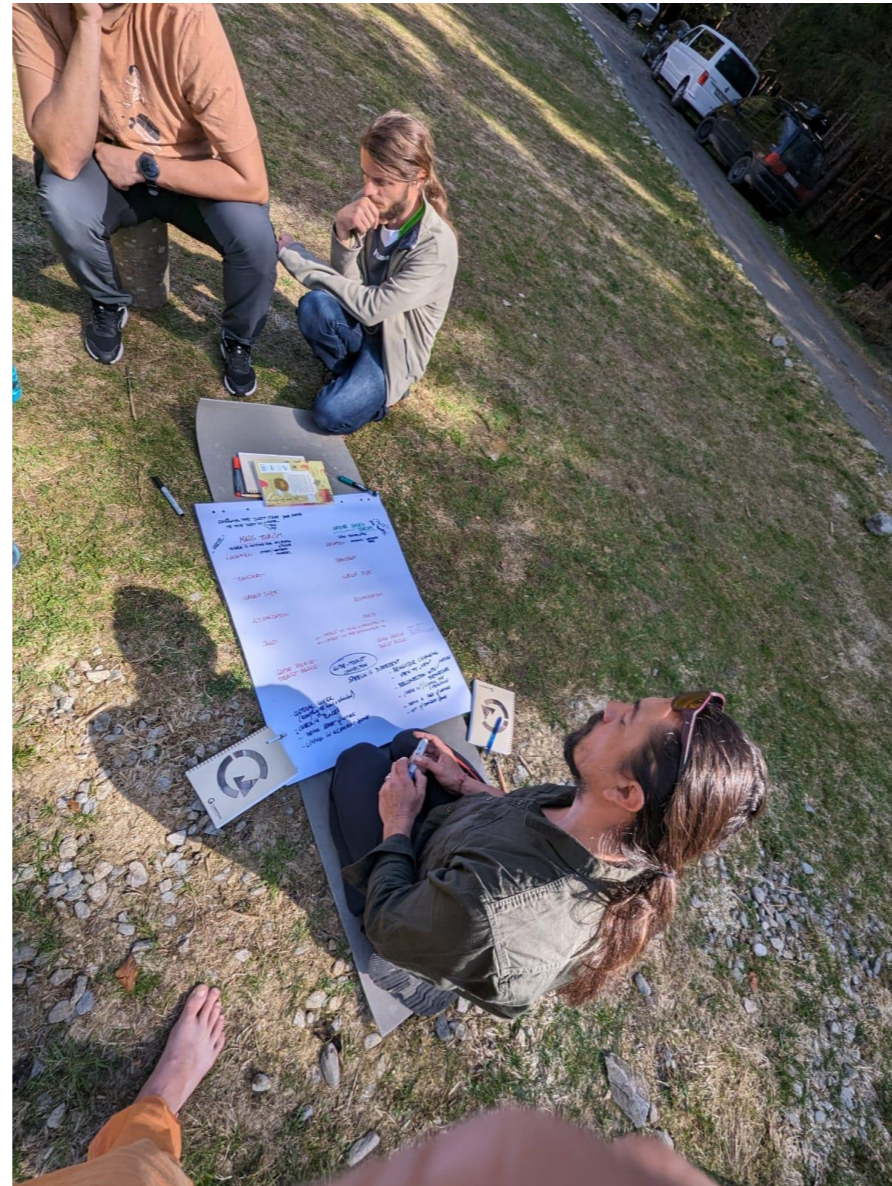
A herd of white oxen with long, curved horns is grazing in a lush green field. The oxen are scattered across the frame, with one prominent ox in the foreground looking towards the camera. The background features rolling green hills and scattered trees under a clear blue sky.

4. Conservation Enterprise Programme

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Travel Carpathia Guiding Academy



The Travel Carpathia eco-tourism guides are the link between our work and the many visitors who want to experience our project and the amazing nature of the Făgăraș Mountains.

We are aware that the skills and knowledge of guides makes the difference between a trip with nice scenery but little information and a trip with an unforgettable experiences in this amazing nature. In order to ensure that our guests have the latter, we invest a lot of time and efforts into the guides' training and have created the Travel Carpathia Guiding Academy.

In April, the participants in the Guiding Academy programme had the joy of learning from Simon Collier, a highly charismatic trainer with over 20 years' experience in eco-tourism.

Together with Simon, the participants practised their guiding, wildlife spotting, planning, networking and group management skills.





Guides hold the key to memorable experiences, and Ilie Popescu, trainer at our Academy, spoke to Travel Carpathia guides about:

- Communication and active listening
- Group dynamics and psychology, what kind of situations to expect and how to overcome them
- The importance of emotional intelligence
- How to create a safe environment for all who are present, conducive to exploring nature.





Safety first! April's first aid course helped the Academy's guides complete their knowledge.



In the kitchen at Cobor Biodiversity Farm



Demand for vegetarian dishes is growing. That's why the Travel Carpathia chefs (both from the farm and from Equus Sylvania and Valea Dâmboviței) have participated in a thematic course in the kitchen at Cobor.



We used the highest quality natural products and local ingredients from local producers.



The apple crisp dessert with home-made ice cream was one of the star recipes of the workshop.





We opened the season with some special guests: the German Ambassador, Dr. Peer Gebauer, his wife Sonja Gebauer and the German Consul in Sibiu, Kerstin Ursula Jahn. They enjoyed the beauty of nature in our project area by exploring mountain trails and visiting the Richita Educational Centre, the Cobor Farm and the Equus Sylvania equestrian centre.

Roadele Munților



The first jam of the year, dandelion jam, is in the works.



All the joy of spring sunshine goes into the jar for us to enjoy in the cold season.

Roadele Munților is a food collection and distribution centre (Food Hub) through which we bring the products of small traditional producers from the Făgăraș Mountains to your tables. Some of the products are already available at Ferma Cobor, but the full range can be found on the [website](#), where you can order online.

One of the products distributed through the food hub is Carpathia beer, the first certified ecological beer produced in Romania, at a small craft brewery in Lerești. We are incredibly honoured by the invitation from the German Embassy to cater with Carpathia Beer for the public viewing of the opening football match of the European Championship on the 14th of June.



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5. Communication and community outreach



Festival(s) preparations

Our events bring people and nature closer together. The dates are set, add them to your calendar now!



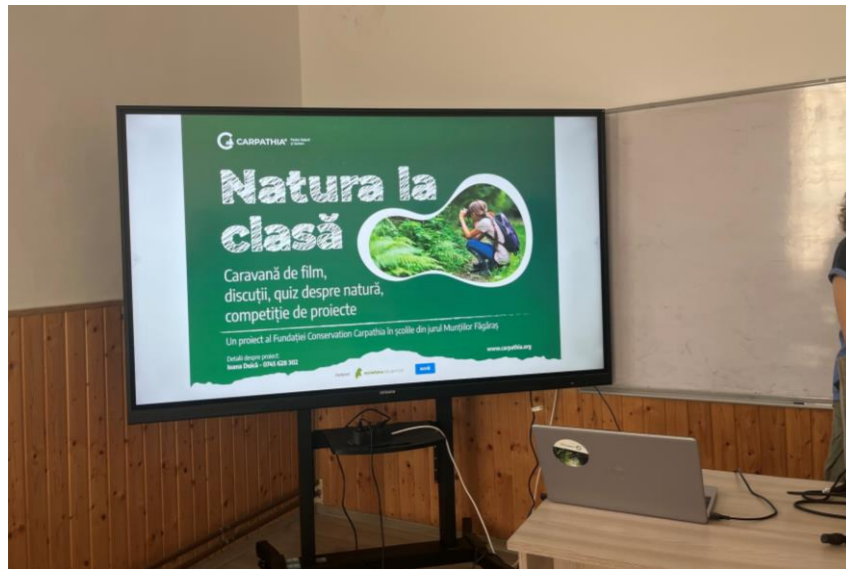
It's not long until 'Cobor between the Oaks', where Ana Coman, Moonlight Breakfast and Taraf de Caliu - friends of Johnny Depp - will be on stage. The festival is the perfect way to spend your Whitsun holiday. We look forward to seeing you on 22nd and 23rd June! Tickets are available on [livetickets.ro](https://www.livetickets.ro)

Făgăraș Fest promises to be intense, with activities for all tastes and ages. Participants will have the opportunity to get to know in detail the nature, history and culture of the community of Racovița, a commune with tradition at the foot of the Făgăraș mountains. See you from [26th to 28th July!](#)



'Nature in the classroom' has ended

Through education programmes we aim to get to know the communities in the Făgăraş Mountains area better and to help raise a generation involved in protecting nature.



Our colleagues met students from 40 schools in the Făgăraş Mountains area.



Students from Braşov, Argeş, Sibiu and Vâlcea counties learned about the work of Foundation Conservation Carpathia. We invited them to participate in a team competition for a chance to win a camp at the Richita Nature Exploration and Activity Centre.



Junior Rangers

We have launched the 2nd edition! Registrations are open for children from several communities in Argeş. All the details are on our website. In the meantime, the participants who started in 2023 continue with their activities.



The children from the Junior Rangers programme gave us a hand with the planting in the Dobroneagu and Tamaş areas.



We study nature by scientific means. At the Richita Nature Exploration and Activity Centre we are equipped for research activities.



A future ranger needs to know and understand how the nurseries function. Together with our employees, the youngsters weeded and learned the flow of activities needed to get healthy and strong seedlings.



Table tennis programme

Free trainings took place weekly at the schools in the programme, in six communities in the south of the Făgăraş Mountains. On the first weekend of April, the children in the programme enjoyed a mini-camp at the Richita Nature Exploration and Activity Centre. The programme did not lack, besides table tennis games, activities around nature.





Subcarpați is a very successful Romanian band who blends hip-hop with elements from Romanian folk music.

We are proud to welcome them as the newest ambassadors of the Făgăraș Mountains! Their interest and involvement honours us. We feel grateful to share with them the mission of protecting nature and the values of rural communities.





We walked the paths that connect several meadows with ancient beech trees in the Nucșoara surrounds and developed three longer hiking trails. We check their condition and degree of difficulty, preparing to mark them with totems, infoboards and all the necessary infrastructure, in collaboration with the local Town Hall.

Until the markings are completed, we recommend that hikers download [the map from the website](#) to follow the trails more easily. The map is available in kmz format, a file type compatible with Google Maps.



CARPATHIA Fund grants

CARPATHIA Fund is a funding mechanism for the development of local communities around the Făgăraș Mountains, addressed to NGOs, local initiative groups, public organisations, individuals and small entrepreneurs developing nature-friendly businesses.

Under its umbrella, the community grants programme offers non-refundable grants and scholarships to NGOs, initiative groups and students belonging to the communities in Țara Făgărașului.

In April, with the help of Țara Făgărașului Community Foundation, we selected five projects that will receive grants for the implementation. The winning organisations must complete them by the 22nd of November.

Program susținut prin  **FONDUL CARPATHIA***
Inițiat de Fundația Conservation Carpathia

Realizat de  **Fundația Comunitară Țara Făgărașului**

Program destinat ONG-urilor și grupurilor de inițiativă din Țara Făgărașului.

Susține natura să fie bine!

Înscorpii



Results



- 27,434 ha of forest under permanent protection and safeguarded for future generations
- 75,000 ha protected for wildlife, with no sport or trophy hunting
- 1,991 ha bought and restored (clear-cuts, alpine pastures, spruce monocultures)
- 4,142,254 trees planted in clear-cuts, riparian galleries and restoration areas of spruce monocultures
- 250 locals who make a living from the CARPATHIA project
- 2,200 students and teachers involved in environmental education projects
- More than 30 local producers are part of the Roadele Munților Food Hub

Please join us in:

- Creating the largest forested National Park in Central Europe
- Annual restoration of 100 ha of native ecosystem over illegal clear-cut areas
- Protecting wildlife on 5 hunting concessions across a total of 75,000 ha
- Sustainable development of local communities
- Environmental education projects