CARPATHIA®

NewStories from the Făgăraș Mountains

FOR COMMUNITIES, FOR NATURE

carpathia.org

February 2026

©Dan Dinu

Main activities summary

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



1

Forest conservation and management

©Dan Dinu

This February, the Făgăraș Mountains were blanketed in snow unlike any we have seen in recent years, transforming the landscape into a winter wonderland.



© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Every snowfall turns the forest into an open diary: a wolf crossing a quiet valley, a lynx on the prowl, or a roe deer foraging in the snow.

We are deeply grateful to our colleagues in the field, the dedicated rangers whose knowledge and care protect these mountains and their ecosystems every day.





© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



During routine patrols in the south-central part of the Făgăraș Mountains, close to the Transfăgărășan Highway, forest ranger teams documented a case of illegal logging. The situation was reported to the competent authorities in accordance with legal procedures. Addressing such incidents remains essential for maintaining forest integrity and supporting long-term ecosystem resilience.



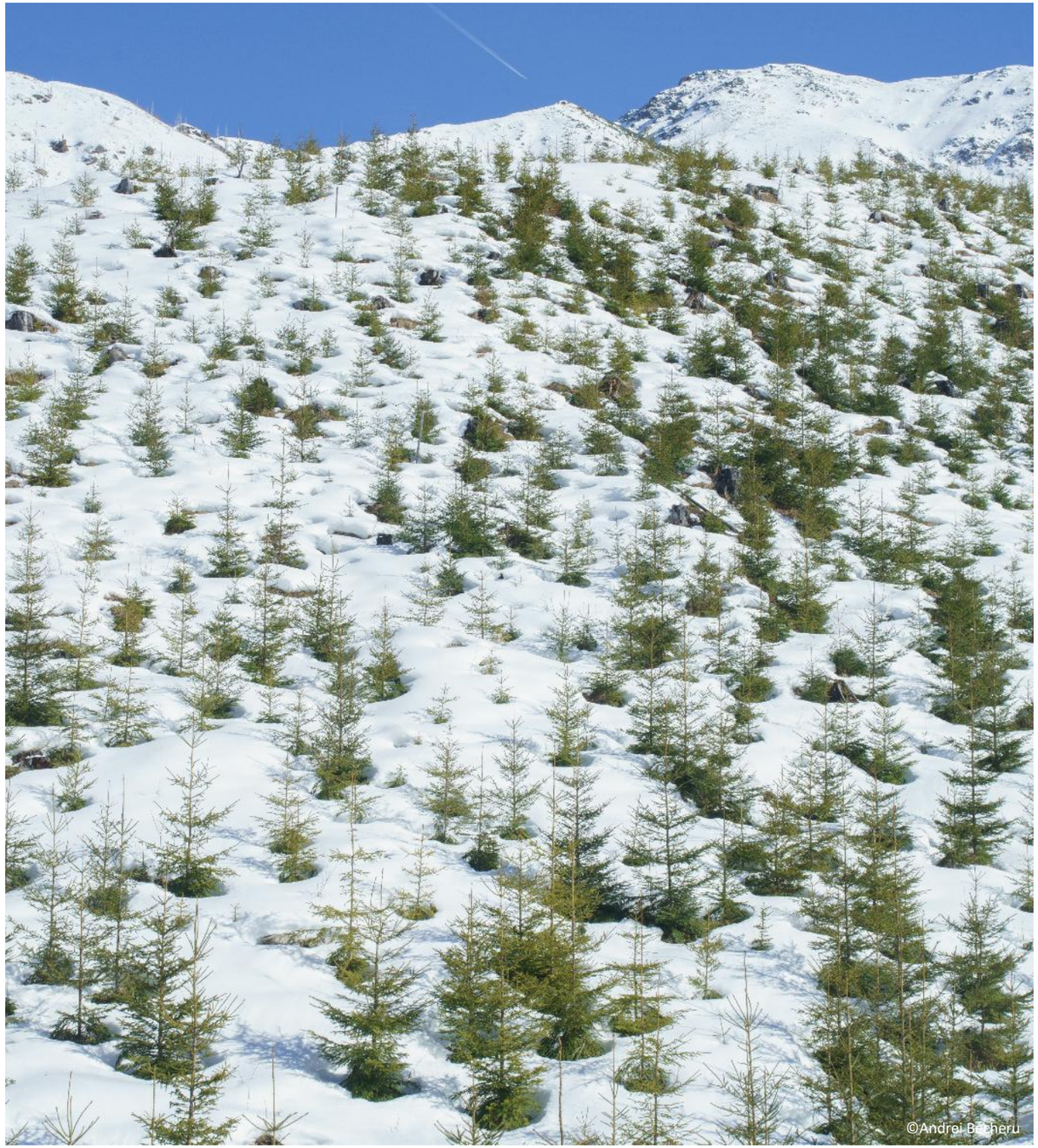
2

Ecological restoration

With spring just a few footsteps away, our teams are preparing restoration work at two sites in the southern Făgăraș Mountains: Zârna and Dobroneagu, ahead of the planned planting of around 60,000 beech, fir and spruce saplings, depending on weather conditions.

Work is also continuing to gradually convert former spruce monocultures into resilient mixed forests, a long-term process aimed at restoring natural forest ecosystems.

Monitoring activities are ongoing in previously restored areas, including fire-risk assessments, tracking climate-driven changes in forest composition, and removing invasive plant species along major valleys in the Făgăraș Mountains.



3



© Adrian Idor

Wildlife conservation









In February, our ranger teams, together with a specialised construction company, completed the acclimatisation aviary that will host the reintroduced griffon vultures (*Gyps fulvus*) during their first six months in Romania, before their release into the wild.

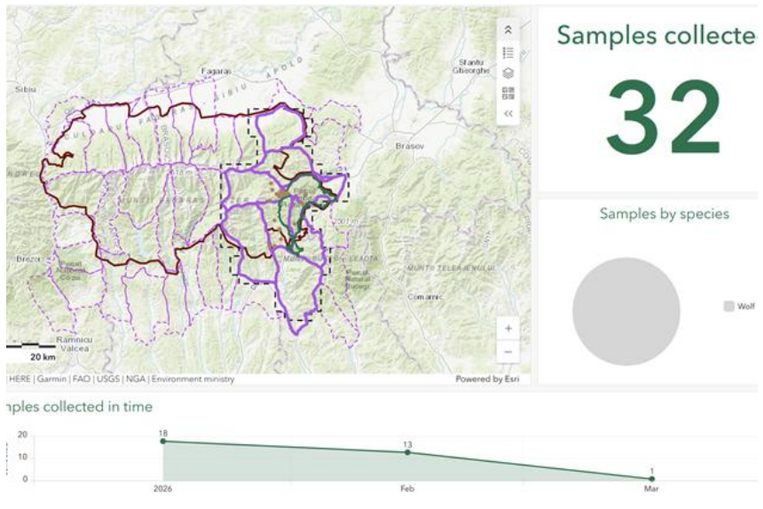
Structural elements, release gates and the video monitoring system were successfully installed, ensuring safe conditions for both the birds and field operations.

In parallel, the final administrative procedures required for the transfer of the vultures were completed.

This stage marks an important operational milestone in the reintroduction programme and prepares the ground for the birds' arrival planned for early March.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia









Snow helps us track the movements of wolves (*Canis lupus*) in the Făgăraș Mountains and collect genetic samples (urine samples on snow, scat and hair left by the wolves).

As part of the genetic monitoring study of wolves, our colleagues have collected 32 biological samples up till the end of February.

The final goal is to collect 90–100 samples in total.

Genetic monitoring studies are the key to estimating population abundance and density, and to understand the population structure, the relationships between individuals, and how wolves use their territory.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia









Bison in Brăduleț: Facts and Our Response

- Two reintroduced bison wandered into the village of Brăduleț, damaging several fences and feeding on hay stored in local gardens.
- Our rangers monitored the animals closely, prepared relocation measures and requested the necessary permits to move them both.
- However, heavy snowfall made the access roads to the planned relocation site impassable. Relocation efforts will resume in March, once the weather improves, and if the bison haven’t left on their own.
- In the meantime, supplementary feeding was provided in a designated area to encourage the animals to stay away from households.
- The bison continued to move between the forest and the village.
- Damage assessments have been carried out and affected landowners have been compensated. We are implementing additional preventive measures to support long-term coexistence.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia









Following wolf-related livestock losses, two sheep were donated to affected farmers in the commune of Stoenești and five in the commune of Rucăr, both located in the southern Făgăraș Mountains area, through CARPATHIA's voluntary compensation programme.

Our rapid intervention teams continued their preventive efforts by maintaining electric fences, monitoring wildlife cameras, and conducting regular patrols in high-risk areas. These actions aim to reduce the likelihood of future human–wildlife conflicts and enhance safety for local communities.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Interest in volunteering in the Făgăraș Mountains continues to grow, with 124 applications received in 2025 compared to 41 in 2024 and 34 in 2023. This trend reflects the increasing international visibility of our conservation work and the strong interest in field-based learning opportunities.

Expanding volunteer involvement also brings coordination challenges, particularly in planning how volunteers can best support research and biodiversity monitoring activities across departments. To address this, we organised an internal workshop focused on improving collaboration mechanisms and identifying monitoring areas where additional field capacity is most needed.

The workshop helped clarify priority needs and strengthened coordination between teams responsible for integrating volunteer support into ongoing conservation activities.









© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

4

Conservation Enterprise Programme

FOR COMMUNITIES FOR NATURE



© Andrei Popa

In February, we hosted two groups for winter riding, who enjoyed excellent snowy conditions at Equus Silvania – Horse Riding & Wilderness Centre.

Our team continues to train the horses to keep them in good physical condition and well prepared for the upcoming trail-riding season, while ensuring safe and enjoyable experiences for all visitors.









© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



#LocalProducerSpotlight

Honey produced by Honey Colonia is part of the Roadele Munţilor Făgăraş portfolio.

The producers are professional beekeepers with experience in diverse apicultural practices, including the production of certified organic honey. Their work reflects a strong connection to the landscape and a commitment to nature-friendly production methods.
Through the Roadele Munților Făgăraș initiative, we help promote small-scale producers who focus on quality, seasonality and the sustainable use of local resources.









Support for Local Gastronomic Points

Local Gastronomic Points (LGPs) are small family-run enterprises that offer visitors traditional meals made with locally sourced ingredients, contributing to rural livelihoods and cultural preservation.

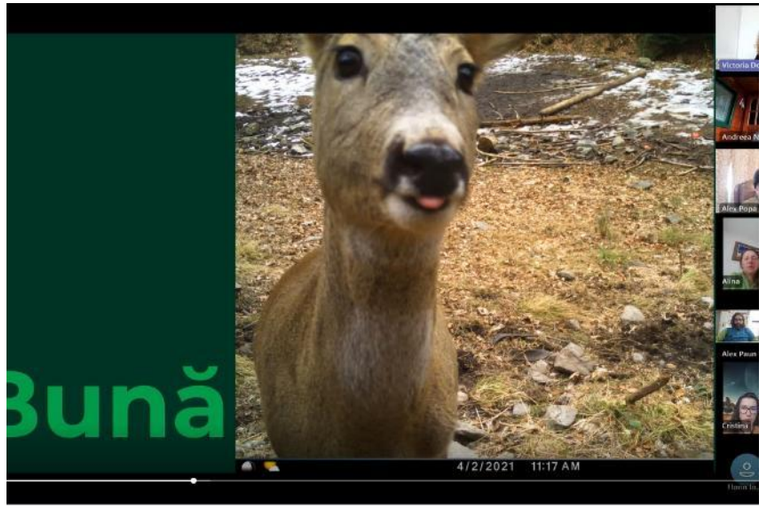
In February, the COBOR Biodiversity Farm hosted the first gastronomic workshops of the year for LGPs' owners.

Participants worked alongside chef Marius Cozma to explore ways of creating authentic and memorable culinary experiences for visitors.

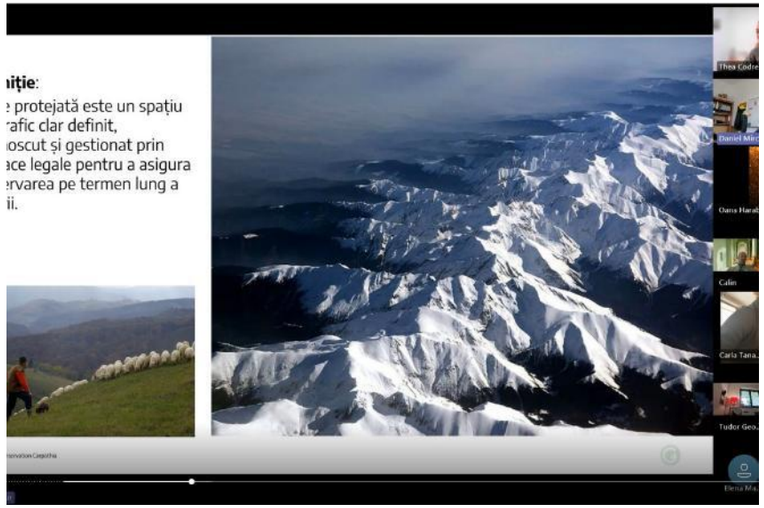
The sessions covered vegetarian reinterpretations of traditional recipes, the use of seasonal local products, cost management and practical solutions for reducing food waste.

We are also developing a dedicated website to increase the visibility of LGPs in the region, which we plan to launch soon.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia









In February, Travel Carpathia guides participated in a series of online briefings that were led by Foundation specialists.

These covered updates on conservation and communication initiatives, wildlife reintroduction projects, educational and community engagement activities, conservation enterprises and the role and regulatory framework of protected areas in Romania.

These regular updates ensure that the guides are closely connected to the Foundation’s activities and able to provide visitors exploring the Făgăraș Mountains with accurate, up-to-date information.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



5

Communication and community outreach



In February, the Social Innovation Solutions team, organisers of the Climate Change Summit, visited our visitor centres to explore opportunities for future collaboration. Discussions focused on how the conservation work carried out in the Făgăraș Mountains could be integrated into upcoming Climate Change Summit initiatives.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

Junior Ranger Programme

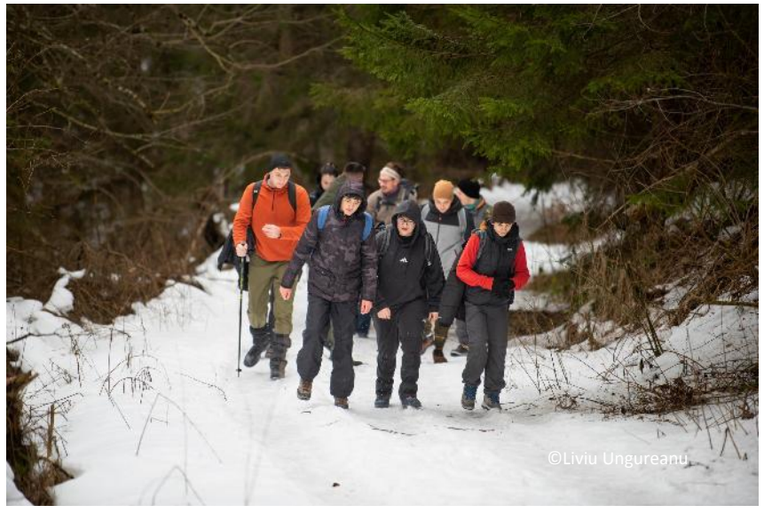
In early February, 26 Junior Rangers and several parents joined a winter hike in the western sector of Piatra Craiului National Park.

The group covered around 14 kilometres over a full-day outing, experiencing snowy forest landscapes and panoramic mountain viewpoints.

The full-day activity combined snow-covered trail exploration with practical learning about wildlife, mountain safety and the role of protected areas in conserving nature.









© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

We are excited to launch the first activities of the ‘Education for a Sustainable Future’ project!

In the coming months, 540 students from Brașov, Argeș, and Sibiu counties will take part in educational programmes at the Richita Nature Activity and Exploration Centre.

Through observation, hands-on exploration, and interactive activities, they will discover the wonders of nature, guided by our team of educators and teachers from partner schools.



© Foundation Conservation Carpathia









In February, we hosted a new session of the ‘Educators for Nature’ course, organised in partnership with the Schubz team.

Twenty participants took part in practical learning activities focused on transforming outdoor trips with children into meaningful educational experiences in nature.

The course generated exceptional interest, with 365 applications received. Selecting only 20 participants was a challenging process, but the high demand highlights the growing interest in nature-based education training.

We plan to organise additional editions in the future to support more educators interested in this approach.

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

If you worked in Romania during 2025, you can redirect 3.5% of your income tax to help keep the forests of the Făgăraș Mountains just as they should be: a safe haven for wildlife, a source of clean rivers, a breath of fresh, cool air, and a place to recharge after long, tiring days.

It costs nothing extra, but we all win – you, nature and the future. It is quite simple: just fill in form 230. (in Romanian)

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia



Results

4,528,254

trees planted

75,000 ha

protected for wildlife, with no sport or trophy hunting

353 people from local communities

are involved in CARPATHIA project’s activities, receiving a fair pay

27,906 ha

of forest under permanent protection and safeguarded for future generations

2,200

students and teachers involved in environmental education projects

>30

local producers are part of the Roadele Munților Făgăraș initiative

© Foundation Conservation Carpathia

FOUNDATION
CONSERVATION CARPATHIA

Calea Feldioarei 27A, Brașov,
Romania

info@carpathia.org

How can you help?

Get in touch and let’s discuss ways that you can get involved, as an individual and/or as a company.

ANA-MARIA ATONOAIE

PARTNERSHIP & CORPORATE RELATIONS DIRECTOR

Mobile: +40 753 956 452

E-mail: a.atonoaie@carpathia.org

or access Donations – Carpathia