



BIODIVERSITY PROJECTS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY OPERATIONS WILFERSDORF

DIR. DI HANS JÖRG DAMM



GUTS- & FORSTBETRIEB
WILFERSDORF
LIECHTENSTEIN GRUPPE

Liechtenstein Group

The Liechtenstein Group is a group of companies owned by the Princely House of Liechtenstein, which operates internationally in the fields of agriculture & food, forestry, renewable energies and real estate.



Agricultural and forestry operations Wilfersdorf

The Wilfersdorf agricultural and forestry operations manage the agricultural and forestry properties of Liechtenstein Group in the Weinviertel region and Wienerwald (Vienna Woods).

AREAS

- **Total area** **6.630 ha**
 - **arable land** **2.980 ha, thereof 460 ha organic**
 - **meadows** **90 ha**
 - **forests** **3.560 ha**

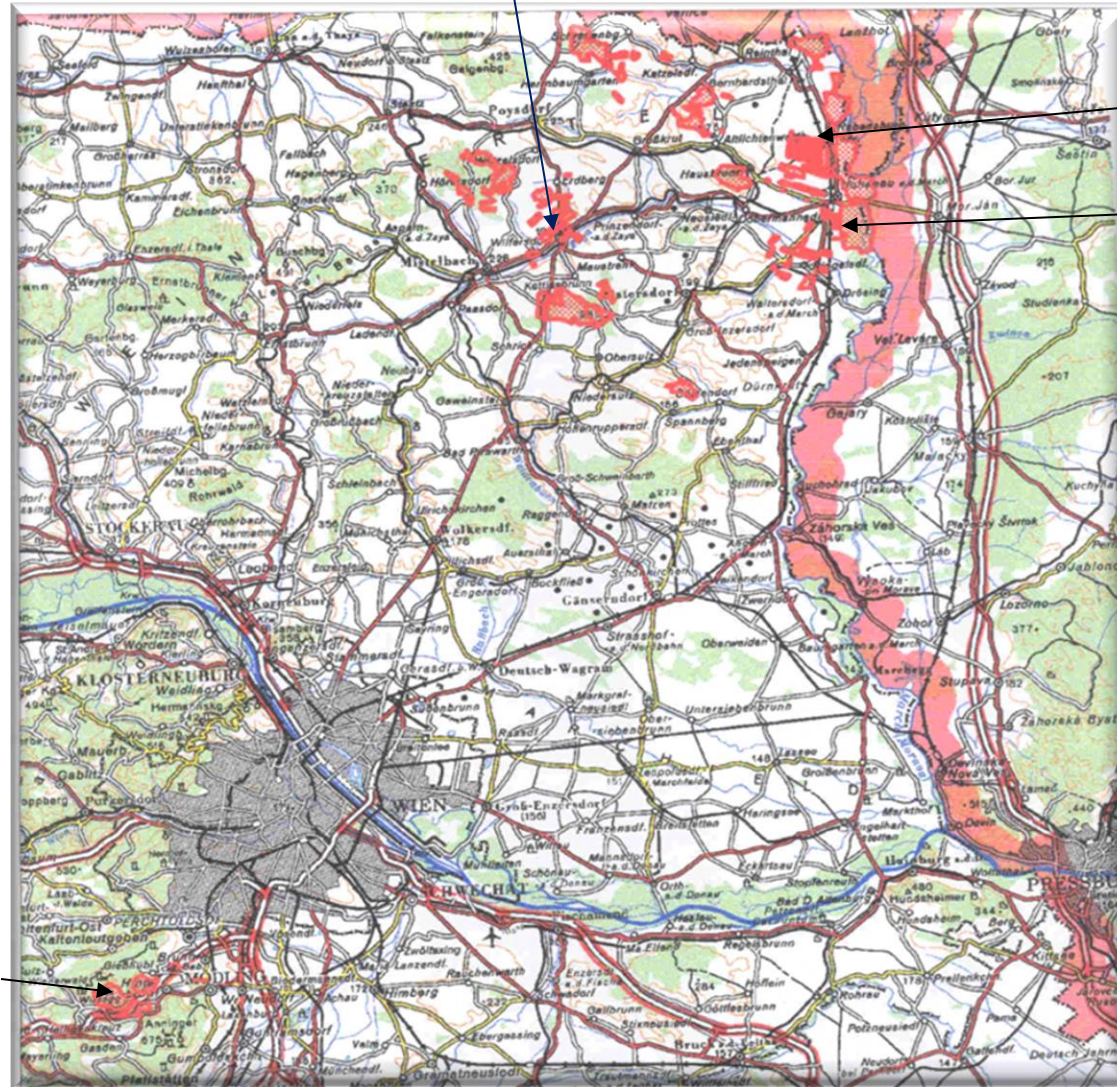
OTHER ACTIVITIES

- **hunting and fishing -**
- **renewable energies (biomass, wind turbines, photovoltaics)**
- **biodiversity, ecological projects, nature conservation**
- **Wilfersdorf Castle, Liechtenstein Historic Castle**



Overview

Wilfersdorf



Rabensburg with Thaya wetlands

Hohenau with March wetlands

Sparbach

Biodiversity conservation. management. education

Three levels of biodiversity:

- **species diversity**
- **ecological functional relationships (species and habitats)**
- **genetic diversity within species**

Biodiversity conservation. management. education

The principle of **economic, ecological and social sustainability** in the management of our business is a top priority for the Liechtenstein Group.

Economic success is one of the requirements for being able to set the right ecological and social priorities. Finding the right balance between the three pillars is sometimes a challenge.

In addition to our internal efforts to preserve and improve biodiversity, it is important to us that visitors to our land are also highly aware of the diverse interrelationships in the various habitats.

Biodiversity conservation. management. education



Design of a company biodiversity brochure

Conservation areas in our company

- Nature conservation areas 200 ha
- Protected landscape areas 2.000 ha
- Natura 2000 2.000 ha (56% of forest areas)
- Nature park 725 ha
- Men & Biosphere reserve Wienerwald core zone 150 ha
- Natural forest preserve 12 ha
- River bank protection strip 16 ha
- Bird nest protection area 64 ha
- Bird reserve Hohenau (on agricultural land) 38 ha
- Compensation measures (for road construction, etc.) 42 ha
- 20 % of our arable land are setasides, biodiversity strips, hedges, meadows, wildlife food plot, etc.)

Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

Natural forest preserve Moravka in Hohenau (12 ha)

- Cut-off meander of river March (hard- and softwood floodplain)
- No forestry use, natural succession as a goal
- Beaver habitat, bird of prey nests
- Since 1998, 20-year contract with the Republic of Austria (Austrian research centre for forests), extended until 2038
- Annual monitoring tasks by the company



Foto rechts: Georg Frank

Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

30 m river bank protection strip on river Thaya (16 ha)

- Non-regulated areas of the Thaya, natural banks
- Contract with the Republic of Austria (via donau), EU LIFE project
- No forestry use
- No bank stabilizations
- Promotion of erosion/sedimentation to restore meander dynamics
- Bird nests in the riparian vegetation
- Monitoring for the near-natural preservation of river banks



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects



Men & Biosphere reserve Wienerwald, core zone (150 ha)

- Men & Biosphere reserve Wienerwald since 2006, approx. 100.000 ha, thereof 5% core zones
- Voluntary offer by the company to stop harvesting on 150 ha in the Eichberg (Gießhübl) district
- UNESCO recognition
- Support for ongoing scientific monitoring measures
- Public relations work (brochure, information days, etc.)
- 82 % broadleaf, thereof 42% Quercus petraea, 27% Fagus sylvatica, etc.
18% conifers (mainly Abies alba)



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

Deadwood and veteran trees (forest ecology programme)

- 70 trees (Quercus robur, Quercus cerris, Carpinus betulus, Pinus sylvestris)
- Minimum 60 cm diameter
- 2018 - 2028, extension planned
- Exact marking, GPS-coordinates



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

Bird nest protection area in floodplain forest Hohenau

- Since 2014
- At the beginning 14 ha, nowadays 64 ha
- 14 ha EU-LIFE project, rest private contracts
- Protection of bird of prey nests (white-tailed eagle, imperial eagle, red kite, buzzard, eagle owl) and black stork-nests
- cooperation with WWF und private owners



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

Ringling of imperial eagles and protection with BirdLife



NÖN Woche 28/2008 **MARCH-TELEGRAF** 53

Der Kaiseradler kehrt zurück!

SENSATION / Das Schutzprogramm von BirdLife greift: Im Weinviertel wurde jetzt die erste Beringung von Jungvögeln in NÖ durchgeführt. Die Brutplätze bleiben geheim.

MARCH-TELEGRAF / Fast 200 Jahre lang war der Kaiseradler in Österreich ausgestorben. Die Rückkehr des größten Steppenvogels *Falco tinnunculus* nach Ostösterreich vor ein paar Jahren war eine Sensation.

Für eine langfristige Ansiedlung hat BirdLife Österreich mit Hilfe des Landes NÖ und lokaler Unterstützung der Landwirte und Gemeinden ein Schutzprogramm ins Leben gerufen.

Die Bemühungen der letzten Jahre zeigen nun erste Erfolge: Seit der ersten Sichtung eines Kaiseradlers in Österreich vor zehn Jahren brüten mittlerweile wieder bis zu fünf Paare in Österreich. Zwei davon im Weinviertel, eines direkt in der Region March-Thaya-Auen.



Im Bild ein beringter junger Kaiseradler. Das Schutzprogramm von BirdLife zeigt seine Wirkung. FOTO: EDLBERGER / BIRDLIFE ÖSTERREICH

Kaiseradler sind in ersten Lebensjahren stark gefährdet

„Wir kennen uns über die erste Beringung von Jungvögeln in Niederösterreich. Sie hilft uns, das Verhalten von Jungadlern über Jahre hinweg beobachten und sie noch besser schützen zu können“, sagt Gföhrer-Wichmann.

Kaiseradler-Projektleiter von BirdLife Österreich. „Vor allem in den ersten drei bis vier Lebensjahren, den Lehr- und Wanderjahren, sind Kaiseradler stark gefährdet durch Lebensraumverlust, Störungen und

illegale Befragung. Die Überlebenschance liegt bei Jungadlern bei unter 30 Prozent.“

Mit Seilschleudern und Kletterseilen sind die Experten von BirdLife Österreich zu den beiden Kaiseradler-Plätzen hochgestiegen, die kurz vor dem Flug werden sind und in 30 Meter Höhe in der ausladenden Krone einer alten Birke residieren. Ein Kaiseradler-Horst hat einen Durchmesser von einem Meter und mehr und ein entsprechendes Gewicht. Dafür sind hohe

Aus Schutzgründen bleiben die Brutplätze geheim

alle Bäume notwendig. Vorräte in der Region ist die Stiftung Fürst Liechtenstein, die als Grundbesitzer den Horstbaum der jüngst beringten Kaiseradler stellt. „Wir sind stolz, dass der Kaiseradler auf unseren Flächen einen ruhigen und geschützten Horstbaum gefunden hat, und freuen uns über den seltenen Nachwuchs. Unsere umfangreichen Bemühungen für eine nachhaltige Bewirtschaftung kommen somit auch dem Kaiseradler zu Gute“, sagt Di-

„A pioneer in the region is the Liechtenstein group, which is the landowner of the nest tree of the recently ringed imperial eagles.“

Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

Ural owl (*Strix uralensis*) project in Wienerwald / Sparbach Nature Park



Foto: Daniel Zupanc

To craft and hang up nest boxes

Ornithological guided tours in our Sparbach Nature Park

Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

Compensation measures for public road construction and wind mills on forest land (nature conservation by contract)

- No timber harvest on high-quality Eco-Forests
- Biodiversity measures on arable land
- Honey buzzard
- Bee-eater
- etc.



Foto: Alfred Kozak



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

Reconnection of cut-off river meanders on rivers March and Thaya, various corporate supports for „via donau company“

- River regulations in the 1970`ies
- Reconnection of cut-off meanders
- 8 different meanders on river Thaya
- 1 big reconnection on river March
- No forest use on new river islands
- Placement in Austria´ s new „Connecting Forests for Biodiversity“ programme



Foto: via donau

Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

- Extensive participation in Austria´s environmentally-balanced programme called ÖPUL (biodiversity areas and strips, „valuable areas“, etc.)
- Later mowing of grass land (corn crake (*Crex crex*) protection programme)
- Planting of wildlife feed plots, hedges, fruit trees, wild indigenous herbs)
- Compensation measures for amphibians (ditches, ponds, etc.)
- Participation in „Organic-Bees-Apple-Project“ of Frutura company (20 ha)



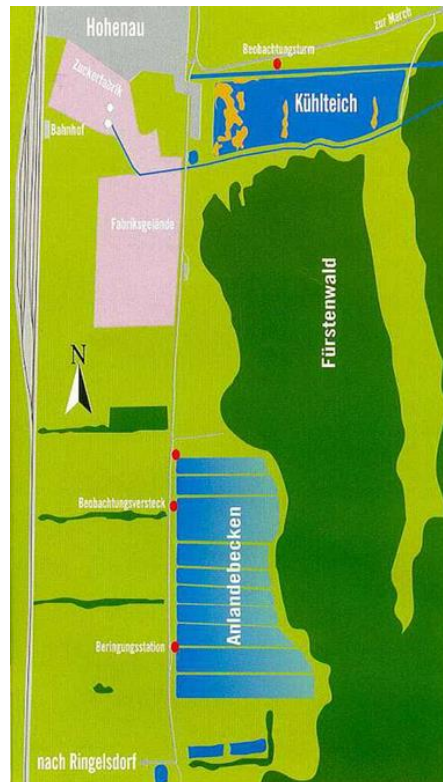
Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

- Widening of ditches, ecologically compatible maintenance measures
- Wet meadow management
- Water management
- Bat monitoring
- Cormoran counts
- Etc.



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

- 38 ha bird protection area on arable land in Hohenau (local ornithological association „Auring“)



- Improvement of habitats for water birds
- Resting sites for migratory birds
- Bird ringing
- Ornithological research
- Educational and public relations work -> 260 different bird species observed
- Ornithological hotspot in Austria
- Well-balanced agreement between bird protection, agriculture and hunting



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

- Afforestation of 6,000 metres of hedges
- Biotope network system for wild animals and birds
- 4 indigenous wild fruit tree species
- 13 different shrubs
- Support for many songbird species
- Recognized red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*) hotspot in Austria



Foto: BirdLife, Neuntöter

Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

- Genetic diversity -
- Harvesting of recognized forest seed stocks
- Afforestation of a genetic conservation forest with BFW and Nature Fund (Germany), sponsored by Michelin
- Resistance breeding for *Fraxinus angustifolia* (against ash dieback) with BFW
- Establishment of a seed plantation in autumn 2022
- Selected seeds for biodiversity areas and wild ecological areas



Examples for corporate biodiversity projects

- **“Biodiversity-promoting measures on the Wilfersdorf farm estate”**
Project development and ongoing consultation by LACON (consultant for landscape planning and biodiversity)
- **Cooperation with Game Conservancy Germany and ongoing support**
Surveys and monitoring of field birds and insects
- **creation of beetle banks**



Foto: Distelverein, Auring



Biodiversity and hunting

- The sustainable hunting management of our land is a central operational goal and an important concern of the Liechtenstein family.
- Agricultural and forestry utilisation is tailored to the needs of wild animals and their habitats (mowing times, rest areas, crop rotation, choice of varieties, careful use of timber and harvesting).
- Employees (hunters, tractor drivers, forestry workers, etc.) are trained in wildlife ecology.
- Marketing of high-quality wildlife products.



Sparbach Nature Park

- Oldest nature park in Austria (since 1962)
- 90-95,000 visitors per year
- Top excursion destination in Lower Austria
- 2022: 60th anniversary
- Cooperation with local primary schools
- About 200 forest and wildlife ecology guided tours per year
- Biodiversity highlights brochure
- Film: "Biodiversity in Sparbach Nature Park" see www.naturpark-sparbach.at
- Austrian Ecolabel for educational institutions
- Natura 2000 film about a yellow-bellied toad project



Ausgezeichnet von der
Österreichischen UNESCO-Kommission



Foto: Lore Prendinger



Foto: Robert Hofrichter/Naturschutzbund

National and international awards for our ecology and biodiversity projects

Anders Wall Award 2020

European Commission DG Environment

European Landowner`s Organization

University of Stockholm

**"35 projects for a natural and cultural heritage
worth living in Lower Austria"**



National award for best practice forestry 2006 (cooperations) and 2017 individually.



Foto: BMLFW

Certifications



Unsere forstlichen Produkte sind nach den Richtlinien von PEFC Austria zertifiziert.

Damit garantieren wir eine nachhaltige Waldbewirtschaftung im Pannonischen Tief- und Hügelland und im Wienerwald.



Foto: DLG

**Certificate for sustainable agriculture (Sept. 2023)
awarded by the German Agriculture Society:**

Certificate for -

- economically successful
- ecologically balanced
- socially responsible farming.

Summary

- Extensive possibilities for an agricultural and forestry operation to implement biodiversity projects
- Proactive or passive strategies for implementing projects
- Voluntariness as a basic principle
- Company´s awareness raising as a necessity
- Financial compensation versus no remuneration
- Long-term nature of projects
- Increasing operational competences, new business areas
- Public relations
- Image

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