

# Forest functions and multifunctional forest management

The importance of forests is diverse and changes over time and space. In Slovenia, we meet the various demands of society for forests through the principle of multifunctional forest management. This means that when making decisions about forest management, we consider all the functions of the forest.

## THREE MAIN GROUPS OF FOREST FUNCTIONS:

- 1. PRODUCTIVE
- 2. ECOLOGICAL
- 3. SOCIAL

Most Slovenian forests serve multiple functions simultaneously. For example, in a managed forest where timber production is main goal, people can also walk, gather fruits, and the same forest is also a habitat for various animal and plant species. All these forest functions must be taken into account when planning management measures.

### PRODUCTIVE FOREST FUNCTIONS

A forest is a source of income for the owner. The main and most valuable forest product is wood, which is why timber production is the most important function for most forest owners.

#### TIMBER PRODUCTION

Wood is the most important resource for forest owner, generating profit. High-quality wood brings higher profits. To grow high-quality trees, the owner must take care for and tend the forest.

#### PRODUCTION OF OTHER FOREST GOODS

For recreation or as an additional source of income people gather forest fruits (blueberries, raspberries, chestnuts, mushrooms), medicinal herbs, ornamental greenery, cones, branches, etc.

#### WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Wildlife is an integral part of the forest and a source of income for hunting associations and the state. Since there are not enough natural predators in our forests, wildlife populations need to be regulated through hunting.

### ECOLOGICAL FOREST FUNCTIONS

Slovenian forestry is based on the principles of close-to-nature, multifunctionality, and sustainability, which means that forest management pays great attention to nature conservation and the ecological functions of forests.

#### PROTECTION OF FOREST LAND AND STANDS

Forests with a pronounced protective role are called protective forests. They are usually located on steep terrains or near water bodies, where they protect the forest and soil from erosion.

#### HYDROLOGICAL FUNCTION

Many drinking water sources are located in forests. Forests purify groundwater, retain water, and increase water reserves.

#### BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION FUNCTION

Forests are habitats for numerous plant and animal species, as well as fungi. In forests where endangered species live, the biodiversity conservation function is particularly emphasized.

#### CLIMATIC FUNCTION

Forests affect the climate at local, regional, and even global levels. Locally, forests protect cities from wind and frost, while in summer, they reduce temperature and provide shade.

### SOCIAL FOREST FUNCTIONS

Forests play a significant role in our daily lives—they offer spaces for recreation, relaxation, and meditation. They can also be used for tourism, and they represent our natural and cultural heritage.

#### PROTECTIVE FUNCTION

Forests with a pronounced protective function protect roads, settlements, and other structures from natural phenomena such as rockfalls, avalanches, landslides, and strong winds.

#### HYGIENIC AND HEALTH FUNCTION

Forests help reduce noise and impact of harmful emissions, dust, aerosols, gases and other pollutants and significantly contribute to a healthier living environment.

#### RECREATIONAL AND TOURISM FUNCTION

Forests provide spaces for relaxation, peace, recreation, and nature observation.

#### EDUCATIONAL AND RESEARCH FUNCTION

Forests with an educational role are intended to introduce the public to nature. These forests may have educational trails, open-air forestry museums, or other educational features.

#### PROTECTION OF NATURAL VALUES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Forests with this function are particularly important for nature conservation. In such forests, we can find natural values and elements of cultural heritage.

#### AESTHETIC FUNCTION

All forests have an aesthetic function, as they add a pleasing element to the landscape. Green is also a calming color.



Zavod za gozdove Slovenije  
Slovenia Forest Service



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA  
MINISTRSTVO ZA KMETIJSTVO,  
GOZDARSTVO IN PREHRANO



GOZDNI  
SKLAD