

SILVA Network Prague communique 2017

Strengthening the role of educational forests

1. In-forest learning and teaching is indispensable for education in forest sciences, because it delivers hands-on experience which cannot be replaced by virtual reality.
2. Educational forests are facilitating in-forest learning and teaching.
3. Educational forests connect academic educational targets with practice.
4. There exist different successful models of managing and utilizing educational forests, as demonstrated during the SILVA Network Meeting in Prague (e.g. university-owned forests, long-term contracts with other forest owners, used with and without financial compensation).
5. Sufficient resources (staff, funding) are indispensable for establishment and maintenance of educational forests for securing high-quality education.
6. In-forest education may include non-forested areas.
7. Educational forests serve learning and teaching about sustainable forest management which includes ecological, economic and social dimensions.
8. Students' theses (BSc, MSc, PhD) and long-term research are fundamental functions of educational forests.
9. Educational forests offer unique opportunities to develop and apply innovative learning and teaching concepts, e.g. project-oriented work, marteloscopes, and involve students in all aspects of forest management, e.g. real world challenges for forest enterprises.
10. Within this scope of educational forests, it is important to include long-term and interdisciplinary approaches of learning, teaching and research.