

GERMANY

Risk prevention & management

Location

Jüterbog, Heidehof, Lieberose and Tangersdorf

Programming period

2014 – 2020

Priority

P3 - Food chain & risk Management

Measure

M05 – Damage restoration & prevention actions

Funding (EUR)

Total budget 23 184
EAFRD 17 388
National/Regional 5 796

Project duration

2017 – 2019

Project promoter

Brandenburg Natural Landscapes Foundation

Contact

info@stiftung-nlb.de

Website

www.stiftung-nlb.de/de/

Rural Development Programme (RDP) support was used for helping to prevent forest fires in a former military testing area in Brandenburg, Germany, that is heavily contaminated with explosive material.

Summary

The widespread former military training areas (TÜP) near Jüterbog, Heidehof, Lieberose and Tangersdorf in Brandenburg, were used as testing grounds for the development and use of military equipment for over 160 years. The high density of ammunition remnants in the area are often the cause of fires and they can make firefighting challenging, sometimes impossible.



The area is managed by the Brandenburg Natural Landscapes Foundation (Stiftung Naturlandschaften Brandenburg) which is also responsible for the area's forest fire protection. Firebreaks with isolated groves and vegetation-free strips have been created and are annually maintained. These firebreak systems help contain fires and allow emergency services to operate safely.

Results

Forest fire protection systems have only been implemented on around 150 of the approximate 13 600 hectares of land managed by the Foundation on the four TÜP, or around 1%. This leaves the largest part of the foundation areas to develop naturally.

The construction of wells and paths has significantly increased the safety of the voluntary fire brigade and rescue forces operating on the former TÜP.

Four new firefighting wells, which were opened in 2017, were significant in helping the containment of a forest fire in 2018.

Lessons & Recommendations

- It is important that there is comprehensive coordination between landowners, fire protection agencies, the forestry administration and the nature conservation administration.
- Protecting this area from forest fires requires compromises, practical solutions and different sources of financing.

Context

The widespread former military training areas (TÜP) near Jüterbog, Heidehof, Lieberose and Tangersdorf in Brandenburg, were used as a testing grounds for the development and use of military equipment for over 160 years. The high density of ammunition remnants that remains in the area are often the cause of fires and they can make firefighting challenging, sometimes impossible. The areas have been left to develop naturally and have, in parts, been cleared of munitions. These large-scale, ecologically valuable natural landscapes have become habitats of numerous animal and plant species.

The Brandenburg Natural Landscapes Foundation (Stiftung Naturlandschaften Brandenburg) owns and manages the four former military training areas and is responsible for their protection from forest fires. Due to the high density of ammunition remnants on the former TÜP, forest fire protection systems have been set up in cooperation with districts, the fire brigade, the forestry administration, the nature conservation administration and other experts. The systems are regularly maintained and checked and improved annually.

Objectives

The main objectives of the project were to:

- Prevent the uncontrolled spread of forest fires.
- Improve the safety of local residents and emergency services.
- Protect the surrounding areas from the spread of fire.
- Enable coordinated fire protection actions in the nature reserve.

Activities

A forest firebreak consists of a vegetation-poor area with isolated woody plants and shrubs. Within this area there are also fire protection paths that can be used by emergency services and one or two wound strips. The wound strips are scrubbed and completely removed of vegetation once or twice a year. The remaining areas are mulched every few years to create low vegetation fire barriers. The Foundation has installed "open spaces" in the form of forest firebreaks as natural barriers. Thus, a running ground fire can be prevented from spreading into the adjacent forest stands.

In this project, a core element of the forest fire protection relied upon strong interventions to the landscape. About 2% of the areas are managed and maintained regularly.

The highest priority is that forest fire protection systems protect emergency services, residents and communities from the uncontrolled spread of forest fire. The safety of emergency services has significantly improved due to the firefighting routes and the protection corridors that allow them to work at a safer distance from a fire.

The 20-50-metre-wide forest firebreaks were largely prepared with the co-finance from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. The foundation also constructed new fire-fighting water wells.

The removal of all ammunition from the area, which is vital to the prevention of these forest fires, has so far been financed almost entirely by the Foundation itself.



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Main results

Forest fire protection systems have only been implemented on around 150 of the approximate 13 600 hectares of land managed by the Foundation on the four TÜP, or around 1%. This leaves the largest part of the foundation areas to develop naturally as wilderness.

Other important actions, such as the construction of wells and paths, significantly increase the safety of the fire brigade and rescue forces on the former TÜP.

Four new firefighting wells were opened in 2017. These wells helped significantly to contain a forest fire in 2018.

Key lessons

It is important that there is comprehensive coordination between landowners, fire protection agencies, the forestry administration and the nature conservation administration.

Protecting this area from forest fires requires compromises, practical solutions and financing from all sides.

Additional sources of information

n/a