



Pro Silva Annual Meeting

Czech Republic, Brno – Křtiny, 16-20th September 2015

Introduction

Pro Silva Europe brings members of e.g. ANW (Germany) or Continuous Cover Forestry Group (UK) together to discuss various aspects of close-to-nature forestry within European context. The practice of individual silvicultural systems that can deliver close-to-nature forestry or the process of transformation from even-aged forest structure to a more diverse one are the most commonly discussed topics during Pro Silva Europe's meetings.

The Annual Meeting of Pro Silva Europe took place in and around Brno – Křtiny, Czech Republic (16 – 19th September). Although Czech Republic has long tradition of using mainly even-aged silvicultural systems (especially in monocultures of Norway spruce and Scots pine), transformation to close-to-nature forestry was the main focus since there have been calls for integrating such management principles as opposed to solely relying on even-aged management. With the exception of several examples or transformations established by some of the local academics, practitioners and forest owners, the tradition of using uneven-aged alternatives has been more or less non-existent in the Czech Republic.

The meeting was hosted by members of Pro Silva Bohemica who kindly showed the meeting participants around some exciting sites where a lot of fruitful discussion took place. Pro Silva Bohemica celebrated 20 years anniversary earlier this year; it is important to note that the members' efforts and dedication have been the major drivers of spreading the principles of close-to-nature forestry in the Czech Republic.

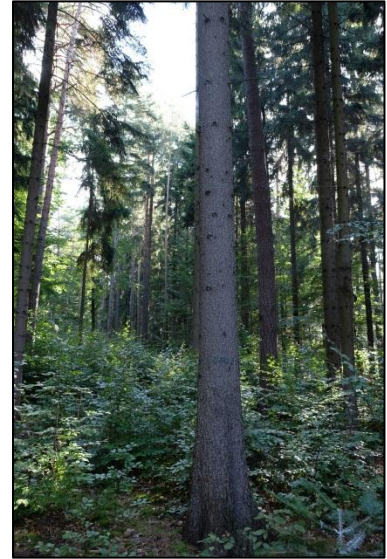
The future agenda of Pro Silva Europe as well as the vision for future were also discussed during board and member meetings.

Following are several highlights of the field excursions that took place as a part of the Pro Silva Europe Meeting in the Czech Republic

17th September

This day was dedicated to excursions throughout the Training Forest Enterprise (TFE) 'Masaryk Forest', which is forest used by the Mendel University for training purposes. The TFE is a forest of 10 228 ha providing ground for training and research activities for the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology (FFWT) at Mendel University in Brno. However, this forest is also used by public for various recreation activities due to its beauty. The TFE is actively managed as the financial revenues serve as a resource for the FFWT.

The first stop was in the forest stand at TFE (Klepačov, Pokojná Hora) that has been under transformation for past 40 years with the aim to form a multi-species and multi-aged structure. Small gaps have been created by single tree cutting in order to allow for small patches of natural regeneration. Larger gaps were created in past by windblow.

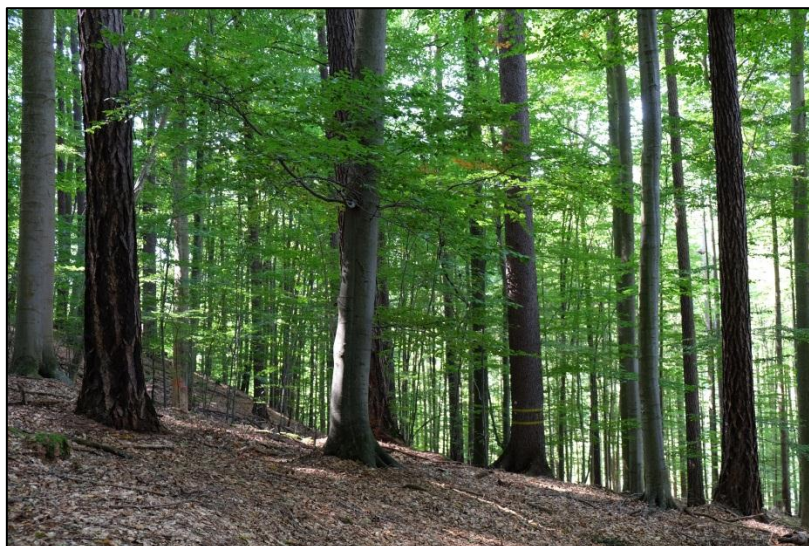


TFE (Klepačov, Pokojná Hora)

The next stop was the forest reserve Habrůvecká Bučina that is a forest where no cutting has been conducted in the past 60 years (except for several non-native coniferous trees). This area has been under protection due to its rich herbal biodiversity that is typical for the local limestone country. Although still showing very few traces of uneven-ages structure, this site was visited as an ‘inspiration’ for close-to-nature management due to the presence of trees of great quality. The same applies for Haša Sanctuary.



TFE (Habrůvecká Bučina)



TFE (Haša Sanctuary)

18th September

The morning of the second day was dedicated to visiting Jihlava Municipality Forests (Vılanec area) that has been under transformation from since 1995. The aim is to transform even-aged Norway spruce monocultures to a structurally more diverse stands in terms of both species and tree sizes.

Certain parts of the Municipality Forest were heavily damaged by frost in 1995, which resulted in the necessity to carry out sanitary felling. This caused an increase in the proportion of silver fir and European larch (on the expense of the damaged Norway spruce) therefore resulting in diversification of species composition as well as diameter distribution.

Some parts of the mature stands were under-planted with European beech and silver (both pure and/or mixed). Such areas were fenced in order to protect the young trees from browsing pressures.

Although the Municipality Forest is dominated by Norway spruce, young European beech stands were established. The current management in such stands is aimed as the selection of best trees that are gradually released from competition by cutting their intermediate neighbours. The same management applies to the young Norway spruce stands.

As for the operational perspective, a network or permanent forest roads was established to ease the harvesting operations. All trees are marked by the local forester to ensure consistency in tree selection.



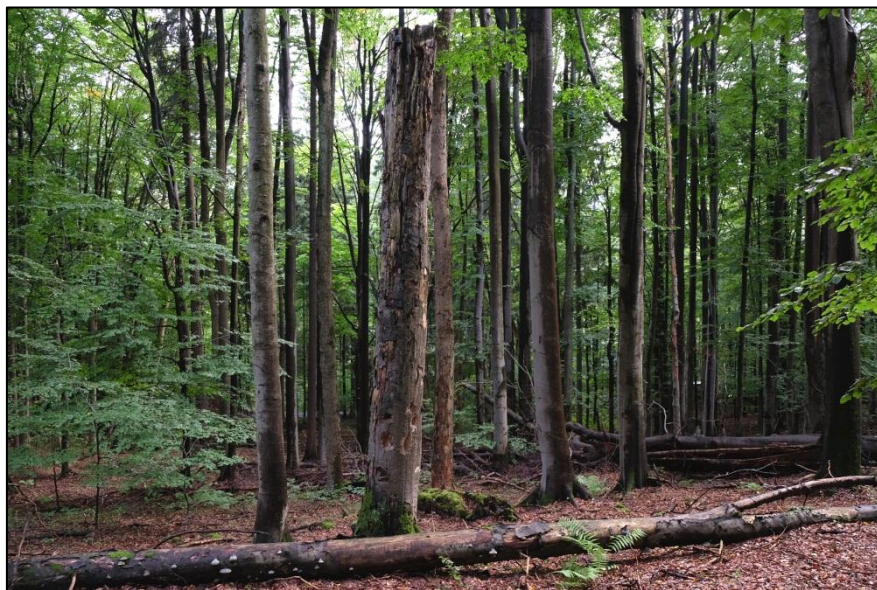
Jihlava Municipality Forest, Vilanec area

The Kinský - Žďár Forest Estate was visited in the afternoon; it is a private forest estate of 5 612 ha dominated by Norway spruce (85%) with the remainder comprising of silver fir and European beech. The transformation of mainly even-aged structure has been aimed at diversification of species as well as diameter distribution. In order to do so, parts of stands where the mature stand has allowed for sufficient light reaching the forest ground were under-planted with European beech and silver (pure and/or mixed). Cutting has also focused on gap creation in order to provide opportunity for natural regeneration and support initiation of new cohorts.



Kinský - Žďár Forest Estate

The day was concluded with a visit to a virgin forest located at Žákova Hora. Although not subjected to any specific management, this visit was included as an inspiration for the rich biodiversity and the outstanding beauty forests can provide.



Virgin Forest at Žákova Hora