

For Immediate Release

6 October 2013

Global Gathering launches new Vision for Wilder Europe

Salamanca, 6 October 2013: Environment leaders have launched a new Vision for a Wilder Europe at Wild10, the world wilderness congress in Salamanca, Spain. Nine organisations from across Europe have promoted the Vision that seeks to build on the significant conservation achievements in Europe that have seen the comeback of some of our most iconic wild species such as the wolf, bear, sea eagle, salmon and beaver.

The Vision calls for a **European continent where the last wilderness areas are protected and where wildlife, natural processes and biodiversity are allowed the space and freedom to come back and shape our land- and seascapes as they did for millions of years.**

The Vision promotes a new perspective on management of nature in European conservation with emphasis on protecting existing wilderness and rewilding - where natural processes take precedence and native species are encouraged to return. This approach builds on established conservation practices to support the return of nature in Europe on a continental scale beyond designated sites and nature reserves. The principles can be applied to cities as well as the last vestiges of wilderness in Europe.

The Vision promotes the idea of a new European Wilderness Convention that would underpin strengthening of existing protection of the last areas of wilderness in Europe; wetlands, seas, ancient forests and mountains that are still home to bison, reindeer, lynx and eagles. Threats from logging, mining and energy developments continue to erode these last vestiges of wild nature across Europe.

“Bold, ambitious and entirely necessary”

Vance Martin co-chair of Wild10 and President of the Wild Foundation says “This new Vision is bold, it is ambitious and entirely necessary if we are to begin to address the losses to biodiversity, and destruction of ecosystems caused by our modification of the planet. The issues and challenges are well understood but we need solutions, new ideas that show the benefits to society and economies. This Vision does just that. My hope is that this Vision can form part of a lasting legacy of our global gathering in Europe, one step nearer to making the world a wilder place”

The Vision was launched at Wild10 and presented to senior representatives from the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Nine signatories to the Vision are; Rewilding Europe, Wildland Research Institute, John Muir Trust, Frankfurt Zoological Society, Pan Parks, Fundació Catalunya- La Pedrera, Wilderness Foundation, Deutsche Umwelthilfe and Wild Wonders of Europe.

The Vision has been published to inspire action and encourage further discussion on the principles and ideas it promotes.

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NOTES FOR EDITORS

About the Vision: The Vision suggests that improving conservation management should cover work in ten specific areas: Natural processes; Apex Species; Existing Wilderness; Rewilding; The business case for the Wild; New stewardship of land, water and sea; financial mechanisms; public support; monitoring, research and compilation of existing knowledge; leadership and strategy.

It can be accessed on the following site: <http://wild10.org/en/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/A-Vision-for-a-Wilder-Europe-Oct-2013.pdf>

About the signatory organisations:

Deutsche Umwelthilfe: <http://www.duh.de>

Frankfurt Zoological Society: <http://www.zgf.de>

Fundació Catalunya- La Pedrera: <http://www.fundaciocatalunya-lapedrera.com>

John Muir Trust: <http://www.jmt.org>

Pan Parks: <http://www.panparks.org>

Rewilding Europe: <http://www.rewildingeurope.com>

Wilderness Foundation: www.wildernessfoundation.org

Wildland Research Institute: <http://www.wildlandresearch.org>

Wild Wonders of Europe: <http://www.wild-wonders.com>

As the heart of the global wilderness conservation movement, **The WILD Foundation** (WILD) is the only international organization dedicated entirely to protecting wilderness and wild-nature around the world. Our vision is to protect and interconnect at least half of the planet, land and water, because wild-areas provide essential social, spiritual, biological and economic benefits – Nature Needs Half™. Founded in South Africa in 1974, WILD is a US- registered not-for-profit located in Boulder, CO. www.wild.org.

The **World Wilderness Congress** is the world's longest-running international, public environmental forum -- a collaboration by many organizations, facilitated by WILD to unite conservation scientists, practitioners, government representatives, artists, Indigenous peoples and local communities and to debate and act on issues threatening wilderness and to share and create solutions to "make the world a wilder place."

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