

WORLD WILDERNESS CONGRESS (WCC)

The WWC is the world's largest wilderness conservation movement. With over 35 years of conservation achievements, WWC is the longest-running, public, international environmental forum. Each WWC is carefully designed to generate practical conservation outcomes -- planning and follow up span at least three years prior to, and after, the event.

The Congress convenes every three to four years, having been held 9 times in 5 continents: South Africa (1977, 2001), Australia (1980), Scotland (1983), USA (1987, 2005), Norway (1993), India (1998) and Mexico (2009). WILD10 is the first WWC to be held in a Mediterranean country.

In addition to addressing high-level policy issues, the WWC showcases international scientific, corporate and artistic perspectives on wilderness, and emphasizes participation and leadership by Indigenous peoples and local communities who have been the traditional stewards of our wilderness. An important element of these congresses is their strong cultural programme, carefully planned to show that supporting conservation can be fun, exciting and a powerful experience. WWCs work closely with host communities to highlight and integrate them into programs and cultural events.

THE WILD FOUNDATION

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 and culture 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. We believe that 'Nature Needs Half™'. Founded in South Africa in 1974, WILD is a US-registered not-for-profit organization, with its headquarters in Boulder, Colorado. www.wild.org.

WILD10

WILD10 is the fruit of collaboration by many organisations and experts, facilitated by the WILD Foundation, bringing together more than 1000 conservation scientists, practitioners, government representatives and Indigenous and community leaders. At the Congress they will discuss threats to existing wilderness, look at the opportunities for rewilding and learn about solutions that will help 'make the world a wilder place'.

WILD10 is about wilderness protection on land and seas, and integrating nature and human needs. At WILD10 scientists, artists, policy-makers, landowners, conservationists, Indigenous, community and corporate leaders will be working together to build a better future for the planet.

WILD10 is not only about science and action on the ground, but also about sharing stories, experiences, insights, feelings, artistic expression and magic moments.

WILD10 wants to send a strong signal into the world:

- Wild nature is not a luxury, but essential to health and prosperity. Protecting and enhancing wilderness preserves beauty, culture and identity, as well as ecosystem services. In addition to providing prosperity and livelihoods, wilderness is also essential for our spiritual wellbeing.
- Wild nature is still under pressure, but there are developments that allow for more wilderness in the future: Urbanization and changes in land-use practices, a growing recognition of the value of wilderness, the interdependence of nature and culture, and a growing movement for a wilder world, all help create a more stable and healthy planet and society.

WILDERNESS IN EUROPE

For many decades biodiversity and wild areas were disappearing on the European continent. However, geopolitical changes such as the dismantling of the Iron Curtain, demographic developments such as rural exodus and urbanization, and changes in land-use practices are altering Europe's landscape. At the same time, dramatic economic problems in some countries with the highest biodiversity (e.g. Greece & Spain) have meant less money and fewer people employed in "managing" nature. As a consequence, wildlife has been returning and moving through the continent, and opportunities exist for new, large and connected wilderness areas.

At the same time Europe has a very good foundation for conservation (legal, protected areas), which have enhanced conditions for many wildlife species to return. Now we have the chance to create a much wilder, even more beautiful and attractive Europe, with increased biodiversity.

One of the key aims of WILD10 is to bring this story to people of all walks of life so that they can understand the opportunities that exist to rewild Europe, provided that we join and work together to make this vision a reality.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, 'A Vision for a Wilder Europe' will be launched at WILD10 covering the three pillars of sustainability: Planet, People and Prosperity (PPP).

While the rewilding of Europe is happening right now on land, we still need to reverse a serious trend of loss of life and health in Europe's seas and watersheds.

ADDITIONAL WILD10 STORY ANGLES

- **Nature Needs Half – What a sustainable planet really requires**
Conservation science shows that nature and the natural processes must be allowed to rule over *at least half* of the land and sea for a healthy sustainable planet. A plan for this vision will be presented.
- **The Neglected Waters – Finding solutions to safeguard our oceans, lakes and rivers**
Oceans, lakes and rivers were the last natural areas explored by man, and now they are among the most threatened. Overfishing, plastic and chemical pollution, acidification and climate change are all threatening the oceans, which regulate the earth's climate, absorb CO₂, and provide fresh water, oxygen and protein. Marine

protected areas and sustainable fishery management are part of the solution to bring these critical habitats back into balance. Marine Wilderness is also gaining momentum and traction both as a concept and a protected area designation.

- **Working at Scale -- Connecting land, safeguarding natural treasures, and cooperation across borders**

If we want to preserve biodiversity and maintain the essential ecosystem services provided by wild nature we need to work on a large scale and across national borders creating wild corridors and promoting connectivity between protected areas.

Examples are provided from North America, Australia, the Arctic, and the Serengeti in Africa.

- **Indigenous & Community Lands & Seas (ICLS)- Finding common solutions with Indigenous peoples and Local Communities for reinforcing the connection between culture, wild lands and seas which is required for economic and community resilience, livelihoods, and well-being.**

At WILD10, ICLS is advancing a vision for the future of conservation—for the protection of all life—inclusive of and rooted in best practices of First Stewards, local communities and mainstream conservation.

Indigenous peoples are currently the stewards of at least the same amount of wild nature as all regional and national governments and conservation organizations combined. Although indigenous peoples total just 5% of the world's population, it is estimated that traditional land claims account for some 24%, or 36 million square kilometers, of the Earth's surface. They inhabit more than 85% of the world's protected areas (PAs), including many marine PAs. These territories span most of the last remaining biodiversity-rich wilderness areas and most of the major conservation priorities for this century. Examples will be given on how Indigenous people and the conservation community work together to protect culture and wild areas, and to identify new socio-economic development opportunities. At WILD10, mainstream conservation and over 50 Indigenous and community leaders representing 39 distinct indigenous nations and communities from 23 countries, will participate in this process.

- **Mobilizing New Constituencies – Rewilding cities, finding young leaders, changing attitudes and lives**

Conservation of nature, including wilderness, suffers from being seen as a sectorally-specific agenda that is irrelevant for many groups in society. To break that deadlock, a number of initiatives are presented on how to reach out to a broader group of constituents including urban populations, youth, writers and artists, leveraging new communication tools such as social media. Evolving concepts of nature and the increased ability to simultaneously protect biocultural (biological and cultural) resources are growing among Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities.

- **The Rewilding 10 – Joint solutions for the return of wild nature, creating jobs and a new economy in Europe**

The first significant attempts to rewild Europe linking up the three PPPs will be presented. Ten large-scale pilot areas have been identified that stretch from the far north of Scandinavia, Eastern Europe and Central Europe to South-western Europe – and action has already started in six of these. A serious effort to integrate

communications as a tool for sharing stories, experiences and to reach out to millions of Europeans has been tried with significant success.

- **Nature & Wildness – Engagement through culture**
Much of human culture has its roots in wilderness and still seeks inspiration therein. But in many cases the connections between the two worlds of culture and nature conservation are still not well understood. To build bridges between the two has always been a landmark of the World Wilderness Congresses. WILD10 is no different, and offers an interesting menu from Hip Hop, wall graffiti, flamenco, storytelling, Indigenous & community methods, film and photo festivals to theatre.
- **Restoring European Megafauna**
As described in his recent book – *Feral: Searching for Enchantment of the Frontiers of Rewilding* – the author George Monbiot will share his perspective on the importance of Europe’s current and past “megafauna” (large herbivores & carnivores), the potential for existing megafauna, as well as the possibility of reintroducing some of those that are missing.
- **Nature-based Development – The link between the business sector and the wild**
Past experiences and new opportunities will be outlined to show how the business sector can act as a powerful vehicle for conserving - or even enhancing - wild values at the same time as creating income and new jobs.
- **The Critical role of Communities and Private Lands – Finding common solutions for wild nature and local prosperity**
Some exciting, groundbreaking initiatives from Africa, Australia and other continents will be presented to show how the delegation of management responsibility of wildlife management to local communities has generated strong comebacks of many species as well as contributed to investments in culture, social infrastructure, income and jobs. In regions like North America and Europe, private landowners have already played the same role.
- **Are Protected Areas Still Necessary?**
The value of protected areas for biodiversity conservation and culture as well as for the society in large has recently be questioned. Arguments will be provided to show their immense value and necessity.