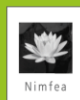


CEETO - D.T2.2.3

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ACTION PLAN

Naturpark Söltkäler (PP04)

Version 1
11 2018





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1. Description of the PA:

Sölkpass is the highest pass in the province of Styria with 1788m. Through the pass road the area around the Sölkpass is easily accessible. A specialty of this area is that you pass all habitats from farm houses, meadows and forests in the lower parts; up to alpine meadows and high alpine area on the top of the pass. The attractive landscape with mountain lakes, a wonderful plant world, special wildlife and great hiking destinations has a high attractiveness for hikers in summer. In winter this area offers several very nice backcountry skiing tours.

Naturpark Sölktaöler is situated in the Lower Tauern massif. The whole park covers 28.800 ha and stretches out from 694 in valley Ennstal up to 2747 meters above sea level. Most of the mountains are extremely steep and not easy to cultivate. The forest line lays about approximately 1800 - 1900 m height. Lots of alpine meadows lower than this line bring a mosaic of different habitats in small spaces. These regions have the highest abundance of species. There are different rock materials, being the reason why there is so much biodiversity of vegetation. Through mainly old rocks a band of marble extends across the two valleys and enriches the vegetation. Distinguishing of the Naturpark Sölktaöler is the swampy landscape and the numerous lakes in the different altitudes.

There are two main parallel valleys. The eastern one has the pass, which leads to the southern regions of Tauern and the valley of Mur. The street is closed in winter; in summer lots of tourists use this possibility to cross the Alps. The former known "Säumerweg" was used to transport and exchange salt, wine and grain. The Sölkpass is one of the main reasons for the publicity of the Sölk valleys. The tourists are passing, see the beautiful landscape and the historic huts and stay for some hours.

Because of the rough climate the farmers only manage their woods and have cattle and mostly sheep, which stay on the alpine meadows during summer. In the valleys there are no fields, only meadows. Most of them are merely harvested two times. The alpine meadows are reserved for cattle feeding. The current trend is that the alpine pastures are being abandoned. This is a result of rising costs of maintaining and connected measures. The goal should be that the pastures do not become overgrown; otherwise the old cultural landscapes and its heritage are lost. In addition to this the return of the wolf faces another problem.

Naturpark Sölktaöler does not have much tourism, more daily tourism for hiking in summer (alpine pastures and huts, which often can be reached by car) and a little group of ski tour - tourists in winter. Additionally there is the castle "Großsölk", the house of the Nature Park with a permanent herbage garden exhibition and another temporary exhibition. The castle is closed in winter. There are approximately 20.000 overnight stays during the whole year in the entire valley. This number is increasing lightly.

Sensitive use of the nature reserve area is therefore of great importance. With regard to visitor guidance, the hunting and landowner interests must be taken into account. In addition to the Sölkpass, the Schwarzensee in the Kleinsölk Valley is one of the tourist hotspots of the Söltkäler Nature Park in summer. Naturally responsible visitor guidance is also important here.

The big goal of the Naturpark Söltkäler is to increasingly focus on quality rather than quantity. Together with the inhabitants the special habitat, flora and fauna should be presented. The awareness of nature should be awaked and increased.



Figure 1:
Sölkpass



Figure 2:
Karlkirchen



Figure 3:
Eckkar

2. Strategy: 5 year goal

From now on until March 2020 five to seven local stakeholders (e.g. huts, landowners) will be involved in the implementation of the project (pilot actions) using questionnaires and meetings. There are two main goals set which are visitor stream management and maintaining the alpine pastures. The visitor stream management is separated in two parts: monitoring/management and raising awareness (more details below). The Naturpark Söltkäler needs to develop tools to make the preservation more attractive for the locals. Nevertheless, it is important that the current population of wildlife is preserved. That is to say, newly developed areas within the Naturpark Söltkäler must be marked prior to the publication with resting areas of the animals, as well with routes for tourists and hikers.

The strategy of the next five years will pursue a qualitative increase in tourism. This leads to an intensification of regional development, conservation of biodiversity as well as the planning and



guidance of tourist streams. With assistance of visitor management these goals can be achieved. This includes zones for the tourist purpose and undisturbed habitats of wildlife.

In order to unite these parallel movements pilot actions take place in the Naturpark Sölkktäler. The pilot actions are used to determine the status quo and will be evaluated at the end of the five years. The status quo can be used as base of a target-performance comparison.

In the Naturpark Sölkktäler are currently two pilot actions to gain data and information regarding monitoring and raising awareness. Both actions are independently from each other because of a different goal setting. The pilot actions are explicitly explained below.

2.1 Monitoring: visitor streams and management

The monitoring program should evaluate the human impact on valleys and leading species of several sensitive habitats (div. grouse species) and find the relative frequency in the different valleys using counting visitors as a method. Additionally the abundance of the wildlife should be verified and constantly reviewed, even the different impacts on different species. For this there were four light barriers installed at different places which are common destinations for day trips and hikes (e.g. St. Nikolai, Mössnakar, Deneck). Additional to the light barriers was a counting station established with local youth counting the people and cars in St. Nikolai during the summer holidays (August and September). This was also arranged at the tollbooth to Schwarzensee (only for one month). The counting will continue in winter 2018, spring/summer/fall/winter 2019 and spring 2020. The counting serves as a basis for an annual comparison as well as a numerical comparison with the visitor counting of the valleys within the Naturpark and with the numbers of Schladming-Dachstein, which is the holding tourism organization in this area. The used instruments to get information for this pilot action are counting mechanical and manual, entries in the summit register of Deneck. In addition, booklets serve as information material with general information about the Naturpark Sölkktäler and recommended hiking and ski routes. The routes are labelled as supporting measures with signs and markings.

The used instruments provide quantitative data, which are further processed in Excel. Graphics should submit visual support and allow easy comparisons of numbers throughout the years, even more complex ones. Likewise, abundance distributions make it possible to identify particularly intense days and differences between the four main valleys and mountain destination inside the Naturpark and to show trends for further development.



Figure 4: counting station St. Nikolai

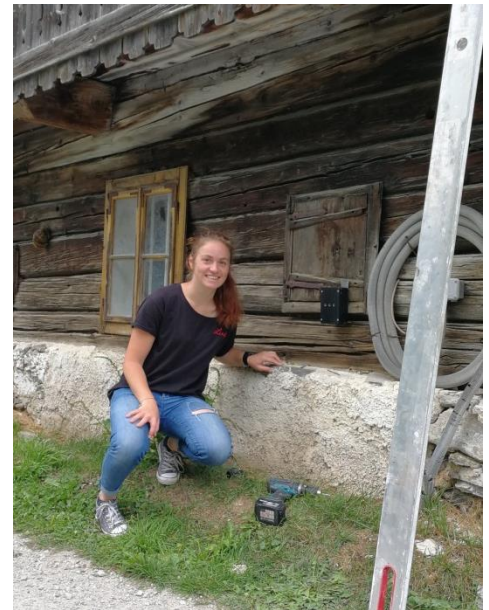


Figure 5: light barrier

2.2 Raising awareness

This pilot action wants to raise awareness from locals and tourists about nature and human impacts on nature within Naturpark Sölkktäler. Therefore the future dialogue was initiated. The first part of the future dialogue is with the youth (age 11 to 25) to get information what's important in their opinion for the region, what matters the most and what would they need to stay or come back in this area. The collected answers can be clustered afterwards and is the basis for the second part of the dialogue which is with the important stakeholders of the Naturpark Sölkktäler. Here, too, information is collected to the same themes/points and discuss the topics which turn out to be important to both groups. Following, the relevant topics of both get-togethers are discussed with the managing director and the project manager to implement and financially integrate the important points in the Naturpark Sölkktäler. The future dialogue started in September/October 2018 with the youth and the final discussion will be in March 2019. The findings of the dialogue will be included in the five year management plan.

Another part of raising awareness is different workshops called "Gemeinsam drüberschaun". These are for and with the locals about themes connected with the traditional cultivation of landscape and to raise their appreciation (see list attached). The workshops will be all just one-day events starting



November 2018 until August 2019. The topics of the workshops come from a former CEETO questionnaire with the goal to bring knowledge to the natives and incorporate them.

The used instruments to get information for this pilot action are questionnaires, workshops and guided tours with the goal of ecological knowledge transfer. These instruments are used to determine qualitative and quantitative data. The questionnaires used as placemats are evaluated by a frequency distribution in Excel. The table shows which motives tourists emphasize more or less in the Naturpark.

Bitte mach mit!
Zutreffendes bitte markieren

Von wo kommst Du?
 Ennstal
 Steiermark
 Graz
 Wien
 Deutschland
 Italien
 Slowenien
 Ungarn
 sonstiges

Wähle bitte das für dich passende Wörterpaar aus der Liste.
 Adrenalin und Aktivitäten
 Erholung und Entspannung
 Ruhe und Einsamkeit
 Natur und Landschaft
 Essen und Tradition
 Geselligkeit und Freunde

Mit wem bist Du hier?
 Partner
 Familie
 Allein
 Gruppe
 Freunde
 andere

Dein Alter?
 < 15
 17 – 25
 26 – 35
 36 – 50
 51 – 65
 > 66

Was machst Du bei uns?
 Wandern
 Radfahren
 Bergsteigen
 Entspannen
 Tiere beobachten
 sonstiges

Wie viele Tage bist Du hier?
 nur heute
 eine Nacht
 zwei Nächte
 eine Woche

Vorschläge zur Verbesserung des Angebots im Naturpark Sölktaöler? (max. 2–3)
 Erreichbarkeit
 Mobilität
 Information
 Infrastruktur
 Übernachtungsmöglichkeiten
 Parkplätze
 Service / Verleihstationen (Ausrüstung z.B. Klettern, Fischen)
 geführte Touren

Schon gewusst?

... dass bei uns Schafe ohne weitere Behirung auch in die obersten Gipfelregionen wandern dürfen? Hunde sind daher gut zu beaufsichtigen!

... dass wir in den Sölkälern auf kristallinem Gestein und sogar auf einem besonderen Marmor stehen?

... dass die Erhaltung der Almen viel Arbeitsaufwand bedeutet? Seit vielen Jahren helfen Freiwillige des Alpenvereins in einem Bergwaldprojekt, die Almen und damit deren besondere Artenvielfalt zu erhalten.

... dass ein weggeworfener Kaugummi 5 Jahre zum Verrotten braucht, Plastikflaschen sogar 100–5000 Jahre?

... dass die Meistenwurz, die „Meisterin aller Heilwurz“ bei uns in den alpinen Bereichen wächst, eine ganz besondere Heilpflanze ist?

SÖLKTÄLER NATURPARK
 Naturpark Sölktaöler
 Stronachgasse/Enns 107
 A-8261 Sölk
www.soeiktaealer.at
 T +43-3683-20 903
 Fax: 0365-5 55 55 55
 naturpark@soeiktaealer.at
 Erstellt: 2018

Figure 6: placemat (questionnaire)



Bitte mach mit!
Hilf uns für eine gemeinsame Zukunft in der Sölk

Dein Alter? (Bitte markieren)
 < 15
 16-17
 18-20
 21-22
 23-25
 > 25

Wo siehst Du Dich in 10 Jahren? (Bitte markieren)
 Sölk
 Gröbming
 Graz
 Salzburg
 Amerika
 Woanders: _____

Wie siehst Du die Entwicklung der Bevölkerung der Gemeinde Sölk?

Was braucht es in der Sölk, damit Du Deine Zukunft hier siehst?

Wer oder was ist für Dich wichtig in deiner Region?

Worauf bist Du stolz, dass du von der Kleinsölk, Großsölk, St. Nikolai oder von Stein kommst?

SÖLKTÄLER
NATURPARK
Erstellt 2018

Figure 7: questionnaire for future dialogue

3. Management/Actions:

The strategy of the Naturpark Sölk-täler is based on the principles of all Styrian nature parks. These are education, recreation and regional development on the basis of nature protection, which must be satisfied. Derived from this, there is a strategy plan for each pilot action, which can be implemented in the overall strategy and can then be aligned. As a general goal it is stated that the locals are encouraged to support and to preserve traditional forms of cultivated landscape, ecotourism, sustainability and the needs of wildlife for the future, more particularly the next five years.

In general, the results of the entire data are interpreted and serve as basis for the target-performance comparison of the five year strategy. The quantitative data are analysed with assistance of Excel. In addition, the future dialogue held in March 2019 is based on the qualitative data.

3.1 Outcome raising awareness:

According to the pilot action the goal is to raise awareness of local and tourists on different levels with not only collecting information but also give information. This could be cultivating the historical



landscape connected to the support of living here as well as finishing the cultivation of landscape. The regional development should slow down and at best prevent emigration. Several factors come together here, which all interact with each other and cannot work independently without having an influence on another partial strategy. It is even important to show the human impact on wildlife. For this purpose certain measurement methods are used (see monitoring) in order to clarify the impacts and gain a positive added value for nature. One of the main goals is to conserve habitats for protected wildlife by going on cultivating them. Visitors and even locals must know the common environment of the protected animals for the do's and don'ts. Ecotourism is used as a measurement to support income and interest in going on cultivating the alpine meadows, huts, etc. The future dialogue should help to adjust the infrastructure and the touristic offer in the valleys.

3.2 Outcome monitoring and management plans:

The main goal of the monitoring pilot action is to gather qualitative data via visitor counting and distributing questionnaires (see above also timeline) to measure and improve the visitor streams (e.g. with inferential statistics: rarely frequented and frequented days).

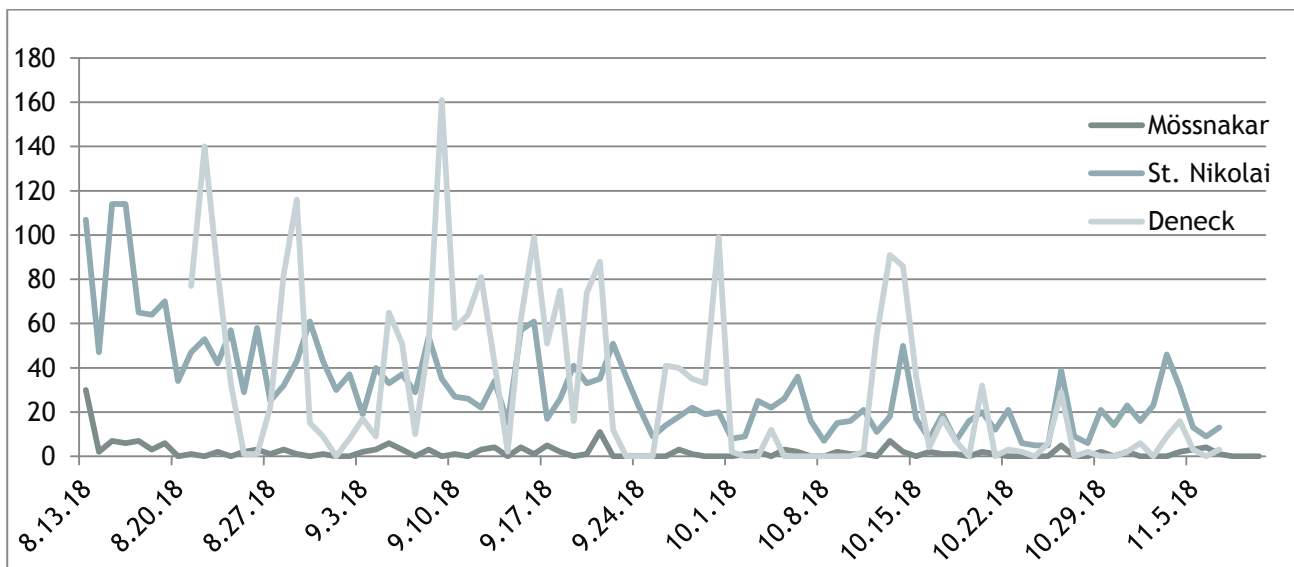
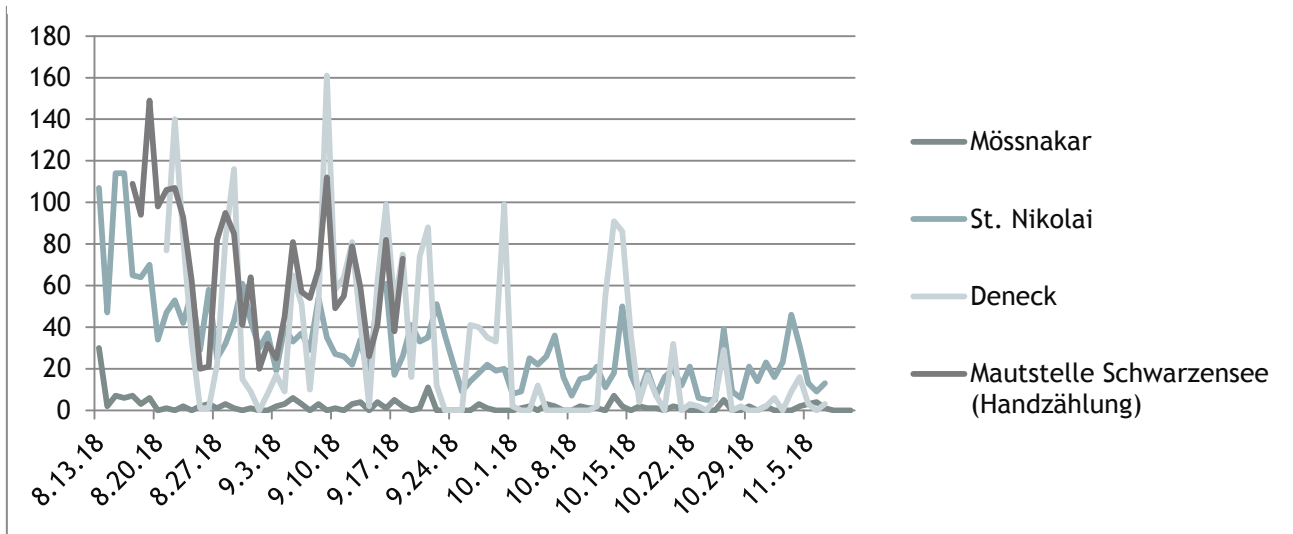


Figure 8: overview light barriers



Figure 9: overview light barriers and counting station tollbooth



The Naturpark Sölktäler would work with local stakeholders to define (winter) tourism areas and recreation zones for wildlife. Plans and ideas as an output of the monitoring program will be compared with different human use of landscape. Due to wrong marked paths in the winter-folder for ski tours, this will be corrected as a first measure. The goal is zoning of wildlife habitats. Preferable it should be separated in priority areas and tour possibilities for summer and winter throughout the entire Naturpark.

There should be a folder for winter ski tourism on basic information. It is necessary to evaluate the status quo (where do the routes currently go? where are the habitats?). Following, the ski tours can be identified and demarcated the paths with signs. The ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the visitor stream management takes place now and will be repeated five years later (2023). The repeated monitoring will show whether adjustments are necessary and these can be taken accordingly. Furthermore it is important to define valleys for winter tourism and others which should remain without a lot of winter tourism. It will be important to provide recreation areas for wildlife in suitable space, even before tourism is growing and the number of ski tour tourists is rising.

Naturpark Sölktäler has the chance to start with visitor stream management even before tourism is growing and spreading throughout the valleys. It is important to start now because it will be more accepted by the tourists and locals if there are already existing rules and marked trails. Therefore the official maps are permanent revised due to changes of the trails to provide only the right marked ones in good conditions.



A regular five year evaluation is essential to monitor the increasement of tourists in the Söltkäler and adjust the measures if it is necessary. As an overall result, visitors are consistently concentrated on marked trails. This is to ensure the quiet zones, recreation areas and to protect young forests and sensible habitats in summer.

In the last years lots of essays arose to these topics.¹ To have good results it is important to manage ski tours and summer tourism in the landscape before land using get bigger dimensions².

4. Planned workshops till now: (still a working progress)

Topic	Referee	Date	Location	Notes
Vortrag Alm- und Weidewirtschaft - Ideen für den Umgang mit neuen Herausforderungen ³	Thomas Schranz	9.11.2018	Kultursaal St. Nikolai	Allgemeiner Vortrag und Podiumsdiskussion - neue Ideen der Landwirtschaft zur Erhaltung der Almen Zielgruppe: Bevölkerung und Interessierte,
Grundeigentümersbesprechung	Naturpark Söltkäler	14.11.2018	Sölkstube	Information und Diskussion
Nährhafte Landschaft ⁴	Michael Machatschek	22.6.2019	Sölkstube	Präsentation sämtlicher Landnutzungsformen
Traditionelle europäische	Angelika Prentner	Jänner 2019		Eintägiger Kurs

¹ Coppes J., Ehlacher J., Suchant R. and Braunisch V. (2017): Outdoor recreation causes effective habitat reduction in capercaillie Tetrao urogallus: a major threat for geographically restricted populations. Journal of Avian Biology 48: 001–012, 2017.

Coppes J, Burghardt F, Hagen R, Suchant R, Braunisch V (2017) Human recreation affects spatio-temporal habitat use patterns in red deer (Cervus elaphus). PLoS ONE 12(5): e0175134.
<https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0175134>

² See for example the german project: „sustainable ski tours tourism” in the Bavarian alps. The project started 1994, before ski tours tourism raised as a trend sport for millions of germans and others. This concept was adopted in other visitor stream management projects, for example in winter tourism concept in “Triebener Tauern”.

³ Alpine and pastoral agriculture and new ideas to recultivate

⁴ Nutritive landscape



Medizin - Theorie & Praxis ⁵	(Apothek e Mariazell)			
Sölker Zukunftsdialog ⁶	Jens Badura (angefragt)	März 2019		Präsentation der Auswertungen der Fragebögen, <i>genaue Abstimmung noch erforderlich</i> Gemeinsame Entwicklung von Zukunftsperspektiven
Auswirkungen des Klimawandel in der Sölk ⁷	Studeregger, Kirchengast (Wegener Zentrum) , WLV (angefragt)	Februar / März	Kultursaal St. Nikolai	Symposium, 16 bis max. 20 Uhr Zielgruppe: regionale Vereine, Feuerwehr, Bergrettungsdienst, ÖAV, BNW, Naturfreunde, etc.
Spitzmaus und Co auf der Alm ⁸	Resch (Apodemus)	August 2019		Kleinsäuger auf der Alm, halbtags
Jagdliche Themen vermitteln ⁹	Monika Pfeifer, Veronika Grünschnberger	August 2019		Vermittlung jagdlicher und pädagogischer Themen
Lebensmittel vom Bauernhof ¹⁰	Martin Ott (Demeter)	<i>IN PLANUNG</i>	?	Noch Abstimmung mit Viktoria Brandner, Wunsch von Viktoria

⁵ Traditional european medicine – theory and experience

⁶ Future dialogue

⁷ Impacts of climate change on Sölkäler

⁸ Shrew in alpine pastures – small wildlife understanding and presenting for tourists

⁹ How to present hunting topics

¹⁰ Groceries from the farm



Figure 10: first workshop „Alm- und Weidewirtschaft - Ideen für den Umgang mit neuen Herausforderungen“ by Thomas Schranz