



## **Integration der Erholungsvorsorge in den Niedersächsischen Landesforsten**

**Abstract der Masterarbeit von PHILINE FEIL**

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### **Abstract**

The pressure on forests and other landscapes in Germany due to outdoor recreation is increasing. There are different reasons for this increase, including a desire for outdoor leisure as part of daily life in a society that is becoming more and more estranged from nature. In this situation the business "State Forests of Lower Saxony", which is the study subject of this master thesis, plays an important role. This is a very popular area for recreation with around 250 Mio. visitors to forests each year (NIEDERSÄCHSISCHE LANDESFORSTEN 2009 a). In addition there is a commitment by law that forests be made available to the public, alongside their business function of timber production and nature conservation.

Existing guidelines about preventions for cultural ecosystem services of forests in Lower Saxony in different laws and in the landscape management are rather abstract. They do not contain specific rules or strategies for developing and maintaining recreation facilities in forests, such as pathways, benches, direction signs or aesthetic woodlands close to trails. Also there is no control on how plans may be achieved to allow the public a comfortable, relaxing and restorative leisure time in the forest. Consequently, it is a matter for the forestry districts as to how far they integrate the binding mandate of the recreation function, which does not offer any economic advantages in their strategies of forest management.

Besides a research of the existing literature about forest recreation, face-to-face interviews were conducted with the employees of the business "Federal forests of Lower Saxony" to learn about any internal strategies to ensure the cultural ecosystem services. The co-operation between the forest districts and local stakeholders using the forest for recreation such as local rambling clubs or mountain bike clubs, is of special interest. To get further perspective on the topic of preventions for the cultural ecosystem services in the Federal Forests, and also to achieve a representative over-view for the whole area of Lower Saxony, postal interviews were then carried out using a standardized questionnaire, with the aim to contact one stakeholder for each of the 24 forest districts.

The results showed that these stakeholders not only bring in plans and nominations in respect of the cultural ecosystem services of the forests, often they also undertake the task of developing, maintaining and financing the recreation facilities. The lack of initiative on the part of the business “Federal forests of Lower Saxony” to ensure an adequate ability for recreation may be due to an insufficient external acceptance for the cultural ecosystem services – neither by binding official instructions nor by financial tribute.