



SOCIETY FOR
ECOLOGICAL
RESTORATION

European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration

Annual Report 2014



ORGANIZATION

SER Europe status as NGO

Since June 2012 SER Europe is officially recognized as an international non-profit organization. The NGO was established in Belgium, close to European decision making, and is hosted by the Research Institute for Nature and Forest in Brussels. The full text of our statutes can be consulted on the SER Europe website.

Management

In 2014 SER Europe Board was extended with five new members. Three members left. Active members are listed below.

Executive Committee members:

- Jordi Cortina (Chair), Universidad de Alicante, Spain
- Kris Decler, (Treasurer, webmaster, policy-interface), Research Institute for Nature and Forest INBO, Belgium,
- Johannes Kollmann (SER2016 Conference) Technische Universität München
- Agata Klimkowska, (Secretary / communication), Eco-Recover, Netherlands/Poland,
- Péter Török (communication / blog / contacts) University of Debrecen
- Anne Tolvanen (at large), Finnish Forest Research Institute, Finland

Other board members:

- Norbert Hölzel, University of Münster, Germany
- Katalin Török (at large), Centre for Ecological Research, Institute of Ecology and Botany, Hungary
- Sabine Tischew (at large), Hochschule Anhalt, Germany
- Elise Buisson (at large), l'Université d'Avignon, France
- Karel Prach (at large), University of South Bohemia, Czech Republic
- Eszter Ruprecht (at large), Babeş-Bolyai University, Hungarian Department of Biology and Ecology,
- Ása L. Aradóttir (at large), The Agricultural University of Iceland,
- Francis Isselin-Nondedeu (at large) Polytechnic School of the University François Rabelais

Intensive communication within Board

Communication within the Board improved greatly, mainly due to more frequent board meetings. In 2014, an in-person meeting was held during the 9th Europe Conference on Ecological Restoration. Intensive within-board communication was needed to support conference organization, prepare the Membership meeting, and further tasks related to collaborations with other organizations, strategic planning and else. Thus, the Board held virtual meetings on April 14th 2014, July 7th 2014, September 30th 2014 and December 15th 2014, and in-person meeting on August 3rd 2014. The General Membership meeting took place on August 7th 2014. Detailed agenda and minutes were prepared, circulated to all board/general assembly members, and finally approved and archived.

Memorandum of Understanding with REVER

In August 2014 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the French network REVER was signed. REVER is an active association, with members all over France, bringing together

ecologists, researchers, and practitioners. It fully supports SERE vision and carries its out, through organizing local events and communication platforms. Its working language is French, and this offers a direct contact with non-scientists and restoration practitioners.

Memorandum of Understanding with other national organizations

Following the example described above, negotiations started with the Finnish Board on Ecological Restoration (FBER), the Italian Society for Forest Restoration and the Spanish Association for Terrestrial Ecology. A MoU with FBER was drafted, and will be signed in January 2015.

Formulating new strategy for SER Europe

Jordi Cortina prepared and shortly presented SER strategy for the next term during the General Membership meeting (in Oulu, Finland). The strategy was discussed and recommendations were issued to formulate the work programme and search for funding opportunities.

Bank account

SERE bank and savings accounts have moved to the socio-environmentally friendly TRIODOS bank. Since January 1st 2015 only a full IBAN number is valid. This represents savings for our organization, as maintenance of both accounts is free of charge.

ACTIVITIES

COMMUNICATION

Website

The website of SER Europe has been regularly updated with information on events, reports, reviews of recent publications, etc. Also recent information on board composition and further Society activities can be found at www.ser-europe.org. Contributions and comments should be sent to Kris.Decleer@inbo.be.

Newsletter

Agata Klimkowska assembled SER Europe newsletter, now in the form of e-mail flash news (e-newsletter). It is easily produced and free of charge. As compared to the previous format, the latest e-newsletter is much more flexible, accessible and easier to scroll through. In 2014 it was issued once (November) and covered a short report after European SER2014 Conference in Oulu, short introduction of new members, and announcement of upcoming events. The older issues of SERE newsletter can be accessed at <http://chapter.ser.org/europe/publications/ser-europe-newsletter/>. Contributions for future editions may be sent to info@ser-europe.org.

Blog

Peter Török has been working on a new blog for SER Europe. It will be operational in early 2015. In this way we want to speed up communication with our members and increase its efficiency.

Flyer

Thanks to Kris Decleer skills, support from SER (costs for the layout), and financial contribution from 9th European Conference on Ecological Restoration, a new flyer of SER Europe was

prepared. The flyer was distributed among members, with a request to spread it at home organisations and among their networks.

Knowledge Base

One of the aims of SER Europe is to disseminate knowledge on ecological restoration in Europe to practitioners, policy people, stakeholders and scientists. With our Knowledge Base and its supporting search engine we provide a tool for the restoration community to share knowledge, best practice experience, interesting case studies, etc. Several contributions were added to the knowledge base throughout 2014. Further contributions and comments can be sent to Kris.Decler@inbo.be.

CONFERENCES and TRAINING EVENTS

In 2014 a major and a very successful event supported by SER Europe was the 9th European Conference on Ecological Restoration (August 3d-8th 2014). In this occasion, our Conference was held in Oulu, Finland, and was organized and coordinated by Anne Tolvanen and colleagues (Metla / University of Oulu). The specific focus of the Conference was Restoration, Ecosystem Services and Land Use Policy. There were approximately 400 attendees from 36 countries, including scientists, managers, representatives of European and national Administrations, contributors from EU Life+ programmes, private companies, consultancy firms, and NGOs. Over 200 oral presentations and almost 100 posters were presented. There were altogether 40 sessions. Of these, six sessions (33 oral presentations) were on peatland restoration, five (28 presentations) on grasslands or farmland, and four (23 presentations) on EU LIFE projects. LIFE+ funding programme was seen crucial for the restoration in the EU. All abstracts, collected in the conference book are available on the conference website.

It was the first time for SER European Conferences to be hosted by one Nordic Country. The region provided opportunities for seven one-day mid-Conference excursions to see northern Finnish nature slightly south of the Arctic Circle. Excursions showed both large-scale restoration in protected areas and smaller-level restoration in the Oulu City recreation area. The 3-day pre-conference tour was directed to subarctic Finnish Lapland, and the 3-day post-conference tour to the northern boreal Oulanka National Park in north-eastern Finland. These trips were fully booked soon after the registration begun.

By acknowledging and discussing international and EU level strategies and targets, the Conference aimed at increasing the link between science and practice of ecological restoration and land use policies. The discussion concerning EU 15% target was lively. Ecological Restoration is seen as a crucial means to bring back the function and structure of degraded ecosystems. More information on the Conference at: <http://www.ser2014.org/>
Anne Tolvanen, Professor, SER2014 European Conference Chair. Natural Resources Institute Finland (formerly Finnish Forest Research Institute) and Thule Institute of the University of Oulu (anne.tolvanen(at)luke.fi).

Other activities:

- Presentation of the book *Guidelines for Native Seed Production and Grassland Restoration* Edited by Kathrin Kiehl, Anita Kirmer, Nancy Shaw, and Sabine Tischew (Cambridge Scholar Publishing) it was prepared after SER Europe Conference in 2012. The book was presented at the Conference in Oulu, and it includes a state-of-the-art on the use native seeds in restoration.
- Landlife Conference, Barcelona, Spain

Jordi Cortina presented SER Europe during the Landlife Conference held in Barcelona (November 6-8 2014). SER Europe later signed the Barcelona Declaration on Land Stewardship.

- Support to European Soil Directive
SER Europe signed the petition "Protect European soils: a new way to open a European Soil Directive". This petition was a reaction to the definitive withdrawal of the proposal for a Soil Directive by the European Commission agenda.

Furthermore, over the year SER Europe was busy with the preparations for two major events in 2015 end 2016:

- Manchester 2015. The 6th World Conference on Ecological Restoration will take place between 23-27 August 2015 in Manchester, United Kingdom. Various members, particularly Jim Harris, provided support in the preparations of the conference. Other members offered their help and support as members of the scientific committee, setting up session, etc. The website of the Conference: <http://www.ser2015.org/>.
- Freising 2016. The 10th European Conference on Ecological Restoration will be hosted at Freising, Germany by Prof. Johannes Kollmann, together with his group (Technische Universität München, Dept. Ökologie und Ökosystemmanagement Lehrstuhl für Renaturierungsökologie). The conference will focus on 'Best Practices in Ecological Restoration' and will most likely take place from 21st till 27th of August 2016.

POLICY ADVICE

SER Europe became recognized by DG Environment and European Commission as a scientific stakeholder organization to advise policy matters, in particular the EU 2020 Biodiversity Strategy. In 2014 SER Europe actively participated in the following working groups:

- Working Group Green Infrastructure Implementation and Restoration (WG GIIR).
- No Net Loss objective (Target 2, Action 7).
- European Habitats Forum meetings with the leadership of DG Environment.

European Habitats Forum is a stakeholder lobby organization of different European conservation societies, organizations and institutions. More information:

Kris.Decleer@inbo.be;

<http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/comm2006/2020.htm>

Katalin Török acted as member of the Steering Committee of EPBRS (European Platform for Biodiversity Research Strategy), and participated in the scoping expert group for Land Degradation and Restoration, a task included in the Work programme of IPBES (Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services). More info: torok.katalin@okologia.mta.hu (www.epbrs.org; www.ipbes.net).

COLLABORATION

REVER

See above.

European Habitats Forum

Kris Decler continued SERE collaboration with the assembly of European non-governmental conservation societies, organizations and institutions. More information:

<http://www.iucn.org/about/union/secretariat/offices/europe/work/?uNewsID=50>

Collaboration with other organizations

Several board members have established contacts with organizations to promote interaction and collaboration, including FERB, SIRF, AEET, Birdlife, Eurosite and Desert Restoration Hub COST Action.

SER

Collaboration with SER Headquarters has continued, particularly with the Chapter restructuring process initiated in 2013. Kris Decler represented SER Europe in the SER BoD.

Financial Report

As of 2014 SER Europe uses a new bank account at TRIODOS Bank, a bank company certified as B corporation (www.triodos.com) and reference point for sustainable banking globally.

Name of the account: European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration

IBAN-code: BE36 5230 4627 9381

BIC-code: TRIOBEBB

Income		Amount
Total Income		€ 2.675,39
Expenses		
Total expenses		-€ 236,17
BALANCE ON 31/12/2014		€ 2.439,22



SER Europe thanks all the members and other donors who contributed to the Society in 2014

Join SER and support our efforts to advance ecological restoration.

Contact: info@ser-europe.org; European Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration, c/o Research Institute for Nature and Forest, Kliniekstraat 25, 1070 Brussels, Belgium.

