

Keep it cool – Upcoming changes in the Verdon Valley

The final meeting of the MASSIF project concerning global changes for the Verdon catchment took place in Peyresq this morning. The project is funded by the EC and highlights main threats for nature and cultural values in the region. The results showed that the forest provides services more likely to be affected by shifts in future land use and climate change.

“Do not cut the forest” is the recommendation that was strongly advised by the representatives of the nature conservation in order to preserve the most threatened services.

After an intensive study on the vulnerability of the area they suggested different measures for conservation and sustainable development of the services in the near future. The study identified the most important ecosystem services related to different ecosystems present in the area. For example, water flow, water quantity and climate regulation are highly important services provided by forests; whereas for agriculture, food provision and pollination are the most significant ones. The evaluation of vulnerability was carried out by considering different pressures. Expected higher temperatures, less rain and catastrophic weather events will lead to serious changes in the services provided and therefore in the livelihood of the people living in the area. To adapt to these changes actions have to be started soon.

The overall coverage of the forest should neither be increased nor decreased because forest will save us from serious damages and loss of soil and water. An increasing of forested area will lead to loss of many endangered species dependent on open grassland. Therefore the maintenance of these areas should be supported by spending subsidies for extensive grazing. The quality and quantity of water should be guaranteed by supporting of organic production and no further intensification and mechanization of agricultural land use.

These aims can only be reached by establishing an “integrated regional management plan”, involving all stakeholders and coordinated by the Verdon regional natural Park. Therefore the government should be aware that more financial resources have to be spent on these additional tasks for the park management.

A hiking day through the mountains of the Verdon valley has been organized to get further information about the project and other aspects of nature conservation. Meeting point is the square in Peyresq, on Saturday 10 a.m. and in the evening, a barbecue with organic regional products will close an amazing day. If you can assist or you like more info you can contact us in the Darwin-Office in Peyresq.