



Press Release

Maintaining Biodiversity in the Forests of Central Europe

German Research Foundation approves new research training group at University of Freiburg

How effectively do deadwood and so-called habitat trees, which provide animals, plants, and microorganisms with specialized living spaces, contribute to maintaining biodiversity in the forests of Central Europe? Young researchers from the University of Freiburg will use the Black Forest as a model system to investigate this question in the coming years. The German Research Foundation (DFG) has agreed to provide the new research training group (GRK) "Conservation of Forest Biodiversity in Multiple-Use Landscapes of Central Europe – ConFoBi" just under 4.5 million euros in funding for this purpose. The project will be launched on 1 July 2016 and is scheduled to run for four and a half years. The spokesperson is **Ilse Storch**, professor of wildlife ecology and management at the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources.

The GRK will combine ecological studies on forest biodiversity with social and economic studies on maintaining biodiversity. In addition, it will promote knowledge transfer between research and practice in forestry management and nature conservation. The scientists plan to apply this approach to 135 testing areas in the Black Forest over a total of 25 square kilometers to identify means of maintaining biodiversity in multi-functional forests. The institutions involved in the project at the University of Freiburg are the Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources and the Faculty of Biology. The Forest Research Institute of Baden-Württemberg is participating as a project partner.

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The goal of the GRK is to promote the scientific independence of the doctoral candidates and qualify them for leadership positions within and outside of academia. Members will receive interdisciplinary training and supervision. The core elements of the curriculum include courses, symposia, trips abroad, and participation in conferences.

German Research Foundation press release:

www.dfg.de/service/presse/pressemitteilungen/2015/pressemitteilung_nr_53/index.html

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The University of Freiburg achieves top positions in all university rankings. Its research, teaching, and continuing education have received prestigious awards in nationwide competitions. Over 24,000 students from 100 nations are enrolled in 188 degree programs. Around 5,000 teachers and administrative employees put in their effort every day – and experience that family friendliness, equal opportunity, and environmental protection are more than just empty phrases here.