



A wide array of strategies are required in order to **fight biodiversity loss**. These range from sustainable forest management to halting desertification; from ending trade in protected plants and animals, to the restoration of mountain ecosystems. The protection and sustainable management of terrestrial ecosystems are also supported by the goals for food security (SDG 2), water supply (SDG 6) and climate action (SDG 13).

NATURE AND HUMANKIND IN HARMONY

➔ WHAT ARE THE ACTIVITIES ALL ABOUT?

The municipality of Bad Saulgau in Baden-Württemberg, which has a population of 18,000, has been actively involved in nature conservation for decades, and provides an example of how municipalities can nurture biodiversity locally. Bad Saulgau is also a member of the ‘Municipalities for biological diversity’ association, in which 114 municipalities committed to nature conservation have joined forces.

➔ WHAT HAS BEEN DONE SO FAR?

Since 2016 Bad Saulgau has managed all public green spaces to environmental standards. This is unique in Germany. This ‘Transformation of uniform green spaces into species-rich grounds’ was the ‘Nature Conservation Project of the Year 2016’.

➔ HOW WAS THIS IMPLEMENTED?

Fully lawned areas were developed into species-rich flowered areas that require barely any pesticides or fertilisers. These colourful areas attract many bird and insect species. Citizens who were initially sceptical were eventually convinced through participatory activities and extensive communication of the objectives.

➔ WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

A so-called ‘nature theme park’ is currently being created: The four biodiversity themes of plants, animals, geology and water will be linked right across Bad Saulgau. ‘Nature tours’ have just been launched. Trained nature guides will show groups of visitors on two-wheeled Segway PTs various themed areas.



Bad Saulgau ➔ Baden-Württemberg



Population:
18,000



Mayoress:
Doris Schröter





SUSTAINABILITY AS A BRAND

For Bad Saulgau, 'Nature and landscape has become the most important marketing element' – according to the municipality's Environmental Officer Thomas Lehenherr. Today, this town in Upper Swabia has more than 300,000 overnight visitors every year. Thanks also no doubt to its title 'Regional capital of biodiversity', representatives of many other municipalities, public authorities and associations want to see for themselves how biodiversity has become part of the life of the municipality.

SDG 15 is worded very broadly Target 15.5 calls on municipalities to reduce the degradation of natural habitats and halt the loss of biodiversity. It also calls for action to prevent the extinction of threatened species.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER AS INITIATOR

1992 was the year in which Bad Saulgau municipal council created the position of environmental officer. The incumbent was mandated to 'take the municipality forwards with environmental issues'. Yet it was not just the environmental officer alone, but also the involvement of citizens, associations, educational institutions and indeed all relevant groups that made the environmental master plan he developed a success.

UNITED IN AN ALLIANCE OF 114 MUNICIPALITIES

Bad Saulgau was and is not alone in this. The entire alliance of German 'Municipalities for biological diversity', which is based in Radolfzell (Baden-Württemberg) and now has 114 members, sees the preservation of biological diversity as a key task. It formulates fundamental objectives, and 'places individual projects and activities in a wider context', says Tobias Herbst, project manager of the alliance. The model for success is the same in all participating municipalities: A biodiversity strategy approved by official decision-making bodies creates binding requirements, and strengthens everyone's awareness of the fact that nature protection is a joint task for all the municipality. The association has named this strategy 'Life – Nature – Diversity'.

MANY ACTIVITIES – ONE CONCEPT

In Bad Saulgau the sustainability team that work with environmental officer Thomas Lehenherr and senior municipal gardener Jens Wehner get all sorts of individual activities up and running. Yet they all pursue the same overarching objective of local biological diversity. Examples include the



Species diversity instead of uniform green – flowers blooming along the roadside in Bad Saulgau (Photo: Stadt Bad Saulgau)

perennial flowered areas alongside roads and cycle paths, or the unsealed traffic islands with species-rich blends of shrubs or verge species that thrive on gravel.

The lawned areas that preceded them had to be mowed 20 times a year, whereas the flowered areas developed over years now only have to be tended twice a year. Moreover, these colourful areas attract many bird and insect species and are an attractive sight. Many citizens who were initially sceptical were eventually convinced through participatory activities and extensive communication of the objectives. For example, every year environmental hiking days and information events are held for citizens along species-rich biotopes and town-centre green spaces.

This transformation of public green spaces began more than 20 years ago. Today there are almost twice as many 'colourful' areas as there were then. This does not require more personnel. As the environmental officer Mr Lehenherr explains, 'The costs of garden maintenance and planting have fallen significantly'.

AND THINGS CONTINUE....

The planned nature theme park with the four areas water, plants, animals and geology will bring together all the educational nature trails, biotopes and other environmental attractions. Here, the municipality and local tour operator will even be providing nature tours on Segway PTs. One entirely new project is the 'Town you could eat'. This involves growing or vegetables in plant pots in the town centre, all of which are available for passers-by to try.

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