



The Federal Ministry and the Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (WPMW) invites you to the international conference

# **Integral approach to the flood protection effect of the forest with special consideration of water and sediment retention**

Thursday, October 14, 2021

Online via ZOOM

The **Austrian Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Regions and Tourism** and the **European Forestry Commission (EFC)** cordially invite you within the scope of the 33<sup>rd</sup> session of the **Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds (WPMMW)** to this year's conference with international expert contributions.

The Working Party on the Management of Mountain Watersheds is a technical body under the umbrella of the European Forestry Commission (EFC), established in 1950, that promotes sustainable development in mountain watersheds by tackling the many challenges faced in mountain watersheds and ensuring the long-term provision of environmental services by watersheds for both upstream and downstream areas.

At this year's session, the Working Party has put a focus on **forests in mountain watersheds**. All over the world forests in mountainous and steep terrain play an important role providing protection against natural hazards for people, infrastructure and commercial areas. Due to their protective character, forests can prevent avalanches in winter, reduce rockfall and actively reduce shallow landslides through the strengthening effect of the roots. Furthermore, the retentive effect of the forest is particularly important: the forest soil can absorb large amounts of precipitation, acts as a buffer store, delays and thus minimizes the effective run-off and hence can reduce floods, whereby this effect is influenced in many cases by the size of the catchment area, the geology but also the land use. In addition, sediments can be retained by the forest.

This special protective effect of the forest has often a connection to broader topics such as optimal forest management or the availability of safe spaces for living and economic activities. In the framework of this conference, this topic will be extensively discussed, current research results will be presented and national and international experiences will be shown.

We are looking forward to your participation. The access link (ZOOM) and the final program for the videoconference will be sent to you in due time after your registration!

Please respond by **October 8, 2021 at the latest** to  
[christoph.lainer@bmlrt.gv.at](mailto:christoph.lainer@bmlrt.gv.at)

## Program

### 10:30            **Opening Session**

**Moderation:** Florian Rudolf-Miklau (BMLRT/ Directorate III/4 – Torrent and Avalanche Control and Protective Forest Policy)

#### **Welcome remarks**

- **Maria Patek**  
Director-General Forestry and Sustainability, Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Regions and Tourism
- **Hermine Hackl**  
FOREST CAMPUS Austria
- **Ewald Rametsteiner**  
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Forestry Division

### 11:00            **Session 1 – Flood protection function of the forest – Scientific state of knowledge**

- **Jürgen Komma**  
Technical University of Vienna (TU Vienna), Institute of Hydraulic Engineering and Water Resources Management
- **Gerhard Markart\* & Christian Scheidl\*\***  
\*Federal Forest Research Centre (BFW) of Austria, Institute of Natural Hazards  
\*\*University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU) Vienna, Austria, Institute of Alpine Natural Hazards

- 12:30**            **Lunch break**
- 13:30**            **Session 2 – Flood protection in Austrian mountain watersheds – State of the art**
- **Michael Schiffer**  
Austrian Torrent and Avalanche Control (WLV)
  - **Stefanie Gruber**  
Forestry Division of the State of Upper Austria (LFD)
  - **Hellen David**  
Austrian Federal Forests (ÖBf AG)
- 15:00**            **Coffee Break**
- 15:15**            **Session 3 – Flood protection in mountain watersheds – International state of the art**
- **Gian Battista Bischetti\* & Francesco Comiti\*\***  
\*University of Milan - Italy, Department of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences – Production, Landscape, Agroenergy  
\*\*University of Bolzano - Italy, Faculty of Science and Technology Italy
  - **Marc Pons**  
Andorra Research + Innovation
  - **Laurent Bélanger**  
France - National Office of Forests (ONF), Directorate of forests and natural hazards
  - **Hideaki Marui**  
Japan – Niigata University
- 17:00**            **End of the conference**