



UNESCO BIOSPHERE RESERVE THURINGIAN FOREST

Regional roots, globally linked.




Biosphärenreservat
Thüringer Wald



Smarter, faster... did you already know?


Interesting facts on the Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest




The Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest has a circumference of 146.17 km. It takes **36 hours** to walk around.

The Biosphere Reserve is home to **flying bagworms, ghosts and swallowtails**. These are butterfly families.

There are genuine rangers here, who know many of nature's exciting secrets.



There is an open air theatre in the middle of the forest. It is located in Steinbach-Langenbach and is the **largest open air theatre in Thuringia**.




The Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve is home to a **carnivorous plant species**: the round-leaved sundew.

Germany's steepest gradient of adhesion railway in normal gauge, is in the area. It leads from Stützerbach to Rennsteig station.

The highest mountain in the biosphere reserve is the Große Beerberg. It is **983 m** high.

The first X-ray tube (Stützerbach, Gehlberg) was built in today's Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve. Welcome to the Thuringian Forest.



Welcome to the Thuringian Forest

Hiking, skiing, vacationing: Recreation has a tradition in the Thuringian Forest. Just like woodworking and glass-blowing. Or the biosphere reserve itself. It is one of the two oldest in Germany. In 1979 it was internationally recognised by UNESCO for the first time - at that time it was still under the name Vessertal.

Since then a lot has happened, our area and our tasks have grown. In 2018, the President of the German UNESCO Commission, Prof. Dr. Maria Böhmer, emphasised on the occasion of the renewed recognition: "The Thuringian Forest is doing pioneer work in Germany and internation-

ally with innovative strategies for sustainable tourism and measures for demographic change".

The Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest is one of the eight national natural landscapes in Thuringia. The umbrella organisation EUROPARC Deutschland e. V. gives all German national parks, biosphere reserves, nature parks and wilderness areas a common voice. On the occasion of our 40th anniversary in 2019, we would like to invite you with this brochure to learn more about the Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve, its rich nature, its tasks, offers and future projects.

Globally linked : Visit of a delegation from Bulgaria for international exchange in Großbreitenbach.



Regional roots: Honey from the biosphere region.



UNESCO-BIOSPHERE RESERVE THURINGIAN FOREST

Model Region of International Standing

The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest is one of 686 biosphere reserves, in 122 countries distributed all over the world (as of July 2018). From the river landscape of Central Amazonia to the vastness of Siberia and the mountain cloud forests of Ethiopia: they are united in an international world network by the UNESCO program “Man and the Biosphere” (MAB). Since the 1970s, UNESCO has designated unique ecosystems and significant cultural landscapes as biosphere reserves. This recognition as a model region is also a con-

stant mission: sustainable developments are to be realised here, in an exemplary manner. In addition to protecting a unique landscape, biosphere reserves also pursue the goal of developing, testing and implementing sustainable management methods in harmony with nature, together with the people of the region. At the same time, education, environmental monitoring and research are among the central tasks.

Biosphere reserves are structured according to human influence: The motto of the core area is: “Leaving nature to its own devices”. It covers approx. 3 % of the land area. Extensive land use methods are used in the buffer zone. It covers approx. 20 % of the area. The largest part of the biosphere reserve is the transition area. Model projects on environmentally and socially compatible use and economy are initiated here.

Discover the world network of biosphere reserves by visiting the interactive exhibition in Schmiedefeld.



SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

From citizen to citizen - Together for the Region

As a model region, the biosphere reserve offers the opportunity to jointly promote sustainable economic, social, cultural and ecological development.

The model project “KOMET” aims to strengthen rural areas. KOMET stands for “Managing places cooperatively” („Kooperativ Orte managen“). The project executing agency is the Ilm-Kreis with scientific support from the Bauhaus University Weimar and support of the administration of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest. For three years (2016-2019), the municipalities of Altenfeld, Böhlen, Friedersdorf, Gillersdorf, Wilden-

Citizen's workshop in Böhlen



spring, Gehren, Neustadt am Rennsteig and Großbreitenbach have been working on different approaches in citizen workshops. The topics covered include joint vacancy management, mobility, training and work, association life, leisure, age-appropriate housing and tourism.

The EUROPARC Deutschland e. V. project “Inwertsetzung von Klima- und Naturschutzmaßnahmen” (valorisation of climate and nature conservation measures) offers private individuals and companies the opportunity to participate directly in the protection of biological diversity. Through the acquisition of nature conservation certificates, the Herrengarten orchard in Suhl-Dietzhausen will be preserved for the future. On an area of approx. 4 ha, 280 standard fruit trees of different ages, species and varieties grow.

Work assignment with students on the orchard meadow in the biosphere region





“Over all of the hills. Peace comes anew,...” Even Goethe felt the touching effect of the quiet mountain forests in the Thuringian Forest.



Flower carpets: The colourful variety of a mountain meadow is not only pleasing to the eye. Mountain meadows are a paradise for wild bees and many other endangered species!

Pure Nature

Extensive mountain forests

Trees as far as the eye can see! Extensive mountain forests determine the character of the Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest, covering over 80% of the area. Different forest communities merge smoothly into each other. In particular the European beech was used for charcoal


burning in the past. Due to deforestation and reforestation spruce trees are predominant in these forests today. Forest conversion is the task of the future: With the help of natural regeneration and with specific care of beech, sycamore maple and silver fir, mixed forests are to be created that satisfy both ecological and economic demands. In the core area of the biosphere reserve, forests are left to their own devices. Here natural processes can be observed and studied.

Pure Nature


Flower-rich mountain meadows

Where the forest opens up, there are views of picturesque landscapes: mountain meadows cover valleys and plateaus in which small villages light up. The meadows were created by centuries of mowing and grazing. Depending on the location, different plant communities have developed with

their special demands on nutrients, water and sun. Here you can find rare animal species, like the common European adder (*Vipera berus*), the wart-biter (*Decticus verrucivorus*) and the common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). The meadows are threatened by the abandonment of their use. How can this colourful, species-rich habitat be preserved despite changed framework conditions? To answer this question the Biosphäre Reserve Thuringian Forest can act as a model region, where different landuse methods can be tested and scientifically evaluated.



The gentle flow, untamed waters - mountain streams are a sensual pleasure. Here you can watch European dippers and brown trout.



Especially in spring and autumn, when thick wafts of mist pass over the bog, the mystical atmosphere is unique.

PURE NATURE

Crystal clear mountain Streams

Glittering to foaming, the mountain streams meander leisurely here and suddenly flow steeply downhill through the Thuringian forest. The abundance of precipitation is due to the location of the mountains across the main weather direction. The mountain streams are shaded by forest and bank vegetation and therefore cool in summer.

Studies have shown that the water veins and their meadows in the Biosphäre Reserve Thuringian Forest are particularly species-rich: More than 500 animal and plant species were found in the valley of the Vesser alone. Over the centuries, people have built settlements along brooks, built mills and straightened and built over watercourses. Today, more space is given to the bed of the stream, so that the original quality of the mountain streams is gradually returning.

PURE NATURE

Mysterious Bogs

The humid and cool high altitudes of the Thuringian Forest hide small-scale bogs. These mysterious landscapes are up to 4500 years old. Today protected as a rare habitat, bogs used to be regarded as a valuable fuel supply. In order to be able to cut peat, the water was first drained into ditches. But a bog cannot survive without moisture.

For this reason, the ditches in the remaining bogs are dug back in order to resupply them with water.

Raised Bog Nature Trail

At Oberhof, the raised bog nature trail, with a 230 meter long barrier-free footbridge, invites you to experience the rare animal and plant species of the approx. 5 ha raised bog up close.

INFORMATION CENTRE

Arrive, Discover, Experience

The information centre in Schmiedefeld welcomes guests of the Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest. The heart of the house is the multimedia exhibition “Lively Silence - Naturally! In addition, the Information Centre also houses the Tourist Information Office, where you can obtain valuable tips for exploring the region. The environmental education room regularly offers lectures and experiments for school classes and other interested parties. Ranger hikes, nature guide offers and project days can also be booked via the information centre.

Exhibition „Living Silence - Naturally!

The multimedia exhibition “Lively Silence - Naturally” invites you to get to know the region through different eyes. Let yourself be enchanted and get an overview of the Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest, its landscapes and history. Learn more about the world network of UNESCO biosphere reserves. Join us on an interactive forest walk, test the dialect quiz, follow the typical daily and seasonal course of the region or take a flight over the world map.

Behind the door you will learn how paper is made from wood.

A foray through the region.

„Listen to what they once told each other at Rennsteig...“

The young visitors enthusiastically listen to the legends of the region.



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

See the Great in the Small

Children, young people and adults are invited to discover nature together during organised school project days, junior ranger groups, hikes and excursions.

The programs are based on the principles of education for sustainable development. The connection between people and the environment will be highlighted. The careful use of the biosphere reserve's natural, social and economic resources will be addressed. In order to live up to this high standard of educational work, close cooperation is maintained with schools, kindergartens and educational institutions, and networking within the region is supported. Junior ranger groups have existed in the biosphere reserve since 2016. Currently, almost 40 children are actively qualifying as junior rangers.

In 2018, the Thuringian Ministry for the Environment, Energy and Nature Conservation awarded the "Thuringian Quality Seal Education for Sustainable Development" for the first time. The administration of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest was also awarded in this context. The certificate guarantees the high quality of the offers.



On a discovery tour: exploring mountain meadows together



Learning with head, heart and hand: from observation to own work



Education for sustainable development in the biosphere reserve means: discovering the phenomena of nature in a playful way and understanding the interaction between man and nature.



„Gut Runst!“ (Good Runst!) - is how hikers have greeted each other on the Rennsteig for more than 100 years. What does it mean? It means to have a good time and good luck on the “Runst” - the Rennsteig hike.

NATURE ACTIVE

Experience the Diversity of the Seasons

The Rennsteig and the Thuringian Forest are known far beyond the borders of the country and invite you to visit them all year round: Hiking tours in the ridge areas, climbing on the highest tower in Thuringia, mountain biking or winter sports - active holidaymakers are guaranteed to get their money's worth in the biosphere reserve.

Germany's oldest long-distance and high-altitude hiking trail, the 169 km long Rennsteig, leads for around 30 km through the biosphere reserve and offers stunning views of the Thuringian countryside. Originally, the historical mountain trail was used as a trade route. Today the white “R” points the way. Away from the Rennsteig, traditional places are waiting to be explored. Sporting highlights such as the World Cup or the largest trail running event in Europe attract many visitors to the competition tracks every year. A well-developed network of cross country ski trails invites you to take part in your own winter sports activities. Whether on skis, snowboard or simply with your hiking boots: enjoy the biosphere region and strengthen your physical condition!



NATURE ACTIVE

On a Discovery Tour with Ranger & Co.

Numerous offers with rangers of the biosphere reserve and certified nature and landscape guides invite you to get to know the region better.

Experience the landscape with the Ranger

The rangers of the Thuringian Forest Biosphere Reserve take you several times a week to impressive places and characteristic landscapes of the region. Being on the move with the rangers means experiencing the special features and uniqueness of the biosphere reserve up close and learning more about the projects in the biosphere reserve.

On the way with nature and landscape guides

The certified nature and landscape guides will show you wonderful views, medicinal herbs, botanical treasures or mysterious places. Nature and landscape guides are rooted in the area and see themselves as ambassadors of the region. They have completed a nationwide uniform training and have a special theme which they bring close to their guests.

Travel back in time with experts of the region: discover old charcoal pile sites, learn more about old meadow use and get to know the biosphere area.





The way to the heart is through the stomach: this also applies to the Thuringian Forest. Whether fish or game - let our biosphere partners surprise you!

PARTNER OF THE BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Live and Enjoy Sustainably

You can still experience traditional crafts and customs in many small museums and glassblowing shops of the Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest. Visitor mines make history tangible underground. Regional specialties show how tradition and modernity can be combined in a cooking pot.

Sustainable Recreation with the Biosphere Partner

Enjoy a holiday with all your senses with the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve partners. They are committed to the preservation and development of this wonderful landscape and stand for the highest quality and best service. Since 2008, partners of the national parks, biosphere reserves and nature parks have been gathering under the umbrella brand EURO-PARC Deutschland e. V. nationwide for sustainable tourism development in their region. The regionally based companies are distinguished according to nationwide uniform quality and environmental standards.

Gourmet Weeks with Fish and Game

Genuine regional specialties combined with creative activities: These are the regional gourmet weeks in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest. You can look forward to fresh fish from regional fish farms and game from the forests of the biosphere reserve. F(r)isch aufgetischt" is the motto in spring, while in autumn it becomes the game gourmet week "Außergewöhnlich Wild".

Biosphere Market: Regional and Diverse

Regional delicacies and traditional crafts from the Thuringian Forest - all this awaits visitors to the annual regional biosphere market. Here you can taste the region: taste apple juice from the orchard, autumn soups, flowery forest meadow honey, homemade herbal teas or hearty wild bratwurst.





Environmentally friendly travel is a challenge for sustainable tourism. The Thuringian Forest lives up to this claim and has received several awards for it.

MOBILITY

By Bus and Train to the Rennsteig

Mobility is a top priority in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest. Guests can easily reach the area by bus and train and explore it on site. An important contribution to sustainable tourism, especially in times of climate change!

Destination Nature Award 2018

The UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest has for many years been recognized as a destination nature area in the context of a cooperation of environmental associations with Deutsche Bahn. Thanks to its central location in Germany, the Thuringian Forest is easily and quickly accessible by ICE trains via Erfurt. Visitors can use public transport during their stay. The region was

awarded the Destination Nature Award 2018 for its mobility offers at Rennsteig and its Rennsteig ticket!

Rennsteig-ticket: the plus for overnight guests. In numerous holiday resorts, overnight guests can be mobile in an environmentally friendly way.

You can travel daily with RennsteigBuses and on weekends and public holidays with the RennsteigShuttle (train) on a regional route network without having to pay a further fee. The guest card includes the Rennsteig ticket. Even if you are not travelling by train or long-distance bus, treat yourself to a few days' holiday from your car during the best days of the year. Try it out! With all nature experience offers you will find information on how to get there by bus and train.





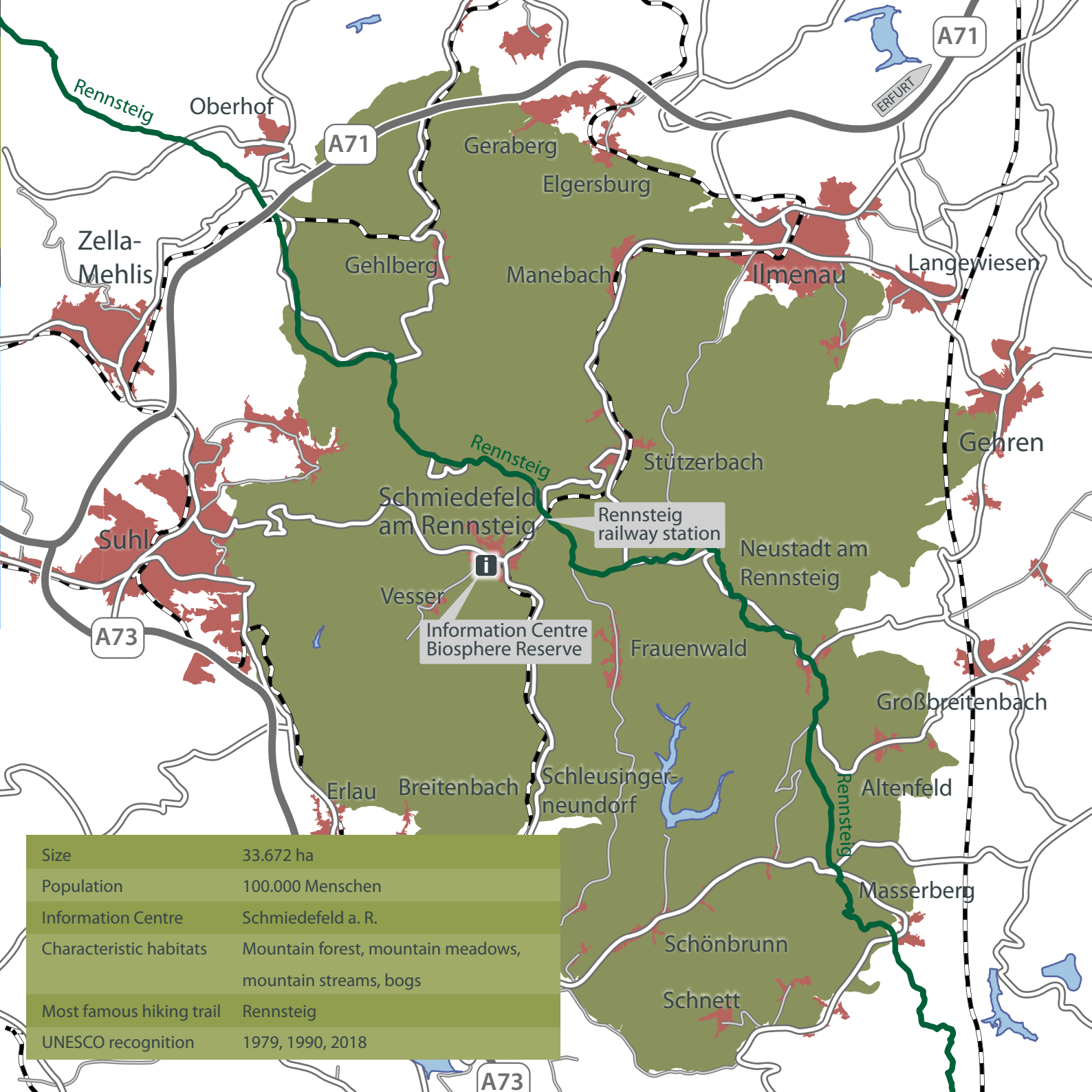
Inventory of the forest: The forest structure in the biosphere reserve is recorded and measured. The data is used to evaluate the various forest functions.

MONITORING

Research for the Future

The growth and structure of the forest, the diversity of living creatures, changes in the cultural landscape and the use of the touristic infrastructure: These and other research fields are being investigated in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest. For this purpose, data will be collected regularly over a period of years.

Currently, for example, the impact of forest management on species diversity is being investigated. For this purpose, selected plots in the core area as well as in the buffer zone and transition area of the biosphere reserve are investigated. These observations allow a direct comparison between managed and unmanaged forests. The results of the research should provide concrete information on how species diversity in forests can be preserved and promoted.



Information Centre Biosphere Reserve with Tourist Information

Brunnenstraße 1 | 98711 Schmiedefeld at Rennsteig

Phone: 0361 573924622 or 036782 61324

infozentrum.schmiedefeld@nnl.thueringen.de

Opening hours:

daily 10.00 - 18.00 o'clock

free entrance

Further service points:

Thüringer Tourismus GmbH, Tel.: 0361 37420, www.thueringen-entdecken.de

Regionalverbund Thüringer Wald e. V., Tel.: 03681 35305-20, www.thueringer-wald.com

Arrival:

We are destination nature area! www.fahrtziel-natur.de

Mobility by bus and train:

www.bus-bahn-thueringen.de | www.rennsteig-ticket.de

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Nationale
Naturlandschaften



The Biosphere Reserve Thuringian Forest belongs to the umbrella brand „National Natural Landscapes“, under which the majority of German national parks, all biosphere reserves and certified wilderness areas, as well as part of the nature parks, have joined together. As an alliance, the National Natural Landscapes stand for high-quality nature conservation, valuable cultural landscapes and unique nature experiences. The umbrella brand is sponsored by the non-profit association „Nationale Naturlandschaften e. V.“: www.nationale-naturlandschaften.de



Organisation
der Vereinten Nationen
für Bildung, Wissenschaft
und Kultur



Thüringer Wald
• Biosphärenreservat im Programm
• Der Mensch und die Biosphäre
seit 1979

