



SPIRITUAL ECOSYSTEM SERVICES OF FORESTS in ITALY

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UNIVERSITÀ
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Dipartimento Territorio
e Sistemi Agro-Forestali
Università di Padova

Forests for Health and Wellbeing

Three years PhD project in LERH program – Land,
Environment, Resources and Health at the University
of Padova



E | T | I | F | O | R
valuing nature



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SFES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT – 1/4 VALUES

ROMANS

Lucus = sacred wood
Multifunctional places for **devotion and celebrations**

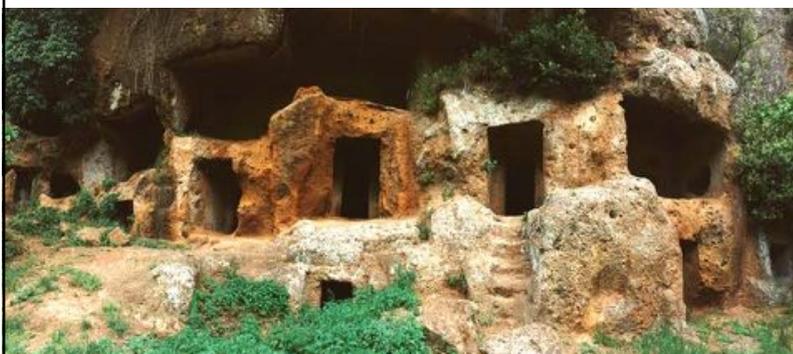
Montelucio Wood dedicated to Jupiter in Umbria - «Lex luci Spoletina» incarved in the stone the first Forest law (III b.C.)



PAGAN USES

Woodlands as the places of **Spirits and Creatures** (good/bad)

Nowadays the ones in public land are often neglected
They attract tourists



Bus de La Lum – Cansiglio forest, a cavern symbol of traditional fairytales and memories of killings in the II World War

Sacro Bosco di Bomarzo (1552 d.C) – private wood transformed in art and pagan sacred open air museum

Marturanum – Etruscan necropolis

SES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT – VALUES

3/4 CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Christians often adopted and adapted the romans and pre-romans divinities living in the woods → **STRATIFICATION**

Woods were useful to **hide and protect** monasteries and to guarantee the **livelihood** for monks.

Symbols of spirituality and divine gift of God (Franciscans tradition)

Inspired by the Book of Isaia (41,19) where is mentioned the act of planting 7 trees as symbol of the hand of God → Cedar, Acacia, myrtle, olive tree, cypress, elm and fir

Picture: Sacred Mountain of Varallo (Franciscan Order)



SFES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT – VALUES

4/4

NOWADAYS

Increasing societal demand to be in contact with forest

«New» initiatives delivering SES are growing: forest schools, funeral forests, forest bathing, and art and music in the forest

Reconnection with Nature

Wellbeing

Education

New Spirituality





SES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Two opposite forest management traditions:

- **Benedict Order (Vallombrosa)** – artificial introduction of fir, intensively managed
- **Franciscan Order (La Verna)** – close-to-nature management

150years ago the first Italian Forestry School in Vallombrosa

Up: La Verna Sanctuary; Right: Praglia Abbey



SFES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT – CHRISTIAN CHURCH 2

SPIRITUALITY = first mean of conservation and sustainable management of forest resources

The principles of conservation and management of forests are included in many texts regulating the life of monks

E.g. La Regola della vita eremitica by Paolo Giustiniani in 1520, and might represent the basis for today **sustainable forest management** practice

Synergies between protection and production/ tourism

From production and NWFPs → to pilgrimage and tourism



SES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT – NOWADAYS

SES are not particularly addressed in forest management

People outside forestry sector
Low interest/knowledge in management

TRADE-OFF

Silence, Loneliness and Contemplation

VS

Anthropic disturbances (?) and logging industry

SFES IN FOREST MANAGEMENT – NOWADAYS

SYNERGIES

SES as means of support and foster other values

- Biodiversity conservation
- Provisioning ES
- Bequest and Aesthetic values
- Education and Heritage (I and II World War)
- Tourism



SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF SES AND THEIR GOVERNANCE 1/2

- Both demanded and delivered **from the bottom** (civil society, associations and SME)
- **Marginally adressed in policies**
- Lack of laws and regulation → is often an **hindering factor**
- Little awareness rising in Public Health Sector at local level with single projects (key actors)



SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF SES AND THEIR GOVERNANCE 2/2

National level, forest SES are named and protected under

- *Testo Unico Forestale* (DL 3rd of April 2018 no. 34) art.16
- *Codice dei beni culturali e del paesaggio* (DL 4272004) art.142 NS 156,
- Decree on Monumental Trees (2017)

→ A List and guidelines for maintenance and protection

<https://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/13732>



ECONOMIC IMPORTANC E OF SES 1/3

Sector is informal and fragmented

Driven by innovation (development of new services) and market demand

Strong social motivation pertaining to wellbeing, spiritual, health and social safety values

Great variability in models (mainly Associations/Cooperatives) – they have to adapt to the lack of regulation



ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SES 2/3

ITALY: 36,4% of total land is cover by Forests

Continuously growing due to land abandonment – natural regeneration

Private property (63%) is fragmented → low economic interest in managing forests

Traditional forest sector is in crisis (net importer of wood)

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF SES

3/3

Forest bathing, relaxing and mindfulness activities are occasion for small businesses in woodland area

BUT

Few initiatives show how SES might be an **economic opportunity for forest owners** (e.g. Boschi Vivi)

(Revenue often stays out of forests and forest sector)

FUNZIONAMENTO



Source: from Boschi Vivi website

MONITORING OF SES

NO MONITORING OR QUANTIFICATION METHODS AT NATIONAL LEVEL

SOME SES INCLUDED IN THE LAST FOREST INVENTORY (RAF ITALIA)

MAPPING OF MONUMENTAL TREES

→List by Region of the Monumental Trees

<https://www.politicheagricole.it/flex/cm/page/s/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/11260>

Elenchi aggiornati al 19/04/2019 (riferimento D.M. n. 757 del 19/04/2019)	
Abruzzo 19.4.2019 (64.34 KB)	Basilicata 19.4.2019 (77.09 KB)
Belluno 19.4.2019 (21.56 KB)	Calabria 19.4.2019 (62.52 KB)
Campania 19.4.2019 (194.17 KB)	Emilia Romagna 19.4.2019 (70.68 KB)
Friuli Venezia Giulia 19.4.2019 (89.36 KB)	Lazio 19.4.2019 (57.99 KB)
Liguria 19.4.2019 (35.6 KB)	Lombardia 19.4.2019 (72.11 KB)
Marche 19.4.2019 (33.76 KB)	Molise 19.4.2019 (36.62 KB)
Piemonte 19.4.2019 (58.8 KB)	Puglia 19.4.2019 (35.47 KB)
Sardegna 19.4.2019 (138.91 KB)	Sicilia 19.4.2019 (40.08 KB)
Toscana 19.4.2019 (61.14 KB)	Trento 19.4.2019 (36.36 KB)
Umbria 19.4.2019 (41.48 KB)	Valle d'Aosta 19.4.2019 (32.15 KB)
Veneto 19.4.2019 (38.38 KB)	



ARTE SELLA – Contemporary Mountains <http://www.artesella.it/>

ARTE SELLA

- Association started in 1986 in Borgo Valsugana (Trentino Region)
- Nowadays a strong mix of public (10%) private (90%) partnership and deeply rooted to the territory
- Almost 100 thousand visitors per year + added value in tourism
- Art for nature conservation, education and fight land abandonment
- Many collater projects of social inclusion and education



DANCE WELL

La danza come espressione del corpo diventa un mezzo di inclusione sociale per le persone colpite da...



FONDAZIONE ANT

La terapia dello suono: realtà virtuale a domicilio per migliorare la qualità di vita dei malati di tumore



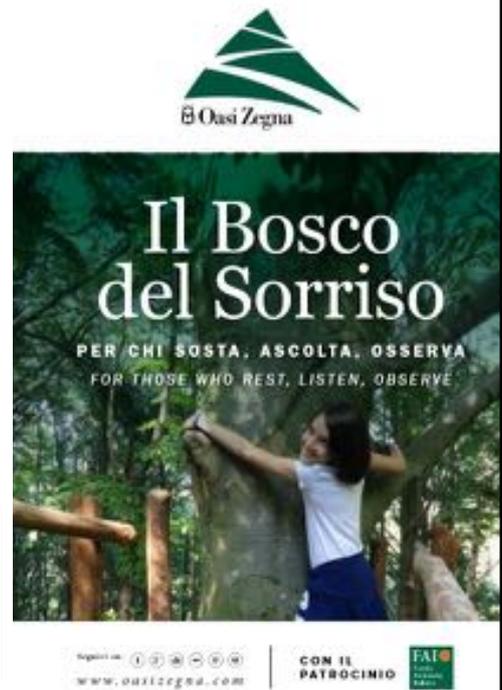
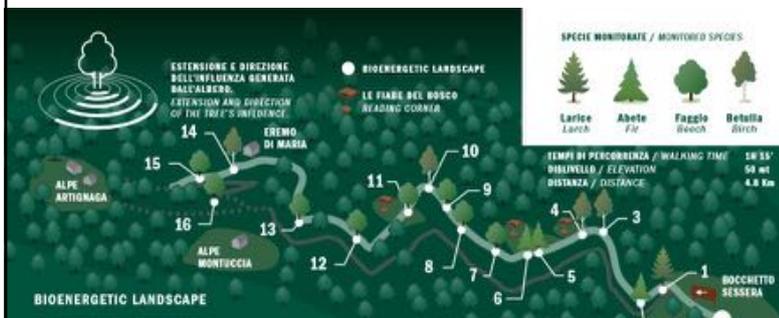
Spirituality and Disturbances

- 29° of October 2018 Vaia Windstorm caused the loss of 8,6 million m² of wood. The greatest storm in Italian history
- Italian population reacted emotionally to the storm, a new attachment to nature and trees
- Many artistic performances (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cV3PF9zLaQ>), art pieces and initiatives (see <https://www.vaiawood.eu/?lang=en>) to elaborate the event and transform it into collective memory
- Arte Sella was also devastated by the storm: replantation program, new art pieces, events and sensibilization



BOSCO DEL SORRISO – Zegna Foundation

- Private foundation – mission to protect and conserve landscape for future generations
- 3 forest bathing paths following a special approach
- Integrated in a wide offer of recreational and educational activities
- Impact on tourism and satellites activities





FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

- Studies on spiritual values, main spiritual uses and the relationship between people and forests
- Lack of information about business models, enabling conditions and suitable FM practices
- How to develop a process of reward for the forest owner?



“In every walk in Nature one receives far more than he seeks” J.Miur

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