WOODMEADOWLIFE

„Restoring and promoting a long-term sustainable management of Fennoscandian wooded meadows in Estonia and Latvia“

LIFE20 NAT/EE/000074

Deliverable A1
“List of sites to be restored with signed 20-year owners commitments (covering 300 ha)”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Landowner consent is an essential prerequisite for wooded meadow restoration under the LIFE WoodMeadow project. By granting consent, landowners permit restoration activities on their land and commit to ensuring the long-term maintenance of the restored habitat for 20 years. Maintenance may be carried out either by the landowners themselves or by tenants. This report presents the landowner consents obtained in Estonia and Latvia for the restoration and long-term maintenance of the first 308 hectares of wooded meadows.

In Estonia, landowners were initially contacted by letter, followed approximately one week later by telephone calls to introduce the project and discuss their willingness to participate. Letters were sent to the owners of 297 cadastral units. The number of cadastral units does not correspond directly to the number of landowners, as individual properties may have multiple owners and individual landowners may own several cadastral units. Landowners include both natural and legal persons. Table 1 presents the landowner consents obtained for restoration activities on 57 cadastral units, covering a total of 164 ha. In addition to the initially selected restoration sites, the table includes consent obtained for one potential new project site.

At the beginning of the project, an open call was launched to encourage landowners within the project area to participate. Information meetings were organised in Matsalu and Kihnu to introduce the planned project activities and opportunities for participation to wooded meadow owners. Similar meetings were also planned in Hiiumaa and Saaremaa; however, stakeholder interest was limited. Consequently, the project shifted its focus towards direct communication and an individual approach to engaging potential participants.

In Latvia, approximately 120 contacts have been made with landowners through telephone calls, letters and emails. The selection of restoration sites has primarily been based on information from the Ozols habitat database, field assessments and direct engagement with landowners. Open calls were also published in Ziemeļgauja and Lubāna mitrājs to identify additional potential restoration areas. Direct engagement proved more effective than public appeals, although it required substantial staff time. According to the data presented in the table, 14 long-term restoration agreements covering a total of 145 ha have been signed in Latvia.

Securing long-term commitments has been a major challenge in both countries. In Estonia, the main reasons for declining participation have included concerns about the long-term maintenance obligation, difficulties accessing restoration sites, challenges in finding suitable tenants, opposition to nature conservation and dissatisfaction arising from previous interactions with conservation authorities. In addition, many landowners could not be reached despite repeated attempts to establish contact.

Some initially selected sites had remained unmanaged for such an extended period that restoration was no longer considered appropriate within the framework of the project. Over time, these areas had developed characteristics of forest habitats with high conservation value, including abundant deadwood and the presence of species associated with old-growth natural

forests. Consequently, retaining these areas as forest habitats was considered more beneficial from a nature conservation perspective than restoring them to wooded meadows.

In Latvia, landowners' concerns about long-term maintenance obligations were further compounded by uncertainty regarding future financial support for habitat management. Difficulties in securing sufficient suitable restoration areas led to the identification of additional sites beyond the original project areas, including state- and municipally owned land. High fuel prices, combined with low timber and wood chip prices, also increased the risk of landowners withdrawing from previously agreed restoration activities. These challenges increased the administrative workload and extended the time required for landowner engagement and related preparatory activities.

In both countries, obtaining landowner consent is a necessary prerequisite for restoration. However, the long-term success of restoration efforts also depends on establishing practical and sustainable arrangements for continued habitat management.

Table 1 provides an overview of the long-term agreements signed with landowners in Estonia and Latvia during the reporting period.

Project site	Country	Cadastral unit name	Cadastral unit number	Restoration area
Abruka	EE	Kallaku	34801:014:0084	3,25
Kassari	EE	Koka	36802:003:0290	0,43
Kassari	EE	Neitsimäe	36802:003:1300	1,97
Kassari	EE	Krossi	36802:003:1240	0,58
Liigalaskma	EE	Tõnulaasu	55001:007:0100	2,37
Liigalaskma	EE	Raamatu	55001:007:0137	1,43
Muratsi	EE	Koordi-Tammiku	27003:003:0358	1,6
Ridase	EE	Tammiku	19501:002:0336	1,59
Valgu	EE	Uue-Raja	50403:003:1130	2,88
Valgu	EE	Jaagu	50403:003:0094	0,13
Sipa	EE	Kasemetsa	42702:003:0114	1,79
Haavakannu	EE	Saare	90002:005:0740	2,73
Nedrema	EE	Peieri	33402:002:0006	5,97
Saaremetsa	EE	Pärna	38601:002:0168	1,17
Abruka	EE	Lepametsa	34801:014:0102	3,25
Võrsna	EE	Ärma	85801:001:0010	2,76
Liigalaskma	EE	Ärma	55001:007:0057	2,93
Nedrema	EE	Hansu	33404:004:0078	7,4
Kaarma	EE	Rauni	27002:001:0249	5.68
Lasila	EE	Haaviku	66204:003:0003	1,22
Ubasalu	EE	Aasa - Madise	34201:001:1250	8,2
Sipa	EE	Veski-Jaagu, Jaagu-mardi, Jaagumetsa	42702:001:0992, 42702:001:0079, 42702:001:0080	7,22
Sipa	EE	Vinguti-Juurimaa	42702:003:0470	11,52
Sipa	EE	Joona, Niine	42702:002:0052, 42702:002:0001	1,82
Sipa	EE	Aleva	42702:002:0802	5,41
Sipa	EE	Iganõmme	50301:001:0329	0,43
Liigalaskma	EE	Tuule, Reinu	55001:007:0054, 55001:007:0097	6,75
Liigalaskma	EE	Rusniku	55001:007:0250	3,89
Ridase	EE	Jaagu, Matsi	41101:003:0203, 41101:003:0143	6,08
Võrsna	EE	Liiva	85801:001:0749	1,82
Võrsna	EE	Rähni-Jaagu, Liiva	85801:001:0456, 85801:001:0752	2,97
Jõõdre	EE	Uuerehe	67401:011:0373	3,7
Naissoo	EE	Lauriti, Nukka	33404:002:0040, 33404:002:0239	4,65
Saaremetsa	EE	Leemeti, Vihu, Kadariku, Jaani-Metsa	38601:002:0116, 38601:002:0191, 38601:002:0220, 38601:002:0072	4,08
Saaremetsa	EE	Kopli	38601:002:0146	7

Liigalaskma	EE	Tõru	55001:007:0268	3,2
Sõrve	EE	Ranna, Toome	72101:001:1345, 72101:003:0670	5,7
Muratsi	EE	Salumõisa, Mõisametsa	71401:001:1388; 71401:001:1387	2,5
Kaarma	EE	Sihi, Liiva, Pihtla, Laane, Kiriku, Vahtra, Kaarma põhikool	27001:003:0249, 27002:001:0079; 27002:001:0203; 27001:003:0100; 27002:001:0073; 27002:001:0146; 27002:001:0333	21
			Total ha in Estonia:	**164,07**

Ziemeļgauja	LV	Kalnkalci	94880160020	16,3
Ziemeļgauja	LV	Marsi	94880160002	13,7
Ziemeļgauja	LV	Meža Tači	94880130004	6,8
Ziemeļgauja	LV	Vētras	94880170046	6,7
Ziemeļgauja	LV	Ieviņas/Ķeizari	94880130011	14,7
Sventājas upes ieleja	LV	Šūnas	64840100008	8,2
Ziemeļgauja	LV	Ziediņi	94880130002	19,9
Lubāna mitrājs	LV	Mežsētas/Vecmadernieki	50900130052	12,79
Ziemeļgauja	LV	Gaiļpieši	94960040017	11
Ziemeļgauja	LV	Gaujmala	94960040025	9
Lubāna mitrājs	LV	Robežnieki	50900130008	1,36
Mugurves pļavas	LV	Raiti	50900100028	6,8
Sitas un Pededzes paliene	LV	Sita	38580050072	7,26
Lubāna mitrājs	LV	Ārbirzes	38740150101	10,3
			Total ha in Latvia:	**144,51**