

Nature conservation in the Karwendel Mountains



Our activities at a glance



Regional project



Austria



In cooperation with
the **Karwendel
Nature Park**



Restoration of peatlands
and alpine pasture
vegetation, and more;
climate education

Our regional nature conservation initiatives contribute to preserving and restoring natural habitats and adapting to climatic changes. This includes protecting native forests, river floodplains, and regional biodiversity, as well as peatland renaturation, community participation, and educational programs. In the Karwendel Nature Park in the German-Austrian border region, experts and volunteers work together to protect the ecosystem and make it more climate resilient.

Would you like to support a certified climate project and get involved in regional climate action at the same time? Nature conservation projects in Germany and Austria is an additional commitment to climate action. Find out more about our combined projects on [page 11](#).

Background on nature conservation in Karwendel

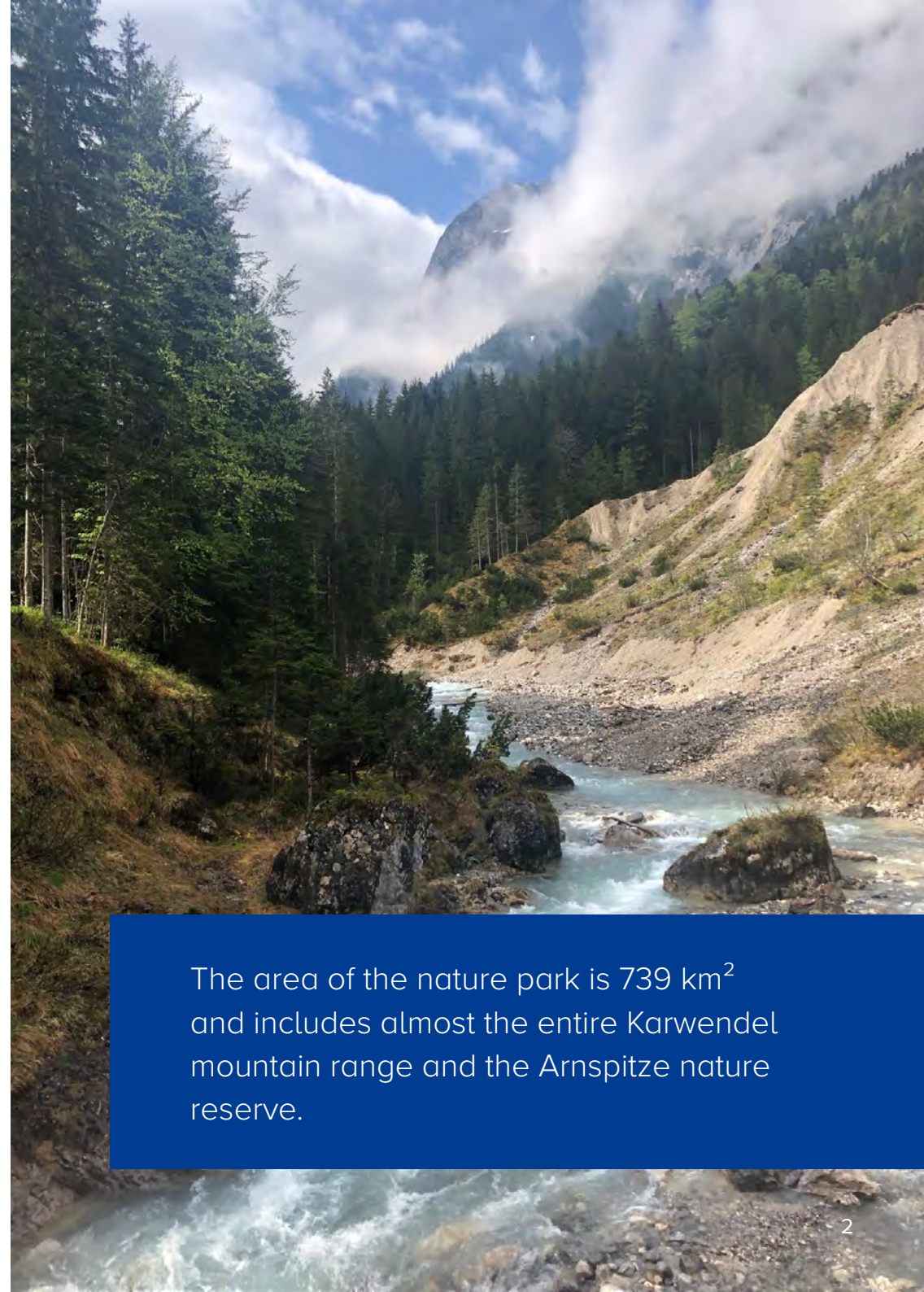
The Karwendel Nature Park is the largest nature park in Austria and the oldest Tyrolean protected area. Unique landscapes such as the Große Ahornboden and the source of the Isar River are located within the protected area.

Due to its location, the Karwendel Nature Park comprises various landscapes, from mountains and alpine pastures to primeval forests and wild rivers. These landscapes are home to a variety of threatened and endangered animal and plant species such as the mountain newt, the sandpiper, and the German tamarisk.

In order to preserve these important habitats and thus animal and plant diversity, nature conservation in this area is essential. This is not only about legal ordinances, but very specifically about projects such as peatland renaturation, which restores the near-natural state of areas that humans have reshaped in the past. The preservation of cultural landscapes such as the Großer Ahornboden also plays an important role, as does the knowledge transfer to visitors of the park.

How does the support work?

We regularly discuss with the team of the Karwendel Nature Park which programs currently need support. We then plan the discussed measures together on-site and implement them at the next possible time.



The area of the nature park is 739 km² and includes almost the entire Karwendel mountain range and the Arnspitze nature reserve.

Where we are active – our sites

Our nature conservation measures take place at various locations within the Karwendel Nature Park. When making our selection, we work closely with our local partner and take into account what is currently particularly needed.

1. Peatland restoration*:



2. Großer Ahornboden:



3. Deadwood:



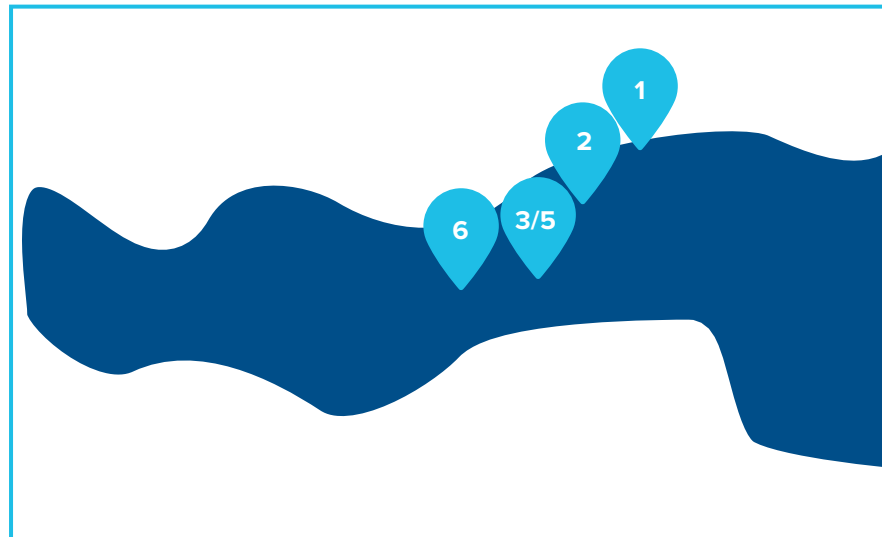
4. Land set-aside:**



5. Mountain pasture vegetation:



6. Qualification in climate education:



* The number shows the location on the map.

** in the entire area of the Karwendel Nature Park

What is being done – nature conservation measures in Karwendel

The Karwendel Nature Park is home to many unique landscapes. With various nature conservation measures, we protect the biological diversity of the region and restore the original state of damaged areas. In addition, we promote educational programmes to share knowledge about the park and about the influence of climate change on the landscape.



Großer Ahornboden

The Ahornboden in the rear Rißtal is home to an impressive cultivated landscape. More than 2,200 sycamores grow there, thriving in the gravelly and barren soil. Many of the trees date back to the 17th century. Without protection, the landscape threatens to disappear in the long term, as the older trees reach their natural age limit and no young trees can mature on their own due to land grazing. Therefore, between 2004 and 2011, 14 maple trees were planted each year and then fenced to guarantee the protection of the trees. The fences are now checked and repaired annually.

The sycamores provide important habitats and breeding sites for animals such as woodpeckers and bats. Rare moss species grow on the trees. And the sycamore's foliage helps to improve soil quality as it decomposes into nutrient-rich humus.

Sycamores are characterised by their longevity and toughness. They are resistant to falling rocks and cold and thus well adapted to the harsh conditions in the mountains. The sycamore maple was already native to Europe before the last ice age.

Peatland restoration

After the last ice age about 15,000 years ago, 14 peatlands formed in the Karwendel due to the combination of sufficient precipitation and the corresponding subsoil. They have a total area of 1.2 km². In the 1970s, people drained many of the peatlands to make the areas suitable for agriculture. Since 2004, a program has been in place to restore the Karwendel peatlands. The renaturation measures ensure that nature is restored to its original state. This is having an effect: by raising the water levels and refraining from using former grazing areas, the biodiversity in the peatlands is increasing again. The peatlands provide habitats for rare and specialised plants such as the carnivorous sundew and animals such as the damselfly, a dragonfly species. In addition, peatlands store large amounts of CO₂ and thus play an important role in mitigating climate change.

The renaturation process is scientifically monitored in the long term in order to be able to make reliable statements about the development of the areas.



Deadwood

The Karwendel Nature Park is a Natura 2000 site according to the Birds Directive – this means that the nature park plays a special role for European bird protection. A total of 96 breeding bird species live in the Karwendel Nature Park. For some of these birds, for example for various woodpecker and owl species, deadwood provides important habitats. They build nesting cavities in standing deadwood trees and look for food in lying deadwood. For other bird species, such as the capercaillie and the hazel grouse, deadwood close to the ground and lying deadwood provide vital cover. And insects and fungi also benefit from dead branches and trunks that have decomposed to varying degrees as a food source and habitat.

Old and dead wood is therefore essential for a functioning forest ecosystem. This is why we are implementing a deadwood program together with the team at the Karwendel Nature Park. In traditional forestry, deadwood is often removed from the forest, as the regeneration of the forest is the priority. Our nature conservation measure ensures that dying trees and deadwood remain in the forest.





Land set-aside

Also among the diverse landscapes of the Karwendel Nature Park are very old forests, which have a very high value from a nature conservation point of view. These forests provide a protected habitat for numerous animals: woodpecker species such as the white-backed woodpecker find suitable breeding sites in the cavities of the old trees, while many insect species live in the old tree population.

In order to protect and preserve these ecosystems in the long term, these areas are set aside. This means that the Karwendel Nature Park, together with landowners and authorised users, establishes so-called natural forest reserves and cells. The forests are thus placed under protection and no longer used for forestry. The landowners and authorised users continue to be the owners and receive compensation for the lost income from the discontinued forestry. By protecting the forest areas, primeval forests can develop that are home to an enormous biological diversity and provide an ideal environment for research, teaching, and education.

Throughout the Karwendel Nature Park, these natural forest reserves act as ecological stepping stones within a biotope network. Ecological stepping stones are protected areas that ensure the survival of endangered species in particular and enable migration between habitats, a so-called biotope network. Thus, the natural forest reserves are safe islands between agriculturally used cultivated landscapes, which are often hostile to many animal and plant species and would hardly allow migrations between biotopes without stepping stones.

Mountain pasture vegetation

Over 100 alpine pastures are located in the Karwendel Nature Park. Centuries-old alpine pasture management has ensured a diversity of habitats in which many animal and plant species live. In order to preserve these habitats, we implement sustainable measures together with the team of the Karwendel Nature Park and the alpine farmers, such as the so-called clearing of pastures. Clearing means removing vegetation such as shrubs and mountain pines from alpine pastures. The open alpine pastures are important habitats for endangered species. If the areas become overgrown, biodiversity is lost.

On the Walderalm (an alpine pasture site), we supported the renaturation of ponds. Over-fertilisation of the areas has caused a dense carpet of algae and duckweed to form on the ponds, displacing many animals and plants. Thanks to the renaturation, regular maintenance, and the renunciation of the use of grazing areas, species such as the Alpine newt and rare dragonfly species have already returned.



Qualification in climate education

Together with the team of the Karwendel Nature Park, we offer people interested in nature the opportunity to complete a qualification as climate educators. The training is offered across borders in Tyrol, Upper Austria, and Bavaria. The modules of the training program are oriented towards regional habitats and impart expert knowledge on climate change and methods of climate change education.

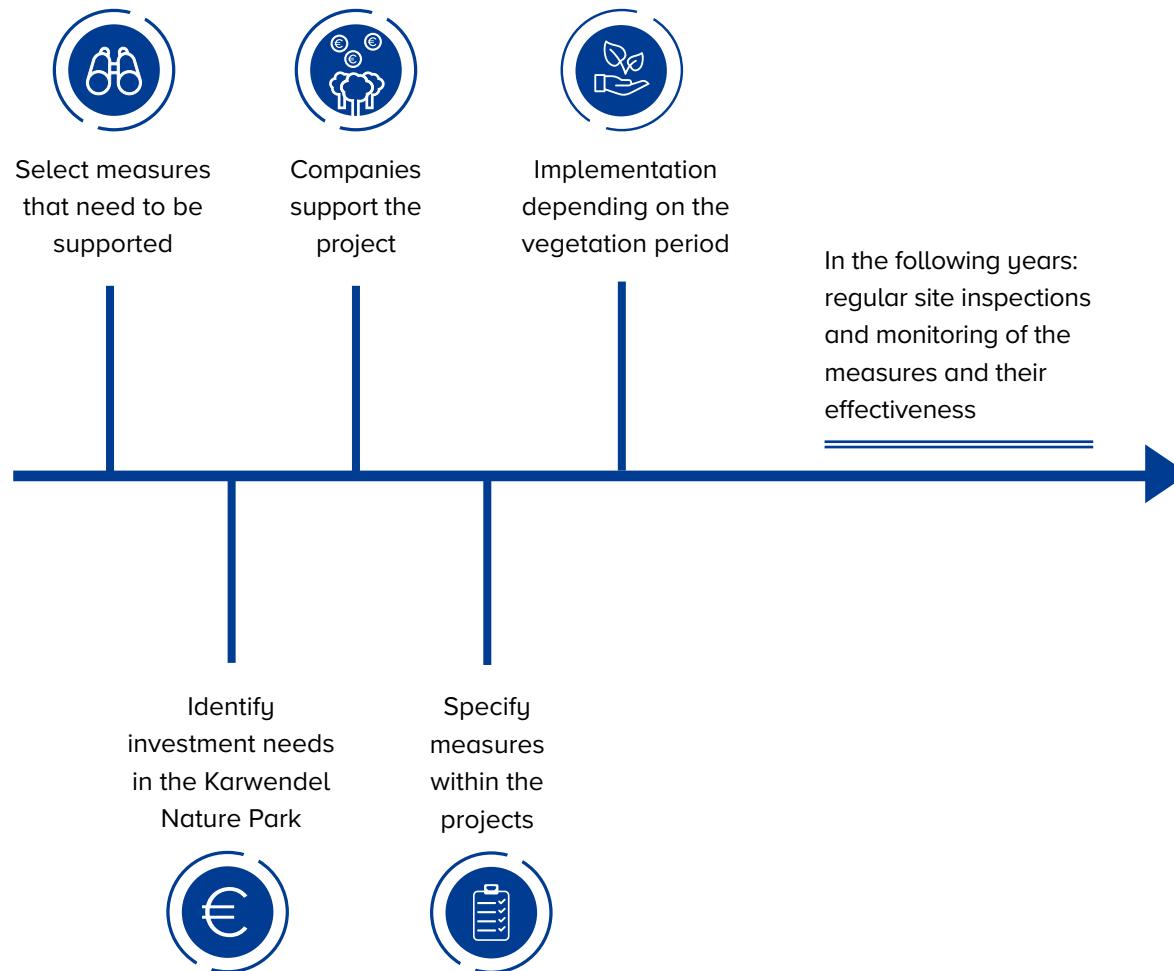
As future experts, the graduates make an important contribution to awareness of the consequences of climate change in the Alps and to empowering others to take climate action.

ClimatePartner covers parts of the costs and thus awards scholarships to participants who cannot finance the qualification in any other way.



The project over time

How does an idea become a project? What steps are necessary and how do we ensure the success of a nature conservation measure in the Karwendel Nature Park?





A contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The measures in the Karwendel Nature Park contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), because peatlands save large amounts of CO₂ and provide a habitat for many animal and plant species, among other things.



Quality education: A qualification in climate education imparts expert knowledge on climate change and methods of climate change education. In addition, nature park tours and hands-on activities are an important part of environmental education.



Clean water and sanitation: Intact and restored peatlands contribute to high water quality.



Climate action: Peatlands store a particularly large amount of CO₂ and thus have a stabilising effect on the climate.



Life on land: The protection of deadwood is a key factor for diversity in the forest and a prerequisite for the occurrence of birds, insects, fungi, and lichens. Peatlands are home to many protected animal and plant species.

Lend a hand!

At our annual hands-on activity days and excursions, experts explain why the various nature conservation measures in the Karwendel Nature Park are so important and how you can get involved in helping on-site.

Once a year we invite the supporters of our combined project (see [page 11](#)) to join in activities or nature park excursions. Here you can, for example, help with a measure to improve the alpine pasture vegetation or learn more about the nature park during an excursion. The type of activity depends on the current needs of the Karwendel Nature Park.

The activities usually take place in the summer months. You will also meet participants from other companies on-site. Together you will receive a short introduction from our experts before you get to work or explore the Karwendel Mountains with the nature park guides.

Once a year, we invite the supporters of the project to join us and participate in our work in the Karwendel Nature Park.



Combined projects: international climate action meets regional commitment



Combined projects give ClimatePartner an opportunity to combine verified emission reductions from an international certified climate project with an additional and voluntary regional commitment, such as the renaturation of peatlands in Austria.

We also offer combined projects with regional commitment in other European countries. Please contact us if you are interested in other initiatives in Europe.

In addition to international climate action, you can also help improve our domestic ecosystems with our combined projects. With the combined projects, companies finance a certified climate project as usual but in addition, for every tonne of CO₂ saved through the contribution to this climate project, a regional initiative in Austria or Europe is also supported.



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