



Carpathian Mountains

CREATING ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF INCOME IN A LANDSCAPE WHERE COMMERCIAL LOGGING CONTRIBUTES TO ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION

WHERE: ROMANIA, FĂGĂRAȘ MOUNTAINS

AREA OF RESTORATION SITE: 200,000 HECTARES

HABITAT TYPES: DECIDUOUS, SPRUCE AND SEMI-VIRGIN FOREST, ALPINE MEADOW, STEEP MOUNTAINS, AND RIVERS

PROJECT LEAD: [FOUNDATION CONSERVATION CARPATHIA](#)

USE OF WILD SPECIES

In the Făgăraș mountains, Foundation Conservation Carpathia have developed a community of producers who harvest, process, and sell a range of local/traditional products via a local food hub (Roadele Munților). Examples of products include jams from a variety of berries (e.g., raspberries *Rubus idaeus*,

blueberries *Vaccinium myrtillus*, blackberries *Rubus fruticosus*, wild strawberries *Fragaria vesca*, bitter cherries (*Prunus* sp.) and products from mushrooms (e.g., Penny Bun Boletus edulis, chanterelle *Cantharellus cibarius* and honey fungus *Armillaria mellea*).

HOW IS THE USE OF WILD SPECIES SUPPORTING THE GOALS OF THIS RESTORATION PROJECT?

The drivers of degradation in this landscape are mainly economic, with many local communities depending on an income from commercial logging, so a key goal of the project is to create a new economy based on non-extractive activities. This is achieved through a conservation enterprise programme which provides entrepreneurial training for locals and supports the development of green businesses. Ten nature-based businesses had been established by 2020, providing

jobs (some seasonal) for over 50 people and creating annual gross revenues of two million euros. One of these nature-based businesses is a food hub, with local producers selling products from processing of wild harvested berries, fruits and vegetables. The food hub represents an additional sales channel for these small businesses, with producers selling around 10-30% of their products through this avenue.



Cantharellus cibarius

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT SUSTAINABILITY

So far, Foundation Conservation Carpathia has focused on improving the economic dimension of sustainability by supporting access to markets for harvesters. FCC works with small businesses within their network of local producers to help them access larger markets and also to provide technical assistance and support in business development. FCC have set up a [sales platform to enable direct sale of their branded food products](#) on a national scale, as well as working with a [large online retailer in Romania](#) to sell products. The food

hub has also become one of the main food suppliers for their eco-tourism programme [Travel Carpathia](#). Currently, FCC has 25 local producers that are authorised for business-to-business sale, with 50 branded products listed for sale online, and 200 products overall. FCC covers the operational costs of the food hub, which helps to enable producers to profit.

More information about this restoration landscape can be found on their [ELSP project page](#).