

The Green Belt Germany

The green belt runs along the former inner-German border. During the separation of East and West Germany, the area along the wall was a restricted area for men. In the area of 500 m distance to the wall, the vegetation was kept short for a better field of view of the guards. In a perimeter of 5 km, the so-called "restricted area", hardly people were allowed to stay, so that only a few roads, settlements and industries occur there.

With the fall the Wall in 1989, the longest biotope network system in Germany arose with about 1,400 km in length. Due to the almost complete absence of man, the nature could develop relatively undisturbed. Many valuable habitats have been preserved and still serve as a refuge for rare plants and animals. More than 600 endangered species could escape into the green belt. 150 nature reserves are located in or adjacent to the Green Belt.



1)

Habitats in the Green Belt



2)

Waters and wetlands

Some streams and rivers in the area of the Elbe or Saale have been preserved in near-natural state. Here they were not converted to transport waters or sewage and have not been straightened through which the water is still clear and unpolluted. Especially in the northern part of the Green Belt, there are numerous lakes. Particularly fascinating is the Schaalsee landscape south of Lübeck.



3)

Grassland areas

In the Green Belt you will find a wealth of different grassland areas: wet meadows, mountain meadows, pastures and semi-open grassland fallows. In the semi-natural grassland areas the lush wealth of flowers attracts insects of all kinds. Butterflies and grasshoppers are again easy prey for bats and insect eating songbirds. On dry and nutrient-poor sites, so-called neglected grassland, numerous endangered plant species can grow, including nearly half of the local orchids.



Pioneer woodlands and forests

Directly on the sites of the former border installations or where the green belt runs through the woods and is not cut back forests are spreading. Unlike in afforestation areas here a natural forest development takes place. In general, the forests have been rarely used for forestry in the area of the border. In some areas, pioneer forests developed a veritable jungle over the decades.

4)

Task list concerning the Green Belt

1. 4 equally sized groups are formed for each of the 4 topics. These groups are considered as experts for their special topic. After reading their material, 4 new groups are formed with at least one expert of each topic. Everybody presents their information about their topic to their new group. The group now thinks about which of these animals could or could not live in the Green Belt and argues for their opinion. These group results should be presented and discussed in class. It is possible to make a ranking of who thinks this animal can live in the Green Belt. Furthermore it is possible to think about what could be beneficial to obtain the individual biospheres to care for the Green Belt.

References:

BUND-Project Office Green Belt Central European Green Belt (2014)
<http://www.europeangreenbelt.org/> (access: 18.02.2014)

Pictures:

- 1) Lencer, (2008): Karte des Grünen Bandes Deutschland
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Karte_Deutschland_Gr%C3%BCnes_Band.png
- 2) Weiher, D. (2004), Schaalsee am Seedorfer Werder
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Schaalsee_im_Morgendunst.jpg (Zugriff: 18.02.2014)
- 3) Briemle, Dr. (2005) Frischwiese bunt http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Frischwiese_bunt1.jpg, (Zugriff: 18.02.2014)
- 4) Trummer I. (2011): Tarvasjõgi at Kõrvemaa Nature Park in Estonia,
<http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tarvasj%C3%B5gi.jpg> (Zugriff: 18.02.2014)