

**Year of the Forests, Central Day of Action and a “Green Wave“ –
Bonn Celebrates International Day of Biological Diversity**

On Sunday, 22 May 2011, the Day of Biological Diversity will be celebrated worldwide. During this year's International Year of the Forests a special emphasis will be on the topic of forests.

The Day of Biological Diversity is commemorated in Bonn with a special day of action, to be held for the second time in the Botanical Gardens with numerous offers for visitors of all ages. Slightly over 40 exhibitors – involving the local beekeeper as well as an initiative for the protection of bats – will offer a great variety of valuable information, food and activities, all of which circle around the diversity of nature.

Bonn's citizens, however, may not only look forward to 22 May, but to a varied program, which aims to highlight and introduce the diversity of nature and forests throughout the entire year.

The “Green Wave”, initiated by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in 2008 with the planting of trees at Bonn's Hofgartenwiese, continues to roll around the globe. This year, it will be young children from Bonn and Huaraz (Peru) that participate in the event. In Peru, 3000 children from Huaraz will plant a total of 100 trees. In Bonn, the children of Herz-Jesu-Kindergarten are already cultivating seedlings. As a symbol of their ties with Huaraz and a tribute to nature, they will also plant a tree. In March several school classes planted beech trees, an activity which was supported by the City Forestry. Together with the global “plant for the planet” initiative, 50 children were trained to become ambassadors for climate-justice. Further symbolic plantings will be linked to topical events throughout the year, such as conferences or visits.

Enjoying a day out at Bonn's Waldau and exploring the Path of Biodiversity is especially worthwhile for families with young children. The Haus der Natur with its interesting permanent exhibition has paid its tribute to the Year of the Forests by offering an additional exhibition on forests. A total of 11 boards containing valuable information, pictures and diagrams are on display. A special field day on 28 September addresses 4th graders in Bonn. From 6 to 8 October all citizens are invited to celebrate Bonn's Forest Weeks. Those who would like to discover and inquire more, may contact the city forestry for a guided tour with a forest ranger through Bonn's urban forest.

A regional initiative takes us from the forests to the cultural landscapes that have evolved in our beautiful home along the Sieg and Rhine rivers. The project is titled “Green C” (inspired from the aerial view on the project's shape) and involves regional green leisure areas. It also offers information on the landscape, local history and diversity. Some sections may already be explored. Upon its completion, the “Green C” will link an area comprising a total of six municipalities in the region. Through special “green gates” very diverse natural spaces and cultural landscapes may be experienced and explored. Moreover, there will be varied offers along the way pointing to the local cultural heritage, such as the Fishery Museum at Troisdorf-Bergheim. Visitors have their choice from a number of attractive routes for hiking and biking.

Those who would like to find out more about our cultural heritage, may pay a visit to Rheinisches Landesmuseum to discover more details of the life of our ancestors. Another interesting exhibition is currently on display there: Realm of the Elephants – World of Fossils in Europe.

If you take interest in animals and their natural habitats, you should be sure to plan a visit to the Zoological Research Institute and Museum Alexander Koenig. Discover fascinating ecosystems in the savanna, the rain forest or in the desert. There is a free guided tour on offer for families on every first Sunday of the month. As of this May the new “Biohistoricum” allows for an exciting insight into the history of biodiversity research.

Museum Koenig also offers several-day workshops during school breaks involving field trips for little forest explorers throughout all seasons of the year.

In 2011, Bonn will again host several international conferences focusing on biodiversity and forests. At the beginning of June the cities from all over the world will deal with adaptation to climate change and the effects of climate change on biological diversity during the “Resilient Cities” conference. In September, a conference will be organized by the Global Partnership for Cities and Biodiversity, to whose Steering Committee Bonn belongs, and another one by the Pan-European Forum of the global environmental organization IUCN. In October, an international conference, highlighting the “Contributions of Forests to a Green Economy”, and the Bonn Forest Days, hosted by the Federal Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Consumer Protection will all be held in our city. Biodiversity will also play a major role during the UN DPI/NGO conference at the beginning of September, the large conference for Non-Governmental Organizations, bringing civil society initiatives from all over the world to Bonn.

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Herausgeber: Der Oberbürgermeister der Bundesstadt Bonn, Presseamt, Stadthaus, Berliner Platz 2, 53103 Bonn

Telefon: Chef vom Dienst 0228/77 3000, Telefax: 0228/77 2468, E-Mail: presseamt@bonn.de

Internet: <http://www.bonn.de> Redaktion: Dr. Monika Hörig (verantwortlich), Monika Frömbgen, Isabel Klotz, Elke Palm, Stefanie Zießnitz