

THE IMPORTANCE OF UNIVERSITY FOREST AT PERTOULI, TRIKALA, CENTRAL GREECE, TO LOCAL ECONOMY AND QUALITATIVE ENVIRONMENT

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EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The contribution of forests on economic development and qualitative environment is presented. A short analysis is given about the forest situation on global level, forest management and goods and services provided by the forests. The existence of adequate forest area and the proper protection and management based on sustainability and multiple use have always strong positive effects on economic development and quality of environment and life on worldwide basis.

An investigation was carried out for the university forest of Pertouli (Trikala, Central Greece) in order to assess the role of the forest on local level. The experimental part of this work was based on a questionnaire for 113 people who knew the basic management principles of the specific forest of fir (*Abies borisii Regis* Mattf.).

The analysis of results showed that the University forest of Pertouli (UFP) is a timber productive forest giving jobs to neighboring living people but it simultaneously provides other services such as recreation activities, education of university students, protection of the ecosystem and the environment, etc. According to the answers of the questioned people, the protection of environment and the practical education of university students are services of top priorities provided by the UFP (32% and 31% of the answers, respectively). However, when the ranking of forest products or services provided by the UFP is based on the answers corresponding to all priorities (from 1st to 5th), wood production is at the top (grade 6.78) followed closely by the protection of environment (grade 6.73). Slightly more than 50% of the questioned people believe that the wood production of the UFP can be increased by applying proper forest practices and management.

Protection of the ecosystem and the environment is afforded by keeping biodiversity, by affecting positively the water resources, by improving the landscape, by purifying atmospheric air, etc. The contribution of the UFP to economic development of the adjacent area is fully recognized and is characterized as significant by providing jobs and income to the people mainly in forest operations, timber production and wood processing. Most of the answers (74.3%) support the view that the existing sawmill in the forest can not start re-operating, for economic and other reasons,. Forest recreation services are also provided to a certain extend by the UFP but the questioned people strongly suggest that they may be improved and widened if additional infrastructure is created. The management and exploitation of the UFP is based on the principles of sustainability and of multiple use in order to keep the permanency of providing goods and services for the future generations.

Key words: forests, environmental protection, university fir forest at Pertouli, forest management, sustainability, multiple use, wood production, forest recreation, economic development.