

Forest and timber industry on the Massif des Bauges

The forest : a founding element of the Massif des Bauges

Forest takes up 34 000 hectares that is to say 58 % of the Massif area. Closely interlinked in its environment, it constitutes one of the founding elements of the landscape.

Forest territory can be divided up in 5 types of stands : conifers seedling forest, mixed seedling forest, mixture of broadleaved trees seedling forest and coppice, mixture of conifers seedling forest and coppice, coppice.

The 2 first types represent 50% of the Massif forestry surface.

The main species found on the Massif des Bauges are fir tree, spruce and beech.

The stumpage is 7 million cubic metre : 4.5 million of conifers (shared between the same volume of fir and spruce) and 2.5 million m³ of broadleaved trees made of 62% beech.

So, the various broadleaved potential rises 38% of the broadleaved trees volume with a panel of 16 species favourable to both biodiversity and production of broadleaved trees with an interesting added value.

The annual growth is on average 6.6 m³/ha/year with a growth of 5.5 m³/ha/year in public forest and 7.5 m³/ha/year in private forest ; the broadleaved trees have an important growth (4.5 m³/ha/year).

The stumpage in public forests is smaller than in private forest. The broadleaved trees represent 30% of the stumpage in public forest and 40% in private forest. They notice a high capitalization in private forest. So, private forest must enhance the value of its broadleaved trees potential by developing and adapted environment friendly exploitation.

Forest constitutes a strong element to increase the value of the territory national heritage : indeed, its patrimonial interest is acknowledged through numerous set up systems like nature reserve, "arêtes de biotope", "sites inscrits et sites classes", Natura 2000 area, "ZICO", "ZNIEFF".

For your information, 50% of the Regional Natural Park is covered by these ecological inventories. Besides timber production, forest provides many other natural products which are still little or not economically developed (hunting, fodder for grazing under forest, mushrooms, fir honeydew for apiculture...).

Besides its production function, the forest in slope areas plays a part in physical protection against soil erosion. Moreover, it ensures an important role in regulating rainwaters.

Public forests are covered by "Local Orientations of Forest Management" and "Local Directives of Forest Management". A forestry stations cartography of the Massif has been made.



A property structure very divided up

40% of the forest is public, 52% is private

Private forest management and enhanced value is dependent on the consideration of the high number of property owners who are hardly sensitive to forest management : the mean surface of properties is 1.5 ha shared in several compartments and the number of property owners is evaluated at 12 000 ; there are only 4 "PSG" covering 230 ha on the whole massif.

Public forests are fully covered by Management documents. From an inventory of fixtures of the forest and its socio-economical context, these documents define management objectives and a program of works.

A hardly economically developed forest

600 000 m3 of wood are harvested on the Massif des Bauges, economically developed at 90% of the Massif.

For your information, 525 000 m3 are harvested in the departments Savoie and Haute-Savoie with a predominance of conifers, essentially in round timbers (92%).

Public forest is properly served by classical ways (road and forestry tracks); as for private forest, it is still too weakly served.

Wood industry firms : a not unconsiderable weight

Local logging firms (32 forestry contractors) have a not unconsiderable weight in the periphery of the Massif. They put the wood put on sale by owners at the first transformation firms' disposal by realizing felling, skidding and transport until the factory operations.

They have very often developed a pluriactivity linked with winter tourism in order to be able to work during the winter season.

There is not any forestry works firm on the Massif.

One sawmill settled in the heart of the Massif des Bauges use 10 000 m3 of logs per year. These medium size firms hardly competes with the firms which produce standard, half – finished products whose production is flexible. Traditional small sawmills (12) employing 1-2 salaried employee each one, are also present on the Massif des Bauges, particularly on the periphery and they are the building artisans suppliers.

This firm fabric permits the development of economical activities in rural society.

Sawing production on the department of Savoie and Haute-Savoie has risen 300 000 m3 for 5 years. The Massif des Bauges has to follow the same stability tendency.

The second transformation is represented by 162 timber frame, carpentry (some of them of regional scale) and cabinetwork firms. It is developing in a considerable way, above all in wood framework construction, a good prospects sector. Indeed, the society evolution and the consideration of environment gives to wood, as an ecological and renewable material, a new outlet. Thanks to their activities, these firms participate to the underway restructuration of the 2 main sawmills of the Massif by enhancing the value in their performance the quality wood produced.

A new industry is at present seeing the light with a possible outlet for secondary quality wood : the wood harming industry.

A forest : a privileged space of relaxation and rechargement of one's batteries

The Massif des Bauges is a Massif surrounded by urbanized areas gathering 400 000 habitants (Albertville, Chambéry, Aix les Bains, Annecy), at less than one hour drive. These populations benefit from the Massif in every seasons for their leisures.

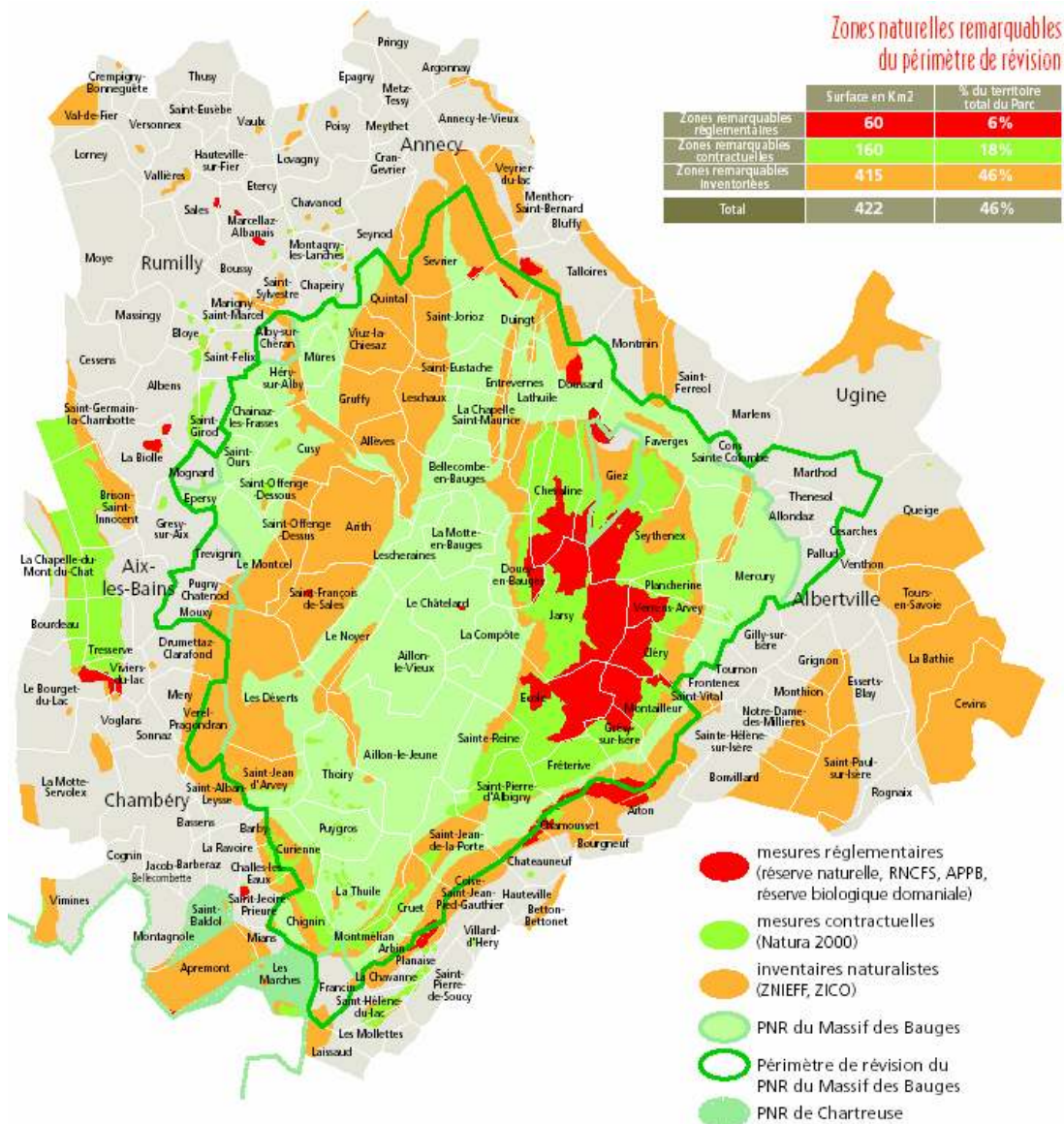
The forest takes an important part as a recreational area (physical and psychical recreation) and has a great influence over the quality of the tourist environment.

The main sites and equipments structuring are the following :

- the cross-country skiing site of the Grand Revard on the towns of La Féclaz, St François de Sales and the Revard
- the downhill skiing site of Aillon and the Margeriaz

- the site of Semnoz at the gateway to the urban area of Annecy
- the National Reserve of Hunt and Wild Faun.

These 4 sites constitute the areas where tourist frequenting concentrates. Tourism is otherwise diffuse on the rest of the Park Territory.



Extrait de l'Atlas diagnostic du Massif des Bauges 2004

Conclusion :

The Massif des Bauges forest constitutes an important massif considering its surface (34 000 ha) and its growth (6.6 m³/ha/year).

This resource is under-exploited with an average harvest of 1.8 m³/ha/year, particularly in private forest. The fir, the spruce and the beech are the main species in the forest, whereas the harvest is made with fir and spruce. The "various" broadleaved trees (16 species) are few exploited despite the existence of a potential.

The public forest is managed by the Office National des Forêts following forest managements whereas only 4 private forests must draft a PSG. The private forest management with an average surface of 1.5 ha shared between several compartments is difficult.

Some documents made to help forest management (ORLAM, DILAM, forestry stations catalogue) are at all the forestry owners' disposal for implementation of a forest management.

60 000 m³ are harvested on the Massif des Bauges, economically developed at 90% out of the Massif whereas there is a big sawmill producing quality products and about 10 small sawmills. These firms supply the 30 second transformation firms, which develop above all the wood frame. The wood is exploited in forest by about ten forestry works firms which have developed a pluriactivity because of the winter season.

The forest also has a social role that is not unconsiderable : it is a strong element of the living environment, its management must integrate a landscape component ; it is a space of public welcome, which requires a sharp knowledge of the frequenting in order to proportion and maintain appropriate equipments.