

Białowieża Forest: Human Footprints in Europe's Last Primeval Forest

Tomasz Samojlik:

The presentation shows an outline of a PhD project (conducted under a supervision of Prof. Dr. Bogumila Jędrzejewska) dealing with human influence on the past biodiversity of Białowieża Forest in the period of traditional multiple forest use. Chronological frames of the project are only partially set: the closing date is known (year 1795 AD, the third partition of Poland, a historical event that fundamentally changed the model of interaction between people and the forest in Białowieża), but the beginning point is still to be set (recent archaeological discoveries showed that human settlement in Białowieża Forest began 2.5 thousand years ago). The project aims to show the interlinked relations between man and nature in Białowieża Forest in the time of traditional use of woodlands, before timber production became the prime forest resource for people. Białowieża Primeval Forest has preserved the last remnants of pristine temperate forests in European lowlands. The long history of protection (since the 15th century) succeeded in preserving enormous biodiversity of flora and fauna, including the European bison. Even longer history of human actions in the Forest left various traces in its structure and composition. Tomasz Samojlik's PhD project will aim at answering the following questions:

1. What were the forms, time and space range of local economical human influence on Białowieża Forest?
2. What were the forms, time and space range, and efficiency of administrative protection of Białowieża Forest?
3. What were the effects of both directions of anthropogenic influence on Białowieża Forest ecosystem biodiversity?
4. What traces of human activities from the period before the beginning of 19th century are observed up to date in Białowieża Forest ecosystems?

Tomasz Samojlik graduated from the Faculty of European Philosophy, Culture and History of the Marie Curie Skłodowska University in Lublin. Since 2002, he has been an administrative coordinator of the project "Centre of Excellence in Biodiversity Conservation and Mammal Research in European Terrestrial Ecosystems (BIOTER)" conducted at the Mammal Research Institute, Polish Academy of Sciences and financed by the European Commission.

Ort: IFF, Schottenfeldg. 29, 1070 Wien, Seminarraum 6. Stock

Zeit: 9. Oktober 2003, 10:00-13:00