4. FIELD STUDY DAY IN A RESTORED OR RESTORATION-IN-PROGRESS FOREST

Students carry out a guided observation in an area that has been restored or is currently under restoration. The goal is to describe visible changes and the impact of restoration on the area's overall condition. In addition, an assessment is made of how the restored area differs from a production forest (structure, species richness, water regime). Based on the information collected during the field day and the knowledge acquired in Lesson 3, 'Preparing a Restoration Plan', a report is compiled. It is recommended to take photos during the field day to illustrate the restoration activities and their results.

If possible, during the study day meet with the specialist responsible for the restoration project or the project implementer, who provides an overview of the following aspects:

- **Restoration goals:** which ecological and social problems are being addressed?
- **Methods used:** for example, closing ditches, creating gaps, removing invasive species, planting native species.
- **Monitoring methods**
- **Difficulties and lessons learned:** what challenges have arisen and how were they solved?
- **Future plans:** what is the long-term impact of the restoration?

Focus of observation:

- restoration of the natural water regime (e.g., ditch blocking, wetland restoration);
- amount and distribution of deadwood (downed logs, standing dead trees);
- stand structure: uneven-aged trees, species diversity;
- forest fragmentation and the restoration of ecological connectivity;
- signs of biodiversity (plant species, insects, birds, etc.).

Observation tools:

- Maps and GPS to locate the study area.
- Observation sheets where students can record their notes.
- Mobile applications (e.g., for identifying plant or bird species).

The report includes the following parts:

- **General description of the area:** location and characteristic features. An explanation of why the chosen area needed restoration. What led to the area's degradation?
- **Description of restoration techniques:** which restoration measures were used in the area?
- **Description of the area's condition:** the impact of restoration on forest structure, species diversity, and the water regime.

- **Risks:** what potential risks were associated with the restoration measures (e.g., excessive soil disturbance, opposition from local residents)? Specify the practical solutions used to prevent these.
- **Monitoring:** which methods were used to assess the impact of restoration?
- **Conclusions and recommendations:** an assessment of the progress of restoration and possible suggestions for next steps. This section should answer the following questions:
    - What key insights and impressions were gained from visiting the restored forest?
    - Did the objectives set for the area's restoration appear to have been met?
    - Which approaches should be adjusted if the objectives did not seem to be met?
    - Which methods could be further used to prevent risks?
    - How does restoration affect the forest's ecological and economic value?