

Activities

Estonian Seminatural Community Conservation Association (ESCCA) is a nongovernmental organisation that was founded in 1997 in order to guarantee the maintenance of Estonian semi-natural communities. Semi-natural communities are traditional agricultural landscapes that include wooded meadows, alvars, floodplain meadows, coastal meadows, but also other meadows and pastures, where grazing animals and mowing have been the only human activities. The ESCCA was called into being due to the fact that the area of semi-natural communities has become marginal during the 20th century, consequently, the further existence of semi-natural communities as well as of species adapted to those conditions has become questionable. Through the maintenance of traditional rural landscapes ESCCA supports also the preservation of traditional village culture.

The member of ESCCA can be everyone, who wishes to support the conservation of Estonian semi-natural communities. There are students, scientists, farmers, nature conservationists, proprietors and other representatives of different fields of life among the members of ESCCA.

The main activities of ESCCA can be divided broadly as following: collecting information concerning semi-natural communities, organising the protection and maintenance of those communities, and thirdly, introducing semi-natural communities to the larger audience.

ESCCA has gathered data about semi-natural communities during several large-scale inventories. In co-operation with Estonian Fund for Nature most of Estonian alvars, wooded, coastal and floodplain meadows were inventoried in 1999-2000. All the semi-natural communities of Läänemaa county were inventoried in co-operation with Southwest Finland Regional Environment Centre. An overview of other seminatural communities has been gathered from the inventories of areas subjected to maintenance and restoration compensations. All this data is collected into one database that is continuously being complemented and used for the protection and management of Estonian semi-natural communities.

The ESCCA has supported organising the conservation and changing the protection regime of several valuable communities, and has also compiled conservation regulations, composed management plans and given expert opinions.

At least two bigger working camps is organised every year, as a result of which some semi-natural community is restored. Most of the working camps have taken place on wooded meadows but also elsewhere.

To fulfil its purposes the ESCCA has applied for funding from different funds that support nature protection. The ESCCA co-operates actively with other nongovernmental organizations as well as governmental institutions and is the member of EKO (the organization of Estonian environmental NGOs).