

# EDITORIAL

## 260 YEARS OF CROATIAN FORESTRY (1765–2025)

Croatian forestry was established on 23 February 1765. On that day, a committee meeting was held at the headquarters of the Karlovac Generalate of the Croatian Military Border in Karlovac, at which it was decided to appoint foresters and organize forestry service in three headquarters: in Baške Oštarije for the forests of the Lika regiment, in Krasno for the forests of the Otok regiment and part of the forests of the Ogulin regiment, and on Petrova gora for the remaining forests of the Ogulin regiment and the forests of the Slunj regiment. The head forester based in Baške Oštarije was assigned eight foresters. The head forester in Krasno, due to the larger area he had to manage, was assigned twelve foresters and one forester-hunter. The head forester on Petrova gora was assigned five foresters. The salary and place of residence were determined for each forester. A temporary instruction was drafted according to which foresters would work and teach their staff. This marked the establishment of our first three forest offices.

At that time, during 1764 and 1765, in the same area, the first inspection, description and division of forests into districts were carried out. Thanks to a precise forest inventory, today we know that 42,017,128 trees of various tree species grew on 126,141 hectares, of which 27% were fir and 50% were beech compared to other tree species. The first original maps of the forests of the Lika, Otok and Ogulin regiments were created, which are today kept in the War Archives in Vienna. The second original copy of the map of the

Lika regiment forests is kept in the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb.

The period of the establishment of Croatian forestry ended in 1769 with the publication of the *Forest Order of Maria Theresa*. This was our first forest law, the first instruction for forest management and the first forestry textbook in the Croatian language. It prescribed cutting age (rotations) for the main tree species. Forest management was regulated by the method of dividing the forest area into annual cuts, the number of which corresponded to the number of rotation years. This way *the principle of sustainability* was introduced into Croatian forestry more than two and a half centuries ago, which only at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century became the backbone of global environmental policy under the name of *sustainable development*.

The anniversary of 260 years of Croatian forestry is certainly an important part of the cultural heritage of Croatia. Croatian forestry should be proud of the fact that it is probably the only profession in our country that has a 260-year-old original document with the date of its establishment, an equally old original map of the forest area with a description of forests, and a 256-year-old law in the Croatian language on regulating sustainable forest management.

Let us be proud of this and celebrate our anniversary in 2025.

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