

Call for Papers

Past, Present and Future: Aspects of a Sustainable Future for the Nature Friends/Friends of Nature in a Historical Perspective

Aim

Rational projections of what the future might bring about are based on explanatory and corrective concepts of a past and present. In particular, the future of a multi-faceted organization like the Nature Friends / Friends of Nature cannot be sketched out in any sophisticated way without reference to historical experiences. In order to outline potentially effective paths into the future, it is the aim here to initiate such a debate on historically relevant questions.

Fundamental questions

- On a general level, what role do historical consciousness or experience play for the future of the organization? Does the knowledge of our past create comprehensive and productive ideas of and for ourselves? How can historical analyses help to evaluate both successful and problematic paths of development?
- Do we claim for ourselves a more or less coherent historical narrative inspite of the fact that our international federation has been expanding from a multitude of differing backgrounds? How can the system of interactions on the local, regional, national, and international levels - and between them - be critiqued historically? Are there relevant long-term trends? Do the narratives defining our view of ourselves suffer from systematic and / or methodological gaps (including "taboos")?
- Over the decades, which social, economic, political, and pragmatic general trends have influenced and changed the field of activities of the Nature Friends / Friends of Nature (or: how has the material and socio-historical environment of the organization changed, e.g. due to technological innovation - means of transport, entertainment industries, media, digitalization, etc. - or with respect to popular concepts on present-day societies such as "individualization" / "risk society", "leisure time culture(s)", "the dissolution of a coherent working class culture", etc.)?

Exemplary Topics

- Do we see the wide scope of the organization as a chance or as a problem? Should we expand (or water down) our profile towards a basically open movement or focus on (or reduce it to) our "core competences"? From a historical perspective, are there long-term positive (or negative) master patterns for the future of the organization?
- What is the role - productive or disruptive - of the structurally and ideologically decentered structure of our transnational club? Do international developments influence national ones?
- Do we see ourselves primarily as a club with an explicitly ecological profile, as a sports organization, as an "alternative" provider in the field of tourism, or as the owners of a most differentiated system of clubhouses and nature retreats? What are the consequences to be drawn from the respective answers?
- In how far do our assumptions on terms like "nature" and "ecology" have historical precursors?
- In how far has the organization functioned as an advance guard of social developments (in the past: Nature Friends amateur scientists as precursors of the *Citizen Science*-movement; clubhouses / resorts as centers of ecological innovation; concept such as "social hiking", "green tourism", etc.)?
- What is the role played in the organization by practical politics, and what impact do we ascribe to our socialist roots? What is the role of the traditional (and dissolving?) working class structures?
- Considering the fact that trade unions and Nature Friends / Friends of Nature are in many a sense complementary institutions (unions organize the fields of production and distribution, Nature Friends target social reproduction and leisure time activities), and in view of the more extended research on the changing socio-historical contexts of the unions: Which of these observations can be applied to the Nature Friends?
- If considered reasonable, how can historical matters be more effectively integrated into the everyday practices of the club(s)?

The project

As a historically oriented online platform *NaturFreundeGeschichte/NatureFriendsHistory* wants to inspire an open and multi-faceted debate on an international basis.

Historical debates cannot solve all the problems the Nature Friends are confronted with under concrete and present-day circumstances. But what they can create is a productive consciousness that such conditions derive from historical factors, "external" (social, economic, political, ecological) and "internal" (structural and ideological).

Ideal results might outline long-term developments in world-wide, national, regional, and local contexts - its findings grounded in history but with the present and future in mind.

Essays, analyses, and comments are welcome from all levels of our federation and should not exceed ten pages. The languages of the journals are German and English; it is possible to also publish texts in other languages. In these cases the texts should be preceded by a German and / or English summary.

(For general guidelines go to geschichte.naturfreunde.org/category/artikelrichtlinien-stylesheet)

The deadline for contributions is early September 2016. Online publication is planned for mid-October of that year. Follow-up discussions in future editions of the journal are possible and welcome.

Contact:

geschichte@naturfreunde-bayern.de

history@naturfreunde-bayern.de