

Today's Challenges

Association of Community and Private Forests Owners in the Banská Bystrica Region is currently addressing a wide range of issues, many of which are especially burdensome for small communities. Chief among them is the zoning of national parks. If approved as proposed, the new regime would have long-term, irreversible impacts on how private forest owners manage and use their property. This is why we advocate for a sensitive, rational, and measured approach.

Roughly 25% of our agenda now concerns environmental matters. Association needs capable colleagues within the governing bodies—people who are either subject-matter experts or locally competent. Another 25% of the other activities are focused to administration and representation before third parties, supported extensively by the experts. The remaining 50% is devoted to advising members—particularly land associations—on the practical problems they face today.

Member engagement has strengthened markedly. Through more frequent communication, we have boosted our collective organization and accelerated problem-solving. Land associations are led by agile, resourceful representatives who could resolve many issues independently; our support, however, opens doors and speeds procedures.

Ownership attitudes are evolving. Older generations tend to maintain a closer, place-based relationship with the land. Younger owners, shaped by a more dynamic socio-economic model and higher mobility, assess assets in broader contexts—sometimes selling and reinvesting to meet life and work demands, including opportunities abroad. Older owners, for their part, may sell because management—often even the paperwork—has become difficult, or to cover rising living costs.

What does this mean for forests? While some fear destabilization, we see a system adapting. Consolidation can enable efficient, sustainable management for new owners, and benefits can flow to society at large. Where owners can manage effectively at scale, they will. Where they cannot, shifting economic activity toward services is a logical—and natural—response.

#SMURFProject

