

## Unit 7. Social uses, recreation and outdoors

### Social Use: Montes de Vigo

#### Description

The Mancomunidad de Montes de Vigo (Montes de Vigo) is an entity that brings together the 14 Community Forests that surround the city of Vigo, the biggest urban conglomerate of Galicia. It was founded in 1997.

The Communities manage 1.565 hectares, which represents around 17% of the total area of the municipality, of which 56.7% is considered for social use. In addition, they have 35 hectares of recreational areas, most of them agreed with the City Council of Vigo, as well as other catalogued archaeological heritage (45 catalogued petroglyphs, 12 mounds, 12 forts, sites, etc.) and ethnographic heritage (mills, paved paths, etc.). There are, also, a lot of official trekking trails that run through these communities (as well as other local trails and themed routes - forest trail, route of mammoths, route of sculptures, Arco da Vella theme park).

The social roles of this private collective forests includes many recreational and sporting activities of entities, educational centers and collectives of the city, ranging from hiking, mountain biking and other types of cycling, mycological activities, botanical or ecological activities, photographic walks, plantations, environmental education, etc. Montes de Vigo has promoted activities that bring together the various communities, the most prominent being the Trekking day (in collaboration with the Vigo City Council) and the Montes de Vigo Trail. Moreover, each of the Communities develops a program of informative, conservation and socio-cultural dynamism activities, as well as sponsoring in their respective parishes many local and cultural festivals, sports clubs, education entities and other social and cultural groups.

#### Goals

“Montes de Vigo” was founded with the purpose of defending and improving the community forests of Vigo, in their economic, social, ecological, cultural and relational aspects. The strategy of the development of the social use is based in:

- An approach of the Forest Communities to society, and particularly, to the logic of services, given that the social function of the forest is not funded in an ordinary way only with the wood production.
- The need of assumption by citizens of co-responsibility in line with the services demanded, both directly (assuming part of their cost or participating in their maintenance) and indirectly (through public administrations, with promotion and assumption of costs).

#### Activities

The actions included in this strategy were:

- Recreational revitalization, which will be responsible for revitalizing the parks and forest spaces, revitalizing the natural and cultural heritage associated with the Montes de Vigo and promoting the performance of recreational and sports activities.
- Environmental education, which will be in charge of managing the communal forest of Vigo as a large classroom of nature in which training activities can be carried out by educational centers, service companies and citizens in general.
- Social participation, which through the Club de Amigos dos Montes de Vigo (Friends of Montes de Vigo Club) aims to bring together everyone interested in knowing and conserving the Vigo forests for purposes of general interest. It is also proposed, in collaboration with collaborating institutions and entities, to promote participation channels such as environmental volunteering or collaborative groups
- Communication and external relations, to publicize the social use of Montes de Vigo and collect the collaboration and sponsorship of public and private institutions in a way that contributes to being able to develop the activities of the other areas of action.

#### Impact

- In 2006, Montes de Vigo drew up the “Natureza Viva” Project. The conclusion of this work was that “... Montes de Vigo have to offer the city a growing variety of uses in line with the new demands; but the various uses must always be compatible with the primacy of the environmental function and the offer of spaces of quality leisure”.
- In October 2017 fires in Galicia and Portugal were one of the most serious fire. Two wildfires ravaged destroying almost 600 hectares of woodland, in Montes de Vigo, People felt devastated. Montes de Vigo coordinated dozens of volunteer groups in mulching action to protect the burned soil from erosion, multiple school plantations, and other actions from companies and social groups. Despite the tragedy, the organization proved that all the efforts made years before in their interaction with the “city” were giving fruit, and gave one of the most important examples of social resilience in the aftermath of a wildfire

#### Social Media

<https://www.montesdevigo.org/>

