

Vatnshorn - Lake's horn

The European Festivals Forest

Iceland pilot 2022-2024

WHO

Arts Festivals across Europe are coming together to plant a forest in Iceland to offset their carbon emissions. The project is run by The European Festivals Forest Foundation, a not-for-profit registered in the Netherlands. Key partner is Skógræktin - the Icelandic Forestry Service.

WHY

Festivals are gatherers of progressive early adopters, free- and forward-thinkers, and are incubators of both societal positivity and behavioural change. 75% of all festivals' carbon footprint is audience and artists' travel. This is a simple way for a whole festival industry to lead a progressive call to climate action.

From Myrkvidr and Silvanus to Gretel and the Gruffalo, the forest is central in European mythology.

WHAT

We are working with Skógræktin to plant 2,500 trees per hectare with locally incubated seedlings of Lodgepole pine, Sitka spruce, Black cottonwood, Downy birch in a mosaic landscape – a bio-diverse forest, with open glades, wetlands, streams and ponds.

In our sector's drive to Net Zero by 2030 this afforestation project is the carbon sequestration plan that complements best practice in reduction, repurpose and recycling sustainability policy in the events industry.

WHERE

Vatnshorn is an 1100-hectare abandoned farm on the shores of Lake Skorradalvatn in West Iceland. The farm has a small amount of lowland, a slope and a large upland area. The slope in the most western part of the property is an intact, primeval birch forest that is protected as a nature reserve. Vatnshorn was purchased by the Icelandic Forestry Service in 1996 with the aim to protect this primeval forest and afforesting other parts of the property. The underlying glacial till combined with plentiful rain creates mesic (not too wet or too dry) soil conditions and several tree species are well adapted to the climate.





“A bio-diverse forest with open glades, ponds, streams and wetlands.”

WHEN

This is a big project. Let us break it down into long, medium and short term, and then the NOW.

LONG TERM vision will enable Strava Sigríksdóttir, a 22nd century luthier, to make violins and guitars from the spruces planted in the 2020s. Forest thinking is like Cathedral thinking, but instead of generations we are planning centuries of arboretum.

MEDIUM TERM stability of geography, the Icelandic Forestry Service land management and partner ownership enables our festivals to plan for sustained and sustainable biodiversity, and carbon certification in 50-year cycles. Time and international collaboration maximises both carbon sequestration and efficacy.

SHORT TERM project management sees 2022 – mapping, fencing, scarification. 2023 - seed cultivation. 2024 sapling plantation.

NOW we can work together to pool our energy and resources to greatest effect. Pilot Festivals will make the Carbon Coin deal with audiences from the Summer of 2022, and start to invest in the EFF this Autumn.

HOW

Festivals will introduce a €2 Carbon Coin levy on each full booking, to be added as an opt-in at checkout alongside the option for a larger carbon-offset donation calculator. We will map the forested area for each festival and provide annual reports. Festivals can join the European Festivals Forest via www.festivalsforest.eu.

HOW MUCH?

The average cost for seedlings and planting is €2 per tree. Carbon sequestration can be metered and certified at 5-10 tonnes per hectare per year for 50 years. The average cost for 1 tonne of carbon sequestration is therefore € 10. This will keep reducing the bigger the area we can afford.

By combining with other festivals and collaborating across Europe we improve economies of scale - the unit costs keep coming down, the sequestration rates keep going up and we get the best possible deal.

The European Festivals Forest Foundation costs will be 10% of the cost of afforestation.



www.festivalsforest.eu

EUROPEAN FESTIVALS FOREST FOUNDATION

Charity registration number 84843225 at the Netherlands Chamber of Commerce