



Stadt Köln



FSC International Staff Meeting

**21st April 2026
Gut Leidenhausen**



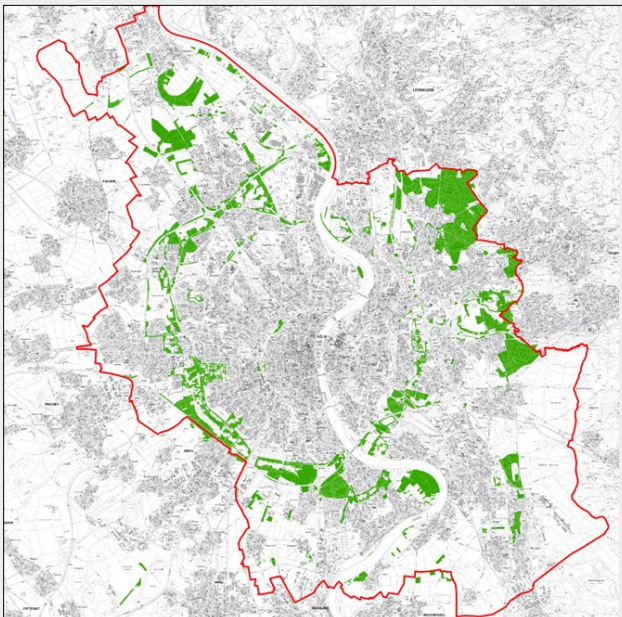
The Forests of Cologne

6,000 hectares = 15 % of the city area

Of which urban forest: approx. 4,000 hectares Mostly created through reforestation in the 20th century.

85 % of the forest is less than 90 years old.
520 hectares (= 16 %) of the forest area is left entirely to natural development.

Special forest facilities: Forstbotanischer Garten und Friedenswald, Waldlabor, Lindenthaler Tierpark, Wildpark Dünnwald, Wildgehege Brück, Gut Leidenhausen



Professions: Master foresters, tree inspectors, foresters, various trainees

(Forest Botanical Garden and Peace Forest, Forest Laboratory, Lindenthal Zoo, Dünnwald Wildlife Park, Brück Game Reserve, Leidenhausen Estate). The forestry operation is divided into the districts on the left and right banks of the Rhine.

Forest management according to the German FSC standard

Key criteria for management:

- No use of chemical pesticides
- Deadwood concept (preservation of standing deadwood in old stands, 10 biotope trees/hectare)
- Natural forest development (for municipal forestry operations over 1,000 hectares, at least 5 % of the operating area)
- Soil-conserving fine development (no more than 10 % of the timber floor area, resulting in 40 meter skid trail spacing with a width of 4 meter)

The Cologne method is a form of timber harvesting that contributes significantly to soil-conserving timber harvesting.

Requirements for the method:

- Motorised manual felling and cutting to length
- Skid trail spacing of at least 40 meter
- The skidding horse in the stand
- The forwarder for final skidding on the trail

Sections are moved forward by the horse and stacked at right angles to the skid trail according to assortment.

Advantages of the method: Due to the trail spacing of at least 40 meter, every second skid trail can be omitted compared to harvesting with a harvester, which significantly reduces the loss of woodland area. In addition, more wood is pre-concentrated per trail, enabling more effective final skidding.

Processing and forwarding with horses is virtually independent of the weather. Final forwarding only takes place when the ground is dry enough to maintain the passability of the lanes. The combination of horses and machines guarantees that the ground is protected.

Climate-adapted forest management

The German government offers forestry operations funding for climate-adapted forest management based on 12 criteria, some of which go beyond the FSC standard. The city of Cologne will receive 236,000 Euros per year for 10 years for complying with these criteria:

1. Pre-regeneration of existing stands
2. Priority given to natural regeneration of native species

3. Compliance with the tree species recommendations of the federal states
4. Allowing succession stages
5. Preservation and expansion of tree species diversity
6. No clear-cutting
7. Enrichment and increase in deadwood diversity
8. Marking of at least 5 habitat trees per hectare
9. Skid trail spacing of at least 30 meter for new plantations
10. No fertilisation or plant protection
11. Water retention measures
12. Natural forest development on 5 % of the area

Environmental Education Center Gut Leidenhausen

The Environmental Education Center Gut Leidenhausen promotes responsible environmental stewardship through practical, experience-based nature education and action-oriented learning. Its primary focus lies on ecosystems and biodiversity, bringing these topics to life through a diverse range of events that inspire fascination for nature and highlight the importance of its protection.

Various related environmental topics are incorporated into the event program.

A central principle of the center's work is shared exploration and discovery. Through inquiry-based learning and direct interaction with nature, participants gain insight into local flora and fauna while also strengthening social and practical skills. The events encourage awareness of the careful and sustainable use of natural resources and aim to empower participants to carry environmental responsibility into their everyday lives.

The educational approach aligns with overarching initiatives such as the Biodiversity Strategy and the Federal Program on Education for Sustainable Development. Supported in part by the voluntary engagement of various associations, Gut Leidenhausen offers a diverse range of activities in environmental education, nature conservation, and social engagement.



Cologne Forest School

The Cologne Forest School is an out-of-school learning center where children and youth experience the forest up close. They explore animals, plants, and ecological connections, learning about climate, water, resources, and sustainable action.

Since 1984, the Cologne Forest School has complemented school learning with hands-on programs at Gut Leidenhausen, Lindenthaler Tierpark, the mobile forest School rucksack and family-centered school projects.

Children develop key future competencies, take responsibility for the environment and society, and experience how their actions can make a difference. The planned ESD certification in 2026 highlights the Cologne Forest School as a forward-looking learning center.

Contact Details

City of Cologne

Forestry Administration

Michael Hundt

T: +49 221 221-34645

michael.hundt@stadt-koeln.de

Environmental Education Center

Gut Leidenhausen

Robert Schallehn

T: +49 2203 9800541

Info@gut-leidenhausen.de



German Forest Protection Association

Cologne

Dr. Joachim Bauer

T: +49 2203 1866494

info@sdw.koeln



Stadt Köln

Der Oberbürgermeister

Amt für Landschaftspflege und Grünflächen
Amt für Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit

Gestaltung und Druck
Zentrale Dienste der Stadt Köln

Bildnachweis
Titel: © Tor Leidenhausen_Peter Gauger;
Waldkarte © Stadt Köln;
Wald © Stadt Köln/Lena Herwagen

13-HF/143-26/67/800/03.2026