



BioCon Valley®

Health Economy Cluster
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Healing Forests

An idea from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is crossing the globe

Jan Schmidt, 8th October 2021 // Terme Tuhelj
Turizam 365



Agenda

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1. (Health) Tourism in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
2. Healing forests – an unique idea from Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
3. The International Certification Office Healing Forest
4. Healing Forest Klink – an example from practice
5. Conclusions



Before we start...

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34.3 %

19,220 km²

24.7 %

5,580 km²



... some facts about Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

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- 23,211 km² surface area
- 1,610,774 inhabitants
- 69 inhabitants per km²
- GDP 42,78 billion EUR (2017)
- Unemployment rate 6,9 % (2021)





1. (Health) Tourism in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

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Tourism is an important economic factor in the region:

- Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is the most popular inner German destination
- 5.1 billion EUR gross annual gross turnover
- 173,000 people employed directly or indirectly in tourism
- 18,000 guest-nights per 1,000 inhabitants at peak
- 34.1 million guest-nights and 8.4 million arrivals in 2018



1. (Health) Tourism in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

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- 2,000 km coastal line
- More than 2,000 lakes
- Rügen & Usedom: Germany's largest islands
- Numerous nature protection areas
- 3 national parks as part of UNESCO heritage
- Spacious forest areas
- Rich architecture and cultural heritage
- 63 spas and health resorts
- 1,648 hours of sunshine a year






2. Healing Forests – an unique idea from MV

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**The forest is the most
natural hospital as well
as the most healthiest
and cheapest pharmacy.**



2. Healing Forests – an unique idea from MV

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„Healing Forests are forests that are designed for **therapeutical treatment** for certain indications. Treatments of diseases in the forest are suited to influence the adverse effects of diseases in a positive manner (tertiary prevention) when accompanied by an **educated therapist**.

Chronical diseases can be treated in a palliative way“.

National characteristics need to be taken into account (e.g. **definition of therapists**)

As concluded at the 1. **International Congress** „Forests´ Potential for Health“ // 13 September 2017 in Heringsdorf (organised by **Spas Association Mecklenburg-Vorpommern e. V.** and **Heringsdorf municipality**)



2. Healing Forests – an unique idea from MV

an unipue therapeutical active mixture:

- **Air** → **respiratory tract/cardio-vascular system**
- **Light** → **Psychology/skin**
- **Surface structure** → **musculoscelatal and cardio-vascular system**
- **Microbes** → **Allergies**
- **Plant compounds** → **Immune status**
- **Silence** → **Psychosomatic**



2. Healing Forests – an unique idea from MV

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Project of the State Forest Agency **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern**



Educating certified **Forest Therapists** as additional **qualification** for:

- foresters
- Nursing staff
- Physiotherapists
- Occupational herapists
- Art therapist
- Psychotherapist
- doctors
- (...)



2. Healing Forests – an unique idea from MV

State Forest Agency MV offers two additional educational courses:

- „Forest Prevention“:
Alumni are able to plan, implement and evaluate forest based programmes for general health prevention
- „Forest Therapy“:
therapeutically accompanied treatment in the forest to support patients with medical diagnoses and indications

www.wald-mv.de/landesforst-mv/Wald-und-Gesundheit/





3. International Certification Office

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Healing Forests in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

—

How to internationalise a regional success story?



3. International Certification Office

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- Many offers related to forest bathing, forest therapy and healing forests
- But no standardised internationally recognised definition what a healing forest is
- No institutionalised approach to support the internationalisation of the healing forest idea and concept

BUT:

In 2021 the International Certification Office Healing Forest was f(o)unded with the support of the Ministry of Economy, Employment and Health



3. International Certification Office

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- To elaborate an internationally recognised certificate „Healing Forest“
- To establish international standards which are the basis for certification of healing forests around the globe
- Validation of forests regarding their potential to serve as healing forests
- Establishment of an international network of experts and interested people



3. International Certification Office

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HEILWALD

What is a healing forest?

Healing forests are forest areas designed for therapeutic use for special indications. Treatments in the forest, accompanied by trained therapists, are suitable for positively influencing the treatment of diseases and the extent of the disability caused by these diseases (tertiary prevention). Chronic diseases can be alleviated (palliation).



3. International Certification Office

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- Preparing certification of healing forests in Austria
- Intensifying contacts to partners in Portugal, Spain, Taiwan, USA, Canada and Lithuania ... and hopefully Finland
- Preparing participation in several congresses
 - 2nd International Conference on Forests for Public Health (5th – 28th October 2021, Korea)
 - IV International Congress „Forest Health Potential“ (30th March – 2nd April 2022, Portugal)



3. International Certification Office

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- Forest owners can receive a certificate „Healing Forest“ if they present a therapeutical concept of usage
- A decision is taken based on a forestal assessment and a medical assessment
- A certificate can be issued when a forest complies with the criteria set by the International Certification Office
- The certificate „Healing Forest“ guarantees a certain quality of the forest as well as a certain quality and impact of the therapeutical treatments that are offered or available in the healing forest



4. Healing Forest Klink – an example from practice

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European Regional
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4. Healing Forest Klink – an example from practice

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- 3rd Forest identified as Healing Forest according to Forest Law MV in 2021
- 4.8 hectare coverage (48,000 sqm)
- Identification as Healing Forest in 2021
- 1 physio therapist, 1 psychologist offer forest therapeutical treatments
- 4000 clients p.a.
- Approx. 3000 clients in the healing forest + visitors, tourists, locals



4. Healing Forest Klink – an example from practice

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- „treatment track“ of 2 km length
- 15 stations
- Different indications addressed
- General health prevention and improvement
- Pain therapy
- Stress reduction
- Musculoskeletal system





4. Healing Forest Klink – an example from practice

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Mecklenburg-Vorpommern
Best of Northern Germany



5. Conclusions

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Healing Forests...

- offer an additional potential for health and well-being
- offer an additional potential for (health) tourism
- help to raise attractiveness of regions
- offer an off-season potential
- help to preserve natural resources and to better deal with climate change
- need to be certified and thus comply with standards valid internationally to guarantee a certain quality



Thank you for your attention

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