2nd February: World Wetlands Day

Santa María de La Rábida: The antechamber to the New World
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The opinions expressed by the collaborators do not necessarily represent those of the publishers.
EDITORIAL
Protecting the past to build the future

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Friary of Santa María de la Rábida:
The antechamber to the New World

ENVIRONMENT
Wetlands for our future

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• Inauguration of the Regional Resource and Interpretation Centre of the Mountain Olive Groves (Cordoba)
• Life+Enerbioscrub project: Cost-effective and sustainable fuel

TRAGSATEC:
• A consortium led by Grupo Tragsa has been awarded one of the largest EuropeAid contracts in Turkey
• Nature Trails app: Enjoy every step of the way.
• Wildmed: the last Mediterranean forest

DID YOU KNOW…?
In the last three years, Grupo Tragsa has performed more than 5,600 environment-related jobs for the Government.
Fragmento de los frescos sobre el Descubrimiento realizados en el Monasterio de la Rábida por Daniel Vázquez Díaz, uno de los grandes pintores españoles del siglo XX.
The past, the present and the future converge in the castles, palaces, cathedrals and other monuments which make up our historical heritage. Representing its history and tradition, they underpin the many identities on which our country is built. If this were not reason enough to ensure their preservation, over the last few years they have also proven themselves to be sources of wealth for our society and it is, perhaps, for this reason that a continually increasing number of institutions are driving attempts to gain a greater understanding of our patrimony.

This is not, however, an easy task. The current situation in our country has forced the Government to tighten its belt when drawing up the national budget and, as a result, the money reserved for patrimony conservation work has gradually gone down. For example, if we add the amount of money spent on heritage conservation and restoration work to the sum assigned to heritage protection, we can see that it has gone down from 24.7 to 22 million Euros in 2015. In other words, a cut of 11%.

Given the circumstances, it would seem only right to enhance the idea that heritage is a resource which is at the service of development and which is valuable in its own right as a representation of the country’s collective memory and as a potential asset for its future. But if financial resources are diminishing, alternative measures are necessary. Perhaps the most obvious might be to drive home the message amongst the general public: our heritage is part of society’s cultural resources and not exclusively the government’s responsibility. It’s also the responsibility of each and every one of us. With that in mind, one of the first tasks which needs to be carried out is to truly UNDERSTAND what our heritage is so that strategies for its use, conservation and promotion can be put in place.

With this in mind, the Tragsa Group has worked alongside different public administration bodies on promotion projects of this kind as well as on the maintenance, conservation and restoration of Spain’s historical and artistic heritage. We have carried out different lines of work in over 900 communities throughout our country where the latest technological applications, functional and visual aspects of our work have been integrated and linked to the environment being worked upon, be it rural or urban. All of this is done with the intention of ensuring that these features fulfil a role which fits in with society today.

Fine examples of such work are the open-air theatre in Torralba (Patio de Comedias de Torralba, Ciudad Real) which was declared a site of cultural interest in 2004, Arévalo Castle (Ávila) or the rehabilitation work done on the La Rábida Friary (Huelva), a place which set the stage for the Discovery of America and about which we will get to know a lot more in this magazine.

No one can deny that the importance of our patrimony, however modest it might be, is the subject of ever greater consensus. The challenge ahead of us today is to achieve greater integration with regards to its protection and providing it with added value within development programmes so that these jewels in our history may be preserved for future generations.

Miguel Giménez de Córdoba Fernández-Pintado
Chairman of Grupo Tragsa
FIELD NOTES

LA RÁBIDA FRIARY: THE ANTECHAMBER TO THE NEW WORLD
The Santa María de la Rábida Friary stands on the left bank of the River Tinto where it passes through Palos de la Frontera (Huelva). Located in a historic enclave, high on Peña de Saturno hill, and with magnificent views of the Huelva estuary, it is linked to one of the most important events in world history: the Discovery of America.
In 1485, the Franciscan monks of La Rábida opened their doors to a Genovese navigator called Christopher Columbus. During his stay at the friary, they gave him both scientific and spiritual guidance. Columbus also had these monks to thank for the fact he received part of the support he needed for his great feat.

Two of the monks, brother Juan Pérez and brother Antonio Marchena, shared his enthusiasm and became key elements in the project, thanks to their royal connections and contacts in the local shipping industry. It was through these religious men that Columbus met his future travel companion, Martín Alonso Pinzón, who

On the 3rd August 1492, the nao (carrack) “Santa María” and the caravels “Pinta” and “Niña” set off from Palos de la Frontera with ninety men aboard. It was the beginning of a tortuous journey that would end with the discovery of the New World. Nevertheless, we need to go a few years further back to get the full story of this great adventure.
FUN FACTS ABOUT LA RÁBIDA

- La Rábida has always been an important point of reference, with Hernán Cortés even going there after conquering Mexico.

- It was chosen as the starting point for the flight of the ‘Plus Ultra’ between Palos and Buenos Aires in 1925, thereby achieving the milestone of linking Europe and America for the first time.

- Some of the rooms the Genovese admiral spent his time in still exist today, and visitors can see the ‘Poema del Descubrimiento’ (Poem of Discovery) mural created by Daniel Vázquez Díaz from Nerva in the 20th century.

- The busts of the Franciscan monks Juan Pérez and Antonio de Marchena by León Ortega are on display opposite the main door.

- The friary was declared a National Monument in 1856. It was declared the First Historic Monument of the Spanish Peoples in 1949. On the 28th February 1992 it was awarded the ‘Andalusia Gold Medal’ by the Regional Government. In the declaration of the 9th Ibero-American Summit of Heads of State and Presidents of Government in Havana, La Rábida was recognised as a meeting point for the Iberian-American Community of Nations.

- The Aztec calendar on Discoverers’ Walk is a brightly coloured reproduction of the calendar donated by the Ibero-American Cooperation Institute. It is a basalt disc measuring 3.60 metres in diameter. It is 122 centimetres thick and weighs 24 tonnes. The original is in the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City. It shows 260 days in 20 symbols around the disc, which means their ‘week’ was 13 days long. The face in the middle could be the Sun god.

- Next to the entrance there is a plaque that reads: ‘La Rábida is the first affirmation of the Spanish-American movement. This place where the seeds of the New World were sown is sacred for racial emotion. For Spaniards and Americans who feel deeply and project their thoughts to the heavens, will it not help our purposes to convert the force that emanates from this humble friary into peace and love? The Christ that Columbus, brother Juan Pérez, Marchena and the Pinzón family prayed to opens his arms to all beliefs and good will.’

TURNING THE CLOCK BACK

After having rested on its foundations for more than five centuries, the friary building had begun to deteriorate, and the wear and tear was clearly visible and quite alarming. At
Entre los trabajos de mejora de las zonas ajardinadas realizados en el entorno de La Rábida destaca la poda de las 90 palmeras que flanquean la columna conmemorativa del IV Centenario.
this point, the Huelva Regional Government stepped in to return this silent witness of Spain’s history to its former glory. The initiative was included in the Forum II Project (co-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, and which is one of the most significant investments in the province of Huelva), involving improving forest areas and infrastructures to encourage tourism, a task in which Grupo Tragsa participated.

DISCOVERERS’ WALK
Work on this particular space also included the area surrounding the friary. The Discoverers’ Walk (or Walk of the Shields) is another emblematic area that has been smartened up. After years of vandalism and neglect, it has now regained its original appearance. The Aztec calendar, donated by the Ibero-American Cooperation Institute at the beginning of the decade of the 5th centenary of the discovery of America, had to be completely replaced, and 18 of the shields that are a symbol of La Rábida and a reference point for visitors had to be repaired. The potter Carlos Escobar did a magnificent job on this.

Several of the main aims of the project were met: creating recreational spaces for visitors, providing a better view of the friary and the recently restored 4th centenary commemorative column, and reducing the risk of fire. The garden areas were improved (lawns being increased by 6,500 m²), and the 90 palm trees along the walk were thinned and pruned.

Another problem associated with the walk was the landslides that affected it when it rained. The path was constantly being covered with earth and weeds. The solution: a 165 metre-high limestone wall and a new drainage system for the access road. This required covering 254 metres of the roadside with concrete.

The work has created more recreational spaces for visitors, provided better views of the monument and reduced the risk of fire.

Lastly, it is important to mention the restoration of the Plaza de la Cruz, located between the Walk of the Shields and the friary. Damaged structures were replaced and garden areas were created by the steps to provide new areas for relaxing in.

This place, which had a key role in the discovery of America, has now been restored to its former glory. The Huelva Regional Government confirmed the success by expressing their satisfaction. They intend to continue improving the areas related to Columbus, particularly focussing on the recovery of the original port from which the caravels set sail on their journey to the New World.

The Aztec calendar was replaced entirely and 18 of the shields that are the emblems of La Rábida were repaired.

CARAVEL WHARF
The project included redesigning the pedestrian access to an area of particular importance: The Muelle de las Carabelas (Caravel Wharf), where the reproductions of the ‘Niña’, ‘Pinta’ and ‘Santa María’ built in 1992 to celebrate the 5th centenary of the discovery of America are located. Here the depth of the Gravera lagoon was increased, encouraging wildlife to the area, and a children’s playground was built.
Wetlands are unique and immensely important ecosystems. They provide enormous natural wealth, are the refuge of many different species and, above all, act as natural water filters. 64% of the planet’s wetlands were lost last century. Raising public awareness of their importance and the need to preserve them is fundamental. That is a challenge that governments all over the world take on every 2nd February; World Wetlands Day.
Spain has a great wetland natural heritage, thanks to their ecological wealth, the diverse species they are home to and their uses. The country boasts the widest ecological variety of wetlands in the European Union. It currently has 74 wetland areas (more than 303,000 hectares) on the list of Ramsar sites, including Doñana and Las Tablas de Daimiel.

This explains the importance that the environmental authorities of Spain place on these ecosystems. This year, under the title ‘Wetlands for our future’, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and the Environment (MAGRAMA) once again participated in the celebration of this important date. The aim of this day is to raise awareness, especially among young people, of the need to take measures that will slow down, stop and reverse the destruction of our wetlands.

The uniqueness and complexity of these sites is a result of their hydrological nature. They work as transition, or intermediate, ecosystems between land and aquatic ecosystems. These peculiarities are what determine the wealth and diversity of life they contain. According to Ministry figures, the wetlands are home to more than 100,000 known freshwater species. It is estimated that in our country they are a haven for more than 40% of the aquatic birds that winter in the western Mediterranean.

64% of the planet’s wetlands were lost last century.

However, until recently wetlands were considered to be wasteland. They were drained, filled and even burnt, which led to us losing 64% of all the wetlands on the planet last century. This is an alarming figure, but which pales into insignificance against the figure of 87% when compared to data from 1700.

Aware of this fragility, MAGRAMA is working to integrate the conservation needs of wetlands into the different sectorial policies it manages, to perform inventories of them and to help contribute to the State’s international commitments in this area. In order to achieve this, collaboration from government bodies and the social agents involved is essential as part of a coordinated plan of action.
**INVENTORY OF SPANISH WETLANDS AND RAMSAR SITES**

In collaboration with the Ministry, Grupo Tragsa is working on several projects in this field. One of these is the **Inventory of Spanish Wetlands** (IEZH, acronym from the Spanish) that is governed by Royal Decree 435/2004. This document provides key guidelines for including wetlands in the inventory and provides information about their conservation status, type and location.

This inventory currently contains a total of 18 different types of wetlands and four different types of states of preservation.

Grupo Tragsa technicians are working with MAGRAMA to gather information provided by the autonomous communities regarding the wetlands that they wish to include in the Inventory. This information is used to study the characteristics of each one in detail, in order to establish whether it should be definitively included. Once the report has been written, the autonomous community is contacted again to confirm that they want to continue with the process.

## TYPES OF WETLAND

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIPOLOGY</th>
<th>Nº OF WETLANDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Permanent, seasonal or intermittent saltwater, alkaline brackish water or fresh water lakes, lagoons, pools, estuaries and marshes</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artificial ponds of ecological interest</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain wetlands and lakes</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural stretches of water courses</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estuaries and deltas</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peat bogs</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reservoirs and reservoir areas of ecological interest and that act as wetlands</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal sand-based systems</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coastal fresh water ponds and marshes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidal estuaries and marshes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flooded land of ecological interest</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt pans</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tidal mudbanks, sandbanks and saline soils</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brackish or salty coastal ponds or lagoons</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aquaculture ponds of ecological interest</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freshwater wooded wetlands</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wetlands with shrub vegetation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CONSERVATION STATUS OF SPANISH WETLANDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONSERVATION STATUS</th>
<th>Nº OF WETLANDS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Altered</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well preserved</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserved</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highly altered</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
320 wetlands have been added to the inventory in our country since the Autonomous Community of Madrid started it in 2006. This number could well change significantly, however, as there are currently several proposals for new incorporations being processed and which, if accepted, could double the number of wetlands in the Inventory.

For this reason it is not possible to give the full national distribution, although the list does give us insight into the amazing diversity of aquatic ecosystems in just six autonomous communities (Andalusia, La Rioja, Madrid, Valencia, the Basque Country and the Principality of Asturias).

The situation of the wetlands on the Ramsar List is somewhat different. Their national distribution is more even, with 74 sites over all the autonomous communities. The legal management tools for these wetlands are regulated by international instruments. In order to become a designated site they must meet a series of Criteria for identifying Wetlands of International Importance.

**RAMSAR CRITERIA**

If we focus on criteria 2 and 3, which refer to the fauna living in these areas, we can distinguish extremely important taxonomic groups such as invertebrates. Of particular significance in this group are beetles. Thanks to them we can gauge the state of preservation of a wetland and the quality of its water. This is why beetles are one of the main indicators used in aquatic environments (rivers, lakes, reservoirs, etc.) for this purpose. The importance of these little beings is so great that MAGRAMA recently published the *Atlas de los Coleópteros acuáticos de la España Peninsular* (Atlas of Aquatic Beetles on the Spanish Peninsula). The book was compiled by the University of Murcia with the collaboration of Grupo Tragsa.

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Spain boasts the widest ecological variety of wetlands in the European Union.
GRUPO A
Sitios que comprenden tipos de humedales representativos, raros o únicos

CRITERIO 1
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si contiene un ejemplo representativo, raro o único de un tipo de humedal natural o casi natural hallado dentro de la región biogeográfica apropiada.

GRUPO B
Sitios de importancia internacional para conservar la diversidad biológica

Criterios basados en especies y comunidades ecológicas

CRITERIO 2
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si sustenta especies vulnerables, en peligro o en peligro crítico, o comunidades ecológicas amenazadas.

CRITERIO 3
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si sustenta poblaciones de especies vegetales y/o animales importantes para mantener la diversidad biológica de una región biogeográfica determinada.

Criterios específicos basados en aves acuáticas

CRITERIO 4
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si sustenta especies vegetales y/o animales cuando se encuentran en una etapa crítica de su ciclo biológico y/o en períodos en que prevalecen condiciones adversas.

CRITERIO 5
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si sustenta de manera regular una población de 20.000 o más aves acuáticas.

Criterios específicos basados en peces

CRITERIO 6
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si sustenta de manera regular el 1% de los individuos de una población de una especie o subespecie de aves acuáticas.

Criterios específicos basados en otros taxones

CRITERIO 7
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si sustenta una proporción significativa de las subespecies, especies o familias de peces autóctonas, etapas del ciclo biológico, interacciones de especies y/o poblaciones que son representativas de los beneficios y/o los valores de los humedales y contribuye de esa manera a la diversidad biológica del mundo.

CRITERIO 8
Un humedal deberá ser considerado de importancia internacional si es una fuente de alimentación importante para peces, es una zona de desove, un área de desarrollo y crecimiento y/o una ruta migratoria de la que dependen las existencias de peces dentro o fuera del humedal.

CRITERIO 9
Un humedal deberá considerarse de importancia internacional si sustenta habitualmente el 1% de los individuos de la población de una especie o subespecie dependiente de los humedales que sea una especie animal no aviaría.
The information in this book will be highly useful for managing our wetlands, as it will help identify endangered species, determine how natural they are and the degree to which these ecosystems have been altered.

Spain is currently in the process of having a new site included on the Ramsar list. The application for inclusion of the Atlantic Islands of Galicia National Park has been processed and is now awaiting approval.

**Spain has 74 wetlands on the list of Ramsar sites**

If it is added to the list, the Government will be committed to taking the necessary measures to ensure its ecological characteristics are maintained. It will also become part of a new national category and the international community will recognise that it is of significant value, not only for the country where it is located, but also for all humanity.
**PROFILE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name and Surname:</th>
<th>David Flores Ramos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualifications:</td>
<td>Forestry Technical Engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position in Tragsa:</td>
<td>Site Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years in the company:</td>
<td>14 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What his job involves:</td>
<td>Responsible for managing projects of varying nature and for their technical and financial control, combining responsibilities for safeguarding quality, environmental control and health and safety in accordance with various regulations. David was directly responsible for the project to refurbish different infrastructures in and around the La Rábida Friary. During the execution phase of the work he coordinated the different means, collaborators and participating craftsmen, ensuring quality, environmental control and worker health and safety. In short, his mission was to ensure that the project and the interests of each of the participating administrative bodies were correctly tended to.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why the La Rábida Friary is worth a visit:</td>
<td>Because it was a direct witness of one of the most relevant historical moments in the entire history of humankind: the Discovery of America. The Franciscan monks played an important role by mediating between Christopher Columbus and the Catholic Monarchs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interesting facts about the monastery, its strong points or most representative aspects:</td>
<td>Its Gothic-Mudejar style church where Our Lady of the Miracles from the 14th century is worshipped, the areas adorned with fresco paintings by Daniel Vázquez Díaz or its Mudejar cloister.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The surrounding area offers:</td>
<td>The gardens, the Column of the Discoverers, the monument in remembrance of the 5th centenary of the Discovery of America, the Harbour of the Caravels and the Celestino Mutis botanical garden built by Tragsa and unveiled in 1992 to coincide with the 5th centenary.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This award was given to mark the 20th anniversary of the creation of the EMAS register, an environmental management system which helps organisations to improve resource efficiency, reduce risks and serve as an example to others by communicating its good practices to the public.
The European Commission aims to acknowledge the commitment to the environment made by enterprises included in this EU environmental management and auditing system. Backed by the European Commission, the Directorate-General for the Environment and relevant entities (in this case, the Institute for Environmental Management in the Spanish region of Aragón, INAGA) were responsible for organising the award ceremony held in the Department for Agriculture, Livestock and Environment headquarters in Zaragoza.

Counsellor Modesto Lobón and Nuria Gayán, the Director of INAGA, presided over the event in which the Tragsa Group was handed a diploma in recognition of its endeavour to implant the European EMAS system and go beyond simple compliance with environmental legal regulations.

The lawyer, Antonio Garrigues Walker, who also attended the ceremony, gave a conference on the corporate world and the environment entitled ‘Twenty years is nothing’. During his intervention, he pointed out the economic and social impact of the environment and assured that these prizes “prove that there is greater awareness amongst businesses of these issues”.
A 19th century building in Sierra Morena has been transformed into the Regional Resource and Interpretation Centre of the Mountain Olive Groves.
Olives, and the oil obtained from them, have been linked to the history and culture of many towns and villages since time immemorial. Such is the case of Adamuz (Cordoba), where 13,192 hectares of the 333.8 km² of its surface area are used for olive oil-related activities. This made it the ideal choice of location for the Mountain Olive Regional Resource and Interpretation Centre.

The project, which is part of the Sierra Morena Tourism Plan, aims to promote awareness of the tradition of mountain olive production and add value to the sector by making it a tourist attraction. This museum complex dedicated to olive production in the Upper Guadalquivir area has been created for this purpose.

The initiative includes the recovery of an important part of Andalusian industrial heritage: the ‘Antigua Fábrica de los Maynez’. This old factory was built at the end of the 19th century for the production of olive oil and use of its sub-products, but sadly deteriorated with the passage of time.

It was the job of Grupo Tragsa to restore the factory, which consisted of reorganising the space for use as an exhibition hall and constructing an administration and promotion building for administration, training and the study of the future of the olive groves in the Cordoba part of Sierra Morena. The complex also includes a garden, where five types of olive tree have been planted: Picual, Nevadillo Negro, Imperial, Manzanillo, Wild Olive.

Susana Díaz, President of the Andalusia Regional Council, opened the Centre at an event attended by Elena Víboras, the Regional Agriculture Minister, and several representatives from ÁGAPA (the Andalusian Agency for Farm and Fisheries Management in Andalusia), Manuel Aguilar (recently deceased and very much loved and missed by Tragsa), Blanca Lucena and Iñigo Terry.
The main aim of the Life+Enerbioscrub project is to reduce the risk of forest fires by using highly flammable forest biomass to generate energy. It is also an alternative means of creating employment in rural areas.
The project, entitled ‘Sustainable management of shrub formations for energy purposes’, was launched several months ago and its more practical phase got underway just under two months ago. The time has come to prove that clearing and harvesting shrubs is viable from technical, financial and environmental points of view.

Work began in Navas del Marqués (Ávila, Spain) although it is also taking place in a further three locations within Spain where different types of shrubs can be found: Garray and Fabero (both in Castilla y León) and As Pontes (Galicia).

The Tragsa Group has selected several areas in and around Ávila where it is using innovative continuous cut and bale technology which will, on the one hand, allow around 250 tons of broom and scrubland shrubs to be harvested and, on the other, permit a greater understanding of the advantages of traditional land-clearing methods.

A number of entities are also participating in this project. For example, the National Institute for Agricultural and Food Research and Technology (INIA); the companies Montes de las Navas S.A (MLN), Biomasa Forestal S.L (BIOMASAFOR) and Gestamp Biomass; the AGRESTA cooperative; the Spanish Bioenergy Association (AVEBIOM) and the Fabero Town Council (León). The project leader is the Centre for the Development of Renewable Energy Sources (CEDER), an entity which reports to the Research Centre for Energy, Environment and Technology (CIEMAT).

This R+D+I project which is being co-financed through the LIFE+ Programme will allow for increased investigation into very relevant aspects of sustainable management procedures with energy-producing aims and will reduce the use of fossil fuels and the risk of forest fires. As such, the project will make a contribution towards the conservation of the European Union’s natural assets, promoting economically viable forest management whilst proving that this can also be a source of job creation in rural areas.
A CONSORTIUM LED BY THE TRAGSA GROUP WINS ONE OF EUROPEAID’S MOST SIGNIFICANT CONTRACTS IN TURKEY
The aim of this contract (one of EuropeAid’s most significant contracts in the field of hydrological planning) is to transform existing management programmes for Turkey’s river basins in order to adapt them to the model which the European Union’s Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) is developing.

Turkey is not rich in water resources. The Turkish government is aware of the importance of efficiently managing these resources and, over the last few years, has taken important steps and has successfully implanted action plans to manage and protect its river basins. Now, thanks to this initiative, these plans will comply with European regulations.

Ankara was selected as the location to carry out the official project presentation which is entitled ‘Technical Assistance for Conversion of River Basin Action Plans into River Basin Management Plans’ EuropeAid/134561/D/SER/TR. The project has a 7.8 million Euro budget. A number of relevant personalities gathered in Ankara. Amongst them were the Minister and General Director of Water Management on behalf of the Ministry of Forestry and Water, the Spanish Ambassador in Ankara and the directors and main technical teams of the companies which make up the consortium (Spanish companies AMBISAT Ingeniería Ambiental and INITEC and the Turkish company SU-YAPI, all led by Tragsatec).

Francisco J. Baratech, Director of Tragsatec, participated along with Alfredo Corrochano, Key Expert, and Marta Robledo, Project Manager.

The project will be carried out over the next three years and include the transformation of the management programmes in four river basins, both international and endorheic. Specifically, Büyük Menderes, Konya, Meriç-Ergene and Susurluk. Support training activities will complete the package of work to be done so that, when completed, the Turkish Administration can continue the process by itself and comply with European environmental policies.

The work will come to an end in December 2017 and from that point on the plans will be put into action. This will enable the Turkish government to make significant improvements to the condition of bodies of groundwater, rivers, lakes and coastal and transitional waters in the four river basins.
UP CLOSE:
ENJOYING EVERY STEP OF THE WAY
It’s Nature lovers’ lucky day. The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Environment (MAGRAMA) has developed an interpretative app for smartphones and tablets which allows users to plan and get greater enjoyment out of each step of Spain’s Nature Trails.

MAGRAMA has been developing its ‘Nature Trails Programme’ since 1993 with the aim of making sure that the general public get to know and learn to appreciate these routes which contribute towards the socioeconomic development of the countryside. The latest step it has taken has been the launch of an application which combines the benefits of traditional guide books with the tools one might expect in an interactive app.

As well as itineraries, fact sheets on the main spots, photos and a summary of important data for excursiologists, the app’s augmented reality function allows users to get a direct and interactive view of tags on places of interest as well as multimedia information and links to the Internet.

The application also has a user and place-of-interest geolocation function on a map. Thanks to a system which organises information in theme-based layers and lists, the information received can be filtered and the option of creating self-guided itineraries is also noteworthy. None of this requires data coverage.

Tragsatec’s Environmental Quality and Assessment and Geographical Information Systems teams were responsible for developing this application for MAGRAMA’s General Directorate for Rural Development and Forestry.

‘Nature Trails’ has numerous advantages when compared to other, conventional user tools. Namely, the user does not necessarily have to be in the area, there is greater user participation, it’s cheaper and content can be personalised for each user depending on the kind of information he or she wishes to receive.

The app currently has 3 trial itineraries: Senda del Oso (Asturias), Muntanyes de Prades (Tarragona) and Cumbres de la Gomera (Canary Islands). The remaining routes will be added one by one until the entire network of nature trails has been included.

This first version is totally operative and can be downloaded for free from Google Play (Android) and App Store (iOS).
UP CLOSE:

CINEMA AT THE SERVICE OF NATURE
The documentary ‘Wildmed: the last Mediterranean forest’ puts the spotlight on a problem which currently exists in Sierra Morena and the risks which are posing a threat to its habitats and to the protected species which inhabit the area.

Sierra Morena is one of Europe’s main wildlife sanctuaries, the only place where some of the Mediterranean forest’s greatest predators such as the Iberian lynx, the Iberian wolf or the imperial eagle cohabit. But the forest’s days could be numbered, or so says the biologist Arturo Menor in his documentary ‘Wildmed: the last Mediterranean forest’.

Mentor, producer and director, Menor’s intention was to use the film to portray the situation which these and other endangered species face. They live in a forest which is hugely affected by environmental decline.”The trees are dying. They have fallen victim to damage commonly known as ‘seca’ ”, warns Menor in his documentary.”The large numbers of deer and wild boars mean that trees do not regenerate. The situation is such that it is the fairy tale baddy, the wolf, who might turn out to be the hero who saves the forest” the biologist explains.

The director is very committed to these issues and has collaborated with the Tragsa Group in making the documentary ‘Doñana, nature reserve, future reserve’ which was commissioned by the Andalusian regional government’s Department for Environment and Territory. The script for the documentary was written by Iván Nieto from Tragsatec and it was produced for the Doñana Nature Reserve where the Group is actively involved in projects which are linked to the protection of endangered species such as the Iberian lynx. The company manages the centre ‘El Acebuche’ which is located there, the first centre to set up a programme to breed this feline in captivity.

It is the first time an independent producer has taken on a project of this magnitude in our country and it is starting to reap the benefits. This wonderful production has been nominated for 8 Goya awards and has so far received three international awards.

The film is due out in cinemas next April. Don’t miss the trailer. Click on the following link: http://vimeo.com/78249561
Second phase of the land designation and protection project around Alquería del Duc and the fresh water springs (“ullalas”) of the L’Estany and La Perla. Gandia (Valencia).
In the last three years, Grupo Tragsa has performed more than 5,600 environment-related jobs for the Government.