



Multimedia Library Collection: Environment and History (journal)

"How Terms Shape Forests: 'Niederwald,' 'Mittelwald,' and 'Hochwald,' and their Interaction with Forest Development in the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland"

Buergi, Matthias

Buergi, Matthias. "How Terms Shape Forests: 'Niederwald,' 'Mittelwald,' and 'Hochwald,' and their Interaction with Forest Development in the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland." *Environment and History* 5, no. 3 (Oct, 1999): 325–344. [doi:10.3197/096734099779568263](https://doi.org/10.3197/096734099779568263). Changes in forests are influenced by, and themselves influence, such local conditions as soil, climate and exposure, and also the demands put on the forests by society. Forestry has played a crucial role, since the 19th century at least, in the way these demands are fulfilled through the use and management of forests. This paper describes a regional case study of the history of forestry practices in the north-eastern part of the central plateau of Switzerland during the 19th century, based on an analysis of official documents connected with forestry. The analysis examines, in particular, how the creation of new terms such as 'Niederwald,' (i.e., simple coppice forest) and 'Mittelwald' (coppice-with-standards forests) influenced the way in which forestry officials classified forests, which, in turn, influenced how forestry was planned and implemented. During the 19th century, community authorities increasingly took to transforming coppice forests into high forests. This trend was critically observed by forestry officials, who themselves conducted similar transformations in the cantonal forests directly managed by them. According to a classification of stand descriptions which used definite criteria for the different forest types, most of the decline of coppice-with-standards forests occurred after the middle of the 20th century. This development is discussed with respect to changing demands for the different sorts of timber produced in the different forest types. All rights reserved. © 1999 The White Horse Press

Download:

PDF: https://www.environmentandsociety.org/sites/default/files/key_docs/buergi-5-3.pdf

Related links:

- *Environment and History* at The White Horse Press
<http://www.erica.demon.co.uk/EH.html>

Websites linked in this text:

- <http://dx.doi.org/10.3197/096734099779568263>

Environment and History (journal) Collection, Multimedia Library, Environment & Society Portal

"How Terms Shape Forests: 'Niederwald,' 'Mittelwald,' and 'Hochwald,' and their Interaction with Forest Development in the Canton of Zurich, Switzerland"

Source URL: <http://www.environmentandsociety.org/node/3025>

Print date: 22 February 2026 08:39:19