*Ballenberg, Swiss Open-Air Museum, press release*

*Hofstetten, 2 August 2023*

‘My Forest’ at the Swiss Open-Air Museum

The updated permanent Forest Museum Association exhibition opens on 13 August

**‘My Forest’ is the name of the updated version of the permanent exhibition in the dwelling from Sachseln OW. Visitors to the Swiss Open-Air Museum can explore this forest museum from 13 August 2023. The updated exhibition – initiated by Förderverein Forstmuseum Ballenberg (FFMB) – combines the biographies of former residents, Ignatia and Joseph von Moos, with historic and current perspectives on forests and their use.**

The forest would have often been the centre of discussion around the kitchen table in the dwelling from Sachseln OW. Ignatia and Joseph von Moos lived in this elegant wooden house in the middle of the 19th century. In 1850, Joseph von Moos was elected to serve in the Obwalden Cantonal Council. In this role, he was also responsible for forest conservation and sustainable forest use. The couple will welcome visitors to the updated version of the permanent exhibition ‘My Forest’ at the Swiss Open-Air Museum. Their former home was moved to Hofstetten in 1981 and has been used to house a permanent Förderverein Forstmuseum Ballenberg (FFMB) exhibition since 1994. This has now been updated. Well-researched biographies of the von Moos family along with companies in Sachseln, Alpnach and Giswil have been used to determine the interactive forest and timber stations, explain the topics and integrate real-life stories. The result is ‘My Forest’ – an exhibition that thoroughly examines an issue based on the history of a Ballenberg building and its occupants. At various points, the updated version leaves the confines of Obwalden to become an extension of the debate surrounding sustainable resources.

**Inter-generational dialogue**

‘My Forest’ combines historical forms of use with the current socio-political discussion regarding sustainability. The permanent exhibition presents the history of forest use as a process of collective negotiation, providing inspiration for our current search for solutions. On the first floor of the Sachseln dwelling, visitors are immersed in the past, when life was directly dependent on the forest. On the second floor, ‘My Forest’ confronts the issues of the modern world, while providing a glimpse of the future on the top floor. People have always pursued different interests in the forest. Conflicts have arisen and will continue to do so. Society must always endeavour to mutually cooperate to find viable solutions. This applies to all forests: past, present and most definitely future. During the course of the exhibition, ‘My Forest’ becomes ‘Our Forest’, which no-one can claim for themselves alone – neither a certain user group, nor a certain generation. The Förderverein Forstmuseum Ballenberg exhibition aims to improve our understanding of inter-generational actions and policies when using natural resources. Visitors to the Forestry Museum will be invited to help develop solutions and assume their share of responsibility for preserving natural resources.

**Förderverein Forstmuseum Ballenberg FFMB and forest museum**

Förderverein Forstmuseum Ballenberg (FFMB) was founded in 1992 under the patronage of the former Swiss Agency for the Environment, Forests and Landscape SAEFL and The Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research WSL. Since then, it has carried out several projects within and beyond Ballenberg’s Swiss Open-Air Museum to inform the general public about forests and timber. ‘Switzerland’s first and only national forest museum’ was the brainchild of Dr Leo Lienert (Head Forester for the canton of Obwalden) and a group of like-minded people. It opened in 1994 and has been located in the dwelling from Sachseln OW ever since. The outdated permanent exhibition has now been redesigned and relaunched by FFMB, along with the Swiss Open-Air Museum. Entrance to the Forestry Museum is included in the admission price of the Swiss Open-Air Museum.

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