Summer School

Old-Growth Forest Research

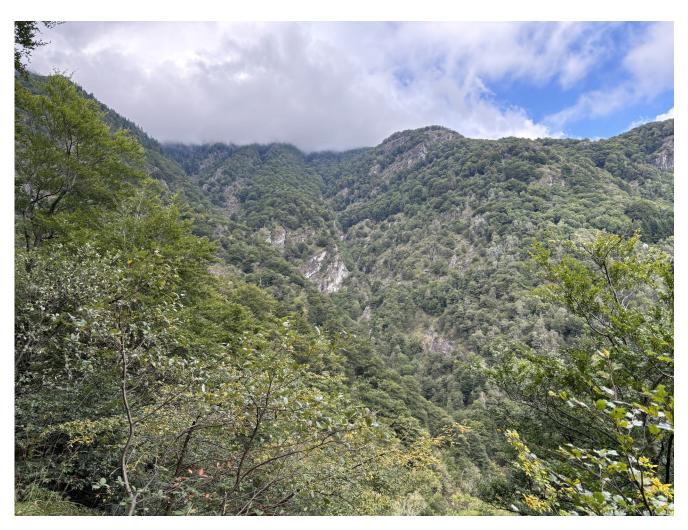September 7th - 13th 2025

Arcegno, Ticino, Switzerland

WSL

Goal

Old-growth forests, ancient forests and forest reserves are attractive and rewarding outdoor laboratories to study diverse topics in forest ecology. This summer school offers scientific training for Master and PhD students interested in old-growth forests. It is organized by the Swiss-Ukrainian research cooperation for primeval forest structures and biodiversity. The goal is to bring together a group of individuals which are motivated to learn from specialists in forest ecology, remote sensing, animal ecology, biodiversity and data management, and to contribute to an inspiring atmosphere.

Location

The summer school will take place in a comfortable guest house near Lodano in the canton of Ticino in southern Switzerland. Lodano is situated in the lower Vallemaggia close to Locarno.

The Valle di Lodano is a wide valley which opens just above the village and its vineyards and offers a fascinating landscape. It is home to a huge forest reserve, which harbors an ancient beech forest and is part of the UNESCO World Heritage.

The site was selected for Summer School due to its rich flora and fauna and its many similarities to the primeval beech forests of the Carpathian Biosphere Reserve (CBR).

Format
The focus of the summer school is on project work in small groups (about 50% of the time, including some field work). Moreover, the week includes introductory lectures on different facets of old-growth forest research. There will be ample opportunity for discussing your own research with specialists from different disciplines to gain new insight and to acquire new perspectives. The summer school is also a great opportunity for intercultural exchange.

Audience
This summer school primarily targets Master and PhD students in environmental sciences, biology, geography and forestry. At least 5 places are reserved for students from Ukraine. All participants must provide proof of being able to follow a lecture in English, and to express themselves in a discussion. Basic knowledge of the R programming language is a plus.
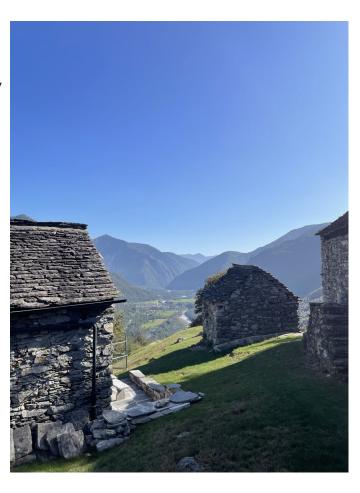
Attendance is limited to 20 participants

Successful attendance of the summer school qualifies for 2 ECTS credit points - however the acceptance of these ECTS-points must be decided by your university.

For any inquiries, contact Jonas Stillhard (oldgrowth@wsl.ch).

Organizing Comittee: Martin Gossner, Martina Hobi, Marius Rüetschi, Jonas Stillhard.

More information can be found on: https://www.wsl.ch/en/events-and-courses/summer-school-old-growth-forest-research-2025/

The course fee is 200 CHF for students from outside of Ukraine and free of charge for Ukrainian students. The fee includes food and lodging, course material and the excursions including necessary transports.

Special offer for Ukrainian participants: You are encouraged to participate. If you need to brush up your English before the summer school, please contact us early so we can check what training you need. We are willing to make arrangements to improve your English, at no or very low cost.

Application procedure
To apply, please send a short motivation letter and a CV in one single pdf to oldgrowth@wsl.ch. We are looking forward to your applications!

Schedule
29th of July: Submission of Applications
5th of August: Notification of Acceptance

Sunday, September 7	Arrival in Arcegno around 4 p.m., in the evening short introductory presentations, Ice-breaker
Monday, September 8	Lectures, Introduction to project work, start to work on projects
Tuesday, September 9	Field trip to Valle di Lodano.
Wednesday, September 10	Lectures, Projectwork
Thursday, September 11	Lectures, Projectwork
Friday, September 12	Project work and project presentation. Closing party in the evening
Saturday, September 13	Departure in the morning