2026

GLOBAL NATUREFRIENDS DAYS

CLIMATE HIKES

Hiking for a better future!

Naturefriends International

www.nf-int.org

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Celebrating nature and solidarity!

The idea of a Naturefriends Day was first introduced in 1948, around our foundation date of 16 September 1895. It was created to honour the strong sense of solidarity that helped our movement survive the difficult times of facism, especially thanks to the support of fellow Naturefriends in countries like Switzerland and the United States.

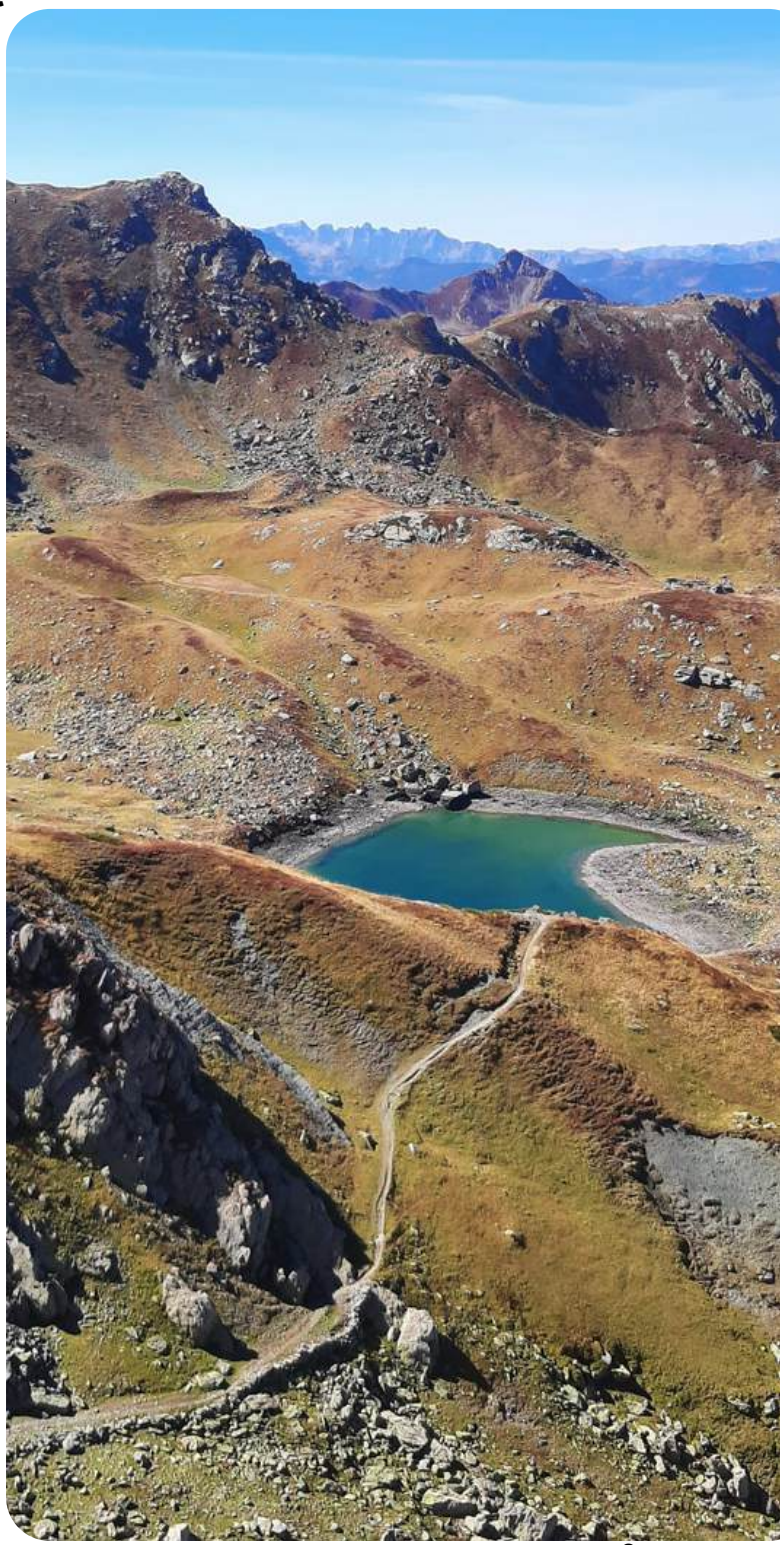
This beautiful tradition continues today, with many groups celebrating in September. To strengthen its international spirit, the 2018 NFI Annual Conference decided to revive the Global Naturefriends Days, focusing on internationality, solidarity, and nature.

Since 2021, our shared motto has been "Nature and Solidarity", a theme that unites us all while giving each group the freedom to create their own local activities.

Together, we celebrate what connects us: our love for nature and our commitment to one another.

We extend a heartfelt THANK YOU to all Naturefriends groups that organised activities during the Global Naturefriends Days 2026.

Your energy and commitment made this celebration truly special!



NF Timisoara

Why a Climate Hike ?

This year again we encouraged all Naturefriends groups to celebrate Global Naturefriends Days by organising a Climate Hike!

A Climate Hike is more than just a walk in nature. Rooted in our tradition of social hiking, it combines recreation, (self-)education, meaningful conversation, and environmental awareness. It's a chance to connect with nature, reflect on the climate crisis, and take action together.

Your hike can take any form that suits your community whether it's a family-friendly walk, a forest trail adventure, or a scenic route near your local Naturefriends House or Natura Trail.

We've been following the celebrations on social media and loved seeing so many Naturefriends groups getting outdoors, going on hikes and celebrating Global Naturefriends Days in their own unique ways!

We're especially delighted that several groups have embraced this new approach by organising their own Climate Hikes and sharing their stories and photos with us.

Moreover, some groups focused their hikes on showing solidarity with the Climate Fund, combining outdoor activity with climate action.

Read on to discover all the highlights and inspiring moments from the activities that took place throughout September.



NF Timisoara

More about Climate Hikes and the guideline : nf int.org/climatehikes

Climate Hike: Amis de la Nature France What our forests tell us when we take the time to observe them

This Climate Hike, organized by the Naturefriends Paris-Centre in the heart of the Bois des 500 Arpents in the Yvelines (Île-de-France), on 6 September had a simple goal: to show, firsthand, the concrete effects of climate change on our forests.

A guide prepared in advance outlined the mechanisms at play - water stress, tree die-off, and the increasing vulnerability of tree species. The hike itself gave us the opportunity to observe these effects firsthand.



Stephanie Duvault-Alexandre

<u>Unmistakable signs</u>
Throughout the hike, participants observed half-burnt leaves: dry and very pale on one side, still green on the other. Heather literally scorched by the sun. Oak trees bearing numerous clumps of dry, dehydrated leaves.

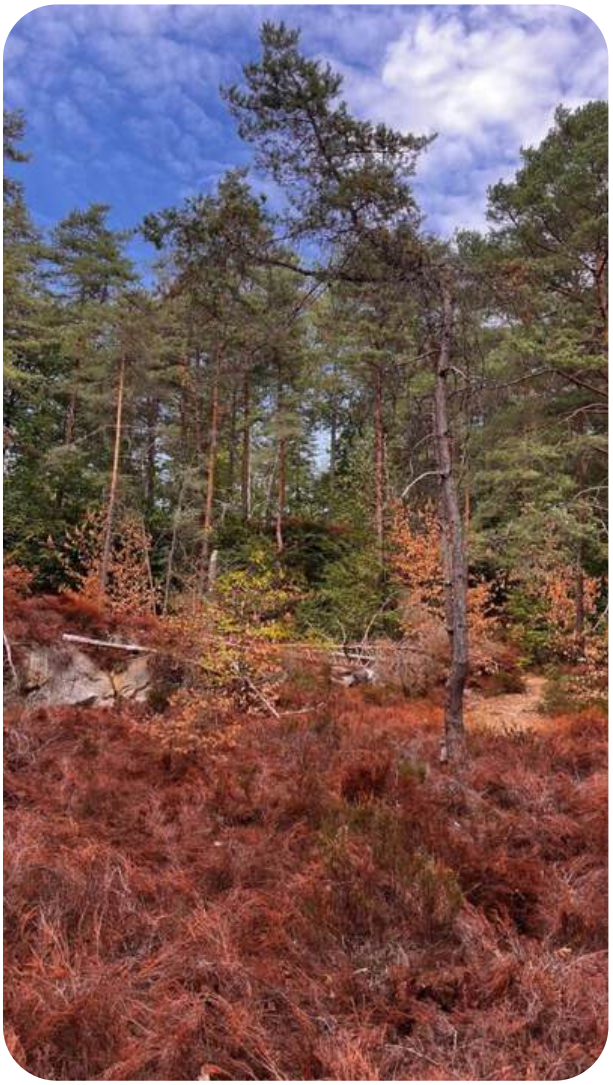
Ferns that were completely scorched, with the appearance typically associated with late fall - except that it wasn't fall, and the overall atmosphere of the forest didn't resemble that of fall either.

What emerged from this collective observation was less a normal seasonal cycle than an obvious lack of water.

Further along the trail, the ponds still contained water - but visibly less than at the same time the previous year, a further sign of a water deficit that is becoming entrenched over time.

Understanding what we observe

These signs are not isolated: they illustrate a mechanism now well documented by forest research. Faced with heat and drought, a tree has two possible reactions, neither of which is insignificant. Either it closes its stomata to limit water loss, at the risk of its leaves overheating and drying out. Or it continues to draw water from the soil: if this demand exceeds what the soil can provide, air bubbles form in the sap and can lead to the death of the branch, or even the entire tree. A tree weakened by this stress also becomes more vulnerable to insect pests, whose life cycles accelerate with the heat. These mechanisms aren't limited to the large mountain ranges that make headlines because of wildfires. They are at work - more discreetly but just as surely - in smaller forests closer to home - the very ones we walked through that day.



Stephanie Duvault-Alexandre

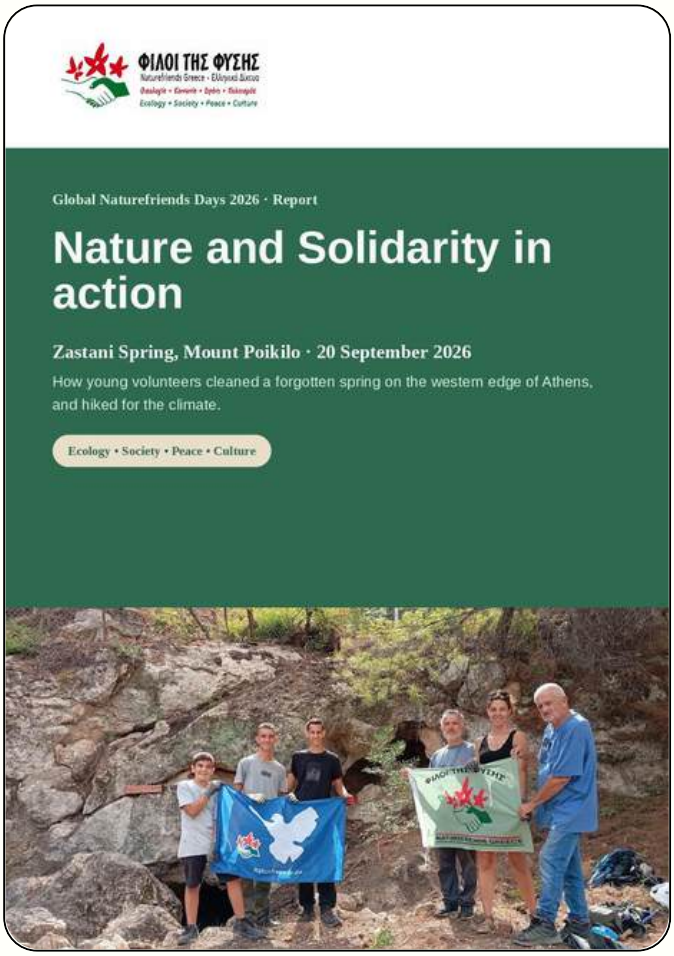
Why these Climate Hikes matter?

Les Amis de la Nature organizes these kinds of outings because understanding climate change is best achieved through direct experience, not just through statistics. Seeing a scorched fern in the middle of summer, feeling the dryness of the forest floor, noticing a pond's water level dropping from one year to the next: these are simple observations, but they drive home the reality of climate change far more effectively than a long lecture.

Clean-up and Climate Hike with Naturefriends Greece

Zastani Spring, Mount Poikilo
20 September 2026

How young volunteers cleaned a forgotten spring on the western edge of Athens, and hiked for the climate.



A spring the city forgot

Until the 1960s, shepherds watered their flocks and farmers watered their fields at Zastani Spring. Then the area urbanised: roads, industry and warehouses arrived, the farmers and shepherds disappeared, and the spring was partly buried under rubble. It now lies in one of the most environmentally and socially degraded areas west of Athens.

Volunteers, not grants

Naturefriends Greece submitted a documented proposal to the Ministry of Culture to fund the clean-up. It was rejected. So the association took the work on itself, with volunteers, in phases.

Four clean-up phases

Phase 1: 29 March 2026
Phase 2: 7 June 2026
Phase 3: 20 September 2026, the main phase
Phase 4: 4 October 2026



NF Greece

On Sunday 20 September, members and friends took a gentle two-hour hike on Mount Poikilo, a small mountain next to the city. Along the way we talked about climate change and peace.

Then a team of young members cleaned Zastani Spring, the third phase of the work.

200 L
of waste and discarded material removed

7
young members did the clean-up

2 h
Climate Hike on Mount Poikilo







NF Greece

Climate Hike in Rovaniemi, Finland

On Sunday, 6 September 2026, Rovaniemi Hikers organised a Climate Hike along the shore near Arktikum in Rovaniemi.

The event brought together 15 participants interested in exploring the effects of climate change on local wildlife.

Ismo Kreivi from the Ornithological Society of Lapland led the hike, sharing insights into how climate change affects bird populations and their habitats.

Equipped with weather-appropriate clothing and binoculars, the participants had the opportunity to observe their surroundings and learn more about the challenges birds face in a changing climate.

The hike combined outdoor activity, nature observation and environmental awareness, highlighting the importance of understanding and protecting biodiversity in the Arctic region.



NF Finland

Climate Hike in Aulanko, Finland

Hämeenlinnan Retkeilijät, together with the Finnish Hiking Association, organised at the beginning of October a Climate Hike in Aulanko, Hämeenlinna.

Led by Markku Karvonen, the group explored the park's rich history and remarkable trees while discovering the natural beauty of the area.

The hike brought together 22 participants representing four Naturefriends associations from Lahti, Kuusankoski, Järvenpää and Hämeenlinna.

The route led to Käärmekallio and Levonkallio, in the northeastern part of Lake Aulanko.
A special highlight was the Sibelius Forest, which was included in the nature reserve in 2018 thanks to the efforts of the City of Hämeenlinna.

The hike offered participants an opportunity to connect with nature, learn more about the local landscape and reflect on the importance of protecting natural environments.





NF Finland

Clean-up with Naturefriends Kaisermühlen, Vienna, Austria

Together with our members, friends, and participants from Naturefriends International and BeUp, we spent the day on 20 September 2026, exploring the area around the Alte Donau. Our goal was clear: to collect everything that doesn't belong in nature and thereby help protect this valuable local recreational area.

Equipped with litter grabbers, trash bags, and gloves, two groups walked along the riverbank in different directions, while other teams in boats from "Meine Insel" used nets to comb the surface of the Old Danube for trash.

With fantastic support from "Meine-Insel" as well as several SUP paddlers, we were able to reach even hard-to-access areas where trash had likely never been collected before. In the process, we uncovered a wide variety of trash: from cigarette butts to packaging materials to beverage cans. Particularly noteworthy was the recovery of a surfboard left behind in the reeds.







Naturefriends Kaisermühlen

The weather was also on our side. Under bright sunshine and pleasant temperatures, the participants were able to carry out their task with great dedication until late in the afternoon. The day came to a successful close with a cozy get-together at the Platzl, where we celebrated in style with freshly baked pizzas from the "Schinakl" restaurant.



We'll remember this day for a long time to come, and it has left everyone involved eager to do it again. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of this event with their dedication, time, and active support. Together, we were able to make a valuable contribution to our environment.

Thank you to all 39 participants - thanks to you, we've made the Old Danube a little cleaner!



Naturefriends Kaisermühlen

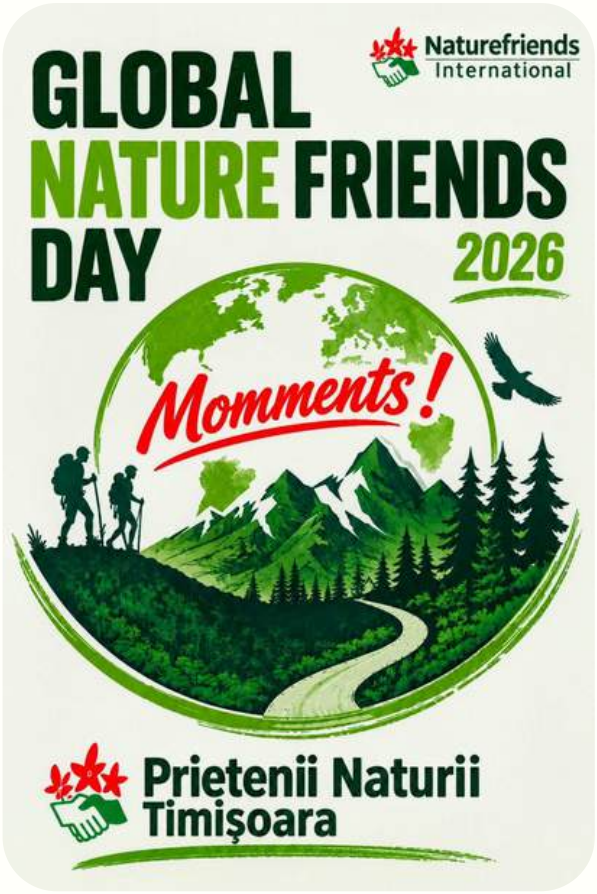
Discovering Kosovo: Mountains, canyons and cultural heritage Naturefriends Timisoara, Romania

A varied and unexpectedly amazing adventure brought us to some of Kosovo's most beautiful natural and cultural highlights!

Our journey began with a guided exploration of the historic centre of Prizren, a beautiful city nestled at the foot of the Šar Mountains, where different eras, cultures and religions come together. Participants took turns highlighting points of interest, offering different perspectives on the city's rich heritage.

The following day, we hiked to Mount Gjeravica (2,656 m), one of Kosovo's highest peaks, enjoying breathtaking views of the surrounding mountains. Our stay at a mountain hut added a rather unique experience to the adventure!

On the way to Peja, we stopped at the Visoki Dečani Monastery, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, before admiring the spectacular Rugova Canyon from above while climbing the Ari and 360° via ferrata routes. Later in the day, we visited the White Drin Waterfall and returned along the edge of a water channel. Dinner at the Seven Summits Lounge provided the perfect end to an eventful day, made even more memorable by the fascinating stories shared by Arianit Nikqi.





NF Timisoara

Our adventure continued on the way back with a detour to the Mirusha Waterfall, where we explored the impressive canyon on foot.

This journey combined outdoor adventure, cultural discovery and encounters with Kosovo's remarkable landscapes, reflecting the spirit of the Global Naturefriends Days: experiencing nature, connecting people and discovering new perspectives together.

Many thanks to Naturefriends Kosovo for sharing information about this wonderful tour!









NF Timisoara

Climate Hikes along the Elbe River, Naturefriends Czechia

This year, Naturefriends Czechia organised a four-day series of Climate Hikes along the Elbe River, bringing together 42 participants for a programme combining outdoor activities, nature exploration and environmental awareness.

The programme included a boat trip from Nymburk via the spa town of Poděbrady to Libice, followed by a return hike on foot.





NF Czechia

The participants also visited the Písty river dune nature reserve, discovering the unique landscapes and natural heritage of the Elbe region.





The event offered a wonderful opportunity to enjoy nature, strengthen connections among participants and highlight the importance of protecting valuable natural environments.

NF Czechia

Get involved next year!

CLIMATE HIKES

Hiking for a better future!

Global Naturefriends Days
3 - 26 September 2027

Be Part of a Global Movement!

The more groups that join, the bigger the impact. Let's set an example together! Set a signal of solidarity by linking your hike to collection of donations for the Naturefriends Climate Fund (climatefund.nf-int.org) to further support climate action.



Don't forget to send us your photos and stories, we'll proudly share your activities on our social media channels to inspire others or tag us on Facebook: Naturefriends International and Instagram: naturefriends_international

Please remember to use the hashtag: #GlobalNaturefriendsDays

Organize a Climate Hike and be part of the change!