



„Umweltbaustelle“ – workcamps of the Austrian Alpine Club

Young people between 16 and 30 years are invited to volunteer work at the „Umweltbaustelle“. These work camps take place every summer in different areas of the alps with various goals. They prevent or stop erosion caused by shortcuts on footpaths, support National Parks and other preserved landscapes, help farmers in high regions, restock woods, build purifying plants for huts and do many other things.

An average „Umweltbaustelle“ starts out of a distinct environmental problem. Corresponding to that a team of responsible leaders create an appropriate project for about 10 – 20 people. The project describes the matters of necessary work, tools, food and lodging for the participants, documentation and financial planning.

There is a number of certain criteria ruling these work camps:

- The project should support a variety of environmental goals.
- A „Umweltbaustelle“ should last at least one week.
- The organisers have to provide food and lodging for the participants.
- The participants don't get paid for their work.
- The project must require manual work.
- Besides working the weeks program has to consider social and educational issues.
- The project has to be approved by landowners and competent authorities.

A new idea for the „Umweltbaustelle“ is called P.U.L.S. This means that participants are invited to achieve additional skills to use in their professional career. Tutored by special coaches they learn how to cooperate with the press, or how to make a useful documentation of such a work camp. They are in charge to take over these jobs at their „Umweltbaustelle“ and have to attend two extra training weekends.

The Youth Organization of the Austrian Alpine Club started in 1986 with the first „Umweltbaustelle“ in the „Hohe Tauern“ National Park. Ever since more than hundred of these workcamps with over 2.000 participants were realized throughout all Austrian counties, and some even outside of Austria. Via UIAA Youth Commission they are announced also in other countries with the result that many participants come from there. The young people's commitment and feedback enforces us to continue.

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