



NATREG team on a trip along Delta River Po.

# NATREG newsletter 02

May 2010

Dear readers,

We are pleased to present you the second e-newsletter of the NATREG project. As you will see on the following pages, a lot has happened since our last reunion at the end of last year. The whole NATREG team has been working hard and we are really happy to see that such progress has been made.

Since December, many workshops and meetings with relevant stakeholders in pilot areas were held, aiming at gathering relevant data, their opinion on project areas development opportunities and disadvantages, etc.

March was very busy: in the first week, the Self-Assessment of the pilot areas was carried out, followed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Quality Management Board meeting in Ljubljana where most important topics regarding project implementation were discussed. Two Slovenian colleagues attended EUROSITE International conference on Natura 2000 conflict management in Barcelona, presenting the project and conflict resolution in the PA Pohorje (Slovenia). English project brochures were printed and already disseminated among partners and relevant stakeholders. Site Communication Plans for all pilot areas were drafted.

In the middle of April, we proudly presented a draft version of the Joint Strategy for Integrated Management Planning for Protected Areas, alias JSIMPA, with all its relevant documents (Introductory Handbook, Guidelines for economic evaluation and for preparation of business plan for PA, etc.) at the first JSIMPA Seminar for project partners which was organized in Venice along with a short trip along the Delta River Po and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Steering Committee Meeting. Italian partners also attended one of the most important spatial planning world conferences, held in New Orleans, USA, and prepared the first NATREG day – a day when an event is organized specifically to present our project, its results, aims, workshops.

As we speak, brochures in local languages are being printed. And last but certainly not least – all activities have to be gathered and cost-evaluated in current Partner Reports; therefore, third Partner Reports are being prepared since the second Reporting Period closed at the end of February.

Even though the summer season is just around a corner, there is still a lot to be done. We are already thinking a few months ahead into the last quarter of the year when many trainings and workshops have to be carried out. And this will be the main topic of our June gathering in Klagenfurt apart from the training materials for managing protected areas, which are in the last phase of preparation. Till next readings, develop with nature!

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**NATREG team**



## Workshop for the development of Joint Strategy for Integrated Management of Protected Areas in Venice

Eva Stare, Alianta

Under the organization of Veneto Region, the NATREG project partners gathered in the Italian town of Adria on 15 April to discuss one of the most important result of the NATREG project - Joint Strategy for Integrated Management of Protected Areas. Presentations of prepared guidelines, which will become part of the Strategy, were presented while sailing down the River Po to its mouth in the Adriatic Sea (*in photo above*). How the guidelines can be improved was discussed by 60 experts in 5 working groups in Porto Viro Delta Po Park Visitor Centre.

Joint Strategy for Integrated Management of Protected Areas represents a series of documents which will help managers dealing with nature conservation planning, sustainable development planning and spatial planning in South East Europe.

At the workshop experts discussed most of the documents which will compose the Strategy. Introductory Handbook on Management Planning for a Protected Area was presented by Gregor Danev from Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation. The handbook will serve as a guide for preparation of integrated management plans for protected areas.

Guidelines for Business Planning for a Protected Area were presented by Mitja Ruzzier from Meritum. The first part of the guidelines presents the general structure of the business plan, while the second part focuses on possible ways of financing nature conservation, where in the last part the potential usage of financial mechanisms at the local level is presented.

Guidelines for Economic Evaluation of Protected Areas/ Ecosystems were presented by Jasmina Zujo from Meritum. These guidelines give to a planner an overview of existing and most commonly used valuation methods while afterwards these methods are evaluated by the set criteria (e.g. availability of data, time consumption, cost, transferability...). Additionally, possible benefit categories with examples of environmental services and commonly

used valuation methods for particular benefit category are collected and presented. Guidelines for Regional, Interregional and Cross-border Development Strategies for Creating Connections between Protected Areas were presented by Hans-Jörg Raderbauer from Freiland Environmental Consulting. They are preparing ecological corridor strategy for Austrian Province of Styria using the multifunctional approach. These guidelines are focusing on spatial planning issues.

Guidelines on Stakeholder Participation Methodology in the Process of Development of a Protected Area Management Plan were presented by Milena Marega from Regional Environmental Centre, Slovenia. The guidelines are focusing on different approaches for stakeholder involvement needed in different phases of Management Plan preparation.

Training Manual will be prepared by E.C.O. and Klagenfurt University as a supporting tool for better understanding of planning process and management life cycle in protected areas.

Guidelines will not be longer than 50 pages and will provide the managers with basic knowledge and with practical examples to encourage them to acknowledge the potentials of natural assets and protected areas for sustainable development and to use them in argumentation for conservation during the discussions with stakeholders.

The partners will now improve the Strategy according to the comments and suggestions gathered at the workshop. The Strategy will be further tested and developed during the preparation of Integrated Management Plans for pilot protected areas.

The workshop was coordinated by technical project manager of the NATREG project, Alianta project consulting.



Venice



## Guidelines for the Economic Evaluation of Natural Assets in the PAs

Jasmina Žujo, Meritum

**Natural ecosystems have been and still are often shown as inferior areas or areas that don't contribute to the economic value of the local community, region, or country. But the fact is that ecosystems or nature provide a wide range of services (provisioning services such as supply of food, fresh water, wood and fiber, services which contribute to health and services that are less tangible and harder to measure but equally critical, such as regulating, supporting, and cultural services), which are not something eternal, indestructible and unlimited.**

As the population, income and consumption levels increase, humans put more and more pressure on the natural environment. Human activities have led to elevated atmospheric concentration of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, acidification, bad air quality, biodiversity loss, climate change, chemicals, waste, water pollution ...

With the economic evaluation of natural assets, the usability of each ecosystem can be quantified, so that general public and the government institutions can recognize the harmfulness of uncontrolled exploitation of natural assets and the usefulness of conservation activities. In the future, the economic evaluation of ecosystems might either justify the current cost of projects of nature conservation and environmental protection (e.g. establishment of protected areas) or justify the planned changes in the area which should lead to greater prosperity of local population or the entire society and to planned sustainable development.

Economic analysis and evaluation of services of a natural (protected) area is useful for:

- Identifying and quantifying the value of ecosystem services provided by natural (protected) areas in terms of raw materials, protection of natural and human systems, and maintenance of conditions for future economic production and growth, as well as the costs associated with the loss of these benefits through resource degradation;
- Integrating business and economic concerns into conservation planning and practice;

- Identifying and developing potential financing mechanisms and economic incentives for management;
- Obtaining funding from insurance companies for mitigation measures if resources are damaged through accidents such as oil spills or shipwrecks;
- Strengthening Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) – the procedure ensures that environmental consequences of projects are identified and assessed before authorization is given;
- Developing mechanisms to ensure that costs and benefits of a natural (protected) area are more equally shared, e.g. income generating activities for local communities who have insufficiently benefited from an PA, disincentives for damaging activities through taxes or bonds, and funding from groups who benefit from an PA at little or no cost, such as user fees for tourists and visitors.

The aim of the guidelines is to present the most commonly used methods for the economic evaluation of natural assets and rank them with a critical assessment of positive and negative characteristics, based on selected criteria.

The methods are evaluated by the following criteria:

- data required to carry out the economic evaluation,
- cost of implementing the economic evaluation,
- adequate knowledge to carry out the economic evaluation,
- complexity of implementing the economic evaluation,
- time needed for the implementation of the economic evaluation,
- reliability of result or accuracy of the economic evaluation,
- transferability of outputs,
- frequency of the use of methods,
- universality of the use of methods.

The table on next page shows all methods and their evaluation. The penultimate line shows the total score for each method. Greater number of points means a better result.

*(continues on page 4)*



NATREG team in front of Delta Po Park Visitor Centre in Porto Viro.

### Criterion for the selection of the method

Criteria \ Methods	REVEALED PREFERENCE METHOD							STATED PREF. M.	
	TCM							CVM	CMA
	MPA	PFA	HPM	ZTCM	RUM	DCA	COI		
Data requirements	4	4	3	3	2	5	4	4	4
Cost	4	4	4	5	1	5	3	3	2
Adequate knowledge	4	2	2	2	1	4	3	2	1
Complexity	5	3	3	5	1	4	3	2	1
Timing	4	3	2	1	2	5	5	2	2
Reliability of result	4	4	4	4	5	1	1	4	5
Transferability of outputs	4	4	3	2	3	1	1	3	5
Frequency of use	5	1	2	3	1	1	1	5	3
Universality of use	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	5	5
<b>SUM</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Result</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>4</b>

- MPA.....Market Price Method
- PFA.....Product Function Method
- HPM.....Hedonic Price Method
- ZTCM.....Zonal Travel Cost Method
- RUM.....Random Utility Method
- DCA.....Damage Cost Avoided

The purpose of such review of the methods is that users can quickly obtain information about the characteristics of each method and the position of this characteristic compared with other methods. For each method, the practical case study is also presented.

Regardless of the outcome resulting from the analysis, individuals shall, according to their needs (e.g. object of the valuation, budget constraints, time, characteristics of the study and of the population affected and whose welfare is affected), decide which method to choose. Individuals may

add criteria weighting which favours a certain criterion, if necessary. This could lead to a completely different order of importance of methods. In the assessment of TEV, a combination of methods is usually used.

In general, these methods are very complicated. Some of the methods require extensive economic knowledge and experience, therefore it is highly recommended that the economic evaluations are carried out by interdisciplinary teams of experts in the fields of biology, ecology, economics, and natural (protected) area managers.

## Cleaning Slovenia in one day

Sebastjan Štruc, IRSNC

On 17 April 2010, thousands of Slovenians joint in the campaign "Let's clean Slovenia in one Day" and we were among them. Employees of OE Maribor IRSNC and the NATREG team helped out in the municipality of Ruše, Local Community Smolnik.

Our meeting point was at the Smolnik Community Center at 9 a.m. where we were given the latest information on where and how the cleaning action in the area would be carried out. After a "good-morning-drink" we armed ourselves with garbage bags and marched off towards garbage heaps.

First we stopped at the illegal dumpsite "Pri Mucu" where mostly male part of our team remained due to the volume and weight of waste and the steep terrain above the Lobnica river, while the others walked towards Vivatova glažuta where they crossed the Lobnica River and turned back towards Ruše.

After the challenging waste collection at the illegal dumpsite, we also cleaned the forest education trail Uršankovo.

Quite tired but pleased with our work we returned for lunch and socializing to the Smolnik fire station which was also a temporary repository of all collected waste.





## NATREG project at the 2010 National Planning Conference of New Orleans

Marco Meggiolaro, Veneto Region

**Upon the invitation of the American Planning Association, Veneto Region presented the NATREG project at the annual US National Planning Conference that took place on 10 April at the Morial Convention Center in New Orleans, USA.**

At the "Delta Urbanism Symposium Session: European Deltas", Veneto Region presented the today's challenges of the Po river Delta, a transboundary territory between Veneto and Emilia Romagna regions which is characterized not only by an outstanding nature and amazing landscape, but also by depopulation trends, the uncertainty of its economy and the effects of environmental phenomena/disturbances intensified by climate change patterns. Some other pilot cases from the Netherlands, Spain and England were also presented.

During the conference which is one of most important events

on this topic worldwide, attended by planners, experts and environmentalists from several countries, the objective of the NATREG project was widely explained, along with the necessity of shared strategies pursued at transnational level by the partnership to tackle balanced and sustainable development of protected areas in South East Europe.

The conference was also a fruitful occasion to present to a wide audience from all over the world the rationale behind the cooperation within the frame of South East Europe Programme and the role played by the Territorial Cooperation Objective in the EU Cohesion Policies.

Currently, Veneto Region and A.R.P.A Emilia Romagna, with the contribution of the two Regional Parks in charge of managing protected areas, are working towards the elaboration of an interregional management plan of the Po Delta, very ambitious goal to be achieved by the next year within the framework of the NATREG project.

Hopefully, final results of the NATREG project will be presented at the next US National Planning Conference in Boston scheduled for April 2011.

## NATREG day Italy 2010

**On the last day of April 2010, A.R.P.A Emilia Romagna in Comacchio (Ferrara) organized the first event called NATREG day ITALIA, participated by some sixty stakeholders from environmental associations and municipalities from Emilia Romagna, Veneto and other Italian regions.**

During the event which was organized in the framework of the international bird-watching and eco-tourism fair 2010, main objectives of NATREG project were presented along with potential socio-economic and environmental benefits resulting from the common management plan for the two Po Delta parks of Veneto and Emilia. The stakeholder's opinions related to the protection of natural assets through the economic development of the territory were collected in specific forms which will be used to enhance the preliminary socio-economic analysis of the pilot area.





## Problem-solving in Natura 2000 sites

Mateja Nose Marolt, Mojca Tomažič, IRSNC

**The workshop titled "Conflict Management and the Natura 2000 network" was held in early March in Barcelona (Spain). Mojca Tomažič and Mateja Nose Marolt attended the workshop as NATREG lead partner representatives.**

The workshop was part of a larger project organized by ECNC, Alter and Eurosit titled "Dealing with Conflicts and the Implementation and Management of the Natura 2000 network – Best Practices at the local site level." The main purpose and objective of the project and individual workshops is to present best practices of participation of different stakeholders and balancing different interests in the areas with the favourable conservation status of Natura 2000 sites.

The objectives of the workshop were to identify conflicts and problems and their causes in the areas of N2K, to identify and discuss the examples of good practices in conflict-resolving. We also prepared suggestions how to resolve conflicts at Natura 2000 sites and proposed recommendations to the European Commission.

The workshop was held in two parts, a morning and an afternoon session. The morning session was devoted to presentations and lectures. In the afternoon session, working in groups and active participation of all participants was moderated.

We presented an example from Slovenia – problem-solving in the Pohorje area: Finding coexistence between nature conservation and professional cross-country skiing.

The lecture presented by the representative of the Office of Spatial Planning (from Catalonia) titled "Natura 2000 and the planning of the Barcelona region" was especially noted! 72% of Catalonia is under Natura 2000 designation. They have developed a methodology using GIS tools for spatial planning in the area. They used the method of loading and removing a variety of contents (physical, social, economic and other relevant) in spatial planning. The projection for the future (approximately 50 years) has also shown potential conflicts/problems in the area. One of the important segments of the planning process is also continuous working in groups and subgroups, continuous education, good knowledge of the terrain, as well as cooperation and participation of all stakeholders.

Conclusions of the morning session were as follows: conflicts in Natura 2000 sites occur in four different categories, depending on the underlying cause (the countryside, the expectations of stakeholders in the areas of Natura 2000, management and use of the Natura 2000 sites).

Experiences in solving them are different, as well as the used approaches. Examples of good experiences/approaches (listening and dialogue, be proactive, participation of all stakeholders) and bad experiences/approaches (opposition, promoting the conservationist point of view, too technical communication, inflexibility and historical tensions, the lack of control, the use of force, power) were identified by the participants. When working in groups, we discussed three topics. We identified the root causes of conflicts/problems in Natura 2000 sites, found important factors contributing to the solution of individual conflicts/problems and developed recommendations for the European Commission.

We identified 40 major sources/pathways of conflict that can be summarized into several categories: agricultural policy (no planning, support, conflict ...), lack of communication at all levels (scientific approach, the constant threat of prohibitions, unclear objectives, "do not tell me what to do", arrogance of the profession ...), spatial planning (state/local community/investor, poor strategic planning), finance (no concrete benefits ...), participation (important stakeholders are not invited ...).

Participants from Mediterranean countries (Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Spain, Slovenia) developed the following recommendations for the EU Commission:

- create flexible management plans;
- listen to messages from the field;
- establish the "price" or "value" of Natura 2000 sites;
- Natura 2000 sites should be presented as an opportunity;
- establish clear and objective goals in these areas and promote "flexible" plan, it is essential to establish clear policies and programs.

To conclude, we can summarize that conflicts/problems in different countries and parts of Europe are very similar. Countries have chosen various approaches to solve problems. But experiences are not just bad. Indeed, the conflict-resolving processes are not fast; they require a lot of work. Multidisciplinary approach is very important, as well as persistence, continuous education, cooperation between sectors, exchange of experience and proactivity.



## Land management in Mura-Drava Pilot Area Mladen Matica, PISPKKC

**The detailed Site Communication plan for the Mura-Drava pilot area has been completed. This document presents how Zavod and Agnatur will interact with key stakeholders and other target audiences in the pilot area.**

In the pilot area, two meetings with crucial stakeholders were held. The first meeting was organized with experts from the Environment Protection Agency in the Koprivnica-Križevci County. The second meeting was held in the municipality of Novo Virje with local stakeholders (NGOs, policy makers). After both meetings, participants went on a field excursion along the Drava river in Novo Virje. During these meetings, the stakeholders were familiarized with the project in detail and agreed with the manner of their involvement in the implementation of the project as proposed by NATREG.

The analysis of existing problems and discrepancies between nature conservation and other sectors in the Drava-Mura pilot site has been conducted. Main problems concerning the regional park Mura-Drava in the Koprivnica-Križevci County are related to spatial planning documentation.

On one hand, the Spatial Planning Programme of the Republic of Croatia foresees the protection of certain sections of the river (the Repaš protected landscape), while on the other hand, the construction of the new hydro-power plant Novo Virje is planned in the same area.

The Republic of Hungary established a national park in the area along the Drava river. Amendments to the Spatial Plan of the Koprivnica-Križevci County do not include the construction of the new hydro-power plant Novo Virje, while the area of the Drava river is designated for the protection under the category of regional park. The area along Mura and Drava rivers in Međimurje, Varaždin, Koprivnica-Križevci, Virovitičko-Podravska and Osijek-Baranja counties was placed under preventive protection.

The area will be under preventive protection until the regional park is designated by the Croatian Government. The basis for the designation as a regional park is an expert study. All these activities are being carried out to better protect the rivers Mura and Drava from various threats and for the implementation of European standards of nature protection.

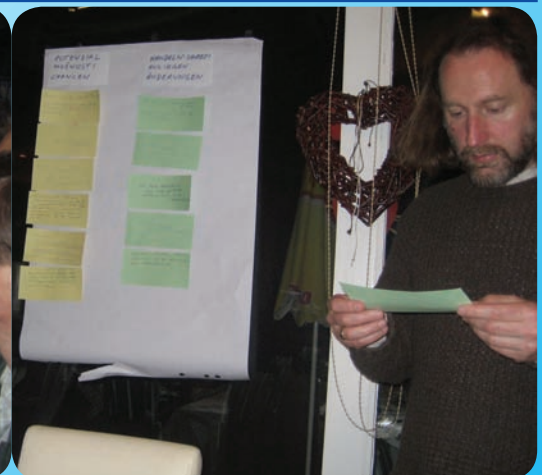
At its 49th meeting held on 1 April 2010, the Croatian Government adopted the decision declaring the setting-up of a power system as a priority. One of the priorities is the construction of hydro-powers plants Molve1 and Molve2 which are to be located in the PA (instead of the hydro-power plant Novo Virje). These hydro-power plants are not included in spatial planning documents and sectoral plans.

Land management along the Drava river is a complex issue in a modern society and cannot be resolved without a multidisciplinary approach and the involvement of local and regional communities as well as civil society.

## First workshop results

**In the Carinthian municipality of the PA Vellacher Kotschna (Belska Kočna) we started with information meetings and workshops.**

We tried to involve several groups of stakeholders in the project process.



One of them were members of Coppla Kaša, a very well organized group of forest managers, with the mayor of the municipality Eisenkappel – Vellach / Železna Kapla – Bela Franz Josef Smrtnik (*in the middle of left photo*). They presented us their ideas and suggestions with regard to the management of the Natura 2000 area Vellacher Kotschna. The results are quite interesting.



Working on the IPAM toolbox: Representatives of the protected areas Deliblato Sands – Serbia, Po River Delta – Italy, Vellacher Kotschna – Austria, Pohorje – Slovenia, and Mura-Drava Rivers – Croatia took part.

## Self-Assessment of NATREG pilot areas by means of the IPAM-Self-Assessment tool

Results of the NATREG workshop in Ljubljana

Daniel Zollner, Stefanie Weiglhofer, Michael Getzner, Klagenfurt University

On 1 March 2010, the partners responsible for managing the NATREG protected areas (PA) met for the purpose of assessing their status of management by means of the IPAM toolbox. The workshop took place at the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation in Ljubljana and was facilitated by the partner University of Klagenfurt resp. E.C.O. - Institute of Ecology.

The web-based and freely accessible IPAM (Integrative Protected Area Management in the Alps-Adriatic Region) toolbox is intended as a support to planners, managers and consultants in Protected Areas. The self-assessment as part of the IPAM toolbox is an interactive checklist of questions helping to identify the most recent state of the development of protected areas (profile of management performance, PA-life-cycle assessment). Accordingly, the toolbox is divided

into four phases and cross-checks 25 so-called FoAs - "Fields of Activities" (these are definable, relevant management components) resulting in a Progress Report. For detailed information see: Jungmeier et al., 2005 or [www.ipam.info](http://www.ipam.info).

### Aims

Basically, the assessment of the current status of a PA helps to identify problems and should support future planning of various management issues within the framework of the NATREG project. The main aims of the self-assessment are:

Identifying the "Big picture": By linking sites as pieces of a jigsaw puzzle into a big picture, the profile of the PAs and the interdependence of certain activities are made visible.

Assessing the management performance: The status of management (what is being managed to what extent) is analyzed by a systematic, standardized checklist.

Working out a SWOT analysis: Based on the answers to the questions (more than 100), strengths and weaknesses, causes and effects etc. regarding management issues are analyzed.

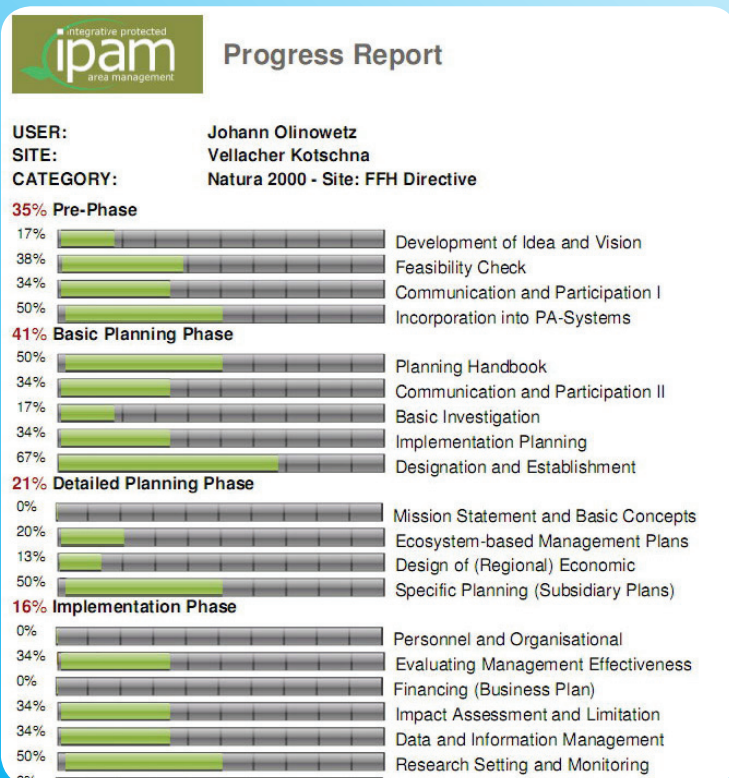
Benchmarking: By comparing the individual situations and SWOT analysis with each other, similarities as well as divergences can be identified.

Exchanging knowledge: Discussing standardized structures and individual results helps to sharpen the common understanding of management issues and enables learning from each other's experiences and approaches.

### Results

Upon answering the questions in the self-assessment tool, a progress report was prepared for each PA. The report provides an overview of the progress of management activities along the life-cycle of the PA and is the basis for further evaluation as presented in the aims above.

(Continues on page 9)



The "Big picture" of the PA management technically presented by the progress report (an example of Vellacher Kotschna): The standardized progress report is tailored to the individual users and sites (see head). A set of management activities (25 fields of activities) which is divided in four phases is evaluated. The greener the bar, the more of the management activities has been carried out. Grey bars show low activities within a certain field. The percentages on the left-hand side show the degree of fulfilment for each activity as well as the summarized number for each of the phases.





*An example of SWOT analysis for Pohorje: The SWOT analysis provided a first glance into the individual management of the PAs. This part served as a good basis for the interpretation of common/comparable issues of the NATREG sites.*

Some of the results based on the detailed evaluation of and the discussions on the report can be depicted as follows:

**“Blind spots” and “Spot lights”:** Many potential management activities within the studied NATREG sites are not being carried out at all, whereas others seem to be focal points. The lack of activities regarding the elaboration of basic management concepts (e.g. Management plans) and financing matters (e.g. Business plans) as well as regarding the development of human and organizational capacities and communication and participation are responsible for various problems. At the same time, all the PAs seem to show good or excellent performance in relation to their data and information management, research setting and monitoring and visitor management activities (services, information and interpretation, marketing).

**“European standard” oriented occurrence of management:** The average of the PA performance of the studied NATREG sites shows the tendency of decreasing management performance along the life-cycle (percentage of fulfilment in each phase is basically getting lower). For newer PAs (Pohorje, Mura-Drava, Po River Delta – transboundary initiative) it basically means a good situation, as they are on the way of developing the PA step-by-step. For older PAs (Deliblato Sands, Vellacher Kotschna, Po River Delta), however, it could mean that the development is somehow stuck in the middle or that it has decelerated. Special Efforts might be needed to re-activate the process.

**Interdependence of management activities:** Management activities within different Fields of activities (FOA) very much depend on each other. During the discussions, interdependence has been made visible (e.g. evaluation of the management effectiveness needs pre-setting of targets (as stated in a management plan).

**Identification of the frame for participation:** Participation as a main topic within NATREG was specifically emphasized within the discussion process of the workshop. As a general conclusion, participation within the NATREG sites shows a wide spectrum of approaches (e.g. Deliblato Sands: Participation was “not necessary”, Pohorje: “multiple stakeholders”, Vellacher Kotschna: “The” stakeholder etc.). With regard to the three main levels of participation – information > consultation > decision-making – (with

increasing significance of “real” participation), certain level has been identified. Basic level is the consultative level; however, some of the PAs might make greater efforts in informing people, i.e. involving them in decision-making processes.

## Conclusions

With respect to further activities planned within the NATREG project, the following conclusion can be drawn:

**Identification of NATREG management problems:** The self-assessment workshop was seen as a good instrument to evaluate the management performance on a basic level and to improve mutual understanding of different management conditions in the NATREG sites. However, due to the very tight timetable for this workshop, further evaluations/interpretations would be needed on a local level. Regarding the project level it was decided to repeat the self-assessment at the end of the NATREG project in order to compare the situations.

**Elaboration of NATREG guidelines:** The issues and results worked out in the self-assessment process will serve as a basis for the various guidelines to be produced. The consideration of the life-cycle concept, the need to make a self-assessment at the beginning of the planning process, strengths and weaknesses, the level of participation, etc. should be presented in appropriate sections of the reports.

**Conception of NATREG trainings:** The identified status of management, the “Blind Spots” and Spot lights, the level of participation, etc. will influence the trainings planned within the NATREG project.

## References and further readings

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- IPAM Toolbox: www.ipam.info [status 6th of May 2010]
- JUNGMEIER, M., KIRCHMEIER, H., KÜHMAIER, I., VELIK, I. & ZOLLNER, D. (2005): IPAM Toolbox. WP2: Transnational Results (Expert System, Toolbox and Best Practice). Study commissioned by: Office of the Carinthian Government Dept. 20, Bearbeitung: E.C.O. Institut für Ökologie, Klagenfurt, 68p.



Photographer: Hoyer



Photographer: Kovacs

## News from our fellow SEE project

# DANUBE PARKS

network of protected areas

Magdalena Wagner, Danube Parks

In June 2009, the DANUBE PARKS Network of Protected Areas was officially founded by signing the Declaration of Vienna (in left photo). Since then, the group of 12 protected areas has been working on various tasks in five different fields of activities (River Morphology & Revitalization; Floodplain Management & Habitat Network; Conservation of Danube Flagship Species; Monitoring & Naturazoo; Danube Nature Tourism). Here are some examples:

White-tailed Eagle (in right photo) is one of the flagship species of the region due to its extensive home range which makes it an indicator species for large, uninterrupted wetland territories. The DANUBE PARKS partners aim at creating a transnational Action Plan for its protection which should also be supported by European Institutions. After having collected the relevant data by questionnaires and the first discussion about the results at the Task Force Meeting (January 2010 in Duna-Dráva National Park and Kopački Rit Nature Park), the experts are now working on the first draft of the paper. The final version will be presented at the White-tailed Eagle Conference in 2011 in Duna-Dráva National Park (Hungary).

Another important activity is the preparation of DANUBE-PARKS Strategic Paper on Conservation and Navigation. At times when navigation is a big focus in international

politics – considering also the European Strategy for the Danube Region – it is more important than ever to raise a joint voice of nature protection stakeholders. The key role of Protected Areas for the conservation of biodiversity has to be considered by all navigation projects. Therefore, a strong joint voice of Protected Areas on this topic is needed as well as a close communication between Protected Area Administrations and navigation stakeholders. This would help to enforce nature protection as well as to identify and explore possible synergies.

Protected areas within the DANUBE PARKS network are important stakeholders in their respective regions – they know the territories and do the everyday nature protection and monitoring work. However, not only the nature benefits from the protection but also the region and the people living in it: By enforcing sustainable nature tourism in the region, a broad range of stakeholders is involved. Currently, DANUBE PARKS organizes a Joint Ranger Training for its rangers and guides in order to raise capacities in guiding foreign tourists (English course) and to raise awareness for international nature protection (a course on this topic). Travelling the Danube and visiting the different areas on a short journey will strengthen the cooperation among the rangers from various countries.

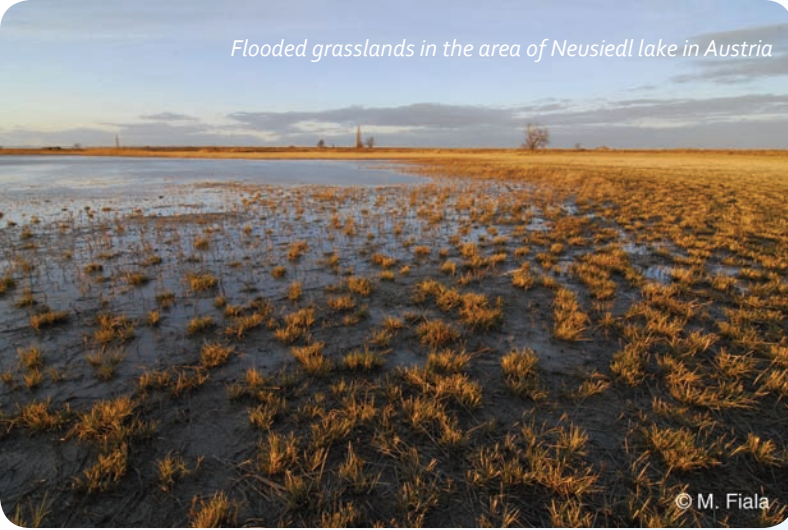
The upcoming months will be dense with the elaboration of joint strategies for all fields of action, as well as with implementing several pilot projects in habitat restoration, tourism, and monitoring.

All news are available to the interested public on our website [www.danubeparks.org](http://www.danubeparks.org) and in the newsletter to which you can subscribe on the website as well!



Photography: Duna-Dráva National Park

Flooded grasslands in the area of Neusiedl lake in Austria



© M. Fiala



Autumnal forest around Podsreda castle in Kozjanski Park in Slovenia

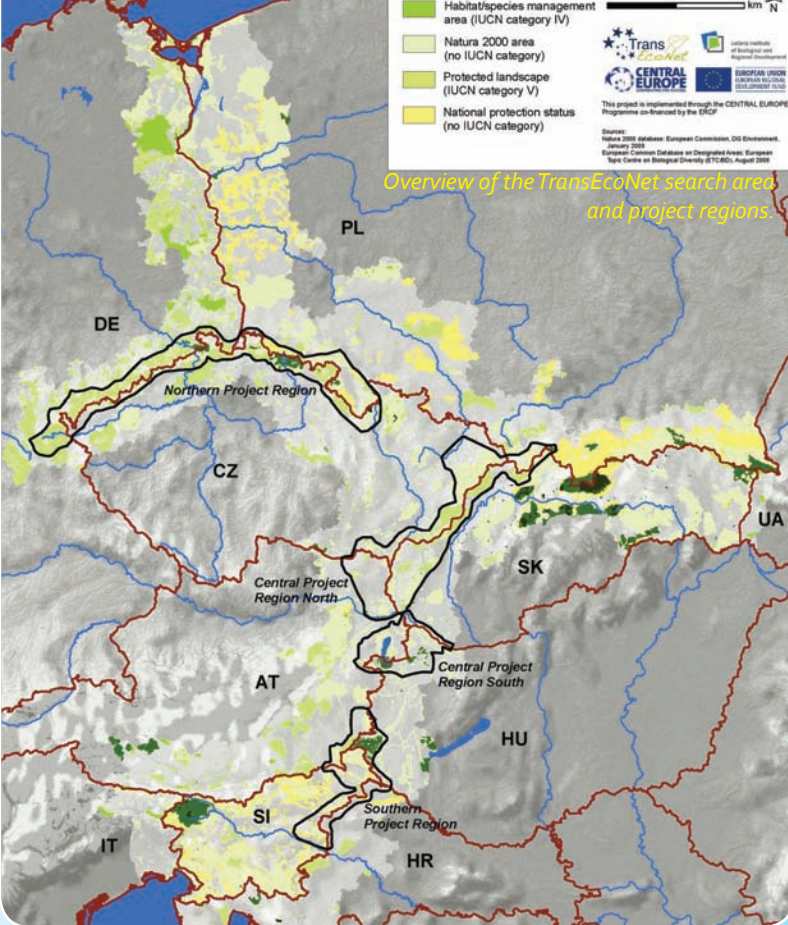
## News from Central Europe project – Trans EcoNet



TransEcoNet - Inventory of Existing Ecological Network (Based on National Administrative Protection Status)



Overview of the TransEcoNet search area and project regions



## Striving for a denser transnational ecological network in Central Europe

Protected areas like national parks, nature parks or biosphere reserves are often isolated “islands” designated for the protection of the world’s biodiversity. They are separated by unprotected agricultural landscapes, traffic corridors and settlements. Often animal and plant species dispose of less space for migration, dispersion and reproduction than required. To preserve natural and cultural heritage in the long run, TransEcoNet (*Transnational ecological network in CE*) therefore strives for better connection of protected and unprotected landscapes across national borders.



EUROPEAN UNION  
EUROPEAN REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FUND

**Sustainable development of transboundary landscapes**  
TransEcoNet focuses on unprotected landscapes lying between the already protected areas. The project regions are situated within or between the wide-ranging ecological networks of the Alps, the Carpathians and the Green Belt. Thus, TransEcoNet contributes to the pan-European interlinkage of these ecosystems and to their sustainable territorial development.

16 project partners coming from 6 Central European countries are working in the fields of remote sensing, geoinformatics, nature protection, landscape ecology, history of architecture and arts as well as regional and environmental sciences. They analyze and assess transboundary landscapes with regard to their spatial connectivity in a transnational network of protected areas, land use change, biological diversity and ecosystem services. Thereupon they give recommendations and elaborate strategies for the sustainable development of transnational ecological networks, for their future land use and for biodiversity conservation. These recommendations and strategies should be adapted by regional planning authorities and protected area administrations in the long run. Additionally, TransEcoNet strengthens people’s awareness about natural and cultural heritage of transboundary landscapes by communicating the project results on regional exhibitions, excursions and workshops.



The Elbe river with sandstone rock in the National Park Saxon, Switzerland, Germany

# NATREG partners are:



ZAVOD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE  
ZA VARNOST NARAVE

REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA  
MINISTRSTVO ZA OKOLJE IN PROSTOR



REGIONE DEL VENETO



agenzia regionale  
prevenzione e  
ambiente dell'emilia-romagna



ALPEN-ADRIA  
UNIVERSITÄT  
KLAGENFURT



REGIONALNI CENTER ZA OKOLJE  
Slovenija



ZAVOD ZA PROSTORNO UREĐENJE  
KOPRIVNIČKO-KRIZEVACKE ŽUPANIJE

AGNATURE



VOJVODINA ŠUME



Italian NATREG team

## In this issue we present the Italian project partners: Spatial Planning and Parks Department of the Veneto Region and Regional Agency for the Environmental Protection of the Emilia Romagna Region (A.R.P.A)

The main objective of **Spatial Planning and Parks Department of the Veneto Region** is to protect and manage the Region's territory in order to improve the quality of life, to assure balanced development coherent with the European integration process and the European landscape convention and to improve competitiveness while mitigating the climate change effects. Department's tasks are spatial planning, European project management and promotion of best practices in the field of spatial planning, urban and environmental quality; coordination, management and valorisation of regional parks and protected areas of the Veneto Region.

**A.R.P.A** was established in 1995 as an environmental control technical support body for regional, district and local authorities. A.R.P.A's functions, activities and tasks cover all aspects of environmental control, including: monitoring of various environmental components, management and surveillance of human activities and their territorial impacts, activities in support of environmental impact assessments of plans and projects, creation and management of a regional environmental information system. A.R.P.A employs more than 1100 people working in the central management and in 9 districts of the Emilia-Romagna Region.

The main objective of the Veneto Region and A.R.P.A within of the NATREG project is to develop a common spatial development strategy of Po Delta, one of the most important wetland zones of the Mediterranean and Europe due to its landscape, outstanding flora and fauna habitats and extraordinary biodiversity. This strategy will lead to the preparation of the interregional management plan for the Po Delta area, a single territorial unit which is actually managed by two different Parks (one located on northern shores of the Po river in the Veneto Region and the other located south of the Po River in the Emilia-Romagna Region).

Because of this very ambitious and long-term objective pursued by the Veneto Region and A.R.P.A within the NATREG project, the two Regional Parks in charge of the management of these protected areas have been involved in the implementation of the project activities. Furthermore, one Interregional Working Team, composed of planners, biologists and economists, has been appointed by the two partners to run environmental studies and technical analyses in the Po Delta pilot area. An interregional management office has been established at Ariano Polesine (Rovigo) to support the work of the Interregional Working Team.

Italian NATREG team (*in photo above*) are: Tiziana Quaglia, Marco Meggiolaro, Emanuela Finesso, Marco Gottardi, Roberta De Faveri, Federico Montanari, Irene Montanari, Lucilla Previati, Maria Cristina Veratelli, Francesco Musco, Graziano Caramori, Cristina Barbieri, Gloria Minarelli, Sabrina Schiavon, Alessandro Longo, Nicola Boscolo, Davide Ferro.

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