



Dr. Marcel Huber (on the right) with the signed Letter of Intent for non-intervention management regarding the first two islands

INTERNAL NEWSLETTER

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The WILDIsland initiative starts living!

On Friday, 29th June 2018, the first “letter of intent” for non-intervention management was signed by Dr. Marcel Huber, the Bavarian Minister for Environment, to ensure natural development and wilderness on two islands with an area of 5 hectares!

This is the first step to bring the WILDIsland initiative onto the ground! It underlines the interest from the political level to take over the WILDIsland concept into the local, Danube-wide and even EU policies.

It was a river morphology expert workshop in 2013 (Bratislava) when the WILDIsland initiative was discussed for the first time by the DANUBEPARKS Network. Within DANUBEparksCONNECTED, a professional inventory was set up, which is now ready and published on <http://wildisland.danubeparks.org/>.

Now, the 2nd Danube Volunteers Day organized by our Bavarian partners prepared the perfect frame for signing this very first commitment.

Beside this great step forward, we started the signing process of the WILDIsland commitment by all DANUBEPARKS Directors. As very first, Stela Bozhinova, Director of Persina Nature Park signed this commitment. This commitment underlines the interest and willingness of the Danube River Network of Protected Areas to work actively on the conservation of the Danube Wild Island Habitat Corridor. It will help to anchor the WILDIsland initiative on policy level, but it could help also on local level to reach conservation commitments for specific WILDIslands (e.g. formulated as an Annex).



Photos: Siegfried Geißler

WILDisland online tool published

The WILDisland inventory has officially been finalized. After all the valuable inputs were addressed by the working group, the online tool has been published and is ready for content upload.

All partners are ought to collect and provide photos and description of each island that fall under their responsibility as soon as possible.

The online tool can be reached on:

<http://wildisland.danubeparks.org/>

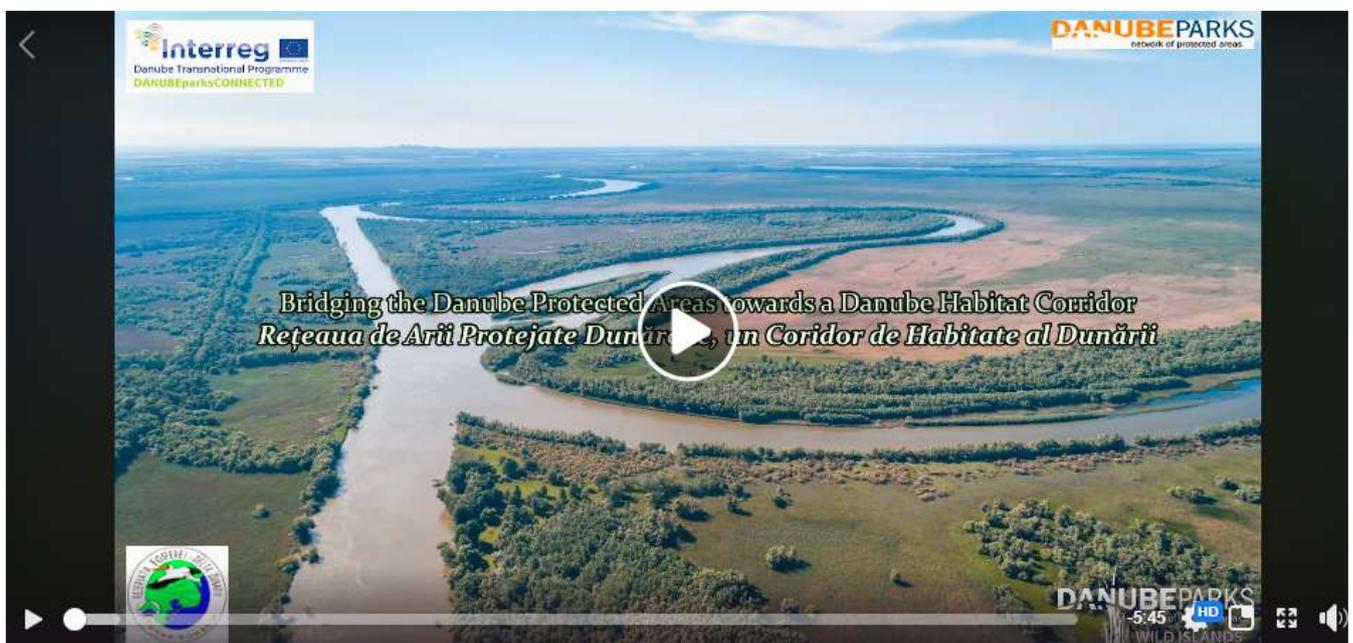


The Danube wild islands from a bird's eye view - a video

Our colleagues from the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority prepared a video about the WILDIsland initiative. Many Danube islands are true marvels of nature and seeing them from above is absolutely mesmerizing.

There have been 11 wild islands identified within the territory of the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve. The video shows how natural wilderness looks like on the Danube from a bird's eye view.

Click on the video to watch:



WildIslands Inventory / Inventarierea insulelor naturale din RBDD

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Cross-sector conference - Nature conservation and navigation alongside the Danube river in Kladovo, Serbia

29TH - 30TH MAY 2018

The second cross-sector conference for transnational cooperation for the Danube took place on 29-30th of May 2018 in Kladovo, Serbia. In the framework of this interdisciplinary conference organized by Danube STREAM representatives of three projects had the opportunity to present their activities and highlight important topics related to river morphology, sustainable waterway management and sediment transport.

Danube STREAM presented the current status on environmentally sound waterway management and summarized results of national level meetings and stakeholder involvement. Guidelines and best practices were discussed on the interface of waterway management and nature conservation.

DANUBE parksCONNECTED presented the final draft of the WILDIsland Online Tool and highlighted fields of cooperation for the initiative, aiming to foster the conservation of Danube Islands in their function to act as stepping stones for strengthening the Danube Habitat Corridor.

DanubeSediment, as an expert on appropriate transnational sediment management of the Danube discussed the detailed content of main project outputs.

In course of second day's study tour participants visited the Iron Gate dams and navigational locks, since this mega construction serves as an example for only its huge impact on the navigation system on this stretch of the Danube but on its major affect on the local flora and fauna. Representatives took a vessel trip to the gorge, which provided an excellent informal platform for knowledge exchange.



Photos: NPDA

Submission of LIFE+ DanubeFreeSky project concept note

We are glad to inform you that the concept note for LIFE+ DanubeFreeSky project proposal was successfully submitted to the Contracting Authority on 14th June! This concept note for the LIFE+ project proposal is the outcome of the elaboration of the DANUBE FREE SKY Strategy of WP4 Corridor Air FREE SKY, which has the aim of formulating technical solutions against collision for all power lines crossing the Danube. With the demand from many partners to intensify the approach against bird collision and electrocution, the LIFE+ project with the title "Transnational conservation of birds along Danube river" will focus on reducing the mortality of birds by power lines within 22 project SPAs and increasing efficiency of adopted measures on a transnational level.

The NGO Raptor Protection of Slovakia is the project's Coordinating Beneficiary, which will connect 7 countries in cooperation. Important details and individual tasks for the concept note submission were discussed in course of a DanubeFreeSky meeting in Budapest on 16th May. Several energy companies and one railway company also agreed to cooperate and apply key solutions to create safer conditions for birds along the Danube.

This LIFE DanubeFreeSky project is a concurrence of the DANUBE parks CONNECTED project and a LIFE+ Energy project of Raptor Protection of Slovakia as the Coordinating Beneficiary. The proposed project will complement and build upon the results achieved in these projects.



Photo: Raptor Protection of Slovakia

2nd Danube Volunteers Day report

The Danube-wide volunteer events are running smoothly, in fact they are slowly coming to the end. Since the first event on 14th April, 13 volunteers days have been organized. Around 300 participants were already mobilized and filled more than 160 huge garbage bags with the collected waste.

While this year's volunteers days have thematically the same mission of focusing on dynamic riverine habitats, specifically waste collection along the river, they varied in many other factors. While some protected areas' participants collected waste by foot, others' volunteers fished out and gathered the floating garbage from the Danube by canoes or boats. Several valuable wild islands were also targetted and cleaned by the enthusiastic volunteers.

The collected waste composition is documented, through which an analysis from the source in Germany to the Danube Delta will be done. The most unique waste items will definitely be noted after the Danube Volunteers Day is over. As of now, several messages in bottles, car tires, cogwheels, oil cans, plastic fruits, a shopping cart, a yet unidentified plush toy bird and a washing mashine metal interior accompanied the several plastic and glass bottles that were in majority.



Photos: NPDA, Vsume, BROZ, JUPP Kopacki rit, PNPd, WD-R

Update about the woolly inhabitants



It has been over a month since the first sheep of this year's grazing action stepped on the dyke. The grazing area is surrounded by an electric fence, which is moved regularly when the specific field has already been grazed.

At first they grazed selectively, preferred common nettle and other wildflowers. After a short while they move on to other grasses and shrubs so the area is equally grazed.



This cross-border pilot action has however brought up some difficulties, which need to be sorted out. Managing regular moving of the fence and maintaining properly nutritious grass for the sheep requires a lot of work and a strong cooperation. Nonetheless, getting the right kind of practice and experience always comes with a learning process.



The employees of Donau-Auen National Park were recently introduced to the pilot action and our sheep in course of an excursion, and as the grazing project has awakened the interest of many people, a press release will soon be issued.



Photos: NPDA

Cross-over capitalization - DANUBE PARKS coordinator of pole “natural values”

In the 2nd call of the Danube Transnational Programme, 22 new projects have been approved, including 8 (!) projects working on natural and cultural values and ecological connectivity. To foster stronger cooperation among those projects, the DTP launched a cross-over capitalization process. DANUBE parksCONNECTED has been elected by the projects of the 1st call as coordinator of the respective thematic pole 5b “natural values in the Danube region”.

Together with the new projects, pole 5b is the biggest cluster within the DTP, and DANUBE parksCONNECTED was nominated as pole leader for all projects together.

In the frame of the Lead Partner Seminar, a first coming together and brainstorming on possible fields of cooperation took place on 27th June in Budapest.

Already in this first session, several options also for cooperation with DANUBE parksCONNECTED were identified, including collaboration on institutional level with Sava TIES (Protected Area Network along the Sava river), WP6 with REFOCuS (protection of riparian forests), strategic partnership with MEASURES (Danube-wide sturgeon conservation), or the implementation of Cycling the Dyke in 2019 (WP2) with AoE Bike Trail and Eco Velo Tour.



Photo: Anna Maria Kramann

Upcoming events

- The last 2nd Danube Volunteers Days in Danube Dráva National Park and Passau District
- International Danube Festival in Ulm, Germany: 6th - 15th June 2018
<https://www.donaufest.de/>

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