EU FUNDING

LIFE+ is the EU’s funding instrument for nature conservation. The focus lies on nature and biodiversity, e.g. cofinancing the establishment of “Nature 2000 protected areas system”. Measures for preservation or (re)establishment of natural habitats for animals and plants are supported by the EU’s “LIFE-Nature-Program”. So called “LIFE nature projects” benefit of those EU subsidies, which support important nature conservation projects all over Europe.

LIFE measures murerleben

Overview

The 1.309 hectares wide Nature 2000 site “Upper and middle reaches of the river Mur with Puemer floodplain forest, Puemer wall and Gulsen” set the project’s geographical background. The measures are allocated over a length of 90 km between Murau and Kraubath.

Total length: 453 km, therewith 298 km in Styria Source: Salzburg, Radstädter Tauern 1.898 m a.s.l. Mouth: in Croatia into the river Drava Catchment area: 13.824 km²

Background

The systematic regulation of the River Mur began at the end of the 19th century. The old abandoned sidearms with their alluvial forests and litter meadows are the last precious refuges for rare and/or endangered animal and plant species.

Project aims

The main goal is the restoration of sidearms and river-widenings to regain the formerly typical braided river system. Additionally, river habitats and alluvial forests shall be restored by connecting existing ones with the dynamic river-system. Ponds on the floodplains shall also be re-established or improved. One of the most important aims is to enlarge the flooding areas where possible without putting adjacent settlements or infrastructure at risk.

After completion of murerleben I with 11 measures in the 90 km long river area, murerleben II started, considering the monitoring results and lessons learnt:

• to enhance and support the previously implemented stepping stones focussing on their up- and downstream impacts.
• to create large connected and diversified habitats in the river and its alluvial forest areas
• to support the consolidation of the revitalized sections
• to provide various, local separate habitat structures for species such as amphibians and fish, which benefit from these contiguous habitat complexes (wintering, spawning, summer quarters) among those they can move back and forth.

That’s why the locations of the 7 new measures were chosen close to the already implemented ones to create the large connected areas as above mentioned.

Project Partners

Lead partner
Styrian Government
Department 14 Water management,
Resources and Subsustainability
Other project partners
Styrian Government
Department 13 Nature conservation
Local Gov. Authority Judenburg
Co-investors
Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management (BMELFUW), fishing beneficiaries, municipalities
Project coordination
freiland Civil Engineers LLC, Vienna - Graz

MEASURES IN MUR[ER]LEBEN I UND MUR[ER]LEBEN II

The general objective is the restoration, improvement and long-term protection of typical wetland forests and river landscape. The requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive and water management and protection are being considered, since they are the prerequisite to maintain rare and endangered animal and plant species.

Typical structures with branches, gravel bars, flat river banks, wetland forests and meadows shall be restored by connecting existing ones with the dynamic river-system. Ponds on the floodplains shall also be re-established or improved. One of the most important aims is to enlarge the flooding areas where possible without putting adjacent settlements or infrastructure at risk.

murerleben I
11 measures to make 90 river kilometers fish-passable
• revitalisation or recreation of 7 abandoned meanders and distributaries
• rebuilding of migration barriers
• initiation of 28 ha rejuvenation of the willow-population and new areas with alluvial forest
• reactivation of approximately 17 ha flooding area

murerleben II
7 new measures
• revitalisation or recreation of 7 distributaries and widenings
• initiation of 17,7 ha new areas with alluvial forest
• implementation of ponds serving as habitats for amphibians (11.000 m²)
• reactivation of approximately 10 ha flooding area