



LIFE measures mur[er]leben

Inneralpine river basin management – Upper Mur

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.

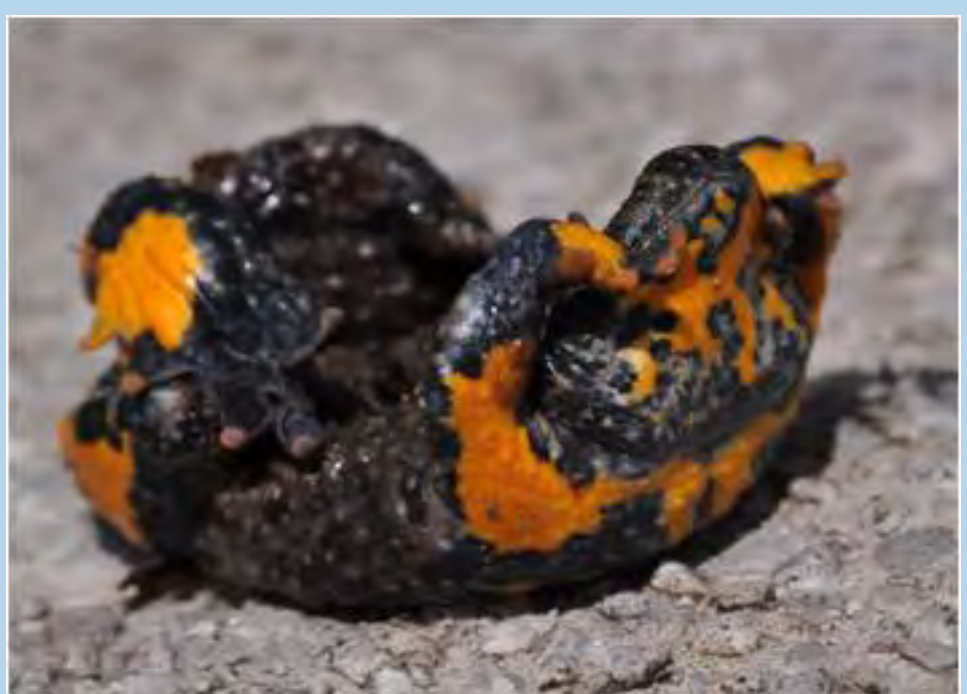
PROTECTIVE GOODS



Danube salmon (*Hucho hucho*)



Italian crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*)



Yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina orientalis*)



Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)



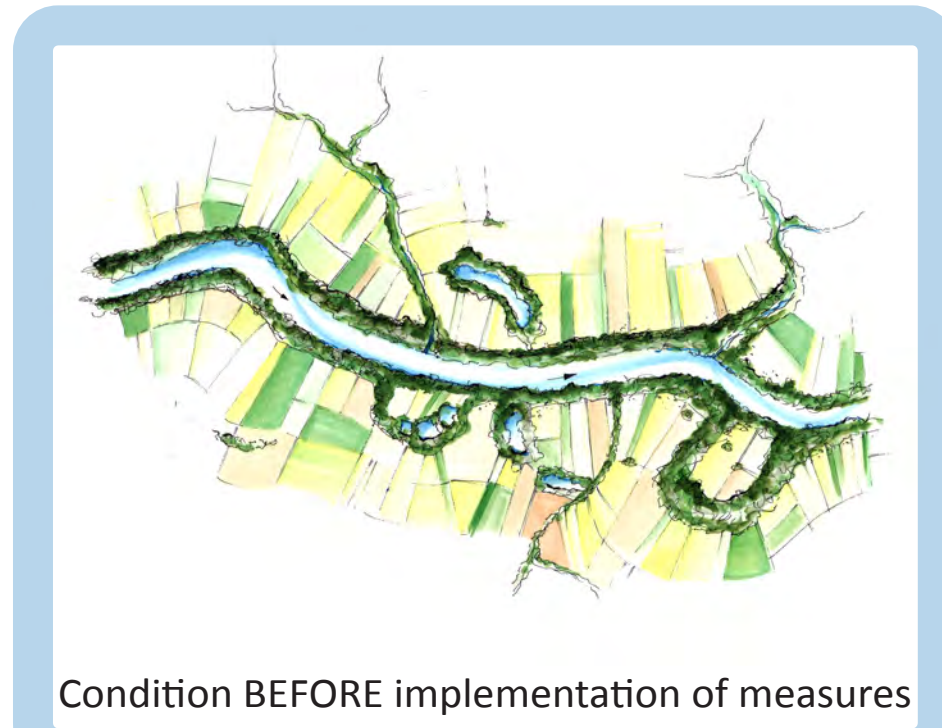
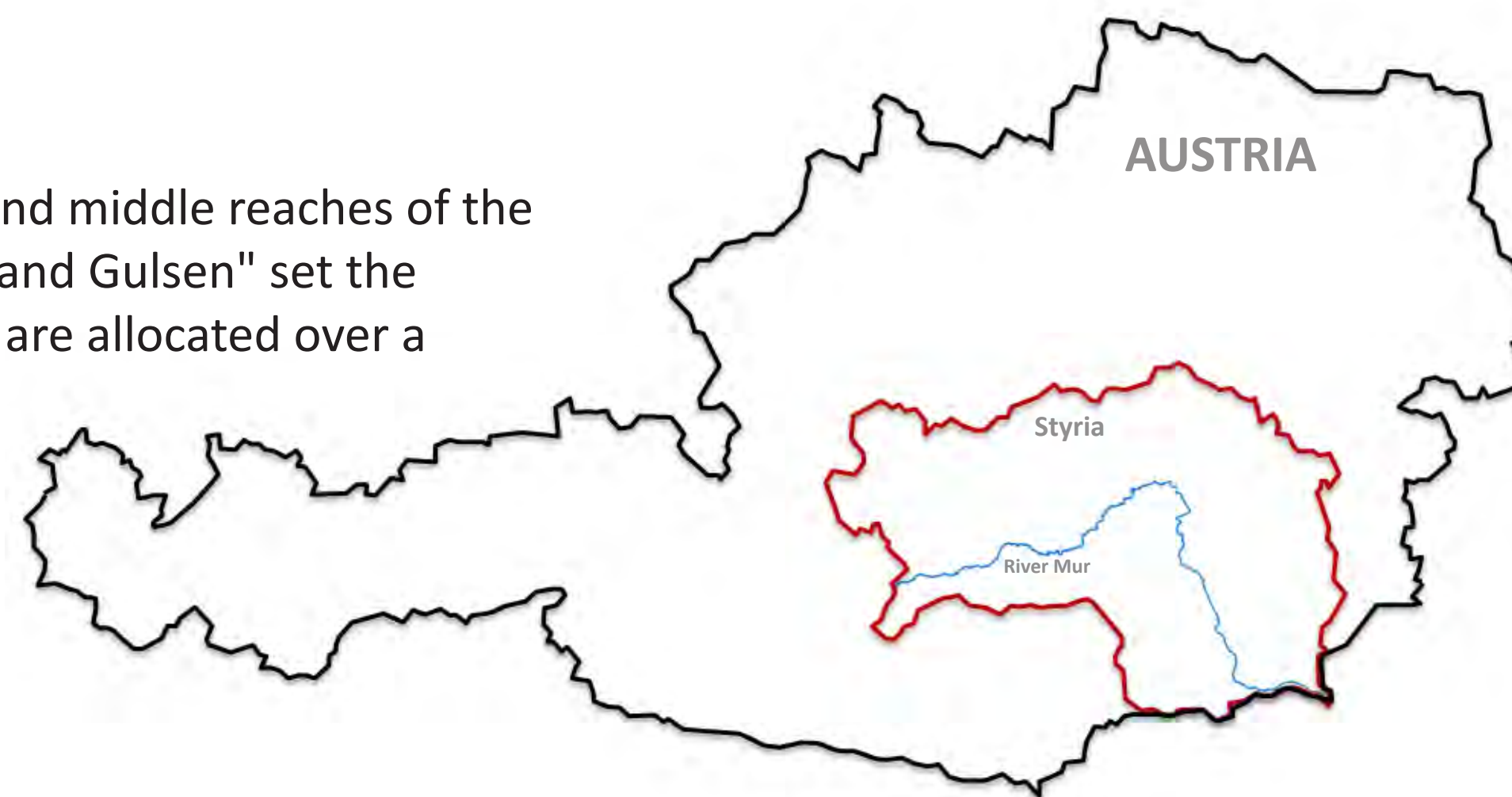
Alder-Ashes-Floodplain forests (*Alnus glutinosa* and *Fraxinus excelsior*)

LIFE+ mur[er]leben

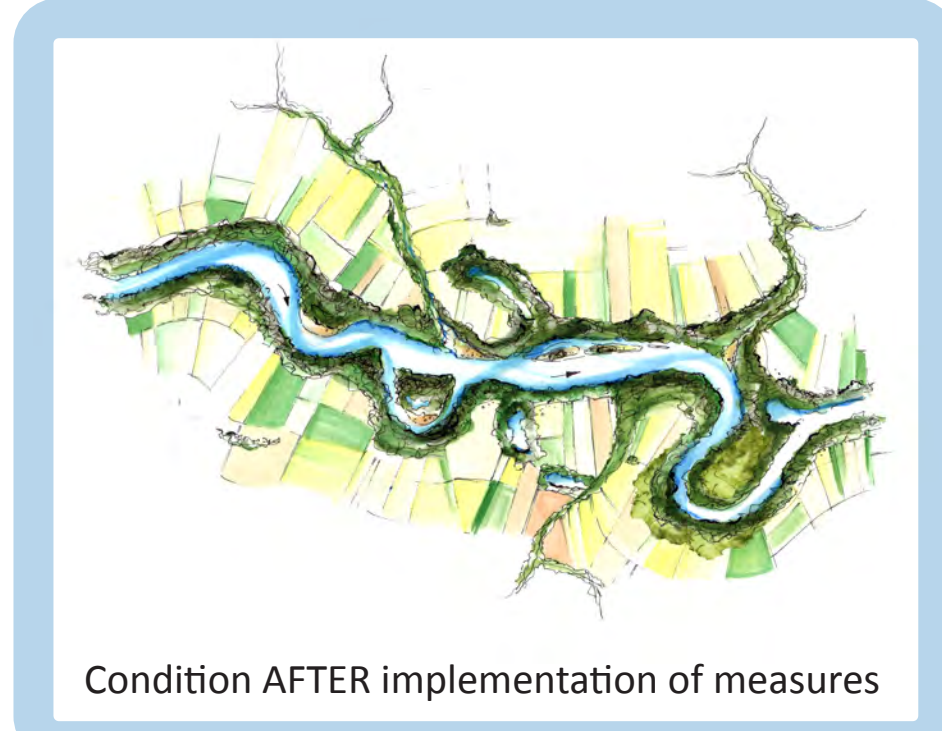
OVERVIEW

The 1.309 hectares wide Nature 2000 site "Upper and middle reaches of the river Mur with Puxer floodplain forest, Puxer 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, thereof 298 km in Styria
Source: Salzburg, Radstädter Tauern 1.898 m a.s.l.
Mouth: in Croatia into the river Drau
Catchment area: 13.824 km²



Condition BEFORE implementation of measures



Condition AFTER implementation of measures

BACKGROUND

The systematic regulation of the River Mur began at the end of the 19th century. Most of the sidearms were cut off and large areas were dried up. The River Mur was disconnected from its surrounding area and side streams and intensive agricultural use goes up to the water body. The alluvial forests on the river banks were reduced (no connection between water and land) and a straightened, deepened river remained. This led to a loss of river dynamic, to a channelled river bed and to a loss of habitats. Also weirs, transverse structures and hydro power stations affected the river-continuum and the sediment transport. Currently, 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:

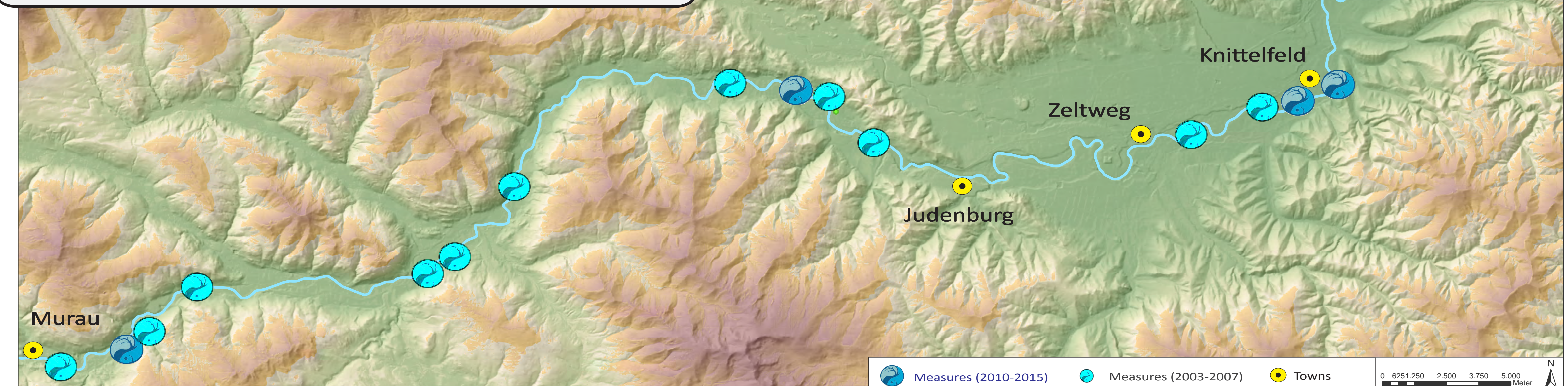
- to enhance and support the previously implemented stepping stones focussing on their up- and downstream impacts.
- to create large connected and diversified habitats in the river and its alluvial forest areas
- to support the consolidation of the revitalized sections
- to provide various, local separate 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.

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 alluvial forest waters were and are going to be created or initiated on 18 different sections of the River Mur. These are intendedly chosen in the vicinity of already implemented measures to intensify the effects of the overall project.



mur[er]leben 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

mur[er]leben 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 (13.000 m²)
 - reactivation of approximately 10 ha flooding area

FACTS AND FUNDS

Project area: Styria, districts of Murau, Knittelfeld and Kraubath

LIFE III - murerleben I

Project budget: € 2.125.000
50% EU-cofinancing: € 1.062.500
Project period: 08/2003 – 07/2007

LIFE+ - murerleben II

Project budget: € 2.784.131
50% EU-cofinancing: € 1.392.065
Project period: 02/2010 – 02/2015

PROJECT PARTNERS

Lead partner

Styrian Government
Department 14 Water management, Resources and Sustainability

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 (BMLFUW), fishing beneficiaries, municipalities

Project coordination

freiland Civil Engineers LLC, Vienna - Graz