



APRIL

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Editorial ECRR Newsletter.

Dear readers,

It is my pleasure to present to you this edition of the ECRR Newsletter. It is the first time that I as the Chairman of the ECRR am writing an introduction to an ECRR Newsletter. The reason for this is that the ECRR is in transition now, due to important changes to the ECRR. One of these changes is that the ECRR became formally an Association by the end of last year. At the same time the (secretarial) support by the Dutch Government has been stopped. For the more than 15 year period of existence of the ECRR, the ECRR Network was a so called loose network and the (secretarial) support was subsequently given by governments and or organisations from a particular country.

Through this the ECRR was able to develop a network with about 800 hundred contacts / subscribers, 11 National Centres / Networks and three partner organisations. The ECRR has organised a huge number of River Restoration Seminars, 6 European River Restoration Conferences. It participated in 2 World Water Fora in Europe, in Istanbul and Marseille and contributed for the last 5 years with presentations, river restoration sessions and workshops in the EURO-INBO conferences on the implementation of the WFD. Moreover, together with the International River Foundation, the ECRR initiated the European Riverprize, awarded to the Rhine river in 2013 and to the Mur river in 2014 and a call for applications for 2015 announced in this newsletter.

Through these developments the ECRR Board, acting for many years in a stable composition, concluded that the ECRR Network should be commonly and professionally governed, based on a clear legal status, with an appointed Board and broad support from the users of the ECRR Network, the beneficiaries of ECRR's activi-

ties and donors. Therefore it was decided to form an association out of the existing network. The articles of association were signed on 17 December 2014. The Board is now working on getting the association functioning according to the new model and is meanwhile supported by some persons, mainly on a voluntary basis, keeping the ECRR operational.

I like to thank very much Hil Kuijpers, Rogier Vogelij, Jos Twente and Wim Zeeman staffing the secretariat for the last 5 years. They made by huge efforts, major contributions to ECRR's performance and development. I like to thank also the Dutch Government who supported the ECRR all over the 15 years of its existence, in particular for both the secretarial and financial support during these last five years.

For this edition of the ECRR Newsletter Wim Zeeman was the editor in chief and I like to thank Wim very much for his work done on this, resulting in quite an attractive newsletter with a variety of articles. These include a call for applications for the 3rd European Riverprize, and an article about the Mur river, the winner of the 2nd European Riverprize. Furthermore the announcement is made of the REFORM final conference, the International Conference on Novel Approaches to Assess and Rehabilitate Modified Rivers and the Natural Water Retention Measures Guide. Moreover you will find a GWP article on droughts presenting the results of a “drought” project, making the newsletter even more thematic on natural water retention measures.

The last news is that the RESTORE project is nominated for the best LIFE Environment / Nature project 2015. The awarding event will take place during the Green Week 2015 and the awarding event of the 3rd European Riverprize will be on 9/10 November, 2015 in Vienna.

Enjoy your reading,

*Bart Fokkens,
Chairman ECRR.*

River Mur - 2014 IRF European Riverprize winner

Introduction

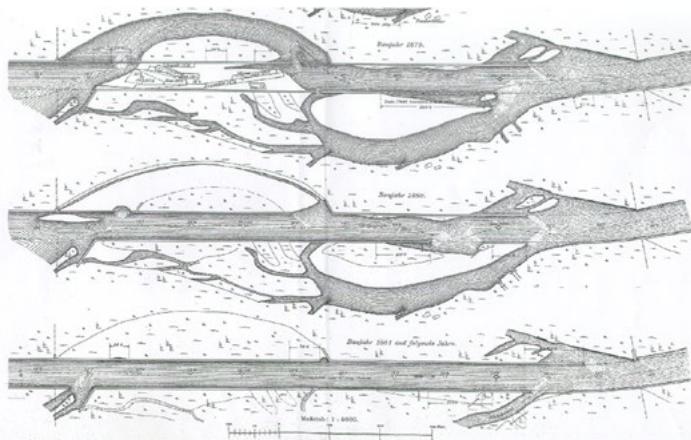
The River Mur rises in the Austrian Eastern Alps and flows into the Drava River in Croatia. Home to the second largest alluvial forest in Austria, the river basin area comprises one of Europe's most species-rich habitats. Works to restore this river have benefited both the environment and the communities in the area, with additional activities including increased flood protection and the creation of leisure and nature activities for the local residents.

Judging panel comments:

"the Mur River restoration was very well planned, implemented with intensive public participation, stakeholder engagement and transboundary cooperation from the very beginning. The project performance shows a high level of integration, going far beyond ecological restoration and demonstrating innovation with respect to water, land use planning and sustainable land management. This is the result of a remarkable combination of persistent, creative and professional behaviour of the river planners and managers."

Historical overview

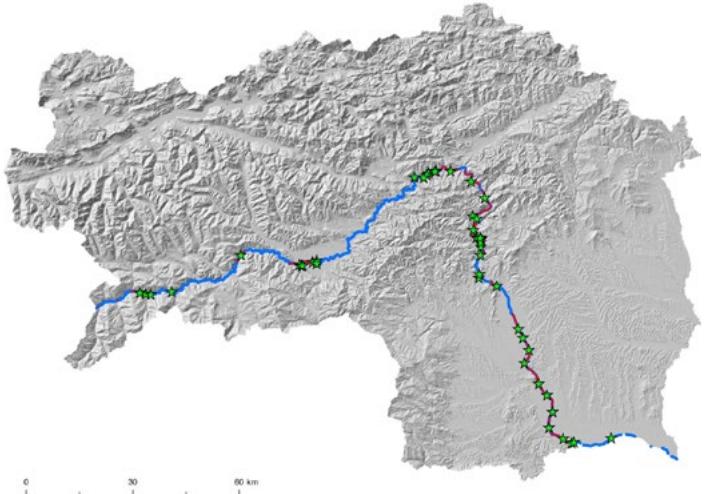
The history of disturbance of the River Mur goes back to 1879-1881 when distributaries were cut off in order to intensify agricultural use:



This was followed by extensive hydropower development in the 20th century:



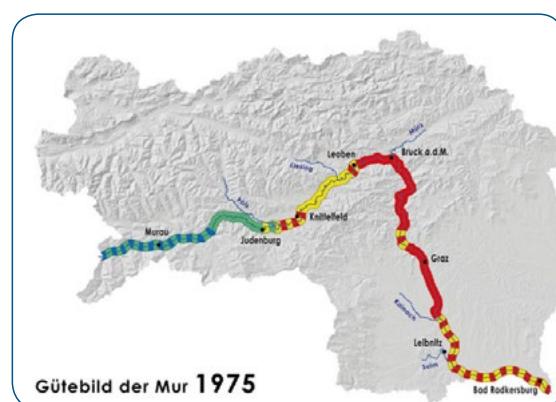
By 2013, the hydropower dams stretch across Austria with impacted river sections shown in red:



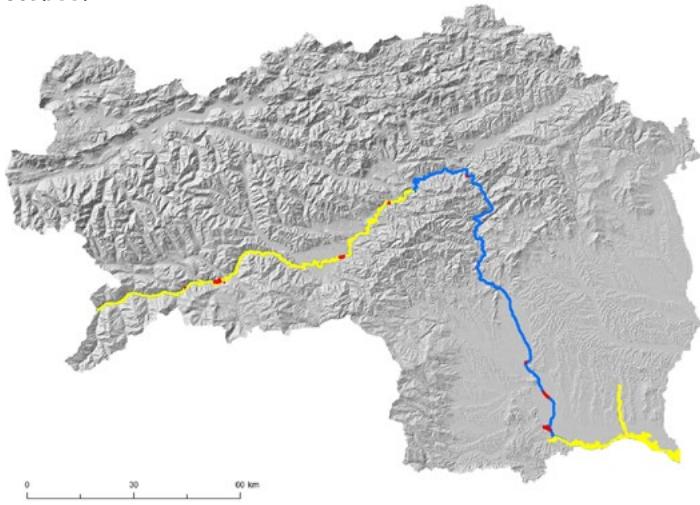
In the 1960s and 1970s, wastewater from industrial plants and communes led to the River Mur being considered as one of the dirtiest rivers in Europe. People were driven away from the river and the situation became unbearable.

Restoration of the River Mur commenced in the 1980s with programmes for ecological regeneration, measures aiming for public awareness, first trends towards nature-orientated river engineering, and cross-border communication.

The improvements have been dramatic with water quality improvements between 1975 and 2005 shown below.



An important part of the restoration was large scale designations as protection areas (yellow: Natura 2000 – protected areas; red: Nature Conservation areas, Natural monuments, Protected landscapes).



With EU funding under the Water Framework and Habitats Directives, the targets of the re-naturation projects were:

- Restoration of typical hydromorphological structures
- Initiation of dynamic processes by building and reconnecting distributaries and widenings
- Stabilization of the river bed, improvement of the bed-load balance
- Restoration and improvement of a variety of aquatic and terrestrial habitats
- Protection of the last existing and initiate new alluvial forests
- Creation of space for flooding areas (passive flood protection)
- Growing awareness for environmental aspects in the public

In total 12.5 m euros were invested in 28 restoration measures covering 21 km. The main ecological renaturation measures were:

- removal of the impassable migratory barriers or building of fish passes
- removal of the bank protection to start dynamic processes
- creation of branches, reconnection of oxbows and tributaries
- different research projects to analyse the bed load balance
- protection of existing habitats and creation of lost habitats

Monitoring has shown:

- the newly created habitats are accepted by many juvenile fish and there are even more demanding species present. There is still high ecological potential.
- Measures rated very positively for the development of the amphibian fauna. It can be assumed with a high degree of probability that they will serve as spawning grounds and even permanent habitat for amphibians.
- The hydrologic regime in the floodplains was improved and directed towards the original state. Suitable conditions were provided for rejuvenation for the riparian vegetation.
- The river bed level within the restored reach has been raised and the observed riverbank erosion indicates further widening is occurring.

The River Mur has made in-roads into the significant hydropower conflict between the water framework directive and the renewable energy directive, also one of the most significant global river issues.

To address the conflict between hydropower expansion and nature protection, a management plan has been established for the River Mur. The plan has been aligned between energy providers and river experts. The aim is to balance the interests of the energy sector and those of river protection and restoration, focussing on river-ecological aspects. This has been achieved by the classification of river sections in the following way.

Ecological priority zones: Environmentally sensitive water bodies where preservation and improvement of the ecological state has priority and there is no hydropower development.

Trade-off zones: River stretches of good ecological value and high hydropower potential. Here hydropower plants are only possible if they are environmentally compatible. Hydropower development is only possible if there is no ecological deterioration is caused (alterations allowed only within a 'state class').

Zones of no particular designation: River reaches with no ecological sensitivity and low hydropower potential. This mostly affects river stretches already used for hydropower purposes (often "Heavily modified water bodies").

Trade-off zones and ecological priority zones have high energy potentials (74%), but make up only 50 % in terms of length. 50% of the River Mur would be protected from ecological deterioration to an inferior state class.

Future plans for hydropower plants are most likely to happen in trade-off zones (highest energy potential), but planning has to be environmentally compatible.

Close cooperation has occurred with the key stakeholders: economic water usage, energy sector, nature conservation, mountain torrent and avalanche control, municipalities, owner of fishing rights, the public, technical and scientific support, various planners, universities, cross-border cooperation, coordinated in a bilateral river commission

Public relations has been extensive including school projects, competitions and scientific classes:



And press conferences, festivals and sporting activities:



The management plan enabled

- the unification of different interests of the EU Water Framework Directive, the EU Flood Directive and the Renewable Energy Directive
- the foundations to comply with the mandatory energy targets, while maintaining/improving the ecological status ==> valid until 2022

Implementation of measures is most successful, if there is a well-planned information base provided for the public

- to make decisions understandable and transparent
- to shorten approval and implementation of projects
- to create environmental awareness
- to bring the population back to nature
- to invite the population to use nature as a living, leisure and recreation space

Conclusions and Outlook

The individual restoration measures enabled

- the reconstruction of lost habitats in some areas
- the reactivation of retention areas for flood drainage
- the ensuring of the ecological status

More information:

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IRF European Riverprize - Rewarding river champions

The International RiverFoundation is now calling for applications for the 2015 IRF European Riverprize. The European Riverprize is Europe's most esteemed award for the restoration, protection or sustainable management of rivers and wetlands across the continent.

Any organisation or partnership involved in the restoration, protection or sustainable management of a freshwater system is encouraged to apply for the Riverprize – regardless of the size of the river or the scale of the work undertaken. The Riverprize will be awarded to the applicant who best demonstrates achievements across a broad range of criteria, including a documented river management framework, evidence of social

and economic considerations, an integrated approach to river management, long-term vision, stakeholder engagement and improvements in river health indicators such as water quality, species numbers and pollution levels.

The 2015 winner will automatically qualify for stage two of the Thiess International Riverprize in 2016, where they will compete against the winners of the Australian Riverprize, the New Zealand Riverprize and the North American Riverprize, among others, for the top prize in river management.

Riverprize winners often attract interest both regionally and worldwide, affording organisations the opportunity to build new partnerships, reinvigorate their programs and continue to make

Apply now for the 2015 European Riverprize!

Riverprize
IRF EUROPEAN

Applications close on 29 May 2015



progress well into the future. In 2014, the IRF European River-prize was awarded to Austria's River Mur for an integrated, collaborative approach to the restoration of 22km of the river, re-establishing the river's natural conditions and restoring native habitats while addressing community and development issues.

Applications can be made online through the IRF website, and stage one of the application process must be completed by 29 May 2015. [International RiverFoundation - European Riverprize](#)

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A guide to support the selection , design and implementation of natural water retention measures.

Capturing the multiple benefits of nature based solutions.

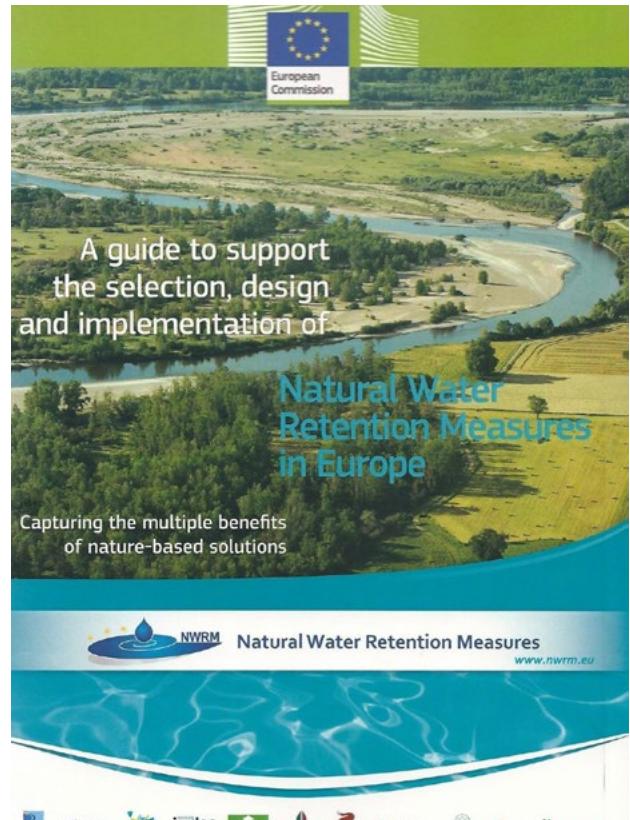
At the 4th European Water Conference held on 23-24 March this guide on Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRM) was presented. NWRM cover a diversity of measures that are implemented by different sectors or considered in different planning processes dealing with water; flood risk management, biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation or urban planning. Some of these measures aim to directly modify the ecosystem, while others focus on changes of practice of economic operators.

Depending on the main challenge you face in your catchment or geographic area, the services you would like to deliver or the main policy objectives driving your planning process, only some NWRM will be relevant to your situation. Once you have identified the most NWRM for your own territory, you can find out the basics about them in NWRM identity cards available in the guide.

You can visit the NWRM knowledge base directly for additional evidence on their design, impacts and pre-conditions for successful implementation www.nwrm.eu

ISBN 978-92-79-46059-3

Contact: Lucia BERNAL-SAUKKONEN env-water@ec.europa.eu



International Conference on River Restoration (30 June – 2 July 2015, Wageningen, The Netherlands)

REFORM will host its International Conference on Novel Approaches to Assess and Rehabilitate Modified Rivers ([website](#)) in Wageningen, The Netherlands, on 30 June to 2 July 2015. We aim for a conference with 200 participants allowing an excellent exchange of experiences and get-to-know each other. Registration to the conference is open under: [link](#)

Conference objectives

The purpose of the Conference is to enlarge awareness of the need and appreciation for the benefits of river rehabilitation. It will serve as a platform to present and discuss aspirations, challenges, analytical frameworks and novel approaches to improve our understanding of the causes and consequences of hydromorphological degradation and to enhance river rehabilitation.



REFORM has generated tools for cost-effective restoration of river ecosystems, and for improved monitoring of the biological effects of physical change by investigating natural, degradation and restoration processes in a wide range of river types across Europe. The conference aims to present the major outcome of REFORM mixed with excellent work from other studies from Europe and other continents.

Topics at the Conference include:

1. Assessment and rehabilitation of hydromorphological processes in rivers
2. Discerning the impact of hydromorphological modification from other stressors
3. Achievements by restoration and mitigation practices
4. How to improve the (cost-)effectiveness of river rehabilitation?
5. Benefits of river rehabilitation and synergies with other uses (flood protection, navigation, agriculture, hydropower)
6. Linking science to practice: tools to assess river status and guide rehabilitation to optimize river basin management

Important dates

Special rate hotel accommodation until 6 May 2015
Registration close 15 May 2015

Programme

The three-day programme will encompass 2,5 days of presentations with ample breaks to interact and socialize followed by half day excursion to experience the materialisation of Room for the Rivers project along the River Rhine.

Keynote speakers

- [Prof. Gary Brierley](#) (University of Auckland, New Zealand)
- [Prof. Stan Gregory](#) (Oregon State University, USA)
- [Prof. Phoebe Koundouri](#) (Athens University of Economics and Business, Greece)
- [Dr Hervé Piégay](#) (National Center for Scientific Research CNRS, France)
- Dr Peter Pollard (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, UK)
- [Dr Phil Roni](#) (NOAA Fisheries, USA)
- [Dr Guy Woodward](#) (Imperial College London, UK)
- [Prof. Roy Brouwer](#) (Institute for Environmental Studies, the Netherlands)
- [Dr Tom Buijse](#) (Deltares, the Netherlands)
- [Prof. Ian Cowx](#) (University of HULL, UK)
- [Prof. Angela Gurnell](#) (Queen Mary University of London, UK)
- [Dr Nikolai Friberg](#) (NIVA, Norway)
- [Prof. Daniel Hering](#) (UDE, Germany)
- [Dr Erik Mosselman](#) (Deltares, Netherlands)
- [Dr Christian Wolter](#) (IGB, Germany)

For further information about the conference, please consult the [website](#).



Summer school

The summer school on “Restoring regulated streams linking theory and practice” will take place on 27 June – 29 June addressing students and young researchers before the final conference. The 3-day programme encompasses field visits to stream restoration projects, theory for assessing degradation and plan restoration and drafting a restoration strategy. The number of participants is limited to 30. For further information on the programme and registration, please visit the summer school [webpage](#).

RESTORE one of the “Best of the Best” LIFE Environment/Information projects 2015.

The RESTORE Project is as one of the 8 “Best of the Best” nominated for the “**Best**” LIFE Environment/Information Nature projects 2015 and will receive an award plaque and be featured in a specific brochure and page on the LIFE web site.

An award ceremony will be held on Thursday the 4th of June (18.30-22.00). It will take place in the context of the EC Environment “**Green Week 2015**” (3-5 June), which is a series of conferences organised by the Commission (DG Environment), focussing this year on Nature and Biodiversity policy issues: “Nature – our health, our wealth”.

The ECRR worked together in close collaboration with the RESTORE project, which ran between 2010 and 2013. It was launched with six European partners. The objective was to make connections between river restoration professionals in Europe and joining existing national efforts on river restoration. Research carried out prior to RESTORE had shown that the main problem faced by river restoration professionals is often not a lack of expertise but a lack of access to shared experiences and knowledge. To address this issue RESTORE worked to share and promote information on the best and most effective means of carrying out river restoration in Europe.

Some of the other key outputs of the RESTORE project are the RiverWiki, the [Layman's report](#) (that sets a direction for future activities) and the river restoration guide for planners: [Rivers by Design](#). The RESTORE partnership created a [website](#) to share knowledge and promoting best practice on river restoration in Europe. The partnership encourages the restoration of European rivers towards a more natural state for increased ecological quality, flood risk reduction, and social and economic benefits. As the project has ended, the ECRR carries this forward.



*Picture: RESTORE’S END CONFERENCE.
RESTORE / ECRR team at the European River Restoration Conference 2013;*

European River Symposium 2015; November 9 – 10/11, Vienna

Rivers in Europe; Best Practices of River Basin Management

The European River Symposium 2015, organised in partnership by a core group of organisations sup-porting best practices in river basin management, is an unique opportunity to celebrate rivers, to meet with river stakeholders from many countries and sectors, and to learn about challenges and opportuni-ties on rivers across Europe. The 2015 River Symposium will include the European RiverPrize gala at the Vienna City Hall, at which the 2015 IRF European RiverPrize winner will be announced.

Building on successful programs in 2013 and 2014, the 2015 River Symposium will include keynote presentations, lecture sessions, panel discussions, videos and optional field excursions. New to this year’s symposium is a focus on key sector partners using rivers including navigation, hydropower and tourism. Economics and business of water in combination with supply chain, in company and market-ing water issues will be discussed for developing processes and principles for best practices of river basin management.

Designed to attract a diverse audience, the River Symposium addresses issues that are relevant to people working in government, river authorities, NGO’s, research institutions and the private sector, offering an unusual opportunity for cross-sectoral discussion and engagement.

2015 European River Symposium theme and program *Rivers in Europe: Best Practices in River Basin Management*

Monday 9 November

Focus: Rivers in Europe

Afternoon: Best Practices in River Basin Management;
Partnerships for rivers Outcomes, trends, opportunities, introduction of RiverPrize finalists

Evening: Sector meetings, Danube River Cruise, RiverPrize Alumni Event

Tuesday 10 November

Focus: Basin Planning; Partnerships for Rivers.

Day: Growing Demand, Competing Uses, Functional Rivers;
Navigation, Tourism, Hydropower, Utilities, Restoration, Floodprotection

Evening: RiverPrize Gala dinner
Optional tour of Vienna’s historic City Hall, Cocktails, Dinner European RiverPrize awarding, demonstrations of the Viennese Waltz

Wednesday 11 November

Day: Optional Field Excursion(s)

Natural small water retention guidelines in Central and Eastern Europe: Combining drought mitigation, flood protection and biodiversity conservation

Authors of the guidelines: Ignacy Kardel, Waldemar Mioduszewski, Tomasz Okruszko (Poland), Daria Istenič, Anja Potokar (Slovenia), Vladimír Mosný (Slovakia), János Fehér, János Tamás, Judit Gáspár (Hungary)

Editor of article: Richard Müller

Most of countries of the Central and Eastern European countries have well developed meteorological and hydrological monitoring systems. Nonetheless, it is essential to develop and implement short and long term measures for limiting the adverse effects of the extreme natural events.

Since 2013, Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe implements Integrated Drought Management Program (IDMP CEE), supporting the governments of Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine in the development of drought management policies and plans.

One of the innovation demonstration projects within the Integrated Drought Management Program is focused on natural small water retention measures. Experts from Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia carried out the project during the period 2013–2015. Main outcome is guidelines on Natural small water retention measures – combining drought mitigation, flood protection and biodiversity conservation that will be published in June 2015.

The guidelines provide details on technical and non-technical measures to increase the natural small water retention, selection of the catchment area, evaluation of the measures (Figure 1) and their connection to river basin management, and flood risk management and drought management plans. It summarizes experiences from implemented projects in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia including best practices on combined effects and involvement of stakeholders.

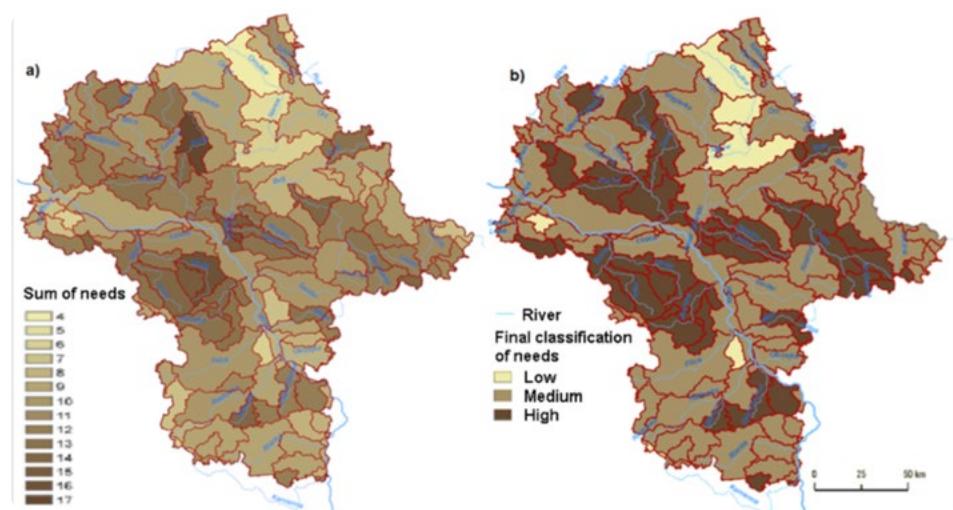


Figure 1. General evaluation of natural small water retention needs in integrated water bodies in Poland; a) the results of evaluation (classes 1-17) of the Unified Water Body, b) the priority of small natural small water retention measures. Source: Tyszewski et al. 2008

One of examples describes the development of complex natural small water retention in Białowieża Forest in Poland. The work consisted mainly of construction of wires on small streams and ditches and restoration of drained peat lands. Results showed significant changes in vegetation, including the loss of certain tree species (e.g. pine) and its

replacement by wetland vegetation. It has been estimated that on average, retention increase was in the range of 5-10 mm, as calculated for the water catchment area while the hydrometric measurements carried out on the larger streams, showed no significant changes in the intensity of secondary flows. If the flow changes occur, they are insignificant in comparison to natural fluctuations in flow rates.

The case studies demonstrated that natural small water retention measures improved conditions for natural flora and fauna as well as they increased biological diversity of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. To some extent, the implemented measures contributed to the reduction of the adverse effects of floods and droughts. However, effects on the water cycle will be visible after implementation of more small natural water retention measures.

The authors also suggest how to develop successful natural small water retention development programs. Among others, elements of small retention should be horizontally integrated into different planning documents on various levels, e.g. spatial development plans, river basin management, flood risk, and drought management plans, particularly in agro-environmental programs, strategies for environmental protection, including Natura 2000 and plans for modernization of irrigation-drainage systems.

As a conclusion, experts recommend development of a framework Master Plan, to facilitate implementation of natural small water retention measures, including proposals for legislative changes, analysis of existing policy framework, funding needs and a proposal for institutional setting.

Notes to Editors:

Global Water Partnership

The GWP vision is for a water secure world. Its mission is to advance governance and management of water resources for sustainable and equitable development. GWP was created to foster the implementation of integrated water resources

management. GWP CEE is a part of a global network that consists of thirteen regions: Caribbean, Central Africa, Central America, Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Caucasus, China, Eastern Africa, Mediterranean, South America, South Asia, South-east Asia, Southern Africa and West Africa. The GWP Secretariat is located in Stockholm in Sweden. www.gwp.org

The Global Water Partnership Central and Eastern Europe

Established in 1998, GWP is an international network open to all organizations involved in water resources management: government institutions, professional associations, research institutions, nongovernmental organizations, and the private sector. GWP CEE's international network comprises 12 Country Water Partnerships in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia,

Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine and more than 160 Partners located in 15 countries.

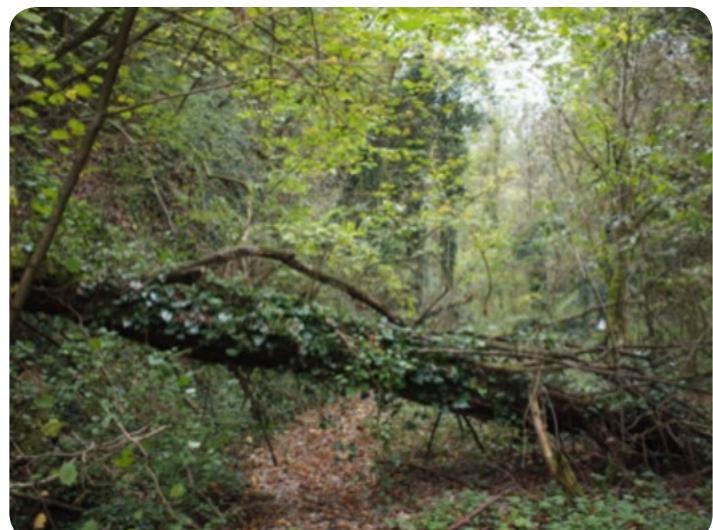
www.gwpcee.org

Integrated Drought Management Program Central and Eastern Europe

It supports the governments of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine in the development of drought management policies and plans. It also builds capacity of stakeholders at different levels for proactive integrated drought management approach and tests innovative approaches for future drought management plans.

<http://www.gwp.org/GWP-CEE/IDMPCEE/>

Photos are from one of case studies, described in the guidelines, Haluzice Gorge in Slovakia



Middle part of the Haluzice Gorge with woody sill to reduce water flow and lush vegetation. Photo credits: Richard Müller



Middle part of the Haluzice Gorge with woody sill (detail)



Woody debris retained by the stone weir in lower part of the Haluzice Gorge.

ECRR Events calendar 2015

Date/periode	Titel/issue	Location	Links
22-25 June	IS. RIVERS 2015	Lyon France	isrivers@graie.org
23-25 June	Fish Passage 2015 Conference	Groningen The Netherlands	http://www.fishpassageconference.com
29 june - 5 july	REFORM final conference	Wageningen The Netherlands	http://reformrivers.eu/events/final-conference
9 th June	Technical Training Course	Manchester UK	http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc-courses-and-workshops
26th Aug	6th World Conference on Ecological Restoration	Manchester UK	http://www.ser2015.org
19th +20th May	RRC 16th annual network conference	Whittlebury Hall Hotel & Spa, UK	http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc-annual-conference-2015
25th -29th May	World water congress XV	Edinburg Scotland	http://worldwatercongress.com/
9th July	RRC training course	Hexham UK	http://www.therrc.co.uk/rrc-courses-and-workshops
23rd - 30th Oct	3rd Italian RRconference	Reggio Italy	http://www.cirf.org/italian/menu1/attivita/news/RF2015-savethedate.html
9 - 10/11 Nov	European River Symposium 2015 in Vienna	Austria	www.ecrr.org

Call for articles

The newsletter of the ECRR should also be a way to share with one another what interesting work is being done, information about seminars or literature. One way of doing this is by writing an article of any project, event or literature you may be acquainted with. Send this article (**maximum of 500 words**) to the secretariat of the ECRR at info@eccr.org.

We will take a close look to the content and if it is coherent with the philosophy of ECRR (ecological river restoration and sharing knowledge) your article will be published with pleasure in the next edition (s) of the ECRR Newsletter.

The secretariat of the ECRR hopes to receive any article on ecological river restoration from any of its members

Free ECRR Network Subscriptent

All who are interested in river restoration and sustainable water management are encouraged to join the ECRR. Subscriptents receive the ECRR Newsletter about four times a year and are the first to be informed about activities by the ECRR, its members and partner organisations. To register, go to www.eccr.org

