

DANUBE FLOODPLAIN - HOW FLOODPLAINS CAN BE RESTORED AND MANAGED? - 1ST DANUBE FLOODPLAIN WEBINAR

05-07-2021

The 1st Danube Floodplain (Online) Webinar was successfully held on 28 June 2021 with over 40 participants who actively participated with questions and comments to the discussion.

In his opening presentation Prof. Helmut Habersack from BOKU (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Vienna) introduced the process of floodplain loss. He highlighted that 80% of floodplains in the Danube River Basin have been lost and the consumption of land is still very high (between 2006-2015 annually an area of 429 km² were sealed in Europe). There have been numerous effects of floodplain loss, such as the acceleration of flood waves, the increase of the flood peak, decline in biodiversity and the increase of negative effects due to climate change. Prof. Habersack introduced the Floodplain Evaluation Method (FEM) developed within the Interreg Danube Floodplain project. FEM is a relevant tool to assess floodplains and their effects and a basis for preservation and restoration.

During the panel discussion speakers from the Danube Floodplain project (Sorin Rindasu from National Administration "Romanian Waters" - NARW, lead partner of the project and Peter Tóth from Hungary's Middle Tisza District Water Directorate - KÖTIVIZIG) and Petra Repnik and Clemens Neuhold on behalf of ICPDR pointed out that among the main challenges for floodplains are land ownership, multiple competing interests for the land, administration of the land. It was emphasized that Floodplain preservation and restoration should be included into municipality spatial plans. The importance of having conversation and engaging with stakeholders from the very beginning of every floodplain restoration projects, was highlighted. The speakers introduced some bottom-up approaches and initiatives for successful floodplain restorations.

In his closing remarks Prof. Habersack explained that in the EU we have both the legal framework and the funding scheme to implement floodplain preservation and restoration. He underlined that the Floodplain Evaluation Method is available, its data need to be brought into life and adapted to the tributaries of the Danube, plus scaled down to smaller rivers.

The 1st Danube Floodplain Webinar is part of a webinar series organized within the Interreg Danube Floodplain project. The 2nd Webinar is due in September. For the date, topic and speakers please check our project's website: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/danube-floodplain> (<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/danube-floodplain>)

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