

Danubeparks Newsletter 14.12.2010

Latest Developments

Cross-border activities in the Danube-Delta Biosphere Reserve



Although the Ukrainian Danube-Delta Biosphere Reserve is currently not a partner of the DANUBEPARKS Project, obviously the cooperation between the two main Delta countries Romania and Ukraine can not be under-estimated.

Therefore, both Biosphere Reserve Authorities work together on a study of future restoration projects. As a start, study visits took place on both sides of the border, involving not only representatives of the Protected Areas, but also of the Water and Forest Management Authorities as well as the WWF.

Video channel of DANUBEPARKS on youtube.com



During summer, several film teams visited DANUBEPARKS partners and shot films dealing with the Danube Region Strategy. These can now be seen at the DANUBEPARKS Youtube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/user/DANUBEPARKS>.

Together with the professionally shot trailers, you find there also private snapshots of some of the training activities, cultural events and monitoring discussion within DANUBEPARKS.

Upcoming Events

March 2011: International Sturgeon Conference in Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve, Romania (date to be announced soon)

Spring 2011: International Conference on River Revitalization in Donau-Auen National Park, Austria (date to be announced soon)

September 4th, 2011: Danube Festival in Donau-Auen National Park, Austria

Autumn 2011: International White-tailed Eagle Conference in Duna-Dráva National Park, Hungary (date to be announced)

Tourism in Protected Areas - chance or threat?

Tourism in Protected Areas is often a disputed topic: It offers many benefits for nature protection and is interrelated with environmental education, which is one main goal of most Protected Areas. On the other hand, problems arise when too many visitors access rare habitats and disturb endangered species.

Education, tourism and sustainable development



Environmental education is vital for the acceptance and support of nature protection activities of a broader public – both regionally and in an international context. Projects in cooperation with schools, guided visits to the Protected Area, and visitor centres all have one common goal: To raise the awareness and understanding of the public for the value of the protected ecosystem, and to raise the capability of each single individual to protect these endangered habitats and species.



In a context of sustainable regional development, the educational and touristic offers of Protected Areas are a chance to diversify and strengthen income opportunities for the local population. The touristic profile of a region can be raised by marketing the Protected Area, and sustainable tourism development makes sure as many inhabitants as possible benefit from it – by the use of additional local services such as accommodation, catering, handicraft, cultural activities and sustainable use of regional natural resources.

Tourism as a threat to nature protection?



There are several problems that can occur with uncontrolled tourism development: Within Protected Areas, there are always endangered habitats and species, that need – sometimes very large – undisturbed areas to live in. If too many visitors access these areas, the conservation efforts can be harmed badly. For this reason, Protected Areas lay down – mostly in their Management Plans – where to guide visitors and what areas to close down for them. In order to implement these regulations, guiding services are necessary: Either by guiding visitors personally through the area, or by maintaining good information services and products, such as maps, study trails, information points, and marked trails.

The danger of uncontrolled tourism development also calls for the inclusion of Protected Areas and other nature protection groups in efforts of regional tourism development, so to include strong environmental education efforts and guiding systems from the start.

The role of DANUBEPARKS

Tourism is always bound to a specific destination, while DANUBEPARKS works transnationally – so what is the role of the Network in touristic and educational activities?



DANUBEPARKS looks at the Danube River as ONE interrelated ecosystem. We think that also this transnational view onto the Danube should be integrated into environmental education efforts, which is why we organized a Joint Ranger Training in summer and autumn 2010. This course was offered once in Austria and along the Upper Danube, and once in Romania and along the Lower Danube. Both courses consisted of an 8-day English Course and an 8-day course on International Nature Protection, in order to strengthen the capacity of guiding international visitors and sensitize all visitors for the international dimension of nature protection.



Additionally, all partners have the chance to further develop their visitor programmes, and to learn from the experiences of others. Especially important are soft boat tours, which allow experiencing the landscape from the water – the most important and influencing element in all our areas.

However, having an offer is not enough – people need to be able to find it. Therefore, DANUBEPARKS is currently creating an online platform for nature tourism offers from all along the Danube. This site will go online in spring 2011 as a part of the website www.danubeparks.org and contain information on visitor centres, guided tours, festivals, as well as regional information such as transport, accommodation and additional recommended sights and activities in the region. This should make it easier for visitors to find all the information they need for their vacation on one single website!

To summarize in a single sentence: DANUBEPARKS are prepared professionally for your visit – **come and experience the natural treasures along the Danube River!**



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