



**„Wetlands for clear water“** was the headline of seminar organized last week (March 24<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup>) in Greifswald Germany by Grüne Liga and University of Greifswald. Over 40 participants from Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and other European countries (Romania, Turkey) could follow 12 lectures referring creation, restoration and utilization of wetlands as nutrients’ traps for the diffuse sources of water pollution (mostly from agriculture). The seminar has addressed the question how the proper wetland management can contribute to the goal of reducing nutrient loads and eutrophication of Baltic Sea. The representative of Federal Environment Agency – **Vera Leujak** pointed out that wetlands *“should not be used as a substitute for combating eutrophication at source”* and there are number of techniques to be used in agriculture for this porpoise. She concluded that *“creation and restoration of wetlands should feature more prominently in RBMPs and the upcoming programs of measures for MSFD”*.

**Toni Schroder** from Leibnitz-Institute for Baltic Sea Research has shown the outcomes from ERGOM ecosystem model for eutrophication management in Baltic Sea estuarine. He claimed that “good water quality” in the Odra river is a realistic objective, but this will not cause a good status of coastal waters. There must be implemented some additional, internal lagoon management tools like mussels farming for nutrients reduction. **Michael Trepel** from Schleswig-Holstein State Agency for Agriculture has raised the question of cost-efficiency of the nutrients’ reduction strategy and shown the wetlands rehabilitation experiences in Schlezwig-Holstein (139 projects implemented since 2000!). Although peat rehabilitation projects are land and money consuming (218 Mio €!) they combine benefits of nature conservation and climate change mitigation in the framework of WFD and Flood directive.

The constructed (artificial) wetlands effectiveness was discussed by **John Strand** from Swedish Rural Economy and Agricultural Society. He pointed out the responsibility of agriculture for soil and nutrient run-off from arable land to surface waters and the devastating (100 years’ old)

process of draining of the landscape in Europe. **“Wetlands are the kidneys of the landscape”** he preached and has shown the results of tests of N and P retention at experimental wetland site carried out by Halmstad University. Ca. 500 – 1000 kg N/ha\*year run-off decreasing to the sea is realistic in well located, designed and managed wetlands.

The advantages and limitations of Polish wetlands were presented by **Lesław Wolejko** from West Pomeranian University of Technology in Szczecin. The practical out-comes from wetland restoration projects carried out by Polish NGO “Klub Przyrodników” has been shown by **Patryk Chapinski**. The special conditions and circumstances of wetland restorations in the mountain areas of Southern Poland were presented with impressive pictures.

The description of governing factors and management options for rewetted peat lands of the River Peene valley was given by **Dominik Zak** from Leibnitz-Institute of Freshwater Ecology. He has presented the dynamics of phosphorus and carbon in degraded pealands which is crucial for better understanding the implications of actions and optimizing restoration measures.

The situation of Lithuanian wetlands was presented by **Zenonas Gulbinas** from “Nature Heritage Fund” at Vilnius Pedagogical University. According to designation rules (17 class of wetlands) Lithuanians wetlands cover more than **25%** of countries’ territory (16 370 km<sup>2</sup>). There were some restoration projects undertaken after 2000 financed by UNDP/GEF Small Grand Program, PIN/MATRA, LIFE+, Lithuanian Government. The planning process for NATURA 2000 territories is going on to serve as a basis for wetland restoration projects at plenty of abandoned areas in Lithuania. Turkish experiences in protection of natural resources and wetlands by coastal area management system at Mugla City was described by **Murat Barlas** from Biology Department of Mugla University.



On the second day of conference the study tour to Penne and Trebel valleys was organized. First we visited one of the best preserved calcareous fens near Gützkow supported by rewetting measures, with interesting landscape and rich biodiversity. These mosaic meadows with stable groundwater conditions were previously exploited by farmers for peat excavation. Numerous of rehabilitation projects in Penne river valley have allowed to gain stable conditions for the nutrients trapping and development of very species-rich habitat. Another example of successful human activities at degraded “fen-polder” we experienced while visiting the implemented project at Rustow-Randow polder (310 ha), where water tables were artificially set up by system of dykes and pumps in 3 phases until the level of river Penne is reached. After 10 years of controlled watering of flood-meadows the nature reserve has been established, inhabited by Otter, Beaver, White-tailed Eagle, Osprey, Tern, Bluethroat, Snipe, Moor Frog, Cranes and many other rare species. The last pump will be switched off this year and the system will go on living by itself with a limited human control (harvesting the reeds).

The unsuccessful example of restoration project was shown at Trebel river valley – Bruderdorf polder, rewetted in 2006 within of the peat conservation strategy of Mecklemburg-Vorpommern. The improper operation of dykes, unstable water levels caused high nutrient dynamics and a suboptimal vegetation development. We visited also an experimental plot of ALNUS project located in the centre of polder by University of Greifswald. The researchers have been analyzing the environmental and economic aspects of alder plantation on rewetted degraded fen soils.

The problem of utilization of restored wetlands as an effective tool for achieving porpoises of HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan is actual all over Baltic Sea Region. Combining scientists knowledge and NGOs activities (with financial support of local and federal governments) wetland projects had been practiced for over a decade in Germany. **Let’s follow them in CCB network - creating promising projects or at least demanding these measures to be involved into RBMPs.**



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