



REPORT

Conference “Conservation of Wetlands in the Carpathians“ 16-19 November 2009, Tatranská Štrba, Slovakia

The conference was organised in the frame of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) and UNDP/GEF Project “*Conservation, Restoration and Wise Use of Rich Fens in the Slovak Republic*”. The project is aimed at the conservation of Carpathian peatland biodiversity, with a focus on alkaline fens, a unique mire habitat. Project is implemented by DAPHNE – Institute of Applied Ecology in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment of the Slovak Republic. Partner of the project is the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic, which is coordinating the *Carpathian Wetland Initiative* (CWI) in the framework of the Ramsar Convention.

The aim of the conference was to support exchange of information on conservation and best practices between Carpathian countries to improve protection and wise use of wetlands, which belong to the most sensitive and threatened ecosystems worldwide.

Main topics of the conference included:

- Policy issues and regional scope – status of wetlands, their conservation and wise use in the Carpathian Eco-region, situation in respective countries was presented;
- Identification of missing information and proposals for priorities to fulfil gaps and needs for wetland protection in the Carpathians;
- Mire ecology – main mire types in the Carpathians, their ecology, threats and processes, inventory of mires;
- Active and restoration management – description of management techniques and their impact on fens, management planning;
- Restoration of hydrological regime – studies and proposals for hydrological restoration, demonstration of case studies as practical experience with restoration and monitoring of fens.

A part of the conference was also a parallel workshop on environmental education in the Carpathians:

- Presentation of the DBU funded project: *World of the Carpathians – Awareness raising about Carpathian biodiversity*;
- Presentation of the guideline and resource handbook for environmental educators “World of Carpathians” – its uses, teaching tools produced on the basis of the handbook;
- Possibilities for follow-up in particular countries.

The programme of the conference is annexed.

In the conference participated 65 representatives of all seven Carpathian countries, wetland specialists and experts from cooperating institutions, protected areas managers, Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention, Interim Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention and NGOs.



In the meeting venue, Hotel Meander in Tatranská Štrba, High Tatra Mts., were presented 17 presentations in the Carpathian Wetland Initiative segment (16-17 November 2009), 2 presentations and one practical demonstration of teaching aids in the parallel workshop "World of Carpathians" (17 November 2009) and 15 presentations in the segment on research, management and restoration of fens (18-19 November 2009). Six posters were displayed as well. Finally the CWI logo proposal was presented and discussed before the closure of the CWI segment. The evening programme was enriched with a documentary film on Tatra mountains, presentation on the Tatra National Park and on botanical attractions of Tatras. All presentations will be available in electronic form to all participants and interested people.

Organisers of the conference were:

State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic – Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI)

DAPHNE – Institute of Applied Ecology

Carpathian EcoRegion Initiative (CERI)

Slovak University of Technology Bratislava, Faculty of Civil Engineering, Department of Land and Water Resources Management

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UNDP/GEF project *Conservation, Restoration and Wise Use of Rich Fens in the Slovak Republic*

Ramsar Convention core budget for the activities of the Carpathian Wetland Initiative

Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt

Ministry of Environment and Water Hungary

Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic



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Slovak Museum of Nature Conservation and Speleology, Liptovský Mikuláš

Tatra National Park Administration

Slovenský raj National Park Administration





Results of the conference

The Carpathian Wetland Initiative (CWI) meeting discussed status, trends, threats and conservation needs in Carpathian wetlands and proposed future steps, priorities, projects and institutional frameworks and CWI work plan for 2010. Small improvements in the proposed CWI logo were recommended.

Challenges and priorities for cooperation within CWI identified by participants

- Include CWI into national policies and activities on wetlands
- Sufficient information on wetlands and their monitoring necessary
- Common understanding of wetland terms and wetland types
- Support to designation of additional Ramsar sites within the Carpathians (e.g. in Poland, Romania, Ukraine)
- Management of trans-border sites, habitats and species
- Exchange of information on efficient management practices in wetland habitat types
- Reach other sectors
- Address climate change issues and role of wetlands
- Control and eradication of invasive alien species
- Develop wetland restoration programme
- Human capacity – establish a small „action group“ and expert network
- Develop public awareness and education - CEPA
- Carpathian Wetland Centre establishment
- Organize annual meetings or seminars

Conclusions and suggestions for the CWI Work Plan 2010:

1. Establish a working group(s) consisting of active practitioners, specialists and NGOs representatives and wetland experts/institutions network within the Carpathians and to communicate with them the work of CWI.
2. Involve administrations of protected areas in the Carpathians in the work of CWI, especially those with important wetlands on their territory.
3. The scope of application of CWI should be also beyond borders of the Carpathian region as many important wetlands and river ecosystems in other regions depend on water from the Carpathians.
4. Develop visibility of the CWI and wetlands using the CWI logo and establish regular communication and outreach (updated web page, poster, calendar, brochures, press announcements and releases...).
5. Develop common understanding of wetland terms and wetland types – Carpathian wetland handbook / classification system in all Carpathian languages.
6. Develop database of wetlands, database on research of wetlands and of projects concerning wetlands conservation, management and restoration in the Carpathians.
7. Coordinate the research activities on wetlands with the *Science for Carpathians* initiative.
8. Develop guidelines for best practices in wetland management and training programme on wetland management and restoration.
9. Develop programme of CEPA (Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness) within the CWI and plan of activities.
10. Develop Terms of Reference for the Carpathian Wetland Centre.



11. Develop a project on inventory and control of invasive alien species in transborder catchments.
12. Organize a thematic seminar on wetlands in a Carpathian country in 2010.
13. Participate in all relevant meetings of the Carpathian Convention.
14. Participate in the Exchange of experience in transboundary issues initiative (meeting in January 2010, Strasbourg, France).
15. Participate in excursion/Field Symposium of IMCG members in Slovakia and Poland (5-17 July 2010).
16. Involve CWI in the project proposals (e.g. Bioregio – SSE programme) and include activities considered as the priority.
17. Develop a proposal for small grants mechanism for local activities, research and restoration of wetlands.

Contacts and further information

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