



World Wetlands Day 2013 in Riga, Latvia

A seminar dedicated to the World Wetlands Day 2013 “Wetlands Take Care of Water” took place on the 5th of February, 2013, at the Natural History Museum of Latvia and was very well attended, gathering representatives of NGOs, state institutions and other nature enthusiasts. A segment about the seminar was included in the nature news broadcast “Vides fakti” (<http://vimeo.com/59569139#t=1100>). The seminar was organised by the LIFE+ project “National Conservation and Management Programme for Natura 2000 Sites in Latvia” LIFE11 NAT/LV/00371 (implemented by the Nature Conservation Agency of Latvia) in collaboration with the Natural History Museum of Latvia.

The event was opened by Juris Jātnieks – the Ramsar National Focal Point and the Manager of project NAT-PROGRAMME, followed by several presentations showcasing various activities that have helped to improve the condition of wetlands in Latvia in 2013, including hydrological restoration actions, the use of constructed wetlands and remote sensing technologies, as well as river management methods that are done with the help of the general public.

Freshwater habitats expert Andris Urtāns, a representative of the Nature Conservation Agency’s LIFE+ project NAT-PROGRAMME and Ramsar National Focal point for STRP, provided an overview of an innovative campaign that he had organised to promote the involvement of the society in the management of freshwater habitats. The name of this initiative is “Liec upē akmeni” (Place a Stone in the Stream), which is a very simple, yet effective method of arranging stones in a shallow river to improve river functionality and self-purification capacities. It is also a very effective way how to raise citizen awareness and motivation through practical, hands-on involvement.

Māra Pakalne, the Manager of the LIFE+ project “Augstie Purvi” (“*Rised Bogs*”) presented an overview about the hydrological restoration actions that have been carried out in 2012. The presentation showcased the positive effects of building dams, such as stabilization of water level, as well as introduced the main results of the groundwater and wetlands monitoring report.

A representative of the Latvia University of Agriculture Linda Grinberga showcased the use of constructed wetlands, which are man-made wetlands built to remove pollutants present in



wastewater. An overview of a number of pilot areas currently testing the use of constructed wetlands in Latvia was presented, examining the pros and cons of such approach to wastewater treatment.

Gatis Eriņš, a representative of the Institute for Environmental Solutions, presented innovative methods for researching water objects. G.Eriņš discussed how remote sensing technologies can be used to, for example, develop flood maps, determine the quality of water or identify sources of pollution.

Nature Conservation Agency's rangers Gintārs Rubenis and Aivars Tomaševics introduced the seminar participants with several river management actions that have been carried out in 2012 to improve the status of rivers in Latvia. Their presentations included practical tips, as well as warnings about managing rivers.

All seminar participants were invited to visit an exhibition at the Natural History Museum of Latvia also dedicated to the World Wetlands Day 2013.

Link to the seminar photos:

http://www.daba.gov.lv/public/lat/aktualitates/fotogalerijas/notikumi/2013_02_05_life_nat_programme_seminars_8222udensrupe_20138221/



