

Wetland Restoration and Management Conference

Fyn County, Denmark 19th–21st April 2006

*Conference report by Mr. Jānis Reihmanis, Regional coordinator of LIFE Nature project
“Restoration of Latvian floodplains for EU priority species and habitats”*

The Fyn County (Denmark) and 2 LIFE-Nature projects organized the conference. Participants from 11 countries took part in the conference. Among them - politicians, administrators at the regional, national and international level and NGO's with an interest in Natura 2000 management applying the LIFE Nature program and the EU Agro-environmental scheme for wetland restoration and conservation of wetland Natura 2000 areas. Project manager Inga Račinska and project regional coordinators Ainārs Auniņš and Jānis Reihmanis from the LIFE Nature project “Restoration of Latvian floodplains for EU priority species and habitats” participated in the conference. The conference was planned as one day of indoor meeting combined with a one-day excursion.

At the first day of the conference participants had possibility to get acquainted with posters. Presented posters covered a broad range of topics dealing with Natura 2000 management in both - habitat and species restoration and conservation aspects.

The Chief Executive Director of Fyn County - Jørgen Dan Petersen, opened the conference at 20th April. Mr. Petersen welcomed the participants and highlighted that Fyn County hosts two LIFE Nature projects – IMAGE (Improving status of the coastal lagoon Tryggelev Nor, Denmark - LIFE2002NAT/DK/8588) and REGAIN (Regional Actions to Improve Nature in River Odense and Odense Fjord – LIFE04NAT/DK/000022) – using wetland restoration as a tool to benefit Natura 2000 values and to counteract eutrophication of coastal waters.

Keynote speakers introduced the main topics of conference. Jens Peter Simonsen from The Danish Forest and Nature Agency was talking about future financial instruments that follow up current LIFE Nature program. The new LIFE+ should be starting at 2007. In this program 80 % of projects' budget will be administrated at national level, but remaining 20 % - at EU level.

LIFE Nature External Monitoring Team - Bent Søholm Jepsen from Astrale GEIE summarized the importance of wetland restoration as one of targets of LIFE Nature projects.

Keynote speaker Olaf G. Christiani from Danish Forest and Nature Agency gave the presentation based on the particular LIFE Nature project experience where spawning river was re-established to provide population viability of endangered Houting (*Coregonus oxyrhynchus*) and favourable conservation status for the three dry grassland habitat types were provided with grazing and removal of bushes.

Nils Lagerkvist from Swedish Board of Agriculture introduced participants with Swedish experience one establishment of wetlands and ponds with support by Agri -environmental scheme. He highlighted ecological, water-conservation and cultural heritage aspects importance in wetlands restoration as well as financial involvement by landowners.

Poul Hoffmann from The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agri Business (Denmark) measured current situation with using Agri-environmental scheme in Denmark. He pointed out the need of environmentally sustainable management of agricultural land and nature in next rural development programme 2007-2013.

Christian Tønnesen from Fyn County was talking about possible solutions to form a background for effective and reasonable management in Denmark open nature areas and to make Agri-environmental scheme more applicable for nature management.

The last key note speaker Lars Grumstrup from The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business (Denmark) marked some aspects of land consolidation in Danish wetland restoration projects. Purchase or substitute of land was mentioned as possible solutions to reach the main goal – creating wetlands.

Workshop sessions were organized after discussions about presented topics. Workshops take place in four different sessions; project staff attended 3 of them:

- Different ways to restore wetlands, means and effects. Monitoring of restored wetlands. Presentation by LIFE Floodplain project manager Inga Račinska “Restoration of Floodplains in LIFE Floodplain project” was included in this section.
- Choice of procedure for wetland restoration. Negotiations with stakeholders and land consolidation procedure.
- Agri-environmental scheme: Targeted efforts for nature management.
- The Agri-environmental scheme and the LIFE Nature program seen from an economic and practical agricultural point of view.

Session work was finished with evaluation and discussion of workshop outputs. During the discussion the participants identified topics that would be the most crucial to discuss in a frame of applying the Agri-environmental scheme in wetland restoration. It was pointed out that wetland restoration should be complex to harmonise between environment, nature and society and that support should be available also outside Natura 2000 areas. As most wetlands are slowly developing ecosystems and restoration results are not be observed during short time period, it was proposed that the Agri-environmental scheme should be long term (as far as 25 years). Need for longer period of monitoring to prove the effect of the projects was highlighted, too. Participants also stressed that in wetlands management all planning levels are important e.g. single property, whole catchment basin or Natura 2000 network at national level.

At 21st April excursion to 2 LIFE project sites took place –finished project (IMAGE) and a project still in progress (REGAIN). The purpose of the excursion was to exchange experiences about wetland restoration for eutrophication management and for the contribution to a favorable conservation status of Natura 2000 areas.

The aim of visited project IMAGE was to achieve a favourable conservation status of the coastal lagoon Tryggelev Nor and of the bird species *Botaurus stellaris*, *Circus aeruginosus* and *Porzana porzana*. To reach project goals the nearby Nørreballe Nor was converted from agricultural lands to a lake surrounded by reeds. During the excursion of the conference we visited several places where information signs introduced site visitors with nature values (Fig. 1) in wetlands created during project. It was useful example for planning further activities E.3 (Information signs) in Floodplain project. Overview on restoration effectiveness monitoring given by Søren F. Hansen from The Danish bird Protection Foundation let us to compare methods used in our project activity F.2. (Initiation of the monitoring system on the effects achieved by management measures) and in restored coastal lagoon.

During excursion to restored area of River Odense (Fig.2.) and to area which soon will be restored (Fig.3.) participants were introduced with REGAIN project activities to improve the ecological conditions in River Odense to be able to obtain/maintain a good conservation

status of *Unio crassus*, *Vertigo moulinsiana*, *Lampetra planeri* and *Cobitis taenia*. Some of rivers in our project are straightened (e.g. Užava and Ražupe) and this excursion demonstrated practical example on how to restore previously changed riverbed. This experience will be used carrying out project activity A.5. (Preparation of 13 site management plans and update of 2 management plans).

Estimation of resources (financial, time etc.) spent on dam building and sluice installation (Fig.4.) to obtain a more stable hydrological condition in IMAGE project and river re-meandering in REGAIN project once again stressed the priority of our project to secure and improve still existing valuable nature areas where better nature conservation results may be reached with less investment.

Findings from conference and practical examples will be also used when implementing project activity E.6 (Production of grassland management handbook).



Fig.1. Information sign to demonstrate nature values in restored coastal lagoon Tryggelev (IMAGE project).

Wetland Restoration and Management Conference Program

Wednesday 19th April

Poster session

Thursday 20th April

Welcome / Chief Executive Director Jorgen Dan Petersen – Fyn County.

The new LIFE+ Nature instrument and perspectives in relation to its application in Denmark / Deputy Director general Jens Peter Simonsen – The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

Restoring and maintaining the nature values in Europe through LIFE / LIFE Nature Coordinator Bent Jepsen – Astrale.

Examples on LIFE Nature Projects benefiting terrestrial and aquatic nature / Desk Officer for LIFE Olaf G. Christiani – The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

Agri-Environmental Scheme – Examples of different designs and employments across Europe / Nils Lagerkvist – Swedish Board of Agriculture.

Agri-Environmental Scheme – Actual and future measures in Denmark / Poul Hoffmann – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.

Aspects of the management of nature within and outside designated NATURA 2000 areas / Christian Tonnesen – Fyn County.

Danish tools to implement larger nature restoration projects – Land consolidation and economic compensation to landowners / Lars Grumstrup – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.

Workshop sessions

Session 1: Different ways to restore wetlands, means and effects. Monitoring of restored wetlands with contributions from:

- o Brian Kronvang and Carl Chr. Hoffmann (DK) – National Environmental Research Institute.
- o Hauke Drews (D) – Stiftung Naturschutz Schleswig-Holstein.
- o Inga Racinska (LV) – Latvian Fund for Nature.

Session 2: Choice of procedure for wetland restoration. Negotiations with stakeholders and land consolidation procedure with contributions from:

- o Torben Nielsen (DK) – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.
- o Egbert H. Beens (NL) – Staatsbosbeheer.
- o Janis Kuze (LV) – Kemeru National Park.

Session 3: Agro-Environmental Scheme: Targeted efforts for nature management with contributions from:

- o Annita Svendsen (DK) – Fyn County
- o Claire McKeever (GB) – The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- o Henrik Wejdling (DK) – Danish Ornithological Society.
- o Leif Bisschop-Larsen (DK) – Fyn County.

Session 4: The Agro-Environmental Scheme and the LIFE Nature program seen from an economic and practical agricultural point of view with contributions from:

- o Erling Andersen (DK) –The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University.
- o Poul Hoffmann (DK) – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.
- o Irene Wiborg (DK) – Danish Agricultural Advisory Service.
- o Marika Kose (EE) – Estonian Ornithological Society.

Friday 21st April

Excursion to the LIFE-IMAGE project sites at Norreballe Nor and Tryggelev Nor and to the LIFEREGAIN project sites at River Odense.



Fig.2. Re-meandered River Odense (REGAIN project).



Fig.3. Project leaders tell about planed re-meandering of River Odense (REGAIN project).



Fig.4. Dam and sluice built in project IMAGE to stabilize hydrological condition in coastal lagoon.