

Cares for Wetlands

communication efforts of Biebrza National Park

The aim of the project is to get a balance in nature and people coexistence. We wanted to engage the process of sustainable development in harmony with nature.

By reaching to bigger number of people we are promoting active protection of environment more effectively. In consequence we also support the region's progress. We want to make aware local communities about those economic benefits related to protection of natural heritage.

OUTCOMES/RESULTS

1 A campaign for drivers called "You MOOSE drive carefully/ Jedź łośtroźnie":

- to improve safety of road users; event organized in cooperation with the Police and State Forests
- the campaign was conducted nine times from early December to late March 2014/2015. In total, 1,400 cars were stopped by police and about 2,500 people were asked to drive more safe and slower especially in areas inhabited by moose. Distributed 5 thousand leaflets and stickers.
- reported reduction in the number of collisions and accidents with moose
- raised public awareness about animal welfare
- Junior Rangers got involved. They were handing out the leaflets and stickers.

2 Annual events:

- **Biebrza Haymaking** (About 700 people each year)

Mowing Marshy Meadows Championship for the nature; to preserve a very old tradition of manual mowing boggy meadows; to promote active protection of the marshland, nature friendly agriculture. Participants are from Belarus, Yakutia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Belgium, the USA, Hungary, Lithuania.

- **Biebrza Local Crafts and Folk Art Products Fair** –

"One hundred ideas for Biebrza" (3,5 thousand participants)
Acquainting people with disappearing craft professions and a craftwork; broadening environmental awareness of the local community and tourists; education of the participants on common protection of nature.

- **Day of the white stork** (20 participants)

Practical dissemination of knowledge about life and protection of the stork.



**BIEBRZA NATIONAL PARK,
POLAND**

The project is implemented in the Biebrza National Park area (north – east of Poland), the places in the Park buffer zone and the major Polish cities – during the national events. The Biebrza National Park is the biggest national park in Poland, has 60.000 ha. The headquarters is located in Osowiec – Twierdza.

LOCATION

The project communicates to society patterns of attitude towards the nature. The goal is to care for it and protect the unique in a European scale fens and birds reserves in the Park area.

NATURE AND PEOPLE
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
LOCAL COMMUNITIES
PROTECTION NATURAL HERITAGE

KEYWORDS

- **Bee Day** (about 200 participants)

Constructing bee huts workshops, lectures about bees, contests and games for the little ones – all that to raise the awareness of the importance of bees for the environment.

- **Willow Day** (about 20 participants)

Familiarize participants with the risks associated with the planting of invasive alien species in home gardens. Get acquainted with species of plants and birds found in meadows and fields in the area.

3 Campaigns „Together we protect the nature“:

- **„Protection of amphibians“**

Youth and Park employees protecting amphibians (which migrate) against roadkill. In April 2015 2669 amphibians were caught and successfully carried over to the other side of the road.

- **Campaign of removing invasive species (about 80 participants)**

Ongoing project of eliminating alien flora which may have negative impact on natural ecosystem. In 2014 and 2015 several campaigns have been conducted. We remove plants such as Lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*), Small Balsam (*Impatiens parviflora*), Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), The Jerusalem artichoke, *Cornus sericea* (red osier dogwood).

4 Junior Rangers Programme

Junior Rangers support our workers on many eco – events. They run information stands, conduct educational games for families and their children. They are responsible for creating ‘Nasza Biebrza’ magazine, published by the Biebrza National Park. They write a letters, poems and remarks which are being published. During the summer camp (July 2015) Junior Rangers carried out works on hiking trails. They cleaned out the information boards, gates, renewed and painted signs on the trails. Few times in 2015 the group was cleaning the garbage on educational trails and the tourist – visited areas.

JR have their Facebook page where they write about the activities of the group, they post some articles on the Park website and the local server . Moreover kids show their presentations at school and during many youth contest.

5 Meetings with farmers and University of Biebrza

In the years 2014/2015 about 1350 people took part in the events organized by the Park. During the prelections, multimedia presentation, field trips presented by Park employees current and future actions of protection of biodiversity and Natura 2000 sites.

LESSONS LEARNED

1 A campaign “You MOOSE drive carefully” results in smaller number of traffic accidents with wild animals – drivers are driving significantly more carefully.

2 Organizing open meetings with local communities can be impellent power for the region (economically). In example handmade souvenirs (made by locals) are currently being sold successfully in the Park’s tourist information centre

3 Active volunteering work together with employees of the Park show that people want to explore nature and jointly contribute to its protection thanks to their selfless help.

4 Junior Rangers
We were guided by the ideas of The EUROPARC Junior Ranger Programme.

5 There is a great need for talks and meetings with the local community for acceptance of the actions taken by the Park.

EVIDENCE

- National funds:
WFOŚ- Wojewódzki Fundusz Ochrony Środowiska (Regional Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management) in Białystok
NFOŚ- Narodowy Fundusz Ochrony Środowiska (National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management) in Warsaw
- Own funds
- UE LIFE funds

DELIVERY

- local community: pupils and adults living around the Park - including accommodation providers, people running tourist businesses, local guides, craftsmen and farmers
- local government
- tourists
- Internet community
- drivers

FURTHER INFORMATION

<http://www.biebrza.org.pl/122,akcja-jedz-lostroznie.html>

<http://www.biebrza.org.pl/280,aktualnosci-edukacyjne.html>

http://www.biebrza.org.pl/275,news-pt.html?wiecej=2169#akapit_2169

http://www.renaturyzacja.biebrza.org.pl/redir,index?wiecej=1425&wiecej_news=1

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Funded by the European Union.

The production of this publication has been supported financially in the framework of the European Commission's (Directorates General Environment and Climate Action).

LIFE + funding programme of operating grants for European Environmental NGOs.

The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the European Union. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the publication lies entirely with the authors.