

Values and results

1.

Tree and shrub species were planted along the oxbow that fit to the oxbow's water level and groundwater conditions.

2.

However, it is not easy to get to the oxbow, it is popular for local fishermen, the improvement of water supply is also important for them.

3.

There are huge black poplar trees at the Old-Drava, with more than 10 m perimeter trunks.

4.

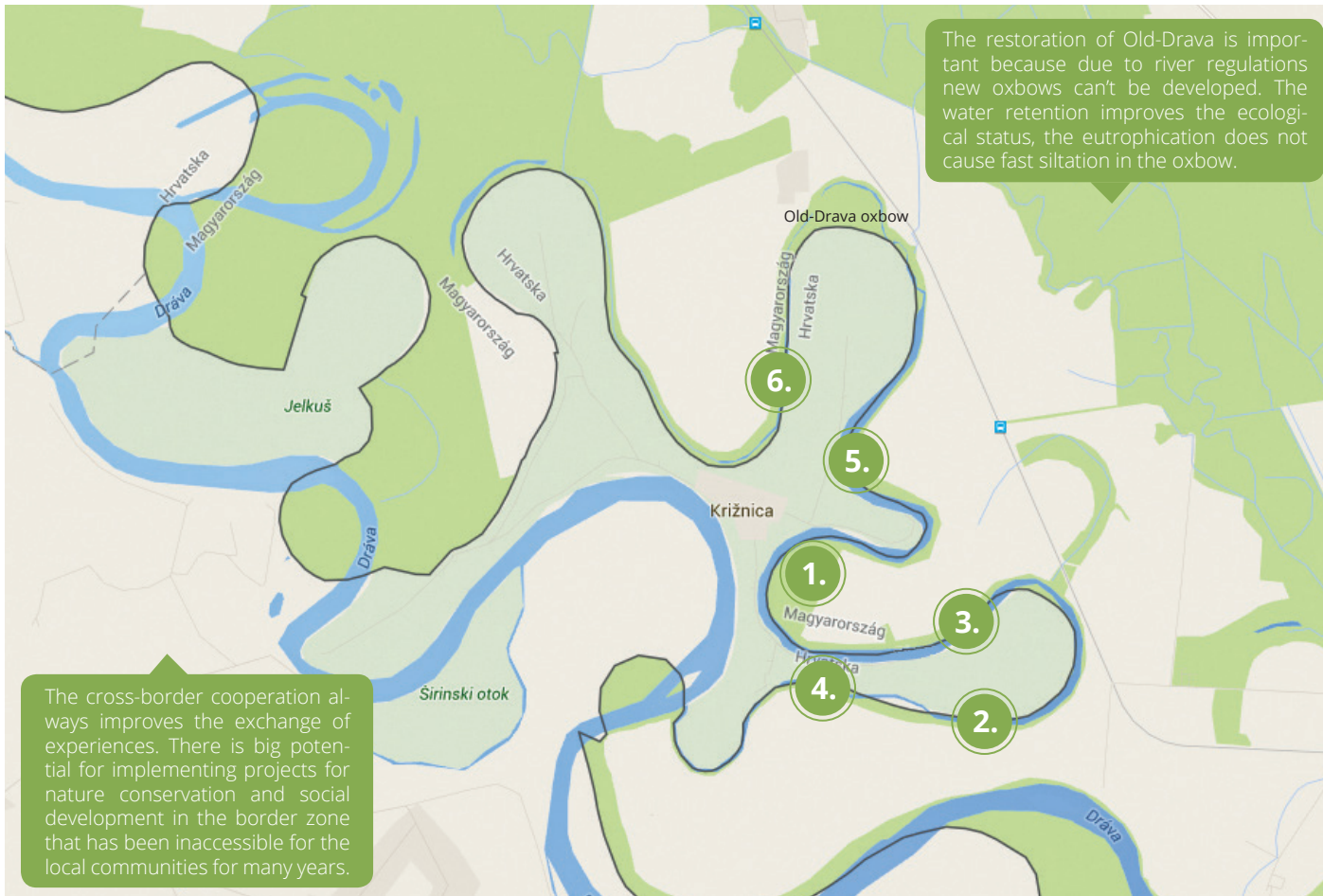
The bottom weir that improves the water level does not block the migration of species.

5.

12 strictly protected bird species live along the Old-Drava. The Purple Heron (*Ardea purpurea*), Night Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) and Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) are also nesting here.

6.

The Old-Drava is the longest, 15 km long oxbow on the left side of river Drava.



THE REVIVAL OF THE OLD-DRAVA OXBOW
The restoration of the Old-Drava oxbow is the first Hungarian-Croatian cooperative project funded by LIFE+



Aims

The Old-Drava oxbow, located near Barcs city, is characterised by narrow sections with dense reed grow, such as by wide open water surfaces. The water supply of the oxbow is insufficient due to the incision of the riverbed, causing water deficiency mainly in low water seasons, during long dry periods. This also causes degradation of the surrounding floodplain forest.



Photo: WWF Hungary

The main aim of the restoration project is to provide better water supply of the oxbow, to improve the biological diversity of the floodplain forests, and to support the maintenance of habitats of European interest. The restoration includes the construction of a bottom weir with a sluice on the bottom of the oxbow to retain water and improve the persistency of water level. The raised water level provides better circumstances for the gallery forests and for the species living in the oxbow.

This project is the first Croatian-Hungarian project, supported by the LIFE+ financial instrument of the EU. The Hungarian part of the project area belongs to the Danube-Drava National Park Directorate, and the entire project site is part of the Natura 2000 network. Both countries pulled in three partner organisations in the project, which are having regular meetings and close cooperation during the organisation of the restoration works: the technical design, permissioning and the physical implementation.




Photo: H. Glader

Activities



FOREST RESTORATION

We plant native tree and shrub species on 15 locations: *Acer tataricum*, *Populus tremula*, *Eunymus europaeus* and *Malus Sylvestris* (Tatarian maple, Common aspen, Spindle and European crab apple). These plants are only 30 to 40 cm in size, but they are expected to grow quickly and improve the diversity and structure of the forest.




CONSTRUCTION OF A BOTTOM WEIR

Water retention will be achieved by the construction of a bottom weir made from stones supported by a steel net, with a sluice built in it, in order to be able to regulate the water level. The bottom weir will have capacity to retain additional 100-120 cm water in the lowest water level season, compared to its previous state before the project started.




CONSTRUCTION OF ANGLER SHELTERS

As the oxbow is very popular among anglers, there were several shelters and piers built along the oxbow. Fifty of them are replaced with new, nice ones that fit in the landscape, and 3 angling platforms were built for community use.



RESEARCH

The ecological status report of the area is a very important part of the restoration. This is the most detailed research has ever made about the Old-Drava, which will be followed by monitoring actions, which will show how effective the restoration was.



DEVELOPMENTS FOR RAISING PUBLIC AWARENESS

Water gauge was installed into the oxbow, educational trail and information point is built on the Croatian side.

Partners



Hungarian partners
Danube-Drava National Park Directorate
WWF Hungary
Federation of Angler Associations of Somogy County

Croatian partners
Municipality of Pitomača
JUUZVP – Public Institution for nature protection in Virovitica Podravina county
Vidra – Regional Development Agency of Virovitica Podravina county



Photo: WWF Hungary

Both side of the Drava is part of the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube established by Hungary and Croatia in 2012. Hopefully, many cross-border initiatives and projects will be developed in the future within this framework.

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The home page is available in three languages:
www.olddrava.com

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