

Report from Staff Exchange

I only started working as a project manager for DANUBEPARKS in BROZ since September. I was very pleased to hear that right from the start there was a possibility to take part in an exchange study in Austria to train the management of this project and to prepare the necessary documentation for the first period.

I was staying there for two weeks working in the DANUBEPARKS Office together with Magdalena Wagner and Georg Frank and it was very fruitful time to cooperate with them. They were very kind and helpful; they went through all SK-AT joint activities with me and helped me a lot with preparing of the first partner report. They provided me with all kinds of documents and advice I needed.

Besides the documentation, I was preparing more project materials in Slovak language. I translated the info brochure, and then I put together a summary for Slovak version of DANUBEPARKS info for the website. I also prepared a material for Slovak press release related to White-tailed Eagle. I am very thankful for the help of Austrian colleagues as well as my BROZ co-workers and advice from Jozef Tomeček from the State Nature Conservancy.

I was really having a great time during the exchange study, I made a great piece of work concerning the project management and activity planning and except of all that, I got there many other opportunities to get familiar with nature protection, scientific business as well as with the Danube Nature Tourism. I participated in a field trip in the Danube floodplains, where I learned much about river morphology and its revitalization, about history of nature protection of the National Park Donau-Auen and I saw all the beautiful nature there. I visited also Slovak guided tour of the castle and its island.

A part of my cooperation with Austrian colleagues was concentrated on the cross-border concept and planning activities for the forestry guidelines. Georg was very supportive and actively planning and preparing all those activities. One day I took small field trip to the flood plains with him and with one of my BROZ colleagues (Matúš Kúdela) and we discussed many possibilities of the cross-border cooperation and forestry management. We were checking some results of previous river restoration activities in Witzelsdorf as an

example for our future activities in the Slovak part of the Danube and we also visited the White-tailed Eagle nesting area.

My internship in the National Park Donau-Auen was very remarkable. I learned a lot of new things and got to know many new interesting and nice people. It was a very stimulating time to work in such nice environment; moreover, the accommodation I was kindly offered, felt pretty comfortable. I spent nice time with my flatmate and other volunteers there and I made myself familiar with many kinds of scientific work. I participated in different field work a few times, e.g. checking of mammal traps, monitoring of turtle nests or collecting insects. For me, as a zoologist, it was very interesting experience.

Finally, I would like to express my words of gratitude to Carl Manzano, the director of the national park, for making this staff exchange possible, to Magdalena and Georg and to the entire staff of National Park for being so helpful and kind to me all the time. If it came to that, I would have highly recommended such staff exchange for other project managers as well.

Miroslava Rudá

Project manager (BROZ)