

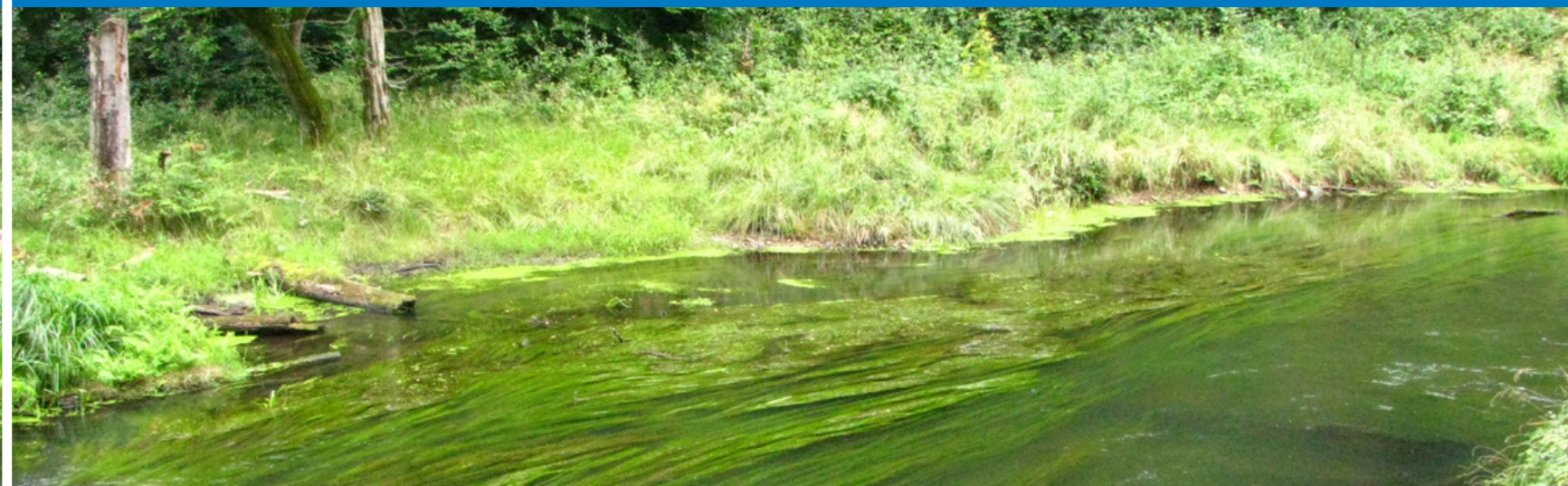
NATURAL RIVER PROCESSES AS A BASE FOR RIVER-RELATED PROTECTED AREAS & RIVER RESTORATION

Expert workshop

April 20
2023

to

April 22
2023



20-22/04

MORE ABOUT THE EVENT

BACKGROUND

One of the **EU Biodiversity Strategy** targets is *"to legally protect at least 30% of the land, including inland waters (..) of which at least one third (10% of the land) to be under strict protection"*. Various natural habitats may be included in the protected areas of concern. One of them is rivers. **Rivers are parts of many protected areas, but may they benefit from strict protection?**

On 22 June 2022, the European Commission adopted the proposal for a **Nature Restoration Law** (NRL), a key element of the EU Biodiversity Strategy. The regulation establishes a framework within each Member States will implement, without delay, effective area-based restoration measures that will cover, by 2030, at least 20% of the EU's territory and marine areas, and by 2050 - all ecosystems in need of restoration. One of the targets is the freshwater ecosystems.

How the Baltic Sea and European countries are preparing themselves for this game changer?

This workshop aims to support these preparations.

The implementation of the NRL will be a huge challenge; in some countries of the Baltic Sea Region even 92% of river surface water bodies need restoration, mainly lateral!

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AIM

We will exchange knowledge on the strict protection of rivers around the Baltic Sea and in Europe among professionals working on this topic, taking into account continental and boreal biogeographical regions and upcoming goals of the EU Nature Restoration Law (NRL).

The workshop's objective is to discuss how the river's natural processes may contribute to:

- achieving objectives of protected areas including strictly protected ones;
- river restoration targets (NRL targets of removing barriers as well as free-flowing river targets).

In particular, the advantages and disadvantages of the application of a strict protection approach to rivers, as well as the possibilities of using natural processes in river restoration.



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QUESTIONS FOR THE WORKSHOP

- When and where the natural fluvial and ecological processes may fully maintain the river's natural values, and the "non-intervention approach" is the best choice for river habitat maintenance? When and where is it not?
- How does strict protection of the neighbourhood ecosystems (forest, wetlands) may impact the river ecosystem and influence river restoration?
- When and where natural processes may successfully restore rivers? Is transforming an altered river into a "free-flowing one" feasible? Under what conditions?
- Maybe "one-off" restoration, and then leaving the river to natural processes is the appropriate solution?
- What level of human use of rivers, if any, is compatible with the strict protection idea, i.e. without interfering significantly with natural processes? What is the pressure of canoeing, angling, etc. and how the pressure may be managed and controlled?
- When protected areas require priority removing lateral and longitudinal barriers?
- What are the criteria for the designation of rivers and river valleys?



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RESULTS

- Exchange of knowledge on the topic of strict protection of rivers in the EU, NRL implementation around the Baltic and in Europe;
- Supporting the NRL implementation and the biogeographical process;
- Feeding the process of discussion of the national pledges for the protected areas;
- Input to the development of national restoration plans;
- A good example of river protection during a field trip;
- Final pithy report possible to use wider, develop a draft of criteria of designation of rivers and river valleys as strictly protected areas.

