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European Union
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WLE Interreg Europe Newsletter #3

Welcome!

This bi-annual newsletter is dedicated to sharing news, events and updates about the WLE project.



Survey Meuse Valley

In April and May 2021 an online survey was organized among residents in the Meuse Valley River Park, in both Belgium and the Netherlands, on both sides of the river. The results are positive: no less than 70% of the surveyed inhabitants support the development of tourism in the area! Moreover, it shows that the inhabitants are particularly fond of their region and want the unique nature to be protected. Half of them also want to contribute, by for example, collecting litter or showing visitors where to go.

consider the presence of wildlife equally important as the hospitality industry in the area.

There are some discrepancies in the results. Municipalities where tourism is more developed, score higher in terms of support for tourism. In municipalities with large areas of new nature the inhabitants first want to discover the beauty of their environment themselves. It is clear that all residents believe that the area should remain a tourist destination, with nature experience being most popular.

The results of this study fit in with the plans to focus on people who want to enjoy nature by hiking and general water recreation in the Meuse Valley River Park. People claim that there is already more than enough bicycle recreation.

With these results, the partners in the Meuse Valley River Park will continue to work on developing a flourishing touristic destination where tourism is tailored to the area and where the focus is on added value, rather than on 'more'. A place where residents, visitors and entrepreneurs can experience the beauty along the Meuse in a qualitative manner.



WLE leads to new project to save the Freshwater Pearl Mussel

The County Administration Board of Norrbotten (CAB) has applied for LIFE funding for a major river restoration project in three EU countries so as to ensure the continued survival of freshwater pearl mussels.

During the WLE project the CAB has identified the need for future Interregional work to ensure the survival of the freshwater pearl mussel and thereby build the

completed a LIFE funding application "LIFE Revives".

The freshwater pearl mussel is a unique species that can live to over 250 years but requires a pristine aquatic environment and strong host species of salmon and trout. Freshwater pearl mussels have a short larval stage where they live and spread on salmon or trout gills and this means that growing numbers of freshwater pearl mussels also require strengthening salmon and trout stocks. This work will in turn create the opportunity for future sustainable sport-fishing tourism based on catch and release of fish.

The Wildlife Economy project has helped give insight into regional needs concerning survival of freshwater pearl mussel and how this unique species can help boost the local economy.



Stettin lagoon cycle path

On June 10th and 11th, WLE project partners DUH and Pomerania participated in the construction opening and testing of a further part of the Stettin lagoon cycle path. The bike path part presented is located between Miedzyzdroje – Wapnica – Wolin in the Voivodeship Western Pomerania (NW-Poland), and another connecting bit to close the 340km long cycle path around the Stettin lagoon in both, Poland and Germany. The partners exchanged with regional stakeholders from tourism agencies, infrastructural planners and local governments as to how to close further gaps in the cycle loop, and improve multi-language signposting, rest and information posts along the Stettin lagoon cycle path. The project which is funded through the EFRE Interreg V A Mecklenburg - Vorpommern / Brandenburg / Poland Programme will continue, and future plans include the construction of information and service posts, fluorescent path markings and explanations to cultural highlights along the cycle paths.

One of the WLE project ideas in the Oder Delta can be linked to this cycle path:

from a joint marketing of the cycle path and the highlights in the area.



Webinars

WLE will organize a set of webinars for the partners to foster inspiration for the RAPs development based on every partner region's thematic interest:

Landscape interpretation: creating added value out of the natural and cultural heritage

Let's Make London Greener, Healthier, and Wilder

Regional Action Plans and Monitoring Plans: the way forward

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