



WWF

UPDATE

2013

Sustainable Hydropower in the Dinaric Arc

Issue 4 / May 2013

Fresh water

This newsletter provides information on the latest developments of the Dinaric Arc Sustainable Hydropower Initiative (DASHI) as well as further news on freshwater and hydropower in the region. DASHI, launched by WWF in 2011, aims to reduce the adverse impacts of hydropower development in the Western Balkans and to promote good practices in the region. The Initiative focuses on the protection of the region's most precious freshwater ecosystems, in particular Ramsar wetlands such as Livanjsko Polje and Hutovo Blato in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lake Skadar shared by Albania and Montenegro.

HYDROPOWER NEWS FROM THE REGION

WWF reveals the undiscovered world of Dinarides

Through the Dinaric Arc Parks project (www.discoverdinarides.com) WWF urges the region and the world to discover the “undiscovered world of Dinarides.” The largest canyon in the world after the canyon of the Colorado River; the oldest and largest rainforest in Europe; meadows with more orchid species than there are in the whole UK; the largest and longest gorge in Europe ... all this is hiding in the Dinaric Arc region! Inspired by all these amazing facts, the creative agency Leo Burnett in Croatia designed a media campaign to promote the brand “Parks Dinarides” which can be seen from April in numerous newspapers, internet portals and on many TV stations throughout the region.

www.discoverdinarides.com



Energy Strategy for the Western Balkans

“The current energy strategy for the Balkans is not in line with European environmental standards” (Jelko Kacin, EP MP)

In February, the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the European Parliament (AFET) held a public debate on the energy strategy of the European Energy Community for the countries of the western Balkans, chaired by MP Jelko Kacin. The meeting was organised on the initiative of Mr Kacin, after a group of MPs wrote to Commissioner Oettinger about the issue of non-involvement of civil society in the process of developing the energy strategy. “The strategy of the Energy Community should not be developed behind closed doors and in a non-transparent manner. The energy strategy must be improved and enhanced since the current version does not ensure the sustainability of the energy sector in Southeast Europe”, stressed Mr Kacin at the meeting. The debate was also attended by the Director of the Energy Community, Janez Kopač, and representatives of civil society from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia.

For more information: bit.ly/ZTwoVH

HYDROPOWER NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Increase in number of permits for the construction of small hydropower plants in Bosnia and Herzegovina

There has recently been an increase in the number of permits issued for the construction of small hydropower plants throughout the Federation of BiH. “Most small hydropower plants are built without previous assessment of their potential environmental impact”, warned Dalibor Ballian, Professor of Forestry at the University of Sarajevo, stressing that small hydropower plants are already causing an ecological disaster and that the main problem lies in the lack of environmental studies. “Not one comprehensive EIA has been carried out for small HPPs built so far in BiH,” he added.

For more information: bit.ly/Zf1BiW

Hutovo Blato Bosnia and Herzegovina

Petition to save Hutovo Blato wetlands

To celebrate Earth Day in Bosnia and Herzegovina WWF handed a petition with 25,517 signatures for the preservation of Hutovo Blato Nature Park to the cantonal Deputy Minister for Nature Protection and the Environment, Mr Zejnil Trešnj. The public event concluded a 3-month campaign to draw the attention of the government to the urgent measures needed to preserve Hutovo Blato. The Ministry, WWF and Park management agreed that all efforts should be focused on stopping the drastic decrease in biodiversity, and on the sustainable financing and better management of the Park. The Deputy Minister confirmed that the preservation of Hutovo Blato is a priority for the Ministry and that they will speed up the process of developing the spatial and management plan for Hutovo Blato, and work with WWF in finding the best financing models.

To learn more about Hutovo Blato and the petition visit: bit.ly/12Au1GK

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Una National Park Bosnia and Herzegovina

WWF concerned about plans for hydropower plants in the Una National Park

A WWF team recently travelled to the Una river region, invited by the director of the newly formed Una National Park to provide scientific and advocacy support in the case of the planned Unac hydropower plant (the Unac is a tributary of the Una river), which threatens the whole Una river ecosystem. WWF discussed hydropower development in protected areas with Park managers, local NGOs and other local stakeholders, and presented their latest publication on hydropower “Sustainable hydropower: a brief guide for investors”. NGOs and management of the National Park were very interested and will use the publication when advocating for sustainable hydropower approaches in their protected area.

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Sutjeska National Park Bosnia and Herzegovina

Environmentalists and employees of the Sutjeska National Park against the construction of hydroelectric power plants

At the public hearing of the draft EIA for small hydropower plants in Sutjeska and Foča National Park, environmental NGOs and employees of Sutjeska NP expressed their concern that small hydroelectric power plants could significantly disrupt the ecosystem and lead to the disappearance of endemic and relic species for which Sutjeska NP, one of three national parks in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is known worldwide. The construction of five small hydropower plants is foreseen, two on the river Sutjeska and three on the river Hrčavka. The public hearing was also attended by WWF representatives, who supported the position of local civil society that the hydropower plants would affect the functions of protected areas and protected species. WWF will be monitoring developments on this project and will comment on the EIA study in collaboration with local NGOs.

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Montenegro



Roundtable on the transboundary impacts of hydropower plants in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia

Montenegrin NGO Green Home organized a roundtable on the planned construction of hydropower plants on the Drina and Lim Rivers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia and their impact on biodiversity in Montenegro. There are serious disagreements between government agencies and NGOs on the subject. The expert committee tasked to assess the impact of hydropower plants in Montenegro did not present any findings on the transboundary impacts of Buk Bijela and Foča hydropower plants, which were strongly criticized by NGOs. In the meantime, the Ministry of Physical Planning, Civil Engineering and Ecology of the Republika Srpska in Bosnia and Herzegovina approved the EIA study for both hydropower plants. Construction of the Upper Drina system of hydropower plants is expected to begin in 2014.

For more information: Nataša Kovačević, natasa.kovacevic@greenhome.co.me

Serbian hydropower plant project Brodarevo causing concern in Montenegro

Construction of a hydroelectric power plant on the Lim River near Brodarevo in Serbia has provoked strong reactions in Montenegro. 50,000 citizens of the town Prijepolje signed a petition against the construction of Brodarevo, convinced that the construction of dams will submerge part of Montenegrin territory. NGOs from Montenegro strongly criticized the EIA study, which does not deal with the negative effects on the territory of Montenegro. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Montenegro requested an exchange of information with Serbian authorities on possible transboundary impacts of the construction of Brodarevo, while the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism requested a revision of the EIA study by the Espoo secretariat in Belgrade. The project, financed by the Canadian company REV with a budget of 145 million euros, envisages two dams 32m and 23m high with a total power of 58 MW.

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Albania

EU-DG Environment meets with NGOs in Albania

Representatives of the EU-DG Environment (Mr Hanley and Ms Dranseikaite) were in Tirana in March to discuss environmental issues in Albania with the NGO sector. INCA, WWF's partner organization in the country, took the opportunity to discuss the issue of balancing hydropower development and preservation of Albanian rivers according to the Water Framework Directive. INCA also stressed the need to increase standards in the process of planning and implementing of hydropower projects.

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Croatia



Ombla hydropower plant: new study shows value of Vilina cave

A new study on the management of biodiversity of the underground system of the Ombla River was presented in Dubrovnik and Sarajevo recently. The study of the biodiversity of the Vilina cave (the source of the Ombla) was carried out by the Croatian Biospeleological Society. The study showed that Vilina cave is the biologically richest cave so far recorded in Croatia and one of the richest in the Dinarides, and thus the entire world. In only three months the scientists recorded 105 cave species, most of which are local and regional endemics, and 13 completely new species. One third of the species found are on the IUCN Red List. The study confirmed that the EIA for Ombla hydropower plant (1999) lacks important data. National NGOs sent their comments on the EIA to the Croatian authorities and EBRD, while WWF supported their arguments on the EIA.

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STAYING IN THE LOOP



Bosnia-Herzegovina: greatest wealth of drinking water in the region, seventh in Europe

According to the World Bank report “Water and Development: An Evaluation of World Bank Support, 1997-2007” Bosnia and Herzegovina has the greatest quantity of drinking water per capita in the region of Southeast Europe. With 9,461m³ of drinking water per capita Bosnia and Herzegovina is the first in the region and seventh in Europe. Bosnia and Herzegovina’s water resources are richer than those of many countries including France, Germany and the USA. In the region of Southeast Europe, Croatia is after Bosnia and Herzegovina with 8,555 m³, followed by Albania with 8,364 m³. Last are Macedonia and Serbia with 2,616 m³ and 1 158 m³ of drinking water per capita.

See: bit.ly/9sSbP6



Dinaric Arc Parks: first regional workshops for the assessment of benefits of protected areas (PA BAT)

How should we evaluate a protected area? It is one of the questions that interests all the employees of parks in the region. Within the project ‘Dinaric Arc Parks’ WWF started a number of workshops to try to answer that question with the application of methodology for the assessment of the value of protected areas (PA-BAT). The methodology was introduced at the first international conference of Dinaric Arc Parks held in Banja Luka at the end of 2012. So far, in 2013, six workshops for representatives of national parks, nature parks and their stakeholders in Croatia have been organized by WWF. The methodology was designed to help the agencies, organizations and institutions for nature protection in collecting and comparing the data of total benefits of protected areas.

See: dinaricarcparcs.blogspot.com/2013/04/first-regional-approach-ever-for.html

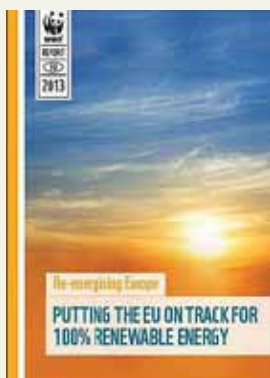


Bosnia-Herzegovina: presidency of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR)

In January Bosnia and Herzegovina took over the presidency of the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River (ICPDR). The former president, Wolfgang Stalzer from Austria, handed over the keys to Ermina Salkičević-Dizdarević, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although Bosnia and Herzegovina does not have direct access to the Danube, it is part of the basin through the major tributaries such as the Sava River. Key activities of the ICPDR in 2013 include the Danube Day on 29 June with a focus on the fight for the protection of the endangered Danube sturgeon. Illegal fishing, primarily for their caviar, is the main direct threat to the survival of the Danube sturgeon, while the construction of hydropower plants is a major new threat causing loss of habitat and preventing migration. WWF and other organizations are working with the ICPDR to encourage governments to adopt measures for improvement of the management of the Danube in accordance with the principles of sustainable development.

See: bit.ly/ZOX1wx

RECENT PUBLICATIONS



New policy can put the EU on track to reach 100% renewable energy

A new WWF report, “Putting the EU on Track for 100% Renewable Energy “, comes just as the European Commission is considering post-2020 climate and energy plans and shows that by 2030 the EU could be reducing its energy use by more than a third and generating almost half of the remainder from renewables. The EU can take the following steps to reach a fully renewable energy system by 2050: use at least 38% less energy; generate more than 40% of its energy from renewable sources; and reduce its energy-related greenhouse emissions by 50% compared to 1990 levels. Almost 80% of Europeans agree that fighting climate change can boost the economy and create jobs and 70% of Europeans believe investment in renewable energy should be prioritised over the next 30 years, compared to alternative energy sources including shale gas, nuclear and carbon capture and storage plants.

The report is available at: bit.ly/YgX5QQ



WWF's Sustainable Hydropower: A Guide for Investors now available in local languages

Last year WWF released a publication “Sustainable Hydropower in the Dinaric Arc - a brief guide for investors”, which is now available in Croatian, Serbian and Albanian. With this guide WWF contributes to a new approach to decision making by providing investors and developers with a detailed overview of the benefits, costs and risks to be taken into account when considering investments in dams, and in particular hydropower.

The report is available at: bit.ly/OWtarK

DID YOU KNOW...?

40th anniversary of the reintroduction of the lynx to the Dinarides

The 40th anniversary of the reintroduction of the lynx in the Dinarides was celebrated in February. In March of 1973 three females and three males, caught in the Slovakian Carpathians, were released in Kočevski Rog in Slovenia, and after an absence of more than 70 years the lynx again became a resident of the Dinaric forests. The lynx disappeared across Western and Central Europe at the end of the 19th and early 20th centuries due to over-hunting and loss of habitat. In Dinarides it survived only in isolated areas of Albania, Macedonia and Kosovo. Although the reintroduction of the lynx in the Dinarides was considered one of the most successful reintroductions of large carnivores, the lynx is again facing extinction. Due to the inability of natural connectivity with neighbouring populations and the natural migration of animals, the reintroduction of new individuals is proposed as the only possible solution for the restoration of genetic diversity and to ensure the survival of the population in the Dinarides.

See: dinaricarparks.blogspot.com/2013/04/40-godina-risa-u-dinaridima.html

You can find more information on the project Dinaric Arc Sustainable Hydropower Initiative at:

<http://bit.ly/KXr1fn>

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Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) in the snow. © Roger Leguen / WWF-Canon

