



MUR
OR LEBEN

Inner-alpine river basin management on the upper River Mur

LIFE-UPPER MUR
mur[er]leben 2003-2016



IMPRINT

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Index

1	Introduction	5
2	Prizes for the upper River Mur	8
3	“What I think” – opinions from the project area	9
4	The upper River Mur	11
	The natural gems of the upper River Mur.....	12
5	The project - why, to what end?	16
	‘Threat to the River Mur’:.....	18
6	More space for the River Mur–	
	LIFE project measures	21
	6.1 Measures at Mauthof.....	22
	6.2 Measures at Sauerbrunn-Pöls.....	23
	6.3 Measures at Thalheim-St.Peter.....	24
	6.4 Measures at Apfelberg.....	25
	6.5 Measures at Lässer Au.....	26
	6.6 Measures at Feistritz-St. Lorenzen.....	27
	6.7 Measures at Preg.....	28
7	The River Mur offers lessons – school projects	31
	7.1 BG/BRG Judenburg grammar school.....	32
	7.2 Simultania Judenburg.....	33
	7.3 Jägersteig Kindergarten Judenburg.....	34
	7.4 FSLE Großlobming school.....	34
	7.5 Planting.....	35
8	Chatting brings people together – the LIFE festivals	36
	8.1 LIFE-Aufeste.....	36
	Responsible organisations.....	39

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1. Introduction

One of the objectives of the LIFE project entitled [Inner-alpine river basin management on the upper River Mur] is to recreate the “Mur or less” original, branching river system, secure the River Mur’s existing and essentially natural alluvial plain and waterway landscape features whilst also initiating the creation of new ones.

This was made possible by the successful reconnection and fresh excavation of secondary channels, the creation of ponds for amphibians as well as by securing and recreating natural alluvial forests.

In addition to ecological aims, the LIFE nature project allowed numerous additional objectives to be achieved. As a result of securing and reactivating flood zones, passive flood protection was significantly improved along the corresponding stretch of river, the River Mur being consequently enhanced in terms of its value as an area for recreation. Moreover, through involving and informing the local population, it was possible to promote regional awareness of the ecological significance of the River Mur as a space for people to enlarge their life experience.

Successful implementation of the measures was only made possible by positive collaboration between the project executive, the Province of Styria, represented by department 14 for water management, resources and sustainability and the project partners department 13 for Environment and Spatial Planning, the department for nature conservation and the building authority of upper west Styria public works department in Judenburg, along with the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management.

Project support from the municipal authorities and affected owners of fishing rights, as well as collaboration by participating schools, namely BG/BRG Judenburg, Grosslobming vocational school, Simultania Judenburg, Jägersteig kindergarten and numerous associations, together led to the great success of the LIFE nature project ‘murerleben I & II’ [experience the River Mur I & II]. Achieving understanding among affected landowners was also a prerequisite for implementing the measures. We take this opportunity to thank all concerned.

River basin management along the River Mur (upper River Mur and by the Slovenian border) attracted a great deal of attention across Europe and indeed worldwide. As a result, the overall concept for Mur 2014 was awarded the ‘European Riverprize’. The ‘River Mur’ project was submitted for the ‘Thiess International RiverPrize 2015’ and has been nominated as a finalist.



■ St. Peterer Au

What is Natura2000?

'**NATURA2000**' is a pan-European network of thousands of conservation areas, with the purpose of maintaining particular animal and plant species as well as **habitats worthy of conservation** for future generations. This network of conservation areas aims to make a significant contribution to the maintenance of biological diversity on a European level.

What is LIFE?

LIFE+ is the EU instrument for financing the protection of the environment and nature. **Measures for the maintenance or restoration of natural habitats** for animals and plants can be funded by the EU **LIFE+** programme. In such projects, subsidies are claimed from this programme in order to support significant nature conservancy projects across Europe.



Facts and figures

Funding:

	LIFE III - murerleben I	LIFE+ - murerleben II
Project budget:	€ 2.125.000	€ 2.784.131
EU funding:	€ 1.062.500 = 50%	€ 1.392.065 = 50%
Project timescale:	08/2003 – 07/2007	02/2010 – 01/2016

Of the project budget, 50 % was funded by the EU. Of the national funding component, 70% was provided by the Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management. The remainder came in various proportions from the Regional Government of Styria as project executive as well as the project partners and co-financiers.

Coordinating beneficiary

Office of the State
Government of Styria –
Department 14, water
management, resources
and sustainability

Associated beneficiaries

Office of the State
Government of Styria –
Department 13 nature
conservation Upper west
Styria building authority

Co-financiers

Municipalities and owners
of fishing rights



■ Weyern

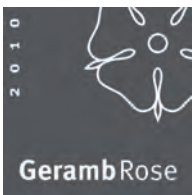
2. Prizes for the upper River Mur



Environmental protection prize 2006

The Regional Government of Styria awarded the LIFE upper River Mur community school project entitled 'murerleben' in the schools category with the environmental protection prize.

(BG/BRG Judenburg school, Simultania Lichtenstein, HBLA Murau, Roseggerhauptschule Knittelfeld school)



Geramb Rose 2010, Weyern widening

In September 2010, the Verein für BauKultur Steiermark [Styrian association for building culture] awarded the Geramb Rose for the Weyern widening, murerleben I.



European RiverPrize 2014

The overall concept for the River Mur including all EU-subsidised projects realised to date and the management plan were submitted as the project "River Mur" for the 'European Riverprize 2014'. The murerleben I and II projects constituted a significant proportion thereof.



International RiverPrize 2015

The 'River Mur' project was submitted for the 'Thiess International RiverPrize 2015' and has been nominated as a finalist.

3. “What I think” – opinions from the project area

“Through the [Inner-alpine river basin management on the upper River Mur] project activity at St. Peter Au it was possible, on the one hand, to restore natural habitats for animals and plants whilst, on the other, creating an essentially natural environment for people to enjoy. The extension of the existing old secondary channel and the newly created, extensively branched system of secondary channels with a large water surface area, present a great advantage for my stewardship of the land, given that the passive flood protection proved invaluable during the heavy rainfall of last summer.”

Kathrin Grillitsch

Landowner, Landentwicklung Steiermark



“The idea of involving children and young people in this project is exemplary. Municipal authorities and schools are collaborating in this project and young people have the chance to come into contact with that. I’ve already informed my school administration in Mexico about this project and we would like to fit it into appropriate parts of the curriculum. If the school promotes ecological awareness, maybe the government will bring about similar renaturation of rivers like the Rio Lerma, just like here along the River Mur.”

Tamara Haid

Teacher at Tecnológico de Monterrey college, Mexico, herself born in Pöls



“The value attributed to the work of all those involved in the LIFE+ projects is evident from the distinctions gained. A successful contribution to the maintenance of biodiversity in Europe as well as an enrichment of the region. In a time when many of our resources are retreating or have already vanished, as an officer for European conservation areas it is of course pleasing to see widespread application of relevant projects dedicated to the maintenance and restoration of ecosystems.”

Peter Hochleitner

European conservation area manager





■ Eschlingbauerkehre

4. The upper River Mur

Covering 1317 hectares, the European conservation area of “upper and middle course of the River Mur with Puxer Auwald (alluvial forest), Puxer Wand (cliff) and Gulsen (mountain)” constitutes the geographical area covered by the two LIFE projects ‘murerleben I and II’. The upper River Mur is one of the most ecologically precious stretches of river in Austria. The by and large intact range of habitats along the upper Mur offers the ‘king of fish’ in Austria’s flowing watercourses, the Danube salmon, a natural breeding environment. Within Austria this is otherwise only the case on the Pielach in Lower Austria. Nevertheless, regulation and more intensive exploitation in basin areas on the upper Mur have led to perceptible development trends implying a threat to habitats and species.

Designation of the upper Mur as a NATURA2000 area means new opportunities for local nature conservation. Measures for maintaining or recreating natural habitats for animals and plants can now be subsidised by EU “LIFE Nature programme”. In so-called “LIFE Nature projects”, subsidies can be claimed from this programme, which supports significant nature conservation projects throughout Europe.



■ Danube salmon

The natural gems of the upper River Mur

Danube salmon (*Hucho hucho*)

The Danube salmon is one of the largest freshwater fish worldwide. In Austria the Danube salmon was originally widespread. Today, naturally-reproducing Danube salmon stocks in Styria are limited solely to the upper River Mur. The habitat-selective Danube salmon prefers dynamic, highly-structured flowing watercourses passing over level gravel expanses, where it can create its spawning areas.

Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*):

In Austria, the bullhead is a potentially endangered fish species. It prefers to live in what are now rare sections of well-structured river rich in oxygen with rapid flow. It is a typical accompanying species in trout and grayling regions.

Ukrainian brook lamprey (*Eudontomyzon mariae*):

The brook lamprey spends several years of its life in the form of a worm-like larva in muddy sand in clean rivers. After 5-7 years it transforms into the adult form with an eel-like, extended body. It prefers to spawn in shallow channels in gravel or sand exposed to bright sunlight. As such conditions

Natura2000
protected
species



■ Bullhead



■ Italian crested newt



■ Ukrainian brook lamprey



■ Yellow-bellied toad

have become rare, the brook lamprey has become an endangered species in Austria.

Italian crested newt (*Triturus carnifex*)

The Italian crested newt is endangered in its forest habitat throughout its area of distribution in the southern Alps. The decline in this species of amphibian is attributable to the destruction of land and water-based habitats as well as water pollution.

The Italian crested newt prefers large, still spawning ponds with gentle banks and landing areas, which are more than a metre deep and free of fish.

Yellow-bellied toad (*Bombina variegata*)

The yellow-bellied toad could be said to be a pioneer species, given that it quickly discovers and utilises any newly-created spawning ponds. It prefers primarily small, shallow areas of water exposed to sunshine, in which the water warms up quickly. Young animals' high mobility favours spontaneous occupation of newly emerging habitat areas. The lack of pioneer biotopes favoured by the yellow-bellied toad is a strong threat to stocks of this species.

*Natura2000
protected
species*



■ Common sandpiper



■ Alluvial forest



■ Common kingfisher



■ rosemary willow

Natura2000
protected
species

Common sandpiper (*Actitis hypoleucos*):

The common sandpiper utilises banks with gravel and stone areas free of vegetation both to forage and to breed. This striking bird concentrates on gravel and stone because it does not build a nest as such, instead laying its eggs directly in the gravel. As a result of having practically no nesting material and the eggs' appropriate colouration, the clutch of eggs is practically invisible. This species is on the red list of endangered breeding birds in Styria and Austria as highly endangered.

Common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*):

The highly-endangered common kingfisher is the only member of the kingfisher family (alcedinidae) occurring in central Europe. It frequents clear, moderately fast-flowing or stagnant bodies of water with stocks of small fish on which to prey, perching on deadwood or overhanging branches. Its preferred nesting sites are nowadays rarely encountered steep erosion banks composed of finely granulated material in which it builds besting cavities 50-90 cm deep.

Alluvial forest with black alder and common ash

(*Alnus glutinosa* und *Fraxinus excelsior* - Natura2000 habitat 91E0)

This category includes a series of habitats that are bound to the natural dynamics of rivers. Amongst them are the lowest banks of the River Mur and river basin forests, which are frequently flooded and remain 'steeped' over extended periods.

Dominant species include black alder, grey alder, ash, black poplar and white willow.

*Natura2000
protected
habitats*

Alpine rivers and bank vegetation with rosemary willow

(*Salix eleagnos excelsior* - Natura2000 habitat 3240):

Rosemary willow prefers to grow on regularly flooded gravel or sand banks. In the event of extended delays to flooding, a natural development rapidly occurs whereby softwood alluvial forests gradually emerge in moist locations.

Resume of the upper River Mur

Conservation status:	Natura2000 European conservation area No. 5 'Upper and middle course of the River Mur with Puxer Auwald, Puxer Wand and Gulsen'
Area:	1317 hectares
Source of the River Mur:	Cirque in central Alpine area (Salzburg) ca. 1950 m above Adriatic
Mur estuary:	after 467 km into the River Drava (Croatia)
Upper and middle course of the River Mur:	from Predlitz (Murau) to St. Erhard (Leoben)
Flow rate:	At Zeltweg on the River Mur Mean level: 57.3 m ³ /s 100-year flood: 710 m ³ /s
Bio-region:	Unglaciated central Alps
River zonation:	Hyporhithral large – grayling region
Basin form:	Sedimentary and V-shaped valleys
River type:	Predominantly meandering course with some sections having secondary channels.
Characteristic morphological structures:	Distinctive gravel banks, alternating sections of flat and steep banks with undercut, eroding banks, strong sedimentary transport, accompanying alluvial vegetation

5. The project - why, to what end?

Systematic river regulation, beginning at the end of the 19th century, caused substantial changes in the course of the River Mur's flow. This water course was originally characterised by numerous elements typical of natural rivers such as secondary channels, shallow zones, gravel, sand and mud banks as well as river bank erosion. As a result of regulation, the River Mur's dynamics were substantially limited along extended sections, with secondary channels cut off and large areas drained to make them available for agriculture. Moreover, the construction of hydro-electric power installations influenced access along the river and sedimentary transport and, as a result of the introduction of untreated waste water from paper factories and settlements, by the middle of the last century the River Mur was one of the most polluted rivers in Europe.

These changes led to disconnection of the River Mur from surrounding land and side streams, to the partial loss of alluvial forest along the river and of dynamics of flow conditions and thus to a substantial reduction of valuable habitats for fish, amphibians and birds.

Measures murerleben I + II

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 01 Fish pass Murau | 11 Thalheim-St. Peter |
| 02 Mauthof Murerleben I | 12 Thalheim |
| 03 Mauthof Murerleben II | 13 Laing |
| 04 Aibl | 14 Weyern |
| 05 Eschlingbauer Kehre | 15 Apfelberg |
| 06 Abandoned meander Schrattenberg | 16 Lässer Au |
| 07 Hirschfeld | 17 Feistritz-St. Lorenzen |
| 08 Weyrach | 18 Preg |
| 09 Sauerbrunn-Pöls | |
| 10 St. Peterer Au and Tippelwiesen | |

MURERLEBEN I (2003-2007)

MURERLEBEN II (2010-2015)





At the end of the 1970s, large national programmes commenced with a view to restoring water quality, accompanied by the first moves towards water management close to nature.

Under the auspices of the 'LIFE Nature' EU funding programme, in 2003 the first LIFE III project 'murerleben I' on the upper River Mur was launched, entitled "Inner-alpine river basin management on the upper River Mur". This 5-year renaturation project was succeeded by the 'murerleben II' project from 2010 till 2015.

The project area extends across two boroughs (Murau, Murtal) from Murau to the vicinity of Knittelfeld.



'Threat to the River Mur':

River straightening

Straightening the course of a river means cutting off meanders and secondary channels. Shortening the course leads to increased flow velocity and the loss of alluvial forest, gravel banks and thus important habitats for fish, birds and amphibians.

Interruption of access along the river

The fish species specific to this type of river, with the Danube salmon (*Hucho hucho*) as indicator species, have to migrate to their spawning habitats. Past construction of hydro-electric stations devoid of fish bypasses have been the primary cause of reduced migration opportunities for fish. Such hindrances to migration have caused a steady decline in fish stocks within the project area.

Reduced sedimentary transport

The retention of sediment at hydro-electric plants and the straightening of the river course caused local deepening of the River Mur. Such deepening has the consequence that tributary creeks often no longer flow at matched depth into the River Mur. As a consequence, many fish are cut off from their spawning areas along these tributaries.



■ Hydro power station St. Georgen [VERBUND]

River flow dynamics

One significant characteristic of a natural river system is its dynamic variation. Each more substantial flood sees the creation of new habitats like gravel banks, secondary channels, riparian ponds etc. Regulation and massive securing measures along many stretches of river bank led to few possibilities for the emergence of new habitats along the upper River Mur.

Loss of alluvial forest through unnatural forestry management

Forest management measures that are not adjusted to suit local conditions lead to the transformation of essentially natural stocks of trees into unnatural forests with a dearth of structure. This results in both a steady reduction of original alluvial forest stocks and the loss of habitats typical of riparian zones and favoured by particular species of bird or other alluvial forest inhabitants.

Flood protection

Flooding and associated sedimentary transport shape essentially natural sections of river and are essential for alluvial forests and wetlands, as the latter are supplied by floods.

Wider sections and natural flood zones play a great role in flood protection. By virtue of their great retentive effect, they provide the river with space and moderate any flood surge.



■ Regulation of the Mur bank



■ Construction Works in Thalheim

6. More space for the River Mur – LIFE project measures

With the title 'murerleben', work took place on the upper River Mur in what was already the second LIFE nature project:

During the first **LIFE nature project 'murerleben' from 2003 – 2007** a total of 2.2 million € was invested in measures to improve the aquatic habitats of the River Mur and on passive flood protection. More than 80 % of this investment remained in the region.

During the new **LIFE+ nature project 'murerleben' from 2010 – 2015** a total investment of 2.8 million € was planned. In line with EU Water Framework Directive, significant steps were taken along seven sections of the River Mur aimed at maintaining species diversity, improving the dynamics of changing flow rates and improving passive flood protection.



6.1 Measures at Mauthof

Costs of measures at Mauthof:

ca. € 60.000,--

Implemented:

2012

Work on implementing measures at Mauthof began in 2007 as part of project 'murerleben I'. With a view to enhancing and amplifying the ecological benefits, measures were extended in 2012. Structuring of the river bed and added secondary channels were complemented by construction of an amphibian pond and backwater area for fish.

Around 2000 m² of riparian pond was created and 3.500 m² land were lowered.



6.2 Measures at Sauerbrunn - Pöls

In Sauerbrunn-Pöls, improvements towards a more natural river system were applied by means of adding a secondary channel and revitalising the mouth of a tributary stream. Also contributing to the restoration of valuable habitat were the creation of amphibian ponds and development of a new alluvial forest.

An approximately 360-metre-long secondary channel was freshly dug, 2700 m² of riparian ponds were created, 1.7 hectares of alluvial forest developed, 6000 m² of the land was lowered and the mouth of the Pichlbach stream was revitalised.

In the Sauerbrunn-Pöls area, the Natura2000 coverage area was enlarged by 2.1 hectares.

Costs of measures at Sauerbrunn – Pöls:
ca. € 275.000,--

Implemented:
2014-2015

Co-financed by:
Elisabeth von Pezold,
owner of fishing rights
Market town of Pöls



6.3 Measures at Thalheim – St.Peter

Costs of measures at Thalheim – St. Peter:

ca. € 370.000,--

Implementation St. Peter:

2014

Implementation Thalheim:

2015

Co-financed by:

Elisabeth von Pezold, owner of fishing rights
Municipality of St Peter ob Judenburg

During the preceding 'murerleben I' in 2006, a secondary channel was created in the St. Peter Au basin area. In order to aid the successful development of essentially natural alluvial forest, this measure was extended both upstream and downstream in murerleben II.

The system was then opened up through the removal of bank revetments and digging of branched secondary channels. Gravel and sand bars were also created close to flowing water. This offers willows for example appropriate conditions for rejuvenating growth on the banks. This served as a foundation stone for significant improvements in alluvial forest structure, giving a roughly 3 km stretch of the River Mur the chance to restore its original branched-channel flow system.

Around 930 m of new secondary channels were dug, 2000 m² of riparian pond created, 3.5 hectares of alluvial forest initiated and a further 3 hectares secured.

In the St. Peter-Au area and in Thalheim, the Natura2000 coverage area was enlarged by 3.2 hectares.



6.4 Measures at Apfelberg

The widening at Apfelberg and measures implemented in Weyern and in Lässer Au are directed towards creating a coherent stretch of river that is rich in structure. Removing bank revetments, creating secondary channels and structuring by means of rootstock has once again enabled dynamic development of the River Mur over a total length of around 4 km.

About 400 m of new secondary channels were dug, 9500 m² of the land was lowered and 1.5 hectares of alluvial forest were initiated or secured.

Costs of measures at Apfelberg:

ca. € 250.000,--

Implemented:

2014

Co-financed by:

Association of fishing rights holders Thalheim-Knittelfeld
Municipality of Apfelberg



6.5 Measures at Lässer Au

Costs of measures at Lässer Au:

ca. € 470.000,--

Implemented:

2012-2013

Co-financed by:

Mag. Klemens Hatschek,
owner of fishing rights
Municipality of Apfelberg

The widening at Lässer Au along with measures implemented at Weyern and Apfelberg all contributed to the revitalisation of a 4-kilometre-long associated set of river features.

To support the dynamic development of the River Mur, the existing revetment on the left bank was removed and a structured secondary channel was created with two flow entry points. In addition, numerous amphibian ponds were created and alluvial forest areas were secured or initiated anew.

A secondary channel around 1300 m long was freshly dug, 4000 m² of riparian ponds created, 3.5 hectares of alluvial forest initiated and 4.5 hectares secured.

In the Lässer Au area, the Natura2000 coverage area was enlarged by 3.9 hectares.



6.6 Measures at Feistritz – St. Lorenzen

In Feistritz a new branched secondary channel system was dug. In addition, along this section the bank revetments were removed, allowing natural structures to develop once more and create new habitats for fish, amphibians and birds. In the event of flooding, the River Mur now has more space for dynamic structuring and is once again connected to the alluvial forest area covering 4000 m².

Around 800 m of new secondary channels were dug, 2000 m² of riparian pond were created, 11,000 m² of the land were lowered and 3.5 hectares of alluvial forest were secured.

Costs of measures at Feistritz – St. Lorenzen:
ca. € 410.000,--

Implemented:
2014

Co-financed by:
Mag. Klemens Hatschek,
owner of fishing rights
Municipality of Feistritz



Costs of measures at

Preg:

ca. € 50.000,--

Implemented:

2011

Co-financed by:

H.M.Z. Liegenschaftserwerbs-,
verwaltungs- u. Handels-GesmbH
Municipality of St Lorenzen
by Knittelfeld

6.7 Measures at Preg

The monotonous section of the River Mur at Preg was restored to attractive fish habitats through structuring measures along a 2 km section. The introduction of rows of stones and felled trees either enhanced or initiated typical river and water body structures.



■ Lässer Au



■ Explanatory sign in the Lässer Au

7. The River Mur offers lessons – school projects

It was already during implementation of the first LIFE project 'murerleben I' (2003-2007) that large numbers of children and young people from the region got involved and were duly rewarded with the environmental protection prize of the Province of Styria. Building on this success, school projects once again play a big role in the LIFE+ successor project 'murerleben II'. Nature and the environment, art and creativity, technology and handicrafts by and in the River Mur all fall within the scope of activities.



■ Electrofishing



■ Measuring of a bullhead



■ Catch of the electrofishing

7.1 BG/BRG Judenburg grammar school

Judenburg grammar school contributed two projects. As part of their 'science and nature' subject, the pupils applied themselves to bio-monitoring whilst, in they designed benches and explanatory signs by the River Mur for the Life project.

Bio-monitoring:

The focus of bio-monitoring was aquatic ecology of the river of their homeland, the Mur. One of the highlights here was electrofishing in the St. Peter Au area for the assessment of current fish stocks. Collected rapidly and without harm, the fish were investigated scientifically and ultimately set free once again.

Benches and explanatory signs

Twenty three pupils from class 7 of 2011/12 designed benches and explanatory signs. The prototypes produced were presented to a specialist jury who



■ Presentation of the prototypes at the «20 years of LIFE festival» in the Lässer Au



■ Winner of the competition «explanatory signs»



■ Benches and explanatory sign in the Lässer Au



■ Colorful milestones adorn the individual measures

gave them ratings. The explanatory sign design by Andreas Reicher and bench collection design by Julia Höfferer and Theresa Petritsch were judged the winners. The actual implementations of the winning projects will ensure that those pursuing recreation by the River Mur will enjoy access to information and opportunities to relax.

The seating arrangements have been available since 2014/15 in the Lässer Au and St. Peter Au forests and at the mouth of the Ingering.

7.2 Simultania Judenburg

From the beginning the project is characterized from the title: „Milestones along the River Mur“. To this title belongs a same-named project, where the Simultania in Judenburg, headed by Prof. Helmut Ploschnitznigg, distinguishes itself. A group of young persons with a handicap have together created wooden pillars, which are to be seen along the banks at the River Mur to make it colorful and to individuate it.



■ Kindergarten Jägersteig at the «20 years of LIFE festival» in the Lässer Au

7.3 Jägersteig Kindergarten Judenburg

Children at Judenburg's kindergarten were able to experience the River Mur during several excursions and learned about the significant features of river basin landscape. Features of the aquatic world of animals and plants that were of special interest here were communicated in a playful manner in the form of songs and stories. As a result, the very 'youngest' in society gained awareness of the sensitive habitats within the river basin landscape.

7.4 FSLE Großlobming school

The Grosslobming vocational school of agricultural and nutritional science was not only a highly committed but also a valued culinary partner in the project. During lessons, the pupils created small baked items in the form of fish, their creations then ensuring outstanding catering at a wide variety of LIFE project events. At a number of opening ceremonies and forest festivals, they took on the task of catering and produced the meals themselves.



■ Baked items in the form of fish



■ End of school year festival in the measure Thalheim/St. Peter

7.5 Planting

In association with measures at St. Peter Au and as part of the end of school year festival for the junior schools of St. Peter by Judenburg, St. Georgen by Judenburg and Unzmarkt – Frauenburg, a large planting initiative took place. St. Peter Au was perfectly suited to the total of 14 play locations of the end of year festival, which had as its theme 'old games rediscovered'. One of the locations was planting in the forest organised by Kathrin Grilitsch. Every child who planted a tree is now the guardian of that tree and has the exciting opportunity to keep tabs on its development over the years to come.

Children from the kindergarten and junior school of the municipality of Pöls - Oberkurzheim took part in a similar planting initiative under the auspices of the LIFE+ measures at Thalheim-St. Peter.



■ Children of the junior school and the Kindergarten Pöls



■ Planting in the measure Thalheim/St. Peter



8. Chatting brings people together – the LIFE festivals

LIFE forest festivals

20 years of LIFE festival

Attended by the minister of the environment Nikolaus Berlakovich, and regional minister Johann Seitingner, the 20th anniversary of the EU LIFE projects took place on 29/06/2012 in Lässer Au.

Among those contributing to preparations were the Jägersteig kindergarten of Judenburg, BG/BRG Judenburg school, Grosslobming vocational school of agricultural and nutritional science and Simultania Judenburg.



LIFE+ Festival in St. Peter Au

There was a grandiose revival of the LIFE forest festival of 2005 as part of the LIFE+ nature project in St. Peter Au.

Supported by local associations such as Frauenbewegung St. Peter women's group, FF St. Peter fire service and MV Rothenthurm-St. Peter music club, culinary treats were provided.

Entertainment was provided by the so-called 'Sautrogregatta', staged at one of the newly created secondary channels. The little ones were kept busy with a diverse children's programme including a petting zoo, alpacas and bouncy castle of straw along with creative pursuits like pottery, painting and working with felt. There was something for everyone including traditional music, a wheel of fortune and wooden dance floor reminiscent of days of yore. The Sound&Mehr disco organised by St. Peter rural youth group brought the LIFE+ 2014 forest festival to its finale.



■ Weyern

RESPONSIBLE ORGANISATIONS

Coordinating beneficiary

Office of the State Government of Styria – Department 14, water management, resources and sustainability

Associated beneficiaries

Office of the State Government of Styria – Department 13 nature conservation
Upper west Styria building authority

Co-financiers

Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
owner of fishing rights Elisabeth von Pezold - Municipality Pöls-Oberkurzheim - Municipality St. Peter ob Judenburg - owner of fishing rights Thalheim-Knittelfeld - owner of fishing rights Mag. Klemens Hatschek - Municipality Knittelfeld – Municipality St. Marein – Feistritz owner of fishing rights H.M.Z.
Liegenschaftserwerbs-, verwaltungs- u. Handels-GesmbH -
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Further Information

www.murerleben.at

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LIFE murerleben I and II

Under the auspices of the **Natura2000** pan-European programme for the protection of both habitats and species, numerous habitats for animal and plant species along the upper River were placed under protection. By means of the EU funding instrument called **LIFE** for the protection of the environment and nature, between 2003 and 2007 and in the zone from Murau to Knittelfeld, 11 measures were implemented with a view to maintaining or restoring natural habitats along the River Mur. This was succeeded in a second project from 2010 till 2016 involving an additional 7 measures.

A total of around five million euros was invested, with 50 % of this project budget funded by the EU.

A large number of institutions, authorities, municipalities, owners of fishing rights and land joined forces over a period of years in order to make this project possible and to implement it.



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