

## GERMANY

### Biodiversity restoration, preservation & enhancement

#### Location

Brandenburg

#### Programming period

2014 – 2020

#### Priority

P4 – Ecosystems  
management

#### Measure

M07 – Basic services  
& village renewal

#### Funding (EUR)

Total budget 140 578  
EAFRD 105 434  
National/Regional 35 144

#### Project duration

2017 – 2019

#### Project promoter

BUND Brandenburg

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Organising a series of educational events to raise awareness and interest about the environmental functions of the peatlands in Brandenburg.

### Summary

The state of Brandenburg is among the federal states with the most peatlands in Germany. The peatlands ecosystem has many important functions, but its importance is hardly known to the society.

**ALLESKÖNNER MOOR**  
KLIMASCHÜTZER UND ARCHE NOAH DER BIODIVERSITÄT



Peatlands withhold water pollutants, carbon and contribute to the preservation of biodiversity. In recent years, however, the peatlands have undergone fundamental changes. The project aims to educate both adults and children about the peatlands ecosystem and their value. A series of educational events were organised, such as 'Peatland days' for school and kindergarten groups, holiday camps for young people, family weekends, bicycle tours or exhibitions. All these events are intended to create social commitment and raise awareness about this fascinating landscape.

### Results

A total of around 580 pupils benefited from the offer within this target group.

The family weekends reached about 25 families.

About 80 - 100 students were involved in the project with university events.

It is estimated that a total of almost 4000 people were informed about the importance of the peatlands in Brandenburg.

The project was awarded as a project of the UN Decade of Biological Diversity.

### Lessons & Recommendations

- ❑ Peatlands are mostly protected biotope and should therefore not be entered. Thus, for each individual excursion a special permission had to be obtained and this required significant effort.
- ❑ Not all peatlands are suitable for school classes, as the visits should not take too long and some of Brandenburg's infrastructure in rural areas is poorly developed, making it difficult to reach peatlands by public transport.
- ❑ The project holders consider that the information brochures should be created right at the beginning of the project so that they can always be presented as information material during the individual events.

## Context

Peatlands as an ecosystem have many important functions. Peatlands protect against flooding and they also withhold harmful substances, thus producing clean drinking water. In addition, they are particularly important for the climate, since they absorb and store several greenhouse gas emissions. Today, the remaining swamps are considered the last wilderness areas. They are valuable biotopes supporting rare habitats for many specially adapted animal and plant species and thus contribute to the conservation of biodiversity.

Brandenburg is one of the richest peatland areas in Germany. However, the peatlands have undergone fundamental changes as a result of agriculture and far-reaching drainage measures. Lowland sites that were once characterised by water surplus, are now experiencing water shortages. As a result, currently only 7000 hectares of Brandenburg's peatlands are sufficiently supplied with water. At present, only 10 percent of Brandenburg's peatlands are in a near-natural state. When peatlands are destroyed due to water shortages then greenhouse gasses are released. Another consequence is that many animal and plant species disappear as well.

These important functions of the peatlands and the significance of their unique habitats are hardly known to society. For this reason, there is also a lack of knowledge about the above-mentioned serious changes to the peatlands and the need to counteract them.

## Objectives

The main objectives of the project include:

- demonstrating the value of wetlands for ecology, climate and the landscape
- raising public awareness and interest in the survival strategies and biodiversity of peatland plants and animals
- Pointing out the importance of peatlands for climate protection

In the long term the project aims to:

- ensure public awareness and commitment to the protection of these ecosystems
- promote sustainable development models for these areas
- show the possibilities to shape the future of the environment and society responsibly.

## Activities

The project supported organising 54 educational events spread over its three year duration. These event aimed to demonstrate to both adults and children the uniqueness of the peatland habitats. The events are diverse addressing different target groups.

Schools and kindergartens can attend the so called "Peatland days". After an introduction, the children can experience on site the peat and typical peatland plants and animals. The children can analyse and examine the peat moss using a microscope. In this framework, pH measurements can also be highly informative, especially for older kids.

In another type of event, kids learn how short films are made. Then try out what they have learned in small groups in front of and behind the camera, focusing on peatlands as a theme.

The focus in both the above types of events is on the method of discovering and learning, in which the children have the opportunity to conduct particularly targeted research. The events also aim to make the distinction between sustainable and non-sustainable actions concerning the peatlands. Thanks to the support of the project, these events can be offered free of charge.



Families can also go on a peatland exploration in the "Schlaubetal" and take a closer look at the wetland. In addition to the various animal and plant species that live there, such as dragonflies, grass frogs and ring snakes, visitors can also explore alder quarries, stream springs, beech forests and boiler marshland. They can do the quaking bog swing and explore the rare and soft peat moss grass barefoot. To relax from the hike, it is possible to go into the water at the "Ziskensee" bathing area and learn more about the creation and the different types of peatland. The family weekend offers both parents and children the opportunity to get to know the peatland and its significance, in an interesting and interactive way.

Furthermore, there are holiday camps for young people and bicycle tours combined with knowledge transfer and exhibitions, so that there is something for everyone.

For people who would like to get involved on a long-term basis, there is the possibility to become a peatland sponsor. Participants are assigned to regularly monitor the peatlands and provide data that are necessary to protect them. Experience and knowledge can thus be shared in the sense of a generational network.

The media support and use of various information channels is also be taken into account. The project uses social media, the association's website, newsletters, flyers. As part of the project a range of other promotional material will be produced including a brochure for young people, a travelling exhibition and an animated film clip about the project. This kind of communication is necessary to advance the education of the population and to demonstrate the possibilities for peatland protection to the broader public.

### Main Results

A total of around 580 pupils benefited from the offer within this target group.

The family weekends reached about 25 families.

About 80 - 100 students were involved in the project with university events.

The "expert days", "information events", "bike tours" and the development of peatlands sponsorship, and regular meetings at "peatland days", informed different people, such as the target group "multiplicators" and "seniors". Through the intensive public relations work on the homepage, as well as social media (e.g. Facebook) and press releases, more people could be reached. It is estimated that a total of almost 4 000 people were informed about the importance of the peatlands in Brandenburg.

The project was awarded as a project of the UN Decade of Biological Diversity. Furthermore, in March 2019, the project was selected as "Project of the Month" in the state of Brandenburg.



### Key lessons

Peatlands are mostly protected biotope and should therefore not be entered. Thus for each individual excursion a special permission had to be obtained and this required significant effort. Not only the nature conservation authority was thus involved, but also foresters, as most Brandenburg peatlands are "forest peatlands".

Not all peatlands are suitable for school classes, as the visits should not take too long and Brandenburg's infrastructure in some rural areas is poorly developed, making it difficult to reach peatlands by public transport.

Peatland excursions are not the same all year round. The most interesting months are for example, April and May, where wool grass and the peatland frog can be seen.

Cooperation with other Brandenburg nature conservation organisations has worked very well. For example, the nature conservation fund had published a well made story for children, including a participatory booklet about "Lilly in the land of mires". This cooperation/connections should be maintained beyond the project in order to optimally shape environmental protection.

The project holders consider that the information brochures should be created right at the beginning of the project so that they can always be presented as information material during the individual events.

### Additional sources of information

[https://mlul.brandenburg.de/cms/media.php/lbm1.a.3310.de/Moorschutz\\_in\\_Brandenburg.pdf](https://mlul.brandenburg.de/cms/media.php/lbm1.a.3310.de/Moorschutz_in_Brandenburg.pdf)

<https://eler.brandenburg.de/eler/de/start/veroeffentlichungen/projekte-des-monats/2019/maerz-2019/>

[www.undekade-biologischevielfalt.de/projekte/aktuelle-projekte-beitraege/detail/projekt-details/show/Wettbewerb/2397/](http://www.undekade-biologischevielfalt.de/projekte/aktuelle-projekte-beitraege/detail/projekt-details/show/Wettbewerb/2397/)

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