



PROJECT INFORMATION

State as at project end: May 2011

Conference on “Wetlands for Clear Water” – Use of wetlands for reducing nutrient input into the Baltic Sea



One of the stations of the excursion: Restored natural wetland. Photo: T. Schaefer

Background

The high concentration of nutrients has been a central environmental problem of the Baltic Sea for decades. The nutrients stem mainly from agriculture and are carried by streams and rivers into the sea. To date, progress made in implementing effective countermeasures in environmental and agricultural policies is slow. On the contrary, the intensification of agriculture in many Baltic Sea littoral states threatens to aggravate the problem. The "Clear Water" target by the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan summarizes the nutrient reduction goals programmatically.

Natural wetlands in the Baltic Sea catchment area could play an important role for the retention of nutrients. However, due to drainage and inappropriate cultivation there are many wetlands that release large amounts of nutrients and greenhouse gases.

Project

At the international "Wetlands for Clear Water" conference on 24th March 2011, 45 speakers and participants from seven countries came together to discuss the experiences obtained in wetland/marshland projects with regards to the nutrient budget. The conference was attended by research organizations, environmental groups and administrative bodies from Germany, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Sweden and Turkey. The excursion that followed on 25th March 2011 visited environmental conservation projects in the Peene and Trebel valley. The presented projects indicate that re-irrigation, appropriate cultivation or the targeted creation of marshlands/wetlands in agricultural landscapes (e.g. Sweden) can substantially contribute to protecting the Baltic Sea from excessive nutrient discharges. The intensive exchange and the conclusions published in a project newsletter should support participants in particular from Germany, Poland and the Baltic States in promoting this approach in the further implementation of the Water Framework Directive, the Marine Strategy Framework Directive as well as the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

- Funding: Advisory Assistance Programme of the German Federal Ministry for the Environment
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- Country: Germany/Baltic Sea Region
- Duration: 12/2010 – 05/2011
- Project management: Federal Environment Agency
- Project partners Germany: GRÜNE LIGA e.V., www.wrl-info.de and www.gruenliga.de