

Wetland Restoration and Management Conference



Fyn County, Denmark
19th – 21st April 2006

Conference report
with conclusions and recommendations



Fyns Amt



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PREFACE

Introduction

During April 19th to 21st 2006 Fyn County, Denmark, hosted a conference concerning the use of EU's LIFE Nature program and the EU Agro-Environmental Scheme for wetland restoration and conservation of wet NATURA 2000 areas. The conference was held in Svendborg on Fyn. The conference included 22 oral presentations and 10 poster contributions. In addition, four NATURA 2000 sites were visited on a field excursion, including oral presentations at the project sites. The conference was attended by 78 primarily managers representing 11 countries across Europe.

The conference was based on two LIFE-Nature projects hosted by Fyn County. That is the IMAGE project (Improving status of the coastal lagoon Tryggelev Nor, Denmark - LIFE2002NAT/DK/8588) and the REGAIN project (Regional Actions to Improve Nature in River Odense and Odense Fjord – LIFE04NAT/DK/000022). A conference and workshop event is part of both project documents and both projects consider wetland restoration as a tool to benefit NATURA 2000 values and to counteract eutrophication of coastal waters.

Both LIFE projects use a broad range of means to reach the project goals. The means concern landowner negotiations, economic compensation, land consolidation procedures, the EU Agro-environmental scheme and other tools which must come into force to secure project success. Using these means Fyn County has with great success carried out wetland restoration by entering voluntary agreements with the involved landowners. To measure the environmental effect a monitoring program is attached to the projects.

The focus of the LIFE projects is a coastal lagoon system (Tryggelev Nor) and a lowland river system (River Odense). In both projects a key measure is large scale freshwater wetland restoration to benefit downstream surface waters designated as NATURA 2000 areas. Another key measure is to create new NATURA 2000 areas in the agricultural landscape.

Conference purpose and aim

The purpose of the conference was to exchange experiences about wetland restoration for eutrophication management and for the contribution to a favourable conservation status of NATURA 2000 areas. Another purpose was to discuss how EU's Agro-Environmental Scheme can be promoted and adjusted to be a more targeted tool in nature conservation and for the long term maintenance of semi-natural wet habitats in the NATURA 2000 network.

One aim of the conference was to provide a number of keynote lectures on topics related to the LIFE-Nature program, to the EU Agro-Environmental Scheme and to land consolidation and economic compensation to landowners. The keynote abstracts presented in this report provide insight into current management practice within this field and expectations to the future.

A second aim of the conference was to perform workshop sessions as a forum for discussions among nature managers in relation to the following topics:

- Different ways to restore wetlands, means and effects. Monitoring of restored wetlands.
- Choice of procedure for wetland restoration. Negotiations with stakeholders and land consolidation procedure.
- Agro-Environmental Scheme: Targeted efforts for nature management.



- The Agro-Environmental Scheme and the LIFE Nature program seen from an economic and practical agricultural point of view.

Abstracts from workshop presentations are provided in this report. Moreover, the conference report includes conclusions and recommendations from each of the four workshop sessions. The conclusions and recommendations take their starting point in the workshop titles and in an additional question, which the speakers considered in their presentation. The conclusions and recommendations should be seen as an input to the ongoing review of the agricultural policies and the task was performed during the conference by four moderators: Dr. Brian Kronvang (Denmark), Director Torben Nielsen (Denmark), Project Manager Annita Svendsen (Denmark), Research Scientist Erling Andersen (Denmark). Project Manager Ann Fuglsang (Denmark) was moderator of the plenary session. The moderators have reviewed the conference report as well as The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.

Many people have contributed to the arrangement of this conference and the production of this report. Mr. Flemming M. Mouritsen was chairman on the conference and Mrs Elisabeth O. Sørensen, Mrs. Mette Baadegaard Larsen, Mrs. Katrine Juul Larsen, Mr. Boris Schønfeldt, and a number of other Fyn County staff facilitated the smooth running of the conference. Field excursions were arranged by Mr. Søren F. Hansen (The Danish Bird Protection Foundation) and Mr. Lars Bangsgaard and Mr. Claus Paludan (Fyn County).

The editors, Odense, Denmark, June 2006

Ann Fuglsang
Elisabeth O. Sørensen
Claus Paludan



Conference program

Wednesday 19th April

Poster session

Thursday 20th April

Keynote speakers

Welcome / Chief Executive Director Jørgen Dan Petersen – Fyn County.

The new LIFE+ Nature instrument and perspectives in relation to its application in Denmark / Deputy Director general Jens Peter Simonsen – The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

Restoring and maintaining the nature values in Europe through LIFE / LIFE Nature Coordinator Bent Jepsen – Astrale.

Examples on LIFE Nature Projects benefiting terrestrial and aquatic nature / Desk Officer for LIFE Olaf G. Christiani – The Danish Forest and Nature Agency.

Agri-Environmental Scheme – Examples of different designs and employments across Europe / Nils Lagerkvist – Swedish Board of Agriculture.

Agri-Environmental Scheme – Actual and future measures in Denmark / Poul Hoffmann – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.

Aspects of the management of nature within and outside designated NATURA 2000 areas / Christian Tønnesen – Fyn County.

Danish tools to implement larger nature restoration projects – Land consolidation and economic compensation to landowners / Lars Grumstrup – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.

Workshop sessions

Session 1: **Different ways to restore wetlands, means and effects. Monitoring of restored wetlands** with contributions from:

- Brian Kronvang and Carl Chr. Hoffmann (DK) – National Environmental Research Institute.
- Hauke Drews (D) – Stiftung Naturschutz Schleswig-Holstein.
- Inga Racinska (LV) – Latvian Fund for Nature.

Session 2: **Choice of procedure for wetland restoration. Negotiations with stakeholders and land consolidation procedure** with contributions from:

- Torben Nielsen (DK) – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.
- Egbert H. Beens (NL) – Staatsbosbeheer.
- Janis Kuze (LV) – Kemer National Park.



Session 3: Agro-Environmental Scheme: Targeted efforts for nature management with contributions from:

- Annita Svendsen (DK) – Fyn County
- Claire McKeever (GB) – The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.
- Henrik Wejdling (DK) – Danish Ornithological Society.
- Leif Bisschop-Larsen (DK) – Fyn County.

Session 4: The Agro-Environmental Scheme and the LIFE Nature program seen from an economic and practical agricultural point of view with contributions from:

- Erling Andersen (DK) – The Royal Veterinary and Agricultural University.
- Poul Hoffmann (DK) – The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business.
- Irene Wiborg (DK) – Danish Agricultural Advisory Service.
- Marika Kose (EE) – Estonian Ornithological Society.

Friday 21st April

Excursion to the LIFE-IMAGE project sites at Nørreballe Nor and Tryggelev Nor and to the LIFE-REGAIN project sites at River Odense.



Abstracts

Keynote speakers

The new EU LIFE+ regulation – perspectives and options

by Jens Peter Simonsen, The Danish Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark

From January 2007 the new LIFE+ regulation comes into force. It replaces the existing LIFE regulation and a few other smaller instruments for support to NGOs, forest monitoring and green urban initiatives. The new LIFE+ regulation has been intensely discussed and negotiated during the last year and is now in its final stages. The regulation is expected to have budget of approximately 1.8 billion Euros.

There are features and structures in the new LIFE+ that are both challenging and interesting. One major change is that 80% of the total budget is to be delegated to the management of the member states. The remaining about 20% of the total budget will be managed by the Commission. Member states must develop individual annual programmes to prioritize and guide their delegated management and they must to set up administrative units to run the activities.

The size of the budget allocations to the member states will be defined by a number of criteria, which has been negotiated at length. The criteria take point of departure in the countries population sizes, areas of Nature 2000 sites etc.

Denmark is expected to receive about 40-55 million DKR annually for its national programme. Not much less than 40% of the budget delegated to the member states must be spent on nature and biodiversity. Co-financing of activities from LIFE+ will in most cases be up 50% of project costs but in terms of nature and biodiversity the EU co-financing can be up to 70 %.

Measures that may be supported are amongst others: Studies, Surveys, Scenario building, Public awareness campaigns, Site and species management, including ecological coherence of the Nature 2000 network, Species and habitats conservation action plans, Purchase of land to maintain or restore integrity of Natura 2000 sites.

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Restoring and maintaining the nature values in Europe through LIFE

by Bent Søholm Jepsen, Astrale GEIE, LIFE External Monitoring Team, LIFE Nature Coordinator.

The EU LIFE financial instrument was created in 1992 to support pilot actions in implementation and development of the EU environmental policy. One of the three branches of the LIFE program, LIFE Nature is specially dedicated to the implementation of the EU Birds and Habitats directives, the fundamental EU legislation for the conservation of nature in Europe. The two directives are the main background for establishing of the European network of protected areas, known simply as the Natura 2000 network. Presently LIFE Nature projects are ongoing in the 25 EU member states and Romania. The amount of co-financing received from LIFE Nature is typically between 50 and 75 % of the total budget.



A large part of the ongoing and completed LIFE nature projects are concerning restoration and management of wetlands. A search of the LIFE project database will show more than 130 such projects, representing a wide range of wetland types and geographical coverage. The aim of the projects are restoring or maintaining a favourable conservation status for EU priority habitats and species, including specially protected areas for birds.

Projects related to restoration of wetlands will often include increasing of surface water levels, and contain elements of land purchase, construction works including dams and other measures, which require substantial funding. Activities targeting local stakeholders are an important element, as restoration may influence the conditions for local users and their active support and engagement may be crucial for a long-term management of the areas.

In many cases agro-environmental measures have been used parallel to the activities funded by LIFE Nature to ensure long term, recurring management of semi-natural areas inside wetlands.

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Examples of LIFE Nature projects benefiting terrestrial and aquatic nature

by Olaf G. Christiani, Desk Officer for LIFE, Danish Forest and Nature Agency, Denmark

The challenges posed to Denmark from the Habitats and Bird Directives are large. Amongst other things we have to work to achieve a favourable conservation status in the Danish part of the Natura 2000 network. Two examples are given on how LIFE-Nature assists in nature restoration and management of Danish Natura 2000 sites:

Urgent actions for the endangered Houting (*Coregonus oxyrhynchus*)

The project covers four rivers in the south western part of Jutland flowing into the Wadden Sea. It addresses the main problems of the habitat quality for this species which is: blocking of migration, lack of nursery areas for fry, fry mortality in fish farms and non-viable local populations.

The actions of the project will involve removal of weirs and dams at 13 points giving access to 117 km of river habitat for the Houting as well as other fish species including salmon. Nursery areas for the fry will be created in a total of 469 ha in the lower parts of the river systems. Spawning grounds will be re-established by restoration of 28 km of river. Restocking will take place in respect of the genetic variation.

Restoration of Dry Grasslands in Denmark

This project will at eleven sites around the country restore a favourable conservation status for the three dry grassland habitat types present in Denmark. The major threats addressed are: Lack of appropriate grazing regimes, overgrowth with bushes and trees, fragmentation of the areas. The project will result in reestablishment of 178 ha of dry grassland from a.o. removal of 65 ha of plantations, removal of tree and bush encroachment more than 1000 ha, introduction of grazing regime on 600 ha and the maintenance by grazing of a total of 1.780 ha.

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Establishment and Restoration of Wetlands in the Swedish Agri-Environmental Scheme

by Nils Lagerkvist, Swedish Board of Agriculture, S-551 82 Jönköping, Sweden

In the past decades, Sweden has paid 26 million euro to Swedish farmers who re-establish wetlands on agricultural land. Since 1990, about 7.600 hectares wetland have been re-established, funded by the Swedish government and the European Union. The objective is to increase the area of wetland in order to increase biodiversity and reduce eutrophication caused by agriculture.

One of the measures in the Swedish Agri-Environmental Scheme 2000-2006 is a *project aid for the establishment of wetlands and ponds*. Landowners and farmers can receive up to 90 percent of the investment cost for creating the wetland. After the wetland is completed the beneficiary has to join a commitment for management of the wetland (Agri-environmental measure). The aid is 325 euro per hectare and year and is based on maintenance cost and alternative use of the land. The commitment period is ten years, with the option of adding another ten years.

Sweden is far from reaching the environmental target of establishment and restoration of 12 000 hectares of wetlands in 2000-2010. In 2005, Sweden adopted a national strategy for wetlands (National strategy for thriving wetlands), including measures to increase participation and the quality of the wetlands that are established or restored. An overview of the national strategy of establishment and restoration is provided by the *wetland chain* (Figure 1). This procedure emphasises strategic planning, which facilitates the balancing of various interests, and makes it possible to direct measures to areas where optimal gain can be achieved. The *wetland chain* also makes it possible to adopt a comprehensive approach which takes ecological, water-conservation and cultural heritage aspects into account, along with needs for land and water use and recreation.

The measures in the *wetland chain* will mainly be funded by the Swedish government. The Swedish Agri-Environmental Scheme 2007-2013 will, if possible, be adjusted to fit this procedure and mainly support elements *Flexible financial support* and *Long-term sustainable wetlands*.

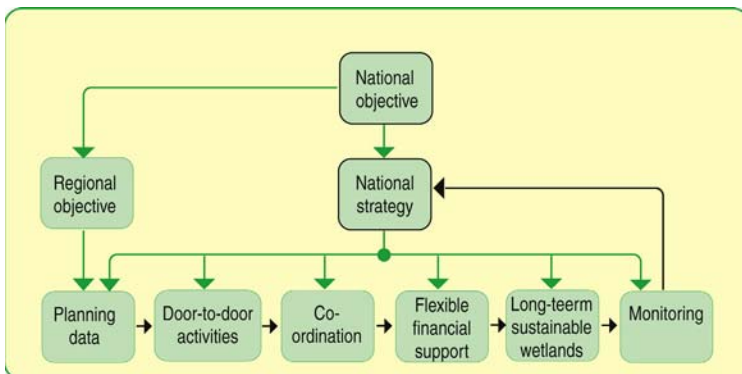


Figure 1. Wetland chain. In order to reach the targets for total area and high quality of restored and established wetlands, all links in the chain need to be developed and available.

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Agri-Environmental Scheme – Actual and future measures in Denmark

by Poul Hoffmann, The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agri Business, Denmark

The AE measures in the Danish rural development program 2000-2006 comprise:

- Protection of the aquatic environment and nature
 - 40 % reduction in nitrogen fertiliser
 - Catch crops
 - Extensive grassland
 - Maintaining grassland
 - Converting arable land to grassland
 - Supplementary mowing, clearing, grazing or hay harvesting, grazing especially valuable natural areas
- Establishment and maintenance of wetlands
- Extensive zones along watercourses, lakes and landscape elements
- Set-aside zones along watercourses and lakes
- Green accounts
- Nitrogen contracts
- Extensive production on agricultural land
- Conversion to organic farming
- Organic farming.

AE payments represent more than 70 % of the total EU and public financial contribution in the programme.

The future design of the AE scheme in the Danish rural development programme for 2007-2013 is not yet known. Discussions on the content of the programme are in progress. At least 25 % of the financial EU contribution to the programme for 2007-2013 shall be reserved for Axis 2. Denmark must beforehand reserve more than 35 % of the Community contribution to AE commitments already made.

According to a recent manifestation from the Minister for food, agriculture and fisheries, the AE scheme shall have a significantly lesser role in the next programme. It may however be anticipated that the measure for establishment of wetlands and the measure for establishment of set-aside zones along watercourses and lakes will be continued as part of the fulfilment of the Danish Aquatic Environmental Plan III (AEPIII). According to AEPIII the wetland measure should support a reduction in nitrogen leakage of 400 tonnes of nitrogen from 2005 to 2009 and a reduction in phosphorous leakage. The AEP-plans have contributed to the Danish implementation of the EU Nitrate Directive.

The rural development programme 2007-2013 shall contain the following 4 axes: Improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry; improving the environment and the country side by supporting land management; improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification; Leader. Environmentally sustainable management of agricultural land and nature is the focus of axis 2 and partly 3 with possibilities for payments linked to the Natura 2000 and Water Framework directives and drawing-up of protection and management plans.

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Aspects of the management of nature within and outside designated NATURA 2000 areas

by Christian Tønnesen – Fyn County, Denmark

In Denmark open nature areas cover only 8.7 % of the land area. In the period 1940-1992 about 70 % of the former nature area in Fyn County has gone. The remaining areas are now protected against further decline by The Law of Nature Protection.

Also quality of open nature areas in Denmark has reduced dramatically during the last decades – species of animals and plants which earlier were quite common in the landscape have now become rare. Among the explanations are:

- The remaining nature areas have become more isolated and fragmented
- Poor management, insufficient grazing/moving of the remaining nature areas
- Wetland degradation due to drainage
- Surplus of nutrients from atmospheric deposition or the use of fertilizer

Financial support by the Agri-Environmental Scheme has especially since 1996 been an important instrument for nature management in Denmark. In Fyn County agreements have been made in about 3700 ha of protected nature areas - about 26 % of the calculated need for management. The scheme has undergone several changes during the years - for example in 2004 and 2005 financial support has been restricted to NATURA 2000 areas and only for 5 years. This means that agreements in about 3800 ha (cultivated land and nature areas) outside NATURA 2000 areas can not be prolonged (about 50 % of the agreements).

Strategy to make the Agri-Environmental Scheme more sufficient for nature management:

- Focus on promoting biodiversity
- Make a priority:
 1. Secure and improve existing valuable nature areas
 2. Restore former valuable nature areas
 3. Create new nature areas on cultivated land
- Agreements/management contracts should last for at least 20 years
- Cover all expenses related to full fill the criteria for best management according to the species and/or nature type, you want to improve.
- Nature need continuity – the scheme should not be changed almost every year

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The tools used when implementing larger land-consuming nature restoration – and wet land projects in Denmark

by Lars Grumstrup, The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business, Denmark

When implementing land-consuming nature restoration – and wetland projects in Denmark, the primary tool for handling property-rights is Land Consolidation in combination with Land Banking.

All projects are based on the principle of voluntary participation and all transactions of land exchange within the project area happen as individual agreements on selling and buying between the land owners.

Husbandry in Denmark requires certain farm-sizes – not only for the production of fodder/forage - but also in order meet the requirements in the Danish legislation about harmony between the affiliated productions of slurry and land.

Due to these rules it is not possible for the farmer to participate in a land consuming project without receiving the equivalent amount of substitute land, unless he decides to cut down on the production.

If landowners wish to buy substitute land outside the project area, the preferred model is for the landowner to accept a compensation for the reduction in value of his land due to the implementation of the project. Alternatively the landowner can decide to sell project-land. The proceeds can then be used when buying substitute land.

Compensation based on continuous payments (MVJ) usually is not considered to be an option. This is – amongst other things – due to the fact that continuous payments over a period of - for example - 20 years can not be used as a down payment for substitute land. Furthermore the landowners do not wish to bind themselves and/or their production for such a long period of time.

Land banking in connection with the 8 -9,000 ha of wetland, which is planned under the The Water Environmental Protection Program II, is created under The Land Consolidation and Land Acquisition Act.

The Land Consolidation Division is the implementing actor of the law. This enables the division to actively purchase land for specific purposes. Thus the division can, contrary to all other state agencies in Denmark, purchase land on the free market without approval from any financial committee. This of course is very important when operating on the free market, as sales often require very quick decisions.

The purchase of land is financed through the ordinary project financing. As the individual project progresses, substitute land is sold of to the participants and the funds go back into the project financing.

From 1998 and up till now 32 land consolidations programs have been implemented, creating 4.996 ha of wetlands, lakes etc. Land banking has created 4.572 ha of substitute land at a total value of 415.696.302 DKR.

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Workshop conclusions and recommendations Summary

The conference workshop was based on four parallel sessions with different issues in relation to wetland restoration and the use of EU's Agri-environmental Scheme. On the following pages the conclusions and recommendations from each session are presented together with abstracts of the workshop contributions. Below, the editors, have highlighted those conclusions and recommendations to which most importance were attached during the plenary session.

- **Holistic point of view**
Wetlands should be restored from a holistic point of view considering the most important aspects with regard to biodiversity, ability to remove nutrients, recreational/scenic conditions etc. First of all nature should be the load-bearing panel.
- **Management of overgrown nature both inside and outside Habitat areas**
The efforts to manage overgrown nature areas by grazing/moving and clear cutting should be given higher priority inside as well as outside designated EU Habitat areas (Nature 2000 areas). The support should be high enough to buy animals for nature management for instance.
- **Permanent or long termed agreements**
The Agri-Environmental Scheme should be long termed agreements for minimum 20 years or permanent, as regards continuity in conservation and improvement of nature conditions. It has been pointed out from several participants that it should be possible to revise the agreements after for instance 5 years.
- **Water Framework Directive and Habitat Directive**
Planning for future wetlands should have a take-off in the whole catchment and to meet the future work with implementation of the Water Frame Work Directive (for surface water and ground water) and the Habitat Directive (for Nature) as well.
- **Strategic plans**
Involvement of the landowners on an early stage of the administrative process should take place by making strategic plans for their whole property. In that way the landowner, the farmer's advisor and the authority can agree on the goals for a nature and environmental friendly agreement.
- **Monitoring**
Targeted monitoring within a longer period is necessary to prove the effect of the projects and the agreements. This to ensure edification of knowledge and to show the beneficial effect of the effort.
- **Financing**
New ways of financing the future work to improve conditions for nature and water environment are to be developed.



Workshop conclusions and recommendations

Danish summary

Konferencens workshop var baseret på fire parallelle session med forskellige emner relateret til restaurering af vådområder og brugen af Miljøvenlige Jordbrugsforanstaltninger (MVJ). På de følgende sider præsenteres konklusioner og anbefalinger tilknyttet emnet på hver session samt resume af mundtlige indlæg. Nedenfor på denne side har redaktørerne fremhævet de bærende konklusioner og anbefalinger som de fremkom ved plenum.

- **Helhedssyn**

Genskabelse af vådområder bør ske ud fra et helhedssyn, hvor de vigtigste aspekter som hensynet til biologisk mangfoldighed, evne til fjernelse af næringsstoffer, rekreative/landskabelige forhold mm. tages i betragtning. Det er først og fremmest naturelementet, der bør være det bærende.

- **Tilgroede naturarealer skal plejes både indenfor og udenfor habitat områder**

Indsatsen for pleje og rydning af tilgroede naturarealer bør styrkes. Det gælder såvel indenfor som udenfor udpegede EF Habitatområder. Finansieringen bør være tilstrækkelig høj til også at sikre f.eks. køb af dyr til naturpleje.

- **Langsigtede eller permanente aftaler**

Aftaler om tilskud til miljøvenligt jordbrug bør være langsigtede, minimum 20 år eller permanente, af hensyn til kontinuitet i beskyttelse og forbedring af naturforhold. Det er påpeget fra flere sider, at der bør være mulighed for revurdering af aftalerne efter f.eks. 5 år.

- **Vandrammedirektivet og habitatdirektivet**

Planlægning af fremtidige vådområder bør ske med afsæt i hele vandløbsoplande og tilgodese det kommende arbejde med implementering af såvel Vandrammedirektivet (overfladevand og grundvand) som Habitatdirektivet (natur).

- **Strategisk planlægning**

Involvering af jordbrugere på et tidligt tidspunkt i forvaltningsforløbet bør ske ved at udarbejde en strategisk plan for hele ejendommen. Jordbrugeren, jordbrugskonsulenten og myndighederne kan derved opnå enighed om målene for en natur- og miljøvenlig aftale.

- **Overvågning**

Måltrettet overvågning over en længere periode bør foretages for at dokumentere effekten af projekter og indgåede aftaler. Dette kan sikre vidensopbygning og vise nyttevirkningen af indsatsen.

- **Finansiering**

Der bør arbejdes med udvikling af nye finansieringsformer til brug for det fremtidige arbejde med forbedring af forholdene for natur og vandmiljø.



Conclusions and recommendations

Workshop session 1

Different ways to restore wetlands, means and effects. Monitoring of restored wetlands

Question to be considered on the workshop: How can the restoration of wetlands take into consideration interests in relation to nature values, nitrogen retention and socio-economic aspects?

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. Protect existing wetlands by law.

How: Protect and enhance (restore) existing wetlands (wet meadows, fens bogs, mires etc.) in all river systems.

Why: Wetlands have suffered from drainage and reclamation for centuries and a very large fraction of the natural wetlands has been lost. Therefore, it is important first of all to protect and restore the remaining wetlands as they will form the biological basis for the development of new restored wetlands.

2. Wetland management should be seen in a regional perspective.

How: The need for wetland management and restoration should take the actual extension of wetlands across Europe into consideration.

Why: In Eastern Europe the extension of natural wetlands is relatively high but management is highly needed to maintain the natural values of these wetlands. In Western Europe nearly no natural wetlands are left and in this region therefore focus should also be on restoring wetlands.

3. Management and restoration of wetlands must occur on a holistic basis.

How: A holistic point of view clarifying all interests (e.g. biodiversity, nutrients, landowners, society interests, and costs) is very important in management and restoration of wetlands. However, the basis should be to secure natural hydrology in wetlands and biodiversity should be the load-bearing panel. This does not exclude e.g. nitrogen retention to be an important side benefit.

Why: Wetlands are characterized by their hydrology and the hydrology forms the basis for wetland functioning. Thereafter all interests should be analyzed, the most important one being the natural values and to analyze the possibilities for promoting these values. Other benefits can be nutrient retention but promotion of these benefits must not occur at the expense of biodiversity. To combine several tasks in the same project gives synergetic effects in the most cost efficient way. To use all possibilities to co-finance and make use of the opportunities to build upon the process for new project changes. To ensure making the optimal solution taking all aspects into consideration.



4. **Large and small scale projects go hand in hand.**

How: Large and small scale projects can go hand in hand in an entire catchment perspective. Small wetland projects can be localized upstream for protection of single species or nutrient retention near source. In contrast, large scale projects can be localized downstream in the wide floodplain with more diverse nature types and a more diffuse nutrient loading (e.g. from rivers).

Why: The size of restored wetlands depends on their location within the catchment. In upstream areas the topography is a concurrent factor for restoring small wetlands. Small wetlands are more efficient nitrogen filters than large wetlands and small wetlands can be localized strategically in upstream areas for nutrient retention near the source. In downstream areas small wetlands can act as hot spots for nitrate transformation within a huge coherent wetland area.

5. **The legislative basis for wetland restoration is the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive.**

How: Planning should take place for wetland restoration in all river systems taking into consideration both the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Habitats Directive (HD) demands. In Denmark the planning phase must be ended in 2009. With respect to the WFD action plans should be carried through no later than 2015. Although no strict deadline is set for carrying out the HD the two directives should be planned for as one entity.

Why: Both the WFD and the HD give very detailed guidelines for obtaining a good ecological state / favourable conservation status of rivers and HD nature types. Although far from all wetlands are designated according to the HD the management and restoration of these wetlands should occur according to the directive and to avoid second class nature.

6. **Nature can do some of the restoration work it self.**

How: Let nature do more of the job itself by e.g. stopping river maintenance and allow the water table in floodplains to rise. The society just have to be patient (>> 10 years) and the society will save economic resources which can be reallocated to the management of existing wetlands and other nature projects.

Why: The political system often expects a rather quick response to legislative initiatives which involves drastic construction works. Large scale construction works are expensive to carry out and they imply a lot of disturbances to the environment. To avoid this and to save economic resources for other nature management activities river maintenance simply could be stopped.

7. **Restored wetlands should be monitored.**

How: Focused and longer term monitoring is important to learn from experience and to prove for the society what was gained by the project. The most important messages should be available in a handbook.

Why: Knowledge about the mechanisms determining the outcome of a project is the key to be able to carry out the next project even better.



8. Not all wetlands should be managed.

How: Management of natural and restored wetlands is important but in some cases we maybe can skip management in around half of the cases (forest swamps; raised bogs). If the aerial deposition of nutrients can be reduced the need for management will also be reduced.

Why: Many natural wetlands become overgrown with unwanted vegetation due to abandonment of grazing and mowing. The same will happen to restored wetlands without management. For those wetlands which are characterized by being light open continued management is important. However, preservation of some wetlands does not require management – e.g. forest swamps, raised bogs and fens with sedges.

9. An efficient economic framework for wetland restoration must be established.

How: Funding of nature restoration (among this wetlands) could be solved using article 9 in the WFD to let the consumer/emitter of water pay a fee per mm drainage water lost (half a cent pr. m³). If say a farmer then want to stop drainage he will have support from the funds for restoration.

Why: In the present situation the economic resources for wetland restoration is insufficient for the landowners to consider the subsidies as attractive.

Abstracts of presentations in workshop session 1

Wetland restoration – How can it be optimized?

by Brian Kronvang and Carl Chr. Hoffmann, National Environmental Research Institute, Denmark

Wetland restoration has been conducted in Denmark since the mid 1980'ies starting with the very first projects where smaller streams were allowed to regain their sinuous course by digging a new meandering river channel. Mostly, the river cross sectional area was reduced and the river bed elevated creating a higher stage in the river thereby creating more floodings of the adjacent floodplain. More than 34 of this type of projects were undertaken along shorter or longer reaches all over Denmark during the period 1985-1999. When the Danish Parliament in 1998 adopted the Second Action Plan on the Aquatic Environment wetland restoration was implemented as an active mitigation measure with the purpose of reducing the nitrogen pollution of surface waters. Since 1998, more than 50 projects and 3000 ha of wetlands have been recreated and approximately 30 projects with an area of 3500 ha are in the phase of being carried out (within the next two years). In many cases restoration involved remeandering of the river transforming a straightened and channelised river channel to a new meandering course. The most prominent of these are the river Skjern project where the dikes and the pumping stations were removed, and a “new” river course was excavated which reestablished the old meandering reaches, and re-established the former delta at Ringkøbing Fjord.

This type of projects are, however, very costly to undertake the costs being around 150,000 EURO per kilometre of restored river channel. In the future many Danish farmers will have to give up farming floodplain and riparian areas as the soils have subsided up to 1-2 meters since they were drained 50-100 years ago. Today farmers are not subsidized any more if they wish to drain their



soils, and the EU Water Framework Directive and EU Habitat Directive will not permit a new large scale drainage scheme to be undertaken in Denmark. Moreover, increased pressure has been and will be put on the Danish lowland riparian soils as climate has already changed in Denmark becoming more wet which have given rises to large increases in average annual runoff in Danish rivers during the last 80 years. Climate change predictions foresee this to continue in the future so low-lying riparian soils will unless drained become more and more wet.

The future will bring opportunities for supporting farmers not to farm low-lying riparian soils being vulnerable for both nitrogen and phosphorus losses. Instead of conducting expensive river restoration projects along shorter reaches new wetlands or wet riparian zones could be reinstated along entire river systems simply by giving up river maintenance work (cutting emergent and submerged macrophytes and excavating the river channel) and allowing the cross-sectional area of the channels to reduce and the river bed to increase in elevation. River maintenance work costs annually around 1000 EURO per kilometre river channel and the money could instead be spend on maintaining and improving the floodplains and the riparian areas by disconnecting drains and ditches, planting trees, having animals for grazing in summer, etc.

Large scale restoration projects can then be conducted where the energy of the river is not sufficient for changes in morphology to take place within decades or where raised bogs, lakes or fjords need to be reinstated.

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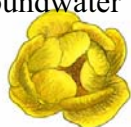
Wetland restoration: A chance for saving our natural heritage

by Hauke Drews, Stiftung Naturschutz Schleswig-Holstein, Germany

Most of the plant and animal species which depend on wetlands are threaten in whole Europe. Therefore several of these species are protected by the FFH- and the bird directive. The member states have the obligation and responsibility to stop the decline and improve the conservation state of these species, especially for amphibians as *Triturus cristatus**, *Bombina bombina**, *Rana arvalis*, *Hyla arborea*, *Pelobates fuscus* and birds as *Botaurus stellaris**, *Porzana porzana**, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Ciconia nigra*, *Ciconia ciconia* and different wader birds.

To secure and improve the conservation state of these species it is necessary to have more wetland habitats in general and more dynamic and variability in wetland hydrology and management. On one hand most wetland-depending plant and animals need a dynamic hydrology in their habitats and a reduced run-off velocity of water from our landscapes. On the other hand the increased run-off velocity of water from or agricultural landscapes is the one of the reasons for eutrophication of the Baltic and the North Sea. By reducing the today draining system of our landscapes back to a natural level, most of the wetland-species will be supported. Some examples will be given from Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.

Due to the circumstance, that in Western Europe est. 80% of the wetlands had been destroyed or heavily modified, wetland restoration will be a long term process. This process will need a permanent financing and organisations, which could full fill this complex task over a long time. Therefore also new financial instruments had to be established by national regulations based on article 12 of the water-framework-directive. Following this a water usage fee had to be established for e.g. groundwater extraction, for cooling water extraction and for using river systems as drain-



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age water dump. The money deriving from such a water fee had to be used to buy land in drained wetlands or to compensate the usage on these sites and restore the natural hydrology. One example will be given from Schleswig-Holstein, Germany.

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Restoration of floodplains in LIFE Floodplain project

by Inga Račinska, Project manager, Latvian Fund for Nature, Latvia

EU LIFE-Nature funded Project “Restoration of Latvian Floodplains for EU priority species and habitats” started in October 2004 and will last until June 2008. It is implemented by Latvian Fund for Nature, in partnership with Nature Protection board, Latvian Ornithological society, North Vidzeme Biosphere reserve and 22 local municipalities. It is co-financed by Latvian Ministry of Environment and UNDP Latvia.

Project is implemented in 16 Natura 2000 sites in Latvia that are most important floodplain territories, not covered by other habitat restoration projects in Latvia.

The total budget of the project is 1 600 000 mil. Euro, significant part of this budget (ca 500 000 Euro) is allocated to support the local farmers in restoration of their lands in floodplains, namely EU habitats *Fennoscandian wooded meadows* 6530*, *Species rich Nardus grasslands* 6230*, *Northern Boreal alluvial meadows* 6450, *Lowland hay meadows* 6510 and *Hydrophilous tall herb fringe communities* 6430.

Habitat restoration is taking place to restore biologically most important and presently abandoned floodplain areas and to ensure subsequent continuous management for the benefit of species of EU and Latvian importance – *Crex crex**, *Aquila pomarina**, *Aquila clanga**, *Gallinago media*, *Osmoderma eremita**

During the project implementation following activities linked to habitat management planning and restoration are taking place:

1. Preparation or upgrade of management plans for 15 project sites
2. Habitat restoration – shrub removal, planned in 980 ha in all project sites
3. Habitat restoration – wooded meadows, planned in 112 ha in 5 project sites
4. Habitat restoration – initial mowing, planned in 2400 ha in all project sites
5. Habitat restoration – controlled burning, planned in 580 ha 14 project sites
6. Education of farmers on EU Agri-Environmental Schemes, seminars and study tours.

All farmers that receive project funding for restoration of their floodplains are obliged to apply for EU Agri-Environmental Schemes to ensure further management of restored lands.

To date, we have contracted works for 1900 ha, in total for ca 200 000 Euro. 120 contracts have been signed with farmers (individual and farm contracts), requiring large amount of person-days to be spent in preparing the contracts, supervising them and communicating with farmers. A lot of effort is put into education of the farmers and explaining the benefits of Agri-Environmental Schemes. Project staff is facing wide range of difficulties, starting from lack of initiative from local farmers and ending with requirements of Rural Development plan that are not favoring maintenance of floodplain meadows. All these difficulties are dealt with, using different tools – education seminars, individual meetings, involvement in development of Rural Development plan for plan-



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ning period 2007 – 2013, analysis of legislation and recommendations for its improvement and others.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Workshop session 2

Choice of procedure for wetland restoration. Negotiations with stakeholders and land consolidation procedure

Question to be considered on the workshop: Which compensation forms are most suitable to compensate stakeholders in a wetland project – advantages and disadvantages?

Discussions in this workshop were based on three concrete examples:

- Traditional agricultural considerations
- National park policy/nature and recreation policy
- Planning policy and urban development

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. It is preferable to keep agreements for nature restoration on a voluntary basis.

How: Attractive tools should be made available through legislation to enable voluntary agreements in nature restoration projects. As an example Denmark has approved a wetland restoration program which meets most of the landowner's demands (full economic compensation, substitute land etc.).

Why: Voluntary agreements ensure local ownership to the project. Compulsory purchase is an efficient method, but in reality most countries will abstain, in some cases due to agricultural policy considerations. It is therefore preferable to keep the agreements on a voluntary basis. The main drawback is that it may delay the projects considerably.

2. State procurement of agricultural land may be very helpful in the nature restoration process.

How: Tools should be available through legislation to enable the state to purchase substitute land and project land to facilitate project progress.

Why: To encounter needs for land from the landowners, the project and to be able to run a land consolidation procedure. It is not necessarily important if the land stays as state-owned land or is transferred to private ownership.



3. **There are different opinions about the impact of the CAP and its subsidies.**
4. **Land consolidation is an essential tool**

How: Legislation has to give the frame for using that tool as authority.

Why: It is possible to change land ownership between many different owners in one procedure, which makes it administratively very simple.

Abstracts of presentations in workshop session 2

Choice of procedure for wetland restoration. Negotiations with stakeholders and land consolidation procedure

by Torben Nielsen, Danish Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business, Denmark

The Danish Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business is an institution under the Danish Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries. The Ministry has a long tradition in supporting land consolidation based on voluntary participation and aiming at improving agricultural structures and thereby improving efficiency. National legislation on land consolidation has therefore existed for many years. The legal procedures are relatively simple and the bureaucracy and costs of multiple transfers of land parcels is much smaller than for ordinary transactions. In 2005 an up-date of the law was passed by Parliament. This confirmed the political support for having this instrument to facilitate spatial development in the open land and it underlined the public awareness of nature conservation and environment aspects as a justification for carrying out land consolidation. At the same time, the principle of voluntary participation was confirmed.

The Directorate for Food, Fisheries and Agro Business has developed capacity in land consolidation in favour of wetland restoration within the framework of two national programmes, VMP II and VMP III. Those two programmes differ in the sense that the compensation to stakeholders/landowners is different: VMP II offers capital grants (once for all compensation) or income loss compensation over 20 years, whereas VMP III only offers income loss compensation over 20 years (EU Agri-Environmental Scheme). Experience from VMP III is limited, as the programme only started at the end of 2005.

During the preparation of the VMP III scheme it was felt that the combination of agro environmental support and the new single area payment would not be sufficient in all cases and it was therefore decided to add the possibility of the state buying certain parts of the wetlands with a view to keeping these areas in public ownership. This facility has not been tested in practice.

The main questions in the light of the Danish experience are:

- Compulsory purchase would facilitate the implementation of projects – but would it ruin the positive attitude of the farming community?
- Capital grants (once for all compensation) have worked well – but the EU will not co-finance and therefore the national interest is limited. There is also a problem in reaching agreement with land owners at a time when land prices tend to increase considerably – how to deal with that?



- The Agri-Environmental Scheme does not go well together with the Single Area Payment (land to be maintained in good agricultural condition) in the case of wetlands – what to do about that?
- The creation of wetlands has mainly been based on collaboration between county and state officials. Could the process be improved by stronger involvement from farmers' unions or other non-governmental organisations?

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Odini polder and Dunduru meadows - two case examples in land consolidation process in Kemeru NP, Latvia

by Janis Kuze, Kemeru National Park, Latvia

Kemeru national park is one of the most diverse and richest wetland areas in Latvia. It was established in 1997 with first management plan elaborated in 2002, since then administration of the park implements EU Life-Nature project "Conservation of wetlands in Kemeru National Park, Latvia" that covers the most relevant actions scheduled by the management plan. Beside many smaller ones there are two large meadow areas — both of them were in need for land consolidation and consequently for the appropriate management. Presentation covers both of those cases. In Dunduru meadows 163.2 ha were bought from the land owners with a purpose to acquire necessary territory for the restoration of river Slampe and to manage the area for the benefit of Corncrake *Crex crex*. Area is now managed using Heck cattle and Konik horses as well as hay cutting. Since 2004 EU subsidies through Agri-Environmental Scheme are used for the managing for the area. Smooth implementing of process was possible mostly due to the small number of land owners' involved (three properties, two land owners).

Another site covered by the presentation is Odinu – Pavasaru polder – 527 ha large meadow territory, an important site for the Corncrakes (up to 40 singing males recorded annually). There are 156 land properties in the polder area and most of the area was under the threat of development (construction) activities. Land owners are not interested in managing their properties for the benefit of nature. Actions taken so far by the KNP are: attempts to include polder as a nature site in development plan developed by local municipality; introducing changes in park's regulations (development of new construction areas restricted within the site, accepted by the Cabinet of Ministers); introducing changes in park's law (increasing of protection level from landscape protection and neutral zone to the nature protection zone). Possible solution for the problem: land change, according to the law "compensations for private land owners for the restriction of economic activities in specially protected nature territories and microreserves" — available from 01.2007.

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Choice of procedure for wetland restoration. Negotiations with stakeholders and land consolidation procedure

by Egbert Beens, Staatsbosbeheer, National Park "de Weerribben", The Netherlands

My name is Egbert Beens, I am working for State forestry service (Staatsbosbeheer) as a site manager- ranger in the national park "the Weerribben". In this workshop I will gladly make a contribution and share the practical experiences, I have gained with my colleague in the national park the Weerribben.



Moreover I will inform you concerning the work such as NNI ambassador for Natura 2000 and the importance of the network for nature and people. Such as the mutual relations between nature administrators in Europe (tinnings) but also how Nature 2000 is a bridge to involve people in the nature.

National park the Weerribben is together with the nature area de Wieden the largest wetland area of West Europe. To improve this area and make connections with other wetlands, the government has developed a plan in which it has been indicated where the connections must come. The so-called ecological network structure (EHS). To realise these it is important that there is a good co-operation between nature administrators and agrarian ground owners and NGO's. The suitable grounds in the plan are sold on voluntary basis against market price. Generally it is the unprofitable agrarian grounds.

The EHS only to reinforce new nature is not sufficient. Moreover it is necessary in existing nature like in the Weerribben to take measures for wetlands systems to preserve. In the Life nature restoration project "repair Trilveen and reedbeds" a plan is made together with local reed cutters. To increase the nature values for many birds and plants species in wetlands.

The measures also give a better income for the reed cutters, because more can be cut. But also visitor's on local boat rent and recreation companies have a profit of this.

Effective implementation of the planned work to reach much consultation goes in advance with local population and reed cutters etc. Creating good public basis and involvement is, a key to, however, succeeding the nature restoration project.

Egbert Beens.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Workshop session 3

Agri-Environmental Scheme: Targeted efforts for nature management

Question to be considered on the workshop: How do we secure nature values in the best possible way in relation to the duration of the Agri-Environmental Scheme within international protected nature areas (NATURA 2000) and outside?

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. Nature needs continuity in management.

How: Agreements/management contracts should be as long lasting as possible. The scheme must come up for review – e.g. every 5 years - to secure fulfilment of the long term goal, both within and outside NATURA 2000 areas.

Why: Continuity is important to natural habitats. A large part of the open natural habitat are situated outside NATURA 2000 areas. Fragmentation of nature can be reduced by nature management in between NATURA 2000 areas. Habitats for threatened and near-threatened species exist outside NATURA 2000 areas. To secure that contracts are successful in the long term, it should be possible to change the obligations in the contract, for example from grazing to hay-harvesting depending on the succession on the area of interest.

2. The Agri Environmental Scheme should be more flexible.

How: Make the AES more flexible: Target the scheme towards species and habitat types, to ensure biodiversity.

Why: If the AES should be a more targeted tool towards fulfilling the demands for the NATURA 2000 areas it has to be more flexible. Today the AES has means to ensure the biodiversity and to protect and to improve the water environment, and its main focus is to decrease the nitrogen loss from the agricultural land. An Agri Environmental Scheme is necessary taking local or even regional considerations into account when planning the management of nature types.

3. Financial support additional to the existing Agri Environmental Scheme.

How: There is a need for additional support for advisory assistance, clearing and fencing (non recurring management).

Why: The AES is a compensation for a loss of income. The AES does not support non recurring management measures. The AES is a fine instrument to pay for the ongoing management. But to start the management of certain nature habitats or for certain species, it can be necessary to support the farmers by paying for fence, or clear cutting wooded vegetation to make the management (grazing and hay-harvesting) possible.



4. **Collect information about the effects of the ongoing management.**

How: Ensure enough resources at the responsible authority to monitor and review the management contracts by visiting the areas.

Why: It's important, that there is an ongoing monitoring of the contracts, both to ensure the quality and the success of the management actions taking places. The monitoring gives also the possibility to make changes in the management contracts, if the management isn't providing the expected results in terms of ensuring the specific species or habitat types.

Abstracts of presentations in workshop session 3

Visions and goals for targeting financial support of nature management

by Leif Bisschop-Larsen, Fyn County, Denmark

The working strategy for Fyn County has been to put major efforts into rescue operations for the finest natural areas with the most threatened species. Our experiences from this work are that we often find the financial tools inadequate to fully reach the target.

Outside the hot spots for threatened habitats and species it is even more difficult to support management in a way that pays off in nature improvements or enlargements of natural habitats. Outside NATURA-2000 areas it is in practice impossible to offer financial support for nature management.

Visions for better Agri-Environmental Support to secure biodiversity in short are:

- Financial support should be given to all valuable natural habitats – both inside and outside NATURA-2000 areas.
- Financial support should be dependent on and successively higher as criteria for the best management are fulfilled with focus on the certain habitats or species you want to improve conditions for. Bonus should be possible for achieving certain goals e.g. presence of breeding species or population levels.
- Management contracts should be longer lasting, at best permanent.
- Support that helps to enlarge core areas or connect core areas into larger continuous nature landscapes should be given priority.
- Resources for guidance of the land owners and for developing nature management plans should be present.
- Tools for evaluating whether management meets criteria for support should be developed. Criteria should be very concrete measures, e.g. vegetation height, water-level, area of habitat or population size.

The above visions and proposals have to be viewed in context with ordinary agricultural financial instruments, and there is a need to avoid that these instruments counteracts with support for nature improvements.

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How do we secure nature values in the best possible way in relation to the duration of the Agri-Environmental Scheme within international protected nature areas (NATURA 2000) and outside?

by Claire McKeever, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scotland

In this talk, I will cover 3 aspects: 1. Outline the background to Agri-Environment Schemes in Scotland and how they have evolved through time. 2. Demonstrate how the RSPB in Scotland manages its sites for wildlife conservation (both within NATURA 2000 wetlands and outwith). 3. The role of Agri-Environment Schemes on RSPB wetland reserves and the benefits they provide.

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Argi-Environmental Scheme: Targeted efforts for nature management

by Henrik Wejdling, Danish Ornithological Society, Denmark

The speaker represents the leading NGO on wetland conservation in Denmark, DOF (Danish Ornithological Society).

The society recently published a policy paper, based on its huge knowledge from the last 99 years on the Danish bird populations and their habitat and management requirements, and how to target the Danish Agri-Environmental Schemes in relation to 116 threatened Danish breeding species of birds and 43 species of migratory and wintering birds.

The presentation will focus on wetland species and recommendations in the policy paper on improvements proposed by DOF with regard to the new Danish Agri-Environmental Policy 2007.

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Conclusions and recommendations

Workshop session 4

The Agri-Environmental Scheme and the LIFE Nature program seen from an economic and practical agricultural point of view .

Question to be considered on the workshop: How shall the Agri-Environmental Scheme be in the future to meet the agriculture and nature interests?

and

How can the farmers' wishes and requirements be met in LIFE projects, where the demands are favorable conservation status?

Conclusions and recommendations:

1. In the future schemes calculate the compensation on individual plans for a whole property/catchment area.

How: By using a point system. Guidelines made for the specific types of nature. The English "Environmental Stewardship" can be used as inspiration.

Why: To ensure a more specific management in relation to specific species of plants and animals in coherence and to pay for protection also, not only for decrease in yields.

2. More focus on the management of overgrown grasslands and semi-natural areas both outside and inside special designations.

How: By avoiding narrow designations and by keeping payments high enough to ensure that it is possible to buy animals for grazing.

Why: It is also very important to ensure vulnerable nature outside special designations while for example other types of nature could need a good conservation status seen on a national level. (2/3 of High Nature Value farmlands are outside special designations).

3. Support for starting up a Grazing – Association

How: By paying farmers or citizens for buying animals for grazing, making fences etc.

Why: To make a higher rent ability and to spread the practical work on more lands.

4. Higher flexibility for both schemes and program

How: By accepting that EU also has to co-finance extra costs e.g. special high prizes on agricultural land, special flood protections for neighbours etc. By using different instruments varying depending on the targets for a certain area.

Why: To increase the possibilities of fulfilling the EU Water Framework Directive and the Habitat Directive.



5. More long termed measures are needed.

How: By making permanent agreements or agreements for 20 years more favourable. Development of new ways of financing has to be considered.

Why: To ensure continuity in protection and improvements for nature and water environment. The EU Single Area Payment does not ensure the conservation status of semi-natural grasslands by demanding cutting every 5 year. But it is recommended that agreements can be revised after a 5 years period.

6. Important to involve the landowners on an early stage of the process of a project.

How: By making strategic plans for their whole property in dialogue with the authorities and farmers advisors.

Why: To identify and agree on goals and thereby direct the ownership of a project to the landowner.

7. A good idea to let landowners with own experiences demonstrate for other farmers.

How: By making guided tours and special advisory services using “employed” experienced farmers.

Why: To favour the conservation of nature and water environment by promoting a future project or scheme.

8. The agri-environmental support should target High Nature Value (HNV) farming systems rather than areas to ensure the survival of farms in a period of transition.

How: No proposal.

Why: To ensure a minimum level of HNV farming across the farmed landscape in a cost effective way. To facilitate the implementation of more targeted actions within NATURA 2000 areas – once the farmers are gone the cost of maintenance multiplies.



Abstracts of presentations in workshop session 4

Balanced solutions for environment and production

by Irene Wiborg, Project Coordinator for AGWAPLAN, Danish Agricultural Advisory Service, Denmark

In the LIFE-Environment project AGWAPLAN (AGriculture and WAtER PLAN) the thesis are that common understanding and common goals between farmers and environmental authorities are a necessity in order to secure a good and balanced coexistence between farmers and the environment.

In order to secure the common goals the project are developing an integrated participatory advisory system where farmers, environmental authorities and farm advisers try to find a balance between production and environment, through cooperation and coordination.

The methods which will be used to optimise the agricultural practices and reduce the losses of N and P are not decided beforehand. It all depends on the plan developed individually in the integrated participatory advisory system. Only methods of Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), which the farmer entirely freely wants to implement, will be used.

Examples of GAPs:

- Establishment of wetlands using land consolidation procedures
- Changed crop rotation
- Optimize the time for and the practice of manure spreading, ploughing, etc.
- Technical solutions

It might well be the situation that cooperation between farmers in the catchment area will be an advantage for the farmer due to different wishes for the future between the farmers.

An example: In a catchment area some farmer wants to continue an intensive animal production while other farmers want to reduce the production. By establishing a wetland on land owned by some of the farmers how want to reduce farming the nutrient leaching from the catchment area will be reduced and the room for continuing the intensive farming will exist.

The economic compensation for reducing farming can be found in the Agri-Environmental Scheme. A set-up of the scheme where the compensation is calculated on individual plans/ catchment area plans for implementation of the goal might be a solution for the future schemes. The English "Environmental Stewardship" concerning nature conservation can be an inspiration for how to handle an individual compensation. General regulation on specific problems seems to be inexpedient.

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Balance between environmental and productional goals.



How shall the Agri-Environmental scheme be in the future to meet the agriculture and nature interests?

by Marika Kose, Estonian State Nature Conservation Centre, Pärnu-Viljandi Region, Estonia

In Estonia EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments are administrated by one paying agency: the Estonian Agricultural Registers and Information Board (ARIB), which is under governance of the Ministry of Agriculture (MoAgr). The ARIB support scheme is implemented since 2002.

Among the ARIB supports available in Estonia however, there are none specifically targeting the semi-natural community management (coastal, floodplain, alvar and other meadows, wooded meadows and pastures). It is worth a notice that special support for semi-natural community management was initially included in the RDP under the Agri-Environmental Scheme but was later deleted by MoAgr.

Indirectly beneficial for the semi-natural habitat management are SAPS (Single Area Payment Scheme) and following payments under RDP (Rural Development Plan): LFA (less favoured areas), Agri-environmental support (including also support for the local breeds - Estonian Native horse and Native Cow), Natura 2000 subsidy (Support for areas with environmental restrictions, accessible only from 2006). However, MoAgr has defined the eligibility criteria for the good agricultural condition of the land without taking into account the local agricultural and environmental situation, and in a way that tends to exclude valuable semi-natural communities, especially wooded meadows. Areas with trees or bush, and wet areas are systematically excluded from the eligible area. There have been many cases when ARIB has reduced the payments or even forced the farmers to pay these back. As the result of protests by environmental NGOs and the farmers some minor improvements have been made.

Targeted nature conservation payments on semi-natural communities are governed by Estonian Ministry of Environment (MoEnv) and are presently not part of CAP implementation in Estonia. MoEnv started national payment scheme for management and restoration of semi-natural communities in 2001 after several years of similar activities on pilot scale in some protected sites. This scheme is more flexible and the contracts are renewed every year but it has its own problems most prominent being the insufficient budget that was cut even further this year.

The RDP for next period is currently under preparation. Nature conservationists are doing their best to include the special payments for semi-natural communities' management into the frame of Agri-environmental support. MoEnv will then have to pay only for the restoration or for the management of land not eligible for CAP payments.

I would like to thank Alex Lotman for his kind help and valuable comments on this abstract.

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