

The Continuum Project

January '09 Newsletter

Workshops in pilot regions

First workshop in the pilot region “Northern Limestone Alps/Eisenwurzen/Gesäuse/Dürrenstein” – 1. October 2008, Admont (A)

The National Park Gesäuse and its partners National Park Kalkalpen and Wilderness Area Dürrenstein started their activities on ecological connectivity with a first workshop in Admont the 1st October 2008. Almost 30 people from the three provinces Upper and Lower Austria as well as Styria participated in this workshop, representing protected areas, local governments with different departments (e.g. nature conservation, forestry, agriculture, spatial planning and water management), NGOs as well as hunters organisations and landowners.

Information on the two projects “Continuum” and “ECONNECT” and fundamentals on nature, cultural and economical structures were presented to the stakeholders. The participants discussed about objectives of ECONNECT, possibilities for cooperation, involvement of stakeholders and opinion leaders, and the organisation of further events. In addition, possibilities of first projects for implementation of ecological connectivity were reviewed.

The conclusion of the workshop is among other things: the basic necessity of awareness raising in the region; the

Stakeholder workshop in pilot region Inn / Etsch (27. / 28. October 2008)

The Continuum Project invited stakeholders from the pilot region Inn-Etsch and further interested people to a workshop held in the Biosfera Val Müstair, Switzerland (27./28.10.2008). To ensure the continuity of work from the Continuum Project to ECONNECT this workshop was jointly organised by both projects. The results of the Continuum pre-project were presented to and discussed with key actors who will carry on the working process within the ECONNECT project which just started on 1st of September. The focus of the discussions was on me-

thods and measures that can contribute to the creation of ecological networks in the region. A summary report in German (6 pages plus attachments) and Italian (7 p.), the presentations and further information on the workshop is available here: www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/the-ecological-continuum-project/pilot-regions.

Besides the presentation of ongoing initiatives in the region, the summary report points out possible next steps in the future and includes a list of all participants and relevant projects in the area.



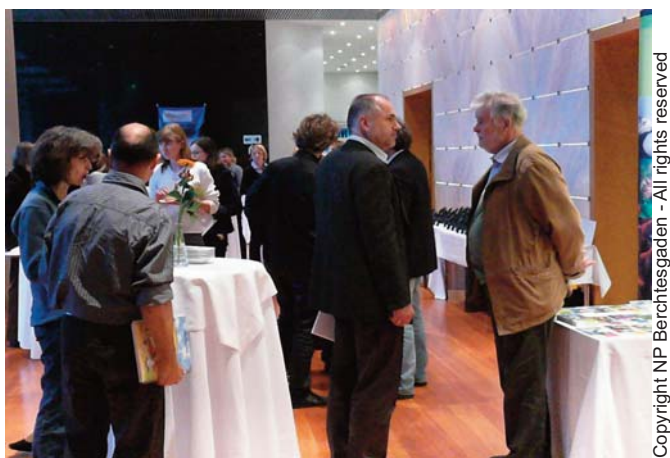
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ECONNECT Kick-off

The kick-off for the EU project “**ECONNECT – Restoring the web of life**” took place in Vienna/A on 4th and 5th November.

The project ECONNECT aims at the enhancement of ecological connectivity in the Alpine space. Protection of biodiversity and natural heritage – a central necessity to cope with the challenges of climate change but also with fragmentation and habitat destruction - requires an integrated approach which beyond protected areas considers high biodiversity areas and corridors as linking elements of an alpine ecological network.

The internal project partners meeting was the occasion for the sixteen partners and four observers from all the



Alpine States to fix in detail the roadmap for their ambitious work over the next three years: realising the first concrete steps to implement an ecological network across state borders and the confines of protected areas. The very well attended public part of the meeting gave the opportunity to present the project as well as its thematic background to the interested audience.

One particular emphasis of the project is on the implementation of measures in six pilot regions. Measures such as the Alpine-wide analysis of statutory and ecological barriers are to provide a contextual framework. The aperitif and buffet that followed the public presentations were the convivial opportunities for the pilot regions to present their regions as well as the work they intend to realise in the frame of the project to all visitors.

The four partners of the Ecological Continuum Project ALPARC, CIPRA, ISCAR and WWF have been the driving force behind ECONNECT and are also ECONNECT project partners (ISCAR with an observer status).

ECONNECT is co-financed by the European Territorial Co-operation Program Alpine Space.

Further information: www.econnectproject.eu

3rd Meeting Platform “Ecological Network” of the Alpine Convention

Berchtesgaden, 11th/12th of December 2008

The platform meeting was attended by 30 participants among others the current and the future platform chair, the Vice Secretary General of the Alpine Convention, 5 country representatives (Austria, Germany, Switzerland, France, Liechtenstein), a representative of the European Commission, representatives of protected areas, and representatives of NGOs. Its aim was the exchange of information on activities within the platform, and particularly to prepare the report of the Platform to the Xth Alpine Conference (March 2009), which shall be used to present all activities of the platform since its establishment. Besides the handing-over of the platform chair from Germany to France in March 2009 was prepared.

Topics from the activities of the platform and of its two working groups “Pilot Regions” and “Communication” to the cooperation with the European Commission and with other initiatives like the planned platform “Large Carnivores” of the Alpine Convention or the System for the Observation and Information on the Alps SOIA (www.alpconv.org/soia/index_en.htm) were presented and discussed. Furthermore a report on the current activities and foreseen results within the Continuum Project and the ECONNECT project and their collaboration with the platform was given by one of the project partners. The catalogue of measures that has been developed in the Ecological Continuum pre-project and provides a toolkit for pilot areas was thereby presented in detail.

Another interesting point in the agenda was the presentation on a WWF running project in the Carpathian region by a representative of the Carpathian Convention. This exchange of information took place in the frame of the cooperation activities foreseen by the Memorandum of Cooperation (Alpine Convention, Carpathian Convention and Convention on Biological Diversity) signed at CBD-COP-9 in May 2008.

All presentations are available on the website www.alpine-ecological-network.org (section latest news).

Catalogue of measures

The catalogue of measures as one of the important results of the pre-project is currently being finalised and will be available soon. This document will present a description of a sample of measures from different countries and different activity sectors that can contribute to the implementation of ecological networks on the ground.

Bibliographic research and a survey carried out in the pilot regions and the countries of the Alps provided the inputs for the catalogue. Each measure is presented with a short description as well as – as far as possible with the data available – an evaluation of its ecologic and socio-economic impact.

This catalogue is targeted at the responsible actors in the

Exchange with key stakeholders in the frame of events

The consortium partners presented the Continuum Project at several international events. The aim of these presentations was to inform interested parties about the connectivity activities of the consortium in the Alps, exchanging experiences and knowledge with other initiatives in and outside the Alpine area.

The consortium partners organised several events, where they also presented their activities in the frame of the Continuum Project. The most important international events were the Alpweek (11-14 June 2008) in the Pays des Ecrins/F and the General Assembly of the Alpine Network of Protected Areas which took place in Bled/Slovenia from 7-10 October 2008.

Furthermore the Continuum Project and its relations and interactions with the ECONNECT project and the Platform Ecological Network were presented at several external events: international conference Gebirgsforschung Schweiz 2008 in Brig/CH, international workshop on defragmentation concepts in Central Europe on the Isle of Vilm/D, IUCN World Conservation Congress in Barcelona/ES, PEEN committee of experts in Strasbourg/F and at the official kick-off meeting of the ECONNECT project in Vienna/A.

Upcoming events

By presentations for different stakeholders and institutions in several countries and by initiating the ECONNECT project, the Continuum Project has become internationally known. The consortium partners will carry on communicating on the Alpine connectivity initiatives at upcoming events. Two highlights in 2009 will be the Xth Alpine Conference of the Environment ministers of the Alpine countries and the EU on 12 March and the 4th Symposium of the Hohe Tauern National Park for Research in Protected Areas, 17th to 19th September 2009.

pilot regions: the measures presented should give them a rough overview about existing possibilities to enhance ecological connectivity by implementing specific measures. It should also inspire them to develop their own measures or to modify and adapt the described measures to their local reality.

The catalogue as it will be presented soon is not a conclusive document – in the contrary, it will be continually completed with further examples and also with the results and experiences made in the pilot areas of the Ecological Continuum Project and ECONNECT.

“*Creating an Alps wide competence network for ecological connectivity will be a crucial element.*”

New ideas for the future of the Continuum Project

The success of the pre-project and the good cooperation reinforced the motivation of the four consortium partners to carry on their joint activities in the frame of the Ecological Continuum Project. A proposal for further activities (main project) has been presented to the MAVA Foundation for Nature. Within the next years the consortium partners want to multiply implementation activities in existing and in new pilot regions and guarantee that connectivity activities in the Alps carry on beyond the duration of ECONNECT and independently of slow governmental decision making. Creating an Alps wide competence network for ecological connectivity will be a crucial element.



New online and printed information

New report: "Evaluation of Approaches for designing and implementing ecological networks in the Alps"

In the frame of the Continuum Project, international experts and members of the "Platform Ecological Networks" under the Alpine Convention were asked to assess four different approaches for planning and implementing ecological networks in the Alps: The Pan-European Ecological Network (PEEN), the Swiss ecological network (REN), the WWF-Ecoregion approach and the ALPARC-approach to establish transboundary ecological networks between protected areas.

ISCAR (International Scientific Committee on Research in the Alps) in cooperation with Swiss Biodiversity Forum summarized the results of 17 expert assessments. The Assessment Report is focusing on the conception of ecological networks on a regional (>100km²) level and clarifies for which types of problem or projects these approaches can be applied or combined.

Download the report (short (37 p.) or full version (96 p.) including the questionnaire for experts and their answers): www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/the-ecological-continuum-project/methods

Poster

Two posters (594mm x 841mm) on the topic "Ecological networks in the Alps" are now available in English and for download on the project's website.

One of the posters is a common product of the Platform "Ecological network" and the Continuum Project. It describes the problematic changes of the Alpine landscape and points out possibilities how to counterpart this situation through i.e the establishment of "human networks" or the current activities in the frame of these initiatives. The poster is available on: www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/services-mainmenu-8/downloads-documents

The other poster also mentions the problematic changes of the Alpine landscape, but mainly refers to the Continuum project with its performing partners, aims, its activities and its involved pilot regions.

Download: www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/services-mainmenu-8/downloads-documents

Pilot region strategy

Building on the results of the Ecological Continuum Project and existing agreements with the project partners, an approach in three phases has been proposed for all the pilot regions, which will be implemented as part of the Continuum Project and the Alpine Space ECONNECT project.

The pilot region strategy expands on the proposals made by various scientific experts regarding common methods for creating ecological networks in the Alps (expert workshops held in Zurich (December 2007) and Chambéry (April 2008); methods report; catalogue of measures).

The document is available in English, German, Italian and French and for download here: www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/services-mainmenu-8/downloads-documents.

Glossary

The Alpine arc spans eight countries and therefore consists of a variety of cultures and languages. Cross-border co-operation or i.e. the realization of multilingual events is sometimes difficult due to language barriers or misunderstandings. For this reason the Consortium of the Continuum Project prepared a glossary on the topic of ecological networks, which should function as a tool to facilitate communication throughout the Alps. The glossary includes relevant terms in English and their translations to the four main Alpine languages as well as a short explanation of the term in English.

www.alpine-ecological-network.org/index.php/services-mainmenu-8/downloads-documents

New publications on ecological networks

Zerschneidung der Landschaft in dicht besiedelten Gebieten; Di Giulio, Manuela / Holderegger, Rolf / Bernhardt, Marion / Tobias, Silvia; 1st edition 2008; ISBN 978-3-258-07381-1.

The process of fragmentation and its consequences on the landscape are explained and illustrated with pictures and drawings. The publication can be ordered here: www.haupt.ch/verlagsshop/oxid.php/sid/a43a1afc77b1d5787371dfff9f87f206/cl/details/anid/9783258073811/listtype/search/searchparam/978-3-258-07381-1.

More publications on ecological networks: www.cipra.org/en/alpmedia/dossiers/13 (check out the different language versions).

