

ANNUAL REPORT 2022



Dear friends of nature,

In 2023, our association BROZ celebrated its 26th birthday. I had the honor to be part of it from the very beginning. Initially, our enthusiasm and common zeal for a good cause were mainly devoted to voluntary work on practical measures for nature - burying drainage channels for wetland restoration, mowing and maintaining woodlands, and planting native trees.

Our proposals for new protected areas and nature reserves, especially in and around Bratislava, were also significant. Several of them were declared and we saved hundreds of hectares of floodplain forests from clearcut logging.

Gradually, more people got involved, we had replaced manual work with shovels by more powerful machines and started to do the first big projects. The volume of work and the related agenda required full professionalization. Gradually, even within the framework of complex projects, we created and developed cooperation with various state and public entities and private spheres in the fields of nature conservation, forestry, water management, agriculture, science and research, defense, as well as fishery and hunting. We try to bring people and different interest groups together to collectively protect our nature and also to use the wealth and natural resources of our country sensitively.

We manage several protected areas ourselves, so we are an example that it can be done by NGO. Great Colley Island is one such example where nature conservation has restored an attractive site that provides employment opportunities for the local community. In some areas, we have brought new, pilot, and ground-breaking measures and solutions for Slovakia - for example in the restoration of river branch systems, rivers, and wetlands. We would like to hand the baton on to the state's water and landscape managers. We aim to kick-start the right processes, not to permanently replace the state and its institutions.

Today, perhaps more than ever, it is important to show public support for good causes. To counterbalance the outcry of the

opponents, who are still only a marginal part of our society. We greatly appreciate the real support of our supporters and donors who make it possible for us to do our work and our mission.

26 years have passed quickly like water in the Danube. It is already a major part of my life that I have dedicated to nature conservation, the Danube, and our association. The clear results of our work and the many less visible ones will be appreciated by nature lovers, but especially by nature itself. I thank all those who have been and still are helpful in this endeavor.



Tomáš Kušík
Chairman



What we achieved in 2022



Water

In the Danube floodplain area, where we operate, water is an essential component of the ecosystem. It is only thanks to the river and its wetlands that a huge diversity of life has developed here. As the entire ecosystem here is intrinsically linked to water, without water it would rapidly degrade and consequently disappear. Therefore, if we want to protect and restore nature in the Danube meadows, the first component we need to focus on is water, its reintroduction into the precious wetlands, and its protection. And this is a large part of our work, which we have been doing for a long time.



Restoration of the Rudava River

The restoration of the Rudava River represents a unique river revitalization that has never been implemented in Slovakia so far.

For the first time, the river, which was previously regulated into an artificial water channel,

has been restored to its natural state. We restored the Rudava River in the cadastre of Veľké Leváre with a total length of 2.2 kilometers (km). The restoration of the natural river consisted of the removal of the bank fortification made of concrete panels from the sides and the bottom of the river bed and from re-meandering the river.

Innovative and nature-friendly bank fortifications were built in

places of larger meanders where it was necessary to ensure the stability of the banks. The trees that were in the route of the new channel have been removed and incorporated horizontally into the bank with root bales towards the river, thus ensuring bank stability and at the same time providing shelter for several species of fish and other aquatic animals.

The preparatory work for this project lasted 3 years. It included



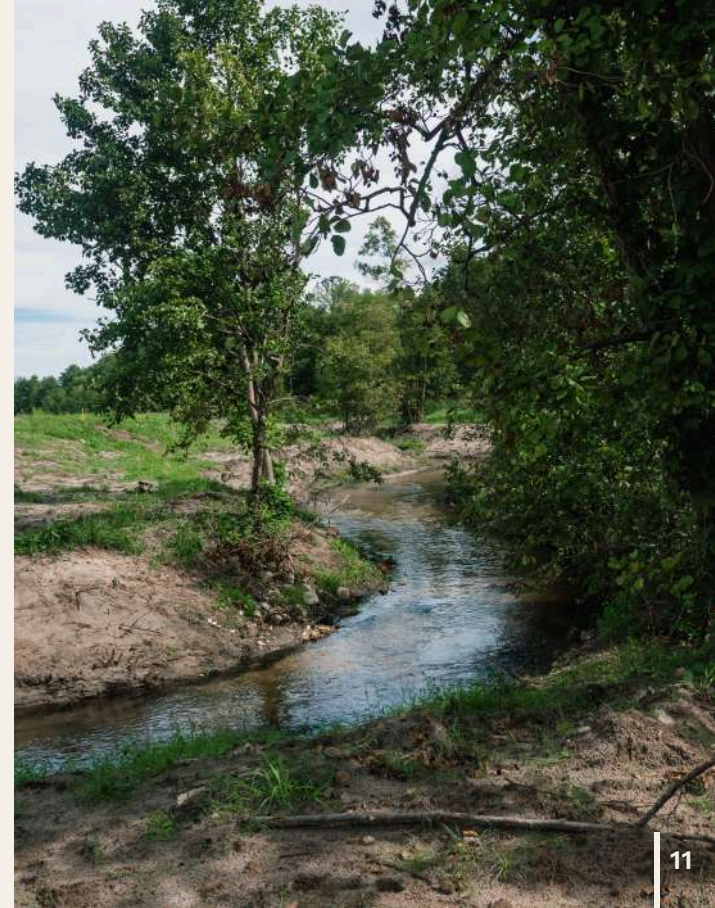
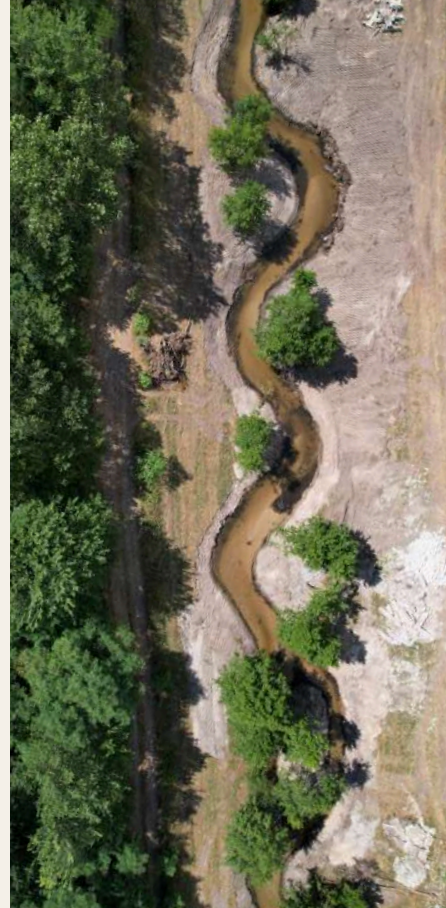
the preparation of a technical study, the preparation of the project documentation, and, most importantly, several negotiations and consultations with designers, water managers, and other relevant experts or organizations.

The implementation works itself (removal of the panel fortification, dredging of the meanders - river bends) took 4 months. In the preparatory and implementation phase, we worked closely with state expert institutions and entities relevant to the management of watercourses.

Restoring the river resulted in the restoration of its natural processes, the natural channel began to form and the river thus began to provide a variety of conditions for a variety of species. After the restoration, the Rudava's

course was lengthened by 180 meters (m), which has had a positive effect on water retention in the land.

The restoration of the Rudava river has first and foremost a positive effect on nature, biodiversity, and water retention in the land at the time of climate crisis, but it is also important in terms of future water restorations. It has helped to identify several administrative and legislative barriers that are impeding progress. We are gradually working to remove these hurdles, which will simplify the process of bringing Slovak watercourses closer to their natural state in the future.





We dug over 1.5 km of the supply channel to restore the wetlands at Istragov

Istragov was still until the launch of the Gabčíkovo Waterworks (GWV) in 1992 a large river swamp with an area of approximately 77 hectares (ha), which was located in the lower part of the inland Danube delta. It consisted of a mosaic of shallow water areas, wetlands, and reedbeds. However, as a result of the construction of the GWV, the water supply to the entire inland delta area was restricted and the lower part, where the Istragov site is located, no longer receives artificially

injected water into the river system. The flow of water to Istragov has almost completely stopped and the once large and important wetland has been dry for most of the year.

In March and April 2022, we therefore began to implement the long-planned restoration of this site. We dug a 1 500-meter-long linking canal, which ran through the original built-up channel where the water originally flowed into Istragov. Thanks to the water supply, 70 hectares of the original wetlands were restored at Istragov and the willow forests were flooded with water after 30 years. The Istragov wetlands were restored from the Pannonian root vole conservation project, so the primary objective was to improve the living conditions for this endemic species and to reconnect



its habitats. The importance of Istragov as a wetland is crucial not only for the European root vole (*Microtus oeconomus mehelyi*), but also for all wetland flora and fauna - especially the many insects, amphibians, and, in this case, the many fish and birds that are tied to the site, which we monitored right after the area was flooded. Immediately after the water was brought in, they began to return to the site and their numbers, which had been declining for a long time, began to increase. In the past, when the entire flow in the Danube was in the river bed and did not primarily pass through the Gabčíkovo's hydrocentral, Istragov was also an extremely important spawning ground for fish. The wetland dredged in this precious location of the inland Danube Delta was filled during simulated flooding of this area - between May and June 2022.





Restoration of other river branches and wetlands

In 2022, in addition to the significant restoration of the Rudava River, other important river arms or sections of river arms were restored - exactly **2 428 meters** in total. We continued with the work we had started on the Šulianske river arm in 2021 and cleaned and restored a total of **1 948 meters**.

We have also managed to excavate the original upper inflow into the Veľkolélskeho river branch and thus connect it in the next section with the main channel of the Danube. The new inflow section was dredged for a total length of **480 meters** and significantly

increased the water supply to the entire system of the Veľkolélske river branch.



We restored steep river banks for kingfishers, bee-eaters, and sand martins

In 2022, we also restored habitats for 3 rare bird species (kingfishers, bee-eaters, and sand martins), tied to steep river banks, which they need for their nesting.

On the Morava River, steep river banks were restored to a total length of **265 m** in Malé Leváre and the village of Gajary. A further **300 m** of steep river banks were restored directly along the main channel of the Danube in the localities of Chlába, Iža, and Velké Kosihy, and **150 m** were restored



in the Inland Danube Delta at Istragov. In total, 715 m of steep river banks were restored in **6 locations** in 2022.

In the 2022 breeding season, we immediately enjoyed the success of the bank's restoration - sand martins (*Riparia riparia*) nested in the restored bank of the Morava River, where approximately **110 pairs** nested.





Simulated floods of the Danube's inland delta

Also in 2022, we engaged in combating simulated floods in the Danube's inland delta.

For the second time in history, since the construction of the Gabčíkovo hydroelectric power station, 2 floods took place - the spring and summer floods. Both with a flow rate of 90 m³/s. We consider this flow into the Danube River system just a partial success in the whole process of simulated floods so far.

In the years to come, the challenge for us is to continue to fight for larger volumes of water flowing into our largest wetland - the Danube's inland delta, namely

for the 120 m³/s during the time of spring and summer flooding.

The Danube's inland delta is a remnant of the rich Danube branch system, which is bounded in our territory by the Danube River (in its original channel) and an artificial feeder canal to the Gabčíkovo Waterworks (GWV). This precious area was drastically altered in the past by the construction of the hydroelectric power plant and has ever since been dependent on the amount of water that is sent into it via an artificial inflow structure in Dobrohošť' based on the

Gabčíkovo Hydroelectric Power Plant's Manipulation Regulations.

In 2020, we launched a petition to save the Danube's inland delta, which was signed by more than 11,000 people and triggered negotiations with the Slovak Ministry of the Environment and Gabčíkovo Waterworks authorities for an amendment to the handling regulations, in which we demanded increased flows and regular floods to the inland Danube delta. In 2020, there were two floods with a flow of 90 m³/s, and again in 2021 and 2022 two floods with a flow of 90 m³/s, compared

to the initially agreed upon flow of 120 m³/s.

In 2022, the process of updating the Gabčíkovo Hydroelectric Power Plant's Manipulation Regulations.

was launched, in which BROZ, Slovak State Nature Conservancy, and the Research Institute of Water Management emphasized the importance of injecting sufficient water into the inland delta in all negotiations and we have several times in the process of approval of the document at the Regional Office of the Environment in Bratislava.

At the suggestion of the Gabčíkovo Waterworks authorities, the

maximum flow rate of 90 m³/s instead of 120 m³/s was proposed again in the update of the handling regulations. Therefore, the process of approval of the handling order is not yet completed due to the appeals and we continue to monitor, comment, and also draw attention to it in the media.

This area of the largest Slovak wetlands deserves such a systematic struggle and we plan actively to continue with it.





Forests and trees



Floodplain forests around the Danube River form another ecosystem component, on which restoration and protection we focus. These are very valuable areas of soft and hard grasslands that are directly linked to the regime of periodic floods and closely linked to water dynamics.

It was the river's dynamics that shaped and exposed the banks on which also very dynamic floodplain forest could grow. Changes in river dynamics and the enclosure of the river in dykes have greatly affected the riparian landscape and the ability of the floodplain forest to grow and rejuvenate. It is therefore important to help the floodplain forests and actively restore them, which we do every year by planting native tree species and by protecting valuable old growth. In addition to these, the following are important trees in the open landscapes, which provide shelter and food for many species, prevent wind erosion, and provide important shade.



We planted trees in the Danube floodplains, but also the open country. In total up to 34 000 trees

The year 2022 was rich in planting trees in floodplain forests, but also in the open country.

We have strengthened the Danube floodplains with tens of thousands of new seedlings of native tree species.

In 2022, we continued the restoration of natural floodplain forests in the Danube floodplains. We planted white poplar, black

poplar, and gray poplar - softwoods - together with summer oak and ash - hardwoods. Together we planted nearly **33 000 trees**.

Soft floodplain forests are an endangered habitat that is no longer regenerating naturally due to the change in river dynamics. Its natural rejuvenation is best achieved on river sections and river branches that have been restored, stripped of bank fortifications, or connected back to the natural source of flowing water. The combination of measures to improve the water regime and the direct planting of native riparian species will have the effect of restoring these precious ecosystems more efficiently and more quickly, which is essential in times of climate crisis.

The reason for the additional plantings was primarily the expansion of the food base for the European ground squirrels (*Spermophilus citellus*) and the many other small animals that benefit from the fruit trees. We planted early summer varieties to give the ground squirrels time to fatten up before they go into hibernation. We managed to plant **57 fruit trees** - plums, mirabelles, cherries, pears, and mulberries. We planted **in 8 locations**, namely on the Cerova vrchovina, in the Tisovský kras, in the Muránska planina, and the Slovak Paradise. In addition, in the Muránska plain we grafted approximately **50 wild apple trees**.

Not only ground squirrels and birds, but also insects are tied to the trees around them. Large areas of meadows are unsuitable

for insects, which need microhabitats where they can find shade and shelter alongside sunny spots. To create suitable conditions for insects to break up the large monoculture areas of meadows, we planted in the Special area of conservation (SAC) specifically in the Holuby Kopanice **625 fruit and forest trees and shrubs**. These were mainly tree alleys, tree plantations, windbreaks, and coppices.

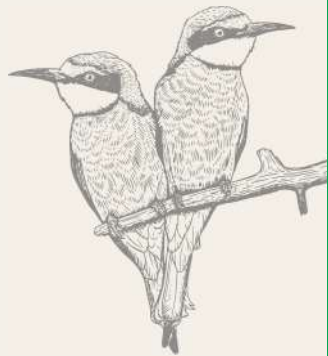
We also planted in the city. Specifically in the Karlova Ves district in Bratislava. Here, in one of the largest Slovak housing estates - Dlhé diely - we are implementing a project aimed at adapting Karlova Ves to climate change - LIFE Deliver. Within this project we continued our several years of activities, we replaced the dried-up trees with new ones



and planted **9 pieces of the decorative tree** (*Liquidambar styraciflua*). In addition to these, we also **planted more than 150 shrubs** to support and enhance biodiversity in the urban environment.



Protection of endangered species



We protect endangered species in all our projects, primarily through the care of their habitats. Whether in the restoration of river banks, river branches, wetlands, or even meadows and pastures, we always do these activities primarily for the animals and plants tied to them - for biodiversity. However, we also have several activities aimed at the direct conservation of endangered species, improving the genetics of populations, or protecting individuals in terms of species that are threatened with extinction in some parts of their habitats. Such species are, for example, the pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*), the European root vole (*Microtus oeconomus mehelyi*), or the European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*).



Spring trapping of the European ground squirrels to strengthen populations

As every year within the LIFE Sysel' project, in spring 2022 we carried out ground squirrel trapping to carry out activities aimed at the conservation of ground squirrel habitats to directly strengthen the ground squirrel populations in Slovakia.

The European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*) has been listed as an endangered species in Slovakia for a long time, and before the start of our conservation project, the number

of ground squirrels was alarmingly low - only 20 000 individuals, which is a decline compared to the millions of gophers that once existed in our country by over 99%.

The ground squirrel trapping was carried out in 3 locations where their population is genetically rich and stable (which resulted from the genetics study carried out in 2021), namely **at the Bratislava airport, in the Slovenský kras and Muránská plain**, with the strongest population of ground squirrels being found at the Bratislava airport, with more than **10 000 individuals**. These ground squirrels were transported immediately after capture to other, geographically close locations and thus reinforced genetically weak populations with small numbers of individuals.

The conservation project's monitoring of the European ground squirrel shows that **ground squirrel numbers have increased from 28 000 to 36 000 in 2022**, mainly due to habitat clearance, grazing restoration and tall vegetation in its habitats.

For ground squirrels, we have restored 4.5 hectares of grazing in different parts of Slovakia.

As its name suggests, grazing is also important for strengthening its populations, which is why we have restored it at several locations of their occurrence - **in the Tisovský kras, Muránská planina, and Cerová vrchovina**.

With activities aimed at restoring grazing and strengthening the population genetics, we plan

to continue within the **LIFE Sysel'** framework during the next four years, and so we believe, that the ground squirrel population will increase significantly and that the families, which were so far surviving, will be stabilized.





Protection of the European pond turtle's nesting sites

Since 2021 we have been implementing a project supported by the Operational Programme of Environmental Quality aimed at the conservation of the pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) in selected sites in southern Slovakia. To preserve the turtles' habitats, we have taken several actions, including removing litter, restoring wetlands, and maintaining the nesting sites in favorable conditions through grazing.

In 2022, we contributed to the conservation of the rare pond turtle uniquely. In one of the most



important sites of its population in Slovakia, we were assisted by a specially trained dog. A female named Rexa and her owner visited the site most often during the egg-laying season, from May to August. The dog's task was to find the freshly laid eggs before predators could get them, especially foxes.

The buried clutch is searched by the dog's sniff. When Rexa finds the egg, she stands over it and waits for her owner, who puts a metal grid on the marked place and fixes it with pins on the edges or even camouflages it with vegetation. The meshes of the grid are large enough for small turtles to get through when they dig themselves out of the ground in the next season.



In 2022, Rexa and her owner Petra Jakubčová found and secured a total of 16 nests of the pond turtle. In contrast, predators found and destroyed only 5 unprotected clutches. Rexa's accomplishments were evident in the spring of 2023 when we witnessed an impressive number of baby turtles hatching right out from underneath the metal grids.

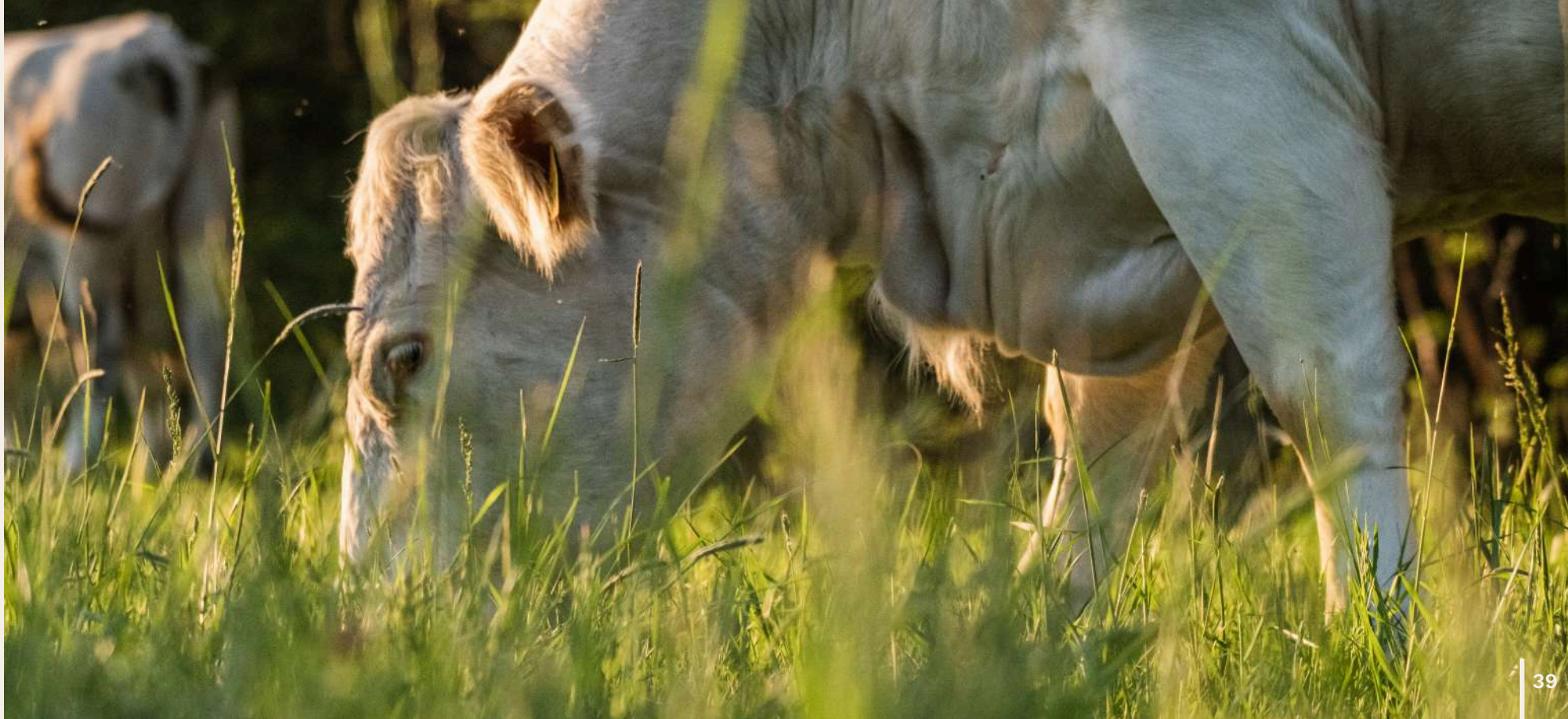


Grazing

Grassland biodiversity is another major area we are working on. Meadows and pastures are home to a huge number of plant and animal species. Many once common, now rare plants, insects, and butterflies, but also, for example, species such as the European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*). Animal grazing was once a common part of the country. Today, unfortunately, it is different, the animals are locked up in stables and the richness of the pastures is lost in the shade of the bushes and invasive trees. That's why we decided to graze for plants, insects, birds, and also for ground squirrels. Especially thanks to the cooperation with local farmers, we are already restoring grazing in almost the whole country.

We have started grazing on several significant sites

Meadows and pastures are important for several light-loving species, whether plants, butterflies, "membrane-winged" insects, ants, beetles, or even mammals such as ground squirrels. As we do every year, in 2022 we are working to restore grazing in protected areas to conserve these precious ecosystems and increase their biodiversity.





We prepared grazing areas to protect ground squirrels, rare plants, and butterflies

The year 2022 was particularly marked by the preparation works for grazing, which included the clearing and mowing of the locations. In the Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Muránska planina where there is one of the largest colonies of The European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*) population in Slovakia, we cleared 2.2 ha of the area within the LIFE Sysel project, in the Bolerázske ground squirrel site we cleared the gopher's field of rose hips and bushes

on an area of 6 ha. 50 hectares of this ground squirrel site we mowed.

Besides cleaning and mowing, we also threw ourselves into construction. In the SAC Spišskopodhradské travertíny we built a stable, from which in the spring of 2023 the sheep were herded out to graze on 18 ha of land. And we didn't clean only for ground squirrels, but also for rare insects. From the project for butterfly conservation (LIFE Metamorphosis), we managed to clear 3.5 ha and 500 m of forest margin in SAC Holubyho kopanice, 2.2 ha and 300 m of forest margin in SAC Beckovské Skalice and 0.32 ha and 2.2 km of forest margin in Fačkovská Homôľka in the Strážovské vrchy. In all three locations, we will start grazing in the upcoming year.



Preparatory work for grazing did not bypass either our project concerning the restoration of dry-loving grassland-herb communities - LIFE Panalp. In SAC Tematínske vrchy in the village Lúka, in the Strážovské vrchy SAC in the village of Zliechov, and the Svarkovica protected area, we removed up to 13 ha of non-native tree plantations and managed to restore valuable meadows and pastures. Another area of 21 hectares was cleared from woody plants. These were the sites of former pastures, namely: SAC Strážovské vrchy - Zliechov, Podskalský Roháč, Bosmany, Čičmany, Hanušová Pod Vyhnanom ; SAC Omšenská Baba - Omšenie, Kopánky location ; SAC Baské - Omšenie, Kráľovec and Lánce location ; SAC Vršatské bradlá - Lysá.

Within the same project, in 2022 we also renewed the grazing on 27 ha in the SAC Strážovské vrchy - Zliechov,

Čičmany, Hanušová Pod Vyhnanom location ; SAC Omšenská Baba - Omšenie, Kopánky location; SAC Baské - Omšenie, Kráľovec and Lánce location.

In addition to grazing, we have been successful also in improving the habitat of the Apollo butterfly (*Parnassius apollo*) over an area of approximately 3.7 ha at specific sites in the Strážovské vrchy and Javorníky mountains. In addition, we also sowed seeds of the *Tephrosia longifolia*, which is a food plant for its caterpillars, in exactly 7 areas with an area of 10 m² to support local populations in the SAC Vršatské bradlá - Lysá.

In the Tematín hills in the village of Lúka, we have restored areas with the occurrence of the endemic plant species (*Dianthus praecox subsp. lumnitzeri*) to approximately 6 ha.





We have restored grazing for rare insects and rare plants

The introduction of grazing on an area of 2.71 ha was successful in SAC Holubyho kopanice, on our sites in the White Carpathians. Rare insect species enjoy grazing there as e.i.: butterflies The large blue (*Maculinea arion*), the Danube clouded yellow (*Colias myrmidone*), and The clouded Apollo (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), beetles, membrane-winged insects, solitary bees, thrips and others. In SAC Jesenské and Cerová vrchovina are local ground squirrels enjoying

renewed grazing. This is exactly 4.5 ha of cleared grazing area.

From the project aimed at dry-loving grassland habitats and rare flowering plants, LIFE Juh has succeeded in introducing grazing on 6.23 ha of Pánske meadows in the Lower Považie, where horses were eager to take part. We cleared this site of invasive plants, especially from the tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) which can grow rapidly and limit the growth of the surrounding vegetation.

From another project focusing on flowering arid-loving habitats, LIFE Sub-Pannonic, we have progressed with the expansion of grazing by 26.6 ha over 2022. These were the sites of SAC Biskupické floodplains, and SAC Drieňové

in the Cerová vrchovina, where we started grazing sheep without fences in cooperation with a local farmer and shepherd. Since 2022, we have also been grazing sheep, goats, and cows in SAC Fabiánka in the Slovak Kras in cooperation with a local cooperative. These animals provide diversity in grazing, so we find a diverse mosaic of microhabitats in this area. Krasín Hill in the White Carpathians has been given a new look thanks to the expansion of the existing grazing area. This enchanting place is also a nature reserve full of light-loving rare plants whose seeds have been eagerly waiting to get the light in the shade of the bushes. And they did.

As part of our grazing activities, we are also trying to restore so-



called grazing forests, which are places particularly rich in biodiversity.

We are gradually restoring one such grazing forest in the woodlands near our farm in the Biskupické floodplains in Bratislava (the above-mentioned SAC Biskupické floodplains).

In addition, we are systematically working on the restoration

of the Panónský háj near Jurský Šur, where a herd of cows grazed in the 2022 season. We have also moved forward with the restoration and clearing of the original grazing forest in Gavurky in central Slovakia, where we are planning to restore grazing soon.

Grazing is amazing! In the spirit of this motto, we continue our mission across Slovakia.

"When it comes to grazing, sustainability is key for us. That's why we are restoring grazing on most sites in cooperation with local farmers. This makes the restoration of grazing beneficial not only for nature but also for local farmers."



Pavol Littera
Vice-chairman





SAVE A WETLAND

We launched the “Save a Wetland” campaign

In early December 2022, we launched a fundraising campaign for saving a 42-hectare wetland in the middle of an agricultural land. We received an offer to buy the entire property for permanent conservation purposes at a reasonable price and we didn't hesitate for a moment. However, the former field (now wetland) is not part of the Natura 2000 network, so we could not use project funds for purchase. **We therefore decided to launch the biggest fundraising campaign to save this area that we have ever done at BROZ.**

This extensive 42-hectare wetland borders the Natura 2000 site and was originally part of the extensive Čiližské marsh system. However, mistakenly does not belong to any protected area, so until BROZ became the official owner, the land was allowed for unrestricted agricultural use. In practice, this means that until recently a monoculture of corn was cultivated there.

With no money to buy the land of the future wetland, we decided to try a public collection. Temporarily we had to borrow from our other sources, which would be legitimately lacking in the functioning of the organization. But with good

intentions, we took a risk and it seems to have paid off. Currently, we have reached more than 85% of the target amount from over 800 donors, which is proof that the public and our supporters recognize the importance of wetland conservation for biodiversity and the climate. The campaign is still running and we are still raising money to save this wetland.

You can still support the saving of the wetland here: <https://broz.darujme.sk/save-a-wetland/>

As the owner, we have already applied to the State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic for the inclusion of the land in the Natura 2000 network. Also, we are planning further systematic steps to protect it.

Near the wetland, there are reed-sedge marshes inhabited by the European root vole (*Microtus oeconomus mehelyi*) - an endemic vole that has survived in our country since the Ice Age. It is a small, charismatic species of vole that lives exclusively in wetlands and feeds on a wetland grass species - sedge. In addition to our root vole, which will inevitably expand into the new 42-hectare wetland - which will certainly help to increase and stabilize its population- it is a suitable habitat

for many species that seek out refuge in the deserted agricultural land.

Wetlands in agricultural landscapes are a refuge for many amphibians that live in them all year round, for many birds that hunt in them - herons, white storks, rare black storks, and other species, but also for many dragonflies and aquatic invertebrates, which are the basis of the food chain for this habitat.

At the same time, areas that are not flooded are also important for solitary insects, which are important pollinators. In monoculture landscapes, they do not have enough living space and yet they are very much needed. In addition, the biomass and its root system in unmanaged land

are necessary for soil bacteria, which, after chemical interventions in the surrounding fields, have the opportunity to spread from such places into the almost dead agricultural landscape and improve its soil structure. The more such islands of biodiversity we have in the landscape, and the denser they are, the better for its possible recovery and health.

As far as the wider surroundings of the site are concerned, the distance to the nearest wetland called Bahno is up to 4 km as the crow flies, which is a good illustration of the changes that this wetland landscape of the Danube region has undergone. The area of the Bahno wetland is just under 15 hectares. To give you a better idea, the surrounding intensively farmed fields are roughly 50 - 100 hectares.





We promoted and communicated our projects and activities

A successful organization also involves proper communication and promotion. That is why in 2022, we've devoted time and energy to effective online and offline communication.

Informative posts on our Facebook and Instagram profiles were seen by more than 1 200 000 people in 2022. In total, we had more than 200 outputs in the media - in both online and print versions of daily newspapers - SME, Aktuality, Denník N, in the RTVS, JOJ and Markiza TV news as well as in several other media outlets.



Pohoda 2022 and the visit of the president in BROZ stand

In the 25th year of the Pohoda festival, the president of the Slovak Republic, Zuzana Čaputová came to visit us at the BROZ stand. She is familiar with our conservation activities and our efforts to continuously improve the environment. She showed her support for us and we, of course, captured this important moment.

"Křídla nad riekou": An Insightful Documentary from the LIFE BeeSandFish Project

The LIFE BeeSandFish Project aims to restore river banks and branches, with a focus on preserving natural habitats of three main bird species – the Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), the European Bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*), and the Sand Martin (*Riparia riparia*) – along the Danube and Morava rivers. This June, the project released "Wings above the river," a 28-minute documentary offering

a glimpse into the lives of these river dwellers.

The film highlights the delicate relationship between humans and the natural landscape, emphasizing the importance of preserving the wilderness and restoring the rivers to their natural state. Through the lens of documentarist Braňo Molnár, viewers get a deeper understanding of these fascinating creatures and their vital role in our ecosystem.





Mossy Earth: Spreading the word through viral videos of shared conservation activities

Our partners and supporters from Mossy Earth have created several viral videos about our shared project's water supply to Istragov. The videos' dynamic presentation of the action has been viewed by millions of people on their YouTube channel. This is an excellent way to spread the word about nature conservation, including our activities abroad.

Check out these videos for more insight:

[We flooded a forest - the result blew our minds](#)

[We are flooding a forest - here's why What Happened to the Forest We Flooded?](#)

Discover valuable natural areas with Lesmír App

Lesmír is a mobile app that serves as your guide to engagingly exploring natural areas. We were approached by the creators of Lesmír to collaborate on two trails located in areas where we have restoring and active for a long time - **at the Veľkolský island and on Devínska Kobyla.** Both locations are available in the app, so why not download it and get captivated by the trails? There's so much to uncover!

You can download trails here:

[Devínska Kobyla](#)

[Veľkolélský ostrov](#)





“After Us the Flood” documentary screenings in schools

As part of our Climate Game On communication project, we have collaborated with director Dorota Vlnova and HITCHHIKER Cinema to produce a documentary film entitled **After Us the Flood**, which highlights the ongoing climate crisis in Slovakia.

Over the past year, we have screened this film at several summer festivals and schools. **14 festivals in particular, where more than 400 people attended the**

screenings. At the school screenings, we worked with lecturers from the SOSNA Ecocenter in Košice and another external lecturer who covered schools in Zvolen and the surrounding area. Since November, when we started the screenings, **over 170 pupils** have attended and the discussions with them have been very fruitful. We have feedback that pupils have little information about climate change in schools and are interested in learning more seriously about the issues. We are pleased that our film serves this purpose.





We launched the “Living country” project

In 2022, we have fully launched the program called Living country. It aims to raise the profile, reward, and connect farmers who care about the state of the land they farm. And it doesn't have to be only those who follow strict organic farming standards. The primary criteria for us is a visible desire to make farming more sensitive than big businesses, whose main focus is profit maximization, regardless of the consequences. For example extensive grazing in protected areas, soil regeneration, no-till farming, water retention in the landscape, or producing fruit

or vegetables without excessive doses of pesticides.

To raise the profile of nature-friendly farms, we created a map on www.krajinaziva.sk where consumers can easily find responsible local producers. Last year, we also organized the naughty year of the Living country Award. We visited the registered farms in June with an expert committee of ecologists, ornithologists, hydrobiologists, landscapers, and pedologists. After getting to know their work and practices, we finally decided to award all six participating farms, as each of them had shown a commitment to creating and maintaining a living landscape. The winning farms received a plaque from us and the opportunity to display the logo and slogan of the program on their products. In addition, we



made them known through videos and posts on our website and social media.

The second part of the program is targeted to the farmers involved. Through various seminars, discussions, and practical excursions, we want to connect them with colleagues with similar approaches to farming, help them solve practical problems, educate each other, and improve their knowledge of how to farm with respect to life and biodiversity.



"In our view, nature-friendly farming and its benefits for the land receive little attention. In addition, many honest farmers encounter a number of systemic and bureaucratic obstacles that in many cases restrict their farming activities. We aim to contribute to changing this situation and to raise the profile of farms that see a favorable state of the land as one of their key priorities."



Katka Klimová
project manager





Veľkolélsky island

Long-term shared efforts of professional conservationists from BROZ, local residents, and farmers in restoring and protecting the valuable Danube floodplain area have been established under the trademark of Ekofarma Ostrov (Ecofarm Ostrov). It provides care for the Veľkolélsky island and the surrounding protected areas. It provides services in the field of ecotourism and environmental education and provides jobs for local people. All revenues are used for nature protection, animal welfare, land management, and bringing the experience from the protected area closer to the visitors. See our offer at [https:// www.ekofarma.sk/](https://www.ekofarma.sk/)

Veľký Lel hosted six summer camp tours during July and August. The camps offered a variety of exciting activities, including environmental education, horseback riding, and exploring the stunning Veľkolélsky island.

This year, our Ekofarm and Veľkolélsky island, among its visitors, also welcomed various media outlets and notable figures. Thanks to their involvement, the island is garnering more attention and increasing popularity.

Veľkolélsky island is one of our iconic locations, which is precisely why we often use this place to promote our activities. Visitors

will find here all kinds of conservation efforts in which we are involved.

Herds of animals grazing on the island's meadows help preserve and restore insect and plant biodiversity. The meadows are, therefore, delightfully chirping and buzzing throughout the season. In the floodplain forests at the island, we are restoring the native tree species - planting black, white, and gray poplars, but also ash, oak, and fruit trees. In this way, we are replacing non-native species of cultivated (commercial) poplars planted by forest managers in the past, which do not fulfill critical ecological functions.



The mosaic of The Danubian Lowland is beautifully complemented by the willow trees towering over the Veľkolélske river branch and the wet meadows. And besides that, there is water all around, as this Danube island's essence suggests. But it was not always this way. Until recently, the Veľkolélske river branch was full of sediments, and the flowing water occurred there at limited times of the year. We implemented a series of measures in the branch

system in 2013 - 2015 and 2022 to restore and improve the flow by dredging and reconnecting it to the Danube river, bringing back many fish and birds. In addition to restoring the branch itself, we have also restored the wetlands inside the island with a simple trick - we have changed the slope of the channel that once served the shepherds for drainage. Now, it brings water from the arm into the wetlands at higher flows,

and we hold it at the island for a longer part of the year.

Come and stroll around the island, explore its wonders and let your senses be the judge of what captivates you the most.





Collaboration with partners and institutions in Slovakia

The form of our work is collaborative rather than confrontational. We strive to build partnerships and collaborators rather than competitors.

Our organic partners with whom we implement some of our shared projects are, e.g., the State Nature Protection of the Slovak Republic, the Research Institute of Water Management, the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Comenius University in Bratislava, National Forest Centre of the Slovak Republic,

Water Management Construction state enterprise, Slovak Water Management state enterprise, and others.

To implement our activities, we also seek agreements and cooperation with other entities and interest groups - foresters, fishermen, hunters, farmers, towns, villages, local inhabitants, conservation associations, and initiatives.

Achieving objectives in this way is not always easy. However, such results have the best chance

of widespread acceptance and long-term existence. Successes, where someone wins and loses, may be of rather temporary duration. We are trying, together with partners, to find win-win solutions that are good for everyone and, first and foremost, for nature.

International cooperation

In 2022, we worked extensively on our ongoing projects with several foreign partners, mainly from Hungary, Austria, the Czech Republic, and other EU countries. To protect the European root vole, we are collaborating with the Nationalpark Neusiedler See Seewinkel from Austria and our partner Pisztráng Kör from Hungary. Another cross-border partner is from the Czech Republic - Czech Union for Nature Conservation; together, we are working on insect conservation in the White Carpathians.

We cooperate on the Dynamic Life Lines Danube connectivity restoration project with our Austrian partner, the water operator ViaDonau, and the Donau-Auen Nationalpark.

We also worked with Donau-Auen Nationalpark in 2022 on another shared project to improve the condition of rivers, tributaries of the Danube and Morava rivers and their connectivity - the Alpine-Carpathian river Corridor, in which we implemented the restoration of the Rudava river.

Conservation efforts for protecting the European ground squirrel cover the cooperation with an organization from the Czech Republic - ALKA Wildlife - and a partner from Poland - Polskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Przyrody "Salamandra."

Our most extensive partnership is the LIFE WILDIsland project for protecting and restoring the Danube islands. Our partners are organizations from all the Danube countries in Europe - 14 partner

organizations in total: Alsó-Duna-völgyi Vízügyi Igazgatóság (Lower Danube Valley Water Directorate) (HU), BROZ, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (RO), Duna-Dráva Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság (HU), Duna-Ipoly Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság (HU), Fertő Hanság Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság (HU), Hrvatske šume limited liability company, Croatian Forests ltd. (HRK), Javna ustanova „Park prirode Kopački rit“ (HRK), Persina Nature Park Directorate (BG), REGIA NAȚIONALĂ A PADURILOR ROMSILVA RA – SUCURSALA DIRECȚIA SILVICĂ TULCEA (RO), Uniper Kraftwerke GmbH (DE), VERBUND Hydro Power GmbH (AT), Javno Preduzede „Vojvodinašume“ (SRB), Via donau – Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH (AT).





To fellow colleagues for further education

To succeed in complex international projects, looking for new ideas and getting inspired by examples of good practices from abroad is essential. This is why we have undertaken several study visits to our international partners and affiliated organizations in 2022.

In September, we were in the Czech Republic to admire the 2.5 km long section of the river Bečva between Černotín and Skalička, which was restored by the state enterprise Povodí Moravy (Morava River

Basin). The latter not only removed the bank fortifications but even had the elevated material taken away from the banks, thus allowing the river to actively form its channel, which has resulted, among other things, in the creation of side branches, which are essential factors in mitigating and possible flood surge.

At Schallemersdorf in Austria, we saw the restored dynamics of a river branch that took away a hectare of forest in a flood. Still, local stakeholders consider this to be natural. In German Bavaria, near Ettling, they explained why rebuilding the entire river branch and restoring the missing gravel benches below the dam were necessary.



"In the field of nature conservation, I consider fundamental the importance to strive for common direction and dialogue between the various active actors in this field. I see great importance in organizing shared excursions, study trips, networking, and conferences. Every year, my colleagues and I put a lot of energy into this work area, hoping it will lead to a better tomorrow for our environment."



Miriam Miláčková
Executive Director



We are part of Danubeparks network

For 12 years, we have been a proud part of the international network of protected areas along the Danube river - Danubeparks.

With its flow and dynamics, the Danube river creates and connects many valuable territories. In all European countries except Slovakia and Germany, national parks have been declared in these areas. In Slovakia, we have “protected landscape areas” and several small-scale protected areas in these parts. In 2010, the Danube National Park Authorities (or relevant stakeholders on the Danube river) came together

to form the Danubeparks network, which was established to share Danube-wide nature conservation and address the challenges facing these areas.

Within the Danubeparks partnership, of which we have been a proud member since its inception, we have implemented several large conservation projects since 2010 and are currently working together on another Danube-wide project focusing on the Danube islands, LIFE WILDisland.

In November, we had a meeting in Danubeparks in Linz, Austria, where board members were elected within the association. One of them was the chairman of BROZ, Tomáš Kušík.

Support from companies and individuals

Mossy Earth

Also, in 2022, we enjoyed excellent international cooperation. Not only with institutions from neighboring countries, which are dedicated to protecting the Danube river, or the protection of rare species, but also with organizations that fundraise for organizations like us and finance, for example, tree planting or wetland restoration. One such fundraising organization is Mossy Earth, which works based on individual donors from around the world and their contributions,

which fund several conservation and restoration projects in many countries worldwide.

From tree planting, which we first began with as part of our shared activities, through direct species conservation - trapping the European ground squirrels and protecting turtle hatchlings - to the biggest shared project that Mossy Earth has funded in 2022, which is the dredging of the water supply channel into the Istragov wetland.





Protected species on socks or cooperation with the Dedoles company

For the second time, we joined forces with Dedoles, a company known for its cheerful products. After their first collaboration - tree planting in the floodplain forests - they focused on raising awareness about rare animal species in Slovakia.



"The idea to create a collection with endangered species came up during an excursion in the floodplain forests, which conservationists from BROZ. The team showed us how the planted forests are doing and what they are doing for nature protection. They identified several species that are still surviving in our area, but the conditions for them are not suitable due to human interference," says Jana Hrubcová, Sustainability Manager of Dedoles.

Many people in Slovakia are familiar with the ground squirrel or kingfisher. Still, only a few realize these endangered species are disappearing from the country due to human activity. That's why Dedoles and BROZ decided to bring endangered species into

people's lives through socks and highlight the issue of biodiversity loss in the nature around us. To raise the profile of the joint collection, Dedoles launched an intensive communication campaign, Endangered Species, which ran in the European countries where Dedoles was active in the market at the time, from 16 to 22 May 2022.

"Due to the abandonment of grazing, expansion of monoculture fields, loss of natural forests, or drying up of wetlands in Slovakia, biodiversity has significantly declined, and the number of originally common plant and animal species has become rare in nature," explains Tomáš Kušík, chairman of BROZ. The Endangered Species collection highlights species no longer usually seen in nature.

The socks depict the European ground squirrel (*Spermophilus citellus*), The black stork (*Ciconia nigra*), The common kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), The European bee-eater (*Merops apiaster*), *Ophrys apifera* orchid and European common blue (*Polyommatus icarus*).

In addition to selling socks within the campaign, Dedoles has also published information about each rare species on its website (in all languages). People could thus learn more about the specific causes of these species' decline and possible solutions to protect them and increase biodiversity in Slovak nature.



SPP Foundation

In 2022, our activities were supported by the SPP Foundation, to which we presented several proposals for a possible joint project at the kick-off meeting. They liked our systematic activities in the inland Danube Delta the most. Since we had the highest number of activities this year at Istragov, they supported planting 2 600 trees and dredging part of the canal which feeds the wetland.

Telekom Foundation

This year, we followed up on last year's cooperation with the Telekom Foundation along with the Pontis Foundation. With their financial support, we restored 10 ha of wetlands on Istragov, cleaned the surroundings of our farm on Velkolélský island and a part of the Čiližský brook near the former landfill near Velký Meder.





Charity pop up dinner by chef Michal Kordoš

Forms of support from companies and individuals are truly limitless. An excellent example of this was the haute-cuisine dinner organized by Chef Michal Kordoš in December 2022, where he donated the profits he raised through ticket sales to the event to our conservation efforts and contributed to our SAVE A WETLAND campaign. We greatly appreciate it as it can also be an inspiring example for people in other industries to support causes indirectly and innovatively.





Volunteering for BROZ

Several volunteer events were also held in 2022. Perhaps the most important of these was the cleaning of the **Čiližský brook**, which also flows alongside the landfill in Veľký Meder. The event took place on a chilly Saturday in November, and in addition to our colleagues, **over 30 volunteers** supported it. The Čiližský brook is not only an essential biocorridor of the Danube lowlands but also connects the habitats of the European rote vole, which we are protecting within the framework of our Pannonian vole habitat restoration project. Volunteers and conservationists **cleaned up an area of about 200 m²** and took the waste out of the stream bed together.

The landfill that caused the waste in the brook has been closed for a long time, but access to it was restricted entirely only a couple of years ago. During this period, the landfill was unattended, and some people continued to dump their waste at the landfill. So for years, the waste, consisting mainly of tires, concrete blocks, flower pots, and other rubbish, has been falling into this watercourse.

In terms of the number of volunteer actions, most of the following has been carried out within the framework of our LIFE SubPannonic project, in a total of 16, from which we are restoring grazing on dry-loving grassland habitats and clearing sites for several rare plant species (such as *Pulsatilla pratensis* subsp. *bohemica*, *Pulsatilla*

grandis, *Adonis vernalis*, and others). Therefore, these actions aimed at restoring pastures along the entire latitude of Slovakia - from Zemplín to Bratislava.

We worked on the sites of the SAC Pieskovcové chrbty - Drňa, Veľký kopec, Drieňové, but also in the areas of Biskupické floodplains - Stipacie, Gajc, Panský diel, Topoľové hony, even on Ostrovné lúčky. Volunteers helped us in these areas, especially with removing weeds, mowing, and expanding pastures. Among other things, by mowing, raking, and removing invasive Giant goldenrod (*Solidago gigantea*), several sub-pannonic habitats in the area of Biskupice and Danube floodplains have been restored. We also removed more than 300 m of old unused fencing, which was a potential threat not only

to the livestock but also to wildlife. More than 230 female and male volunteers participated in these events in 2022.

An interesting event was also held in November 2022 from the LIFE project Panalp. A group of volunteers embarked on a rescue mission of the critically endangered Red-eyed Hawk butterfly (*Parnassius apollo*), aptly named Mission Apollo. This event was organized in cooperation with the Association For Nature, the International Conservation Group JARO and Administration of the CHKO (Protected Landscape Area) White Carpathians , who

motivated up to 70 volunteers from Slovakia, the Czech Republic and France, who worked in the nature reserves of Babiná near Bohunice near Prusko and Vršatské bradlá. The volunteers removed volunteer trees and non-native, invasive trees and cleared approximately 1 hectare of habitat for this critically endangered species.

Even the ground squirrels received assistance from dedicated volunteers, primarily involved in providing food for them and monitoring predators or any undesired activities within the ground squirrel territories.

Volunteers have also been involved in our educational events. From the project Deliver, several workshops were organized for pupils in schools in Bratislava. The pupils helped us to improve the school grounds, pick up rubbish or install birdhouses. From this project, we regularly plant shrubs and trees. Also, in 2022, we reinforced the city districts with new shrubs, 153 in total, with the help of 28 volunteers.





New projects

LIFE Metamorphosis Project -
Establishment of proven butterfly
conservation practices in Central
and Eastern Europe

The project started on the 1st
of September, 2023, and its
activities are planned to continue
until the 31st of March, 2029.

The project is aimed
at the conservation of 15 species
of butterflies listed in Annexes II
and IV of the EU Habitats Directive
in Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania.
It is also dedicated
to the conservation of the 6210
dry-loving grass-herb habitat
shrub and scrub vegetation
on the calcareous substrate,
which represents important
habitats for rare species
of the Orchidaceae family.

**5 organizations are working
together on the project:
the coordinating beneficiary
of the project is us - BROZ -
and the project partners are
the State Nature Protection
of the Slovak Republic,
Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania
in Romania, Órségí Nemzeti
Park in Hungary and the
Institute of Zoology of the
Slovak Academy of Sciences.**

Project activities include, e.g.,
removal of volunteer trees, grazing
and mowing of grasslands,
creation of broad transitional
habitats between grasslands
and forests, creation of wetlands
and places with exposed soil,
planting butterfly food plants,
and taking care to ensure long-
term habitat management
and sustainability in cooperation
with local communities

and stakeholders. By mapping
target species, we will obtain
scientific data, particularly the
genetic structure of populations.
Further, it will be possible
to restore locally extinct
populations by releasing artificially
raised individuals or translocating
individuals from sufficiently strong
populations. The project will also
raise stakeholder and public
awareness of the target species,
conservation measures, and their
importance through a school
program, educational films,
volunteer events, guided tours, or
information boards. Best practices
in butterfly conservation will be
replicated with stakeholders
at project sites and beyond.

LIFE Living Rivers

The LIFE Living Rivers Project Implementation of the Slovak Water Plan in selected river basins is focused on the implementation of the Slovak Water Plan in the river basins of the Danube, Hron, Ipeľ, and Belá rivers. The aim is to ensure good ecological status/ good ecological potential of waters in 10 water bodies and thus improve a total of 344 km of watercourses through hydro morphological measures, appropriate care protected areas, restoring floodplain forests and non-forest habitats, ensuring that barriers to fish migration are removed, and fish populations are strengthened.

The project started in January 2023, and its activities will run until the end of 2032. It involves 10 partners from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, as well as experts from various fields: water managers, scientists, employees of state institutions, and NGOs working in the field of practical nature conservation.





LIFE 4 Steppe Birds

The project is aimed at the protection and restoration of habitats that represent potentially suitable habitats for ten selected species of birds of European importance: Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*), The European roller (*Coracias garrulus*), Common redshank (*Tringa totanus*), The pied avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), The garganey (*Spatula querquedula*), The red-footed

falcon (*Falco vespertinus*), The Eurasian scops owl (*Otus scops*), The tawny pipit (*Anthus campestris*), The lesser grey shrike (*Lanius minor*), The red-backed shrike (*Lanius collurio*).

The project areas are mostly wet and dry steppe habitats with shallow wetlands degraded by intensive agriculture, inappropriate management, or, on the contrary, lack of appropriate management. Currently, the unfavorable condition of selected habitats

persists in the long term, leading to declining populations of selected bird species or complete abandonment of the habitats. The project's key objective is to reduce the strong negative impact on the target species and their habitats by setting up appropriate management measures such as the restoration of extensive grasslands, restoration of the water regime and wetlands, and the creation of breeding opportunities for the target species.

We celebrated 25 years of BROZ and 30 years of LIFE

In April 2022, BROZ celebrated 25 years since its establishment. Bratislava Regional Conservation Association was founded on 1. 4. 1994 by five conservationists. Since then, we have grown and moved our activities from the Bratislava area and the Danube region to territories nearly around the entire Slovakia.

Together, we have implemented many projects from various grant schemes, the most important of which are **23 projects supported by the LIFE program. Within these projects, we have restored over**

1 000 hectares of meadows and pastures, 1 200 hectares of wetlands, 70 km of river channels, and planted 120 000 trees within floodplain forests alone.

In addition to these practical measures, we have had numerous meetings with state institutions and authorities and worked with them on various strategic concepts on nature conservation issues, commented on a number of laws, drafted programs for the management of protected areas, and submitted proposals within the framework of a number

of procedures related to nature, its interventions or its protection. In 25 years, quite a lot has been done. We are pleased that our activity has been possible, owing to, and sometimes despite, collaboration with various institutions, as well as governmental bodies and private sectors.

So, we celebrated our 25 years of efforts and achievements accordingly. Where else than on the Danube river?

Congratulations also to the LIFE program, which celebrated its



30th anniversary this year and with whose support most of the measures mentioned above for Natura 2000 sites and Slovak nature could have happened.

It is not easy to succeed in an international grant competition. Still, we are proof that it can be done and that this grant scheme is set up both logically and practically and, in many ways, much more straightforward than internal grant schemes within Slovakia.

We keep our fingers crossed for other organizations and state institutions, too, so that we can continue to utilize such European resources for our nature in the future.





Lands for nature conservation

At BROZ, we can guarantee permanent nature protection within the areas we lease in the long-term, having in management or ownership.

As part of our work, we also devote considerable effort to securing land in protected areas, primarily through ownership, but also through long-term lease. The first piece of land was purchased by BROZ in 2005. It was a corner of a field with an area of 3 057 m² in the Protected Landscape Area of the Danube floodplains in Bratislava - Čunovo, which we subsequently started to convert into a floodplain forest.

Today, BROZ owns about 1,000 hectares of land in protected

areas, with another 1,600 hectares in long-term leases, mostly for 30 years. The Danube region and the area of Danube floodplains have been our priority since the beginning of our activities; therefore, most of our land is located in this region. Thanks to land purchases and leases, we have succeeded in stopping the clearing of native and natural forests and planting native species of trees belonging to floodplain forests instead of monocultures of non-native trees.

Further, to prevent the plowing of protected areas and the expansion of arable land at the expense of nature, to grass up arable land and create meadows and pastures, restore wetlands and flood the surrounding land, or remove stone fortifications

to restore the natural banks of the Danube river.

A permanent or at least long-term relationship with the land allows us to implement ambitious conservation projects and guarantee the long-term sustainability of the results achieved.

We can guarantee this for our donors but also for ourselves. We can carry out conservation measures on "our" land quickly, efficiently, and without unnecessary compromises. This also saves significant time and considerable resources. Whether in personnel expenses, x-years of negotiation, or for the actual implementation of restoration activities, compared to activities on somebody else's land. When restoring watercourses and the

Danube's side branches, we often encounter requests from other entities for various fortifications, paved crossings and bridges for car crossings, etc. These are expensive measures, which can also significantly reduce the results and effectiveness of restoration measures. In the case of other owners, of course, we respect their legitimate demands. However, we do not have to make such compromises on our lands.

We have been funding this activity for a long time from various sources. In addition to the European Commission and the LIFE+ Nature financial instrument, we receive support from other foreign and international grants and the citizen's volunteer contribution from 2% of annual income tax. BROZ relies on its own resources and the generous contributions

of many individual donors and supporters who trust in our work. It's important to note that the land purchase is not financed from the state budget of the Slovak Republic or funds allocated by the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic.

Permanent use of these lands for nature conservation purposes is guaranteed multiple times from the purchase contract, through the donors' terms and conditions, to our association's statutes. Ownership of land acquired for conservation purposes and the activities of the BROZ shall be transferred in the event of the dissolution of the BROZ or the inability of the BROZ to manage such land in accordance with the requirements of nature conservation, can only be transferred to a legal entity which operates in particular

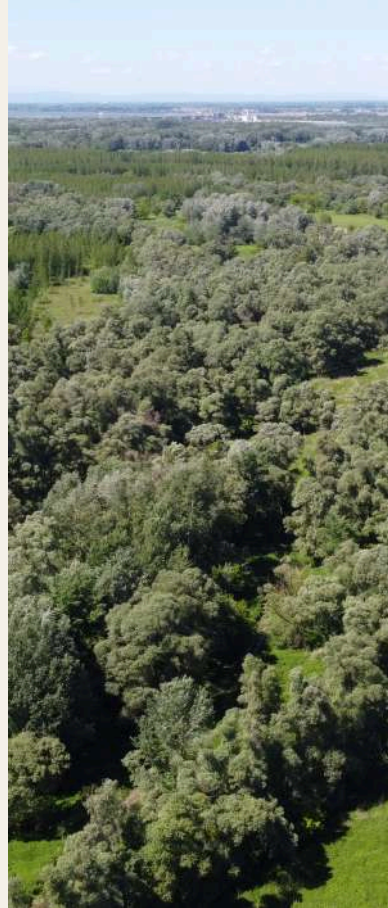
in the care/ protection of the environment, biodiversity, nature, and landscape, while maintaining all the conditions and guarantees the permanent use of such land for nature and landscape conservation purposes.

Yes, BROZ already owns a considerable amount of land in protected areas. This has already become a target of criticism on social networks by various desolates in Slovakia. Worse, it is also the object of envy of some people in the environment ministry. The Slovak Republic has the resources to purchase lands in protected areas and legal instruments, such as the state's right of pre-emption in areas with a third or higher level of nature protection. However, the state cannot yet implement this agenda

effectively and successfully enough.

For those sincerely interested in our work, it is well known that we do and must address nature conservation through the land. This is just further confirmation that we are serious about nature conservation. We do not 'take' the money we raise but invest it in lasting solutions to benefit nature conservation. And that is also the land purchase from private owners in protected areas.

We are accountable to our members, donors and supporters, auditors, and various control mechanisms. All necessary information and documents are available to them. However, we are not accountable to the shouters on social media, the anonymous, and the liars whose interest is not



to learn the facts but to purposely create a negative image of conservation associations.

In terms of the character of the land, the largest part is made up of floodplain forests. This is followed by meadows and pastures, wetlands, and water areas. We also buy arable land, which we then change, restore, and turn into nature by grassing or even (partial) flooding.

The sustainability of regular management activities following the completion of projects (such as mowing, grazing, and trimming of head willows, etc.) is ensured through our own limited liability company (s.r.o.). We carry out the work with our own equipment but also by subcontracting. For land management, we try to draw agricultural subsidies from The

Agricultural Paying Agency (APA), including payments for agri-environment, ecology, etc. This is entirely in line with the LIFE projects, where already in the project proposal, we mention this funding source as part of ensuring long-term sustainability.

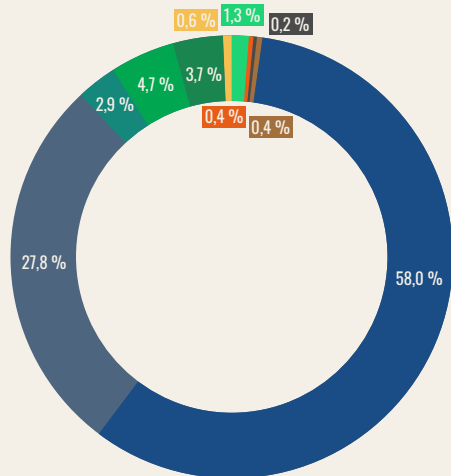
Many small locations, now only fragments of the original habitats and large natural areas, cannot be economically independent and viable in today's system because of their size and character. Protecting their outstanding natural values and biodiversity, therefore, requires external financial resources in the long term. A notable example of our work is, for example, the Veľkolélský island on the Danube river, which we have been taking care of since 2006.

Financing in 2022

Revenue 2022

4 807 985,23 € 100 %

Revenue from main activities	60 653,25	1,3 %
Contributions received from legal entities, grants, donations	17 100,00	0,4 %
Contributions received from individuals, donations	10 703,61	0,2 %
Contributions from the share of tax paid 2 %	18 569,38	0,4 %
Grant Programme LIFE - EC*	2 790 299,98	58,0 %
Grant Programme LIFE - MŽP	1 336 727,92	27,8 %
Grant Programme DEAR	141 646,77	2,9 %
Grant Programme Interreg	226 844,28	4,7 %
Grant Programme OPKZP	176 197,59	3,7 %
Grant Programme NFM	29 242,45	0,6 %

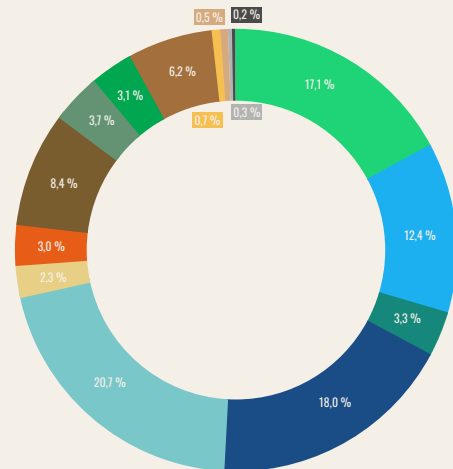


* LIFE projects are awarded in an EU-wide competition from hundreds of applicants across the EU. This money is not allocated or claimable for specific countries. It will only go to the best performers, based on an independent scoring process. Around 20% of the applications submitted are approved. If our projects are not successful, the money is spent in other EU member states and not here in Slovakia.

Expenditure 2022

4 808 049,16 € 100 %

Grazing - preparation of grazing sites, fencing, fodder, animal care and veterinary services	822 487,17 €	17,1%
Wetland restoration and water restorations - Rudava river, Sulianské branch, Istragov, etc.	595 835,00 €	12,4%
Floodplain forests restoration - purchase, planting and care of seedlings	156 734,65 €	3,3%
EC contributions to partner organizations in LIFE projects	867 035,90 €	18,0%
Staff and external collaborators - 79 people	997 644,93 €	20,7%
External consultants, experts, forest managers, surveyors, experts, legal services, translation, interpretation	112 147,98 €	2,3%
Training and communication, volunteer events, meetings with stakeholders	143 104,42 €	3,0%
Purchase and lease of land for nature conservation	404 465,60 €	8,4%
Travel allowances, petrol consumption, machinery repairs and spare parts	176 887,92 €	3,7%
BROZ overheads	150 312,75 €	3,1%
Depreciation of assets - machinery, vehicles, stables, animals, etc.	299 980,77 €	6,2%
Other services: energy, software support, transport, postage	31 272,94 €	0,7%
Consumables	25 022,65 €	0,5%
Bank, administrative fees, property insurance, exchange rate losses	14 316,48 €	0,3%
Audit	10 800,00 €	0,2%





Our projects

Project acronym

[BeeSandFish](#)

[Zo života hmyzu](#)

[Dunajske luhy](#)

[Deliver](#)

[CZ-SK SOUTH LIFE](#)

Full name of the project

Restoration of nesting and feeding habitats of Sand Martin, Kingfisher and European Bee-eater in Danube-Morava region

Conservation of selected Natura 2000 insect species in the cross-border region (CZ-SK) of the Western Carpathians

Restoration and management of Danube floodplain habitats LIFE14 NAT/SK/001306

Human settlements as living places resilient to climate change

Optimizing the management of NATURA 2000 sites in the South Bohemian Region and southern Slovakia

Project duration

1. 1. 2014 - 30. 6. 2022

1. 7. 2017 - 31. 12. 2022

1. 8. 2015 - 31. 1. 2024

15. 6. 2018 - 31. 12. 2023

1. 9. 2017 - 30. 6. 2024

BROZ 2022 budget

356 177,65

226 706,58

238 666,40

52 774,79

411 028,53

BROZ status

coordinating beneficiary

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = AOPK Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic (Czech Republic)

coordinating beneficiary

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = Karlova Ves municipality (Slovak Republic)

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = South Bohemia Region (Czech Republic)

Project partners

VÚVH - Water Research Institute
VV - Water Management Construction, state enterprise
PříFUK - Faculty of Natural Sciences, Comenius University

ZO ČSOP Bílé Karpaty (Czech Republic)
ČSOP Salamandr (Czech Republic)
Vzdělávací a informační středisko Bílé Karpaty - Education and Information Centre Bílé Karpaty (Czech Republic)
Infinity Progress (Czech Republic)

VÚVH - Research Institute of Water Management
VV - Water Management Construction, state enterprise
NLC - Národné lesnícke centrum (National Forestry Centre)
DINPD - Duna-Ipoly Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság - Directorate of the Danube-Ipel National Park (Hungary)

CDI=Carpathian Development Institute
CI2, o.p.s. (Czech Republic)
IEPD=Institute for Passive Houses

ZO ČSOP ONYX (Czech Republic)
Regional school management office (Czech Republic)
SNC SR = State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic



Project acronym

[SubPannonic](#)

[Microtus II](#)

[DLLD](#)

[Panalp](#)

Full name of the project

Conservation of subpannonic dry grassland habitats and species

Restoration of habitats for root vole *Microtus oeconomus mehelyi*

Dynamic LIFE Lines Danube

Restoration of drought-loving herbaceous communities in the contact area of the Pannonian and Alpine bioregions

Project duration

1. 9. 2018 - 31. 12. 2024

1. 9. 2018 - 31. 8. 2025

15. 7. 2019 - 30. 6. 2026

1. 9. 2020 - 28. 2. 2027

BROZ 2022 budget

342 759,38

461 269,08

330 296,94

290 637,96

BROZ status

coordinating beneficiary

coordinating beneficiary

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = Via Donau - Österreichische Wasserstraßen- Gesellschaft GmbH (Austria)

coordinating beneficiary

Project partners

ČSOPK – ONYX (Czechia)
SNC SR = State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic

VÚVH - Water Research Institute
Comenius University in Bratislava
State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC SR)
EDUVIZIG-Észak-dunántúli Vízügyi Igazgatóság – North-Transdanubian Water Directorate (Hungary)
Pisztráng Kör Waldorf Természetvédő és Természejáró Egyesület – Trout Circle Association (Hungary)
Nationalparkgesellschaft Neusiedler See – Seewinkel – National park Neusiedler See – Seewinkel (Austria)

National park Donau Auen (Austria)
WWF Austria (Austria)
NLC = Slovak National Forest Center
PRIFUK = Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Natural Sciences

DINPD = Duna-Ípoly Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság - Duna-Ípoly National Park Directorate (Hungary)
PP - Píliši Parkerdo Zártkörűen Működő Reszvénytársaság) - Pilis Park Forestry Company (Hungary)
SNC SR = State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic



Project acronym

[Sysel'](#)

[Wildisland](#)

[Metamorphosis](#)

Full name of the project

Conservation of European Ground Squirrel

WILDisland – Danube Wild Island Habitat Corridor

Developing best practices in butterfly conservation in Central and Eastern Europe

Project duration

1. 9. 2020 – 31. 12. 2027

1. 9. 2021 - 31. 8. 2027

1. 9. 2022 - 31. 3. 2029

BROZ 2022 budget

331 952,17

65 114,29

50 593,92

BROZ status

coordinating beneficiary

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = Nationalpark Donau-Auen GmbH (Austria)

coordinating beneficiary

Project partners

ALKA Wildlife, o.p.s. (Czechia)
 Polskie Towarzystwo Ochrony Przyrody "Salamandra" (Poland)
 SNC SR = State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
 National Zoo Bojnice
 PRIFUK = Comenius University Bratislava, Faculty of Natural Sciences

Alsó-Duna-völgyi Vízügyi Igazgatóság (Lower Danube Valley Water Directorate) (Hungary)
 Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve Authority (Romania)
 Duna-Dráva Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság (Hungary)
 Duna-Ipoly Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság (Hungary)
 Fertő Hanság Nemzeti Park Igazgatóság (Hungary)
 Hrvatske šume limited liability company, Croatian Forests ltd. (Croatia)
 Javna ustanova „Park prirode Kopački rit“ (Croatia)
 Persina Nature Park Directorate (Bulgaria)
 REGIA NAȚIONALĂ A PADURILOR ROMSILVA RA – SUCURSALA DIRECȚIA SILVICĂ TULCEA (Romania)
 Uniper Kraftwerke GmbH (Germany)
 VERBUND Hydro Power GmbH (Austria)
 Javno Preduzeće „Vojvodinašume“ (Serbia)
 Via donau – Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH (Austria)

State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic (SNC SR)
 Fundatia ADEPT Transilvania (Romania)
 Őrségi Nemzeti Park (Hungary)
 Institute of Zoology of the Slovak Academy of Sciences



LIFE 4 STEPPE BIRDS



Project acronym

4 Steppe Birds

IP Living Rivers

AKK Rudava

EU DEAR Game Over

Full name of the project

Conservation and return of steppe birds to lowlands of Slovakia

Implementation of the river basin management plan in selected river sub-basins in Slovakia

Alpine Carpathian River Corridor - the habitat network of aquatic organisms in the Slovakian-Austrian border area

Game On! Don't let climate change end the game

Project duration

1. 12. 2022 - 30. 11. 2028

1. 1. 2023 - 31. 12. 2032

1. 9. 2017 - 31. 8. 2022

1. 11. 2019 - 31. 10. 2023

BROZ 2022 budget

0,00

0,00

232 143,96

157 385,30

BROZ status

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = SOS/Birdlife Slovakia - Slovak ornithological Society

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = VÚVH - Water Research Institute

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = Nationalpark Donau-Auen GmbH (Austria)

project partner, coordinating beneficiary = CEEweb for Biodiversity (Hungary)

Project partners

SOS/Birdlife Slovakia - Slovak ornithological Society

Ministry of Environment = MoE
Slovak Water Management Enterprise, state enterprise = SWME
SNC SR = State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
WWF = WWF Slovakia
Catch Me if You Can = CM
University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice (Czechia)
Administration of the Tatra National Park = TANAP
VV - Water Management Construction, state enterprise

SNC SR = State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic
Schwechat Wasserverband (Austria)
Stadtgemeinde Fischamend (Austria)
Österreichische Bundesforste AG (Austria)
Via donau – Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft mbH (Austria)

Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (Bulgaria)
Latvijas Dabas fonds (Lithuania)
Lithuanian Fund for Nature (Latvia)
Milvus Group (Romania)
Na myslí (Czechia)
National Society of Conservationists - MTVSZ (Hungary)
PersonaR (Hungary)
Romero Initiative (Germany)

Project acronym	Full name of the project	Project duration	BROZ 2022 budget	BROZ status	Project partners
Korytnačka	Protection of the European pond turtle (<i>Emys orbicularis</i>) in selected localities of southern Slovakia	15. 3. 2020 - 31. 12. 2023	185 471,15	project BROZ	-
Nórsky fond Warrior	Wetlands for life and prosperity	1. 2. 2022 - 22. 6. 2024	30 862,58	project partner, coordinating beneficiary = Green Foundation	NINA=Norsk Institutt for naturforskning (Norway)

SPRÁVA NEZÁVISLÉHO AUDÍTORA

31. 12. 2022

Bratislavské regionálne ochrannárske združenie
Na Rivière 7/A
841 04 Bratislava

D.P.F., spol. s r.o.
Ekonomicko-písateľská a auditorská spoločnosť

SPRÁVA NEZÁVISLÉHO AUDÍTORA

Štatutárnemu orgánu občianskeho združenia Bratislavské regionálne ochrannárske združenie,
Na Rivière 7/A, 841 04 Bratislava

SPRÁVA Z AUDITU ÚČTOVNEJ ZÁVIERKY

Názor

Ukážoňu sme audit účtovnej závierky občianskeho združenia Bratislavské regionálne ochrannárske združenie („Organizácia“), ktorú obsahuje súvahu k 31. decembru 2022, výkaz ziskov a strát za rok končiaci sa k uvedenému dátumu, a poznámky, ktoré obsahujú súhrn významných účtovných zásad a účtovných metód.

Podľa nášho názoru, prílohou účtovnej závierky poskytuje pravdivý a verný obraz finančnej situácie Organizácie k 31. decembru 2022 a výsledku jej hospodárenia za rok končiaci sa k uvedenému dátumu podľa zákona č. 431/2002 Z. z. o účtovníctve v znení neskorších predpisov (ďalej len „zákon o účtovníctve“).

Základ pre názor

Audit sme vykonali podľa medzinárodných auditorských štandardov (International Standards on Auditing, ISA). Náša zodpovednosť podľa týchto štandardov je uvedená v oddelku „Zodpovednosť audítora za audit účtovnej závierky“. Oš Organizácie sme navštívili podľa ustanovení zákona č. 423/2015 o štatutárnom audite a o zisovaní a doplnení záukov č. 431/2002 Z. z. o účtovníctve v znení neskorších predpisov (ďalej len „zákon o štatutárnom audite“) týkajúcich sa útky, vrátane tritického kódexu audítora, relevantných pre náš audit účtovnej závierky a splnili sme aj ostatné požiadavky týchto ustanovení týkajúcich sa útky. Sme presvedčení, že auditorské dôkazy, ktoré sme získali, poskytujú dostatočný a vhodný základ pre náš názor.

Iná skutočnosť

Organizácia nepôsobí veľkonošou kritériá pre povinný audit účtovnej závierky v zmysle zákona o účtovníctve, a teda nemusí ani vypracovať výročnú správu. Pre audit účtovnej závierky sa rozhodla dobrovoľne.

Zodpovednosť štatutárneho orgánu za účtovnú závierku

Štatutárny orgán je zodpovedný za zostavenie tejto účtovnej závierky tak, aby poskytovala pravdivý a verný obraz podľa zákona o účtovníctve a za tie interne kontroly, ktoré považuje za potrebné na zostavenie účtovnej závierky, ktorá neobsahuje významné nesprávnosti, či sú v dôsledku podvodu alebo chyby.

Prí zostavení účtovnej závierky je štatutárny orgán zodpovedný za zhodnotenie schopnosti Organizácie nepretržite pokračovať vo svojej činnosti, za opísanie skutočností týkajúcich sa nepretržitého pokračovania v činnosti, ak je to potrebné, a za použitie predpokladu nepretržitého pokračovania v činnosti v účtovníctve, i keď by mal v úmysle Organizáciu zlikvidovať alebo ukončiť jej činnosť, alebo by nemal inú realistickú možnosť ne tak urobiť.

Zodpovednosť audítora za audit účtovnej závierky

Nášou zodpovednosťou je získať primerané susedenie, či účtovná závierka ako celok neobsahuje významné nesprávnosti, či sú v dôsledku podvodu alebo chyby, a vydať správu audítora, vrátane názoru. Primerané susedenie je ústretovo vysokého stupňa, ale nie je zárukou toho, že audit vykonaný podľa medzinárodných auditorských štandardov vždy odhalí významné nesprávnosti, ak také existujú. Nesprávnosti môžu vzniknúť v dôsledku podvodu alebo chyby a za významné sa považujú všetky, ak by sa na dalo odôvodnene očakávať, že jednotlivito alebo v súhrne by mohli ovplyvniť ekonomické rozhodnutia používateľov, uskutočnené na základe tejto účtovnej závierky.

V rámci auditu uskutočneného podľa medzinárodných auditorských štandardov, počnúc celého auditu uplatňujeme odborný úsudok a zachovávame profesionálny skepticizmus. Okrem toho:

- Identifikujeme a posudzujeme riziká významnej nesprávnosti účtovnej závierky, či sú v dôsledku podvodu alebo chyby, navrhuje a uskutočňujeme auditorské postupy reagujúce na tieto riziká a získavame auditorské dôkazy, ktoré sú dostatočné a vhodné na poskytnutie základu pre náš názor. Riziko nezodhalenia významnej nesprávnosti v dôsledku podvodu je vyššie ako toto riziko v dôsledku chyby, pretože podvod môže zahŕňať tajnú dohodu, falšovanie, úmyselné vnechovanie, nepravdivé vyhlásenie alebo obdĺenie internej kontroly.
- Obznanujeme sa s internými kontrolami relevantnými pre audit, aby sme mohli navrhnuť auditorské postupy vhodné pre daných okolností, ale nie za účelom vyjadrenia názoru na efektívnosť interných kontrol Organizácie.
- Hodnotíme vhodnosť použitých účtovných zásad a účtovných metód a primeranosť účtovných odhadov a uvedenie a nim súvisiacich informácií, uskutočnené štatutárnym orgánom.
- Robíme záver o tom, či štatutárny orgán vhodne v účtovníctve používa predpoklad nepretržitého pokračovania v činnosti a na základe získaných auditorských dôkazov záver o tom, či existuje významná neistota v súvislosti s realizovaním alebo zlikvidovaním, ktoré by mohli významne spochybniť schopnosť Organizácie nepretržite pokračovať v činnosti. Ak dospjeme k záveru, že významná neistota existuje, sme povinní upozorniť v našej správe audítora na súvisiace informácie uvedené v účtovnej závierke alebo, ak sú tieto informácie nedostatočné, modifikovať náš názor. Naše závery vychádzajú z auditorských dôkazov získaných do dátumu vydania našej správy audítora. Budúce udalosti alebo okolnosti však môžu sponobiť, že Organizácia prestane pokračovať v nepretržitej činnosti.
- Hodnotíme veľkú prezentáciu, štruktúru a obsah účtovnej závierky vrátane informácií v nej uvedených, ako aj to, či účtovná závierka zohľadňuje uskutočnené transakcie a udalosti spôsobom, ktorý vedie k ich vernému zobrazeniu.

Bratislava, 27. jana 2023

D. P. F., spol. s r. o.
Cernicová 6, R51 01 Bratislava
Licencia SKAU č. 140

Obchodný register Okresného súdu
Bratislava I, odd. Sro, vl. č. 23006/B

Ing. Jana Paulenová
Štatutárny audítora
Licencia SKAU č. 442

We thank our partners for their cooperation:

Vúvň Výskumný ústav
vodného
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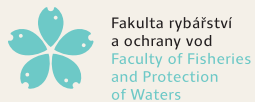
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PERSONAR

We thank the following donors for their financial support:





Your team BROZ