International Course on ECOHYDROLOGICAL APPROACHES TO WISE USE, RESTORATION, MANAGEMENT AND CONSERVATION OF WETLANDS was held in the town of Třeboň, Czech Republic, from 4 - 9 June 2007

Organized by the Czech National Committee for the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme in cooperation with the Czech Ramsar Expert Group and Enki, with a financial support from the UNESCO Participation Programme, Ministry of Environment of the Czech Republic and the Council for International Affairs of the Czech Academy of Sciences

The training course was attended by 23 participants from 15 countries predominantly from the region of Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans and Central Asian Republics. A mix of scientists, protected area managers and NGO representatives met to strengthen their knowledge in ecohydrology as one of the most important aspects in wetland management, restoration and conservation. The course offered a series of lectures and field visits aimed at addressing various management and wetland restoration issues. Open discussion and short presentations of the course participants on projects they are working on helped to develop a team spirit and contributed to the nice atmosphere. A follow–up to the course is envisaged in terms of further courses and potential joint projects amongst the course participants.

Course participants during the field trip to the Sumava National Park and Biosphere Reserve guided by Iva Bufkova (right) showing us a well-preserved and functioning Vltava River floodplain (Vltavsky luh).

Main topics of the course addressed:

- Management of wetlands as stabilizing components of catchments
- Control of hydrological processes as a management tool
- Steering of biogeochemical cycles in wetlands
- Role of wetlands and wetland vegetation in regional water cycling
- Integrated Water Resources Management with respect to wetlands
- Ecohydrological monitoring of water bodies in the context of the EU Water Framework Directive
- Services and livelihood provided by wetland ecosystems
- International cooperation in the field of conservation and wise use of wetlands

The course participants have come from a broad range of professional backgrounds, including botany, zoology, microbiology, ecology, geography and environmental sciences, hydrology, forestry. Participants of the course appreciated the broad range of topics addressed by the course programme which they considered important for being able to successfully implement integrated water resource management as well as wetland conservation, wise use and restoration in their respective countries and\or regions. The programme of lectures was accompanied by field visits (to fishponds, wet meadows and marshes within the Třeboň Basin Biosphere Reserve and Protected Landscape Area, and floodplain wetlands and mires in the Šumava National Park and Biosphere Reserve. The field excursions were guided by managers and also scientists working within the respective sites.

Eddy-covariance method is used to measure gas exchange (CO_2 and water vapour) between the wetland and the atmosphere at Wet Meadows near Trebon. This station is part of the European network of fluxtowers included in the CarboEurope Integrated Project of EU.

Industrially-cut peatbog ‘Soumarsky Most’ some eight years since the peat extraction was finished. In places where the water table has been restored, peat-forming vegetation re-appears quite quickly.

Nevena Kambourova from Bulgaria and Arpine Jenderedjian from Armenia experience the peatland at ‘Soumarsky Most’ (Sumava NP) with their bare feet.

Prepared by Martina Eiseltova