III International Conference of the Baltic Landscape Project

Poznań, 30 September – 3 October, 2013

Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznan
Welcome to the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań

The Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań administers forests which cover the area of over 440,000 hectares. Managing such a large area being of interest for a number of stakeholders, the foresters of the Wielkopolska (Great Poland) region must possess wide knowledge referring not only to forest legislation but also to nature conservation, environmental protection, water laws and other fields. The forest constitutes a property that should be subject of our common care. Generations of forest service staff responsible for making forests accessible to society in a manner not threatening their persistence, sustainable development and biodiversity have provided, with a higher and higher commitment and determination, educational activities for children and young people. By raising social awareness and instilling a sense of responsibility for the environment into the youngest ones, we hope to build a good system of cooperation and partnership in the future.

The importance of forest non-productive functions has been increasing in Europe. It is advisable to derive knowledge about this topic from experiences of other countries and apply ready solutions worked out by them throughout many years. The Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań co-operates with a number of foreign institutions from Germany, Austria and Sweden in the area of forest growing and protection, nature conservation as well as nature and forest education. Why not to broaden our perspective and look across the ocean, at Canada? It is where the Model Forest formula underlining the international Baltic Landscape project comes from. Model Forests enable sustainable use of forested land by specified entities with no harm to forest biodiversity.

Similarly as in the case of Promotional Forest Complexes and their Socio-Scientific Councils, the latter ones composed of representatives of local governments, academics, non-governmental associations and organisations, any plans and activities under Model Forests undergo wide consultations. Variants of solutions for various, often disputable, issues are chosen as a result of consensus. Ready and verified solutions are disseminated and implemented outside the borders of a Model Forest.

It is possible that the State Forests, being under growing pressure from a number of organisations representing mutually conflicting interests, will use the opportunity of developing effective practices based on the Model Forest concept.

Partnership established in the course of works conducted under an objective dialogue platform for interested parties will lead to broadened possibilities of common undertakings and consultations in the near future.

Head of the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznan

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Piotr Grygier
“Baltic Landscape – Innovative Approach towards Forested Landscapes” Conference Programme

9:00 – 9:15 Opening of the conference – Piotr Grygier, Head of the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań

Project’s International Context

9:15 – 9:30 Project objectives, implementation and future prospects – Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Baltic 21
9:30 – 9:45 International and regional importance of the project – Lead Partner – Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences SLU
9:45 – 10:00 Baltic Landscape – general progress and future prospects

Project’s National Context

10.00 – 10.15 Water management issues – Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan. BL Warta (Poznan)
10:15 – 10:35 Coffee break

Examples of Local Problems and Ways of Solving

10:35 – 12:30
- Major challenges in implementation and management of the Natura 2000 network – Warta BL (Poland)
- The Wełna Valley Natura 2000 site – conservation values, challenges and potential solutions – Warta BL (Poland)
- Ways of mapping High Conservation Value Forests (HCVF) with use of satellite data – Ilomantsi Model Forest (Finland)

Partnership in Planning and Management of Landscape

- GIS portal as method of communication and information exchange – Mazury BL (Poland)
- Management of reindeer population – Vilhelmina Model Forest (Sweden)
- Partnership versus development of forest tourism – Warta BL (Poland)
- On-line support for GIS databases – Ilomantsi Model Forest
- Indicators of sustainable development for municipalities – methods and results – Bergslagen BL (Sweden)

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch break
13:30 – 15:30
- Forest - communities, authorities, business – how to build partnership? (Russia)
Approach towards Landscape and Water Management

- Forestry versus melioration in the Neman River Valley – Neman BL (Belarus)
- Co-operation with schools in water resources management in forested landscapes – Helge BL (Sweden)
- Management of European beaver population in landscape – Mazury BL (Poland)
- Water retention and monitoring of small-scale water retention effects – Warta BL (Poland)
- Development of action plans for large rivers – Vilhelmina Model Forest (Sweden)
- Advantages and challenges related to creation of Model Forest

15:30 Closing of the conference
Characterisation of Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań as Partner under the Baltic Landscape Project

The Regional Directorate of the State Forests (the RDSF) in Poznań is one of seventeen similar administrative units separated under the State Forests National Forest Holding (the State Forests) which is the largest in the European Union organisation managing forests owned by the State Treasury. Foresters operate on 24% of the total country’s area, taking care of biodiversity and protecting Polish forests against numerous threats. Forest management carried out according to sustainable development principles provides a raw material – timber to the ecological market, and one of the basic tasks of foresters is making forested landscapes accessible to society. For that purpose, they create tourist, cycling and horse riding routes, forest car parks and recreational areas, as well as professional educational infrastructure that offers a wide range of didactic activities on nature topics.

The State Forests is a self-financing organisation; resources from sale of timber enable forest management that does not require funding from the state budget. Such a forestry model gives a possibility of financing a great number of undertakings on a national scale, for example: scientific research, nature and forest education, preparation of forest management plans, building tourist and recreational infrastructure or nature protection in forested landscapes and works related to forest culture and protection.

The management of the State Forests is based on a three-tier structure:

- General Director of the State Forests
• Regional Director of the State Forests
• Forest Inspector

Forest management

A dominant species in the forests of Wielkopolska (Great Poland) is the Scots pine, *Pinus silvestris* (70% share) which grows in the poorest forest habitats. Other forest species worth mentioning include: the pedunculate oak (*Quercus robur*) and the cornish oak (*Quercus petraea*) which, in local conditions, produce valuable and well-known in Europe raw material for veneer, the black alder (*Alnus glutinosa*), the silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and the European ash (*Fraxinus Excelsior*).

Acquisition of timber is a natural consequence of forestry activities. Timber is an entirely renewable material – young trees are planted as a new forest generation to replace trees that have been cut down. The Directorate is independent in acquiring seeds of tree and shrub species as well as in production of seedlings of all necessary species. The forest inspectorates under the Directorate acquire around 1.6 M cubic metres of timber yearly – this quantity is determined by forest management plans and does not constitute a risk to the persistence of the forest.

The forest management on the territory of the RDSF in Poznań is based, to international standards of forest management, on the PEFC and FSC criteria; we have got certificates from both these organisations.
Natural values

The following nature protection forms managed by foresters and located in the area of the Directorate deserve special attention:

1. Nature reserves (69). Due to subject of protection they are divided as follows:
   - Forest reserves – their objective is to protect forest types and tree species,
   - Floristic reserves – protect stands of vascular plants
   - Fauna reserves – protect stands of rare animals
   - Peatbog reserves
   - Landscape reserves – protect landscape with all its elements.

2. Natural monuments – single formations or communities of animate and inanimate nature of a particular value. There are over 1,000 natural monuments in the forests of the Directorate. They are single trees of a unique size, groups of trees, avenues, erratic boulders and rocks.

3. Landscape parks – areas protected due to their natural, historical and cultural values, for promotion and dissemination of those values in the conditions of reasonable management. The territory of the Directorate comprises 11 landscape parks.

4. Natura 2000
   The area of the Directorate includes 13 Special Protection Areas of birds (77,816 hectares under management of the State Forests) and 33 special areas of conservation of habitats (69,328 hectares under management of the State Forests).

5. On the territory of the Directorate a great number of rare and protected plant species can be found (e.g., spring snowflake Leucojum vernum, royal fern Osmunda regalis and wild service tree Sorbus torminalis) and animals (e.g., white-tailed eagle Haliaetus albicilla, black stork Ciconia nigra and European pond turtle Emys orbicularis).

Data report for 2012.

Promotional Forest Complexes (PFCs)

These are large, compact forest areas located in one or more forest inspectorates. Established on the territory of the whole country they show changeability of habitat conditions, diversity of the forest species composition and multiplicity of its functions. Through the PFCs foresters promote sustainable forest management, support scientific research and carry out forest education for society.

The PFC is the polish equivalent of Model Forests, which are created around the world and based on the Canadian concept.

In the RDSF in Poznań two Promotional Forest Complexes have been established:

1. PFC „Rychtal Forests” – set up in 1996 in the southern part of the Directorate and covering the area of 47,000 hectares.

2. PFC „Noteć Primeval Forest” – set up in 2004 and covering the area of 137,273 hectares, of which 25,000 hectares are located within the Directorate.

Baltic Landscape is another international project implemented by the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań. It is not accidental that we are one of 14 partners from 7 countries: Belarus, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Russia and Sweden. In addition to the Poznań RDSF Polish partners include the University of Life Sciences in Poznań, the RDSF in Olsztyn and the Marshal Office of the WARMIA and Mazury Voivodeship.

How did it start?

In 2003 the RDSF in Poznań received, by agency of the Marshal Office of the Wielkopolska Voivodeship, a proposal to implement a short mini-project on obtaining bio-energy from forest ar-

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The project, entitled „Baltic Forests”, was carried out by two Polish partners with participation of a partner from Russia: Leningradzkaja Oblast (St. Petersburg). It was in 2004. The next edition of the project under a slightly changed name: „Baltic Forest” involved an extended group of 24 partners from 8 countries and was implemented by the RDSF in Poznań in the years 2006-2007. This time the thematic scope was wider and was divided into the following work packages:

- 1: Forest management and production aspects
- 2: Forest ecology and environmental aspects
- 3: Forest social aspects
- 4: Small-scale private and state forestry and forest based SME
- 5: Model forests as a tool for sustainable forest management and regional development.

In 2007 the team of partners interested in the Model Forest subject made a decision about joint implementation of a new project. Possessing certain experience, showing very high activity and understanding of particular topics in undertaken activities and being a reliable organisation, RDSF in Poznań was an ideal partner. After holding a series of meetings and discussions of working groups representing particular partners, selecting main directions of the project implementation and specifying real landscape related problems on which planned activities would focus, the Community Initiative Interreg approved the project application.

What is „Baltic Landscape”?

On 1 January 2012 the RDSF in Poznań started activities within the frame of an interregional European Union programme; the activities will last till 31 March 2014. The project is co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund as a part of the Baltic Sea Region. The RDSF in Poznań implements the following work packages:

- WP 2 – Communication and information in the Project
- WP 3 – Model Forest concept
- WP 4 – New approach to integrated landscape planning as exemplified by Natura 2000 sites
- WP 5 – Tourism and recreation in forest areas
- WP 6 – Water management in water catchment area in forested land

The programme’s objective is to present multifunctional, permanent and diverse management on selected areas. It is meant to support regional development of forests through expansion of transnational model forest network based on the Canadian model which is already well-known worldwide (it has been functioning in several project-partner countries, inter alia, in Sweden and Russia). The Model Forest concept consists in establishing a dialogue platform in an area (landscape) where a conflict occurs. In a discussion on solving a specific problem, all parties involved take part and the effect achieved in this way is transferred onto the whole country. Making use of experiences of the international Model Forest network, the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań has been implementing innovative, sustainable management in selected areas, inviting interested parties to co-operate.

Main areas of interest of the Model Forest organisations worldwide include:

- Science and best practices.
- Sustainable economic development.
- Communication, spreading knowledge, providing information.
- Activation of local communities.
- Establishment of the IMFN (International Model Forest Network).
- Monitoring and assessment of undertaken activities.
- Efficient area management and administration.

The aim of the project is not only to develop international co-operation, gather the best national and foreign practices with respect to development of tourism, promotion of Natura 2000 sites and
solving of problems related to water management in the environment, but also, or maybe first of all, to establish a partnership network mainly on a regional level.

BL Warta site

For the purpose of implementing the program guidelines, a special area of a planned Model Forest was designated – BL Warta. It is located within the Łopuchówko and Oborniki Forest Inspectorates. All project tasks are being implemented by the RDSF in Poznań and its subordinate forest inspectorates, including especially: Oborniki, Karczma Borowa, Jarocin and Taczanów inspectorates. Local results, solutions worked out and collected during activities, workshops, meetings with social groups and organisations, which concentrate their interests on the forest, will be used and transferred to the BL Warta site. It is also planned that a managing structure will be appointed for this area, which will take care of both the environment and people.

Work packages (WP)

Forest inspectorates that carry out selected work packages have been chosen not by accident.

WP 4 – New approach to integrated landscape planning as exemplified by Natura 2000 sites
The area of the Oborniki Forest Inspectorate includes a major part of the Noteć Primeval Forest with several Natura 2000 sites where under protection are habitats and species of plants and animals listed in the Birds and Habitat Directives.

WP 5 – Tourism and recreation in forest areas
Every day forests of the Karczma Borowa Forest Inspectorate which border on the city of Leszno are visited by local people and tourists. The forest areas are used for educational and recreational purposes, for doing various sports and exercising hobbies. With such extensive penetration of the forest environment as that observed around Leszno, problems often arise with visitors not respecting forest infrastructure as well as with ignorance and breaching of the Act on Forests. In such a case, a widely understood process of making forests accessible to society proves insufficient.

WP 6 – Water management in water catchment area in forested land
Under small-scale retention programmes the State Forests undertake various technical operations – setting up or reconstructing small-scale water reservoirs, dams, penstocks and culverts. The Taczanów and Jarocin Forest Inspectorates implement a package devoted to water management in the water catchment area in forested lands. They are aware of the fact that water is of great importance not only for foresters. Melioration services, farmers, people living in villages and in cities as well as researchers are also interested in water management. A great number of managing organisations, operating simultaneously in a given area, do not fully cooperate.
WP4 – Innovative approach towards integrated landscape planning.

A keynote of the package WP4 under the Baltic Landscape project is a new approach to landscape planning. Integrated planning is a little-known concept in Poland. Therefore, using the Model Forest concept an attempt was made to unite various communities in the Welna Valley in order to give institutional planning an integrated character. The area of the Welna Valley, being a site of community importance (SCI – Natura 2000), turned out to be a perfect proving ground. The focus has been on management of water and natural resources in the Welna and Flinta rivers. The Welna river located on the edge of the eastern part of the Noteć Primeval Forest is a right tributary of the Warta River, with the total length of ca. 118 kms and the area of the basin amounting to 2621 km².

A picturesque river valley has been qualified into the most precious nature parts of Poland. The place has been designated as the Natura 2000 (SCI) Welna Valley site (code: PLH 300010) with the area of 1447 ha. Some natural habitats, species and plants of animals listed in the Habitats Directive and Bird Directive are the subject of protection here: (f. ex.: oxbow lakes and natural eutrophic water reservoirs, mountain and riparian herbaceous plants, lowland and mountain fresh meadows utilised extensively, the sea trout, Atlantic salmon, European bullhead.

Welna Valley – struggle for water

The Welna Valley and its right-bank tributary – the Flinta River are subjects of social conflicts related to the river use. Needs of the local community, a need of protecting the river’s biocenosis, tourist pressure and related development on the river banks, development of small hydro stations are only examples of divergent interests of various social groups. Recently, in this region we have been observing disputes over the way of managing the river and its tributaries. Non-governmental organisations are interested in the maximal conservation of valuable nature elements and thus they opt for a number of restrictions to the economic utilisation of the river. On the other hand, the local community is anxious about periodical inundations and numerous impediments related to melioration conservation of both the basic as well as detailed devices within the Welna river basin. Due to high falls and a speedy current, the Welna river attracts the interest of the power supply industry. A concept exists of the development of the river and using it for power generation purposes, which is in an entire conflict with the need for protecting the valuable excerpts of nature. Development of a network of small power plants constitutes a real threat to the most valuable natural elements of the whole ecosystem. Other threats to the river’s ecosystem include: an idea of hydrotechnical development of water steps on the river, melioration conservation conducted in a wrong way, construction of small-scale water retention facilities as well as surface water pollution. The Welna is quite a popular canoeing route. The canoeing tourist activity itself does not constitute a threat to the subject of conservation. It is the development of tourist infrastructure along the river that may be more dangerous.

Model Forest concept tested in Welna Valley

The Welna valley is an area where social conflicts relating to the river use frequently arise. Natural variety of the river ecosystem, forest and non-forest habitats as well as numerous threats related to the utilisation of the areas within the river basin were reasons why this area was chosen for a test use of the Model Forest concept. Taking into account high diversity of human activity, action planning based on broad discussions among interested parties offers a good chance for solving problems and
avoiding sharp conflicts in the future. In subsequent stages of activities undertaken by the Oborniki forest inspectorate under the package WP4 several meetings were organised for representatives of various institutions related to water and natural resources management, local governments and communities. During common workshops a great number of issues were addressed, starting from a state of knowledge about the most precious nature elements located within the Wełna Valley, through major problems affecting particular institutions, and ending with challenges that everyone will face in relation to Poland ratifying further nature, water and landscape conventions. It was assumed that co-operation in making decisions on ways of management in a given area will serve solving local problems, preventing conflicts and supporting initiatives which are beneficial for the local community while allowing ecological aspects. As a result of undertaken activities the following documents have been or are being prepared:

1. „Analysis of Barriers to Implementation and Management of the Natura 2000 Network and to Implementation of the European Landscape Convention in Poland” - completed. The document constitutes a synthesis of the present knowledge on implementation of the Natura 2000 network and the Landscape Convention in Poland.

2. „Diagnosis of the State of Natural Environment in the Wełna Valley Natura 2000 Site and Preparation of Guidelines for Practical Actions” – in preparation. There is no conservation tasks plan in place for the area and so the document to be completed by the end of 2013 will become a good basis for developing such a plan in the future.

3. A paper on the Flinta River - in preparation. It will specify the river hydromorthological parameters and indicate directions for management of the river catchment area, that will help solve existing problems.

Common agreement is a success guarantee.

The same activities helped to define institutions and individuals who are deeply interested in identifying and common solving local problems. Thanks to meetings of stakeholders in working teams, a level of communication in the region was strengthened. Information on activities undertaken was distributed to all engaged parties. Publications in the press and training for services related to environmental protection aimed at increasing ecological awareness and sensibility of local residents with respect to both the subjects of conservation and possibilities offered by the European Natura 2000 network.

Documents prepared under the project and agreed upon by the interested parties constitute a common concept of management in the Wełna Valley, taking into account, as far as possible, social and economic expectations. They enabled systemising, at least to some extent, the knowledge about this area and broadening it with new information. In addition, directions for further research and areas of knowledge that require supplementation were defined.

The integration of local communities and planning in a specified part of space as initiated by the Oborniki Forest Inspectorate was of informal nature. Going beyond the frames of legal acts and statutory activities, the Oborniki Forest Inspectorate showed how we can try solving local problems.
It can be firmly concluded here that the Model Forest concept tested in various regions of the globe has proved well also in the Wielkopolska region. Thus, it should be used in other problematic areas and in wider social circles for the purpose of achieving common goals.
Polish forests are open for everybody

A great majority of Polish forests are owned by the Polish State Treasury, which means that they are open for each resident of our country. Everyone may go for a walk, jog, and cycle, pick mushrooms, watch the nature, hunt or simply rest there. A lot of people spend their free time in a forest, exercising their hobbies, passions and interests. Forests located in the vicinity of big agglomerations play a protective, recreational and educational role rather than a productive function.

Foresters are responsible for making forests accessible to society in a manner that does not endanger their permanence, sustainability and biodiversity. The Karczma Borowa Forest Inspectorate administering the forests which border with Leszno – a city with population of over 60,000 – willingly welcomes in its forests everyone who wants to relax in a natural surrounding and tries to create conditions for everybody to find a piece of a forest land for themselves. All initiatives for designating new tourist tracks, routes or paths are usually given positive decisions and “no admittance” ban has never been applied.

Source of conflict

However, there are certain legal restrictions which regulate issues related to environmental pollution, noise or damaging of forest roads; for example, it is forbidden to enter a forest by car or motorbike and horse riding is permitted only along specifically designated and marked routes. Due to fire risk, people must not enter stands of young trees (up to 4 metres high), and campfires are allowed only in designated places. Illegal dumping sites are a real bane; their removal is a costly and long-lasting process.

At present, an extremely high number of institutions, organisations, enterprises and individuals are interested in forests accessibility. It often happens that various groups using forest grounds become mutually obstructive, a lack of spatial management plans results in uncontrolled constructions being pursued in places of high tourist attractiveness and there is no landscape users’ cooperation and agreement model. These situations cause specific conflicts preventing sustainable development of the area.

The development of partnership

The above have become determining factors in selecting the Karczma Borowa Forest Inspectorate for implementation of the WP5 assumptions in the Leszno poviat under BL Warta. The general goal has been defined as: Tourism and recreation in forest areas based on modern solutions consistent with social expectations and preserving multi-functionality, biodiversity and sustainable development of Polish forests.

Expected result: The BL Warta site has got a well-functioning consultation platform managing tourist and recreational forest areas under jointly found solutions based on sustainable development.
The Baltic Landscape project implemented in the Karczma Borowa Forest Inspectorate aims at creating, on the basis of the Model Forest concept, a neutral platform for exchange of information and expectations of parties interested in using specific forest and non-forest areas with respect to their tourist accessibility.

In order to initiate partnership among institutions using forest ecosystems, the Project assumptions and the Model Forest concept were presented during a convention of the Leszno Region Tourist Organisation (it associates local governments and companies operating in tourism and commercial recreation). The composition of the dialogue platform included additionally representatives of non-government environmental, hunting, fishing, sports and off-road motor organisations.

During workshops on solving problems relating to public forest accessibility, members of a working group managed by the chief Project co-ordinator indicated over 50 problems requiring solutions on a landscape scale. A skilfully managed, model dialogue resulted in developing methods for achieving compromise among interested parties.

For the purpose of identifying social expectations as to forestry services making forests accessible to the public, a local WP5 working group prepared a specimen questionnaire that was distributed among Leszno powiat inhabitants. Answers provided by 1,300 respondents allowed a full analysis of the subject and led to specific conclusions. Attention should be drawn primarily to increasing awareness and precise expectations as well as a sense of responsibility for the forest.

**Exchange of experience**

To make use of experiences and a proved formula of the Model Forest, study tours were organised to the Wilhelmina Model Forest (Sweden) and the Ilomantsi Model Forest (Finland). Knowledge gained there and conclusions reached during observation of a perfectly functioning partnership among institutions representing contradictory interests, supplemented with Poland-specific details, accelerate considerably creation of a real dialogue platform and, when it is already in place, solving of common problems. Ready solutions for specific issues, observed at the Project foreign partners’, can be implemented, after slight adjustments to local conditions, in the Wielkopolska region.

Based on the materials collected abroad and solutions worked out by a local working group, the Project and the Model Forest concept were promoted via the Internet, on the radio and television and in the press.

To enable exchange of experiences and information, two study tours were organised for the Forest Inspectorate employees to the Wielkopolska forest inspectorates that struggle with similar tourism management related problems. Solutions and methods used by foresters from one area are often suitable for use in another one.

Conclusions set forth in the study tour reports are used on a current basis for preparation of the BL Warta tourism strategic plan.

**Tourist map**

As a part of activities carried out by a local working group, in co-operation with IT specialists and a Project partner from the University of Life Sciences in Poznań, guidelines were developed for inventory of tourist elements in the Leszno powiat. An effect of the inventory is an electronic, unified data base used for creating the first in the powiat, professional GIS map portal: an Interactive Tourist Map of the Leszno powiat. The tool available on web sites of local governments and the State Forests offers, among other things, software for mobile devices and promotes, in an innovative and modern manner; tourism and recreation in the area of BL Warta.
Landscape of the Karczma Borowa Forest District (fot. T. Girtler)

Fire in forest (fot. T. Girtler)

Excursion in forest (fot. T. Girtler)

Forest education of children (fot. T. Girtler)
Strategic water management

In order to maintain permanence and continuity of forests as well as sustainable use of all their functions, proper water management is indispensable. Water is of key significance for the nature and for the human being, and therefore management of water resources in a landscape is extremely important. Due to the area of forests in Poland, which cover around 1/3 of the total area of the country, appropriate water management in forests affects the entire national water balance. An integrated approach to water within the whole catchment area in the context of the European Water Directive is a key idea of Work Package 6 (WP6). It turns out that water is a subject of interest not only for state institutions but also for farmers, foresters and users of open waters – anglers, fishermen and finally, due to recreational aspects, the whole society. So far, division of tasks and fragmentary management of water resources have been an „original sin” in water management. A lack of proper communication among institutions, local governments and non-governmental organisations results in a chaos and, in some cases, in duplicating the same tasks. Dispersed management leads to a situation where interests of various social groups may be omitted, entailing occurrence of conflict areas. Using the Model Forest formula for building partnership around strategic water management seems to be a perfect solution for water management related problems. The primary idea of sustainable development is to satisfy human needs without violating nature protection principles. Works on establishing a strategic water management partnership have gathered a dozen or so governmental institutions and non-governmental organisations. A working group has identified key problem areas. The most important problems related to water management include a lack of specialised knowledge about water in the whole catchment area, fragmentation of management and a lack of dialogue among the stakeholders. A series of meetings and training led to increased awareness among forest service staff and opening to knowledge from other institutions and needs of the society expressed by non-governmental organisations. Important elements of the Baltic Landscape project implementation comprise broadening the knowledge, exchanging experiences among partners and organising study tours. Good practices and problem solutions can be successfully transferred to our area.
a part of Work Package 6, trips to BL Mazury (Poland) and BL Niemen (Belarus) were organised, and Polish representatives also participated in trips to BL Helge, BL Vilhelmina in Sweden and BL Ilomantsi in Finland. It turns out that the majority of problems related to water management in Europe have a similar origin and a key to solution is partnership and dialogue around management. Conclusions provided in the study tour reports are used on a current basis for developing a strategic water management plan for the BL Warta site.

Small retention – important issue

When performing tasks under WP6, a focus was placed on the impact of small-scale water retention on forested landscapes and a role of forests in water retention. An important task is to identify problem areas related to water management in forests. In the course of works it was decided to set up a system monitoring the effects of small-scale water retention projects implemented by the State Forests on forest ecosystems and the importance of small-scale retention for the whole catchment area. In recent years a number of water retention programmes have been developed. In the BL Warta site it is a programme called “Small-scale Water Retention Programme for the Area under Management of the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań for the years 2005-2015”. The programme provides for building 386 small-scale water retention facilities in 22 forest inspectorates; the facilities are to retain 887 441 m³ of water. Before July 2013 323 facilities were completed; their total estimated volume of retained water amounts to 984 657 m³. The impact of small-scale water retention on forest ecosystems and water balance is not fully known. Therefore, under the Baltic Landscape project an idea appeared to set up - together with the project partner – University of Life Sciences in Poznań - a system for monitoring small-scale water retention effects. For that purpose the Taczańów Forest in the Taczańów Forest Inspectorate was selected as a pilot area where experiences of BL Mazury and BL Niemien partners learned during study tours have been used. The monitoring uses a system of piezometers for current measuring of changes in groundwater level as well as expert opinions on distribution of various species. Technical expert reports have also been prepared, covering inventory of water and melioration installations, including in particular the condition of drainage infrastructure dating back to the 80-ties of the previous century. Knowledge about damp habitats, protected plants species and places of living of the European beaver (Castor fiber) was extended. The results of monitoring are to indicate the impact of small-scale water retention on forest ecosystems and show how to locate small-scale water retention facilities in the most optimal way as to obtain the maximum retention effect from the investment.
Riverine forests, trainings and partnership

Another important water related theme addressed by the Regional Directorate of the State Forests in Poznań is protection of riparian forests and restoration of oxbow lakes eco-systems in the Jarocin Forest Inspectorate. Many-year experience in ways of protecting riverside forests in the Jarocin Forest Inspectorate makes it a leader in riverside forest protection on a national scale. With respect to protection of riparian forests and endangered riverside ecosystems the State Forests may in the future lead problem groups with the aim to work out oriented systemic solutions for conservation of riparian forests. A Riparian Forest Protection Centre was established at Czerszewo Educational Centre in the Jarocin Forest Inspectorate. The Centre is at present used by the State Forests for promoting proper water management, water retention and protection of riverside forests.

Training for employees of the State Forests, co-operating institutions and non-governmental institutions are an equally important element of the project implementation. A working group operating according to partnership principles has already brought the first effects. A better understanding of stakeholders’ needs provides water management with a holistic and innovative approach to management in the context of the whole catchment area. The method adopted in this way will enable a more comprehensive implementation of the European Water Directive within the BL Warta site.
Baltic Landscape in change – innovative approaches towards sustainable forested landscapes