

LIFE RESTORE FOR MDD

UNESCO Five-country
Biosphere Reserve
Mura-Drava-Danube



FACTSHEET

WIDENING OF THE MURa AT THE SULZBACH CONFLUENCE

In the area of the Sulzbach confluence in the municipality of Halbenrain, the river Mura is being widened over a length of approximately 450 m. The aim of this measure is to promote river dynamics by providing more space for self-dynamic developments. The resulting near-natural structures, such as gravel banks, pools, and shallow water zones, significantly enhance the ecological value of the watercourse and create new and improved habitats for animals and plants. Construction work will be carried out from April to December 2026.

GOALS

- Promotion of natural river dynamics
- Improvement of hydrological conditions for 4 ha of floodplain forest habitat
- Improvement of morphology over an area of 1 ha
- Mobilization of 30,000 m³ of sediment
- improvement of the ecological continuity of the Sulzbach

PLANNING

In the planning process, various hydraulic scenarios were modeled, ranging from the current state to the construction and interim scenario, and finally to the development scenario. Key elements also included assessing the impacts of the construction measure on third-party rights, river ecology, and the necessary maintenance measures after implementation.

The LIFE RESTORE for MDD project is a trans-boundary initiative aimed at protecting and restoring the largest contiguous floodplain forests in the UNESCO Five-country Biosphere Reserve Mura-Drava-Danube. From 2023 to 2028, 17 partners from Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary and Serbia will implement restoration measures at 29 locations covering an area of 2,100 km².



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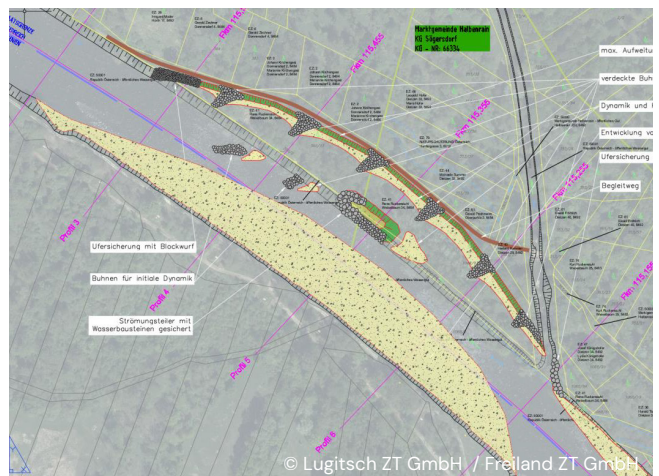
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MEASURE

For implementation of the measure, the following construction activities are required in the Mura, which are in line with the objectives of the management plan „NATURA 2000 Site – Südoststeirisches Hügelland“:

- Removal of bank protection along approx. 450 m of the Mura
- Relocation of bank protection (concealed groyne) 30–50 m into the hinterland
- Construction of a flow divider and an initial groyne
- Implementation of structural habitat measures in the Sulzbach (rootstocks and armourstones)
- Additional ecological enhancements (e.g. woody debris accumulations)

The groyne relocated inland serve to protect adjacent properties and the planned maintenance path. Prior to the start of construction, reptiles were collected and relocated, potential bat roost trees were sealed, and bat boxes were installed.



Top: Construction date April 2026
Bottom: Site plan development scenario

PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

- Office of the Styrian Government, Department 14 Water Management, Resources and Sustainability
- Office of the Styrian Government, Southeast Styria District Construction Management
- Lugitsch Ziviltechniker GmbH
- freiland Umweltconsulting ZT GmbH
- Swietelsky AG
- Aber Büro für Kulturchnik e.U.

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CO-FINANZIERUNG

