Notes on the workshop

„Peatlands in the Narach area: potentials for nutrient retention by paludiculture“

(3rd of August 2021)

About 20 people participated in the workshop. Besides members of the projects REMEMBER and DESIRE different regional stakeholders attended the workshop:

Boris Adamovich, Hanna Zhukava, Tamara Makarevich, Darya Kruk (BSU), Larissa Ushkowa (independent interpreter), Felix Närmann, Marina Abramchuk, Wendelin Wichtmann, Andrej Abramchuk, Achim Schäfer, Sophie Hirschelmann (GMC), Aliaksei Novikau, Volha Pasled (National park "Narochansky"), Vyacheslav Sipach, Natalia Hryshchankava (National academy of sciences of Belarus), Jūratė Sendžikaitė (DESIRE project, Lithuanian fund for Nature, LFN), Andrzeij Kamocki (DESIRE Project, Byalistok Technical University, BTU), Natalia Tupitsyna (Magilov State University), Vyacheslav Darashevich, Kanstantsin Chykalau (regional environmental activists, NGO bagna BY, Belarus), Olga Denyshchyk (Succow-Stiftung, GMC), Elena Sadovskaya (journalist, ecoactivist), Olga Kaskevich

The presentations can be found in the attachment.

Here are some comments / questions / answers which arose after presentations / during the discussion:

Marina Abramchuk: As more than the half of the Neman catchment area is in Belarus, also in Belarus there should be all potential measures be taken to avoid algae blooming in the Baltc Sea. The importance and necessity of measures for rewetting is shown, for example, in Marina's picture, which depicts the stilt alders, which describes a peat loss of more than one metre depth. Algae blooming can only bew reduced by reduction of nutrients loads of freshwaters.

Boris Adamovich: The main problem of eutrophication by landuse seem to be high losses of Phosphorus to the inflows of the lakes. This has been successfully reduced by a BY programme on landuse change (reduction of livestock farms, head of pigs and cattle, change arable land into grasslands and pastures). There should be additional potential for further reduction of nutrients in the lakes by rewetting of peatlands and changing landuse to paludiculture in the catchment area of the lakes. If the size of the respective catchment area really is the main reason for the different nutrient contents of the Naroch lakes than there will be some potential for further optimisation of the situation by further reduction of input (e.g. fertilsation of mineral soils) and peatland rewetting in the whole catchment area!

Andrej Abramchuk: By combining and evaluation of different sources, including ground truthing, the real location of the peatlands in the Belarusian Neman river catchment area could be concretised for the DESIRE project. Also the completeness of the database on the peatlands of the Lake Naroch basin was assessed on the basis of various sources. It should be noted that the official figures of the area of peatlands in Belarus are greatly underestimated. The real area of peatlands in Belarus is 1,5-2 times bigger, which is estimated at 4,6 - 6 million ha. The real area of peatlands in Belarus is at least twice as large as the official figures, and is estimated at 1.5 - 2 million ha. In the Neman river basin the area of unrecorded (not reflected in the database) peatlands is supposed to be at least 50 to 100 thousand ha, including about 40 thousand ha of unrecorded (not reflected in the database) mires. The area of unrecorded (not reflected in the database) bogs in the Naroch lake basin is preliminary estimated at several hundreds of hectares. Most of them are relatively small areas. The area of such sites varies from several hectares to 10 hectares. This data will significantly complement the databases of DESIRE and REMEMBER projects.

Felix Närmann: There are not many experiences with paludiculture in BY until now. The Lida peat factory tested biomasss from wet peatlands a a resource for briquetting and pelleting – but only as long as the project wetland energy was running. Nowadays they add some portion of different organic wastes from agriculture to the peat for briquetting, like wastes from rape seed and flax production. Currently their rewetted peatlands are part of a EU-Life project organised by the Baltic Environmental Forum (Lithuania) which deals with the management of reedbeds (change Phragmitres dominated reed stands to sedge dominated communities by multiple harvesting activities) to make them appropriate for the Aquatic warbler. Hopefully the peat factory also uses the biomass produced in the process for briquetting in future.

Wendelin Wichtmann: Using the biomass from wetland vegetation simultaneously exports nutrients from these sites and by that also reduces the amount of nutrients which potentially are leached into the open waters. Some experiences from Clearance and Desire projects are published on the following homepages:

MoorWissen | Paludiculture | Projects | Desire | Events, News & Outputs,

MoorWissen | Paludiculture| Projects | Clearance | Output

Achim Schäfer: There are still arguments necessary, why peatlands shall be rewetted and simultaneously no further production of food for men is possible.

- By paludiculture in peatlands, resources can be produced that replace renewables which are produced on mineral soils. By that, area on arable mineral soils is set free to use them for food production again.
- Meat and diary products can be reduced as they are connected with rather high GHG emissions. This will also set large areas free for other food products worldwide.