



LE GOUVERNEMENT  
DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG  
Ministère du Développement durable  
et des Infrastructures

Département de l'environnement



# Natura 2000 Biogeographical Process Continental, Pannonian, Black Sea & Steppic Kick-off Seminar

Luxembourg, 29 June to 1 July 2015

## Site visits

### *Option 1: Mëllerdall and Our Valley (Luxembourg)*

#### **Site 1: Mëllerdall region (Luxembourg, Forests)**

Participants will discover an enchanting landscape of sandstone formations, narrow canyons as well as beech and remnants of alluvial forests.

The so-called Mullerthal (valley of the mills) - also known as the Little Switzerland of Luxembourg - harbors very particular animal and plant communities with very interesting overlaps between the Continental and Atlantic biogeographical regions. Because of its picturesque landscapes, the Mullerthal attracts tourists from all over Europe, putting pressures on the ecosystem that need to be channeled and incorporated in management practices.

The entire region is in the process of creating a natural Park and participants will receive information on the aims and objectives of this regional development project with an emphasis on nature, promotion of regional products etc.

The Administration for nature and forests will present its activities in terms of management of Natura 2000 areas (SAC LU0001011), forest management and recreational activities.



<http://www.naturpark-mellerdall.lu/browse/1/>

## Site 2: Our Valley and the freshwater mussel nursery (Luxembourg-Germany, Rivers & Lakes)

Visit of the freshwater mussel nursery at the mill of Kalborn located along the River Our. The project area "Our" overlaps with the northernmost part of the Natura 2000 site "Our Valley" (SAC LU0001002 and SPA LU0002003) and extends from the point where the three borders (Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg) meet near Ouren to Stolzemburg in the South.

The Our Valley is among the most impressive nature reserves in Luxembourg. It gains its attractiveness from a diversity of valuable biotopes. Its habitats harbor a vast variety of animal and plant species, such as the Freshwater Pearl Mussel (*Margaritifera margaritifera*) and the Thick Shelled River Mussel (*Unio crassus*), that occur on the national Red List and on the Annex II of the European Habitats Directive.



<http://www.unio.lu/>



## Option 2: Sierck region (France) and Haff Réimech (Luxembourg)

### Site 1: Dry grasslands and rocks of the Sierck region (France, Grasslands)

Visit of the SAC « *Pelouses et rochers du Pays de Sierck* » (FR4100167) which includes five distinct areas around the town of Sierck-les-Bains. The local population and municipalities have been committed to the achievement of the restoration and conservation of the site since the 1980's. Part of it, around the village of Montenach, has been classified as a national nature reserve in 1994. These sites are managed by the *Conservatoire d'espaces naturels de Lorraine*.



<http://www.lorraine.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/pelouses-et-rochers-du-pays-de-sierck-a4491.html>

The River Moselle and its tributaries have carved the limestone plateau into a landscape of hills and valleys. The species and habitats diversity of the site has resulted from this landscape. Among the 13 habitats of European interest identified in the SCA, the calcareous grasslands shelter major orchid sites. 80% of the identified habitats of European interest are forests (including small areas of forests on slopes and alluvial forests). The site also includes a petrifying spring with tufa formation, an alkaline fen and caves resulting from ancient mining activities.

Restoration and conservation actions started in the 1980's, mainly on the grassland habitats that lost their agricultural economical interest after the 1950's. The management plans of the Natura 2000 site and the nature reserve now include a continuous grazing or mowing program which is being implemented mainly through Natura 2000 measures.

### **Site 2: Haff Réimech (Luxembourg, Wetlands)**

Visit of Haff Remich, an area of former gravel pits with some 40 ponds and lakes, most of them surrounded by read beds. It is situated in the Moselle Valley just north of Schengen. Haff Remich is one of Luxembourg's two Ramsar sites, a Natura 2000 site (designated under both the Birds- and the Habitats Directive (SPA LU0002012, SAC LU0001029) and a national nature reserve. Priority bird species are Little Bittern (*Ixobrychus minutus*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) as breeders, and Smew (*Mergus albellus*) and Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) in wintertime. Some 250 bird species have been recorded, of which 97 are breeding.

In the summer months, Haff Remich is well-known tourist site: up to 50 000 people visit the recreational area with the large swimming lake. Haff Remich was awarded European Destination of Excellence for combining nature protection and sustainable tourism. A new visitor centre called Biodiversum will be opened to the public in autumn 2015.



[\(http://www.haff-remich.lu/index.php/\)](http://www.haff-remich.lu/index.php/)

## **Option 3: Prenzebiërg-Giele-Botter (Luxembourg) and La Praille (Belgium)**

### **Site 1: Prenzebiërg-Giele-Botter (Luxembourg, Grasslands)**

This site visit will allow participants to discover a unique, manmade landscape resulting from open pit land mining in the southern part of Luxembourg. Former mining areas are today nearly entirely designated as Natura 2000 sites (SAC LU0001028, SPA LU0002008) protecting dry meadows, rocky habitats and a number of species such as the eagle owl and bats.

The management focusses on the conservation of a habitat mosaic of different successional stages creating suitable habitat for a range of species of community interest.

Due to their location in the direct vicinity of a number of towns and cities, channelling recreational uses in accordance with conservation priorities is a major challenge for site managers.

The development of a new grazing strategy of open habitats using a herd of sheep and goats is in the making. The aim of the project is to seek collaboration with an organization working with unemployed people, combining ecological management, social work and marketing of products from sheep and goat herding.



[http://www.environnement.public.lu/conserv\\_nature/Centres\\_d\\_accueil/CA\\_Ellergronn/CAE\\_Sentiers/CAE\\_Sentier\\_Prenzebiere\\_Giebotter/](http://www.environnement.public.lu/conserv_nature/Centres_d_accueil/CA_Ellergronn/CAE_Sentiers/CAE_Sentier_Prenzebiere_Giebotter/)

## Site 2: La Praille (Belgium, Grasslands)

Visit of the site of special biological interest “La Praille”, a 40 ha state-owned nature reserve located in the Belgian Lorraine, along the River Semois. The first conservation initiative was implemented in the 1990ies by the Forest and Nature Administration to protect some of the most valuable *Molinia* meadows known in Belgium, with very important orchid and Viper’s Grass (*Scorzonera humilis*) populations. Traditionally managed as hay meadows, these *Molinia* meadows grow on clay, along the Semois floodplain. Since the Nature reserve has been extended to 40 ha as a result of consecutive land acquisitions, two types of Annex I grassland habitats have been restored: hay meadows (6510) on alluvial soils which had been intensively grazed pastures before, and *Molinia* meadows (6410) on former spruce plantations. To restore the meadows, the spruce plantations on former agricultural lands were cut down and their stumps removed. Meadow seeds harvested elsewhere were sown on the deforested land to accelerate the restoration process. The grasslands are now managed by farmers, with the financial support of the Walloon agro-environmental scheme. The future legal protection of the Natura 2000 sites will also be presented during the visit.



<http://biodiversite.wallonie.be/fr/975-la-praille.html?IDD=251660152&highlighttext=la+praille+&IDC=1881>