



Danube Day 2008 in Germany

Calling on the Danube's past to help it's future

Germany celebrated Danube Day at both ends of the German Danube. Events took place at both Donaueschingen in southwest Germany (at the source of the Danube) and in Deggendorf in the southeast, close to where the river leaves German soil for Austria.

Deggendorf hosted the main celebration with an event that connected today's Danube users with those who worked on the river over 400 years ago: the official opening of the newly restored *Ship Master's House* by Dr. Otmar Bernhard, State Minister. Built in 1590, it now houses an exciting new venue for environmental education. Focussing on the Danube, water and environmental issues, the new centre provides an important opportunity for engaging school pupils, students, cyclists and tourists in the sustainable use of their river. It also provides a fascinating insight into the lives of those who relied on the Danube in the past. Visitors to the Danube Day festivities had the chance to tour the new building, enjoy local food and dance along to the big band sounds of the Comenius-Gymnasium of Deggendorf.

The event also saw the culmination of the search to find Germany's young Danube Art Master for 2008. Pupils from 14 secondary schools from Straubing to Passau were invited to join the international Danube competition. Young artists were challenged to let their creativity run wild and create a piece of art inspired by their river on the theme of "Together for Clean Water." The winning Art Master was crowned by Dr Bernhard and their work displayed at the new centre.

Danube Day in southwest Germany was also extremely successful with a number of events along the river from Donaueschingen-Wolterdingen to Tuttlingen. The Baden-Württemberg Water Management Administration hosted a Danube information day attracting over a thousand people. The day began with an open-air church service and official opening led by the President of the Freiburg District Council, Julian Würtenberger. Guided tours proved very popular throughout the day and visitors were given the chance to learn more about the new flood protection dam, water management, the local beaver population and EU legislation, while being entertained by a recital of the "Blue Danube" by young musicians from the Wolterdingen Primary School. The talented pupils also performed a special play: the "New Source of the Danube" and students from the Eichendorf School in Donaueschingen presented their fascinating art project - "The Danube Puzzle" - a poem about the Danube hidden in a beautiful artwork puzzle.

The afternoon saw 30 participants take to their bikes for a guided tour from Wolterdingen via Donaueschingen to Tuttlingen. During the tour, participants learned about river restoration projects; beaver activity; the hydrology, ecology

and geology of the region; flood measures and ways to re-establish the ecological balance of the river.

“A sustainable method of handling the Danube and its resources has to be reached.”

Julian Würtenberger, President of the Freiburg District

Danube Day Partners

State Office for Water Management, Deggendorf • Federal State of Bavaria • Municipality of Deggendorf • *Wasserversorgung Bayerischer Wald* administration • 14 secondary schools • European Union Leader+/ LAG Deggendorf • Water Management Administration of the Federal State of Baden-Württemberg • Freiburg District Administration • Town of Donaueschingen • Wolterdingen Primary School • Donaueschingen Eichendorff School • Community of Wolterdingen • Wolterdingen organisations: Music Club; Accordion Club; Angling Club; Kyffhäuser and Kyffhäuser Choir; Bowling Club; Voluntary Fire Brigade; Red Cross; Swimming Club; St. Kilian Catholic Church • County of Schwarzwald-Baar.

The Danube rivers: let's use them – not abuse them!

For general information about the 14-country Danube Day celebrations, view www.danubeday.org or email the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River: jasmine.bachmann@unvienna.org.