

Danube Day 2013 in Germany



Too much water didn't dampen the Danube spirit

With rivers doing their utmost to disrupt celebrations, partner organisations in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg worked hard to keep events afloat. Good attendance at the many events that did proceed indicates the commitment and dynamism of local people to explore a sustainable future.

The popular **Baden-Württemberg** Garden Show came to **Sigmaringen** for 2013, providing the perfect opportunity to promote Danube Day to around 2000 people. **Experience the Danube in Baden-Württemberg** provided visitors with an interactive exhibition about their river. By following the virtual river on the floor, you could learn about who lives beside the stream; how rivers form their beds and what happens to an area when it undergoes ecological revitalization. But it wasn't just hands-on: a wet-foot-path saw people cast off shoes and socks to experience the riverbed substrates. A huge sand-tray was a big hit with younger children; while the 'play Danube' computer game captured the attention of others!

Accompanying **river excursions** during July provided the genuine article, visiting areas that have undergone revitalization, as well as sections being further developed by a resident beaver! They also looked at work aimed at aiding fish migration and flood reduction.

As part of the exhibition, four young teenagers premiered their short **Danube film** – 'DONAUld Duck – a duck on tour' recounting the journey of one rubber duck in the Riedlinger duck race. The Tübingen President, Hermann Strampfer, and the Mayor of Sigmaringen praised the Riedlingen school-girls for the way they had portrayed complex Danube issues, engaging young people in a fun and creative way.

"For only what we know and love, will we also want to protect."
Hermann Strampfer, Tübingen President, at the Danube film premiere.

Immendingen was the venue for a **Danube weekend** of eco activities and music celebrating the town's new Riverside Park. Freiburg President, Bärbel Schäfer, and Immendingen Mayor, Markus Hugger, cut the ribbon to open the transformed landscape: revitalised from a disused garrison to an environmentally sustainable recreation area, with riverside paths and platforms, a water playground and interpretative trails.

In **Bavaria**, severe flooding prohibited many of the planned celebrations. But disappointment for artists in the **Danube Art Master** competition was avoided: the annual awards ceremony went ahead, relocating to a bank in Straubing. Nine local schools entered artworks into this year's competition, which encouraged children to get to know their rivers and create a piece of art using found objects by the riverside. The Art Master crown and prize money went to *Ludwigsgymnasium* for their eye-catching Sturgeon made from red, blue and yellow litter.

“What you don’t know, you won’t appreciate or protect.”

Joseph Feuchtgruber, Deggendorf Water Management Office.

The annual **Ingolstadt Danube swim and festival** brought cheer to a region recovering from the devastating June floods. In contrast to last year’s tropical conditions, it was all wet-suits and hot drinks in 2013. Despite the weather, films, quizzes and the maiden voyage of the hydro-powered Ingolstadt Ferry made for a special day. Ongoing drizzle ensured the flood models were permanently inundated! In the comfort of the marquee, Hungarian and Serbian dancers were joined by an impromptu Bavarian dance display. With everyone embracing the Danube spirit, the Ingolstadt Environment Agency-organised event was a success.

In **Ulm**, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg joined together for **Donaubüro’s Danube Festival**. The afternoon of outdoor activities was somewhat curtailed by miserable weather: but fortunately none of the fun, excitement or learning was lost, as everything decamped inside. Most eye-catching of all was a giant drawing of a fish, ready for children to add their personal touch, designing scales in vibrant colours. Children could catch their own fish and try-out a Danube sounds quiz with *BUND Umwelt*; polish stones into gems at the *Umweltstation ‘Mooseum’* and explore the *GAU Schutzgemeinschaft’s* Eco-Mobile, equipped with microscopes and water analysis kits. Also enjoyed was the **Underwater World of the Danube** schools painting exhibition. In the evening, a new feature-length documentary: **Danube: Europe’s Lifeline** was screened.

Danube Day Partners

Baden-Württemberg:

WBW Water Development Training Company – Swabian Danube; Tübingen regional authority; State Office for Water; Sigmaringen and Immendingen local authorities; Immendingen ecological and recreational clubs and the Baden-Württemberg State Garden Show.

Bavaria:

Cities of Straubing and Ingolstadt; Water Agency of Deggendorf; local schools: *Anton-Bruckner-Gymnasium, Gymnasium der Ursulinen, Johannes-Turmair-Gymnasium, Ludwigsgymnasium, Jakob-Sandtner-Schule, Mädchenrealschule der Ursulinen, Grundschule St. Josef Straubing, Mittelschule St. Stephan Straubing-Alburg and Mittelschule Ulrich Schmidl.*

Ulm/Neu-Ulm:

Danube Office Ulm/Neu-Ulm; *BUND-Hochschulgruppe; BUND Umwelt; Gau Schutzgemeinschaft Neu-Ulm* (Gau Conservation Society); *Umweltstation “mooseum”* (Mooseum environmental NGO) and *Technisches Hilfswerk.*

Danube Day 2013: Get active for the sturgeon!

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 (ICPDR): benedikt.mandl@unvienna.org.