

Ural Basin Project

The First Ural River Basin Workshop

Rescue of Sturgeon Species by means
of Transboundary Integrated Water
management of the Ural River Basin

Orenburg, Russia, 13th-16th June, 2007

Call for Participation



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About the Project

The catastrophic depletion of sturgeon stocks worldwide has stimulated various activities of environmental national agencies and international organizations. Unfortunately, despite numerous conservation and restoration programs sturgeon populations not only continue to shrink, but many are already extinct or face the threat of extinction in the near future.

Apart from its high economic value and flagship function the sturgeon is an indicator (umbrella) species for the river basin it inhabits. The quality of Integrated Water Management is one of the factors influencing the riverine ecosystem.

The basin of the Ural river is a unique ecosystem. Thanks to the absence of a barrier complex it contains a self-sustaining, viable sturgeon population capable of natural reproduction. This population can serve as a basis for the restoration programs in other regions. However, the importance of the Ural sturgeon habitats for the conservation of the whole Caspian Sturgeon population is greatly underestimated in both national and international Action Plans.

The system of integrated basin management which once existed in the Soviet Union has collapsed and new international transboundary approaches need to be developed to take its place. At the same time experience and knowledge on the transboundary river management accumulated in European countries cannot simply be copied. Careful evaluation of best practices and extensive research is needed to develop an appropriate regional strategy for sustainable basin development.

To improve the situation it was decided to initiate the transboundary Ural Basin Project, which aims to preserve natural sturgeon habitats by securing high standards of Transboundary Integrated Water Management and crossdisciplinary collaboration and research. The inaugural event for the Project will be the First Ural River Basin Workshop to be held in Orenburg (Russia) on 13-16 June, 2007.

The Project has been initiated and coordinated by the Environmental Systems Laboratory of the Central European University (Budapest, Hungary) and the Research and Consulting Center "DonEco" (Russia), under the auspices of the regional Orenburg Administration, Oblast environmental authorities and Federal Nature Protection Agencies.

Workshop

The First Ural Basin Workshop "The Rescue of Sturgeon Species by means of Transboundary Integrated Water management of the Ural River Basin" is organized by the Project coordinators in cooperation with Orenburg Ministry of Natural Resources, the Federal Fishery Agency, Orenburg State Agriculture University and other organizations.

The targeted participants for the First Ural Basin Workshop are regional authorities, national/international experts and regional environment protection practitioners from both basin countries. The number of participants at the first event is limited to pre-selected key experts and officials. They will (i) share their views on the current state of the Ural sturgeon population and related ecosystem aspects, (ii) summarize the available information and identify the gaps in knowledge, (iii) set up the Steering Committee for the Sturgeon Action Plan development and (iv) conduct initial consultations for the establishment of the Ural Sturgeon Protected Area. The fields to be covered will include different environmental disciplines and anthropogenic activities related to the well-being of the sturgeon population.

This workshop is seen as the first event in a series of meetings among actors and stakeholders in international Ural river basin management and transboundary biodiversity conservation.

Workshop themes

- Best practices and experience in transboundary integrated water management of river basins. European Water Framework Directive, its realization and application to the Ural region. Basin Concept of Sustainable Development;
- Transboundary Protected Areas in River Basins and migratory species conservation;
- Transboundary cooperation in the management of the Ural river basin: problems and perspectives;
- Ural river basin environmental problems and holistic, interdisciplinary approaches to their resolution;
- Technologies of river ecosystem conservation and restoration. Securing natural sturgeon reproduction.
- Information technologies in the management of Ural regional economy and natural resources. Creation of GIS databases for the Ural basin. Mathematical modeling of basin natural and social systems for sustainable development;
- Education as a key factor in sustainable basin development. Amendment of existing courses and new curriculum development of interdisciplinary courses on sustainable basin development in regional Institutions of higher education;

The workshop languages are English and Russian.

The workshop is co-sponsored by the NATO Security Through Science Programme and the Caspian Environmental Program.

Participation

There is no registration fee for the workshop unless an applicant is from industry or commercial sector.

Although the participation in the workshop is by invitation, a limited number of applications from specialists and practitioners in related disciplines will be accepted. Prospective participants can send an email indicating name, affiliated organization, presentation topic and contact details to seminar@uralbas.ru. The Organizing Committee will contact selected applicants by March 25th.

The complete registration form and workshop programme will be available at the workshop website. Please send the completed form and presentation abstract by 5th March 2007.

The selected workshop presentations will be published by Springer Publishing House. The deadline for manuscript submission is 1st May, 2007.

The participants should plan to arrive in Orenburg on 12th June 2007. Departure is on June 16th.

More information on the Project, participation in The First Workshop and the presentation requirements can be found at the Project's website <http://uralbas.ru>.

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