

Partnership Action

WORKING TOGETHER FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER. VOL.1, NO.4. SEPTEMBER 2005

Dear Reader, Welcome to the fourth edition of the Environmental Partnership Newsletter! Again, we are happy to give you a brief overview of the most important activities and achievements of the Environmental Partnership as reported by the six member foundations over the past three months.

NEWS IN BRIEF

- Our strategic Annual Meeting took place alongside the Central European Greenways meeting on September 14th and 15th in Brno, CZ. It was concluded with a celebration of this year's winner of the **Central European Heritage Award**, and for the first time in history we presented the **Laurence S. Rockefeller Greenways Award!** At the ceremony, we were honored by the presence of prominent guests such as the Czech Minister of the Environment, Mr. Libor Ambrozek, as well as representatives from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the German Marshall Fund, the European Greenways Association, Toyota Europe, Skanska, Philips Lighting, Toyota Peugeot Citroën Automobile, and the Prague International Marathon.
- The **German Marshall Fund** contributed to our endowment campaign with a gift of USD 20,000!

THE WINNING PROJECT OF THE CENTRAL EUROPEAN HERITAGE AWARD - FORESTRY OPEN AIR MUSEUM

The project, launched in 2001, was initiated by the Slovakian NGO **Vydra - Rural Development Activity**, named after the Vydrovo valley, situated in Central Slovakia. The aim of the organization is to revitalize the valley. It has significantly contributed to the revival of the historical Čiernohorská forest railway, and launched a recreational center with a children's playground, a shelter, and an amphitheater. Thanks to their initiative, this area was also selected as a suitable location for a **forestry museum**.

The Forestry Museum is an open-air eco-museum, a 3-kilometer-long trail with 48 stops providing visual answers to questions that are frequently asked by the public in relation to the forest and forestry. The trail also includes several works by international eco-artists.

The project is a great example of successful **cross-sectoral cooperation**, with four partners working together in this case: the state enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic, Vydra - Rural Development Activity, Čiernohorská Forest Railway, and village of Čierny Balog.

THIS PROJECT HAS SUPPORTED:

- the sustainable development of Čierny Hron micro region,
- the conservation of a national nature reserve by redirecting tourists to the less protected Vydra valley,
- local business opportunities that help preserve the region's environment and history,
- local cultural events, traditions, and education,
- the creation of an attractive tourist center using natural materials,
- "active tourism" as an alternative to commercial-based tourism.

This type of tourism, which is geared towards families and nature lovers and is respectful of the local culture and environment, helps create suitable conditions for sustainable rural community development. The Ekopolis Foundation (the Slovak Environmental Partnership) was one of the supporters of the project.



**THE LAURANCE S. ROCKEFELLER GREENWAY AWARD
FOR THE BEST GREENWAY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN
EUROPE 2005-WINNING PROJECT:
THE PRAGUE-VIENNA GREENWAYS**

This Laurance S. Rockefeller Greenway Award, named after the cofounder of the first Greenway in the USA, is made possible by generous support from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, and offers a prize of 5,000 USD.

The Prague-Vienna Greenways is a network of walking and biking routes going through historic towns and villages, charming countryside, national parks, protected reserves in Bohemia and Moravia, and wine-regions in South Moravia and Lower Austria. The backbone trail between Prague and Vienna is 430 kilometers long.

This ongoing project was started in 1990 with the cooperation of municipalities, non-profit organizations, and businesses. One goal of the greenways project is to mobilize local communities to be more proactive regarding environmental issues and cultural preservation in their region. In the process of building the greenways, people of all generations rediscover their local history, participate in the beautification of their villages, plant trees, help preserve traditional crafts, and organize events to revitalize the local culture and attract sustainable tourism.

It is managed by the civic association Prague-Vienna Greenways with assistance from the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation.

More on: www.pragueviennagreenways.org

Other projects nominated for the award were:

- The greenway in Zselic, Hungary
- The Polish part of Amber Trail Greenway
- The Spruce Pine Way in Romania
- The greenway around the Polana volcano in Slovakia



STUDY TRIP TO FRENCH GREENWAYS

In June, greenways project partners from the various membership foundations participated in a study tour to learn about greenways in France and to share experiences with local non-profit organizations and municipalities

One of the best greenway networks in Europe, with more than 3500 kilometers of trails, can be found in France. These trails have been developed mostly along canals, rivers, or on abandoned railways by local and regional governments with financial support from the EU. The highlight of the trip was visiting the first prize winner of the European Greenways Award of 2003: La Voie Verte de Cluny a Givry. Among the other trails the group visited were "La Voie Verte des Hautes Vosges," an urban greenway in Chambéry, alpine greenways in Rhone-Alpes, and a wine trail in Beaujolais. Participants also had the opportunity to learn about the city bike-rental system in Lyon with its 2,000 rental bicycles.

The trip was prepared by the Environmental Partnership in collaboration with Voies Vertes AF3V (www.af3v.org) and with financial support from the Environment DG.

CAMP GREENWAYS - INTERNATIONAL SUMMER CAMP FOR CYCLISTS AND NATURE ENTHUSIASTS

A two-week camp was organized for kids and youth in the South Bohemian region in CZ this past summer. Campers went cycling to discover the cultural and natural heritage along the Czech greenways. Children had the assignment to provide information at the "greenways information points", which are situated at the crossings of several local cycling trails and are used by hundreds of visitors yearly. Campers distributed maps, brochures, and information about local attractions.

Our goal for next year's camp is to bring together kids from all over Central and Eastern Europe to encourage an interest in cycling, greenways, and environmental stewardship.

We would be happy to have your feedback. Please send an email to: veronika.bilski@okotars.hu