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THE NEWSLETTER OF RIPARIAN FORESTS

Newsletter nº 6 **June 2022**

LIFE ALNUS—THE FOREST OF THE RIVER

Re-mark of dead wood in Ter river

13th October 2021

Regarding the monitoring activities of our "Dead wood displacement protocol in river areas in Mediterranean basins", we keep on with the re-marking of wood rests which will be used as a monitoring tool. These rests, at long-term, will offer us nature-based solutions from an innovative perspective.

Large dead wood rests have direct influence on river morphology, sediment erosion, and retention processes, creating large sedimentation areas. They contribute to the decrease of floods effects by dissipating part of the energy from the water flow while retaining suspended solids and particles. Dead wood rests are part of the river system, and they contribute to their biodiversity such as by forming microhabitats and by allowing soil carbon retention. However, the accumulation of dead wood in rivers increases the risk of damaging infrastructures (such as bridges and dams) causing an increase in overflows as a result.

To assess the possible effects of dead wood on river geomorphology, it is important to understand its distribution, movement, and permanence in place.

Understanding the dynamics of dead wood mobilization in rivers and riverbeds, will allow the development of guidelines on how to manage this dead wood to maintain or enhance the ecological dynamics of rivers while reducing the risk to damage infrastructure at the same time. This need is a priority, especially in the case of large accumulation of dead wood produced by extraordinary floods. In these situations, as a management measure it is usually applied a systematic removal of the dead wood without regard to ecological criteria to preserve it in those places where it is not representing a significant risk to river infrastructures.

Since Gloria storm of 2020 and its floods, there hasn't been any other one capable to mobilize our market dead wood. Patience and water!

Forestry Works to improve the riparian forest in the Vallforners Riera in Cànoves and Samalús

26th of November 2021

Within the scope of the implementation activities of the *C2 Forestry works for the improvement of the habitat action* in the Besòs basin, several actions coordinated by the Granollers City Council and the Besòs-Tordera Consortium have been promoted to act on a very specific section of the Vallforners stretch in Cànoves.

The forestry treatments have been made for the eradication of invasive non-native species, such as black locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*). The large trees ringing, mainly plane trees (*Platanus x hispanica*) and the removal of various feet of black locus and plane trees through cuts and high pruning techniques have been done to prioritize the existing riparian species such as the alder (*Alnus glutinosa*). The works have been carried out by the company Virens de Cardedeu and the rests from these works

have been used by the property owners which, willingly, have given permission to carry out these actions within their properties.

A small fraction of the thickest branch of these works will be used to build wildlife refuges, specifically for otters, at various points along the Congost River.

Start of the Works at Gambires and Sorral islands in Masies de Voltregà

3rd of January 2022

One of the biggest demonstration projects of the LIFE ALNUS project has started to move towards its execution. After months and years working on a technically complex and highly innovative proposal, at least in our country, the project reaches the decisive moment of its execution.

The Catalan Water Agency (ACA) has awarded the works for the restoration of the Gambires river area and the Sorral island in a section of four kilometres of the river Ter, by the municipalities of Torelló and the Masies de Voltregà, in the Osona region. The works will involve an investment of approximately 450,000 €, consisting of hydromorphological restoration actions, in accordance with the objectives set out in the LIFE ALNUS project, of which the ACA is a partner.

Implementation works of Gambires island, where Ter river is divided naturally in two flows, consist on gravel supply to the main river channel to compensate its lack and also to favour the elevation of the water sheet, circulating through the secondary channel as well. This will allow the improvement off the hydrological connexion at Gambires island and the alder recovery. This habitat is of communitarian interest and currently in regression so the works will also impact on vegetation by eradicating alien species from the island.

Regarding the measures foreseen at Sorral Island, they will consist on the demolition of the runway and access path decompaction, supply and redistribution of gravels water above and below acting as sediment trap as the runway used to.

In the current planification period (2016-2021) which ACA is promoting, 8,7M€ are destinated to fluvial and river morphology recovery measures for the internal basins of Catalonia. This specific work at Ter represents a huge hydromorphological rehabilitation and restoration work and generates a very important precedent for the replicability of such actions in other regions of the territory. Thanks to the 3rd planification period (2022-2027), 44 M€ are foreseen to be destined for hydromorphological restoration at the internal basins of Catalonia.

Fauna refuges constructions

17th of January 2022

With a small portion of wood rests from C2 action cuts of alien species at Vallfornes river in Cànoves we've built fauna refuges, specifically for otters, in different spots in Congost river.

The emplacement of such refuges have been codesigned together with the Besòs Consortium, Rivus Foundation, and with the Conservation Biology Group of CTFC.

The construction has been held by the Specialised Work Special Centre Helix, from Viver Foundation at Bell-lloc of Cardedeu.

Thank you everybody for the works!

Visit of the TV3 channel at the implementation zone of the Besòs basin

28th of January 2022

With the communication done for the otters refuges at Congost river, the Maresme-Vallès Oriental delegation team of TV3 came to visit us last January to spread the LIFE ALNUS project all around Catalonia.

During the recording we presented different implementation spots and actions done while trying to elaborate thoughts on fluvial dynamics recovery and on the importance of the riparian habitats restoration.

You can find the news at the following link: https://www.ccma.cat/tv3/alacarta/telenoticies-comarques/recuperacio-del-riu-congost-amb-el-projecte-life-alnus/video/6148198/

Stewardship agreements and authorisations with properties of riparian forests

February and March 2022

To start with the works of C2. Silvicultural measures of alder forest restoration, with the objective to improve the ecological quality and structure of the most strategic alders of the Ter basin, we've contacted again with the different properties next to the river to get the permission to access them and enlarge the improvement and protection of the riparian forest in about 120 ha along the Ter river. This will be done through forestry works and alien species eradication, habitat reintroduction in those places that were extinct or not structured in the past, and habitat connectivity improvement.

LIFE ALNUS workshops inside the Osona's Naturalistic Days

2nd of April 2022

With the beginning of the C3. Restoration of rivers geomorphological strongly modified, a technical field -visit in Torelló and Masies de Voltregà has been promoted to keep the awareness, communication, and explanation of the importance of the hidromorphological recovery as the basis to recover all the fluvial system dynamics at the Ter basin. This has been done through the Osona's Naturalistic Days.

The project "Hidromorphological rehabilitation of the Gambires island and the Espadamala de Baix property (Torelló), including the Sorral island (Masies de Voltregà) at the Ter river" consist on the works in a stretch of almost 4 km through morphology and connectivity recovery actions. This will boost the communitarian interest habitat 91E0* (Alder forest of

Alnus glutinosa and *Fraxinus excelsior* conservation at regional and EU scale, according to the LIFE ALNUS project objectives.

Joint Day of LIFE INVASQUA and LIFE ALNUS sobrabout alien species

1st and 2nd of June 2022

The upcoming 1st and 2nd of June of 2022, a joint day will be held between LIFE ALNUS and LIFE INVASQUA about alien species. The 1st day will be placed at the Prat de la Riba room in the Institution of Catalan Natural History and the Catalan Studies Institute of Barcelona.

Under the tittle of “Functional Ecosystem Services: more resistant to invasions and more resilient to their impacts”, the joint day will have technical presentations and a round table together with both General Directorates of the Catalan Department of Climate Action and the Catalan Water Agency.

The second day will be placed at the Besòs basin, specifically will consist of a field trip at Vallforners river in Cànoves. The objective will be to meet some invasive species actions done. After this, a visit to the Natural Space of Can Cabanyes, in Granollers, will take place, where it is foreseen to have an aquatic fauna observation through electric fishing.

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