



Info Day of SaveGREEN Project for the Pilot Area in Bulgaria

Interactive outdoor activities, entertaining talks and discussions engaged experts and young nature lovers

5 October 2022 - The Bulgarian partners in the SaveGREEN project, Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN) and the Bulgarian Biodiversity Foundation (BBF), with the support of experts from the associated strategic partner, the South-West State Enterprise (SWSE) at the Ministry of Agriculture, organized an Info Day for the project in Blagoevgrad.

About forty young people from two local secondary schools, teachers, experts, and representatives of the community were involved in varied information and demonstration outdoor activities that focused on the rich wildlife and beautiful nature of the nearby mountains that gave the name of the SaveGREEN pilot area Rila – Verila – Kraishte. Information was presented about the project and its goals, objectives, and achievements.

The young participants, sixth grade students of the "Georgi Izmirliiev" Secondary School and 11th grade students of the School of Mathematics "Acad. S. Korolyov", Blagoevgrad, have learned a lot of new things about the wildlife species whose migratory routes cross the transport infrastructure of the pilot area near the city. They also discussed the measures proposed by the project to support the functionality of the ecological corridors and the protection of biological diversity.

Experts spoke about the ecological corridors used by wild animals in their migration, and explained about the dangers that car traffic and roads posed for them. The experts stressed on the need to provide crossing facilities for wildlife on transport infrastructure to facilitate their movements across large territories and avoid accidents.



Leaflets and fact sheets for the Bulgarian pilot area were distributed to the local community. They inform about the pilot area named after the surrounding mountains which is located on the 16-kilometer Lot 1 of the Struma Motorway and comprises 15 large facilities for wildlife crossing. Those facilities have been constructed in a problem area to mitigate the bottle neck effect and improve chances of the species to migrate and survive in the long term.

The main highlight of the Info Day was an educational and entertaining activity held in one of Blagoevgrad's parks. It was conducted by eng. Vera Stanisheva, eng. Vanya Kamenova and eng. Daniela Belemezova who used their attractive climate van named "Forest in a Cart", hiding many secrets in the form of interactive wildlife related games. The foresters from SWSE were happy to share their knowledge with the young people, and engaged them in games dedicated to nature. The students were shown models of coniferous and deciduous trees, seeds and berries, herbariums. The purpose of this educational and awareness tool is to stimulate public interest in environmental issues.

The children took part in many games and activities, recognized animals by pictures as well as by their footprints, learned more about the sounds they make and many other interesting things. Along with the promotion of the SaveGREEN project, the information activity raised the awareness of the local community on wildlife and forest protection issues and taught the young people to love and care for nature and the forest. For this purpose, the children received educational materials provided by the SaveGREEN partners.

Particularly attractive for all young people and other representatives of the local community were the gifts related to the pilot area Rila – Verila – Kraishte, which reflect the connection of the zone with the natural resources and rich biodiversity of the region and make certain ecological suggestions.

Kraft paper tea bags with a mix of aromatic herbs from the surrounding mountains, artistically designed and branded according to the project requirements, and natural-colored cotton shopping bags with an image of a crossing facility, remain as a memento of the info day and emphasize the connection to the pilot area and local nature. The youths also received branded t-shirts with the image of the wildlife bridge as a gift souvenir of the interesting and engaging public event.



Open air SaveGREEN Info Day in Blagoevgrad – interactive games organized by forestry engineers for schoolchildren



Project factsheets and fliers as well as site specific give-aways for the Rila – Verila – Kraishte pilot area were distributed to the young nature lovers



The van "Forest in a Cart" used by the SaveGREEN partners for information and awareness activities