

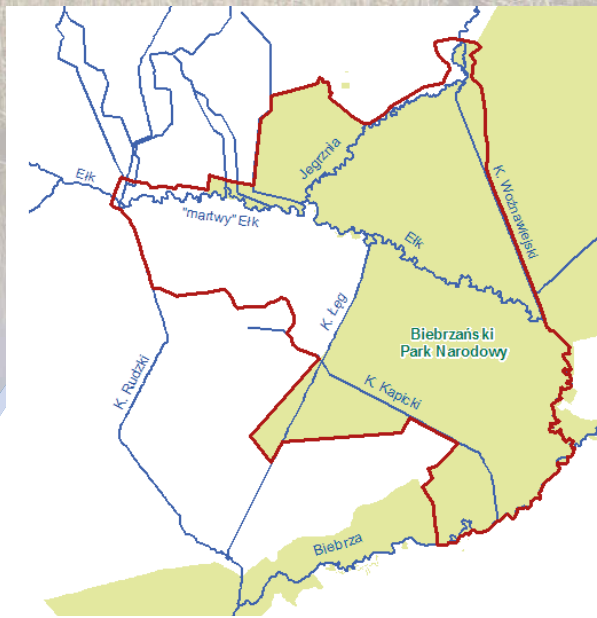
## Frequently asked questions:

### Will the farmers' fields get flooded?

The Park is allowed only to manage its waters in a manner not causing flooding of private plots of land. The level and flow of waters on the project area will be controlled to ensure no such flooding can occur.

### Why implement the restoration project while the drainage was carried out long time ago and everything seems to function properly?

Since the hydrological network was damaged by drainage and land reclamation, the habitats have been continuously degrading and dangerously drying out. In result, the wetland bird population is dropping, dangerous fires brake out more often, the agricultural and farming conditions are worsening. These dangers make the restoration necessary.



Project Area „Restoration II”

## Restoration of hydrological system in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley. Phase II

LIFE13 NAT/PL/000050

Elk river

## Project Area

### PROJECT OFFICE:

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**More information about the project can be found  
at the website: [www.renaturyzacja2.biebrza.org.pl](http://www.renaturyzacja2.biebrza.org.pl)**



LIFE13 NAT/PL/000050 Renaturyzacja sieci hydrograficznej w Basenie Środkowym doliny Biebrzy. Etap II.

Project co-financed by the LIFE+ financial instrument of the European Commission, the Polish National Fund for Environmental Protection and Water Management, and the project beneficiary - Biebrza National Park.

The project area is located within the middle basin of the Biebrza Valley, both in the Biebrza National Park and its buffer zone. For the last 150 years, the local hydrological conditions have been subject to substantial changes. Hydrological network has been altered most significantly due to construction of canals in 19th century and intensive land reclamation works carried out in 20th century. Two large canals were created: Woznawiejski and Rudzki, as well as a number of smaller ones, a/o Lęg, Kapicki. These actions led to changes in water conditions: different drainage system flow, faster outflow of water and significantly lower groundwater level. In result, the wetlands are drying out, especially in vicinity of canals.

To prevent wetland degradation, the Biebrza National Park commenced implementation of phase II of the „Restoration of hydrological system in the Middle Basin of the Biebrza Valley” project.





Woźnawiejski Canal

### What are the goals of the project?

The Restoration II project constitutes a next stage of actions carried out in the middle basin of the Biebrza Valley. During phase one water outflow from canals was limited. For example, waters from Woźnawiejski Canal were directed into Jęgrznia River. The main goal of the phase II is improvement of wetland habitat protection conditions in the target area, by means of:

- re-establishing a steady flow of Elk River, what will contribute to the recreation of close to natural hydrographic conditions in the middle basin of the Biebrza Valley,
- improvement of the environmental conditions of numerous wetland birds' water dependent natural habitats,
- reconcile the requirements of local agriculture with the need to preserve the natural values of the area,
- urism,
- disseminate knowledge of nature conservation among the local residents.

### What actions will be carried out within the confines of the project?

- reconstruction of water facilities at the Modzelówka floodway system in Ruda village;
- capacity enhancement of the Elk river;
- construction of a culvert in the Dębiec wilderness, allowing passage of a/o farming vehicles;
- construction of small-scale water retaining facilities to slow down the outflow of water through the Kapicki Canal (bars and floodgates);
- land purchase;
- shrub removal, mowing;
- construction of tourism infrastructure: vantage point – tower and overpasses in Dębiec wilderness next to the Elk river;
- monitoring of the efficiency of conservation activities and other actions undertaken within the confines of the project;
- educational workshops for farmers owning land in the project area, children and youth from the project area;
- a series of meetings with local community.

### Who will benefit from project implementation?

Restoration of the Elk river flow is carried out to gradually rebuild the natural hydrographic conditions in the Biebrza river middle basin area. Reconstruction of water facilities at the Modzelówka floodway system and weir modernisation will allow redirecting the Elk river waters back to their old bed, thus improving habitat conditions through increasing groundwater levels.

Additionally, these actions will provide economic benefits, in particular stimulating the spring flooding of meadows in the currently dead Elk river bed and improving the moisture conditions necessary for utilising these areas for agricultural purposes. Maintaining the flow of the Elk river also in dry periods should provide grasslands with proper amount of water.

The main goal of the water management in Biebrza valley is providing the wetlands with necessary moisture level, close to natural that existed before the original hydrological system was altered, while still allowing expansive utilisation of a part of the valley for agricultural purposes. Reconciling needs of the agriculture with necessity of protecting the natural values of this area is crucial.

It is also necessary to develop means of utilising water facilities that would allow maintaining maximal level of ground waters while not impeding usage of meadows and pastures for agricultural purposes.

Reconstruction of Modzelówka floodway system will allow dividing Elk river waters in such a way that 80% of the flow will be directed to Rudzki canal while the remaining 20% will go to the actual Elk river bed (the "Dead Elk").



Designed to rebuild weir in Modzelówka



dead Elk riverbed