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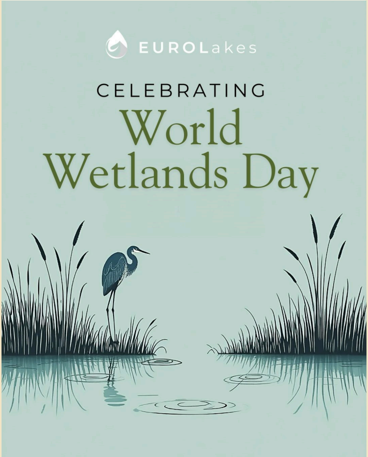
NEWSLETTER vol.3

NEWS FROM THE BASIN

Safeguarding and restoring European natural lakes and their ecosystems

EUROLakes is a **Mission Ocean project** which main goal is to propose an **innovative, holistic** and **science-based approach** to safeguarding and restoring **European natural lakes** and their **ecosystems**.

Through establishing **local communities** of practice, **EUROLakes** will apply the principles of **co-creation** and **inclusivity** to **develop** and showcase novel, integrated protection and restoration solutions, focusing particularly on **nature-based solutions.**



February set off with a celebration of the world wetlands - the little-known superheroes for our planet.

EUROLakes highlights the vital importance of these incredible ecosystems for nature, climate and us, people.

What are wetlands?

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil or is present near the surface of the soil year-round or for varying periods of time during the year. Think of marshes, swamps, fens and even some lakeshores!

Why are they so important?

Nature's Filter

Wetlands act like giant sponges, filtering pollutants from water and improving water quality.

Biodiversity Hotspots
They provide critical habitats for countless species of birds, fish, insects and plants, many of which are endangered.

Climate Champions
Wetlands store vast amounts of carbon, helping to mitigate climate change. They also act as natural buffers against floods and storms, protecting our communities.

Our Daily Life
From providing fresh water and food to offering beautiful spaces for recreation, wetlands support livelihoods and well-being for millions of people worldwide.

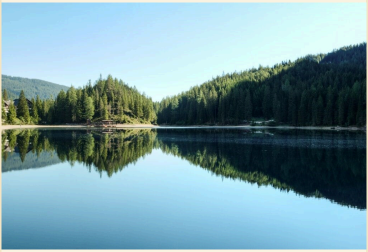
The value of these unique ecosystems is immense. With the integrated approach of the 4 Returns Framework, EUROLakes guides landscape restoration and implements Nature Based Solutions. We aren't just looking at the water itself but the surrounding land too, the biodiversity it supports and the communities that depend on it. This holistic approach is crucial for preserving and restoring our wetlands, ensuring their vitality and conservation.

ONE YEAR OF EUROLAKES

In mid-October 2025, the EUROLakes consortium gathered online for our second management meeting, a significant milestone for the project: one full year of dedicated research, community engagement and restorative environmental action. From stakeholder engagement workshops to digital modelling and nature financing mechanisms, we have spent the last twelve months laying the groundwork for building and implementing the 4 Returns Framework at our demo lakes. We invite you to explore our website, where we celebrate our progress, share the lessons we've learned, and reaffirm our commitment to reconnecting our lake communities with the world of nature.

Scaling up lake restoration

A major achievement we're proud of is the launch of the **EUROLakes Replication Call** led by the **Global Nature Fund**. The call represented a significant step in expanding the impact of the project beyond its three demonstration lakes in Italy, Germany and Romania.



The Replication Call invited **local and regional authorities across Europe** to apply for support to transfer and adapt nature-based solutions (NBS) for restoring and protecting natural lake ecosystems. Drawing on insights and tools developed through EUROLakes' demonstration sites and the **4 Returns Framework** for landscape restoration, selected regions are expected to design and implement tailored lake restoration plans with hands-on mentoring from project experts.

The call was open from mid-October 2025 to 15 January 2026 and was widely promoted on EUROLakes social networks and website as well as on European Commission's channels in order to broaden the reach and attract interest. With the submission now closed and evaluations underway, the next steps include selection of the top proposals, preparation of grant agreements and the kick-off of the replication projects in 2026, focusing on tailored restoration plans and stakeholder engagement.

By scaling the solutions and lessons learned from our demonstration sites, the Replication Call is set to contribute strongly to EUROLakes' mission of fostering healthier, resilient lake ecosystems across the continent.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

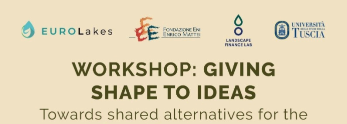
In the past months, EUROLakes has continued to strengthen its participatory approach by bringing together local communities, authorities and experts to shape sustainable pathways for lake landscapes. The multistakeholder engagement activities are at the heart of the project, ensuring that restoration and future development of lake regions are rooted in shared ideas, local needs and collaborative action by the establsished communities of practice.

Bistret lake: Mapping visitor routes with local voices

In southern Romania, a collaborative workshop marked the beginning of efforts to co-design a visitor route in the **Bistraț-Cârna Lake** area. Hosted by WWF-Romania in partnership with the Jiu Corridor (Dolj County Center for Nature Protection, Tourism and Sustainable Rural Development), this interactive session brought together local stakeholders to discuss how nature-based tourism and lake restoration can be aligned with community priorities. Participants explored opportunities for enhancing access and engagement with the wetland environment while respecting ecological values and cultural context.

Read the article

Lake Vico: Shared ideas for sustainable development



EUROLakes

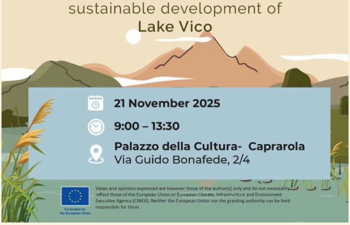
Fondazione Eni Enrico Mattei

Landscape Finance Lab

Università degli Studi della Tuscia

WORKSHOP: GIVING SHAPE TO IDEAS

Towards shared alternatives for the


sustainable development of
Lake Vico
21 November 2025
9:00 – 13:30
Palazzo della Cultura- Caprarola
Via Guido Bonafede, 2/4
Co-funded by the European Union

Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

At **Lake Vico** in Italy, the second major multistakeholder engagement workshop titled **“Shaping Ideas: Shared Alternatives for the Sustainable Development of Lake Vico”** was held on 21 November 2025 in Caprarola at the Palazzo della Cultura. The event gathered municipal representatives, local organisations, scientists and citizens to collaboratively envision sustainable future scenarios for the lake region. Participants worked together to identify alternative development pathways that balance environmental quality, community needs and long-term resilience.
By creating space for open dialogue and idea exchange, this workshop strengthened shared understanding of the opportunities and challenges ahead, and helped to embed the voices of local stakeholders at the centre of planning and decision-making.

Read more

EUROLakes partners will continue to foster participatory processes at each demo site, connecting local insights with scientific guidance and integrated management frameworks. Workshops like these not only help to shape specific plans for nature-based solutions, but also nurture lasting partnerships able to carry lake restoration efforts beyond the project’s life.

The EUROLakes Facebook Groups for **Lake Vico (Italy)** and **Lake Bistret (Romania)** are active, providing members with opportunities to share concerns, exchange ideas, learn about upcoming workshops and training events, and voice their opinions on the landscape they value and care for. They are designed as living communities of practice - places where knowledge and experiences meet tradition and action - helping to strengthen stewardship, collaboration and a sense of belonging to the landscape.

We warmly invite you to **discover and join the groups** and invite friends from your community to become part of the conversation.

COLLABORATION FOR IMPACT

Exploring the hidden power of wetlands

Living Lakes
Living Lakes Webinar Series
WETLAND BASICS
NATURE’S HIDDEN POWERHOUSES
UDO GATTENLÖHNER
Global Nature Fund (GNF)
Managing director of
Global Nature Fund (GNF)
ALEKSANDRA STARČEVIĆ
Wetlands International
European Association
EUROLakes Project Manager at
WIEA

On **September 23, 2025**, members of the **EUROLakes project** took part in the **Living Lakes Webinar Series**, diving into the vital world of **wetlands.** The webinar was hosted by the **Living Lakes Network** and brought together experts and enthusiasts to explore facts, figures, graphics and examples about the functioning of wetlands and why they are indispensable for a healthy planet.

Continue reading

NETWORKING FRIDAY

From Demo to Impact: Matchmaking with Cascade Funding for Public Authorities on Restoration

November 14, 2025, 1-2 PM UTC

Background image Credits: Amelie Gautier/Unsplash
AIR CENTRE
2021 2030 United Nations Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development

Later in the fall of 2025, on November 14th, EUROLakes coordinator **Wetlands International Europe** joined the **AIR Centre - Atlantic International Research Centre** Networking Friday special session "From Demo to Impact: Matchmaking with Cascade Funding for Public Authorities on Restoration" where the project announced the open call for Replication sites.
The webinar was aligned with the **Mission Ocean and Waters** and addressed a key challenge: how can public entities transition from successful pilot demonstrations to real-world deployment and measurable impact in marine and coastal ecosystem restoration?

Mission Lakes webinar series

Ever since their launch in August 2025, the Mission Lakes webinar series have become a space for open exchange – not just about environmental challenges, but about practical, sometimes bold, solutions that connect science, policy and local communities.
The second webinar took place in November and was hosted by the ProClean Lakes project and focused on how entrepreneurship and innovative financing models can drive lake restoration efforts across Europe. EUROLakes was represented by Paul Chatterton, Landscape Finance Lab, who shared insights on mobilizing private capital and developing landscape finance mechanisms to support long-term restoration.

Key highlights included:

💡 The growing role of entrepreneurial actors in nature restoration

💶 Innovative financing tools to unlock investment in freshwater ecosystems

🤝 Cross-sector partnerships as catalysts for scalable impact

🌱 Real-world examples, demonstrating how restoration can create economic value

The discussion reinforced that protecting Europe's lakes is not only an environmental priority but an economic enabler too, when backed by the right financing.

The third Mission Lakes webinar, in February 2026, explored circular approaches to tackling lake pollution, under the theme **"Turning Pollution into Resources."**
The session highlighted innovative solutions for nutrient recovery, waste valorisation and circular economy models that transform environmental challenges into opportunities.
EUROLakes was presented by Prof. Rafaelle Pelorosso, University of Tuscia, Italy, who spoke about "*Lake Vico: Restoring Nature by Rebuilding Trust*".

Ani Hristova
Ani Hristova
Tallent Dadi
Raffaele Pelorosso
Alenka Zalaznik
Kasper Reitzel
EUROLakes
Volcanic Lakes of the Lazio Region
ORVIETO
Bolsena
Lago di Bolsena
VITERBO
Lago di Vico
Lago di Monterosi
Lago di Bracciano
Lago di Martignano
ROMA
MARE TIRRENO
Lago di Albano
Lago di Nemi
Lake Vico
Lake Albar
Lake Bolsena
Lake Nem
Lake Bracciano
Lake Martignano

We highly value participation in these exchanges as they further strengthen synergies with fellow Mission Ocean projects and reaffirm the project's commitment to integrated systemic solutions for natural lake restoration.

DISSEMINATION

Advancing science for sustainable water systems

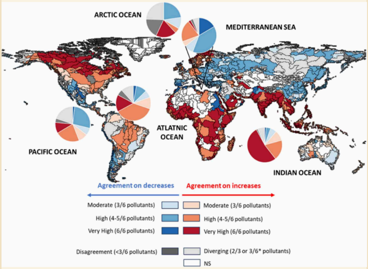
EUROLakes has contributed to two important scientific publications co-authored by our research partner Albert Nkwasa from the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA). Both studies draw on data and modelling work connected to EUROLakes activities and provide valuable insights into land-use dynamics and future pollution pathways.

Land-Use Modelling and Multiple Cropping

The first publication explores how current land-use models often underestimate the complexity of agricultural systems by insufficiently accounting for multiple cropping practices. By refining modelling approaches, the study improves our understanding of how agricultural production can evolve under sustainability and climate objectives. This is a crucial step for designing pathways that reduce pressures on freshwater ecosystems while ensuring food security. The research paper directly supports EUROLakes' integrated perspective, linking land management, nutrient flows and lake health.

Future River Exports of Nutrients Under Climate Change

The second publication examines how climate-driven hydrological changes could affect future river exports of nutrients, plastics and chemicals worldwide. Using advanced modelling tools, the study assesses how shifting precipitation patterns and river flows may influence pollutant loads reaching freshwater and coastal systems.

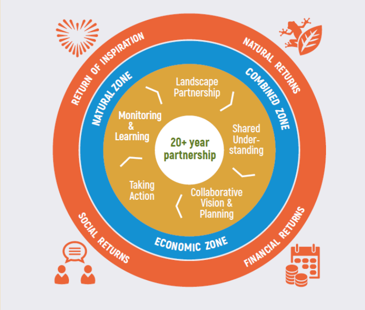

ARCTIC OCEAN
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
ATLATNIC OCEAN
PACIFIC OCEAN
INDIAN OCEAN
Agreement on decreases
Agreement on increases
Moderate (3/6 pollutants)
High (4-5/6 pollutants)
Very High (6/6 pollutants)
Moderate (3/6 pollutants)
High (4-5/6 pollutants)
Very High (6/6 pollutants)
Disagreement (<3/6 pollutants)
Diverging (2/3 or 3/6* pollutants)
NS

The findings underline the urgency of adaptive management strategies and cross-sector coordination to mitigate emerging risks for lakes and rivers in a changing climate, while reinforcing the relevance of EUROLakes' restoration and prevention framework.

Both publications can be accessed through the EUROLakes Knowledge Hub on the website.

INTERVIEW:

The 4 Returns Framework for landscape restoration



To close EUROLakes campaign on the **4 Returns Framework for landscape restoration** - the guiding methodology underpinning all activities across the demonstration sites and replication efforts, we interviewed one of the project's leading experts on landscape management and restoration - Elton Mudyazvivi from Wetlands International. In this in-depth conversation, he unpacks how the framework moves beyond short-term environmental fixes by generating four interconnected returns: inspiration, social capital, natural capital and financial capital. The interview offers a clear, accessible look at how EUROLakes translates this holistic approach into practical and tailored restoration planning, stakeholder engagement and sustainable financing strategies, thus ensuring that lake restoration delivers long-term benefits for nature, communities and local economies.

Read the interview

FROM OUR BLOG

Beyond reports and workshops, EUROLakes continues to share stories from the ground. Our latest blog posts shine a spotlight on the three demonstration lakes – **Lake Vico, Bistreț–Cârna Lakes, and Lake Dümmer** – reflecting on why they were selected, what challenges they face and how local stakeholders are shaping their future. Together, these articles bring readers closer to the landscapes where the magic of natural lake restoration is happening in practice.

Natural laboratories for change

In *"Vico, Bistreț and Dümmer Lakes as Natural Laboratories"*, understand why these three sites were chosen as EUROLakes demo areas. Despite their different ecological, social and governance contexts, they share common pressures – nutrient pollution, climate impacts, competing land uses - making them a good fit for our integrated restoration approach.

Each lake represents a distinct European lake ecosystem while contributing to a shared ambition: developing scalable, nature-based solutions that can inspire replication across the continent.

Continue reading

Lake Dümmer – biodiversity, balance and local voices

Explore the lake's ecological significance, its role as a recreational hotspot, and the delicate balance between conservation and human activity in *"Lake Dümmer: Nature, Recreation and Resilience in Balance"*. The article outlines ongoing restoration efforts and the importance of long-term resilience planning.

Besides this broader perspective, we also looked at Dümmer through the eyes of a local limnologist in *"Reed Bed Protection is Key for the Biodiversity of Dümmer Lake"* where he shares on why reed beds are vital habitats for birds, fish and overall ecosystem health. The piece underscores how protecting these natural buffers is not just an environmental measure but a cornerstone for sustaining biodiversity and improving water quality.

These two articles are part of the EUROLakes **#DemoLakes** campaign and nicely illustrate how the project combines scientific insight with local knowledge to ensure that restoration strategies are grounded in both evidence and community engagement.

From local laboratories to European replication, these stories depict how hands-on restoration, stakeholder engagement and science-based planning merge in practice. The lessons emerging from **Lake Vico, Bistreț-Cârna Lakes and Lake Dümmer** are not only shaping local action plans. They are outlining the strategies for replication sites and contributing to a growing European community committed to restoring and safeguarding freshwater ecosystems.

COMMUNICATION CORNER

EUROLakes official video released

We proudly share the official video of EUROLakes, released in September 2025. It is developed for the public, local lake communities, scientists and policymakers to raise their awareness about the project's ambition and approach to sustainable lake management and integrated restoration activities.

Watch the video on YouTube and subscribe to our channel to increase your literacy on natural lake landscapes and how you can help in preserving their beautiful resources.

EUROLakes
Restoring Europe's
Natural Lake Landscapes

Project Posters

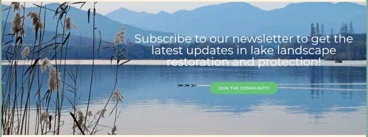
EUROLakes project posters are now available on the website – feel invited to browse, download and learn more about our mission and results.

View the posters

Looking Ahead

With one year of EUROLakes, the drive is clear. From activating local stakeholders and launching the Replication Call, to contributing to scientific research and strengthening cross-project collaboration through the Mission Lakes community, the project continues to bridge knowledge, action and long-term vision.

Guided by the 4 Returns Framework, EUROLakes is restoring lake ecosystems while building resilient landscapes generating ecological, social and economic value. As we move into the next phase with replication activities, continued stakeholder engagement and deeper knowledge exchange, our ambition remains the same: scaling impact for healthier lakes across Europe.


Subscribe to our newsletter to get the latest updates in lake landscape restoration and protection!
JOIN THE COMMUNITY!

Stay connected, follow our journey (@EUROLakes) and be part of the community inspired to restore and protect Europe’s freshwater resources.

In case you landed on EUROLakes newsletter by chance, make sure you subscribe to it, to stay on top of all news coming from the basin.

Share the passion for natural lakes restoration by forwarding this newsletter to friends and colleagues to learn together how improving our lake ecosystems benefits the environment, local economies and communities, for a sustainable future.

EUROLakes is social. Let’s connect!

EUROLakes

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