

Youth for Nature

Donau-Auen National Park
meets
Thayatal National Park

Volunteer Camp 2021

National Park Donau-Auen,
Orth an der Donau
&
National Park Thayatal,
Hardegg
August 22nd until September 4th 2021



Formatiert: Deutsch (Österreich)





Dear young, tough and dedicated volunteer!

We have the pleasure to welcome you as a part of our project, the **Volunteer Camp “Donau-Auen National Park meets Thayatal National Park”**, at the Donau-Auen Nationalpark and the Thayatal Nationalpark in Lower Austria! Our names are Matthias (Donau-Auen) and Christoph (Thayatal) who are part of the organisation team of this volunteer camp. Together with the camp leaders, we want to provide you with the right conditions to do a good job and have a good time. From **AUGUST 22nd till SEPTEMBER 4th** you will be part of a group of international people doing hard, but valuable work in the gorgeous Thaya valley and the wild floodplains of the Danube River close to Vienna.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO READ THROUGH THIS INFORMATION SHEET CAREFULLY SO THAT YOU ARRIVE FOR THE CAMP FULLY-EQUIPPED AND WELL-PREPARED! PLEASE TAKE SPECIAL NOTICE OF THE SECTIONS HEALTH & SAFETY AND EQUIPMENT!

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1. First of all ...

The camp takes place at two different places. First week you will stay in the smallest city in Austria, Hardegg. For the second week of the camp we will transfer you to village Eckartsau. As a consequence, your arrival and departure locations are different ones. More information can be found in Chapter “Arrival and Departure”.

2. The Organisation and its Partners

This International Volunteer Camp is hosted by **SCI Austria**, the national branch of a network of international volunteer exchange associations and **Naturfreunde Österreich**, one of Austrias alpine and tourism associations. The local partners are the managements of **Thayatal National Park** and the **Donau-Auen National Park** which coordinate protection and management of nature and also take the interests of the local community, the NGOs and other institutions in the spheres of regional development into account. Both organisations are responsible for organizing the field work.

3. Duration

Thayatal National Park, August 22nd to August 29th, 2021

Donau-Auen National Park, August 29th to September 4th, 2021

4. The field of operation – your contribution

The conservation area of **Thayatal National Park** – the smallest of Austria’s national parks – covers part of the Thaya Valley river landscape. While cutting through the Bohemian Massif the river Thaya created an enormously diverse landscape with protruding meanders, steep wet slopes of forest, dry grassland upon outstanding rock formations and beautiful meadows along the river. Together with the adjacent Podyjí National Park in the Czech Republic, it is one of the most interesting and diverse river valleys in Central Europe. You will encounter nearly half the plant species that exist throughout Austria.

The **Donau-Auen National Park** is protecting one of the last large unspoilt wetland areas in Europe. Here the dynamics of the flowing stream are still active. The rise and fall of the water levels define life rhythms in the wetlands. The river shaped this landscape with its floods and still nurtures today a large diversity of plants and animals. In the National Park, nature can develop free of economic impact. The varying conditions lead to a diversity of habitats, the river Danube itself, canals and former tributaries of the Danube, all sorts of marshy pools and sloughs, gravel banks on islands and riverbanks, or meadows and well drained, dry ground where the vegetation is reminiscent of savannahs. Obviously, this great range of habitats is the basis for an outstanding diversity of species.

There are not many dry grassland areas left, and we are here to preserve the last ones. We will cut the grass, the bushes and trees and remove the biomass from the areas. We will also improve the habitats of different (protected) species, like reptiles or fish. In the wetlands we will selectively remove invasive alien species to support the native flora. We are not only working for biodiversity, but also for the beauty of this unique landscape. This camp contributes to the Natura-2000 region with the goal of restoring and conserving natural habitats.

All together about **15 volunteers** will participate in this great attempt to maintain the typical nature of Thayatal and the Donau-Auen. We also want to demonstrate to politicians and local communities that there are young people, who don't fear hard work, who care about nature and are willing to help in their free time and who are interested in the conservation of areas worthy of protection.

We will do a good job and have a great time! Many hands make light work.

5. The accommodation – your home

At Thayatal National Park you will be staying in the “Wildcat Camp”. The facility is equipped with bedrooms for up to 6 persons with bathrooms, a common room and kitchen. Breakfast, packed lunch and dinner will be provided either in the camp, at the work site or in nearby restaurants. Wireless LAN will be available in the Camp.



During time in Donau-Auen National Park we will stay at the Nationalpark-Camp Meierhof next to the castle of Eckartsau. We will sleep in big tents and therefore you will need a sleeping bag and a camping mat. In the camp there is also a house that contains common areas, kitchen, toilets and showers.

During the camp we will also cook together. This will be an opportunity to share international food culture and cooking styles.

If you have any allergies or special food wishes (vegetarian...), please let us know in advance!

6. Leisure time

Those who work hard, also play hard! We will be able to enjoy free time after a hard-working day by playing games, getting to know each other better and by talking about all kinds of different topics. One of the goals of this camp (next to doing valuable work) is to have a cultural exchange and to support the understanding of different cultures. ☺

We will work 5 days a week from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. with breaks in between. In our leisure time we can enjoy the beautiful landscape of the National Parks and their surroundings.

We will experience the particular landscape and nature not only while working but with joint excursions in the area. You will be able to enjoy the best the two regions have to offer in your leisure time: Close to the Thaya Valley is the beautiful town of Retz, famous for its vineyards, its sandstone cellars as well as a lake for swimming. Close to the Camp in Donau-Auen is Austria's capital, Vienna, with all its theaters, museums, sights, restaurants and bars.

7. Language

ENGLISH is the official language of the camp. Therefore, this information sheet is only in English. **PLEASE make sure that you speak English well enough for basic communication and to understand work and safety instructions.** If there are any parts of this information sheet that you cannot understand, please contact us personally.

8. Health and Safety

We will be working about 6 hours, 5 days a week – sometimes in steep terrain, on hot days, but also very cold or rainy days etc. Therefore, some **basic fitness** is required. Before you sign up for this camp **PLEASE make sure that you are healthy enough to participate.** If you get sick just before the camp, it is no problem if you have to cancel. We do not want you to endanger your health for the sake of the camp.

If you have **any underlying conditions** such as **allergies** (to food, bees, pollen, penicillin etc.), **heart conditions**, **epilepsy**, **troubles with your circulation or blood pressure**, **troubles with your joints or eyes** or if you are **required to take any medication on a regular basis**, **PLEASE INFORM THE CAMP LEADER AHEAD OF TIME** so that appropriate measures can be taken in the case of an emergency.

Due to the **COVID-19 pandemic** some special regulations have to be considered: Please make sure you bring a **valid certificate** of either a **negative Corona-Test result**, of your **vaccination** or of a **past illness** (no more than 6 months after recovery). We will also **provide antigen tests** during the work camp. During the volunteer camp, **please make sure that you understand and follow all safety instructions** given to you by your camp and group leaders.

9. Equipment

The **bold** items on this list are **ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED**. Hardegg and Eckartsau are small villages and do not offer many shopping opportunities. **PLEASE make sure that you bring everything** to ensure an uncomplicated and comfortable stay.

- **SLEEPING BAG/ CAMPING MAT / PILLOW** (In Eckartsau we will be sleeping in tents). In the National Park Thayatal you will sleep in the fully equipped Wildcat Camp, just bring some towels for personal use.
- **STRONG HIKING BOOTS** – at least **ANKLE-HEIGHT** with a good profile! These are **ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL** as we will be working in **STEEP AREAS**.



- **WORKING GLOVES** * take some high-quality ones which fit you well - you will need them every day!





Nationalpark
Thayatal



- **MEDICATION YOU REQUIRE**
- **WORKING CLOTHES** * We will get dirty during the work – please make sure that you do not wear expensive or new clothes
- **RAIN CLOTHES, warm pullover/fleece** * be prepared for RAINY and COLD weather!
- **SUN PROTECTION: A HAT / BASEBALL CAP, sunscreen, sun glasses** * be prepared for SUN and HOT weather!
- **Filtering Face Piece** * Cat 2
- **Insect repellent** * Mosquitos
- **ID card, European Health Insurance Card** (for EU citizens only) * ask your health insurance company for a free copy
- **Toiletry and hygiene articles, towels**
- **Enough socks and underwear for the two weeks**
- Free time clothes and shoes
- Swimming togs
- Light shoes - for inside and after work
- Small backpack for the working days
- Earplugs – * we sleep together in the Wildcat Camp and the Nationalpark-Camp Meierhof!
- Bottles - for water * on hot days you need 2 litres!
- Torch light (head torch) and pocket knife
- Musical instruments (who takes a guitar?!), CDs, books, pen and paper, camera and so on
- Recipes of your favourite food
- Some money for extra sweets, drinks and souvenirs
- Something typical from your region or country * something liquid, something solid, something in between, it doesn't matter, as long as there's a story behind it which you want to share with us!

Suggestion: It's always good to arrange **travel insurance**: It costs very little and can help a lot!

10. Local Infrastructure

Hardegg is the smallest town in Austria, with only 90 inhabitants, right at the border to the Czech Republic. Despite its remoteness it has a small grocery store and two restaurants and a local doctor, the closest hospital is in Horn (30 min by car). In the close by city of Retz you will find more Restaurants Cafés, Shops, a small cinema, ATMs and supermarkets.

Eckartsau is a village east of Vienna. The camp is near the castle of Eckartsau. Eckartsau is a small village with one restaurant and a typical Austrian "Heuriger". In the castle there is also a café. There is a local doctor and the next hospital is in Hainburg.



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11. Information on Arrival, Accommodation and Departure

a) Meeting point:

***!On Sunday, AUGUST 22nd you should be
at the train station in Retz at 16.15 p.m.!***

From there transport will be arranged to the Thayatal National Park/Hardegg.
In case you are planning to arrive independently, please let us know in advance!

The transport from Thayatal to Donau-Auen on August 29th will be organized by us. After the week in Donau-Auen, at the end of the Camp on September 4th, we will bring you to the trainstation Bad Deutsch Altenburg after breakfast. From there you can easily catch trains to Vienna city or Vienna airport. You can buy the tickets just before you go and our team will support you with the necessary travel arrangements to catch your next flight/train/bus home.

If you will just take part in one of the weeks, please let us know in advance, we will organize your arrival/departure individually.

b) **Contacts for organizational issues in advance:**

Donau-Auen:

Matthias Kuhn
m.kuhn@donauauen.at
+43 (0)676-842235-16

Thayatal:

Christoph Milek
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Formatiert: Englisch (Vereinigte Staaten)

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c) Addresses

Nationalpark-Camp Meierhof
Schlossgasse 2
A-2305 Eckartsau

National Park Thayatal
Merkersdorf 90
A-2082 Hardegg

d) Arrival and Departure:

The **travel costs are not included** - you have to organise and pay this by yourself!

Be on the meeting point at 22nd of August in Retz at the train station (it's a small train station so it's easy to find each other). If you want to try and hitchhike, be aware that Austrians are not very hitchhiker-friendly people. Maybe some of you want to come by car – in this case let us and your camp-colleagues know so that you can do some car-sharing. You will receive a list of all the participants via email before the camp, so you can contact people and arrange transport together!



Useful websites for transportation in Austria are:

http://www.viennaairport.com/en/passengers/arrival_parking/bus_connections

<http://www.wienerlinien.at/>

<http://www.oebb.at/>

<https://www.cityairporttrain.com/de/home>

<https://westbahn.at/>

e) Car routes:

Please check which route is best for your location at:

www.viamichelin.at or www.maps.google.at

Please note that you have to have a "Vignette", a road tax sticker, on your car to use the Austrian highways. You can purchase these stickers at the borders, any petrol station or tobacconists.

f) End of the Camp:

On Sunday, **September 4th** the Camp is officially closed. **After breakfast** we will drop you at the train station in Bad Deutsch Altenburg. For your orientation, trains from there to Vienna take around 60 Minutes, trains leave at least every hour!

12. Interesting Websites

National Park Donau-Auen

www.donauauen.at

National Park Thayatal

www.np-thayatal.at

SCI Austria

www.sci.or.at

Naturfreunde Österreich

www.naturfreunde.at

13. Questions?

If you have any concerns or questions, feel free to call or email us.

Christoph Milek (Thayatal National Park)

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