



Dear colleagues,

As we move into spring, we're happy to share a new round of updates, opportunities, and inspiring progress from across the Dam Removal Europe (DRE) network. 🌊



Call to action: Last chance to get your barrier removal projects into National Restoration Plans!

Member States are preparing their National Restoration Plans (NRPs) **right now**, which must be submitted to the European Commission by September 2026. [Click this link to see how your country is organising this process](#). A barrier removal included in NRPs represents a concrete commitment by the Member State to go through with it, making it essential that dam and barrier removal projects are clearly included.

With this, take these 4 points into consideration:

1. Changing NRPs once they are drafted is significantly difficult. It is important to **include your barrier removal projects in your country's NRP TODAY**, before they are submitted to the

European Commission September 2026! [Check out this link to see how to engage with your Member State's NRP drafting process.](#)

2. Inclusion of barrier removal projects in the NRPs ensures that **budget will be allocated** for barrier removal projects. If not included, this will be more difficult at a later stage.
3. While aligning your project with the [criteria for identifying free flowing stretches](#) strengthens its credibility, it is not compulsory follow the guidance. Barrier removals **that do not adhere to these criteria will still contribute to** gradual progress toward achieving free-flowing status.
4. Existing or potential funding such as the [Open Rivers Programme](#) can be used to **promote projects are included in the NRPs** and show that projects are realistic and ready for implementation. The DRE helpdesk can support this.

Now is the moment to engage national allies and ensure that barrier removal projects are clearly reflected in the plans!

More information!



New case study: Reconnecting 33 km of headwaters in Belgium

A new case study highlights the removal of 14 culverts in headwater streams in the Parc naturel Haute-Sûre Forêt d'Anlier. Implemented in two phases (2024–2025), the project improved connectivity across a high-quality forest catchment, reconnecting 33 km of river network. The work was led by the **Parc naturel Haute-Sûre Forêt d'Anlie** in collaboration with the Walloon Department of Nature and Forests.



[Read it here!](#)



World Fish Migration Day on 23 May

With two months to go, preparations are underway for this year's edition under the theme "***We Are River People***". It's an opportunity to showcase your work, organise local events, and connect with a global community working on river and fish conservation, and to highlight your love for fish and free-flowing rivers!

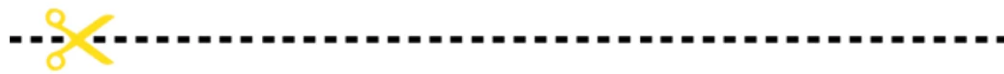


[Register your event here!](#)

You can also join the Art show, open to all formats, from music to painting, as long as there is a strong connection to fish and rivers!

WE ARE RIVER PEOPLE *ART SHOW*

[Join the art show on WFMD!](#)



Webinar: Restoring Free-Flowing Rivers by Removing Obsolete Dams

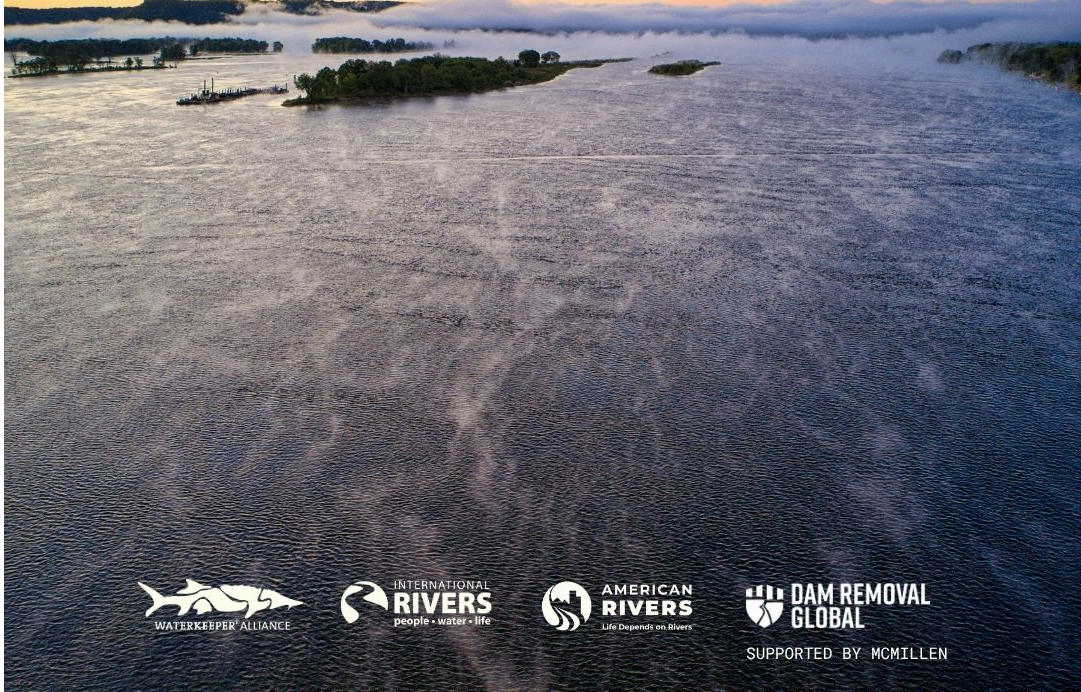
Don't miss this webinar on **April 7 at 16h CET**, which will focus on scaling up the removal of obsolete and risky barriers worldwide and bring together international perspectives and experiences. Organised by International Rivers with the support of McMillen.

GLOBAL
WEBINAR

APRIL 7, 2026 | 4PM (CET)
SUBSCRIPTION AT [BIT.LY/4B9NZV7](https://bit.ly/4B9NZV7)

RESTORING FREE-FLOWING RIVERS

SCALING UP THE REMOVAL OF OBSOLETE
AND RISKY BARRIERS WORLDWIDE



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Subscribe here!



**Call for Evidence: Help Defend the
Water Framework Directive**

The European Commission has launched a call for evidence on the review and revision of the Water Framework Directive (WFD)!

Reopening the Directive risks [weakening hard-won water protection standards](#), increasing pollution, and undermining Europe's water resilience at a time of escalating climate and water crises. Furthermore, the initiative raises serious concerns about the future of the WFD's non-deterioration principle - particularly its application to permitting processes for projects such as mining.

For the call for evidence, the Commission explicitly welcomes contributions not only from industry but from environmental organizations, river practitioners, and other stakeholders. DRE members and partners are strongly encouraged to respond and to share this call within their networks.

[More information!](#)

[Access guidance for the call for evidence!](#)

[Learn more about it!](#)

New Narrative Toolkit on Water

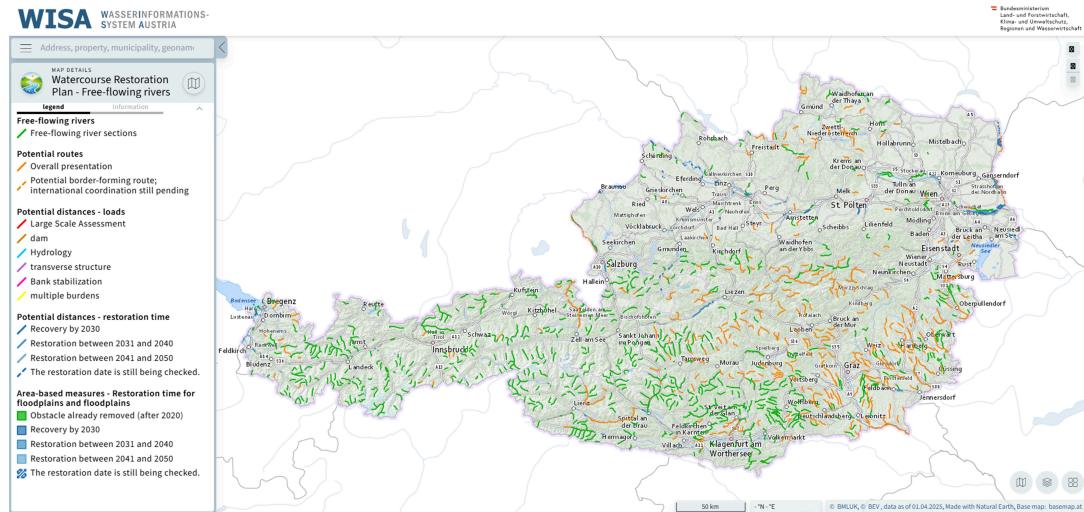
The Living Rivers Europe Coalition has published a new Narrative Toolkit - "Finding Flow: a guide to talking about water and the laws that protect them", designed to help environmentalists, policy teams and communicators talk more effectively about rivers, water protection and water policy.

[Narrative toolkit!](#)



Free-Flowing rivers in Austria

Austria has published its first-ever plan to restore free-flowing rivers. You can see the full plan in this map and share your feedback!



Have a look at the map!



Free to Flow: The Fragile Success of River Renaturalisation

"Restoring rivers to their natural state is an increasingly widespread practice; however, growing anthropisation and an uncertain political climate are threatening its continuity," as highlighted by our colleague Foivos Mouchilinis in this article published in *Renewable Matter* (*Materia Rinnovabile*), an international magazine on the bioeconomy and the circular economy.

Read it here!

If you have questions, would like support, or wish to share relevant updates with the network, please don't hesitate to get in touch.
Thanks for being part of this growing effort.

Warm regards,

Dam Removal Europe team



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