

O2 - Best Practice Data Sheet

People and Water NGO, Slovakia

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Name of the Project: BLUE ALTERNATIVE
– ecosystem creation of water sources in
Upper Torysa. Alternative to the Tichy
Potok water dam

Carrier of the Project: People and Water
NGO, Slovakia

Country: Slovakia / Torysa river

Contact: People and Water,
www.ludiaavoda.sk

Duration: study and construction from 1995
till 2000



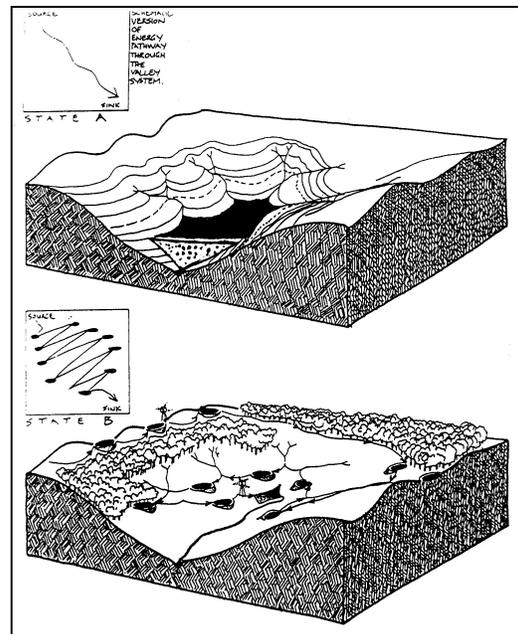
Reference: <https://books.google.sk/books?id=FQcCAQAAQBAJ&pg=PA24&lpg=PA24&dq=Blue+alternative+Tichý+Potok&source=bl&ots=p2WffV71qo&sig=ACFu3U0zWf1D3X86TXVQjvLN5rIJLOyIA&hl=sk&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwil4eCgroLkAhWlbfAKHTR1DusQ6AEwCnoECAGQAQ#v=onepage&q=Blue%20alternative%20Tichý%20Potok&f=false>

<https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20010186/michal-kravcik-the-environmentalist.html>

Origin and Context of the Project

In the early 1990s, the Government of the Slovak Republic asserted the need to build a new dam above the Ruthenian village of Tichý Potok in the Torysa River Basin. The dam was supposed to provide drinking water for the inhabitants of Prešov and Košice. At that time, a group of conservationists from the civic association NGO People and Water intervened in the plan for the construction of the dam with the Blue Alternative project in cooperation with conservationists of north-eastern Slovakia - PČOLA.

The Blue Alternative was inspired by the Australian Bill Mollison's Permaculture publication and its principle of slowing downflow of rainwater from higher to lower





places (see Figure) to give it the opportunity to soak in and replenish groundwater supplies. The Blue Alternative proposed a number of water retention measures to collect rainwater, allow it to soak in and thus "produce" pure spring water. As there was no experience with such a project in Slovakia, NGO People and Water in cooperation with other conservation associations in Slovakia decided to organize camps called Blue Alternative in Upper Torysa and to implement pilot projects. The first project was carried out in Nižné Repaše on Horná Torysa.

Another project of the Blue Alternative was implemented in the cadastre of the village Tichý Potok. Within the Blue Alternative Camp in 1996, the conservationists implemented the project in a dry, eroded gorge. The total water-retaining volume of the dams was approximately 89 m³. The dams were able to capture rain, which subsequently soaked into the soil to create springs and a creek.

Vegetation gradually changed in the originally dry and eroded gorge without water, and in 1998 springs occurred, these exist until today. Even during the most severe drought, which lasted 3 months without rain in the spring of 2009, small watercourses dried up, but the spring of the Blue Alternative did not dry up. The creek flows in the pilot project of the Blue Alternative and the gorge is full of greenery even in times of the greatest drought.

The assumptions were confirmed and, in given geological and soil conditions, this micro-project creates a water source even in the times of drought. Flow monitoring shows that to create a water source with a rate of 1 litre per second, it is necessary to create at least 8,000 m³ of water retention measures in the drainage area, these retain rainwater and replenish groundwater supplies and spring capacity.

The project's innovative idea is to create water resources by retaining rainwater in

damaged ecosystems so that rainwater soaks into the soil and geological structures, creates groundwater reserves and eventually forms springs. The project can be applied in any damaged, dried-up countries where it rains intensively at least once a year.



Photo: Michal Kravčík