

## O2 - Best Practice Data Sheet

People and Water NGO, Slovakia

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**Name of the Project:** WATER FOREST OF SLOVAK SAVIN BANK – ecosystem restoration of damage forest in High Tatras National Park after wind storm in 2004

**Carrier of the Project:** People and Water NGO, Slovakia

**Country:** Slovakia / High Tatras

**Contact:** People and Water, [www.ludiaavoda.sk](http://www.ludiaavoda.sk)

**Duration:** study and construction from 2005-2007



**Reference:**

<https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20002388/water-forest-revives-high-tatras.html>

<https://www.rainforclimate.com/article/slovak-savings-bank-water-forest>

### Origin and context of the project

On November 19, 2004, a windstorm in the Tatra National Park uprooted 12,600 hectares of forest, predominantly made up of spruce. At that time, many people mobilized to help restore the damaged forests in the Tatra National Park. NGO People and Water also started the process of restoring the damaged landscape by building water retainment measures to retain rainwater in the damaged landscape and contribute to the restoration of the new forest.

After the Tatra windstorm, there were different opinions in society about whether to help in the restoration of nature and if so, in what way. On one hand, the conservationists suggested that the fallen wood should be left in the damaged forest and that nature should be left to recover by itself. On the other hand, the foresters demanded to remove all wood material from the forest.

The Water Forest project brought an innovative solution that was based on the removal of wood mass and using





the remaining waste wood into water retention measures to help retain rainwater and create appropriate humidity conditions for optimal growth of new vegetation.

After the implementation of more than 4,000 water retention measures in 2005 on a site of 42 hectares, 34,000 seedlings were planted (spruce, red spruce, pine, fir, whitebeam, mountain maple and elm).

In summer, 120 - 140 volunteers from 26 countries worked on the project every day. The project was implemented in cooperation with the Scouts and it was financially supported by Slovenská sporiteľňa, which sponsored the project in the amount of € 330,000. The financial resources were used to build two other sites covering an area of 41 hectares.

The idea of the impact of rainwater retention in ecosystems on strengthening ecosystem restoration processes in wind-damaged forests has been fully demonstrated. Not only the planted trees thrive, the grass vegetation is also very diversified with high ecological value. According to the monitoring of the restoration processes, this part of the Tatra is recovering the most vigorously.

The innovative idea of the project lies in restoring the wind damaged forest that is monocultural both with regard to age and species through the retention of rainwater and planting diversified forest.



Photo: Michal Kravčík