

Wachau Volunteer meets Wildnisgebiet Dürrenstein

Youth for Nature

Wachau Protected Area
Spitz an der Donau
&
Wilderness Dürrenstein
Göstling an der Ybbs
July 29th until August 11th 2018



alpenvereinsjugend 



Dear young, tough and dedicated volunteer!

We have the pleasure to welcome you as a part of our project, the **Volunteer Camp „Wachau Volunteer meets Wildnisgebiet Dürrenstein“** at the World Heritage Landscapes of Wachau and Dürrenstein in Lower Austria! Our names are Valentin who is going to be your camp leader, Elisa (Wachau) and Nina (Dürrenstein) who are part of the organization team of the volunteer camp. Together with the other camp organizers, we want to provide you with the right conditions to do a good job and have a good time. From **JULY 29th till AUGUST 11th** you will be part of a group of people doing hard, but valuable work in the gorgeous hillsides along the Danube and the forests of Dürrenstein.

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 you will stay in the village of Spitz in the Wachau. For the last days of the camp we will transfer you to the Wilderness Dürrenstein, more precisely to the village of Göstling an der Ybbs. As a consequence your arrival and departure train stations 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 the **ÖAV - Österreichischer Alpenverein** (Austrian Alpine Association). The Alpenverein was founded in 1862 and ever since this organisation has tried one the one hand to protect alpine nature and to make the Alps accessible to the public and on the other hand to make people aware of its magnificent and sensitive nature, which needs support and protection. Co-host is SCI Austria, the national branch of a network of international volunteer exchange associations.

The local partners are the management of the **Wilderness Dürrenstein**, a nature reserve, and the association **Welterbegemeinden Wachau** which coordinates the interests of the local community, the NGOs and other institutions in the spheres of regional development, ecology and sustainability in the Wachau. They are the main partners for the field work.

3. The field of operation – your contribution

As one of the oldest cultural landscapes in Austria, the **Wachau** was declared a protected zone in 1955, and in 1994 it attained the European Diploma of Nature Protection. In December 2000, it was denominated a UNESCO-World Heritage site. The Wachau is located in Lower Austria and contains the most valuable and endangered natural habitats in the river valley of the Danube. The river landscape surrounded by hills with small historical villages set in between makes it unique. On the slopes there are sunny wine terraces and old orchards, both maintained through hard work.

Many old meadows and abandoned stone terraces rich in biodiversity are in danger. The numbers of livestock sent out by farmers has declined and so have the mowing activities. As a result, bushes, scrubs and trees are claiming back the grasslands and are overgrowing the stone terraces. Especially in the extreme conditions with little water and soil and high structural diversity, a complex ecosystem can evolve. Many of these areas were created by human cultivation, but times have changed. Without action, a valuable biodiversity hot spot with hundreds of different species will become a forest because of succession. Moreover, invasive species such as the locust (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) and others are spreading progressively, pushing back native plants and endangering the floodplains and their typical structure along the Danube.

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 to hold back the succession. 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 15 hectares of habitat.

Since the end of 2002, the entire area of the **Wilderness Dürrenstein** has been secured, due to its nature reserve status. In 2003 it was recognized as the first category I wilderness area in Austria, according to the criteria of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). The Wilderness Dürrenstein seeks to protect the unique forest, endangered organisms and habitats. Rather than trying to maintain a specific condition, the natural processes are allowed to unfold without human intervention as far as possible.

In order to protect precious areas adjacent to the original land and to allow the reserve's borders to adapt better to the natural conditions, the area was expanded repeatedly, increasing the area of protected land to 3.500 hectares. Formerly, these expansion areas were used for hunting, forestry and as wood pasture. There are still some residues - like fences – existing, that need to be removed.

All together about **16 volunteers** will participate in this great attempt to maintain the typical nature of the Wachau and Wilderness Dürrenstein. 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.

4. The accommodation – your home

During our time in Spitz, we will be staying at the local secondary school – the Regionalhauptschule Spitz, located in the heart of Wachau. You will need a sleeping bag. The school has a big kitchen, in which we will cook together. Cooking ourselves will also be an opportunity to share international food culture and cooking styles.



In Göstling we will stay at different bed and breakfasts.

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

5. 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 four days a week from 8 a.m. till 5 p.m. with breaks in between. In our leisure time we can enjoy the beautiful landscape of Wachau, a place the “National Geographic Traveller” has rated a top historic spot because of its historic character and its intactness in spite of tourism (There are more than 680.000 overnight stays in the Wachau each year!) We will visit historical sights, enjoy nature, swim and relax at the Danube and have a great time.

6. 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.

7. Health and Safety

Wachau Volunteer meets Wilderness Dürrenstein is a volunteer camp. We will be working about 6 hours every day – 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.

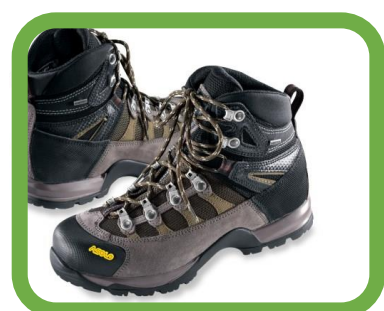
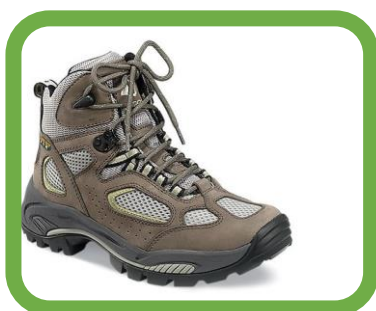
If you have **any underlying conditions** such as **allergies** (to food, bees, pollen, penicillin etc.), **heart conditions, epilepsy, troubles with your circulation or blood pressure, troubles with your joints or eyes** or if you are **required to take any medication on a regular basis**, **PLEASE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

During the volunteer camp, **please make sure that you understand and follow all safety instructions** given to you by your camp and group leaders.

8. Equipment

The **bold** items on this list are **ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED**. Spitz and Göstling 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 / PILLOW** (In Spitz we will be sleeping in the gym of the local school on air mattresses. Air mattresses are provided by the Arbeitskreis Wachau, but if you wish, **YOU CAN ALSO TAKE YOUR OWN AIR/CAMPING MATRESSES IF YOU FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE ON THEM**)
- **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!
- **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**, sun cream, sun glasses * be prepared for **SUN** and **HOT** weather!
- **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 clothes
- Light shoes - for inside and after work
- Small backpack for the working days
- Earplugs – we sleep together in the gym!
- Bottle - for water
- 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!

9. Local Infrastructure

Spitz is a small village and does not offer a lot of shopping opportunities. However, there are several supermarkets, a clothing/shoe shop, some bakeries, a pharmacy, an optician's, a tobacconist's, a post office and many cafés and wineries. There is a local doctor (a GP), but no hospital (that is located in the next bigger city – Krems – about 20 min away by car.)

At the school, we have bathrooms, showers, a kitchen and also a washing machine, which we are allowed to use. **However, we do not have internet access.** Two internet evenings can be arranged per week at the office of the Welterbegemeinden Wachau. If you feel that you need mobile internet, please check with your provider back home about their roaming regulations.

Please always keep in mind that **we are guests** at the school and adhere to the **house rules**. The school is located in a quiet neighbourhood and is locked at 10 pm. We therefore ask you to be quiet at night and to be home before 10 pm. If you want to stay out longer that is also possible as long as you tell the camp leader so that he can let you in when you return.

For the time of our stay in **Göstling an der Ybbs** we will sleep at different bed and breakfasts. Göstling is also a small village with two supermarkets, two sport shops, a bakery, a tobacconist's, a post office and many cafés and restaurants. There are two local doctors and the next hospital is in Scheibbs, which is about 30 min away by car.

10. Information on Arrival, Accommodation and Departure

a) Meeting point

!On Sunday, JULY 29th you should be at the train station in Melk at 16.20 pm!
From there transport will be arranged to Spitz an der Donau.
In case you are planning to arrive directly at Spitz yourself, please let us know in advance!

Contact for camp coordination:

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Contact for organizational issues in advance:

Elisa Besenbäck
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b) Address

The address of the school at which we will be staying in Wachau is:

Regionalhauptschule Spitz
Rote Tor-Gasse 3
3620 Spitz an der Donau

The local bed and breakfasts in Göstling are not selected by now. If you wish to know the addresses, please contact us shortly before the camp.

c) Arrival and Departure:

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

The best way to come to Spitz is by train or bus. If you want to try and hitchhike, be aware that Austrians are not hitchhiker-friendly people. Maybe some of you want to come by car – in this case it would be very nice of you to let your camp-colleagues know so that you can do some car-sharing. You will receive a list of all the participants via e-mail about two weeks before the camp, so you can contact people and arrange transport together!

d) Train connections:

- From Vienna/Wien:

There are several train stations in Vienna, but for Melk you will be leaving either from Wien Westbahnhof or Wien Hauptbahnhof. If you land at Vienna airport, you can reach these stations with the Vienna Airport Bus (Westbahnhof) or by train (Hauptbahnhof). There is also the City Airport Train (CAT) or the cheaper S-Bahn, which will take you to the station Landstraße/Wien Mitte. From there you can reach either of the two train stations via underground.

If you go to Melk from Westbahnhof, you will take either a regional ÖBB train (They take a little longer, but you do not have to change trains!) or you will take a fast “Westbahn” train and change onto a regional train in St. Pölten.

If you go to Melk from Hauptbahnhof, you will take a fast train (railjet/Intercity) to St. Pölten and then change onto a regional train in St. Pölten.

- From Salzburg/Linz

If you land in Salzburg, you can go to the main train station by bus and then take a fast train (either Westbahn or ÖBB) to Linz or Amstetten and change onto the regional train there. (If you land in Munich, you will have to take a train to Salzburg first.)

Useful websites for transportation are:

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

<http://www.wienerlinien.at/eportal3/>

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

<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 any petrol station or tobacconist’s.

f) End of the Camp:

On Saturday, **AUGUST 11th** the Camp is officially over. At about **midday** we will drop you at the train station in Ybbs/Donau. For your orientation, trains from Ybbs to Vienna take between 1:10 and 1:30 hours. We will have all times for the trains with us, so you can plan your trip home!

11. Interesting Websites

Welterbegemeinden Wachau	www.weltkulturerbe-wachau.at
Wilderness Dürrenstein	www.wildnisgebiet.at
Austrian Alpine Association (ÖAV)	www.alpenverein.at
SCI Austria	www.sci.or.at

12. Questions?

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

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