

## **“World Wetlands Day 2013”, Nature Park Hutovo blato**

### **Report**

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### **Introduction**

Hutovo blato is recognized as a wetland of international importance, and Bosnia and Herzegovina assumed responsibility by signing the Ramsar Convention to protect the ecosystem of Hutovo blato. In the framework of the initiative "Stop destroying Hutovog blato!", symposium on the occasion of the World Day of wetlands was held on Monday 4th, 2013. in the Park at the motel Karaotok, This conference was attended by representatives of the Government of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Herzegovina-Neretva County, University of Sarajevo, Mostar, Split and Dubrovnik, the local government of the municipality Capljina and Stolac, public companies, international and local non-governmental organizations from BiH and Croatia.

### **The main debate**

The conference was opened by the director of the public company "Park Hutovo blato", Nikola Zovko, who gave an overview of the enterprise and the review of the wetland ecosystems of Hutovog blato. Problems that are faced in their work in Hutovo blato are presented to numerous members of the media (television, radio and print) from across the country. Zoran Mateljak from the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) presented the initiative "Stop destroying Hutovo blato!" within which they aimed to collect signatures for the preservation of Hutovog blato. By February 4th 2013., it has been collected over 14,000 signatures.

Two problems have been highlighted in Hutovo blato and these are:

1. Sustainable funding of the Public Company "Park Hutovo blato";
2. Transfer of the waters of Hutovog blato waters for the needs of the hydropower.

A detailed review of monitoring water regime of Hutovo blato was presented by Emil Bakula from the Agency for water flow area of the Adriatic Sea from Mostar. Problems of ecosystem of Hutovo blato are most evident in the disappearance of floodplain meadows in Deransko depression (Upper mud). The concept of revitalization of these flood meadows through the definition and implementation

of environmentally acceptable flow is presented by Nusret Drešković from the University of Sarajevo. Final discussion was related to finding a mechanism for sustainable financing of the public company "Nature park Hutovo blato" and the following conclusions were adopted.

### **Suggestions of possible ways to overcome the existing difficulties in financing the public company "Park Hutovo blato"**

1. To keep the existing organization and management of the nature park, provided in the Budget for 2013. year, which is in the process of adoption, and the Financial Plan of the County Environmental Fund plan sufficient funds, according to the Financial Plan for Nature-based financing activities of the Nature Park.
2. That the management is constantly working on activities that will finance the improvement of protection of nature park include HZ HB, which owns the dam on Hutovo blato, which uses water of Hutovo blato, in accordance to Article 70 of Environmental Protection Act liable to pay compensation for damage caused to this activity.
3. That in the contribution in improving of the safety should be involved Capljina and Stolac municipality as a unit of local government where there is park Hutovo blato, Federal Environment Programme through the protection and improvement of the protection of flora and fauna in the nature park, the Federal Ministry of Environmental Protection through the various forms of assistance and international organizations that expressed constant interest in Park Hutovo blato.

### **Sources of funds provided by the Law are:**

- Compensation to environmental pollutants and user environment,
  - Special benefits for the environment from the legal registration of all motor vehicles,
  - Gifts, loans and borrowings,
  - Funds provided under bilateral and multilateral international cooperation and collaboration in the country in joint programs, projects and similar activities in the environmental field,
  - From other sources.
- By accepting of this Act to acquire the conditions laid down by

Article 75 Nature Protection Act ("Narodne novine HNŽ. Br. 3/05)  
"for conducting environmental protection funds are provided from  
the Budget of HNC and by the Fund for the Environment counties."  
Secure resources (budget and fund) are supposed to guarantee the  
smooth execution of the basic task of public company: "protection  
of natural values of Hutovo blato."

**Improvement of natural resources conducted through funds that would be provided from other sources, according to the program.**

Adopt Law on nature park, which stipulates that a nature park should be managed by the public agency that would take over the former employees of public enterprises and property of public enterprises, so that employees in the public company should remain employees of public institutions and would be directly related to the budget in a way that their salaries and wages and material costs should be provided so as the other state officials and employees. Thereby the minimum requirement for the smooth execution would be created for the basic tasks that concern the nature park as a protected value of special interest for the county. And in this case, the improvement of protection is to be provided by other sources and resources.