



**FARNET TRANSNATIONAL SEMINAR FOR FLAGS
WEIDEN, GERMANY 20 – 22 NOVEMBER 2017**

Integrating aquaculture within local communities

Field Trip 22 November 2017

Situated in northeast Bavaria, more than 4 700 fish ponds make up one of the oldest aquaculture landscapes in Europe: The Land of a Thousand Ponds. Pond farming has always been a small-scale family business in the region. Thanks to hundreds of local fish-farming families and recreational fishermen, the ponds continue to exist. Indeed, without regular fish cultivation and constant maintenance, these ponds would disappear within just a couple of years – thereby altering the landscape and the richness of the local ecosystem.

The FLAG, which was already operational in the period 2007-2013, has focused its strategy on linking the identity of the area with the traditional carp production. This field trip to three FLAG-supported projects will illustrate to the participants how the FLAG has contributed to this key objective.



- Stairway to Heaven
42 km from Weiden
- Museum Quarter
38 km from Weiden
- Fischhof Beer
39 km from Weiden

Stairway to Heaven

The Waldnaabaue area is a 3 000-hectare landscape of meadows near Tirschenreuth. At the centre are ponds dating back to the 10th century, making it one of the largest and oldest cultural sites in Germany. Due to the proximity of ponds, forests and grasslands, it is home to an abundance of rare, partially endangered plant and animal species.

Built thanks to the financial support from Tirschenreuth's regional administration and FLAG, the "Stairway to Heaven" (*Himmelsleiter*) is a 20m high and 70m long viewing platform, shaped so as not to obstruct the cyclists and hikers enjoying the path around the conservation area. From the top, anyone can appreciate the view over the land of 1000 ponds.

The Tirschenreuth FLAG was strongly involved in the development process of the stairway and helped in its realisation. With funds from the EFF, the FLAG contributed to the cost of stairway by installing the information boards that provide visitors with information about the region. The FLAG promotes the site as one of its main attractions of the area.

Museum Quarter

The museum, located in the centre of Tirschenreuth, makes the nearly thousand-year-old natural history of its local ponds understandable and enjoyable for all ages. The fisheries exhibit opened in 1982 and has a new location and concept since 1993. The museum is connected via underground to an old monastery where other exhibits are presented, such as the history of the town local arts and crafts. Across from the museum, visitors can also experience the "house by the pond" (*Haus am Teich*) to discover local fish species in a series of aquariums and multimedia displays.

The FLAG was highly involved in developing the contents of the fisheries section of the museum. The designer of the museum kept close contact with the FLAG on how to best arrange the information. The FLAG coordinated the details between the museum designer and other parties involved (the city of Tirschenreuth, the fisheries association, nature conservation authority...) to ensure an interesting and balanced design of the museum. Similar to the Stairway to Heaven, the FLAG also promotes the museum as a highlight of the area.

Fischhof Beer

For more than three generations, the Beer family has been committed to breeding high quality fish for its loyal customers – a quality made possible through traditional breeding techniques in natural ponds in combination with modern expertise. The "Fischhof" offers mirror and scaly carp, tench, pike, zander, roach and rudd.

In addition to fish farming, the Beer family recently turned their former stables into a guesthouse, offering rooms, a restaurant and holiday apartments. Thomas Beer attended a training organised by the FLAG to become a tour guide and now takes visitors around his ponds where they can experience the daily work of fish farmers.

The FLAG carried out the project of training fish farmers as tour guides to increase attractiveness of the area and give them the opportunity for an additional income. The FLAG financed the promotional launch of the tours and it continues to handle requests from potential visitors and helps farmers manage their visits. A special offer was introduced for schools and youth groups called "Become a pond discoverer" (*Werde Teich-Entdecker*) to promote fish farming among children and youth.



Bavarian State Ministry
of Food, Agriculture and Forestry

