

Following aquatic creatures

Danube Challenge: River adventure throughout Austria

Vienna, June 3 2014 - For the 8th time already, Austrian teenagers can take part in challenges about the Danube and its tributaries. In the project, organized by Coca-Cola Hellenic Austria and Generation Blue – the youth water platform of the Austrian Federal Ministry of Agriculture – students can discover the river as a habitat at five different locations. For the first time, there is the possibility to visit a creek or a river close to home and to perform suggested challenges there.

Get out into nature! This year's Danube Challenge is about small creatures and microorganisms in local waters. Austrian students will be looking for the fascinating aquatic creatures of the Danube and its tributaries. In five action days in different parts of Austria, the participating school classes will be facing different challenges on the subject of the river as a habitat. Federal Minister Andrä Rupprechter supports the initiative: "The Danube Challenge offers teenagers a unique experience of nature at rivers in Austria, a country worth living in. With our youth platform Generation Blue, we support this project on the website as well as on Facebook. Teenagers are our future, they are going to take over responsibility for our water someday."

"The students take a look at the river as an ecosystem and develop new awareness for the resource water. Every year, dozens of school classes would like to take part in our project. This confirms our commitment to imparting knowledge about the environment in an age-appropriate way through initiatives like this one," Susanne Lontzen, company spokesperson of Coca-Cola Hellenic Austria, explains about the background of the Danube Challenge.

Campaign "Trinkpass" ("hydration check") as a ticket for the Danube Challenge
The participants of this year's Danube Challenge qualified by taking part in the campaign "Trinkpass" ("hydration check") in spring. For a certain period of time, the teenagers kept a record of how much they drank. Then, they analyzed and adapted their drinking habits. It is very important to drink enough, especially in everyday school life. Dehydration leads to problems with concentration, reduced learning capacity and headache. This year, almost 30,000 students ordered a pass, hundreds of them took part in a creativity contest in which they could win microscopes or the participation in the Danube Challenge.

Do it yourself: Making an excursion to waters close by

In order to make it possible for more teenagers to take part in the Danube Challenge, the school classes now have the possibility to do some tasks at a river close by. For this purpose, they can order a folder about aquatic creatures. The students have to find very small aquatic creatures, examine the water quality and measure the flow velocity. The folder gives information not only about how the challenges can be completed, but also about the most important animal species close to and in the water.

Action days in all parts of Austria

In June, school classes in all parts of Austria will be invited to take up challenges at five action days taking place at the rivers Danube, Lafnitz, Inn, Traun and Isel. Together with national park rangers, they will be watching, researching, fishing in ponds and barbecuing. Small and very small aquatic creatures are in the focus of this year's challenges. They have a very important function for the ecological condition of a river or lake.

Dates at a glance:

June 4, Lafnitz – Ramsar area

June 5, Danube – National Park Donau-Auen

June 24, Inn – Mils/Imst

June 25, Traun – Obertraun/Hallstadt

June 26, Isel – National Park Hohe Tauern/Matrei

The impressions of the researchers and their challenges can be found on www.facebook.com/DanubeChallenge.

Further information on www.generationblue.at