



Manifesto for the protection of the East Tyrolean Glacial Rivers

The Isel and its tributary rivers Kalserbach, Tauernbach and Schwarzach are glacial rivers and an internationally unique treasure trove of nature. They provide a habitat for several endangered animal and plant species, are an irreplaceable recreational area for people and an important attraction for nature-oriented tourism. The endangered German tamarisk - an indicator plant for intact wild river landscapes - has its most important occurrence in the entire Eastern Alps here. This uniquely networked river landscape is one of the last places where we can see, experience and explore how natural glacier-influenced alpine rivers function. Thus the glacial rivers of East Tyrol are also indispensable reference rivers of international importance for science.

But the future of the East Tyrolean lifelines is uncertain. The sensitive ecosystems along wild river landscapes depend on intact river dynamics and a continuous network of main and tributary rivers. If these special habitats are blocked with hydroelectric power plants, their special diversity will be lost forever. Several structures in the catchment area of the Isel already exert great pressure on the glacier river system. As a result, dramatic collapses in fish stocks have been recorded, especially for the vulnerable grayling. After decades of hesitation, the government has nominated a Natura 2000 site in 2015, but the concept is far too patchy and does not provide sufficient protection against hydroelectric expansion plans. Power plant projects on the Isel and its tributaries, the Kalserbach, Tauernbach and Schwarzach, now threaten to further dissect and thus destroy this natural jewel.

Together, Isel, Kalserbach, Tauernbach and Schwarzach form a unique glacial river system in the Alps and are the lifelines of East Tyrol. This sensitive wild river landscape must be preserved for future generations. Therefore we, the signatories of this manifesto, demand

1. to stop the construction of power plants in the catchment area of the Isel river including Kalserbach, Tauernbach and Schwarzach
2. effective legal protection for the entire connected wild river landscape, including the Isel, Kalserbach, Tauernbach and Schwarzach by means of designation as a nature reserve
3. the implementation of ambitious renaturation and species protection measures, based on a professionally sound protected area management plan.

SIGNERS OF THE MANIFESTO

The manifesto for the protection of the East Tyrolean glacial rivers was initiated by WWF Austria and Verein Erholungslandschaft Osttirol (association for landscape protection east tyrol) and signed by a total of 43 organizations from the fields of environmental, nature and climate protection, fisheries, whitewater sports and the private sector, as well as eleven signers from science and civil society.



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