

Joint press release by Global Nature Fund (GNF) and Lake Constance Foundation

Charter for the Protection of Lakes published

Avoid microplastics and reduce their input into Lake Constance: Two environmental organisations are calling on local authorities to sign a voluntary commitment. The paper has a signal effect for lake regions throughout Germany and beyond.



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Radolfzell, 18.02.2022: Municipalities and cities on Lake Constance are committed in many ways to keeping the lake clean. The region lives and profits from this as a drinking water reservoir, leisure destination and tourist magnet. However, Lake Constance is also a habitat for numerous animals and plants and must be protected as efficiently as possible. Pollution that endangers water quality or biodiversity must be prevented at all costs. Microplastics have only recently been identified as a threat. Although the situation at Lake Constance is not yet alarming, vigilance and precautions are sensible so that it does not worsen.

As part of the EU-funded LIFE Blue Lakes project, the Global Nature Fund (GNF) together with the Lake Constance Foundation, both based in Radolfzell on Lake Constance, have formulated a lakes paper to reduce and prevent microplastic and plastic waste pollution in and around lakes. The Lakes Paper

contains a voluntary commitment that calls on municipalities to protect lakes and their tributaries from plastic waste and microplastic pollution and to take measures to prevent the waste from accumulating in the first place. Municipalities can specify in the voluntary commitment which means they want to take and by when.

The most important aspect of the self-commitment is to set a good example and actively involve citizens. The municipalities are supported in this by the Lake Constance Foundation. Marion Hammerl, Managing Director of the Lake Constance Foundation, says: "*The voluntary commitment is not just lip service, but a starting signal to avoid further microplastic discharges at Lake Constance at an early stage*". The Lake Paper describes the current problem situation and is above all a tool for municipalities. "*Demands alone do little to help the environment and the lake,*" Hammerl continued. "*With the lakes paper, we want to give the municipalities a tool that describes measures, what can be done concretely.*" The measures presented in a matrix are subdivided into different areas of public life and range from fishing to weekly markets. For all 15 areas described, examples are given of what municipalities can do. The matrix is intended as a suggestion, explanation and support for the development of one's own implementation strategy. The municipalities in the Lake Constance catchment area have been sent the voluntary commitment, the Lake Paper and the matrix. The Lake Constance Foundation will support the municipalities in planning and implementing measures in the coming years and hopes for a close partnership in the fight against the threat of microplastics.

From Lake Constance to the whole world - the Lake Paper becomes a global Lake Paper

Lakes in Germany are not the only bodies of water affected by microplastic or plastic waste pollution. The lake paper developed at Lake Constance therefore serves as a template for other lake regions worldwide. Udo Gattenlöhner, Managing Director of the Global Nature Fund, describes the situation as follows: "*In Germany, we know the pollution relatively well and have technical possibilities to avoid microplastics. In many other lake regions of the world, the conditions are much worse. The insidious thing about microplastic is its invisibility. This is where the lakes paper, which also addresses plastic waste as a source of microplastics, helps us.*" The Global Nature Fund distributes the document as a "Lake Paper" among the members of the global network Living Lakes, which it coordinates, and thus supports communities in lake regions worldwide.

Municipalities are key actors in the global reduction and prevention of microplastics and plastic waste pollution in lakes. They can lead by example, develop concepts and reach out to their citizens through public relations. The Global Nature Fund and the Lake Constance Foundation expect a strong signal from the municipalities and numerous signatures of the Lake Paper - first at Lake Constance, then worldwide.

[The lakes paper and other publications on the topic of microplastics can be downloaded from the Global Nature Fund website.](#)



About the Global Nature Fund (GNF)

Since 1998, the Global Nature Fund (GNF) has been committed to nature and the environment from Radolfzell on Lake Constance. As coordinator of the worldwide Living Lakes network, GNF, together with over 130 partner organisations and 113 lakes and wetlands in 57 countries on all continents, promotes water protection, draws attention to the dangers that threaten lakes, rivers and wetlands around the globe and develops solutions for their preservation.

About the Lake Constance Foundation

The Lake Constance Foundation is a private environmental and nature conservation organisation based in Radolfzell on Lake Constance. It was founded in 1994 by six environmental and nature conservation organisations around the lake. The Foundation works on a project-oriented basis for more sustainability and nature conservation in the international Lake Constance region and beyond. It is a founding member of the international lake network Living Lakes. The Lake Constance Foundation works on topics from the areas of agriculture & climate, economy & biodiversity, energy transition, nature and lake protection.

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