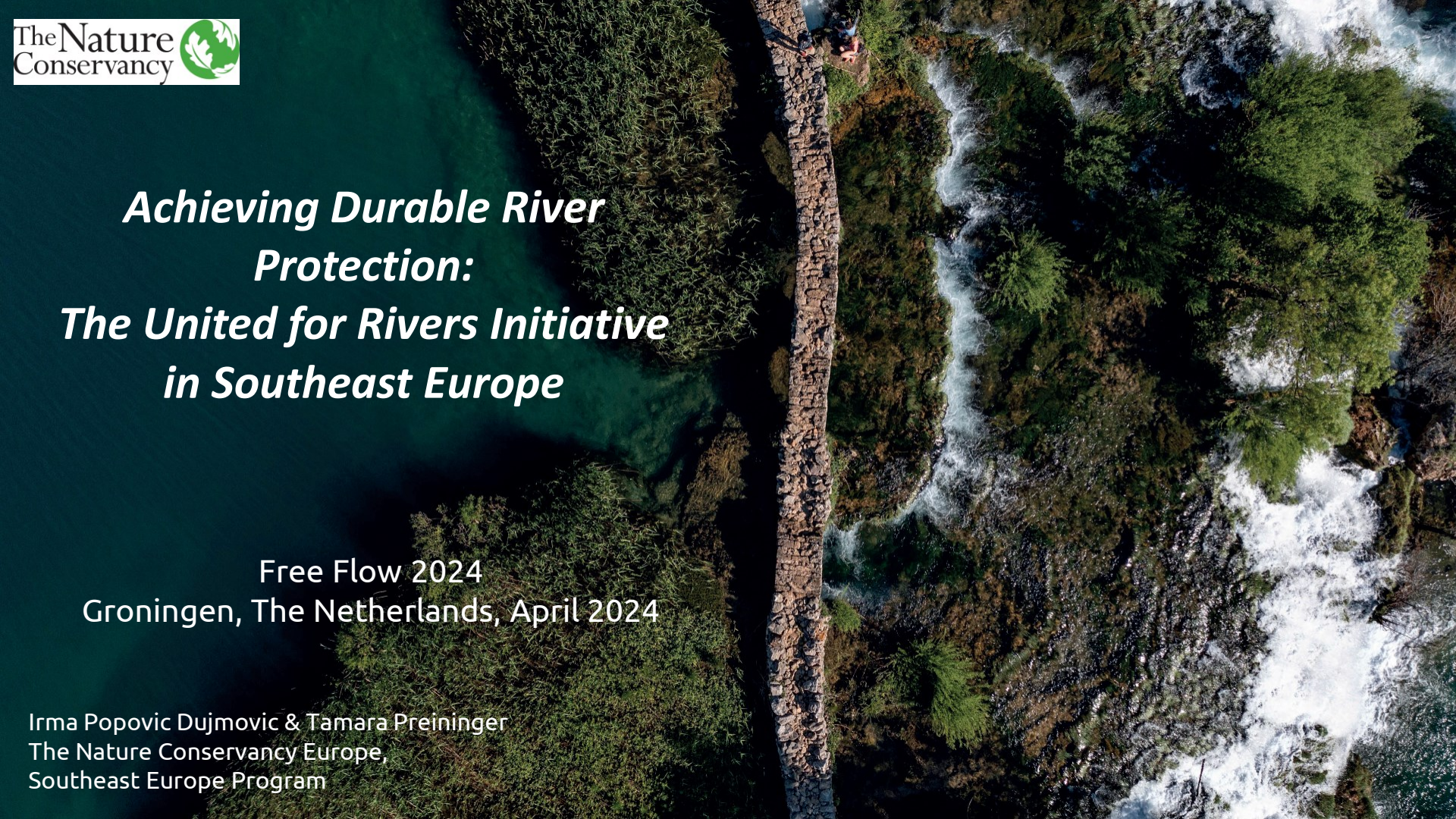


***Achieving Durable River  
Protection:  
The United for Rivers Initiative  
in Southeast Europe***

Free Flow 2024  
Groningen, The Netherlands, April 2024

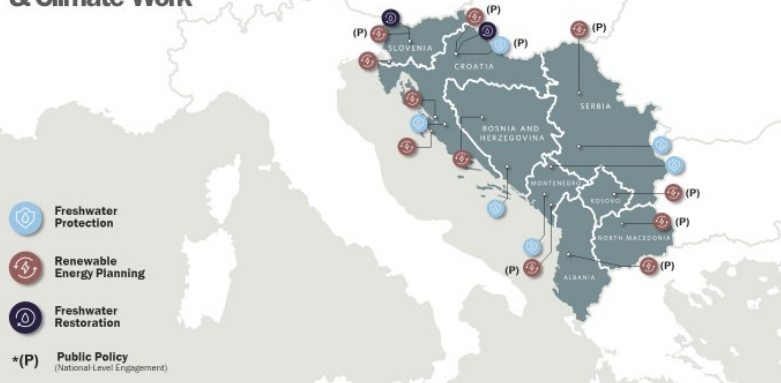
Irma Popovic Dujmovic & Tamara Preininger  
The Nature Conservancy Europe,  
Southeast Europe Program



# Preserving the Wild Beauty of the Western Balkans

## TNC's SEE Program

### Western Balkans Freshwater & Climate Work



#### Avoid

TO AVOID  
ADVERSE IMPACT



#### Protect

THROUGH ON-THE-  
GROUND PROJECTS



#### Restore

BY REMOVING  
BARRIERS





# UNITED FOR RIVERS



Our vision: “A region where rivers are loved, and people thrive.”

- The initiative's primary goal is to protect and preserve the region's most important rivers.
- The secondary goal is to strengthen the awareness of local communities about the importance of river preservation and the role that communities play in that process.

# WATER

- CROATIA: Korana, Mreznica & Tounjcica, Zrmanja
- BIH: Vrbas, Neretva, Buna

## Project geography



Saperis dolo volupta  
quis amet volorro m  
dolesto odiasin n



# Goal: 13 rivers protected across 5 countries / total 400 km of rivers by 2030

01 Protection (engaging with national and local governments)

02 Community-Driven Protection

03 Protected Area Management

04 National & international advocacy

05 Promotion of river conservation for awareness raising



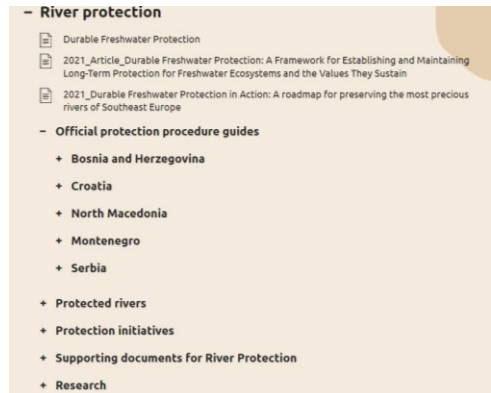
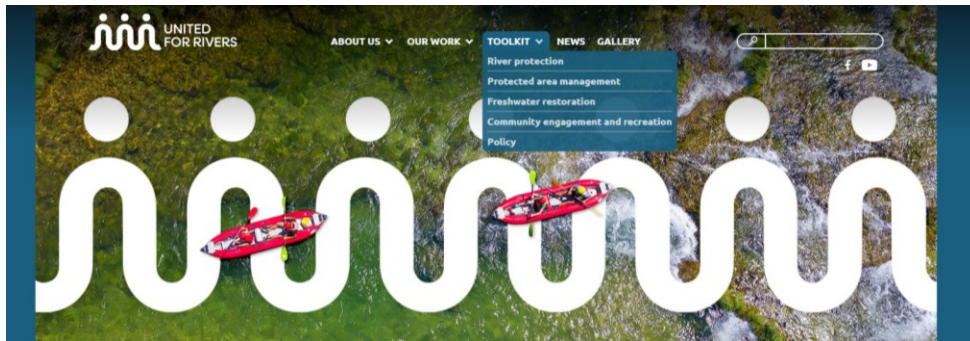
How to transcend “project by project approach” to make bigger impact / scale up?

## Durable Freshwater Protection Toolkit for the Balkans

**GOAL:** Strengthen local capacity to inspire river protection initiatives across the Western Balkans and protect the most valuable freshwater ecosystems in the Western Balkans.

**RESULT:** Tools and methodologies for freshwater protection & management are available to stakeholders in SEE region via an open-source, user friendly platform → leads to more FW protection projects

**Primary audience:** NGOs, local initiatives, and grassroots river-protection initiatives from SEE region



# First wins!

Rivers Mreznica and Tounjcica –  
March 2024

Monument of Nature Mreznica –  
Tounjcica

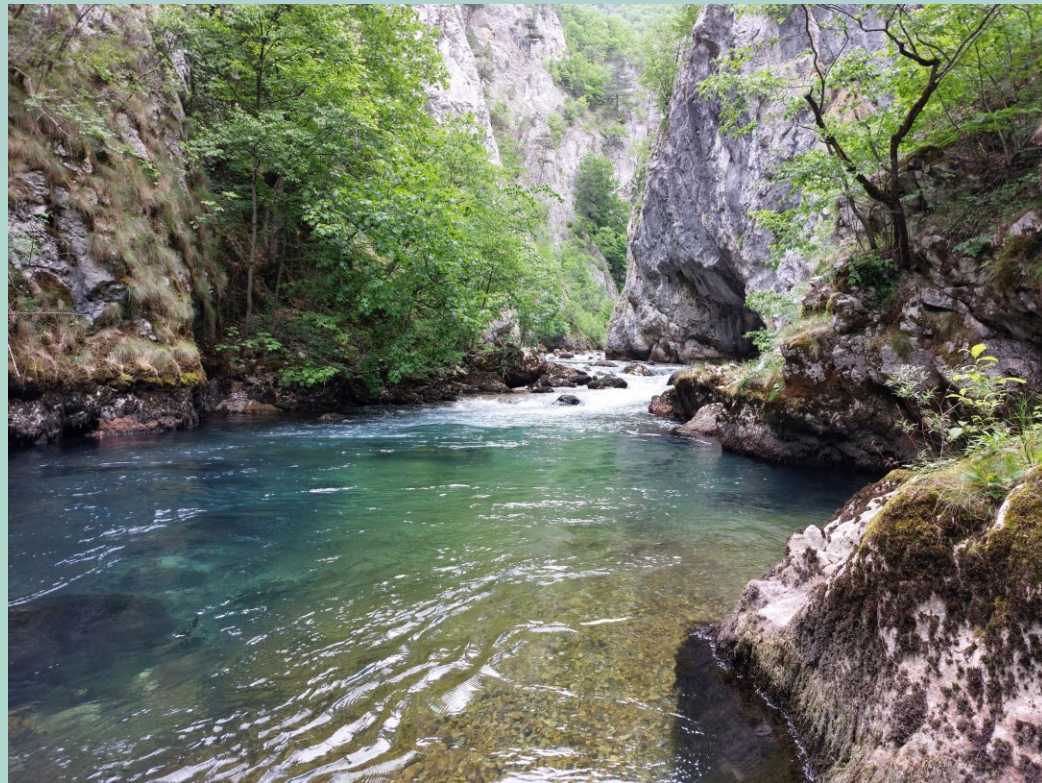
Significant Landscape Mreznica





## Đalovića gorge and River Bistrica – March 2024

Monument of Nature Đalovića gorge





*Thanks for your attention!*