**Importance of riparian habitats lining small streams to improve the soil water retention capacity of agricultural landscape**

Riparian habitats lining small streams represent a highly valuable part of the landscape that is becoming increasingly important especially within areas heavily modified by human – i.e. mainly in agricultural and urban landscapes. These areas are usually characterized by low biological diversity and the very limited ability of landscape to accumulate the water, which is then reflected in more numerous occurrences of extreme hydrological events (drought episodes or flash floods) and low quality of ecosystem services provided by this landscape to human society. The main aim of this contribution is to highlight the importance of the vegetation cover in riparian zone along small watercourses through the outputs of a model aimed at quantification of the water retention capacity in a typical agricultural landscape in Central European conditions. The outlined issue is solved in the form of a case study within several selected sites in a smaller watercourse catchment in the Czech Republic, in an intensively utilized landscape in which the watercourses are subject to significant anthropogenic pressures. In addition to the quality and spatial extent of riparian habitats, the hydromorphological status of selected watercourses has been analysed, since it is one of the key variables that can significantly influence the formation of the runoff processes in the landscape (in addition to the natural conditions at a given site). The results of the analysis point to the fact that the presence of riparian habitats and their extent is an important factor influencing many ecosystem functions – including the ability of the landscape to retain the water and to some extent reduce the level of flood risk and the risk of hydrological drought. However, the degree of dependence between a particular habitat type in the riparian zone and the quality of performing the water retention function of a given landscape is influenced by a number of other natural and anthropogenic characteristics that may degrade the significance of riparian habitats.