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Narrative Report,
2023-2024

Mission, Vision, and Values of MEY

The mission of MEY – the Ukrainian Ecostation Network – is to unite people for community development in harmony with nature.

- Through the model of ecostations, MEY brings together those who are committed to protecting nature and provides tools and support to implement environmental initiatives. Ecostations are the key mechanism through which MEY advances environmental knowledge, implements scientific and educational projects in ecology and environmental protection, and connects like-minded individuals — creating synergy for eco-solutions and sustainable development at the community level.

Our Values

- Caring off all living nature
- Positive human impact on the environment
- Respect for human dignity and freedom
- Professional and scientifically-based approach

Our Story and Network

- In 2019, a group of Ukrainian ecologists and entrepreneurs established the first ecostation – “Hlyboki Balyky” – near the city of Rzhyschiv in the Kyiv region.
- In 2020, after two years of successful operation of the first ecostation, its founders decided to scale their model and bring the experience to other communities across Ukraine.
- In 2021, the NGO MEY – the Ukrainian Ecostations Network – was officially registered.
- As of 2024, MEY includes six ecostations and continues to grow.

MEY’s ecostations **operate in and for** local communities. They act as local hubs for scientific research, environmental education, sustainable community development, and natural resource management. They play a key role in biodiversity protection, fostering environmental awareness, and implementing nature-based solutions.



MEY's Core Areas of Activity

Biodiversity Protection and Restoration. MEY promotes systematic biodiversity inventory and monitoring in local communities, engaging experts and using citizen science tools. [Research results](#) are made openly accessible and contribute to building a national knowledge base on Ukraine's ecosystems.

Strengthening the Scientific Community in Ukraine. MEY serves as a platform for collaboration among scientists and experts, facilitating interdisciplinary solutions in ecology and heritage protection. The organization conducts scientific expeditions, conferences, workshops, and green education programs. MEY fosters idea generation, strengthening scientific network, improves the quality of environmental research, and introduces innovative approaches to the protection of cultural and natural heritage.

Sustainable Community Development. Guided by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), MEY works with communities through eco-educational and cultural events aimed at increasing environmental awareness and promoting knowledge about biodiversity among both children and adults. Ecostations function as local centers of informal environmental education and ecotourism. MEY collaborates with youth organizations, civil society, and educational institutions to encourage the adoption of eco-friendly practices and nature-based solutions in everyday life — including permaculture, pasture management, and regenerative agriculture.

Highlights of Our Work, 2023-2024

Strengthening Organizational Capacity

- We expanded our [team](#) with the addition of a communications specialist, a consultant on strategy and operations, and a network coordinator.
- In August–September 2024, MEY conducted an organizational capacity self-assessment and began implementing the next steps
- In November 2023, the 2nd ecostation network meeting of the network's was held at the [Ecological Research Station “Hlyboki Balyky”](#)
- By the end of 2024, we held two strategic meetings with ecostation teams and began preparing a joint action plan for 2025.



Partnerships (1/2)

2023

- Joined the [New European Bauhaus \(NEB\)](#) platform — a political and financial initiative aligned with the European Green Deal.



2024

- Became a member of the [Ukrainian Climate Network \(UCN\)](#), the largest association of pro-climate NGOs in Ukraine. In 2024, MEY initiated collaboration with UCN and took part in its strategic planning session.
- Formalized cooperation with the [NGO “Green Agro Solutions”](#) through a memorandum aimed at integrating knowledge and practices in sustainable regenerative agriculture. The partnership promotes eco-solutions and lifelong learning through joint research, education, and consulting activities.
- Partnered with the [NGO “Studenkyvski Dzherela”](#) to organize community events in collaboration with the ecostation “Hlyboki Balyky” in the Rzhyschiv territorial community.



Partnerships (2/2)

- Expanded ongoing collaboration in scientific research, nature protection, and reserve management by signing a memorandum with the [NGO "Ukrainian Nature Conservation Group" \(UNCG\)](#).
- Entered into a memorandum of cooperation with the [NGO "Ukrainian Union of Young Geographers" \(USMG\)](#) to strengthen joint efforts in scientific research, geospatial analysis, environmental education, and biodiversity protection.
- Partnered with ["Plast - National Scout Organization of Ukraine"](#) to enhance young people's environmental knowledge and foster best practices in informal eco-education. The collaboration includes the development of a modern ecology curriculum for Plast educators, to be implemented in youth programs, along with citizen science initiatives.



Eco-Educational and Scientific Events (1/3)

Conferences

- June 9-10, 2023 — Conference "[Regenerative Agriculture: A Path to the Restoration of Post-War Ukraine](#)" (Lviv, in-person and online)
- May 2-3, 2024 — International Scientific and Practical Conference "[Biochar for the Green Restoration of Ukraine](#)" (Kyiv, NULES, in-person and online)



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Eco-Educational and Scientific Events (2/3)

Lectures, Seminars, and Presentations

Delivered by Bohdan Popov, Head of the MEY and Director of the Ecological Research Station “Hlyboki Balyky”:

- February 2023 – Lecture on biodiversity for schoolteachers in Dnipropetrovsk region (invited by the Center for Professional Development “Educational Trajectory” of the Dnipro City Council)
- April 2023 – Scientific seminar: “Biodiversity of the Rzhyschiv Community: First Inventory Results and Future Research Perspectives” (with UNCG experts)
- March 2024 – [Presentation of the 3rd volume of the study](#) “Biodiversity of the Rzhyschiv Community”
- January 2024 – Guest [lecture within the certified course on permaculture design](#): “Immersion in Permaculture and Restoration”
- May 2024 – Participation in the [strategic planning session](#) on early recovery of Rzhyschiv community for 2024-2027
- May 2024 – [Public talk](#) on native species for the residents of the Rzhyschiv community (International Day for Biological Diversity)
- September 2024 – Design [workshops on rainwater harvesting and ecosanitation](#) during “Permaculture in the Botanical Garden” (organized by NGO “Permaculture in Ukraine”)
- November 2024 – [Presentation of the 4th volume of the study](#) “Biodiversity of the Rzhyschiv Community” (Rzhyschiv Library, with the Center for Resilience)

Eco-Educational and Scientific Events (3/3)

Presentations & Public Speaking Engagements

- October 2023 – Speaker at “[World Food Day 2023: Food Producers Sustainability Forum](#)” (organized by FAO, WFP, and the Ministry of Agrarian Policy and Food of Ukraine)
- December 2023 – Talk at a [seminar for journalists and educators](#): “Climate Change and Agriculture in Ukraine: Why It Matters and How to Communicate About It”
- December 2024 – Speaker at the [online discussion “Using Biochar: Ukraine’s Experience”](#) (organized by Green Agro Solutions), presenting outcomes of MEY’s International Scientific and Practical Conference: “Biochar for the Green Restoration of Ukraine”



Delivered by Bohdan Popov, Head of the NGO “MEY”, Director of the Ecological Research Station “Hlyboki Balyky”

Our Products

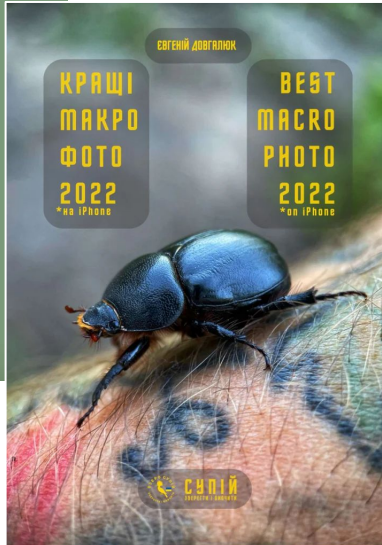


БІОРИЗНОМАНІТТЯ

Ржищівської міської об'єднаної територіальної громади

Наукові праці Екологічної дослідницької станції «Глибокі Балики», відокремленого підрозділу ГО «Мережа екостанцій України»

ВИПУСК 2



Publication and presentation of Volumes 3 and 4 of the **scientific collection “Biodiversity of the Rzhyshev Community”** based on comprehensive research conducted by MEY’s scientific unit — the Ecological Research Station “Hlyboki Balyky”:

- [Volume 3](#)
- [Volume 4](#)

Support for the publication of photo books from the ecostation “Supii Lake Explore Centre ”:

- [Best Macro Photos 2022](#)
- [The Magical Macro World](#)
- [16 Wonderful Places on the Outskirts of the Supii River: Photos from the Sky](#)

Project “Biochar: Closing the Nutrient Loop”

Most communities in Ukraine still lack effective systems for managing organic waste. Biochar offers a simple and accessible solution — providing a tool for sustainable agriculture and more ecological lifestyles in response to challenges like soil degradation, climate change, and resource scarcity.

The **goal** of the project was to promote biochar production as a fertilizer and a method for closing local nutrient cycles.

As part of the project, a locally-built biochar kiln was developed and tested, and experimental plots with biochar were established. A hands-on workshop was held for 30 local participants, and a series of training videos and step-by-step guides were created to help share the practice more widely.

The **results** demonstrated a clear reduction in organic waste and improved soil structure. Three other communities expressed interest in adopting the technology.

Location: Ecostation “Hlyboki Balyky”, Rzhyschiv Territorial Community, Kyiv Region

Implementation period: Ongoing since 2019



Project “Recovery Through Crafts”

In times of war, it is essential for people to have a safe space for physical and emotional healing. Working with natural materials through traditional crafts fosters a sense of stability, connection to nature, and community. This kind of creative “therapy” is accessible and can be led by the community itself.

The **goal** of the project was to support emotional recovery and inner resilience among residents of the Rzhyschiv Territorial Community and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

The project included the construction of a five-person blacksmith workshop at the “Hlyboki Balyky” ecostation, as well as the purchase of a pottery kiln, weaving looms, and craft tools.

As a **result**, 10 workshops in blacksmithing, pottery, sculpting, wool felting, and wicker weaving were held for 70 participants, led by four local artisans and facilitators. The project concluded with a community exhibition of handmade works. Participants shared that the experience improved their emotional well-being and inspired motivation for self-employment.

Location: Ecostation “Hlyboki Balyky”, Rzhyschiv Territorial Community, Kyiv Region

Implementation period: Ongoing since 2019; workshops for IDPs and local residents took place throughout 2024



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Project “[Rzhyshchiv Family Ecoclub](#)” (1/2)

Environmental awareness starts at home. To effectively address today’s ecological challenges, we need to raise a generation that values and respects nature. The family-centered approach of this project integrates environmental learning into everyday life and strengthens the connection between parents and children.

The **goal** of the project was to promote the culture of shared family hikes along local eco-trails for all age groups, while fostering environmental awareness among residents of the Rzhyshchiv Territorial Community through recreation and learning in an eco-friendly environment.

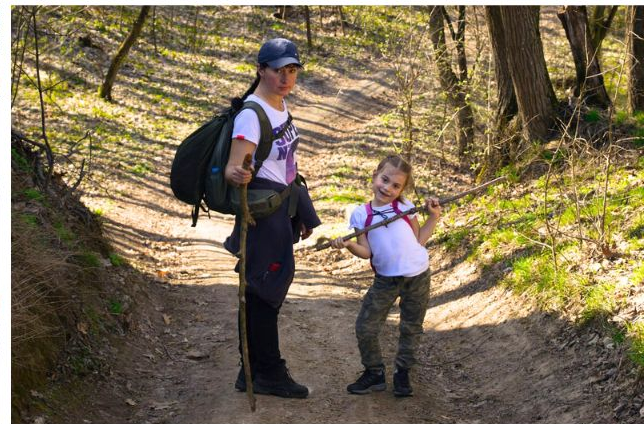
As part of the project, five [interactive excursions](#) were held with scientists on topics such as biodiversity, water, waste, energy, forests, and sustainable consumption. These events included eco-games, hands-on activities (like fire-starting using the Native American method and learning to treat injuries with natural remedies), nature observation, and the use of tools such as an online guide and the [iNaturalist.org](#) and PlantNet apps.

The project **engaged** 25 families who regularly participated in “eco-weekends” at the ecostation. In addition, a new 6-kilometer eco-trail was established.

Location: Ecostation “Hlyboki Balyky”, Rzhyshchiv Territorial Community, Kyiv Region

Implementation period: Ongoing since September 2023

Project “Rzhyshchiv Family Ecoclub” (2/2)



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Projects “Pidkova” and “Solar Shepherds” (1/2)

Meadow and steppe ecosystems can be restored through nature-based practices such as rotational grazing. However, many communities lack effective, energy-independent, and sustainable models for managing these landscapes.

Project goal: to demonstrate how planned regenerative grazing with solar-powered electric fences can contribute to the restoration of grassland ecosystems.

The preparatory phase began in May 2020, and the first implementation stage — the “Pidkova” project — was launched in May 2023. It tested controlled grazing by a herd of goats on a degraded site at the “Hlyboki Balyky” ecostation. Autonomous electric fences powered by solar panels were installed to manage grazing patterns.

Results: Over 40 local residents — farmers and researchers — participated in the project. Initial monitoring showed an increase in plant biodiversity within the restored grasslands.

Location: Ecostation “Hlyboki Balyky,” Rzhyschiv Territorial Community, Kyiv Region

Project period (“Pidkova”): 2020–2023



Projects “Pidkova” and “Solar Shepherds” (2/2)

In autumn 2024, under an agreement with Greenpeace Ukraine, there was implemented the second phase of the project “Solar Shepherds”.

Project goal: to restore biodiversity and grassland ecosystems in the Central Dnipro region through sustainable pasture management.

For two months, goats were rotationally grazed over 5 hectares, while the ecostation team monitored vegetation, documented visible changes, and held five educational field tours for local residents.

Results: Over the course of the year, more than 1,000 people visited the site — including community members, tourists, students, and researchers. A goat herd is now permanently maintained at the ecostation, supporting continuous grazing. Sixteen research paddocks are actively managed, and an independent solar power station has been installed.

Location: Ecostation “Hlyboki Balyky,” Rzhyschiv Territorial Community, Kyiv Region

Project period (Solar Shepherds): August–October 2024



Scientific Research

Research has been conducted at the “Hlyboki Balyky” ecostation since 2020, aiming to set a precedent for a comprehensive biodiversity inventory within a single administrative unit in Ukraine — a local community.

Over the past 4.5 years, 79 scientists have worked at the ecostation (including 41 researchers from 19 academic and research institutions in 2023 alone), and 60 volunteers participated in data collection, including through citizen science platforms such as [iNaturalist.org](https://www.iNaturalist.org) and UkrBIN. A total of 2,558 species of flora and fauna have been documented.

Based on the results of these extensive studies, four [volumes of the scientific series "Biodiversity of the Rzhyshchiv Community"](#) have been published — a collection intended for professional biologists, students, conservationists, local historians, and local authorities.



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Media About Us

- GreenPost — “[For the second year in a row, a community in the Kyiv region is the most studied location in Ukraine in terms of biodiversity](#)” (UA)
- Ekorubryka — “[New Species and Green Autonomy: What Are Ecostations and Why Do They Matter?](#)” (UA)
- Ekorubryka — “[Ecostation “Supii”: A Place Where Anyone Can Become a Researcher](#)” (UA)
- UVE — “[1000 Faces of Regenerative Agriculture: Meet Bogdan Popov](#)” (UA)
- Khroniky Obukhova — “[An Environmental School Has Opened at the Ecostation Near Rzhyschiv, Introducing Students to Scientific Discoveries](#)” (UA)



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