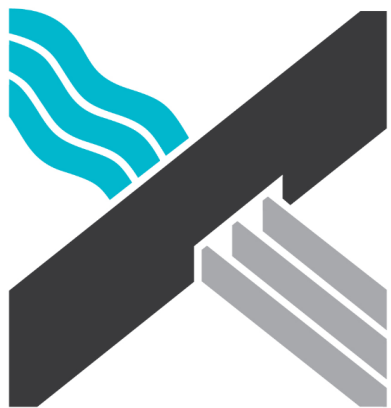


Students for Rivers Camp

An Initiative of the Balkan River Defence



**BALKAN
RIVER
DEFENCE**













River Up

ivers Tour

om Slovenia turned dirtbag kayaker into unstoppable energy of youth in Bosnia, at the confluence of the park—a settlement that emerged in the area at the end of the 14th century, in an inviting manner. He's immersed in involving turbulent river experiences. Kudo, Bosnia, on the coast of the Adriatic Sea.

ite and pragmatic all at once—only by presence.

ake people to rivers, their voices
softer," he says. "The only way
experience the river."

of a proclamation made to his
of anger. Rok threatened to do
k of in the moment—start rowing


hockey team and was rowing the
as impulsive (and a bit childish)
elf to stop rowing after winning
sional athlete course, he became
edals and others' expectations
force to move, but you're always

um," says Rok. "This symbolizes forcing my way forward without the world around me." A backseat for six months, and he finally got out and one seemingly insignificant change in his life.

against advice from doctors and
syking forward.

you've taught that when it feels like kayaking, if it feels difficult then it's not kayaking. It's a series of micro-adjustments and

ference in Belgrade, Rok took a pen and drew a red line from Slovenia to the attendees at the conference hall.



described how he was going to paddle the length of the line to bring awareness to the beauty of the Balkan Rivers—and that he'd be stupid to do it alone. Some scoffed. A few NGO leaders even laughed at the prospect. But that night, people from the villages and towns that would be transformed by the dams started approaching Rok saying, "If you come to my river, you can stay with me and my family." Some said they'd join as kayakers. The support began there, as Rok likes to describe, "from the bottom up."

In 2016, Rok started the Balkan Rivers Tour, something he calls a movement, not a project, because "a movement is more powerful than a project." He paddled 23 rivers in six different countries, with more than 500 kayakers and 1,500 people from 18 countries attending events and protests. Rok talks about campaigns and projects as actions that are artificially driven, by money or effort, and he does not trust that real change flows from these examples. "A movement, on the other hand, is like the river. Once it gets a flow, there is no stopping it—it doesn't need me."

In 2017, the second Balkan Rivers Tour focused on Slovenia's Soca and Montenegro's Morača Rivers. To be involved with the movement one just needs to be a human with the power of speech, because a Rok says, "The trout in the river don't have a voice to speak against the market forces and the economic interests."

As the clouds roll in and out and Rok prepares his fly-fishing gear, he reminisces on how he was pulled toward protecting rivers in the Balkans before that crucial evening in Belgrade.

"Years ago in Chile I met an Australian kayaker who stayed three years after a kayak expedition to protect the Rio Marañón (the source of the Amazon) in Peru from five planned dams," says Rok. "I found him looking disheveled in the streets, but he told me how he'd stayed in Peru with no work or money, how he'd connected with local NGOs and how they'd eventually managed a four-year moratorium on the five projects."

Rok then traveled home to learn about the more than 3,000 dams either planned or in the process of being built in the Balkans, including more on tributaries of his beloved Sotla and Sava Rivers in Slovenia. He decided if one dam could be stopped, then all of them could be stopped. He's been fighting to protect wild rivers in the Balkans ever since.

Rok, "But they can never say they live next to a wild river. Dams are good for one thing, they give us electricity, but the question is: Do we need more electricity in the Balkans?"

Beyond the Balkan Rivers Tour, Rok (and a friend from Slovenia) started Leeway Collective, creating films like *One for the River: The Vjosa Story*, which follows their philosophy that if you love something, you have

way Rozman is approaching this duty. On many occasions, Rok and his kayaking friends have been screamed at, chased and stoned by security guards watching over construction sites on various rivers, as they usually

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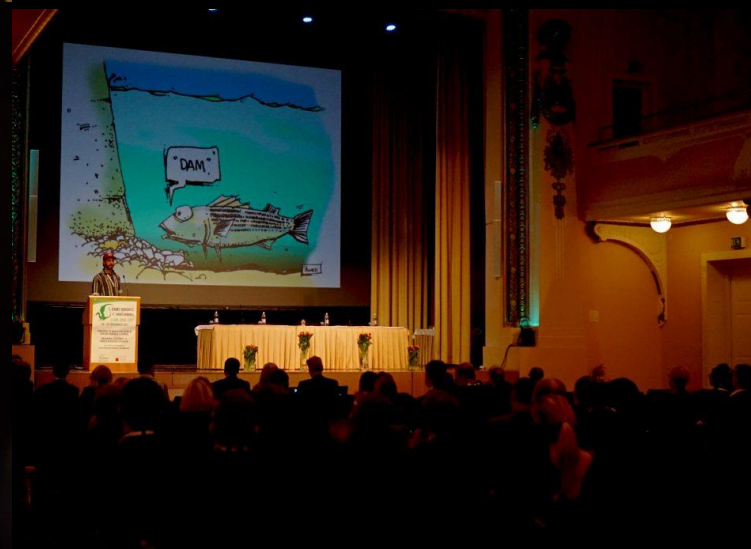
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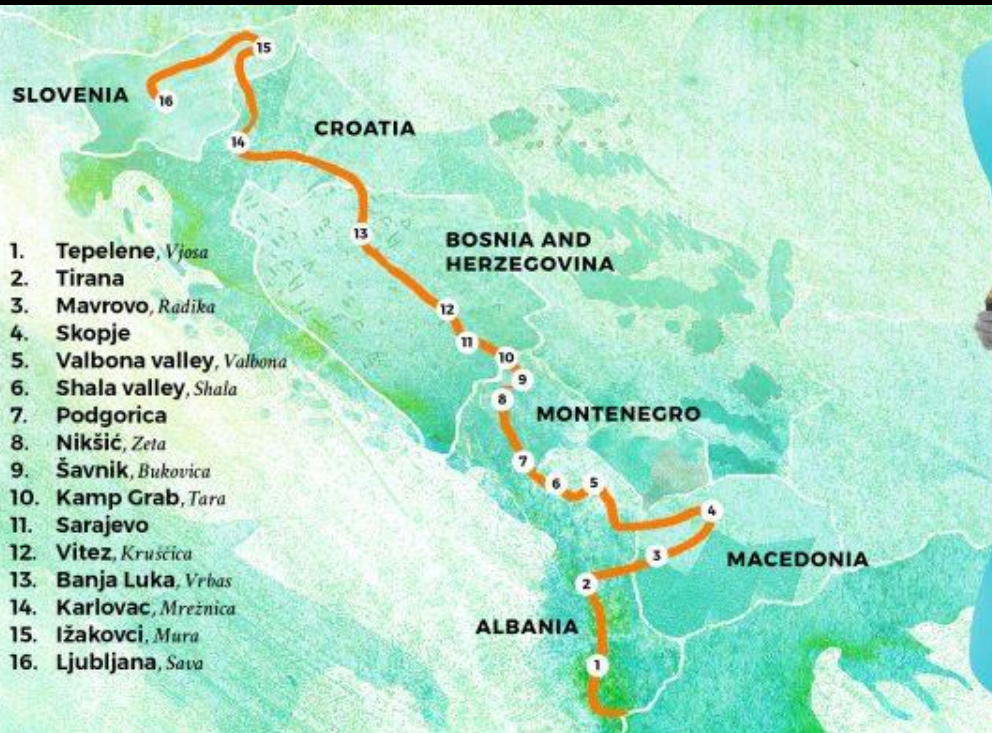
have cameras and are there to expose what is happening: hurried and careless dam construction, often before permits have been issued. Much of the construction happening on rivers in the Balkans, especially small tributaries, is hidden. If the investors conceal construction, they can start building—removing earth and scarring the area—and then the environmental permits are easier to acquire. Most people approach the river by land and not many dam construction companies expect kayakers to be traveling the water.

Rok talks about the Balkan Rivers with pure love. To him the rivers are sacred not simply because of the endangered species and ecosystems involved, but because of the people who live here. He says they are

"The rivers here come with the people. When the people talk, the rivers talk with them," he says. For Rok, rivers unite. They are proof that people, young and old, can come together for something.

"As it turns out, kayaking down a river is much more fun if you know there is a reason why you're doing it."





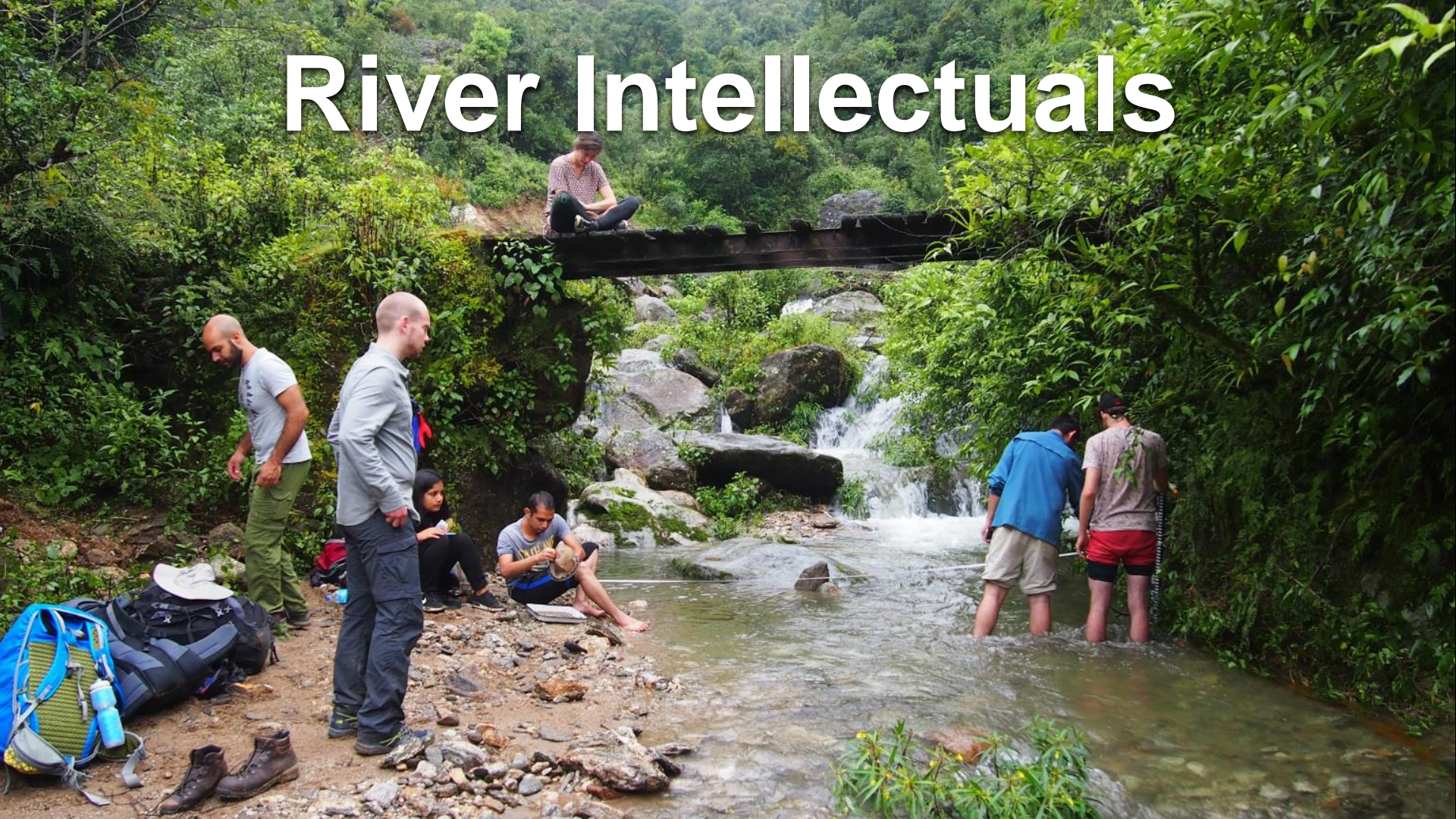
BALKAN RIVERS TOUR

SEPTEMBER 7TH – OCTOBER 8TH

Albania, Macedonia, Montenegro,
Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Croatia, Slovenia



River Intellectuals



Anthropology

Tourism

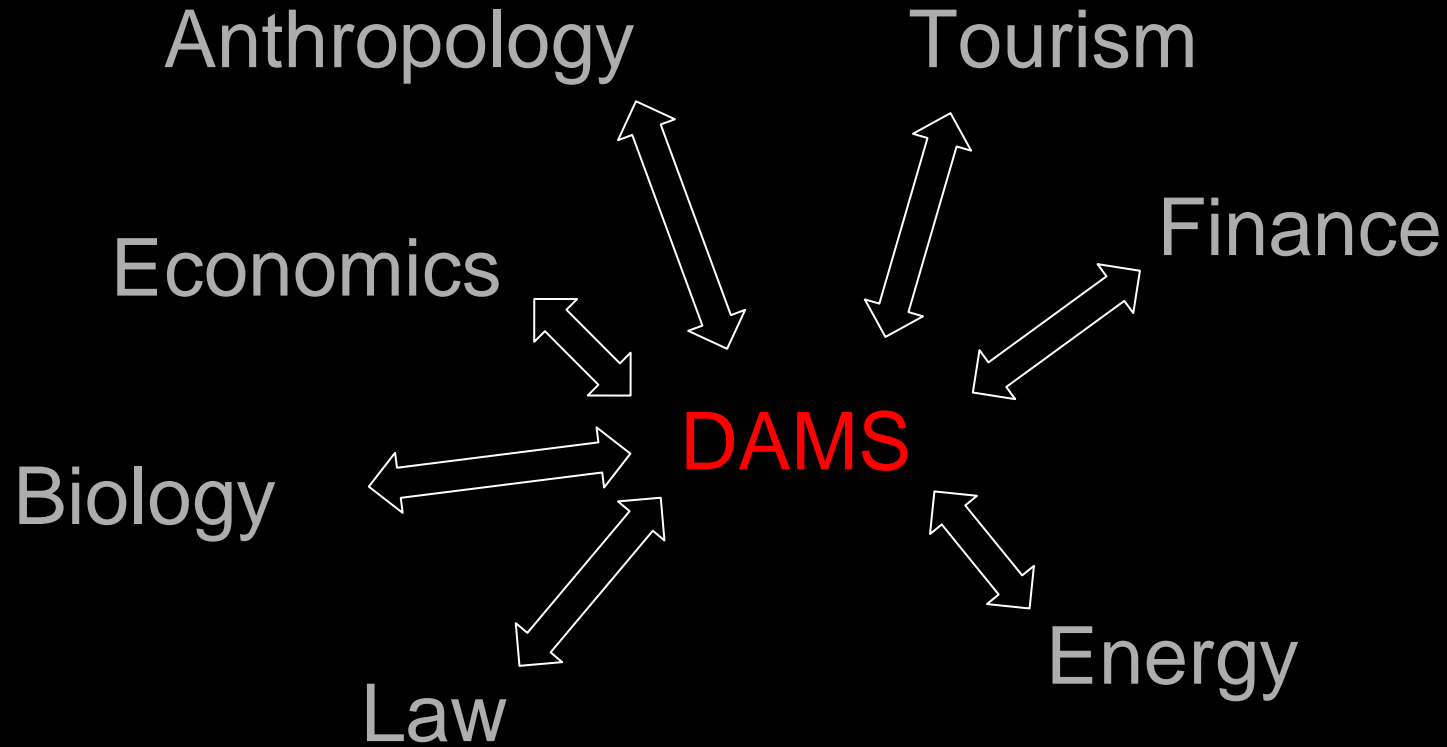
Economics

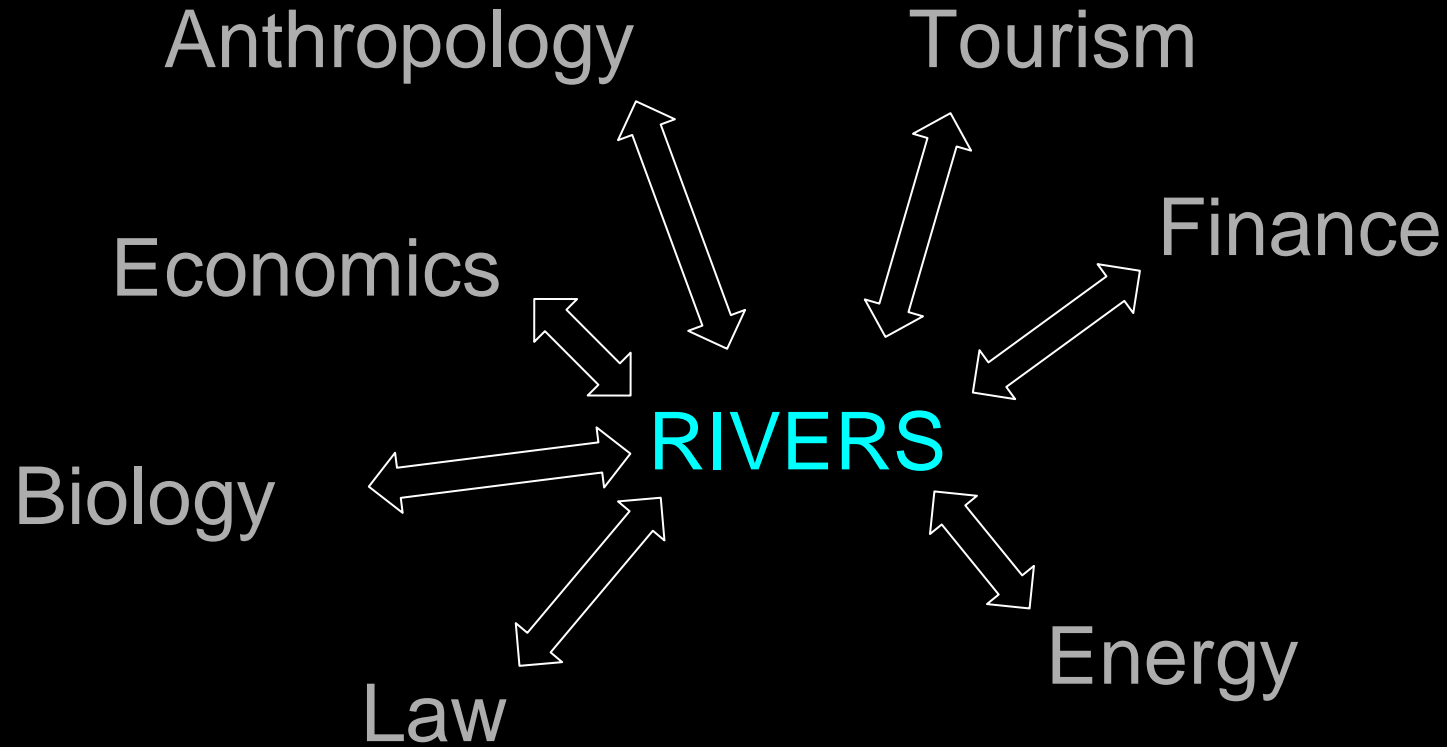
Finance

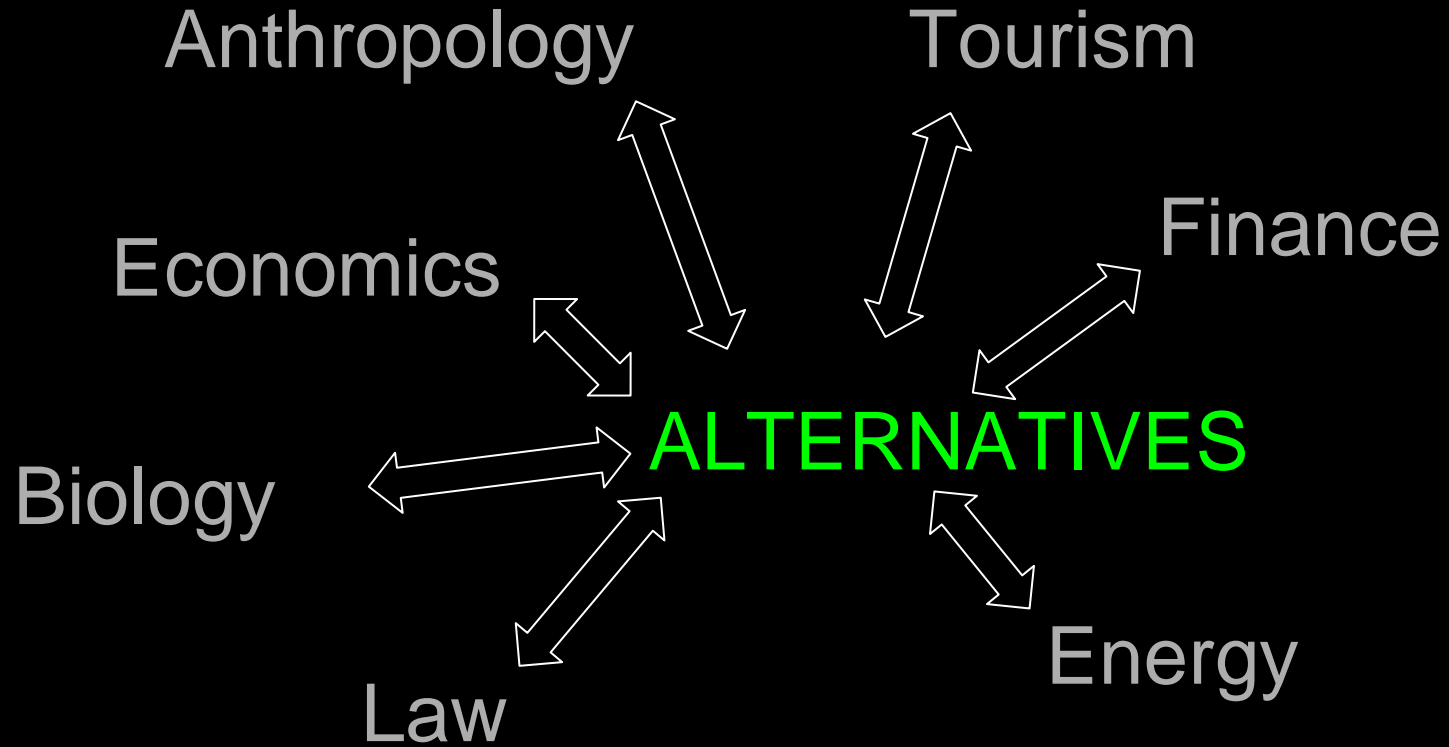
Biology

Law

Energy







River Intellectuals

- Balkan Countries and other European Universities
- Master Theses and Internships
- Learn from each other!
- Share findings with the world

Students for Rivers Camp

- Gather and connect
- Students that seek to put knowledge to action
- Share Knowledge
- Spark initiatives
- Spread the message
- River Experience

















PAIRS

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Let's Connect for more ideas!

ABOUT THE FORUM

300⁺ PARTICIPANTS

40⁺ INVESTMENT PROJECTS

3 days OF NETWORKING

2nd International Summit and exhibition “HYDROPOWER BALKANS 2018” is a professional platform, bringing together chief ministers, major investors, decision-makers of the leading hydropower plants and investment project initiators, as well as regulators, to consolidate efforts focused on efficient implementation of key projects for the construction and reconstruction of HPPs across the Balkan region.

Balkan Hydropower Summit

by Vostock Capital
Budva 6-8 of November

Movie Screening 'The Undamaged'

Protest by NGO's and locals