



ANNUAL REPORT

The Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve

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Dear friends,

In July 2008 it will have been five years since the day the UNESCO Man and Biosphere (MaB) Committee in Paris approved the designation of the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve.

Certain questions invariably come to one's mind: Is five years long enough time to describe and characterize the youngest offspring's contribution to the family of six biosphere reserves (BR) in the Czech Republic? In what respects is it different from its older siblings? Why is the Lower Morava BR internationally viewed as a second-generation BR?

We often have to answer these and many other questions asked by practitioners, students, experts from different fields both from our country and abroad, as well as journalists. We are aware that it is important to provide objective and comprehensible information and more importantly, to communicate the importance of our BR for the Czech Republic and the South Moravian region through our own activities and successfully implemented projects.

What then distinguishes us from the rest of Czech biosphere reserves?

The most visible difference from other BR is the fact that out of the total area of the Lower Morava BR (354 km²) only one quarter of it is encompassed in the Palava Protected Landscape Area, while other BR and their areas are virtually identical with the relevant Protected Landscape Areas. However, the primary difference is the informal style of meeting the general goals of biosphere reserves through a professional team of the BR employees who push forward their activities backed by their strong mandate delegated by the stakeholders of the Lower Morava BR through their representatives in the governing bodies of the Public Benefit Organization.

Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, Public Benefit Organization (PBO) was established as a legal subject in 2004 and on August 31, 2009 it will celebrate its small anniversary. Its Founding Agreement defines the mission as an active fulfilment of the Seville Strategy ideas which encompass conservation of biological and cultural diversity and sustainable development. In February 2008, the Third World Congress of Biosphere Reserves in Madrid adopted a so-called Madrid Action

Plan which builds on the Seville Strategy and sets tangible aims which are to be implemented by Biosphere Reserves in 2008–2013. Our PBC was one of the first to update its medium-term Action Plan and to harmonize it with the UNESCO planning terms.

2008 proved crucial for the development of our corporation in terms of our international activities. We are pleased to say that our foreign partners have recognized and appreciated our concept of implementing the ideas of BR. The issue of cultural landscape management is a complex interdisciplinary task which draws primarily on the responsibility of individual landscape professions and land owners. Nature protection cannot be its sole aim. It is far more advantageous if all stakeholders, who utilize the landscape as their production tool, voluntarily accept the key principles of nature and environment protection as an integral part of their expertise and knowledge. However, even the concept of sustainable programs aimed at the conservation of cultural and species diversity acknowledges the fact that sustainable success is conditioned by balanced environmental, economic and social factors.

Our activities and the individually implemented, internationally presented projects have led to an unofficial inclusion of our BR to the small group of "second generation biosphere reserves". These reserves engage in complex implementation of the Seville Strategy and the Madrid Action Plan and set the main future development trend for the entire world network of BR.

In 2008 our activities focused on solving selected problems within the Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape. Through the preparation of project documentation, studies and other activities, we practically manifested the potential of a specialized Site Manager and thus created the prerequisite for introducing systematic protection and conservation of the Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape, World Heritage Site.

I wish to thank all members of the BR governing bodies, its employees and external co-workers whose efforts contributed to the fact that 2008 can also be rated as a successful year. Special thanks go to our sponsors, without whose assistance we would not have been able to develop our company.

I believe that we are fully capable of further implementation of the noble ideas of UNESCO and its Man and the Biosphere Programme and to represent our corporation both at home and abroad. I firmly hope that the numbers of our supporters will continue to increase and that we shall deserve their trust also in 2009.

Jan Vybíral, Managing Director, January 2009



LOWER MORAVA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The worldwide programme of environmental cooperation called **Man and the Biosphere (MaB)** came to life through UNESCO in 1970. Its aim is to promote sensible and sustainable utilization of natural resources and to improve relationships between man and the environment.

Biosphere Reserves (BR) are sites with international status recognized by UNESCO which are designated based on national nominations under the MaB Programme. The key aim of BR is to test such innovative approaches to sustainable development which combine scientific findings and different forms of management with the objective to decrease the loss of biodiversity, to improve people's standard of living and to enhance the social, economic and cultural conditions necessary for environmental sustainability.

BR differ from traditional protected areas by the fact that they do not focus exclusively on nature protection but rather respect and support such human activities in landscape which lead to its positive and sustainable development.

All BR fulfil the following three basic but equally important and inter-connected functions:

1. Conservation of natural and cultural diversity.
2. Economic development which is socially, culturally and environmentally sustainable.
3. Support of research, monitoring, environmental education and training.

Every BR is divided into three zones: **The Core Area** is designated for nature conservation, monitoring and non-invasive research. **The Buffer Zone** surrounds or connects core zones and is designated for activities which are in accord with sustainable environmental procedures. The remaining area of a BR is the **Transition Area**, or area of cooperation, in which stakeholders work together towards sustainable management of resources of the area.

In 2008, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves which was established under the MaB Programme, consisted of 529 BR in 105 countries. Out of this, six BR were in the area of the Czech Republic (Šumana, Krkonoše, Křivoklátsko, Třeboň Basin, Bílé Karpaty and Lower Morava BR).

In July 2003, the extension of the Pálava Biosphere Reserve (designated in 1986) was approved to encompass the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (hereafter LVCL) and the floodplain forests at the confluence of the Morava and Dyje rivers. This act created conditions for designating a new protected area, the **Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve**.

Since 2004, the BR has been managed by the **Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, Public Benefit Corporation** (hereafter PBC). The PBC was established by the following founding members: Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, Moravské naftové doly, a.s., District Chamber of Commerce Breclav, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the Czech Union of Nature Conservationists.

In the context of the Czech Republic, this represents a unique concept of BR management by a non-profit, non-governmental organization, as the areas of the remaining Czech BR are identical with Protected Landscape Areas and as such share the same state administration.

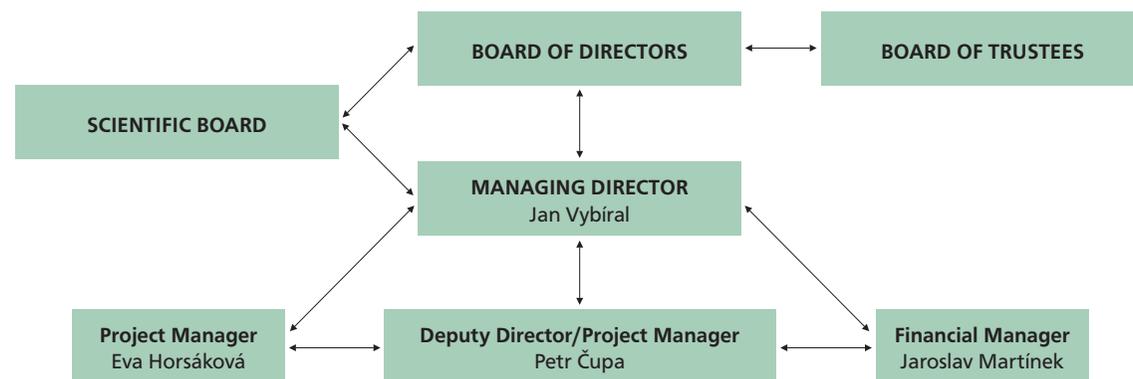
The provided public benefit services are the following:

1. Organizational, institutional, factual and personnel provision of the activities administered by the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve as part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
2. Participation in activities relevant to the Lower Morava BR, including the coordination of these activities with state administration bodies, municipal authorities, stakeholders, educational and scientific institutions, companies, general public and other bodies.
3. Participation in mediating and providing advisory, financial and coordinating services which relate to the Lower Morava BR and its development, in accordance with the UNESCO regulations on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
4. Safeguarding the commissioning, development and regular update of an open information database on the Lower Morava BR and the scientific, economic and development activities relating to the area of existence of the Lower Morava BR.
5. Participation in publishing both periodic and non-periodic materials and proceedings, including informative and methodological publications printed, electronic, audio-visual and multimedia, as well as their presentation, distribution and sale.
6. Participation in educating the general public, further education and training of young people, and cooperation with youth centres in a spirit of promoting the principles of sustainable lifestyle, in particular nature and landscape conservation and the rational management of natural resources.
7. Providing information services for the general public.
8. Participation in organizing international scientific conferences, forums, training courses and exhibitions relating to the Lower Morava BR.
9. Establishment and management of model facilities.
10. Fostering international cooperation in matters relating to the Lower Morava BR and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
11. Promoting and enforcing activities aimed at economic and demographic development of the Lower Morava BR and the entire region.
12. Providing mediatory services in cases of disputes and conflicts arising from the existence and activities of the Lower Morava BR.

All our activities in 2008 were conducted in accordance with the 2005–2010 Action Plan and with the approved 2008 Annual Plan.

ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE OF THE CORPORATION

Registered office: Národních Hrdinů 23, 690 02 Břeclav
 Registration number: 26938171
 Legal form: Public Benefit Corporation



Board of Directors

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|--|
| Chairman: | Libor Opluštil | (Czech Union of Nature Conservationists) |
| Vice-Chairman: | Libor Kabát | (municipalities of the LVCL Region) |
| 2 nd Vice-Chairman: | Stanislav Koukal | (Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic) |
| Members: | František Fabičovic | (District Chamber of Commerce Breclav) |
| | František Hrnčíř | (municipalities of the Podluzi Region) |
| | František Komárek | (Moravske Naftove Doly, a.s.) |
| | Ladislav Sečkář | (District Chamber of Agriculture Breclav) |
| | Miroslav Svoboda | (Forests of the Czech Republic) |
| | Petr Žluva | (municipalities of the Podluzi, LVCL and Mikulovsko Regions) |

Board of Trustees

| | | |
|-----------|----------------|--|
| Chairman: | Pavel Kotásek | (Moravske Naftove Doly, a.s.) |
| Members: | Libor Ambrozek | (Czech Union of Nature Conservationists) |
| | Víktor Beran | (Chamber of Commerce Breclav) |
| | Martin Bílý | (Ministry of the Environment) |
| | Tomáš Blaha | (Forests of the Czech Republic) |
| | Vilém Vyhňálek | (municipalities of the 3 regions) |

Scientific Board

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|-----------|---------------------|---|
| Chairman: | Karel Zlatuška | (municipalities of the Podluzi Region) |
| Members: | Antonín Buček | (Czech Union of Nature Conservationists) |
| | Jiří Danihelka | (Ministry of the Environment) |
| | Václav Jelínek | (District Chamber of Commerce Breclav) |
| | Petr Kučera | (municipalities of the LVCL Region) |
| | Jiří Matuška | (administration of the Palava Protected Landscape Area) |
| | Jaromír Mička | (National Institute for the Protection and Conservation of Monuments and Sites) |
| | Ota Pražák | (Moravske Naftove Doly, a.s.) |
| | Martin Půček | (District Chamber of Agriculture Breclav) |
| | Milada Rigasová | (municipalities of the Mikulovsko Region) |
| | Jiří Schlaghamerský | (MAB National Committee) |
| | Jiří Stonavský | (Forests of the Czech Republic) |

In 2008 the Board of Directors met six times, the Board of Trustees had two meetings and the Scientific Board met three times.



IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN 2008

In 2008 we pursued activities which are in accordance with the three basic functions of biosphere reserves and with our long-term Action Plan. Most of our projects concentrated on the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (LVCL), which followed from executing the function of the Site Manager (SM) of this World Heritage Site which we were entrusted with. Our other projects focused on sustainable management of the cultural landscape, education activities and publication work.

Supporting the management of the Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape, World Heritage Site

SM is a coordination, information and advisory institute whose main mission is to promote the protection and conservation of LVCL values through the implementation of the LVCL Management Plan. SM participates in dealings with state administration bodies, institutions of state protection and conservation of monuments and sites and other stakeholders, who encompass companies and associations, cultural and educational institutions in relation to the currently discussed events and topics. SM can also be summoned to solve and assess different projects on the level of state administration, but without being granted the authority to take decisions. The establishment of the SM institution was conditioned by requirements of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, issuing from the Czech Republic's ratification of the Convention on the Protection of World Heritage, and based on the Resolution No. 2007/19 of the Interdisciplinary Committee for the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (LVCL). The latter accepted the proposal of the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, P.B.C., that Ing. Eva Horsakova should execute the post of LVCL SM.

The specification of LVCL SM activities draws on foreign experience (Stonehenge and Avebury World Heritage Sites in the UK, Fertö-Neusiedlersee in Austria) and encompasses cooperation with important stakeholders (owners, administrators, state administration bodies, institutions, companies and other), participation in meetings of the Lower Morava BR governing bodies which deal with important aspects of LVCL. It is also responsible for designing and managing some priority projects whose objective is to conserve and interpret the values of LVCL, providing consultation in relation with planned development projects and activities whose aims are to

conserve the values of LVCL, promote and enforce the values of the LVCL Management Plan (cooperation with the media, presentation of the LVCL on local, national and international levels, workshops and conferences).

For 2008, the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic approved state budget funding of the Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape Site Manager activities. The funding encompassed the implementation of the project "Support of the Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape (LVCL), World Heritage Site Management".

The project was implemented with financial support of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.

Exhibition to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Lower Morava BR establishment (Valtice, Breclav, April-September 2008)

In cooperation with the Valtice Tourist Information Centre, an exhibition to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Lower Morava BR establishment was opened in April. Bilingual posters informed visitors about key projects that were carried out by the corporation during its existence. The exhibition was officially opened by the Valtice Mayor, Mrs. Terezie Lvova.

In May and upon request of the town of Breclav, the exhibition was transferred to the Pohansko manor and was complemented with a photographic cycle by Jan Halady. The exhibition was open throughout the high tourist season.



The exhibition to commemorate the 5th anniversary of the Lower Morava BR establishment was opened by Ms. Terezie Lvova, the mayor of Valtice and Mr. Jan Vybiral, the BR director

"The Allahy Fishponds Forest Park" project documentation

The forest stands in the vicinity of the Three Graces manor, an important architectural monument situated between the towns of Lednice and Valtice, constitute an integral part of the composed landscape of LVCL, World Heritage Site. The forests are owned by the state and managed by Forests of the Czech Republic, and in 2000–2002 were subject to silvicultural measures with the objective of being gradually transformed into a park forest. In 2006, the contracted period of landscaping measures concluded. The forests were transferred into the category of "special purpose forests" and as such require different methods of management.

Our project, which was prepared in accordance with the approved LVCL Management Plan, highlighted the complementary functions of forest stands and devised measures which will lead to their gradual transformation into forest parks in an area highly attractive for tourism. In relation to the preceding landscaping measures, we devised the restoration of selected solitary trees and tree groups and their systematic maintenance with the objective to restore and enhance the aesthetic function of the area.

The implementation of the project was funded by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

“Restoration of Habitat Conditions of Endangered Species Bound to the Water Regime of the Dyje Floodplain, a Site of European Importance” – project documentation



In 1994–2000, the hydrological relations in “Kanci obora”, a significant floodplain forest complex, were improved under a large-scale floodplain forests restoration project. Some sites situated in the vicinity of the town of Breclav, however, were not completed to match the original plans. With the planned change of the forest category and its gradual transformation into a city forest, it proved necessary to conduct study of the water regime, as the site represents an inundation area with important wetlands, periodic pools, as well as hatching grounds of outbreak mosquito species.

Our study proposed a gradual transformation of forest stands into a city park forest situated in the attractive area of floodplain forests. It also focused on the improvement of hydrological relations in important suburban areas. Restoration of parts of non-functional water channels and of both the current periodic pools and new flow pools was proposed, including possibilities to control the water relations through sluice gate facilities in the course of the seasons.

The objective of the designed measures was to increase species diversity, improve site conditions of the forest stands, to enhance the aesthetic value of the environment and thus create a pleasant haven for the local inhabitants.

The project was co-funded by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

“Hlohovec Park” – project documentation

In 2000–2002, silvicultural measures were implemented in the forest stands situated in the centre of LVCL, in the vicinity of the municipality of Hlohovec. Their objective was to facilitate the restoration of valuable park stands. The forests were transformed into a category of special purpose forests and as such require different methods of management.

The project, which draws on the approved LVCL Management Plan, proposed to implement the aesthetic and park silvicultural measures in the forest stands in close cooperation with the municipality of Hlohovec. Its key aim is to accentuate the selected tree dominants and through regular tending, increase the aesthetic value of glades and vistas on the banks of the Hlohovec fishpond.

The project was co-funded by the Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

“Stand Tending of the Insel site near Mikulov, 2nd Stage”

Under a cross-border project funded under the EU Interreg III.A Initiative Programme Czech Republic – Austria called “Landscape of Our Ancestors”, silvicultural measures aiming at a gradual transformation into a park forests were carried out in 2007 near Mikulov. This touristically attractive area encompassed sites which constituted a part of the border protection zone in the past. The entire area is part of the historically composed Mikulov-Falkenstein landscape and the given site is in the vicinity of a significant cultural monument, the Portz manor, near the municipality Sedlec near Mikulov.

We designed reconstruction of forest stands covering a total of approximately 20 hectares with the objective to transform the current production forest into a special purpose forest, and to eliminate the geographically and habitat allochthonous tree species in favour of indigenous species. The plan also encompasses the extension of steppe habitats, the enhancement of the glades' aesthetic value, as well as the restoration of vistas of Mikulov, the Holy Hill near the town and the landscape surrounding the town of Valtice.

The project was implemented under the co-funding of Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

The Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape Tree Avenues – project documentation

Despite that tree avenues along roads have traditionally been one of the cornerstones of the composed Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape, in the past they failed to receive sufficient expert maintenance. Thus the tree avenues are overmature, and are not restored and even if they are, they are underplanted with poor quality plants. They also suffer from a shortage of available funding for regular, long-term maintenance. Our project consisted of an inventory, as well as a recording and analysis of the existing tree avenues. It also encompassed the assessment of selected parameters and the tree avenues' vegetation potential, along with an evaluation of the existing condition of vegetation elements and determination of their future perspective and further use. The proposal part of the project provides data for spring stage of felling and space cleaning for future activities, as well as the trees designated for sanitation felling. The project also contains documentation for vegetation tending – planting, the layout plan and data necessary for the actual planting, including detailed specifications of the implemented methods and technologies needed to carry out the plan.

The project was co-funded by the South Moravian Regional Authority.

Determination of sites requiring the protection of important vegetation elements of the composed landscape of LVCL, a conservation area and World Heritage Site

The harmonious Lednice-Valtice cultural landscape is the only Czech monument listed as a World Heritage Site in the sub-category of cultural landscapes. LVCL constitutes an outstanding example of a composed landscape shaped in the course of several centuries by deliberate human activities to create a harmonious combination of cultural and natural values.

Along with the human work of art, an area of highly diverse habitats rich in plant and animal species came to life. One of the species of

LVCL protected by both European legislation and ours is the European Beaver (*Castor fiber*), which after over 250 years of absence began to re-colonize the area of South Moravia in the early 1980s.

The presence of beavers in the area, its natural activities and the methods of protecting them have initiated some antagonistic viewpoints which have been presented in discussions on various levels, including those on the adequacy of current legislative amendments concerning beaver protection and the consequences which stem from this.

Based on thorough studies of relevant expert literature, field monitoring and discussions with stakeholders represented by expert groups, state administration representatives, companies managing the landscape, municipalities, owners and users of land, as well as the general public, we prepared a study which aims to describe and address key issues in terms of the protection of LVCL values, which have gradually arisen in areas inhabited by beavers, and which require solutions.

The aim of the project was to devise a coordinated and informed treatise on the issue of the presence of European beaver in the area, with priority given to conserving of the identified values of the harmonious cultural landscape, and to initiate a discussion of all stakeholders which would lead to a general consensus with regard to the future of beaver's presence in LVCL.

The project was co-funded by the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic.

“Cultural Landscape Management” workshop (Lednice, October 16, 2008, 115 participants)

For some, landscape management represents standard economic activities, while others understand it also in terms of regulations for complex landscape use encompassing leisure activities or tangible management plans for the protected area.

Together with the Czech Forest Society we organized a workshop focused on the sustainable management of the Central European landscape and its related issues. The workshop took place at the Faculty of Horticulture of the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno and was designed for representatives of landscape professions, state administration and state nature conservation bodies, forest and agricultural land owners, fish farmers, game managers, local governments and university representatives, as well as the general public.

The workshop was characterized by active discussions whose outcome was agreement that the cultural landscape values can probably be preserved only via the same principles which initiated the landscape's origins. It also concluded that landscape professions and land owners cannot be overtly prevented from pursuing their mission in economic and other activities if these are conducted in accordance with relevant laws. The state should play a significant role in this process by providing expert information and as a bearer of positive motivations, while simultaneously setting and enforcing rules of land use binding both for the land owners and managers, as well as for other stakeholders. Most workshop participants agreed that aims for nature or monument protection cannot be isolated but must become a natural, integral and respected part of all human activities in the landscape.

The project was co-funded by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, the Forest Management Department.

Restoration of the Mikulov Viticulture Nature Trail

The trail runs along the foot of the Pavlovské Hills and in the course of 20 km it acquaints visitors with its regional wine growing traditions, organic methods of vineyard management, the vineyard ecosystem, improvement of grapevines, the function and significance of organically managed vineyards for the landscape, as well as its agricultural non-production functions and the wine growing history of settlements in the vicinity of the hills.

In the course of its short existence (launched in October 2000), the trail has been visited by dozens of thousands of both tourists and local inhabitants. The texts on information boards are provided in three languages (Czech, English and German), which means that the significance of the nature trail for general education and the promotion of nature-friendly methods of wine growing surpasses the borders of the Czech Republic.

In collaboration with ADONIS, the Mikulov chapter of the Czech Union of Nature Conservationists, we participated in the restoration of the Mikulov Viticulture Nature Trail. The work involved the replacement of information boards which had been damaged by vandalism and adverse weather.

The project was implemented and co-funded by the company Vínarstvi Volarik Mikulov.



The project manager Ms. Eva Horsakova and Mr. Jan Vybiral, the BR director at the opening of the “Cultural Landscape Management” workshop

PUBLICATION ACTIVITIES

Publications constitute a significant part of our activities. We publish materials which inform readers about the missions of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and about the specific regional significance of our Public Benefit Corporation. The publications highlight places of interest in the area of the Lower Morava BR or interesting activities within, and their general aim is to promote the ideas of the area's sustainable development.

Traditional Landscape Professions and Landscape Activities of Man – Origins and Development of Cultural Landscape, Cultural Landscape Management and its Sustainable Development – publication

The publication provides basic information on the landscape development in a Central European context, highlights the specific features of the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve and outlines the participation of key landscape professions, which utilize the landscape as their production tool in shaping the character and structure of the cultural landscape. It stresses the importance of understanding and analysis of history as the basis for estimating future development trends and society's requirements on the landscape. It strives to show that the highest efficiency of the region's development will be achieved if the widest possible agreement is reached with regard to the form and methods of fulfilling the joint vision of the region, as well as the share of responsibility for the condition of the natural and cultural riches and its future utilization. This complex process then involves the creation and acceptance of a concept of sustainable use of nature, and the protection and utilization of cultural heritage as our ancestral legacy. An agreement concerning the society's relation to the issues of environment and cultural landscape values is beneficial for both existing and future generations of the human race on local, regional and global scales.

The project was implemented with co-funding of the company MND, a.s.



“Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape, World Heritage Site” Map

The map which we published in 2007 to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the LVCL inscription on the World Heritage List was almost immediately dispensed. Therefore we decided to publish an updated version.

The author of the map and drawings included in it is Ing.arch. Ales Klose. The back of the map contains bilingual information on LVCL and its cultural, historical and natural values, as well as the context of long-term deliberate human activities within the landscape.

The map publishing was funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic.



“Wetland Restoration in the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve” – leaflet

Floodplain forests, meadows and wetlands have traditionally constituted the key ecosystems of the Lower Morava BR. In the past, the floodplain landscape was characterized by large-scale inundations on the lower reaches of the Morava and Dyje rivers.

However, the past centuries brought about human activities which have had a major impact on the original landscape character. The most significant changes in the floodplain landscape were the result of a large-scale project of water management measures in South Moravia which was implemented in 1968–1989. The aim was to prevent the adverse impact of regular floods on the local populations. However, the measures disrupted the natural hydrological relations of the entire area and had a highly negative impact on the environment.

Despite the fact that the entire area was disrupted in a number of places in the past, a number of sites with unique plant and animal communities have been preserved. Among other ways of protection, these areas were listed as Ramsar wetland sites of international importance.

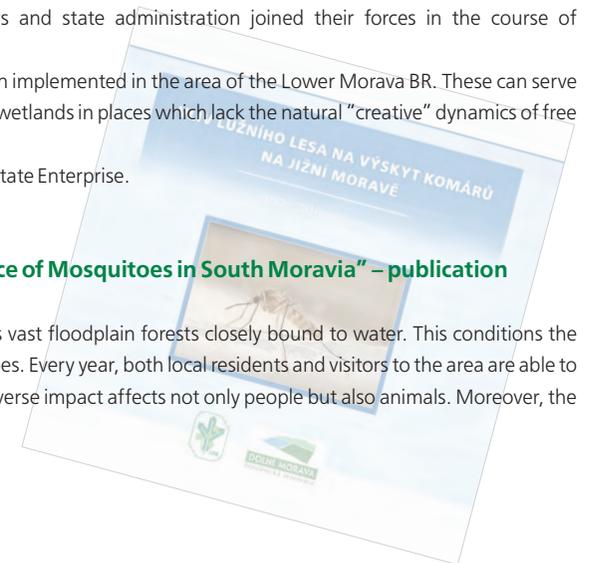
After 1989, the change in political regime initiated efforts to at least partly eliminate the adverse impact of the water management measures on the landscape. Companies, private land owners and state administration joined their forces in the course of implementing these restoration projects.

Our publication focused on some of the projects which have been implemented in the area of the Lower Morava BR. These can serve as examples of the possibilities on how to restore non-functional wetlands in places which lack the natural “creative” dynamics of free river streams or where natural succession of forests asserts itself.

The publication was co-funded by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

“The Influence of Floodplain Forests on the Occurrence of Mosquitoes in South Moravia” – publication

The Lower Morava BR is situated in an area which encompasses vast floodplain forests closely bound to water. This conditions the occurrence of one of the floodplain forest phenomena – mosquitoes. Every year, both local residents and visitors to the area are able to attest to the fact that mosquitoes affect the entire area. Their adverse impact affects not only people but also animals. Moreover, the



PUBLICATION AKTIVITIES

mosquitoes act as vectors of infections and visitors and local residents alike, often influenced by images presented by the media, succumb to the excessive fear of these insects.

The aim of the publication by RNDr. Oldrich Sebesta, a leading Czech expert in the field, was to provide objective information on the life of mosquitoes, the real dangers they pose, and the methods of fighting them. It deals with mosquito systematics, their biology, living conditions, hatching grounds, results of 10-year-long monitoring, significant human diseases which are transmitted by mosquitoes and mosquito control. The latter focused on modern methods of individuals' protection, and on the elimination of mosquito outbreaks in nature via biological methods which take into account the protection of floodplain areas species diversity.

The project was co-funded by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

100 Most Interesting Trees of the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve

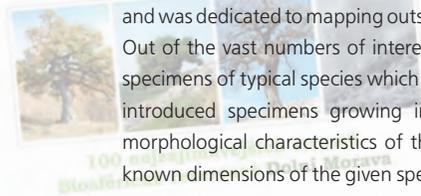
This book was written by a team of authors from the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry (MUAF) and the Lower Morava BR and was dedicated to mapping outstanding tree species growing in the reserve.

Out of the vast numbers of interesting trees we selected along with the help of GPS technology, we located the largest known specimens of typical species which occur in the natural forest communities of the BR (native species), as well as the most interesting introduced specimens growing in the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (allochthonous species). The text provided basic morphological characteristics of the individual species, their ecological requirements, distribution and utilization, the maximum known dimensions of the given species specimens in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Belgium, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, USA and possibly also other countries.

The aim was to provide a reader-friendly form of information on the dendrological points of interest in the BR and to initiate their protection. We also endeavoured to increase the general awareness about the Lower Morava BR, to promote basic ideas of biosphere reserves, such as sustainable development and efforts to strike a balance between human activities and nature, as well as to encourage readers to set out to the wild and look for the trees themselves. The ultimate goal then was to involve readers in the ongoing programme of mapping important trees, which is conducted by the MUAF in Brno and under which all information on dendrological points of interest throughout the Czech Republic is collected.

The project was co-funded by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, and the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology of the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno.

Throughout 2008, articles about the Lower Morava BR and our activities were published in magazines **Malovaný kraj**, **Jihomoravské listy**, **Lesnická práce**, **Lesu zdar** and **Region**. Further information, mostly on our activities, appeared topically in the regional daily, **Breclavský deník**.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

Throughout 2008 we presented the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve and its activities at conferences, lectures, forums and excursions designed for both general public and experts.

3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves – Madrid 2008

On February 4–8, 2008, the Spanish capital hosted the 3rd World Congress of Biosphere Reserves. The congress was organized by UNESCO in cooperation with the Ministry of the Environment of Spain and the Spanish foundation "Fondacio Biodiversidad". In the history of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (1970), the congress represented the third most important event, following congresses in Minsk (1983) and Seville (1995), which sets out the agenda for action of the MAB Programme and all its biosphere reserves for the next six years. A total of 850 delegates worldwide participated in the congress, including seven from the Czech Republic.

The principal aim of the congress was to assess the activities of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves (hereafter WBNBR) since 1995, when the groundbreaking Seville Strategy was adopted. Other discussed topics included the utilization of the BR potential in connection with the newly emerging challenges, such as the accelerated loss of traditional knowledge and cultural diversity, demographic changes, loss of arable land, climate change, promotion of sustainable development, urbanization or loss of biodiversity. **The output of the congress was the adoption of the Madrid Declaration and the Madrid Action Plan**, which builds



on the Seville Strategy and develops it into tangible tasks which should be implemented by the BR in 2008–2013 (the UNESCO planning cycle).

Among other things, the Madrid Declaration recommended the establishment of efficient partnerships via cooperation with all sectors of society, such as public and private institutions, media, stakeholder communities, research and education centres and other. It invites members to use the BR potential to address new challenges, to establish mechanisms for long-term financing to ensure sustainability of their operations, to focus on strengthening the importance of BR and the MAB Programme, and to promote MAB and WNBR as forums for involving people and for developing policies and plans to address local problems. Such forums should then look for dynamic and mutually beneficial relationships between people and the biosphere and implement the Madrid Action Plan.

The Madrid Action Plan summarizes the MAB Programme strategy. It is divided into six parts which focus on key aspects of BR work. It defines 31 targets and 65 actions which are to be taken at local level in accordance with the given BR needs. The Plan stresses the importance of using BR as places which demonstrate efficient answers to the present challenges, such as climatic change, increasing urbanization, poverty and desertification. Among the individual steps which the Plan recommends is the integration of urban areas into BR, providing education on the various ecosystems, designation of pilot BRs to assess their economic contribution to local economies, involvement of stakeholders in the management or the promotion of BR via goods with the BR brand.

Mr. Petr Cupa participated in the congress on behalf of the Lower Morava BR. He presented the BR and its concrete projects in terms of the panel section and in the course of workgroup sessions.

Meeting of the international Trilateral Ramsar Platform: Slovakia, Czech Republic, Austria (8–9. 4. 2008, 24 participants)

The Lower Morava BR hosted the meeting of **Trilateral Ramsar Platform: Slovakia-Czech Republic – Austria**. We prepared a panel presentation, information leaflets on restoration projects in the area of the Lower Morava BR, a field trip and a lecture on the sustainable management of natural renewable resources.

The project was co-funded by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

Workshop on floodplain forests (11. 4. 2008, 90 participants)

The Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology (FFWT) of the Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry (MUAF) in Brno organized a workshop which informed its participants about some output of its Research Plan. The workshop was organized in cooperation with our BR and Mr. Jan Vybiral gave a presentation on behalf of the Lower Morava BR.

International conference “Water Resource Management” (Udine, Italy, 30. 4. 2008; 55 participants)

The Italian town of Udine hosted a concluding conference of a project called “Water Resources Management in Protected Areas – WAREMA”. The project was funded by EU through its Interreg IIB CADSES Initiative. It was implemented in the area of Friuli Venezia Giulia, Italy, in collaboration with five partners from Hungary, Greece and the Czech Republic, which was represented by the Poodri Protected Landscape Area.

The aim of the project was to devise a joint planning procedure based on the cooperation of organizations, investors and local inhabitants, which would meet the European Council Directive No. 2000/60/EC on water. The project focused on improving the treatment of water resources from an environmental perspective, which stresses the importance of their protection and preservation, but also from an economic perspective through the involvement of the general public in the decision-making process.

Mr. Petr Cupa was invited as a lecturer to inform the participants on the experience with water management in the area of the Lower Morava BR. The title of his lecture was “Flood Management in Protected Areas”.

Visit of an important scientist in LVCL and the floodplain forests of the Lower Morava BR (9. 5. 2008)

In terms of our long-term cooperation with the FFWT of the Mendel University in Brno, we organized a specialist excursion for Professor Nguen Hoang Nghia, director of the Forest Science Institute of Vietnam. In the course of the excursion we presented methods of sustainable forest management in Central European conditions.

Specialist excursion for university and nature conservation workers from Hungary (22. 5. 2008, 16 participants)

We organized a specialist field trip for a group of researchers from the Budapest and Sopron Universities and for the senior management of nature protection institutions (national parks, protected areas, the Ministry of the Environment of Hungary), called “Hydrological Management of Floodplain Forests”.

LTER – establishment of an information database of research papers and results for the area of the Lower Morava BR (23. 5. 2008, Brno)

The meeting at the FFWT at the Mendel University in Brno agreed to establish an information database of Long Term Ecological Research – LTER. The negotiations focused on presenting the specifics of the system and the database as part of a European network of data exchange on ongoing research which focuses on monitoring of specific characteristics.

Dipl. Biol. Jiri Schlaghamersky, PhD., Vice-Chairman of our Scientific Board, was put in charge of coordinating the LTER activities on behalf of the Lower Morava BR.

International Model Forest Network Global Forum (16–21. 6. 2008, Hinton, Canada)

The International Model Forest Network (IMFN) is a voluntary community of practice whose members and supporters work toward a common goal: the sustainable management of the landscape. The program, which initially focused its activities on forest management only, has expanded since its origin in order to encompass sustainable management of forest-based landscapes.



Mr. Jan Vybiral, the BR director with Professor Nguen Hoang Nghia from Vietnam

The initiative involves complex relationships between people, communities, businesses, state institutions, non-profit organizations and other groups, and strives to foster collaboration and exchange of experience in sustainable landscape management.

The Lower Morava BR was established on the foundations of the MAB Programme, which in many aspects resembles those of the Model Forest. The new Action Plan adopted in February 2008 at the World Congress in Madrid encourages BRs to collaborate more widely with similar programmes. Therefore the governing bodies of the Lower Morava BR decided to support our participation in IMFN.

In June 2008, Canada hosted the International Model Forest Network Global Forum, where Ing. Petr Cupa was officially invited to introduce the Lower Morava BR, its activities and to discuss the possible membership of our BR in IMFN.

Training of Tourist Information Centres staff (24. 6. 2008, Mikulov, 12 participants)

The training was organized under the project "Staff Training of Tourist Information Centres Situated in the Palava Protected Landscape Area and the Lower Morava BR" which was managed by the Mikulov chapter "ADONIS" of the Czech Union of Nature Conservationists. In the course of the training, two lectures called "Lower Morava BR" and "Opening Naturally Valuable Areas to the General Public" were given. The training was concluded with a field trip to the LVCL and the Allahy Fishponds site. Every training participant was given a set of publicity materials to enhance the awareness of visitors to the BR.

International EURORURAL Conference (25–29. 8. 2008, Brno; 30 participants)

The Mendel University of Agriculture and Forestry in Brno organized an international conference EURORURAL 08 which focused on rural areas research. We promoted our BR with the help of our publicity materials and a short presentation.

Lecture trip upon invitation from the Swedish National MAB Committee

In terms of promoting international cooperation, Ing. Petr Cupa accepted an invitation of the Swedish MAB Committee and the Vänerskårgården med Kinnekulle candidate Biosphere Reserve and on 22–26. 9. 2008 he made a series of presentations focusing on the Lower Morava BR, its organization structure, participation management and its prepared, implemented and completed projects. Particular emphasis was put on the Lednice – Valtice Cultural Landscape Management Plan. At present, Sweden has two designated BR, Lake Torne Area (1986) and Kristianstad Vattenrike (2005), one candidate BR and two more reserves which are in the nominating process at the local level (Czech Republic has six BR: Šumava, Krkonoše, Křivoklátsko, Třeboň Basin, Bílé Karpaty and Lower Morava BR).

The opening lecture was presented to the students and researchers of Stockholm University and was held at the Stockholm Resilience Center. It was followed by a presentation for the local administration staff at the municipal office in Mariestad, another presentation for students and general public at the Goteborg University in Mariestad and two more presentations for state officials, local administration representatives and general public at municipal offices in Lidköping and Gotene.

The main aim of the lectures was to present the concept of biosphere reserves and the history of the MAB Programme in the Czech Republic., to demonstrate the Lower Morava BR model based on the principle of a non-governmental organization and the participation of stakeholders in its management as a model which might be used in the newly established Swedish BR.

In the course of the trip, a number of formal and informal discussions were conducted, focusing on the issue of biosphere reserves, their contribution, and the future direction of the MAB Programme. The information provided by the presentations and consequent discussions will be utilized in the course of devising materials for proposing the organization structure and focus of the future Vänerskårgården med Kinnekulle Biosphere Reserve. The lecture series represented an onset of long-term cooperation between the Lower Morava BR and its Swedish partners.

Field meeting of the Czech National MAB Committee in the area of Soutok (22. 10. 2008, 41 participants)

In response to the request of the Czech National MAB Committee, our corporation helped organize the field meeting. Senior specialists of the Zidlochovice Forest Enterprise, with Managing Director Ing. Blaha in the lead, were in charge of the field trip. The aim of the excursion was to acquaint the participants with the forest conditions of different sites at the Soutok Forest District and the methods of forest management in the area which is intended as part of the newly proposed Protected Landscape Area. During the concluding meeting at the conference room of the Lanzhot municipal office, information about the prepared project of a new protected landscape area was revealed. In the course of the ensuing discussion, substantial differences in opinions on the forest conditions, on methods of forest management and the possibilities of efficient protection of biological diversity emerged from the viewpoint of some nature conservation experts on one side and foresters on the other.

Excursion of employees of Forests of the Czech Republic from the Zlin region to LVCL (6. 11. 2008, 32 participants)

To further a request of Forests of the Czech Republic, we prepared an excursion for employees of the Regional Headquarters of Forests of the Czech Republic in Zlin and their forest districts. The specialist part of the event focused on the issues of cultural landscape management as experienced in LVCL.

Conference for the project of the newly prepared Soutok Protected Landscape Area (8. 12. 2008)

The conference was organized by Senator Jan Hajda and Jiri Petru, Member of Parliament, under the auspices of the mayor of the town of Breclav. At the conference, representatives of the Ministry of the Environment presented a plan to designate a new Protected Landscape Area in Soutok-Podluzi and Dolni Podyji, both Sites of European Importance. Apart from the Lower Morava BR, a numerous group of mayors, businessmen and state administration representatives participated in the conference. A managed discussion



Ms. Johanna MacTaggart of the Swedish MAB Committee and Mr. Petr Cupa of the Lower Morava BR

OTHER ACTIVITIES

revealed the negative attitude of the region to the proposed project. Insufficient and improper communication by nature protection bodies with the public and other regional stakeholders were listed among the reasons for the negative answer.

At the conference, the Lower Morava BR also presented its standpoint. We recommended that the environmental state administration should communicate and discuss all the alternatives of safeguarding the protection of the natural and cultural values of the affected area to all stakeholders in the given area, particularly land owners and users, well in advance. The alternatives should encompass more than the intended new large-scale specially protected area in the category of Protected Landscape Areas. We also expressed our readiness to become active participants in the process of negotiating the protection methods for the given area, and in order to safeguard a balanced and objective discussion we offered our neutral platform and organizational backing.

Cooperation with universities

Similar to 2007, when a student of the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague took her internship at the Lower Morava BR, a student of the University of South Bohemia took an internship here in 2008 as well. We have noted increasing interest on the part of universities and students for closer cooperation. Joint projects, requests for lectures, as well as applications for diploma and bachelor thesis topics, student excursions and summer internships of students who are interested in our vision of landscape management and practical implementation of the BR ideas, attest to this trend. Our PBC is represented in the Scientific Board of the FFWT at Mendel University in Brno and our Managing Director is regularly invited to observe defences of bachelor and master theses at Mendel University.



DONORS AND PARTNERS

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