

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

The Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve



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INTRODUCTION

Dear friends,

2011 marked forty years since the launch of Man and the Biosphere (MAB), a worldwide programme of environmental cooperation under the UNESCO patronage. Let us remember the Programme's key objective defined in the 1971 document as follows: **"To develop the basis within the natural and social sciences for the rational use and conservation of the resources of the biosphere and for the improvement of the global relationship between man and the environment; to predict the consequences of today's actions on tomorrow's world and thereby to increase man's ability to manage efficiently the natural resources of the biosphere."**

The success of the project can be manifested by the fact that at the beginning of 2012, the total count was 580 Biosphere Reserves (BR) in 114 countries implementing the MAB Programme. Approximately 20 new BR are added every year, complementing the worldwide network by their unique sites, thus attracting global attention and positively enhancing the responsibility of the local institutions and community.

In 2011, the **Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, Public Benefit Corporation (PBC)** focused its activities on the management of the South Moravian cultural landscape, making it its top priority. In co-operation with selected municipalities it participated in preparing and implementing key restoration projects in the agricultural landscape. Our PBC and the said municipalities may proudly say that thanks to our joint efforts the issues of support and enhancement of the cultural landscape biodiversity are given increased importance during urban and landscape planning. In the course of the year we prepared over 15 presentations attended by over 500 people both at home and abroad. We took part in 12 projects and succeeded in establishing contacts with municipalities outside the BR as well. Upon their agreement we prepared projects for establishing new

elements of the Territorial System of Ecological Stability.

2011 was declared the Year of Forests and a global positive UNESCO campaign focused on the issues of preserving, maintaining and extending forest ecosystems. Our PBC played an active part in this initiative and contributed to raising awareness by releasing an interesting set of six documentaries on a single DVD called **"Man, Landscape, Forests..."** as well as organizing a number of presentations and lectures.

A project of extensive restoration of the Lednice chateau Riding Hall, under which an educational centre will be established on the premises, was launched in 2011. The main exhibition will focus on the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (LVCL), World Heritage Site, and two additional exhibitions will present the Lower Morava BR and the MAB Programme respectively. Our PBC participates in the project as a partner and as such prepared expert documents required in the process of selecting the exhibition contractor. An updated version of the LVCL Management Plan was also released in 2011. Later in the year, a fourth year of the traditional "Cultural Landscape Management" workshop took place. This event is becoming an informal platform for presenting and exchanging interdisciplinary information in the form of lectures given by renowned scientists, specialists as well as actual managers.

On 4–8th July 2011 EuroMAB 2011 conference was held in Sweden. The international EuroMAB Network is made up of all Biosphere Reserves of Europe and North America. A conference is organized every two years to evaluate the activities of the past period and set the future strategic axes of the MAB Programme. The EuroMAB 2011 conference was attended by almost 150 participants from Europe and Canada, including ing. Petr Čupa as a representative of the Lower Morava BR. The conference stressed the importance of communication with and involvement of municipalities and business in the work of each BR on the basis of equal participation of the stakeholders involved. Each BR, unlike Specially Protected Areas which by default must favour the nature conservation aspects, has ideal conditions to meet this requirement. Furthermore, all BR functions are equal and as such closer to the real-life conditions in their territory and beyond it. This concept, which the Lower Morava BR has been actively promoting since its designation, places us into a progressive group which is gaining ground as the mainstream and logical evolution of the MAB Programme philosophy.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to all members of our governing bodies, our external consultants as well as supporters both at home and abroad who helped us provide beneficial services throughout 2011 and thus helped us create and promote values of civic society in the long-term horizon. Special thanks go to our sponsors, with whose support we are able to develop our organization. I am confident that we can continue to act as a big informal team which is fully capable of meeting the noble goals embedded in UNESCO and the Man and the Biosphere Programme. We are ready to stand as respectable representatives of our organization both in the Czech Republic and abroad. I hope that the ranks of our supporters will continue to grow and that we deserve their trust.

Jan Vybiral, Managing Director of Lower Morava BR, March 2012



MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME AND BIOSPHERE RESERVES

As early as 1971 it was defined that the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme is to “develop the basis within the natural and social sciences for the rational use and conservation of the resources of the biosphere and for the improvement of the global relationship between man and the environment; to predict the consequences of today’s actions on tomorrow’s world and thereby to increase man’s ability to manage efficiently the natural resources of the biosphere.” It was its integration of the socio-economic aspect which made it a pioneering approach in integrated nature conservation.

Carefully selected areas called “biosphere reserves” (BR) are seen as tools for implementing the goals of the MAB Programme. The meaning of the term “biosphere reserve” should be understood more as “a store kept for future use” rather than the notion of the purely conservation aspect of BR, which most languages, including Czech, incorrectly accentuate.

Sadly, not only the term itself but also its inherent philosophy has come up against problems stemming from an erroneous understanding of the institution, which is not purely conservationist at its core and is not restricted to its geographical and ecological aspects. Developed countries with well-developed environmental legislation, including the Czech Republic, have other institutions which see nature conservation as their sole priority and the focus of BR should therefore remain wider and more balanced.

Every BR must conform to a specific set of criteria and has to be able to meet a given set of tasks. BRs worldwide fulfil the following three equally important functions:

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

All three basic tasks of BR should be given equal importance. It therefore follows that BR are specific by the fact that they do not focus exclusively on nature protection, which on the other hand must remain a priority at specially protected areas managed by nature conservation bodies.

Nature conservation, despite its indisputable importance, represents only one of the tasks which must be equally complemented by supporting such human activities in the landscape which promote its positive and sustainable use and development, as well as by sharing information and expertise gained through active involvement and research.

The area of every BR should be divided into three functional zones. The *core zone* is an area designed solely to protect biological diversity. The *buffer zone* is an area surrounding the core zones to protect them from negative impacts. It is utilized for activities related to nature conservation and ecological procedures, including environmental research and education, recreation or eco tourism. The remaining area of BR consists of the *transition zone* or the zone of cooperation. It is the most important zone where standard economic activities and other uses of the environment take place, while promoting sustainable management.

Biosphere Reserves are nominated by national governments and designated by the MAB International Coordinating Council. The area of every BR also encompasses sites protected under the respective national systems or other internationally recognized areas (World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Wetlands, Natura 2000 sites, etc.).

The relation of BR to the category of specially protected areas is restricted to the fact that they always either partly or fully overlap with one of the relevant types of protected areas. However, a territorial overlap does not necessarily mean an agreement of terms. The priorities and recommended forms of participative management are not, and often simply cannot be, identical with those of large-scale specially protected areas, as we know them in the Czech Republic and elsewhere in Europe. In the history of the MAB Programme, several BR have been abolished due to the fact that they acted “purely as a national park”. However, no national park has ever been abolished for acting simultaneously as a Biosphere Reserve.

An integral part of every BR must be the important role played by the “human element” either in the landscape or in the wider sense in the management of the given BR. An equal collaboration and active participation of local governments and inhabitants, state administration bodies and other stakeholders, such as local businesses, conservation groups or natural and social scientists, is vital in this process. The Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve is the only BR in the Czech Republic to directly and equally involve various stakeholders in the management and decision-making process of the BR through participative management. This is done on the platform of a Public Benefit Corporation.



LOWER MORAVA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

In July 2003, the designation of the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve as an extension of the former Pálava Biosphere Reserve (designated in 1986) to encompass the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (LVCL) and the floodplain forests at the confluence of the Morava and Dyje rivers was approved.

In 2004, the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, Public Benefit Corporation, was established to procure fulfilment of all BR functions on the basis of participative management. The founding members of the corporation included Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, MND, a.s., Břeclav District Chamber of Commerce, Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic and the Czech Union of Nature Conservationists. The organizational structure is complemented by representatives of municipalities of the Mikulov, Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape and Podluží Regions and also includes representatives of the Břeclav District Chamber of Agriculture.

In the context of the Czech Republic, this establishment represents a unique concept of BR management in which, apart from nature conservation bodies, representatives of municipalities, business and non-governmental organizations participate directly as well. Moreover, the Lower Morava BR is the only Czech BR to give its employees full-time contracts. The areas of remaining Czech BR are identical with those of their

respective Protected Landscape Areas or National Parks and as such the fulfilment of BR tasks represents only a marginal part of the respective state administration officials' worksheet.

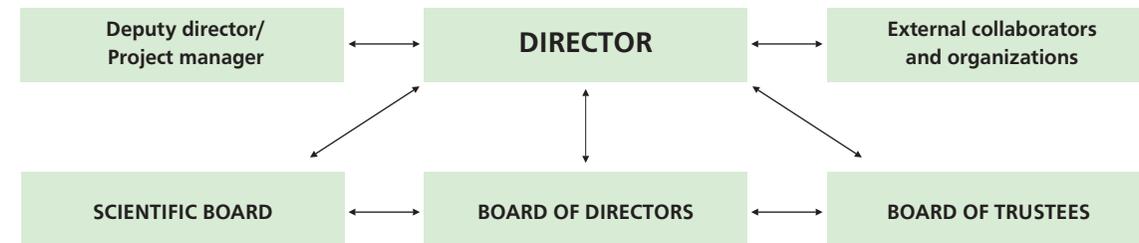
Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, P.B.C., provides the following public benefit services:

1. Organizational, institutional, factual and personnel provision of 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 procuring 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 on the scientific, economic and development activities relating to the area or 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 those of 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 activities conducted in 2011 were in accordance with the 2005-2013 Action Plan and in concord with the conditions of the Man and the Biosphere Programme.

ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE CORPORATION

Registered office: **Národních Hrdinů 23, 690 02 Břeclav**
 Office: **Zámecké nám. 69, 691 44 Lednice**
 Registration number: **269 38 171**
 Legal form: **Obecně prospěšná společnost**



In 2011, due to changes in legislation related to public benefit corporations it was necessary to introduce organization changes in Lower Morava BR, P.B.C, the most significant change being that the Managing Director became the statutory representative of the corporation.

Additionally, changes in the founding members' structure were proposed, along with restructuring of the governing bodies and a change of the registered seat of the company. These changes were subject to the process of approval by all founding members in 2011. It is expected that they will be fully accepted in the course of 2012.

Governing bodies of the Lower Morava BR, P.B.C., in 2011

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman:	Libor Kabát	(obce regionu LVA)
Vice-Chairman:	Miroslav Svoboda	(Lesy České republiky, s.p.)
2nd Vice-Chairman:	Stanislav Koukal	(Ministerstvo životního prostředí)
Members:	Miroslav Volařík	(Okresní hospodářská komora Břeclav)
	Ctirad Petrla	(obce regionu Podluží)
	Tomáš Nečas	(Okresní agrární komora Břeclav)
	Libor Ambrozek	(Český svaz ochránců přírody)
	Vladislav Moravčík	(obce regionu Mikulovska)
	Pavel Kotásek	(MND, a.s.)

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairman:	Libor Opluštil	(Český svaz ochránců přírody)
Members:	Zbyněk Parma	(MND, a.s.)
	František Fabičovic	(Okresní hospodářská komora Břeclav)
	Dušan Utinek	(Ministerstvo životního prostředí)
	Vladimír Krchov	(Lesy České republiky, s.p.)
	Vilém Vyhnálek	(obce regionů Podluží, LVA a Mikulovsko)

SCIENTIFIC BOARD

Chairman:	Karel Zlatuška	(obce regionu Podluží)
Members:	Antonín Buček	(Český svaz ochránců přírody)
	Jiří Danihelka	(Ministerstvo životního prostředí)
	Roman Osička	(Okresní hospodářská komora Břeclav)
	Petr Kučera	(obce regionu LVA)
	Jiří Matuška	(Správa CHKO Pálava)
	Jaromír Míčka	(Národní památkový ústav)
	Otakar Pražák	(MND, a.s.)
	Martin Půček	(Okresní agrární komora Břeclav)
	Milada Rigasová	(obce regionu Mikulovska)
	Jiří Schlaghamerský	(Český národní komitét MAB)
	Jiří Stonawski	(Lesy České republiky, s.p.)

In 2011 the Board of Directors met five times and the Board of Trustees had one meeting.

In 2011 the Public Benefit Corporation employed two employees full-time.



IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN 2011

1. Programmes implemented in collaboration with Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise

Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, are the biggest manager of forest land in the country. Its primary task is the management of over 1.3 mil ha of state-owned forests as well as over 39,000 km of designated watercourses. The company promotes a strategy of sustainable management based on the use of creative natural forces which safeguard a continuous and balanced fulfillment of production and other functions of the managed forests. The company aims to establish stable, high-quality, mixed forests in terms of their species, spatial and age compositions. It also acts as the most important administrator of protected areas and a key partner of nature conservation bodies in the Czech Republic.

Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, as one of the founding members of Lower Morava BR, have been traditionally supporting our activities both inside and outside the BR. The collaboration is embedded in a contract and takes place in four thematic categories:

A. Conservation of the natural and cultural diversity of cultural landscapes

Conservation of natural and cultural diversity is one of the three basic tasks assigned to each BR. A model for

fulfilling this task, as recommended by the MAB Programme, can be seen in a complex collaboration of natural and social scientists, conservation and development groups, state administration and local government representatives and most importantly of the local community. Lower Morava BR promotes this approach, striving to apply the principles of species and cultural diversity in the form of specific projects which focus on sustainable management and use of natural sources, as well as in the form of landscape management guided by principles of interdisciplinary exchange of information and collaboration.

Such projects undertaken in 2011 included collaboration with the Habrůvka municipality and the "Habrůvka - Traditional Village" civic association, an update of the project "Restoration of habitat conditions for specially protected species in the Dyje River Floodplain SCI" or preparation of projects of establishing and restoration of the Territorial System of Ecological Stability (TSES) focusing on planting trees in biocentres and interaction elements for the municipalities of Pohořelice, Nová Ves, Lednice, Nejdeč and Novosedly.

B. Cultural landscape management

The area of Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve encompasses a unique cultural landscape which acts as a hub and intersection of cultural, natural and social values. It is no coincidence that various institutions of species, habitat and cultural diversity overlap in their actions in the area. The landscape is predisposed to intensive agricultural, fish and forest management, owing to its ideal climatic and soil conditions. Additionally, the great number of cultural monuments in it fuels development of tourism. Is it possible to channel the various interests to preserve the landscape's values in their entirety and to use them in a sustainable manner? Our BR is striving to find a positive answer through exchange of interdisciplinary information, support of model solutions and implementation of model projects. To fulfill this task we collaborate with universities, state administration bodies, local municipalities and other stakeholders.

The main outputs included activities related to the work of the LVCL Site Manager, joining the project of Lednice Chateau Riding Hall multi-function centre and organizing the fourth "Cultural Landscape Management" workshop under which a public workgroup called "Harmonization of Floodplain Forest Management as a Tool for Preserving Higher Plant Species Diversity" was established.

C. Environmental education and training

Environmental education and training is provided in the form of individual lectures, field excursions or long-term projects based on collaboration with partners. The largest target group is represented by Czech and international university students, followed by primary school students, members of professional unions or representatives of state administration and local government bodies.

Regular training of both Czech and international students of Mendel University in Brno and Palacky University in Olomouc takes place within our BR and the PBC participates directly in these events. Upon request, employees of the PBC organize field trips for students of other Czech and foreign universities, as well as for professional groups, and open student trainee programs within the BR under the patronage of our PBC. In collaboration with the "Habrůvka - Traditional Village" civic association and the Lower Morava Local Action Group we organize educational events for children.

D. Information and cooperation with the general public

2011 marked the 40th anniversary of launching the MAB Programme, the 15th anniversary of inscribing the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape on the UNESCO World Heritage List and the Year of Forests was declared. To commemorate these and other occasions, we attended a number of official and unofficial meetings during which the role of biosphere reserves was presented, along with the activities of our PBC and the role its individual founding members played in its development. A close collaboration with municipalities within and outside the BR was established, under which we offered assistance in urban and landscape planning and in enhancing the biodiversity of the cultural landscape.

The activities received financial support from Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise

2. Support of public benefit activities of MND, a.s.

MND, joint-stock company, is the largest company in the Czech Republic which focuses on surveying and extracting crude oil and natural gas. Companies of the MND holding are aware of their position, the nature of their business and the consequent social and environmental responsibility. Their activities are therefore based on an awareness of the environment, principles of sustaining environmental balance and fostering partnerships.

MND is one of the active founding members of Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, Public Benefit Corporation. Via our BR it strives to aid the development of the region, while sustaining the high quality of its environment. The funding for public benefit activities, which we received in 2011, was used for the following purposes:

- Provision for activities of Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, as part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- Participation in activities related to BR, including coordination of the said activities with state administration and local government bodies, interest groups, educational and scientific institutions, business, general public and other entities.

- Mediation and procurement of advisory and coordinating services related to BR and its development, in accordance with the UNESCO regulations on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- Updating the information database on BR and the scientific, business and development activities related to the area or existence of BR.
- Publishing of periodic and non-periodic materials and proceedings, including informative publications.
- Participation in educating the general public, procurement of further education and training of young people, and cooperation with youth organizations in a spirit of promoting the principles of sustainable lifestyle, nature protection and rational management of natural resources.
- Organizing conferences, forums and training courses.
- Promoting international cooperation in matters related to BR and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- Promoting and implementing activities aimed at the economic and demographic development of the BR and its region.



Workshop on Cultural Landscape Management

Thanks to the financial support of MND, a.s., we were capable of procuring public benefit services in unchanged conditions and support entities and activities whose primary aim is the development of the area of our BR in accordance with the conditions and regulations of the Man and the Biosphere Programme.

The activities received financial funding from MND, a.s.

3. Innovation of study programmes of Mendel University in Brno – project "Management of Natural Resources in the Tropics and Subtropics"

The project is implemented by Mendel University in Brno and our PBC participates in it together with Lipka, an

educational organization for environmental training, as partners. The project focuses on innovation of study programmes of Mendel University in Brno, with the primary objective to enhance the competitiveness of its graduates.

The innovations modify the former, purely forestry-oriented approaches to university education towards environmental approaches on the landscape level. The platform of two biosphere reserves, Lower Morava BR and Socotra BR, is used for the purposes of the project. The study programme introduces students to the specific aspects of natural resources management in tropical and subtropical regions and offers comparison with cultural landscape management in the conditions of Central Europe. In the course of a practical training module the students solve field projects in Socotra itself in collaboration with native inhabitants and local employees of the Socotra BR.

As partners we are directly involved in the management of this international project, participate in designing theoretical and practical training modules, and based on the comparison of the two BR operating under different social, economic and geographical conditions we offer a series of lectures.

In 2011 we participated in activities which focused on the issues of nature conservation and landscape management in the specific conditions of Socotra. We were able to exchange experience of teaching students in the Czech Republic and on Socotra, as well as to participate in establishing and checking plantations in selected parts of the island, and in dendrology and entomology research of the local species diversity.

The project received financial funding from the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic under the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme.

4. "Extensive Orchard Revitalization", "Landscape Plan" and "Urban Study" in the cadastre of Habrůvka Municipality

Despite the fact that Habrůvka is situated outside the Lower Morava BR, based on positive references its civic association "Habrůvka - Traditional Village" approached employees of Lower Morava BR to ask for help during implementation of several projects which focus on landscape management as well as on natural and cultural diversity.

Our PBC prepared an outline for the design of detailed landscape plans and an urban study as theoretical documents necessary for establishing a modern development plan and complex land consolidation. Our PBC involved Mendel University as well as the Moravian Karst Protected Landscape Area Administration in the project.

As guarantors, we helped gather a complex body of documents which include the landscape plan, urban study,

plans to establish orchards with traditional regional fruit tree varieties, as well as complementary plans for the territorial system of ecological stability and for maintenance and revitalization of the local Tyrš Orchard. The said orchard was established on a pasture called "Na stání" around 1932 on the initiative of a newly founded local chapter of a sports union Sokol and it was named after the union's founder, Mr. Tyrš. It was gradually enlarged until its present area of 3.8 ha. The original management plan included gradual replacement of old trees with newly planted ones, regular mowing of grass and fruit harvesting (charging a fee) by the local inhabitants. In 1982-1995 maintenance of the orchard was provided by members of the local gardening union. Since then, the orchard has not received any permanent maintenance. Moreover, it is unsuitably situated right next to a place which was used as an unofficial dump. The orchard gradually overgrew with naturally seeded trees (robinia, dog rose, blackthorn) and with sprouts and offsets of planted plum roostock. Some old trees (particularly cherries) suffer from disrupted stability, damaged trunks, broken branches and dry crowns. Under the project, a management plan for an extensive orchard was designed. The follow-up social activities included a series of lectures, practical sessions of fruit tree pruning and placing nest boxes for birds, bats and bumble bees.

5. Update of the project "Restoration of Habitat Conditions for Specially Protected Species in the Dyje River Floodplain SCI"

In 1994–2000, the hydrological relations in an important forest complex "Kančí obora" were improved under a major floodplain forest restoration programme. However, several parts of the project in the vicinity of the town of Břeclav were not completed according to the original plan. Due to the proposed changes of the given forest into a different category and its logical gradual transformation into a suburban forest it became necessary to prepare a study of its water regime, as this inundation area encompasses important wetlands, vernal pools and works as a breeding ground for outbreak species of mosquitoes.



Dyje River Floodplain Special Area of Conservation

The study provided by our PBC in 2008 promoted a gradual transformation of the said forest stands into a suburban park forest situated in an attractive area of floodplain forests and proposed an improvement of the hydrological relations in its suburban parts. Restoration of sections of silted water channels was proposed, along with restoration of the existing vernal pools and new pools with flowing water which may be controlled by means of sluice gates in the course of the seasons. The proposed adjustments should enhance the habitat conditions of the forest stands and their species diversity, and help create a pleasing, aesthetically valuable resort for Břeclav locals.

In 2011, in collaboration with the project agency AQUA-centrum we facilitated an update of the project "Restoration of Habitat Conditions for Specially Protected Species in the Dyje River Floodplain SCI", which focuses on restoration of the aquatic ecosystem of a floodplain forest in the site of "Kančí obora" between a flood relief channel of the Dyje River and the area of the Břeclav chateau. A grant application amounting to CZK 5 mil was prepared and submitted by the Židlochovice Forest Enterprise.

Upon submitting the updated project we agreed on a close cooperation in the course of preparing a report on forest management in LVCL as part of the updated LVCL Management Plan. We agreed on other topics which will be subject to joint collaboration of our BR with the Židlochovice Forest Enterprise, among them the issues of the impact of the European beaver, zonation of the Lower Morava BR and others.



6. Establishment of biocenters and elements of the Territorial System of Ecological Stability in the cadastres of Pohořelice and Nová Ves

The interest area situated outside the BR comprises vast stretches of arable land intersected by linear plots of land used as access roads, usually devoid of complementary linear greenery. The entire area shows a minimum ecological stability. With this in mind we proposed the establishment of three biocenters of the Territorial System of Ecological

We acknowledge the need to restore the missing system of ecological stability

Stability (TSES) to complement the existing bio-corridors (a windbreak and the Jihlava River) with new interaction elements in the form of tree alleys and groves which will house natural plant communities currently missing in the interest area. The implementation of the project will complement vast stretches of farmland with interaction elements which will play poly-functional role within the local TSES and enhance the aesthetic and hygienic function of the landscape.

This project represents probably the most extensive implementation project focusing on the establishment and complementation of South Moravian TSES to date. The proposed area to be planted with trees and shrubs amounts to approximately 56 ha and the planned implementation cost is approx. CZK 40 mil. Under the same project delivered to the town of Pohořelice, we prepared a successful application for funding from the Operational Programme Environment.

7. Louky Biocentre in the Novosedly Municipality

Revitalization of some waterlogged land was proposed under a project of land consolidation, together with establishing the Louky Biocentre covering approx. 5.5 ha. The proposed cost of the project is approx. CZK 3.5 mil. The primary objective of the proposed measures is to create a system of small aquatic, wetland, meadow and forest biotopes, ranging from vernal pools to permanent water bodies deep enough not to freeze over.

In 2011 we updated a project from 2008 and prepared documents necessary for submitting a grant application for the Operational Programme Environment.

8. Restoration of elements of the Territorial System of Ecological Stability in the Lednice Municipality

We selected and provided project documentation for the restoration and establishment of several TSES segments, e.g. restoration of a part of an old windbreak consisting of poplar cultivars. The project proposes the establishment of an interaction element consisting of planted native tree and shrub species. We also prepared a complex grant application for the Operational Programme Environment.

9. NejdeK Biocentre

We procured a project for an interesting site with a well-established name "NejdeK Biocentre". The project solves reclaiming of a part of a former sand pit. The proposed measures include dredging and adjustment of several pools, revitalization of the mine' sand wall and adjusting it for nesting of the European Bee-eater, the Sand Martin and the Common Kingfisher. It also aims to plant shrub and tree groups of native species and to establish a steppe grassland which would work as a "butterfly meadow". The planned biocentre is situated right next to a space which is used for leisure time activities by the children, young people and other residents of NejdeK by Lednice. The project represents a practical attempt to create an interesting natural space which will enhance the local biodiversity as well as enhance the environmental quality for both local residents and visitors.

10. Site Manager of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape, World Heritage Site

Lower Morava BR, P.B.C., focuses on the issue of cultural landscape management as a sophisticated system with numerous specific requirements, particularly in the area of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape. These requirements are inherent in the obligation to ensure protection, management and sustainable development upon preserving the outstanding value of the landscape inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1996. The complexity of the task and the necessity to ensure interdisciplinary coordination, communication and continuous awareness of all the stakeholders in the area require a full involvement of a coordinator, or LVCL Site Manager, as an objective moral authority. Lower Morava BR, P.B.C., was proposed for this post by the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL in 2007.

In 2011 we succeeded in obtaining funding from the Grant Programme of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic to secure an update of the LVCL Management Plan. The project is implemented in collaboration with experts from the National Heritage Institute, as well as scientists from Mendel University in Brno, particularly those from the Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice. We also established a close collaboration with external specialists in the field of LVCL.

We provide all labour-law requirements for the LVCL Site manager and participate in all the relevant activities in LVCL. As a legal entity we fulfil the role of a platform intended for continuous interdisciplinary exchange of expert information. This principle is safeguarded through active participatory management, thanks to the fact that all key LVCL stakeholders are represented in the Board of Directors and other governing bodies of our BR.

11. Lednice Chateau Riding Hall – multi-functional centre

The project Lednice Chateau Riding Hall – multi functional centre is one of the biggest and most important projects in the South Moravian Region. Our role as a partner in the project is significant for the BR as such, as well as for all its founding members and other stakeholders who participate in the activities and development of the BR with the objective to partake in the development of the region, its promotion and in the process of educating young people and the general public by using the latest educational methods.

Our present activities within the project are defined by the Agreement on Partnership and Mutual Cooperation closed in 2009.

The cornerstones of participation in the project include interpretation of principles of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves projected on the model example of Lower Morava BR, a biosphere reserve of second generation (via educational, cultural, public enlightenment and information activities);

- expert cooperation aiming at the establishment of a permanent exhibition, including landscape models depicting selected time periods, to visualize the area of Lower Morava BR in relation to the World Network of Biosphere Reserves;
- preparation and provision of educational programmes in the form of multimedia, lectures and presentations focusing on the subjects of Lower Morava BR, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and the MAB Programme;
- expert cooperation aiming at the establishment of a presentation and educational exhibition on the mission and activities of UNESCO international programmes, including practical examples from the Czech Republic, EU and the world. Both the presentation and exhibition will be used under partner projects "National Centre of Garden Culture in Kroměříž" and "Chateau Veltrusy – European Landscape Convention Centre Ferme ornée";



Chateaux Lednice and the complex of its former riding hall
(Foto Vojtech Zapletal)

- cultural landscape management in concord with the Man and the Biosphere Programme and the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage under the UNESCO patronage;

In 2011 we processed suggestions related to the exhibition "Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape" and participated in preparing thematic areas and sources required for commissioning the scenario of main exhibitions on the premises of the Lednice Chateau Riding Hall. A concept of a permanent exhibition, which will be situated in the eastern wing of the building covering 254 m², was approved. The actual wording of requirements for the scenario, which our PBC helped prepare, is available at present but due to conditions of the public tender is considered confidential. Added to this, a thematic plan of the exhibition on Lower Morava BR and its activities has been prepared as well. It plans to implement all available audio-visual technology and interactive tools to present the wide scope of activities of our PBC. Thematic proposal for the Man and the Biosphere Programme exhibition presenting the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, focusing on our partner biosphere reserves and presenting the programme in various parts of the world, has also been submitted.

12. Cultural Landscape Management Workshop – IV. year

Public discussions on the subject of cultural landscape management are a regular activity of our PBC and aspire to become a regional forum for the exchange of vital interdisciplinary information acquired by scientific research and practical experience alike.

The fourth workshop offered information on specific projects of landscape professionals and university scientists for discussions with the objective to make a contribution to the ultimate goal of creating a harmonic cultural landscape. The workshop delivered presentations on forestry, horticulture, viticulture, game-keeping, landscape management and nature conservation.

A public workgroup called "Harmonization of floodplain forest management as a tool for preserving the higher plant species diversity" was organized along with the event and was intended particularly for forest management professionals. Both events were organized to commemorate the 15th anniversary of LVCL inscription on the World Heritage List.

13. EuroMAB 2011 conference in Sweden

The international EuroMAB Network is made up of all Biosphere Reserves of Europe and North America. A conference attended by representatives of individual biosphere reserves and national MAB committees is organized every two years to evaluate the activities of the past period and set the future strategic axes of the MAB Programme. The EuroMAB 2011 conference took place on 4-8 July 2011 and was attended by almost 150 participants from Europe and Canada.

In the course of conference sessions, implementation of recommendations of the EuroMAB 2009 in Slovakia was discussed. Other topics included sharing of procedures and experience with educating the community, as shown on concrete examples of Action Plan implementation, identification of human, financial and technological resources, partnership building with the objective to realize projects in individual BRs. Participants also discussed the marketing potential of biosphere reserves and their contribution to business and community, including the engagement of both.

The key theme of the conference was communication, and both formal and informal meetings revealed that the entire MAB Programme stresses the importance of communication and involvement of municipalities and businesses into the MAB Programme and the work of every BR. This cannot be achieved but through equal participation, for which every BR has ideal conditions, as unlike specially protected areas (which must prioritize nature protection), all BR functions are equal.

Lower Morava BR, its founding members, partners and projects were presented during a one-day public event called BiosFAIR. Our stand was placed next to that of our partner Wienerwald BR, which enabled us to present our international activities jointly. Sadly, it was the only public presentation of Czech biosphere reserves and the Czech MAB Programme at the event.

A comparison of our activities with activities implemented by well-established BRs abroad and with the official MAB Programme policy reveals that Lower Morava BR fulfils the set tasks and its projects comply with all requirements.



Petr Cupa (Lower Morava BR), Meriem Bouamrane (MAB)
a Christian Diry (Wienerwald BP)

PUBLICATION ACTIVITIES

We publish materials which inform the public not only about the activities of our Public Benefit Corporation in fields where they are implemented, but also about the philosophy of the MAB Programme, its specifics as well as about the importance of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves and its role in raising awareness of the principles of sustainable development.

DVD "Man, Landscape, Forest.."

Forests have an exceptional role in the cultural landscape of Lower Morava BR and of the Czech Republic as a whole. Their value is manifold.

Films "Floodplain Forests at the Confluence", "Colours of a Forest", "Mosquito Paradise", "Thirst of a Forest", "Landscape Connections" and "In the Landscape under the Lednice Minaret" were produced at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries. They present mainly the South Moravian forests and landscape from the natural, social and cultural perspectives. The films introduce human activities in the cultural landscape and show examples of the involvement of landscape professions in the enhancement of biodiversity and sustainable use of natural resources.

The multilingual DVD "Man, Landscape, Forest.." was released to commemorate the 40th anniversary of launching the Man and the Biosphere Programme (UNESCO) and the International Year of Forests (UN). It was published in cooperation with the South Moravian Region and the Regional Development Agency South Moravia with the financial support provided by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic, Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, and the municipality of Lednice.



OTHER ACTIVITIES

As in other years, in 2011 we attended a number of meetings both at home and abroad. We established cooperation with new partners and continued collaboration with the existing ones. In the course of work meetings, conferences, lectures and field trips we presented the MAB Programme, Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, our activities and the involvement of our founding members and partners. Our audiences included students, the general public, state administration and local government representatives as well as experts and professional groups.

Coordination meeting to promote the International Year of Forests and the 40th anniversary of launching the MAB Programme (19. 1. 2011)

A coordination meeting, whose agenda was to promote a positive campaign commemorating the 40th anniversary of launching the Man and the Biosphere Programme and the International Year of Forests, took place at the South Moravian Regional Authority. The output was a proposal to release a compilation DVD of documentaries about forestry issues called "Man, Landscape, Forest..." which is to be used for promotional and educational purposes.

Meeting to discuss the periodic report on the current condition of LVCL, World Heritage Site (4. 3. 2011)

As the LVCL Site Manager, we were approached by the National Heritage Institute in Brno to provide information required for the periodic report on the current condition of LVCL, World Heritage Site. The meeting agreed on a long-term regular cooperation between the two entities and coordination of their activities within LVCL.

Meeting on the project of the Lednice Chateau park revitalization (4. 3. 2011)

The Faculty of Horticulture of Mendel University in Brno and our BR agreed to coordinate our activities under a project of revitalization and maintenance of the Lednice Chateau park. We were given project documentation and reports on the ongoing project.

Field excursion for students in Kancí obora near Breclav (22. 2. 2011)

The theme of the field excursion and workshop attended by students and lecturers of the Faculty of Horticulture of Mendel University in Brno, as well as by the Deputy Mayor of Břeclav, was "Solving the space of suburban forests in a wider context".



Assigning bachelor and doctoral theses by wer Morava BR (25.2.2011)

During a meeting with representatives of the Faculty of Horticulture we agreed to cooperate in finding and assigning themes for bachelor and doctoral theses focusing on the area of Lower Morava BR.

International Student Programme LEONARDO in Ladná (9. 3. 2011)

The mayor of Ladná took part in a meeting under the international student programme LEONARDO coordinated by the Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice. "Conservation and restoration of an outstanding monument – wild duck catching facility Ladná" was assigned as a project for future landscape

architects. The subject and documents necessary for preparing the proposed architectural designs were provided by our PBC. The guarantor of the entire project was Vice Rector of Mendel University. Added to this, long-term collaboration between the municipality and our PBC was agreed, focusing particularly on the prepared landscape consolidation in Ladná.

Lectures at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (12.–14. 3. 2011)

Following a request by Dr. Robert Axelsson and Dr. Per Angelstam of Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Forest Sciences in Skinnskatteberg, we gave a presentation on Lower Morava BR and landscape management for Forest Management students. The same lecture was delivered to representatives of local governments and stakeholders from the area of Bergslagen, where an initiative for designating a new biosphere reserve is currently being promoted.

Lecture for international students at Mendel University in Brno (15. 3. 2011)

Following a request by the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology we presented a lecture on "Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve – Participative Model of Landscape Management" for international students of Mendel University in Brno.

Lecture for international students under the LEONARDO study programme (15. 3. 2011)

Following a request by the Faculty of Horticulture we prepared a lecture on "The role of Lower Morava BR in the coordination of cultural landscape management".

Field consultations for international students (15.–25. 3. 2011)

We organized field consultations for students preparing the architectural study "Conservation and restoration of an outstanding monument – wild duck catching facility Ladná". As part of our international cooperation policy we also established contact with Marian Dragoi, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Forest Management of Universitatea Stefan cel Mare Suceava in Romania.

Lecture "Man and the Biosphere Programme, Model Forest and Forest Park – concepts of cultural landscape management" (23. 3. 2011)

We prepared a lecture on "Man and the Biosphere Programme, Model Forest and Forest Park – concepts of cultural landscape management" as well as ensuing discussion for students of the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology.

Public presentation of activities necessary for the conservation of cultural landscape values (25. 3. 2011)

During an international workshop for LEONARDO Programme students, where international teams did projects focused on selected issues within the LVCL and Mikulov Region, we delivered a presentation on Lower Morava BR and our PBC activities aiming towards the conservation of the outstanding values of cultural landscape.

Coordination meeting discussing the issue of cycling trails in Breclav, LVCL and the Podluží Region (30. 3. 2011)

Representatives of ViaDesign, s.r.o. presented a study of the existing structure of cycling trails and its problems in the town of Břeclav and in the wider national and international context of the regional cycling trail network in LVCL and Podluží. Collaboration and coordination of activities were agreed with the objective to build an efficient and functional network of cycling trails, including its maintenance. We were asked to participate in the prepared project as partners and to provide feedback and comments, possibly as a follow-up on our former project of sustainable tourism at the Confluence (Soutok) of the Morava and Dyje Rivers.

Work meeting at the UNESCO Office in Venice, Italy (30.3. – 1.4.2011)

Following an invitation by the programme specialist from the UNESCO Office in Venice we participated as consultants in a programme conference on Future Strategy for the MAB Programme in SEE and the Mediterranean.

The objective of the meeting was to exchange experience with cultural landscape management in the conditions of biosphere reserves and to brainstorm the possible ways of revitalizing the EuroMAB network at the Balkans.

Municipal council of the Podluží Region in Kostice (5.4.2011)

As part of regular collaboration with municipalities within our BR, we informed mayors of all member municipalities of the Voluntary Association of Municipalities of the LVCL Region, as well as representatives of the Local Action Group Lower Morava about our activities and prepared projects which focus on the revitalization of the cultural and agricultural landscape of South Moravia and on establishment of a visitor centre in Lanžhot.

Off-site meeting of the Czech National MAB Committee (14.–15.4.2011)

Lower Morava BR hosted a two-day off-site meeting of the Czech National MAB Committee. A field excursion was organized on the first day, during which the participants visited sites of “problematic projects” within the BR (Břeclavská tree alley by Valtice, Lednice fishponds, Obelisk game preserve and floodplain forests at the Tvrdonice forest district). The committee meeting took place on the second day.

It has become a tradition that committee members noted that regardless of results obtained and despite its favourable reputation abroad, they consider our BR problematic and not fully operating. We believe that the criticism expressed by the Committee stems from their different opinions of the evolution of the MAB Programme philosophy which has had a major impact on the present operation of biosphere reserves as such. The attitude of the Committee members is shaped by their preference of the nature conservation function of BRs, regardless of the required balance in BR activities and management as required by the MAB Programme.

Event commemorating the designation of a Forest Park at the Training Forest Enterprise Křtiny (22.4.2011)

The institute of a forest park should serve as a model of exemplary sustainable forest and landscape management. Fully operating forest parks should be able to prove that natural and cultural values of given landscapes can be protected without the need for stricter special regime of nature conservation and further

funding required from the state budget, while preserving and enhancing the universal use of the given area. The designation of a forest park does not entail any restrictions to the free use of forests which has a century-long tradition in Central Europe.

The Training Forest Enterprise Křtiny, situated north of Brno, is a training facility of Mendel University but also an area of distinct natural value popular with people from Brno and the surrounding settlements as a natural retreat. All activities carried out in the park, including forest management, nature conservation or game keeping, will be done in accordance with valid legal norms and will follow principles of sustainable management.

Lower Morava BR participated as a consultant in the process of nominating the Forest Park, whose designation as the second Forest Park in the Czech Republic was attended by Minister of Agriculture, Rector of Mendel University in Brno and a number of other official guests.



Jan Vybíral, director of the Lower Morava BR

Presentation “Cultural landscape management on the example of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape” (4.5.2011)

The Faculty of Horticulture of Mendel University presented outputs of student projects with proposed solutions to selected problems within the cultural landscape. As part of the official programme, our PBC delivered a lecture on “Cultural landscape management on the example of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape”.

Public lecture in the National Museum of Agriculture in Prague (5.5.2011)

As part of a lecture course organized by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Czech Republic to commemorate the International Year of Forests we prepared two lectures. The first on “Forestry in Central Europe and virgin forests in Madagascar, or what do they have in common?” and the second on “Model Forest and Biosphere Reserve – modern concepts of landscape management”.

Seminar “Pictures of modern-day forestry” (26. 5. 2011)

The seminar was organized by the South Moravian Regional Authority under the auspices of the South Moravian Governor Michal Hašek and our BR presented a lecture on “Pictures of modern-day forestry through the lens of biosphere reserves”.

Lecture “The importance of landscape professions in a cultural landscape” (26. 5. 2011)

For the students and employees of the Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice we prepared a presentation on “The importance of landscape professions in a cultural landscape”.

Field excursion for international students of Mendel University in Brno (27. 5. 2011)

Upon request of the Vice Dean of the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology in Brno we organized a field excursion for a group of international students with the objective to present Lower Morava BR and the participative model of landscape management.

Environmental education for children in Habruvka (30. 7. 2011)

The aim of the event, organized in collaboration with “Habrůvka - Traditional Village” civic association and Mendel University in Brno, was to introduce the smallest inhabitants of Habrůvka to the values represented by the old Tyrš Orchard in an attractive way which would raise their awareness of the need for nature and landscape conservation in their village. In collaboration with the Břeclav Chapter of the Czech Union of Nature Conservationists, various types of nest boxes for different songbird species, bird feeders, a bumble bee nest box and a house for insects were presented and put up. The event drew major attention of children and adults alike. As a bonus, adults were given the opportunity to attend a practical lesson in pruning old fruit trees led by a professional arborist.

Field excursion for employees of the National Heritage Institute in Prague (16.–17. 8. 2011)

The aim of the excursion was to give new professionals employed at the Institute the opportunity to see the issues inherent in LVCL through the lens of its Site Manager. The meeting took place at selected sites and buildings to give hands-on experience of selected issues solved, among them the revitalization of historic tree alleys, fish management or the Obelisk game preserve. The field excursion included a meeting with mayors of LVCL municipalities. Close long-term collaboration was negotiated in the fields of updating the LVCL Management Plan and performing the role of LVCL Site Manager.

Negotiation on the issue of the Visitor Centre in Lanžhot (12. 8. 2011)

The agenda focused on project specifications of the Visitor Centre in the town of Lanžhot. For financial reasons, the idea of building a new facility was abandoned. The existing refurbishment plan of the designated space, which has already been processed, was extended and complemented to allow the entire site to become a visitor centre. Individual “attractions” were designed as modular elements which logically complement the existing facilities in the town itself.

Establishing collaboration with the District Chapter of Czech-Moravian Gamekeeping Association (CMGA) Hodonín (6. 9. 2011)

Following a request of the District Chapter Hodonín, a consultation meeting took place to discuss the possibility of establishing a Public Benefit Corporation for individual district chapters of the South Moravian Region. The meeting succeeded in clarifying the concepts, requirements and hopes expressed by the CMGA and the District Chapter Hodonín, while our PBC put forward the possible solutions, conditions and downsides. We prepared an outline of founding documents and the newly established entity agreed to collaborate in future educational projects focused on biodiversity of the South Moravian agricultural landscape.

Meeting on activities implemented at the lower reaches of the Dyje and Morava Rivers (7. 9. 2011)

Following an initiative of the Morava River Basin, State Enterprise, we organized a meeting with its project managers who presented their concept of activities at the lower reaches of the Dyje and Morava Rivers. The implementation of important projects, such as strengthening protective dams, dredging blind channels of the Dyje or revitalization of the Morava riverbed, will be carried out in close collaboration with Austrian partners who require involvement of the non-profit sector on the Czech side. We were selected out of a number of organizations as an ideal partner to participate in the project.



Field excursion for participants of the project "Impact of Protected Areas on Municipal Development" (27. 9. 2011)

Following a request of the Regional Development Agency South Moravia, seven model examples of cultural landscape management were selected within Lower Morava BR for participants of an international project "Impact of Protected Areas on Municipal Development". We offered practical demonstration of our expertise gained in the course of implementing projects which had to bridge the differences between development interests of municipalities with nature conservation requirements.

The project was concluded on 29.11.2011 in Mikulov by an international conference and a presentation of the key outputs called "Impact of Protected Areas on Municipal Development – experience of Czech and Austrian municipalities", which gave a clear summary of all the information and experience from the project in which we participated as well.

Lecture "Biosphere reserves and cultural landscape management" (20. 10. 2011)

Following a request of Mendel University we delivered a lecture on "Biosphere reserves and cultural landscape management" for a group of Finnish students from the North Karelia University of Applied Sciences in Joensuu who studied in the Czech Republic under a scholarship programme.

Work meeting discussing a system of outdoor activities in Breclav (28. 11. 2011)

Together with representatives of Palacky University in Olomouc, the Vice Mayor of Břeclav, Head of the Department of Development and an urban architect we discussed the possibilities and negotiated a basic outline for commissioning a study focusing on outdoor activities in the vicinity of the Břeclav Chateau and the winter stadium and assessing the possibility of using a part of a nearby floodplain forest. The basic plan of possible use of the space will be processed in the form of a study solving the wider spatial and social relations.

Expert seminar for entrepreneurs and forest management workers (30. 11. 2011)

In the course of an expert seminar, which took place in Třebíč, we delivered a presentation on "Cultural forests of Central Europe and virgin forests of Madagascar, or what do they have in common?".

Meeting of the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL (1. 12. 2011)

Attended by Ing. Tesař, Deputy Minister of the Environment, the meeting discussed vital organizational measures necessary for improving the capacity of action of the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL. The meeting further discussed the position of the Site Manager, as a key interdisciplinary coordinating service within

the largest Czech landscape monument, and the importance of applicable practical outputs of the LVCL Management Plan designed by our BR.

Collaboration with universities

The so-called logistic function requires each BR to provide support for research, monitoring and environmental education. Few BRs worldwide are capable of fulfilling this function independently and at their own expense, and sadly, Lower Morava BR is no exception. To fulfil this function, we therefore take on primarily a coordination role and collaborate mostly with universities, or with research teams and individual researchers upon their requests. In 2011 Mendel University in Brno, notably its Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology and Faculty of Horticulture, was one of our key partners, along with Palacky University in Olomouc.



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