



Czech Landscape Award 2012

Ministry of the Environment



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Czech Landscape Award 2012

The Czech Landscape Award is a national competition to nominate a Czech candidate for the Council of Europe Landscape Award. The Council of Europe Landscape Award was set up under Article 11 of the European Landscape Convention, which the Czech Republic signed up to in 2002 and ratified in 2004. Like the Council of Europe's award, the Czech Landscape Award is an honorary award recognising policies and measures carried out by local or regional authorities and groups thereof as well as non-governmental organisations that contribute to sustainable landscape conservation, management and planning.

The purpose of this award is to help create a general awareness about the value of landscape to the everyday lives of people and highlight the importance of conserving our landscape and its cultural and natural heritage and accepting our responsibility for its sustainable use. Executed projects aimed at landscape conservation, creation and management or at educating specialists, officials or the public in landscape management, planning and use may be entered in the competition.

In collaboration with the ministries for local development, agriculture, culture, and education, youth and sports, the Ministry of the Environment launched the second year of this award at the end of September. Twelve nominations were received, one of which did not meet one of the application conditions (less than 3 years had passed since the completion of the project; in other words, the project's outputs had been used for less than 3 years). This project was not judged. The projects successfully entered for the award were judged by an expert panel from the perspective of four main criteria:

1. sustainable development – an assessment of the scope and effect of the project; its knock-on effects in other areas; the durability and long-term benefits of the project's outputs; an assessment of the comprehen-

sive understanding of landscape as both natural and cultural heritage and a space for economic activity and the life of local people (the interrelationship between the three main pillars of sustainable development);

- 2. model value** – an assessment of the possibility of repetition, the uniqueness and originality of its realisation and implementation;
- 3. public involvement** – an assessment of the own/personal contribution of the project's implementing organisation (what "sacrifices" had to be made); the amount of voluntary work involved in the project; the engagement of the concerned general public;
- 4. raising awareness** – the contribution to changing attitudes in order to create a perception of landscape as natural and cultural heritage.

The expert panel selected the project "Pilgrimage through a Contemplative Landscape – The Ecological education of Strakonice Town Year by Year" as the one that best fulfilled all the criteria. Above all, the expert panel appreciated this project's comprehensive approach to ecological education, the scope of the education, and the involvement of members of the public of all ages. The project demonstrates the uniqueness of the landscape of the microregions of Strakonicko, Blatensko and Vodňansko in the natural, cultural and historical context, highlighting the concept of sustainable development, the importance of conservation and functional use of the landscape as an interconnected and interrelated entity which, when understood and used correctly, ensures its inhabitants a high-quality, healthy and satisfied life. In the long term, this project raises public awareness about the South Bohemian landscape while helping people to attain a healthy self-confidence and respect for the place where they were born and live.



The expert panel also decided to give a special mention to the project of the municipality of Tvarožná Lhota and the company INEX SDA Bílé Karpaty entitled “The Service Tree – The Tree of the Slovácko Microregion” for its multifaceted approach and high level of involvement of the general public and the surrounding villages. The main aim of this project was to encourage collaboration between local inhabitants, volunteers and the local administration to promote the use and cultivation of traditional varieties of fruit trees and the renewal of the cultural landscape of Slovácko as a whole. The project’s main theme is the service tree, which was once an agriculturally important tree in the region. Gradually, the service tree became a symbolic tree of Slovácko and more than one hundred villages in the region joined in the project.

The members of the expert panel confirmed the difficulty of assessing the very different projects from the time perspective and also from the perspective of the projects’ scope and objectives. The panel underlined the uniqueness of each nominated project and rated all of the projects as inspirational and extremely high-quality examples of the practical application of the aims and ideas of the European Landscape

Convention. The entered projects are proof that it is not only institutions that can bring about major changes: proactive individuals can, too.

You can find all the information about the award, including conditions and criteria, at www.cena-krajiny.cz

or on the Council of Europe webpage www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/heritage/Landscape/Prix/Session2013_en.asp ■



Pilgrimage through a Contemplative Landscape or The Environmental Education of Strakonice Town Year by Year

project bearer: municipality of Strakonice

location: microregions Strakonicko, Blatensko, Vodňansko – South Bohemia

contact: Ing. Miroslav Šobr, miroslav.sobr@mu-st.cz, www.souteze.strakonice.eu/

realisation: 2003 – present

partners: municipality of Blatná, municipality of Vodňany, Regional Museum of Stř. Pootaví – Strakonice Museum, South Bohemian Region, South Bohemian radio – České Budějovice, Makov Animal Rescue Centre, regional press – Strakonice Daily (Strakonický deník), Forests of the Czech Republic s. p., Povodí Vltavy s. p. (state water management company), ZOO Plzeň, The Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation Brno, Cassiopeia branch in Strakonice, CICONIA Roudnice, Blatenská ryba s. r. o.

financing: municipality of Strakonice, South Bohemian Region, Forests of the Czech Republic – s. p.

The ecological educational project in Strakonice began back in 1997 when the Strakonice District Council's environment department came up with a series of articles on protected monumental trees. A year later it wrote about protected areas, and the series was concluded in 2001 with an exhibition on the natural beauties of the Strakonice district and its twin towns in the Netherlands and Switzerland. The idea of presenting landscape through thematic sub-projects is nothing new, but the use of the latest technologies makes it more attractive, especially as it is possible to involve people of all ages and thus contribute to the preservation of natural and cultural heritage.

The project is made up of one-year sub-projects that follow one another thematically and focus on landscape and ecology. Each of the thematic series is accompanied by a quote from a book called *Contemplative Landscape* (first published in 1947) by the author Ladislav Stehlík, a native of Bělčice near Blatná. Linking a perspective that is over fifty years old with the present day creates an inspirational view of the historical development of the South Bohemian landscape. The sub-projects highlight the uniqueness of the landscape of the Strakonicko, Blatensko and Vodňansko micro-

regions in the natural, cultural and historical context. It underlines the concept of sustainable development, the importance of functional use of the landscape as an interconnected and interrelated entity which, when understood and used correctly, ensures its people a high-quality, healthy and satisfied life. In the long term this project raises public awareness of the South Bohemian landscape while helping people attain a healthy self-confidence and respect towards the place where they were born and live.

11 out of the 14 planned thematic series have been executed so far:

- 2003 - Step by Step Visiting the Protected Nature Areas of the Region: a series about the areas of special protection
- 2004 - Step by Step Visiting the Protected Nature Areas of Blatensko and Vodňansko: a follow-up to the region's areas of special protection
- 2005 - In the Shade of Protected Trees (together with the year's theme, Year of the Tree): an introduction to the region's protected monument trees
- 2006 - At the Springs of the Living Water I: series about the most important "miraculous" and healing water sources and wells



- 2007 - At the Springs of the Living Water II: part two of the series – linked to the clean-up of natural water sources
 - Town in Nature, Nature in Town: series on the natural wonders of Strakonice linked to the renewal of small-scale religious architecture and the pilgrimage site Dobrá Voda on Podsrp hill near Strakonice
- 2008 - Rivers, Brooks, Streamlets – From Springs to Estuaries: series on watercourses linked to the clean-up of the river Otava, the building of the source and stories of Otava river swimmers
- 2009 - On the Ripples of Silver Fishponds: series about the most important fish ponds and pond culture systems in the region
- 2010 - On the Pathways of Mansion Parks and Gardens: series on the region's chateau parks, the launch of monitoring and the planting of original fruit tree varieties on what used to be farm estates
- 2011 - The Mysterious Shady Woods: series on forest complexes in the region linked to the International Year of the Forest – a reminder and clean-up of Jewish forest cemeteries
- 2012 - "He Went that Way, He Had Bagpipes": series linked to the Year of the Bagpipe-

ers 2012 organised by the town of Strakonice, presenting the bagpipe tradition in Strakonice in connection with the historical development of the region's landscape

In the series planned for 2013, primary school pupils will prepare – as part of a literary competition – stories on the historical creation and utilisation of the landscape as preserved in the storytelling of seniors. A series on mineral wealth and a series on the relationship between the South Bohemian landscape, region and culture (literature, painting, film, folklore) are planned for 2014 and 2015 respectively. An update and a re-start of the project as a whole is scheduled for 2016.

Each series has a theoretical side (lectures by experts, competitions, publications, DVD, internet, exhibitions, radio broadcasts) and a practical side (the renewal and clean-up of water sources and wells, clean-up of the Otava river banks, reforestation, the monitoring and re-planting of original fruit tree alleys, renovation of religious architecture, cemeteries etc.), involving all social and age groups of the public, including the disabled. The project may be



utilised in school teaching (biology, history, geography etc.). The project initiated long-term co-operation between primary schools and the environment department of the Strakonice municipal authority. Schoolchildren may also take part in the decision-making process through the Children's Board, especially in matters concerning the appearance and tidiness of the town, the protection of environment and the preservation of cultural heritage. The eldest generation (seniors, homes for the elderly) also take part in the project by contributing their memories of what farming and the relationship to landscape were like in their time – these inputs are subsequently used when preparing thematic texts.

The project inspired the creation of a national campaign called City of Trees. In 2010 Strakonice was designated as the venue for the national Ecological Education in Practice conference for employees of municipal authorities of the South Bohemian region, employees of non-governmental non-profit organisations and anyone else in the Czech Republic who might be interested. The project was also a source of inspiration for the town of Blatná, which started to organise annual thematic exhibitions on environmental topics.

The information people acquire through the project makes them realise their ties to South Bohemia as a place from where they may set off to the rest of the world but to where they may also return at any time. What is more, they may do so feeling that they are part of "European" nature, because, for example, water from the rivers in the Strakonicko microregion flows into the seas; because the harsh living conditions in this region often forced previous generations to seek work in other countries; because the fish from the microregions of Blatná and Vodňany ponds are exported to the rest of Europe; because the international bagpipes festival in Strakonice is the result of not forgetting one's roots; because timber from South Bohemia's forests helped build Prague, Vienna and even Hamburg; to say it simply, because the "locals" form a distinct part of Europe and have something to offer. And this is where the main strength and power of the unique landscape of South Bohemia lies. ■

Service tree – The Tree of the Slovácko Microregion

project bearer: municipality of Tvarožná Lhota and the company INEX SDA Bílé Karpaty o. s.

location: Tvarožná Lhota – South Moravian Region

contact: Vít Hrdoušek, hrdousek.v@straznicko.cz

Martin Stránský, stransky.martin@cenelc.cz

www.tvarozna-lhota.cz, www.treeforeurope.com

realisation: 2001 – present day

partners: Administration of the Bílé Karpaty Protection Landscape Area, the microregion of Strážnicko, local primary school, CENELC.CZ, CIVILSCAPE, the SLOWFOOD movement,

local societies: the Men's Choir, gamekeepers

financing: local people's voluntary activities, Ministry for Regional Development, Ministry of the Environment, Tvarožná Lhota municipality

The Slovácko microregion has defined the cultural landscape of the Moravia-Slovakia border for many centuries. Within a relatively small region different types of cultivated landscapes have been preserved – from lowlands to highlands. The main aim of this project was to instigate collaboration between the local inhabitants, volunteers and the local administration to promote the cultivation and use of traditional varieties of fruit trees and the renewal of the cultural landscape of the Slovácko region as a whole. The primary element of the project became the rowan tree – true service tree (*Sorbus domestica*), which used to have a great importance in the landscape. Successively the service tree became a symbolic tree of the Slovácko region and more than 100 villages joined the project – named “The bearers of the service tree tradition”.

The nominated project emerged from the needs of the Local Programme for Countryside Renewal as part of the municipality's sustainable development programme. Most of the living service tree giants have been mapped under the project. Furthermore, comprehensive information was obtained about both rare species and other fruit trees such as *Sorbus torminalis*, *Cor-*

nus, *Morus*, *Mespilus*, and traditional apple and pear tree varieties. Protected monument trees were designated and the most endangered ones were treated.

The project initiated the creation of the different elements of landscape structures, especially in the context of the Territorial System of Ecological Stability, and became the foundation for the municipality's spatial plan. 12 km of road were renewed and replanted as part of this project. Together with the Administration of the Bílé Karpaty Protection Landscape Area and with much help from the local residents and volunteers, an area of 5 hectares of original important landscape structures, interactive elements and roads were replanted with the seedlings of 8 varieties of original fruit trees and 6 varieties of original deciduous trees. The landscape's ecological potential (anti-erosion, retention and increased biodiversity), aesthetic potential (increased value of the landscape character) and user potential (ensuring the landscape is accessible and penetrable and the fruits are consumed by people and animals) were thus enhanced.

Other important outputs of the project were the creation of the Service tree Museum with an educational trail and the establishment



of a rest, promotional and educational centre – the Shepherd’s hut Travičná – with its arboretum of rare fruit trees and natural garden. At the same time, two original orchards where the service tree and its varieties are grown were renewed.

A new annual tradition was established as part of the project – the Service tree celebration and fruit picking. The general public took to this event keenly and, when the time comes, people from all over the region gather here so that they can show off the results they have achieved with these trees, present their fruit products and enjoy the cultural programme. At this event, “The bearers of the service tree tradition” are selected – these are public officials that receive seedlings and certificates so that they may spread the knowledge about this tree to their municipality.

Another aim of this project is to promote an awareness of this almost forgotten fruit tree in the rest of Europe and to present it as a tree symbolising the need to care for our landscape: The service tree – a tree for the new Europe. The project wishes to draw attention to the disappearing heritage of cultural landscape and make use of its regional, food, forestry and medical importance for the current and future generations. Co-operation has been initiated with organisa-

tions and municipalities in Slovakia, Austria, Germany and Italy.

Several hundred local and foreign volunteers took part in the project over the years. The project Service tree – the tree of the Slovácko region has proven that close co-operation between local societies and the municipality and the right involvement of the general public make it possible, with minimal financing, to achieve important improvements to the quality of life and to the value of the local landscape. Community co-operation, when caring for the landscape and making use of the local potential, resulted in not only an improvement in the countryside but also in the development of social and private activities that are closely linked to the landscape.

The realisation of the project and other activities were key factors in the municipality being awarded the title Antante Florale Europe 2008 and also taking second place in the national competition Village of the Year 2012. The Arboretum with its herb garden was awarded an “Exemplary Natural Garden” certificate in 2012. This project has been a great inspiration to many municipalities across Europe for several years. ■

Podhůra Recreational Forests

project bearer: Municipal Forests of Chrudim, Ltd.

location: Chrudim, Podhůra – Pardubice Region

contact: Ing. Zdeněk Odvárka – executive director

Mgr. Lucie Janovská, janovska.lucie@lesychrudim.cz,

www.lesychrudim.cz/,

www.chrudim.eu/cs/download/zdrave-mesto/lc_projekt_lesy_09_upr.pdf

realisation: 2005 – present day

partners: Municipality of Chrudim, Municipal Forests of Chrudim as managers of the area, and others

financing: Municipality of Chrudim, Municipal Forests of Chrudim s. r. o., EU – ROP NUTS

II Northeast

Motto: “Act locally, think globally – think of the future”

The Podhůra recreational forests lie at the foot of the Železné hory (mountains) in a triangle between the towns of Chrudim, Slatiňany and the municipality of Rabštejnská Lhota. Their total area is 360 ha. It is the first extensive forest complex adjoining the flatland area of Polabí (Elbe river basin). The Podhůra Recreational Forests project originated from the idea to create peaceful zones for the people living in the immediate vicinity. The idea was to create a meeting place, a place to relax and somewhere to go on day trips of discovery. The area of the “recreational forests” as a whole is made up of a combination of forests that are allowed to naturally renew themselves and those where the renewal is artificial. The forest is a place to rest, relax or pursue some high-adrenaline activities, all in a setting of stunning nature close to the town. It caters for the relaxation needs of people of all ages.

The basic idea behind the project is the further development of an open, flourishing, original, permanently sustainable town offering a high living standard for its inhabitants. The project is carried out in such a way as to give people a chance to play an active role in decision-making to do with the development as a whole. The municipality of Chrudim strives to actively include its

people in the decision-making process through Local Agenda 21 and the project Healthy Town. The nominated project is exemplary where co-operation between the municipality of Chrudim, the company Municipal Forests of Chrudim Ltd. and the general public is concerned. A round table was organised in 2005 in order to attain specific information about people’s wishes regarding the further use of the area. The conclusions drawn at this meeting became the foundation for the initial study of the planned development of Podhůra Recreational Forests. The study also followed on from the spatial plan, the approved plan for the strategic development of the town of Chrudim and the approved tourism concept.

A forest educational trail, a playground, a unique lookout tower named Bára and a service facility were built. A grant from the EU Regional Operational Programme was received in 2008. This helped the further development and repair of the network of forest trails (for people on foot, cyclists and horse-riders). A forest gym and a rope park in the treetops were created. The forest trails link to other places of interest in the vicinity such as Kočičí Hrádek, Slatiňany chateau, Švýcárna and the Kochánovické ponds. This makes the area an attractive destination for visitors from all over the



Czech Republic. Information panels, direction signs and trail markings have been put in place. Every year, a small, architecturally interesting structure is added to make the area even more attractive (a wooden climbing wall, a sheltered fireplace etc.). Much attention is paid to the education of kindergarten and primary school pupils, as well as the general public. The educational process takes the form of instruction about the forest, guided walks with a forester, and events such as the Forest Celebration, pram walks, well openings etc. organised for the general public.

The future strategy of the municipality of Chrudim is to maintain the original character of the landscape while making it as accessible as possible to visitors. In the near future the Podhůra Recreational Forests should become connected to Chrudim by a cycle route. The recultivation and utilisation of an old dump site bordering the land is another part of the project. A local geological curiosity – the shore of a Mesozoic cretaceous sea – is found within the dump site. Once the area is made accessible to the public, information panels on the origins of this rarity will be installed.

Another project is planned in collaboration with local organisations – the Administration of

the Protected Landscape Area Železné hory and the Chrudim Water Sources Ltd. This is an educational and information centre that would form the “gateway” (actual as well as informational) to the very interesting area of the Železné hory. The principal aim of this educational centre is to teach the young generation to think ecologically and to respect the area’s cultural and natural history and values. ■



Crosses, Roads, Sculptures, Landscape, People

project bearer: JINAKRAJINA – citizens' association location municipalities of Šarovy, Lhota near Malenovice, Salaš, Bohuslavice near Zlín – Zlín Region

contact: Professor and sculptor Jan Ambrůz, ambruz.jan@seznam.cz
www.jinakrajina.eu

realisation: 2008 – present day

partners: PREFA Brno a. s., Českomoravský cement a. s., EVRAZ Vítkovice Steel a. s., ZAPA Beton a. s., MT Servis – Manipulační technika s. r. o., Kovocité a. s., Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University in Brno

financing: Ministry of Culture, Zlín Region

**IN MEMORY OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE TOILED TO TURN THIS LANDSCAPE INTO FERTILE
FIELDS DIVIDED BY NARROW BOUNDARIES AND INTO ROWS OF CHERRY, PEAR,
APPLE AND BLACKTHORN TREES
IN MEMORY OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE DRIVEN THROUGH THIS HOLLOW AND WHO
WALKED TO MAKE THIS ROAD**

The purpose of the landscape project Crosses, Roads, Sculptures, Landscape, People realised by the JINÁKRAJINA citizens' association and covering an area belonging to four different municipalities – Šarovy, Lhota near Malenovice, Salaš, Bohuslavice near Zlín – is an attempt to revitalise this cultural landscape that has become soulless and impersonal. Currently, it is a production resource without any signs of a sensitive approach to the landscape or an ecological perspective on the part of the current owner. The minimalist artistic elements combined with the historical footprints evident in the landscape evoke a Christian tale filled with suffering; but at the same time it brings to mind a simple story of the local people whose lives were closely linked to the earth here.

The gradual process of land seizure by the recent communist regime erased people's natural relationship with their land and the landscape. The land has been degraded by the current system of management to nothing more than a numerical value. Sadly, this is now accepted by a majority of the owners. The roads form a basic, logical landscape network. The renewal and maintenance of these roads is the simplest way to restore the landscape's functional aes-

thetic. The safeguarding of such roads and their ownership can become a tool for negotiating with an insensitive user.

The project is realised in the cadastres of the municipalities whose representatives should naturally take interest in the area as a whole, in the clear designation of development concepts and the stability of the entire region despite the fact, that most of the land is privately owned. The surrounding landscape is looked after by the users, who took over the agricultural land and who carry on with its management even after it became evident that there is dire need for change. The municipality representatives are getting rid of what was once common property or do re-assume ownership of municipal roads and other property because the maintenance of these would be a burden on the municipality's budget. The user bought much of the land cheaply and the rest of the fields are bound up by twenty-year contracts or by lien. The mechanism of land consolidation is therefore at their mercy. It has thus gradually become clear that the reality of the current cultural landscape has been abandoned by people of sense, and that is why we strive to draw attention, in our own way, to this bit of land.



The members of the association search for still visible footprints in the landscape and, based on these, renew and recreate what has almost been lost. They gradually build sculptures in distinctive places (Chapel I, POLEH, PAVUČINA – cobweb...). They then interconnect these points of interest with renewed pavements and roads enhanced by alleys of trees (ROWAN, PEAR, CHERRY OR APPLE TREES). In doing so, they try to highlight the new possibilities of the current cultural landscape and to dispel the present-day village's passivity and lethargy. A sub-project called KŘÍŽOVÁ (Cross) draws attention to the theme of the Calvary and attempts to combine its narrow spiritual meaning with the broader landscape. It brings to light the current state of affairs that reflects the relationship between the land's owners and its current users. All of the current problems of the cultural landscape, its people and today's society in general, are clearly encapsulated within this relatively small area. The project is highly original in that it brings a level of tension to this agricultural landscape, a landscape with which its users have a rather aloof relationship.

It is mainly students of the Faculty of Art and the Faculty of Architecture of the Technical University in Brno who take part in this project.

Local companies are involved in the various sub-projects – erecting artistic structures, renewing roads or planting trees. Local people also started taking part in tree planting last year. Local authorities are involved in the decision-making process, whether they happen to be for or against – their opinion is taken into consideration. ■



Saving the Riparian Zones in the Morávka River Basin

project bearer: Moravian-Silesian Region

location: Morávka river basin – Moravian-Silesian Region

contact: Roxana Macháčková, roxana.machackova@kr-moravskoslezsky.cz
www.life-moravka.cz/

realisation: 2007 – 2010

partners: Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP) Salamandr, Povodí Ordy s. p. (state water management company), Forests of the Czech Republic – state-owned company, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, Pilsner Urquell a. s., Radegast Brewery

financing: Moravian-Silesian Region, EU – LIFE-Nature, Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP) Salamandr, Forests of the Czech Republic – state firm, Povodí Odry s. p., Ministry of the Environment, Pilsner Urquell a. s., Radegast Brewery

The project was realised in the northern part of the Moravian-Silesian Beskydy Mountains area in the lea of the river Morávka between the villages of Nošovice and Nižní Lhota. This used to be an unmanaged section of the wild river, characterised by gravel deposits, soft as well as hard riparian zones. Protected sites important even by European standards lie in the Morávka river basin. They form part of Natura 2000. Furthermore, there is also a Protected Landscape Area of the Beskydy Mountains and two smaller Protected Areas – the Skalická Morávka National Nature Monument and the River Morávka Profile Nature Monument.

At its time this project represented the most important one-off nature conservation project in the region and one of the largest projects in the Czech Republic as a whole. Its aim was to save a biologically and geomorphologically important area that was under threat of being invaded by the Reynoutria spp. plant. The problem with these invasive plants is that they pose strong competition to the local flora and subsequently also fauna. They not only push out the existing species but also cause greater erosion and can become a problem where anti-flooding measures need to be

taken. Any use of the affected land is very difficult. Alongside the less effective mechanical eradication, the elimination of these plants was also carried out using herbicide spraying and injection. This was done with both human and animal welfare in mind. Overall it could be said that the eradication attempts before the realisation of this project were not successful. This was mainly due to the non-systematic approach, the small surface areas where eradication took place and the relatively short after-care of the treated areas.

The realisation of the project required co-operation and a positive attitude from private landowners, affected municipalities, local people and schools. Some twenty seminars were staged prior to the project launch. Raising awareness among the general public about the importance of landscape formed an important part of the project. This was mainly done by providing more information on Natura 2000 and nature protection in general. The affected municipalities received the necessary know-how about eradication of invasive species, which is a common problem here. Close collaboration was established with the local schools, with the children taking an active part in identifying the



affected areas and subsequently passing their findings on to the project team. Schools were provided with the necessary teaching materials. The project was also important in that it made the affected areas more attractive, thus making them available for sensitive recreational use. In the last year of this project an international conference was organised.

Since the project ended regular monitoring has taken place. Aftercare is being provided to these areas by the land managers and other partners out of their budgets, just as was done when the project was still running. Successful approaches to the eradication of invasive species and the subsequent regeneration of the affected areas are being shared on a national and international level. The method of the eradication of *Reynoutria* spp. and the subsequent revitalisation of the affected areas was set down in a book in two languages that has also been prepared in electronic form. The project received two prestigious prizes, which are evidence of its exceptional quality: in 2010 it received the Energy Globe Award and in 2011 it was assessed by the European Commission as one of the best projects on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the LIFE programme. ■



Forest Ecosystems Recovery in the Krkonoše Mountains National Park

project bearer: Krkonoše Mountains National Park Administration

location: Krkonoše – Královéhradecký Region

contact: Jan Hřebačka – director

Radek Drahný – press agent, info@knap.cz

www.knap.cz

realisation: 1992 – 2001

partners: Dutch foundation FACE, Forests of the Czech Republic – state firm

financing: Dutch foundation FACE

The Krkonoše mountains – an island of tundra placed in the middle of Europe. Despite the relatively small surface area and low altitude, the Krkonoše mountains are known for their extraordinary diversity of landscape, and flora and fauna unseen in the surrounding European mountain ranges. This is due to its unique geographic location, where events shaping the development of the Central European countryside took place in the long past and recent history.

Over eight centuries of human activity striving to make use of all the natural resources available in the mountains interfered with the natural process in Krkonoše. The initial stage of human settlement in the Krkonoše mountains was superseded by mining, metallurgy and later on, glass manufacture. These developments resulted in rapid growth of the settlements in Krkonoše and large-scale exploitation of the mountain forests. When timber production moved to neighbouring mountain areas, the local inhabitants switched to agriculture. This affected Krkonoše significantly, and gradually led to the emergence of tourism. Tourism became increasingly popular, especially at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century, and its disproportionate growth caused

considerable damage to the local nature and the Krkonoše landscape. The endangering of the natural environment led to the gradual implementation of various conservationist measures that culminated with the area being made a national park in 1959 (Karkonoski Park Narodowy in Poland) and in 1963 (Krkonošský národní park in the Czech Republic). With the increase in the number of thermal power plants in the region, the detrimental side-effects of their emissions on the forest ecosystems became apparent towards the end of the 1970s. However, the rapid disintegration of forest vegetation also had a lot to do with the harsh climate, the unsuitable species and age composition of the forests and the subsequent changes in the soil, as well as an overall decline in resistance against disease and pests. After 1991 the emissions situation improved considerably but the acidification of the soil, lack of nutrients in the soil and the weakening of the Mycorrhiza systems did not give much hope for quick regeneration.

In the 1990s the Krkonoše Mountains National Park was one of the ten most endangered national parks in the world. A project known as Forest Ecosystem Recovery in the Krkonoše Mountains National Park was launched in 1992



in collaboration with the Dutch foundation FACE. The aim of the project was to stop the widespread die-out of the pollution-damaged forests and to restore them to health. As part of what was known as “emissions extraction”, 7,000 hectares of forest were felled. During the project over 5,220 ha of forest cover was newly planted or reconstructed. Fortunately, the initial prognosis of the forest’s death did not come to pass and the vitality of the Krkonoše forests gradually started to improve.

The principle of sustainable forest management is seen from the long-term perspective as a means to attaining ecologically stable forest ecosystems. Principles previously unknown and unused in the Czech Republic were applied. Natural processes, which may be guided by man where necessary, remain the priority. Systematic and planned interventions are necessary to support natural processes and the gradual restoration of ecological stability. The most important short-term tasks of the project were to speedily reforest the area with trees that matched the natural species structure and possessed the appropriate genetic quality, replace missing species and, where necessary, to adjust previously established forest areas. This was a scientific

project, but the affected communities and the visiting public were also kept updated about developments.

During the project and after, great emphasis has been placed on job creation for the local people in the National Park. Green forests can once again be seen there. The precious natural environment will be preserved for the generations to come – and this is thanks to international co-operation and the integrity, understanding and support of the local organisations and people. ■



Restoration of Landscape – in Zahnašovice

project bearer: municipality of Zahnašovice

location: Zahnašovice – Zlín Region

contact: František Němec – mayor, starosta@zahnasovice.cz
www.zahnasovice.cz

realisation: 2000 – present day

partners: municipality of Zahnašovice, Agency for Nature Conservation of the Czech Republic – Zlín, Gamekeepers' Association – Zahnašovice, Fishermen's Association – Zahnašovice, Municipal Authority – Holešov

financing: municipality of Zahnašovice, Ministry of the Environment, follow-up care – local association

The municipality of Zahnašovice lies in the Zlín Region in an intensively farmed corn-growing region, south of the town of Holešov. Historically, the local people are known to have worked mostly in farming. Agriculture still has great importance here due to the favourable location and fertile land. In the year 2000 the area of interest was a bland agricultural landscape devoid of natural elements and showing obvious signs of wind erosion. The municipality of Zahnašovice and other partners decided not to wait for help to come from above and themselves set about actively improving the functional and aesthetic values of the local landscape. This was linked mainly to the development of the planned Holešov industrial zone and the building of a motorway to the north.

The aim of the project is to gradually renew the structure and functions of the landscape that has experienced intensive and large-scale agricultural production over long periods of time. The project sought to revitalise the disrupted agricultural land areas, increase the ecological stability of the landscape, improve the landscape's retention capacity, reduce wind erosion, enhance the landscape's aesthetic properties and make the landscape easier to access and pass

through for people. The project is based on the landscape's history as revealed in the landscape itself and in historical maps.

The Medřický bio-centre was established on an area of 3.5 ha of waterlogged farmland where systematic drainage was carried out during the period of large-scale production under communism. One large pool and several smaller pools were created in depressions in the terrain. These are surrounded by trees suitable for the varying hardness of the ground. The newly created biotope was immediately colonised by a family of beavers – this completed the new look of the landscape.

Trees are planted in a linear fashion along historic field tracks belonging to the municipality. A wider spectrum of original tree species is being planted here to form alleys, windbreaks, bio-strips and bank vegetation. So far, the total length of planted corridors has reached 5,908 m and over 26,000 trees have been planted.

The area is monitored and the newly established bio-centre is managed in co-operation with specialists from the Nature Conservation Agency. The subsequent care for the measures already in place is ensured due to the cooperative approach and activities of local associations.



The municipality's and local people's interest in the renewal of their landscape does not stop with this project. In collaboration with the Zlín Region and the Land Office in Kroměříž, other projects to restore almost forgotten features and the quality of the landscape are being prepared. ■



INTRODUCTION TO LAND CONSOLIDATION

Even short-term, one-off projects can be of great benefit to the Czech landscape and may have a long-term, positive effect on the economic, environmental and social pillar of sustainable development. Four Land Offices entered ecological measures realised as part of land consolidation for this year's award.

During the collectivisation of agriculture between the 1950s and 1980s there was a widespread merging of small fields into huge parcels of agricultural land, removing all elements that stood in the way of large-scale agricultural production. All landscape elements such as roads, cuttings and paths, including the vegetation that grew there, groves, marshes and alleys were thus removed. This policy contributed to the overall degradation of valuable landscape features and functions and led to the disappearance of many animal species. The straightening of small watercourses, unsuitable amelioration work and the draining of marshlands caused a significant decrease in the landscape's retention capacity. Other outcomes of these insensitive measures are extensive water and wind erosion of the soil and the contamination of watercourses with artificial fertilisers. After 1991 land consolidation became one of the key tools for renewal of the countryside and rural development and at the same time a means to restore a positive personal relationship between the people and their land and landscape.

Land consolidation is closely linked to the rural development programme, which motivates local people to strive, both through local administration and through personal efforts, for the development and protection of the landscape's natural and cultural value. This can be done, for example, by means of landscape measures such as building anti-erosion and anti-flood protection systems, putting in place a system of ecological stability necessary for the survival of

small animals, or making an area more accessible by rebuilding the network of tracks and roads. This brings about a restoration of the landscape's aesthetic qualities, increasing the recreational potential and the overall attractiveness of the area. Land consolidation deals with landscape with the best interests of the public in mind, and it re-arranges land parcels in a way that is conducive to rational farming. Accessibility is ensured and conditions for rational management are put in place. At the same time, it puts in place the right conditions for increased ecological stability and improvement of the natural functions of the landscape (retention, anti-erosion, the landscape as common land, and as a place to farm, live and relax in).

Land consolidation is discussed with all the concerned owners, as well as with all the relevant bodies and organisations (at the municipal, town and regional level). Land consolidation paves the way for the updating of cadastral data and is a binding basis for spatial planning and all the development programmes of the given municipality.

For more information on land consolidation visit: <http://eagri.cz/public/web/mze/pozemkove-urady/pozemkove-upravy/co-jsou-pozemkove-upravy/> ■



Landscape Measures in the Košín Cadastre

project bearer: Land Office – Tábor

location: Košín, Stoklasná Lhota – South Bohemian Region

contact: Ing. David Mišík, david.misik@mze.cz

realisation: 2008

partners: Road and Motorway Directorate of the Czech Republic, municipality of Košín, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic – České Budějovice, Ministry of the Environment, Luboš Kroužek

financing: Land Office – Tábor, Road and Motorway Directorate of the Czech Republic, municipality of Košín, Ministry of the Environment

The project was realised in the municipalities of Košín and Stoklasná Lhota that form part of the suburban agglomeration of Tábor. The area is characterised by very intensively farmed land and is severely affected by the heavy traffic on the D3 motorway. There are also future plans to build a railway corridor. One part of the project is being realised within a 2nd degree hygienic zone – a water reservoir that supplies water to Tábor. The project took place in an endangered landscape in line with the planning documentation and the relevant nature and landscape conservation policies. Local suppliers were used as much as possible on this project (in line with the limitations stipulated in the law governing public procurement).

Because land consolidations took place at the same time as the building of the new motorway, the Land Office participated in the zoning proceedings and building permit proceedings. On the other hand, the Road and Motorway Directorate voiced its opinions in regard to the proceedings of land consolidation and was simultaneously one of the investors. Farmers and land-users also had to become partners of the project, because without their co-operation the project would have been impossible. Those concerned had to accept a decrease in the area available for agriculture.

The project was financed from several sources applying the “snowball” model, whereby the land consolidation was the starting point and other potential financial resources that could be incorporated into the project were sought. The municipality also contributed financially to the

execution of these measures in addition to providing its own land, and will be in charge of the subsequent maintenance. The municipality and the owners have thus taken responsibility for the realised measures and carefully oversee their state.

As described above, the project consists of measures dealing with specific problems that, when combined, have a multi-functional effect. The measures for ensuring conservation of water sources and land were based on the Jordán reservoir anti-erosion and anti-flooding study. Project work took place on the banks of the reservoir and on the nameless tributaries of the Košín stream. A study looking at how to reduce the negative effects of the D3 motorway on the landscape was also prepared. The planting of 10-20 m wide green belts fulfils several ecological and landscape functions, such as noise reduction, reducing the amount of dust and salt from the motorway, and “visually” removing the motorway from the landscape. The roadside green belts continue along secondary roads towards neighbouring villages. All of the above measures are accompanied by linear planting of trees along unpaved tracks. ■



Hlavatecký Pond – Planting of a Bio-corridor

project bearer: Land Office – České Budějovice

location: Sedlec near České Budějovice – South Bohemian Region

contact: Ing. Eva Schmidtmajerová, CSc., eva.schmidtmajerova@mze.cz

realisation: 2000

partners: Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic,
Ing. Popela, ASAKON spol. s r. o.

financing: Ministry of the Environment

The Hlavatecký pond bio-corridor was established as part of the plan for land consolidation in the cadastre of Sedlec. The location of this bio-corridor was defined by the Territorial System of Ecological Stability (TSES) as a place of long-term anthropological influence and where the land has been intensively farmed. The realisation of this project linked together the existing biotopes and thus created a break in the intensively farmed locations.

There were many confrontations with local landowners during the process, because these landowners remained convinced of the importance of large-scale farming. Much effort was required on the part of the project manager and employees of the Land Office to achieve the project's aims – the creation of the proposed bio-corridor with a view to changing the way people think about the landscape, increasing the aesthetic value of the landscape and raising awareness of the need to protect the environment. The results were dependent on reaching agreement with 97% of the landowners concerned and reaching agreement with central government bodies as well as local governments. The municipality then actively helped with the realisation of the project. One outcome of the project is a significant increase in the biodiversity of entomologic species. The vegetation of the bio-corridor provides a suitable refuge for birds (twenty pairs of wild geese nest here) and for other animals as well. ■



Interactive Element ŽP1 – “Hliník Sovenice” Bio-centre

project bearer: Land Office – Nymburk

location: Sovenice – Central Bohemian Region

contact: Ing. Zdeněk Jahn, CSc. zdenek.jahn@mze.cz

realisation: 2008

partners: MONTANO Nurseries – Přerov nad Labem, town of Křineč, Cerha gardener – private company, Zbyněk Adam School of Aviation – Nymburk

financing: Ministry of Agriculture

The landscape surrounding Sovenice village is intensively used. To the north this land is lined by widespread forests. In the Sovenice cadastre the only free-growing trees have remained in the pits left by clay and gravel quarrying and alongside several tracks, roads and watercourses. Between the years 2004 and 2007 a project was prepared and approved for land consolidation in this area. Based on requirements of a committee of landowner representatives and the Department of Environment of the Nymburk municipal authority, five ecologically important landscape segments were planned, including the area of interest – referred to as ŽP 1: enlargement and planting of the “Hliňák” landscape element. All of the above localities were subsequently integrated into the Territorial System of Ecologic Stability.

The uniqueness of this project is in that it is concerned with the revitalisation of an abandoned clay quarrying site – a well-preserved technical historical monument. The location attained the qualities of a bio-centre when another less fertile area was incorporated. The project consisted of detailed inventory analysis of the existing trees, their treatment, the removal of non-indigenous plant species and weeds and the addition of other trees suitable for this area and conditions. Ground shaping has channelled surface water into the marshy part of the bio-centre. One positive side effect is the landscape’s water retention capacity. The entire area of the bio-centre is owned by the municipality of Křinec. Trees are now also being planted alongside newly built unpaved tracks.

The project brought together a team of specialists, ranging from the project manager and comprehensive land consolidation surveyor to the planting project manager and a gardening company. The project is the upshot of negotiations and agreement between 300 farmland owners, the municipality of Křinec, the Land Fund of the Czech Republic and the relevant authorities. A written agreement was signed by 89% of land owners. The realisation of this project serves as a good example of best practice and an improved know-how agro-environmental education. ■



Local Territorial System of Ecological Stability – Hostovlice village

project bearer: Land Office – Kutná Hora

location: Hostovlice near Čáslav – Central Bohemian Region

contact: Ing. Petr Lázňovský, petr.laznovsky@mze.cz

realisation: 2003 – 2004

financing: SAPARD, Ministry of Agriculture

This project is an example of successful realisation of part of a common facilities plan approved as part of comprehensive land consolidations within the Hostovlice and Okřesaneč cadastres. The landscape has been cultivated since prehistoric times. There has been significant ecological disruption in large fertile areas. Natural elements have been marginalised in narrow strips unsuitable for farming.

During this project, the Kutná Hora Land Office for the first time tested the gradual implementation of the individual elements of the Territorial System of Ecological Stability. 1.5 km long bio-corridors with a total area of 1.86 ha were gradually built in the thalweg of the Zehubský stream in a largely ecologically unstable area. These bio-corridors are made up of newly planted indigenous varieties of trees and grassy strips, while a waterlogged meadow has been conserved. A new bio-centre with a total area of 3.07 ha was established near Meduna. Over an area of 1.24 ha a pond named Meduň was created. On the remaining territory the existing vegetation was modified, trees were planted and grassy areas were created. The pond is not meant for intensive fish breeding and was created to significantly improve biodiversity with increased numbers of amphibians, reptiles and birds.

The project is a good example of the work done by the Kutná Hora Land Office. Previous successes of the Land Office include the Water and Land Consolidation conference and, more recently, a meeting of mayors, Local Action Groups and the National Rural Network. The

project has raised public awareness about the possibilities of landscape improvement, increasing the landscape's attractiveness and ecological stability through land consolidation. The area has become a popular place for the locals to go on walks. ■



Planting of a Tree Alley alongside a Local Road

project bearer: Moravian-Silesian Region

location: Svinov – Moravian-Silesian Region

contact: Ing. Jan Filgas, jan.filgas@kr-moravskoslezsky.cz

realisation: 2011

partners: Moravian-Silesian Region, Dvořák Lesy, sady, zahrady, s. r. o.

financing: Moravian-Silesian Region, Dvořák Lesy, sady, zahrady, s. r. o.

A general decrease in the number of trees alongside roads is currently being registered. This project is a good example of how to turn around this undesirable trend. The realisation of this nominated project took place as part of a national event called "Tree Planting Record" organised by the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation. Under the project, alleys of trees were planted along a local road in Ostrava – Svinov. A total of 100 linden trees (*Tilia cordata*) were planted.

The project is an excellent example of co-operation between partners and an active approach to the question of nature and landscape conservation. One important output of the project is the creation of a tried-and-tested model for co-operation between local municipality and the private sector. The project's success is collectively guaranteed by the involved partners – the implementing organisation, which provides the necessary finances, and the building material supplier, which takes care of the technical side and provides expert assistance for the planting. The project's sustainability is ensured through the subsequent care of the planted trees. Employees of the Department of Environment and Agriculture of the Moravian-Silesian Region actively took part in the tree planting. Participation in the event was rewarded with a certificate. The planting of trees alongside roads is perceived very positively by the general public and is undoubtedly an improvement to the environment in the concerned location. ■



The European Union talks about landscape

The European Landscape Convention is the result of many years' efforts of a select group of specialists and the initiative of the Council of Europe. The Convention was adopted in the year 2000 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. It was signed by the Czech Republic in 2002 and once the ratification process ended it became binding on the Czech Republic on 1 October 2004.

The aim of this Convention is to support sustainable protection, management and landscape planning in all contexts, as well as to organise European co-operation in this area. The Convention also brings attention to the fact that landscape contributes towards the creation of local cultures and is the foundation stone of European natural and cultural heritage. Its importance is that it represents a framework for the creation and realisation of thoughtful and sustainable regional development politics and land consolidation from the perspective of landscape characteristics, while encouraging the general public and local and regional authorities to participate. In line with the principles of sustainable use of landscape, it also requires the preservation of the character of specified European landscapes through the active care of their natural

and cultural value and co-ordination of activities planned in the landscape.

Conservation, management and landscape planning are linked to the rights and responsibilities of everyone. The Convention does not perceive preservation of natural and cultural heritage as an isolated problem, a problem solely between the state and the relevant specialists. It is perceived as a shared responsibility of government authorities and local administration, owners and users of the landscape, as well as the professional and lay general public. The Convention also perceives landscape preservation as something active and dynamic arising from the continuous activities linked to a specific landscape and its potential.

Many people living today, in these modern times, wonder where they come from and where they belong. Landscape is not only an ensemble of complex living and non-living natural elements, but also of social and cultural ties. Landscape helps us find out who we are. Legends, folk customs, original crafts, traditional architecture and lifestyle are linked to a certain type of landscape. It would be fitting to translate the word "identity" as a "sense of belonging". ■



To be able to belong to Europe and bear the responsibility for values and the direction Europe is heading in, one must first belong to a certain place and in that place be responsible for the community and one's surroundings.

(Ing. Ivan Dejmál)

When one speaks of the lovely Czech landscape, very few people picture a jungle. In Central European conditions, landscape is linked to the people who populate it and alter it according to their needs. The cultural values that we invest in the landscape have been hundreds of years in the making. History and traditions are important where landscape is concerned. There can be no doubt that landscape forms a part of cultural heritage. It is the result of entire human generations who have tried to make use of the landscape while at the same time striving to preserve and improve it. This is why landscape is considered to be a fundamental cultural phenomenon of every European nation.

Regional differences that have come about through different historical characteristics certainly carry great cultural value. They give a place its form and thus create its unique identity. Globalisation and homogenisation harm such values. As long as local architectural traditions are maintained, one can tell whether one is in South Bohemia, Bavaria, Krkonoše or Bretagne without having known the place before.

(Ing. arch. Miloš Solar, Historic Value of Cultural Landscape in Public Administration no. 48, 2006)

LET US ASK A FEW QUESTIONS

How do we perceive landscape today? Is our landscape being used in such a way that it is a sustainable source of food as well as a place offering good quality of life? What do we need to do to hand over the landscape to our children in a better state than we received it from our ancestors? What are the best and worst features of our cultural landscape

and how did they come about? Do we sufficiently appreciate the preserved natural and cultural values of the landscape and its vulnerability? Do we have a personal relationship with the landscape we live in? Can we and do we know how to make responsible collective decisions about its future? Or do we live in a spiritually barren landscape with no sense of emotion and responsibility and unable to affect its outcome?

Every single one of us can give answers to the above questions, thus making an inventory of our own perception of the state of the landscape we live and work in, enjoying the positive as well as the negative aspects of life.

(Ing. Martin Weber, VÚKOZ)





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