



EUROPEAN DIPLOMA HOLDING SITE

IPOLYTARNÓC FOSSILS NATURE CONSERVATION AREA

HUNGARY

ANNUAL REPORT

2024

**FOR THE PERIOD
DECEMBER 1. 2023 - NOVEMBER 30. 2024**



IPLYTARNÓC FOSSILS NATURE CONSERVATION AREA- HUNGARY – ANNUAL REPORT 2024

This document follows the present regulations of the model plan for EDPA annual reports. (*Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1 on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas, adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008 at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies, amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.*)

State/Country: H U N G A R Y

The Protected Area:

Name: Ipolytarnoc Fossils Nature Conservation Area
Postal address: H- 3138 Ipolytarnoc Pf.1. Hungary
Tel/Facsimile: +36 32 454 188
Person responsible: János Baczur
Email: baczurj@bnpi.hu
Internet: <http://osmaradvanyok.hu>

Year of the award/Year of the last renewal/ Year until the award is renewed: 1995/2020/2030

Central authority concerned:

Name: Department for Nature Conservation, Ministry of Agriculture
Address: H-1055 Budapest, Kossuth tér 11. Hungary
Tel.: +36 1 795 2399; Fax: -
Person responsible: András Schmidt (Head of Natura 2000 Unit)
Email: andras.schmidt@am.gov.hu; Mobil: +36 -30678-8764
Internet: www.kormany.hu/en/ministry-of-agriculture; www.termeszetvedelem.hu

Authority responsible for its management:

Name: Bükk National Park Directorate (BNPD)
Postal address: H - 3301 Eger Pf.116. Hungary
Tel: +36 36 411 581; Fax: +36 36 412 791
Person responsible: Ms. Kálmánné Rónai director
Email: titkarsag@bnpi.hu
Internet: <http://www.bnpi.hu>

0. Preface:

The European Diploma to the Ipolytarnóc Fossils (IFEDPA) was extended on 23 September 2020 by the Committee of Ministers until 11 September 2030, through the Resolution CM/ResDip(2020)9. This short annual report focuses on the implementation of the recommendations set in this new Resolution. But it also refers to the remarks on the pages 104-109 of the [COMPILATION OF THE ANALYSIS OF THE 2023 ANNUAL REPORTS by the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas \(T-PVS/DE\(2024\)11\)](#)

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The Resolutions on the reward and renewals of the European Diploma to the IFEDPA have never contained specified conditions. N/A

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. further explore the site's high potential for geological discoveries, especially palaeontological excavations. It would be of significant added value if further promotion of internationalisation of research activities took place by making the results of scientific research publicly available;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The newest publications on fossil footprints' research have been [uploaded to the website of the IFEDPA](#), including the recently published research paper on fossil rhino footprints by the experts from Italy and the ELTE University, Budapest. As part of the continuation of the finished RiWild Interreg SKHU/1902/1.1/037

project some of the digitized footprint surfaces [have been uploaded to the internet](#), and became available on the [website of the IFEDPA](#) as an open database.

2. take all appropriate measures to preserve and, if possible, exhibit the site's geological and palaeontological resources. By 2025, engage in a careful (ensuring maximum respect of geological and palaeontological features) renovation/replacement of buildings, primarily the exhibition halls along the geological trail. Additionally, renovate the visitors' centre and other visitors' facilities during the renewal period of ten years;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

Excavations of fossil resources are sheltered or winter covered at the Lower Miocene stratotype section of the Borokas ravine. In situ exhibitions interpret the palaeontological finds. At the visitor center there is high-tech exhibition from some of the movable geological and fossil material.

The [RiWild Interreg SKHU/1902/1.1/037 project](#) was successfully finished, part of it was the reconstruction of the previously worn-out II. Excavation Hall of the geotrail. To protect the excavated palaeosurface with its fossil remains within the protective buildings industrial dehumidifiers were introduced. Small scale renovations of the buildings, including the visitor center took place throughout the year and the repairment of the reception building's exterior plaster was finished.



The protective building with new roof sheathing.



Visitors in the renewed interpretive hall.

Monitoring the conditions of the fossil resources is a constant activity, due to the recent unusually humid weather, the groundwater started to cause some molding problems in the cellar, which shelters the huge petrified tree, plans were made to reroof the building and install some passive air ventilation structures inside it.

3. further explore the possibilities of the site taking a central and active role in the integration in the Slovak-Hungarian trans-border Nógrád-Novohrad Geopark, in order to preserve and raise awareness about the natural assets of the region and to further develop the multilingual information point for geo-tourism;

Action taken by the site to comply with the new recommendation:

The BNPD is one of the main stakeholders of the transnational Novohrad-Nógrád UNESCO Global Geopark (NNUGGp). Part of the active cooperation is that the Bukk National Park Directorate (BNPD) has a Memorandum of Understanding (MU) with the Geopark to delegate the Hungarian representative (who is at present the former leader of IFEDPA) of the Slovak-Hungarian Geopark to the Coordination Committee of the European Geoparks Network (EGN).

One of the flagship geosites of the NNUGGp is the IFEDPA. The fact that the Geopark has a European Diploma-holding site within its boundary bears a good point. To officially include the BNPD in the Geopark's top management, restructuring planning started to establish a new organization, the transnational Neograd Geopark EGTC next year.

As the main gateway to the NNUGGp, Ipolytarnoc promotes the geological heritage of the region and advocates its resources to the visitors during special events, like the usual [EGN Week at the turn of May](#) and provides exhibition place to the Geopark. The Visitor Centre of the IFEDPA as the main entrance gate to a UNESCO Geopark successfully applied to take part in the Venice Biennale 2025 in the [Exhibition "Deep Surface: Polyfunctional architecture to enhance the experience of UNESCO Designated Sites"](#).

The IFEDPA website, like in the case of the Geodiversity day has a close partnership, [connection sharing news and programs with the Geopark](#). One of the thematic, special guided winter tours [crosses the state border and leads to a nearby geosite on the Slovak side](#) to promote the interconnectedness of the NNUGGp.

The GUIDE@HAND smart phone application is available for downloading in the reception building. It got further expanded and is available in Slovak and English languages as well in offline format, containing several study-trails and geolocalities of the NNUGGp.

Two INTERREG projects (GEOTOP and RiWild) ended, promoting the geotourism of the NNUGGp. The BNPD as the lead partner adapted the common layout of the NNUGGp, [the brochures and publications are available](#) at the homepage and at the Visitor Center of the Site.

4. continue the gradual replacement of non-native tree species, in particular Robinia pseudoacacia and regionally non-native Pinus species with native deciduous tree species (for example, Quercus) by assisting the natural succession process through ecologically sensitive land management practices. Also take measures to control herbal invasive alien species such as Ambrosia artemisiifolia. Continue the control of game which is causing considerable damage to vegetation and protected animal species;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The native tree rehabilitation forestry activity continued as usual, by caring for the plantation of formerly acacia covered 4.5 hectares. The enhancement of the spreading of indigenous tree species and suppressing of exotic species, including the elimination of invasive plants also continued along the trails and open spaces this year. In the meadows of the border zone and around the buildings on the geological trail the pine tree and acacia spreading have been further suppressed.

Sensitive game management is an ongoing activity throughout the year, the leader of the site is responsible for it with the assistance of the staff of the BNPD headquarters.

Just to give a bit more details than previously about the challenges we are facing in this issue: The wild boar population is low, which is due to the appearance of African swine fever (ASF) in the area and the continuous, even diagnostic wild boar shooting. Despite this, in October 2024, a wild boar sample was again diagnosed positive for ASF, so the area remains strictly restricted for ASF (SZKT).

The red deer population remains high, the quality of the trophy is improving. The number of kills has been increased in order to reduce the population. The roe deer population is stable, there is no growth, so there is no need to increase the number of kills. Roe deer trophies in the area are weak.

The appearance of large predators is expected, since the population of large predators in Slovakia is very high, their expansion in our direction is natural. This is indicated by the increasingly frequent news about wolf and brown bear sightings. In September 2024, a young brown bear also appeared in the area, which was recorded by a wildlife camera.

The spread of fallow deer is a problem, its presence can be observed more and more often in the area. It is undesirable for fallow deer to settle in the area, and it has become necessary to plan shootings and thus prevent their settlement. The local TETT Foundation NGO also endorses these efforts. There is a game-refrigerating container to temporarily store slain game.

5. maintain the balance between open spaces and wooded areas on the western side of the conservation area, close to the nearby settlement, to preserve the mosaic structure of the landscapes there. Maintain the use of the regional breed/landrace of Racka sheep because of its added value from a historical husbandry point of view, and also to increase structural diversity in the herb-dominated vegetation. For agropastoral reasons, maintaining hay-cutting by local farmers and/or non-governmental organisations (NGOs) should be encouraged. Limiting management of open habitats to the use of sheep grazing alone would change the landscape into a mosaic of patches covered in woody and herbal plant communities (so-called woodland), which would not comply with earlier recommendations (2010);

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

At the buffer zone, close to the local settlement the meadows are leased to local farmers, grazing, hay cutting and bailing activities are ongoing. Tree thinning on forest edges has successfully maintained the mixed vegetation cover of the landscape. Clearings are also maintained as part of game management and along some parts of the state border, the mosaic-like structure of the landscape is well managed.

Unfortunately, both of our Racka rams died in 2023, although a specific plan was made to develop the population. In 2024, we managed to acquire two females to replace the two rams. According to the plans, we would develop the population to a maximum of 5-6 specimens, grazing in the fenced meadow, close to the trailhead of the geological study path as an added value to demonstrate the protected ancient breeds of the animal husbandry heritage.

6. replace the power line that runs between the village and the visitors' centre by an underground structure, respecting the current landscape and exhibitions;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

On this issue we are looking for other sources to support the burial of the power line between the village of Ipolytarnóc and the IFEDPA reception building transformer station, but we consider this important not only for landscape protection, but also from endangered bird protection point of view.

7. explore the feasibility of a video presentation, or documentary film on the scientific, evidence-based process of palaeontological science (paleotaxonomy as well as paleoecology and ecosystem reconstruction/restoration). In particular, the palaeontological method which reconstructs whole animals based on "simple" footprints is astonishing and will interest the general public and scientists in other life sciences;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

This recommendation was implemented through the RiWild INTERREG project. The animated documentary film was officially presented at the end of last year and has been continuously shown on the geotrail guided tours (with Slovak or English subtitles as well) since then, and based on the feedback, it has been well received. The interpretive film [is available here](#).

8. as is already done in the rock park, install more visual markers that make links between present and past (Miocene) ecosystems;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

This recommendation was also fulfilled. The exhibition in the Ancient Pine Visitor Centre presents a film about EDPA wildlife management, which visually suggests the connection between contemporary mammal tracks and fossil tracks of the past. The interactive touch wall uses playful, new animations to connect the present animals with the wildlife of the paleohabitat. The RiWild INTERREG project also targeted such developments in the Rock Park and Miocene forest sections, introducing new signs and placing interactive interpretive panels linking the present to the past between the Visitor Centre and the entrance to the geotrail.



9. improve documentation/reporting on the results of management measures through structured monitoring, as well as of public response (numbers of visitors, appreciation), etc;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

This recommendation was also fulfilled. The new BNPD visitor questionnaires, which have been circulated as printouts and [uploaded to the webpage of the site](#) to check on the quality of our services and give option to the visitors' opinions are under constant evaluation. To further emphasize and acknowledge the importance of structured monitoring of visitor satisfaction in our work, we created a [new opening slide to our homepage](#).

It encourages visitor evaluation by asking for their opinion (Volt már nálunk? Véleményére várunk/ Have you ever been to us? We would like to know your opinion) Reflections of the visitors shared on social media platforms and on the internet are followed and consulted by the staff.

10. further enlarge local, regional and transnational public involvement and administrative co-operation, for example on the Novohrad - Nógrád transnational Geopark (to be undertaken by the Bükk National Park authorities rather than the Ipolytarnóc management);

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The BNPD headquarters is a major stakeholder in the NNUGGp and the BNPD has been involved in the development and supervision of the Geopark at all levels. It is a member of the government council of the National Committee of Hungarian Geoparks, has participated in international geopark meetings, and has been a leading partner in the INTERREG projects (Geotop and RiWild) targeting cross-border Geopark developments. Further steps have been taken this year to strengthen and acknowledge the active role of the BNPD within the NNUGGp, as it is currently unable to enter the existing Nonprofit kft management organization due to state regulations. In order for the BNPD to officially enter the top management of the Geopark next year, reorganization planning has begun to establish a new management organization, the transnational Neograd Geopark EGTC.

The BNPD has worked with external researchers through various projects, such as the Herman Ottó Museum in Miskolc, the [Budapest Museum](#) of Natural History and the Geopark expert of ELTE University. He built a strong relationship with the local TETT Foundation NGO, which participated in the maintenance of Ipolytarnóc and other nearby geosites.

11. consider citizen science projects in order to strengthen involvement and engagement of non-scientific stakeholders;

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The completed RiWild INTERREG SKHU/1902/1.1/037 project has made parts of the 3D scanned paleosurface [available to the public as an open database](#). All new scientific publications have been [uploaded to the Website](#) to encourage self-learning. There are several university and EGN-GGN collaborations for fieldwork and further research, the results of which will be part of an open database for citizen science. There is frequent email correspondence regarding consultations on fossils with interested parties from different backgrounds.

Just to show the effectiveness of the geoheritage dissemination appreciated by the residents of the geopark, some local residents from time to time bring in and donate rocks and fossils that they found strange or attractive during the construction. Some of these rocks are on display in our visitor center with their source and donor indicated, to further promote knowledge about geoheritage and encourage local participation in its preservation.

12. continue to make good and systematic use of the logo and slogan of the European Diploma.

Action taken by the site to comply with the recommendation:

The European Diploma logo is visible everywhere in and around the venue, including on the road signs leading to IFEDPA. All the press conferences, brochures and other publications distributed, even the contracts with the TETT Foundation, mention the European Diploma, promoting this prestigious title well. All the new interactive panels contain the European Diploma symbol. The website includes a link to the [official website of the COE EDPA](#). In order to raise public awareness, IFEDPA plans to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the European Diploma in 2025.

3. in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The BNPD provides leadership and specialists' expertise from the Headquarters to the Site. The BNPD has a permanent local staff of 8 people now and by annual contracts with the local TETT NGO, it also employs another 12 people right now.

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

The IFEDPA has fixed boundaries, its core and buffer zones are well defined, there are no changes.

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.

Despite the economic depression and other difficulties the site still remains one of the main geotourism centers and propagators in the region. The position of the IFEDPA is stable on the Tentative List of the World Heritage Sites in Hungary, it is the flagship of the NNUGGp, and within it the significance of the European Diploma is well recognized.



IPOLYTARNÓC FOSSILS NATURE CONSERVATION AREA- HUNGARY – ANNUAL REPORT 2024

New international research paper on footprints (Rec.1.)

Website reference to the European Diploma (Rec.12.)



The visitors watching the new interpretative film of prehistoric animals' reconstruction based on their footprints (Rec. 7.)