Czech Union for Nature Conservation Vlašim

"Published on the Occasion of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Foundation of the Organisation."

Editors: Pavel Pešout, Kateřina Červenková





Vlašim I 2020

Czech Union for Nature Conservation Vlašim

Published on the occasion of the 30th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Organization of Nature Conservationists in Vlašim.

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The organization of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation (CUNC) was founded in Vlašim on 25 September 1990, as one of the grassroots organisations of the nationwide Czech Union for Nature Conservation. In 2020, our organization consists of 240 full members and several hundred additional volunteers and supporters. Moreover, we employ 30 professionals.

Our vision is the Podblanicko Region with the assured care of the preserved natural and cultural heritage and with the inhabitants who actively contribute or morally support the improvement of our shared environment.

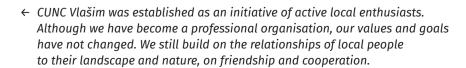
The mission of CUNC Vlašim is to protect and care for the natural and cultural heritage of the Podblanicko Region. We fulfil our mission by:

- 1. Providing information and advice to the public.
- 2. Providing environmental education and education of children, professional groups, and the public.
- 3. Documentation and interpretation of natural and cultural heritage.
- By involving local people in our activities and cooperating with landowners and farmers.
- 5. Partnering with local governments, the state administration for nature conservation, the Museum of Podblanicko and other institutions.
- 6. Providing practical care for valuable sites and objects.
- 7. Purchasing of selected plots of land.
- 8. Implementation of programmes for the protection of endangered species.
- 9. Rescue and care of animals injured by human activities with the aim of their return to their natural habitat.
- 10. Promoting environmentally friendly regional development.

Some of our activities are ground-breaking and thus have a supra-regional impact.

This publication, published on the thirtieth anniversary of our existence, will introduce you to our activities.

You will thus be able to see for yourself to what extent our mission and vision are being fulfilled.





Annual gathering of members and friends of the CUNC.

We are one of the three hundred grassroot organisations of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation in the Czech Republic. Since the beginning of the existence of CUNC, we have been supporting the Union and participating in several joint programs and projects.

Every year since 2005, we have been publishing the CUNC Annual Report, where we look back at the activities of the previous year.





Which of the valuable areas with valuable habitats and rare species of organisms in Podblanicko Region do we want to protect? The answer is simple: All of them! All valuable natural localities that were not subject to the intensive socialist agriculture, replacement recultivations and expansion of human settlements. We carry out surveys on these localities and agree with the owners on the way of farming, or on leaving the wilderness untouched.

Since many sites, on the contrary, are threatened by the absence of management, we step in and apply appropriate form of management using our own capacities. The most threatened and most valuable plots of land are bought into our ownership. Since 1999, the CUNC Vlašim has been an accredited land trust, "The Land Trust for Nature and Monuments of Podblanicko Region".



At present, we either manage ourselves, or in cooperation with the owners 400 hectares of valuable land from the point of view of natural history. We have redeemed 25 hectares of the most endangered sites into the ownership of our CUNC. Among them are also peat bogs hosting the round-leaved sundew located at Na Pramenech by Horní Lhota site. This site has been taken care of by our CUNC for 20 years. www.pozemkovyspolek.net

 Waterlogged alnus glutinosa forest blooming every spring with many thousands of spring snowflakes was transferred into the care of CUNC Vlašim 20 years ago by its previous owner, the township of Miličín.



We continuously monitor the conditions of specific sites, we document it and according to our findings we then modify the management of these sites.





We make the revitalized sites accessible to the public, because we believe in the old slogan of nature conservationists: "Get to know, study and protect". This is how the Křížovský quarry was made accessible to public in 2019.



Our Ancient Forest



Dead fallen tree trunks host a multitude of species of organisms. Pictured is an attractive **coral tooth fungus**.



At the tourist trail, on the border of the forest, we installed an *interpretive signage* with basic information on the Jehliště ancient forest.



In cooperation with the enlightened owner, Otto Srb, we managed to ensure the protection of **the Jehliště ancient forest** on the eastern slope of the Javorová Skála Mountain near Sedlec-Prčice. In 2010, the owner of the land registered a nature protection easement on the forest in favour of the CUNC Vlašim, by which he undertook to leave the local forest as a non-intervention forest. This is **the first case in the Czech Republic when the ancient forest was saved in this way**. This non-intervention forest hosts deteriorating and dead wood pulp, which is very valuable for a variety of species of organisms.

More than **200 species of fungi** have already been found here, including three dozen threatened species.

To monitor the development of the forest, we have established a permanent **monitoring area**.

russula solaris



Wet and peaty meadows rank among the most valuable botanic sites in Podblanicko Region. The rescue of abandoned, overgrown and for many years uncut meadows is one of the main long-term activities of our organization. Gradually, we managed to restore regular care for dozens of meadows with a total area of 50 hectares. It meant thousands of hours of work with a brush cutter or pitchfork in knee-deep water. The current situation shows the hard work did not go in vain. The meadows now boast blooming plants, butterflies, and other insects. Caring for meadows would not be possible had it not been for a close cooperation with the owners. In Jinošovské Valley and in the Podlesí National Nature Reserve we managed to buy the land with valuable meadows into the ownership of the CUNC Vlašim.

Waterlogged meadows of Podlesí host a real jewel, a critically endangered honey waxcap.

The Podlesí National Nature Reserve is one of the first sites in our care.

Gradually, we managed to get the local peat into the ownership of the CUNC. Today, it ranks among the most valuable sites of the Blaník PLA from the point of view of natural history. →

Orchid Meadows



Typical herbaceous plants of preserved waterlogged meadows include the **broad-leaved marsh orchid** – hence the name orchid meadows.





Serpentinite Steppes



Vasim nature conservationists have cleared several old serpentinite quarries from municipal waste dumps and expanded the habitat of exposed serpentinite rocks.



Serpentinite rock formations, exceptionally valuable sites from the point of view of natural history



Serpentinite is a rock erupted from a great depth on the border of the earth's crust and mantle, and its outcrops on the surface of the earth are a rarity. There are several such sites in Podblanicko Region, and they rank among the sites of world importance from the point of view of natural history. In fact, the serpentinite contains magnesium in an amount that many species of plants cannot tolerate, and therefore sites like this one boast preserved glacial relicts hard to find anywhere else. In the case of some species, this site is the only site in the Czech Republic where such species grow. In the case of minuartia smejkalii, the site is of global importance!

Based on the suggestion of CUNC Vlašim, the most valuable parts of serpentinite sites have been declared protected areas. Thanks to the collaboration with the owners of these national natural monuments we manage to provide the essential care for these sites. For example, there is an agreement with state-owned enterprises, Lesy ČR and Povodí Vltavy, the CUNC Vlašim could restore the grazing of the pine relicts in the National Nature Monument, Hadce u Želivky.





Places without vegetation, just sand and clay dust. The places, such as unpaved footpaths, disturbed slopes of deep ravines, small local sand pits, paths trampled by grazing cattle in pastures have practically disappeared from our landscape. And with them, we are witnesses of the disappearance of the species tied to them, such as solitary bees. One of the last places with the vegetation growing on the open sandbanks was a one-time slush pit of a former goldmine in Roudný - a small desert nested in the middle of the landscape, but full of life. We have been involved in its maintenance practically since the establishment of the organization. We were cutting out natural seedings and plucking out vegetation, which was taking over the entire area. In the end, it became clear that without a major intervention, it would not work. We prepared the project and with the help obtained from the Operational Program Environment and the Central Bohemian Region we implemented the restoration of habitat.

- 1: Aelurillus v-insignitus, one of the representatives of the rich thermophilic arachnofauna of Roudný Natural Monument
- 2: The former slush pit of the goldmine stands for an extremely valuable site from the mycological point of view. The site hosts a critically endangered booted knight mushroom.
- 3: **Cylindera arenaria**, an attractive inhabitant of the Roudný Natural Monument site.

Open Sandbanks 1.4





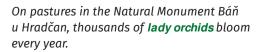




Each village used to have its own communal pasture in the past where residents drove cows, and even geese to graze. Such pastures were mostly steep, uncared slopes with a character of a steppe, often covered with junipers. The disappearance of the cattle from local settlements also meant the end to grazing of these places, which then became overgrown with

vegetation. We have been taking care of these sites since the early times of the existence of our CUNC. A juniper pasture named Na Ostrově, Natural Monument, located by Nemíž hosting very rare species of mushrooms is the first plot of land the CUNC Vlašim bought. We restored traditional farming activities in this area and we are also trying to strengthen the population of junipers by planting new junipers grown from the seeds originating from local plants. Another such site is Pastvina u Brodce, located in the Blaník Protected Landscape Area (PLA), or Báň u Hradčan Natural Monument.









Frog's paradise. That is what the ponds in the Jinošovské Valley, in the Podlesí National Nature Reserve and the Částrovické Ponds National Nature Reserve (Blaník PLA), which are managed by CUNC Vlašim, represent. Most of them have been reconstructed and cleared of mud. Ponds are rich from the point of view of natural history because we farm here exclusively in an extensive way. We do not fertilize ponds or feed fish; we do not use herbicides or other chemicals. Near the ponds, we created pools and thus further supported the occurrence of amphibians and other species of organisms tied to wetland habitats.



We manage the ponds extensively only-that is, without the use of fertilizers, supplementary feeding, and the chemicals. Fish stocks are species-diverse and in such quantity as to ensure the development of aquatic plants. \rightarrow

Our Ponds - 1.6 **Paradise for Frogs**



We bought and reconstructed five ponds from the Jinošovské Valley Pond system. We also take care of their surroundings. Today, the ponds not only represent a valuable habitat for amphibians and other animals, but also a popular walking destination.





The region under the Blaník Mountain may seem to some as less valuable in terms of biodiversity. The opposite is true, though. There are several very rare and critically endangered species of organisms. Some species here have the most numerous populations in the Czech Republic, some do not even occur anywhere else in our country.

Several species from here have been newly described for science. And Podblanicko Region also has its own endemic species that we do not see anywhere else in the world. However, some species are in such a bad state that we are trying to protect them by implementing special measures, including the use of rescue breeding and cultivation.

Mnohonožky



In conservation projects, we cannot do without a research, long-term monitoring and evaluations. Therefore, we cooperate with academic institutions.



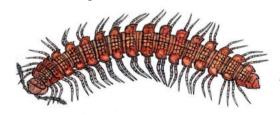
We try to make the knowledge of nature accessible to a wider public. Among other things, we publish field guides to determine selected groups of species, such as the first Czech monograph with a field guide for the identification of millipedes, or an overview of the regional fauna, such as the book on the Birds of Podblanicko Region.



We work with local farmers and residents on most species' protection programmers. We also organize excursions and lectures for them.

← Some species are on the verge of extinction.

To save them, we revive forgotten ways of farming (forest grazing, coppicing, harvesting of dried twigs and shoots), or implement special management, such as breaking up the turfs, tearing off the surface humus layer, etc.



Polydesmus Testaceus

We Saved Endemic Species of World Importance



of minuartia smejkalii collected on the Podblanicko serpentinite rock sites near Želivka Dam and near to Kamberk were grown at the Botanical Institute and planted back on the sites.



We started to mow the sites, introduced the grazing and tearing off the top humus layer of the soil, and after many years the minuartia smejkalii began to naturally multiply by itself.



An endemic species is a species that does not grow anywhere else in the world except in a given place or area. We are proud to have such species in relict perialpine pine woodlands and serpentinite steppes at Podblanicko Region – a minuartia smejkalii. This small plant was threatened with complete extinction in 2015. Therefore, we decided to take active measures to save it. We invited the Institute of Botany of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic to cooperate and managed to get support from the European LIFE+ program.

Today we can claim that the species is saved. In nature, we managed to increase the population of minuartia smejkalii ten times! As a great

success we take the involvement of local people – we created 20 backup stocks that are taken care of by gardeners in the area.









The sunny slopes of central Povltaví are one of the richest places in biodiversity in Podblanicko Region. Yet, even here, endangered species are rapidly declining, and populations of others are dwindling. A hundred years ago, the slopes above the VItava River looked completely different. Instead of dense growth of trees and shrubs, there was a sparsely wooded forest, people mined fuel and often grazed domestic animals there. It was for the sparsely wooded habitat that made an ideal home for not only butterflies, but also other insects. However, people gradually stopped farming on the poorly accessible slopes, and these became overgrown. Therefore, we have chosen the most suitable sites and in cooperation with the owners, we are trying to restore the low growth light forest here. We thin trees, apply coppicing, remove shrubs and enlarge areas with gap cutting. motyli.csopvlasim.cz

long-horned beetle

Bright forests and rocky outcrops in the Vltava River Canyon are botanically rich (pulsatilla pratensis subsp. nigricans). →

Butterflies in the Canyon 2.2 of the VItava River



This habitat is the last place of occurrence of the rock grayling butterfly in the Czech Republic. However, its population is rapidly decreasing.



Veteran Trees for Hermit Beetle



The hermit beetle is among the endangered species of beetles tied to tree veterans. Its larva feeds on dead wood and after a few years, after pupation, an adult beetle hatches in the summer months. You may spot the beetle during a walk in the castle park in Vlašim or in the Jinošovské Vallev.





An old tree does not only stand for a witness of the past, or a memory of the landscape. It also represents a life-giving housing estate. And it does not only refer to memorable oaks or lindens, but also to the old standard fruit trees. In their crowns, hollows and cracks in the mighty trunks and branches live hundreds of species of organisms – fungi, insects, birds, bats. Yet the old trees are disappearing from the open landscape as well as from the gardens, and with them all kinds of species tied to these giants. Therefore, we search for them in the landscape and explain to their owners why it is important not to cut them. We treat them to extend their life. And finally, we also plant new trees to replace the old ones one day.

hermit beetle grub

We treat old trees and secure tree crowns against breakage.

Thus, we extend their life by many decades. We release the younger prospective trees in the stands so that they can develop and eventually replace the surviving veterans. This will ensure the existence of the habitat and rescue the hermit beetle and other endangered species.





Dragonflies - Colourful 2.4 Acrobats Hovering over the Water Surface



1: Although Podblanicko is one of the most explored regions in terms of dragonflies in the Czech Republic, even here we still manage to discover new species - in 2020, a Mediterranean keeled skimmer was discovered.

2: Every year we organize odonatological seminars in different regions of the Czech Republic (pictured is excursion in 2008 in the Czech Forest).

3: We have summarised all the findings in an extensive monograph, called the" Odonatological Bible", a monograph which cannot be compared to any other monograph of this kind even at a pan-European level.

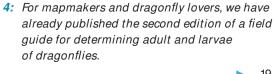
guide for determining adult and larvae of dragonflies.

In the mid-nineties of the last century, we launched the nationwide program named "Dragonflies". At that time, identification literature focusing on dragonflies was hard-to-find. Therefore, we first published new field guides describing both adults and larvae of dragonflies. Thanks to this, we gradually managed to excite many collaborators for the mapping and protection of dragonflies, for whom we hold odonatological field seminars and we publish "Dragonflies", an expert

collection. With many associates of the Dragonfly Program we have compiled a protection methodology focused on dragonflies, a red list and finally, we published a voluminous monograph on dragonflies in the Czech Republic. As a result of all these activities. these days, the dragonflies belong among the most popular species of insect in the Czech Republic. www.vazky.net







Rescue Transfers



Every saved frog counts.



Every year we carry swan and duck mussels living at the bottom of the ponds at the time when the ponds are cleared of mud.



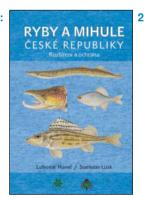
Unfortunately, amphibian migratory routes from wintering grounds to breeding grounds and back often cross busy roads and many frogs and newts end their journey under the wheels of cars. Until the time when these critical places are permanently saved, we continue building 50-cm-high mobile barriers preventing the migrating amphibians from crossing the roads and with the help of volunteers we carry them to the other side. Thanks to our rescue transfers, we have carried more than 120,000 amphibians to safety.

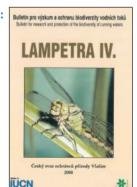
In addition to the amphibian rescue transfers, we also carry water bivalves or crayfish to safety. We carry out the rescue transfers of aquatic animals, predominantly in the autumn when ponds are harvested or cleared of mud.

Since 1991, we have been implementing the "Lampetra" program aimed at systematic research of lampreys, mapping and the protection of lampreys and endangered fish in the Czech Republic. This program is the oldest of CUNC Vlašim's programs aimed at protecting endangered species. During the existence of the program, we managed to map the occurrence of the brook lamprey on several hundreds of sites. A great success was the new confirmation of the occurrence of the Ukrainian brook lamprey in Velké Losiny. This happened after decades since the first finding. Lampreys are demanding on the quality of water streams. Therefore, since the beginning of its

existence, the CUNC Vlašim focuses on the problems linked to the revitalization of the streams and their protection.

- 1: We published a monograph "Fish and Lampreys of the Czech Republic. Distribution and Protection".
- 2: We publish a peer-reviewed international bulletin LAMPETRA. a publication focusing on the research and protection of biodiversity of watercourses.





Mysterious Brook 2.6 Lamprey



In 1993, to protect the population of the brook lamprey and at the suggestion of CUNC Vlašim, Štěpánovský Potok National Nature Reserve was declared.

We Protect the Nests of Field Birds



Saved nest of lapwing by agreement with the farmer. Over the past 40 years, the numbers of lapwings in our country have decreased by 80%, therefore saving each nest from destruction is of great importance.



We buy the areas inside the arable land and leave the fallow land here. We also create a diverse treeshrub patches (the picture features a purchased part of the field at Býkovice pod Blaníkem).



Intensive agriculture has led to the disappearance of once common bird species, such as the lark and the owl, from the landscape under the Blaník Mountain, while others are on the verge of extinction and others are becoming rare. The CUNC Vlašim has long been trying to persuade owners and municipalities to divide large tracts of fields by boundaries (hedgerows) and vegetation belts, to create tree-shrub patches and other elements that increase the diversity of the landscape. We try to protect the nests of selected species from destruction by the technology used during harvesting and other agricultural works. Our aim is to come to agreement with the farmers. Hopefully, over time, it will be possible to change the setting of agricultural subsidies so that they motivate the farmers to use more environmentally sound management techniques. We hope our descendants will still hear or observe a lark

or a quail, lapwings, or partridges in the wild rather than in the zoo.

 Young chicks of the western marsh harrier on their nest hidden in the middle of the field. We found this nest and saved the birds in time.



In addition to birds, another once common species, the European ground squirrel, has disappeared from our agricultural landscape. Today it is found only on several widely separated sites in the Czech Republic. This prevents the migration of ground squirrels between their colonies and leads to the loss of their genetic variability, which results in the gradual extinction of these isolated colonies. The CUNC Vlašim participated in the ground squirrel rescue program, which is managed by the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic. Our rescue station is one of five facilities in the Czech Republic, where semi-natural breeding is carried out. Individuals from our breeding station will strengthen the natural colonies in the wild.



Aviary in the CUNC Vlašim Animal Rescue Station where the semi-natural breeding of ground squirrels within the framework \leftarrow of the rescue program takes place.

The ground squirrels in rescue breeding need to be regularly counted, checked, weighed and their health (parasite check) carefully taken care of. \rightarrow

We are Involved in 2.8 **Saving Ground Squirrels**



The first 30 ground squirrels settled in our rescue station in 2015.



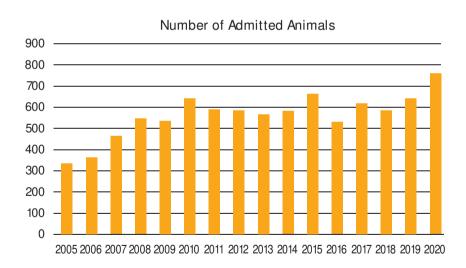


The Animal Rescue Station was established by the CUNC Vlašim in 1994. Since then, we've admitted over 10,000 injured and otherwise handicapped animals. Their long-term growing number led us to building a new large modern facility with a separate quarantine and veterinary office (2010), which we built on an area of two hectares near Vlašim, thanks to the support of the Operational Program Environment, the Central Bohemian Region, and the Town of Vlašim.

We turned the original outdoor area in the town centre into a public exhibition of the rescue station and named it ParaZOO. We consider the treatment and rehabilitation of handicapped animals very important. At the same time, we put stress on informing and educating the public. We have learned that the sharing of the fate of injured animals motivates visitors and participants of our programs to application of preventive measures to avoid unnecessary animal injuries.



In 1995, the CUNC Vlašim Rescue Station was a co-founder of the National Network of Rescue Stations and still constitutes an inseparable part of it. Within this network, it provides its services to a territory of nine authorized municipalities.



The Development of the Number of Injured and Otherwise Handicapped Animals Admitted to the CUNC Vlašim Rescue Station.

www.pomoczviratum.cz

We Inform and Engage the Public



Every single one of us can eliminate traps presenting the risk to wildlife. We inform the public through instructions on our website, social networks, and printed materials. This poster for builders was hung up at the building authority offices in our region.





The number of patients in our rescue station is growing year-on-year, and we cannot do without an active support from the public. For the help to be effective, it is necessary to "rescue properly". Therefore, the rescue station organizes a whole range of awareness-raising activities. We inform the public how to protect the wildlife, provide them with first aid and, above all, how to prevent their injury. Caregivers also visit schools, where they introduce school children and young people to the problems through courses or lectures.

← As part of the educational events we present basic equipment, aids and medicines of our animal rescue ambulance car used as first aid to animals.

The public participates in the release of cured animals into the wild and in volunteer activities directly in the rescue station.

The rescue station provides telephone advisory to public within the framework of its emergency service from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day, including the weekends.



Part of the animals that cannot return to the wild due to their injuries remains in our care in the exposition of the Animal Rescue Station - ParaZOO. In this small zoo, we introduce visitors to the destinies of animals, their most common causes of injury and, most importantly, how to

> prevent such injuries. Every year, 15 to 20 thousand visitors to our ParaZOO learn about the risks for wildlife in the cultural landscape. We explain how to lower or eliminate such risks.

ParaZOO also hosts several educational events, such as exhibitions on endangered species, The Bat Night, or the Insectoid ("Hmyzák"), which emphasize the importance of the smallest species in nature.

1: Since 2018, we have been focusing on the positive training at ParaZOO. Thanks to this training, the animals better tolerate the presence of visitors, do not get bored and are easier to treat.

www.parazoo.cz





The stories of the animals in the ParaZOO are told as part of the guided tours.



We Treat Injured Animals



The veterinarian in the Rescue Station checks whether the operated open fracture of the young eagle owl is healing properly. After a couple of weeks, he was planted in the nest to the adoptive parents.





Our goal is to return as many injured or otherwise handicapped animals as possible to the wild.

Some cases can be solved over the phone, especially to discourage the finders from collecting presumably abandoned chicks. Although we are on call every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (including

the weekends and holidays), animals often come to us in very bad shape already. Sometimes their treatment takes days, sometimes months, some patients just rest and get stronger in the Rescue Station, others have complicated operations and long rehabilitation. At our Rescue Station, we provide outstanding care. There is a fully equipped veterinary office with an operating room, rooms for intensive care, several outdoor aviaries and paddocks adapted for different species of animals, as well as large free flight aviaries and a separate quarantine room.

For the most part, we get our feed as a gift from food processors, wholesalers, and private individuals.







We Return the Cured 3.4 **Animals to Their Natural Habitat**





A whole third of the admitted injured animals is given a second chance and released back into the wild. We achieve the best results when breeding chicks of predators and owls that have fallen out of their nests. In some cases, we use permanently handicapped animals for their rearing, or we put the chicks in the nests to the adoptive parents in the wild. We return the cured animals to the nature as close as possible to the place of their finding or we release them directly from the rescue station from our free flight aviaries. The animals then return to feed for some time. Not every case has a happy ending. Many animals cannot be saved.

1: Before releasing cured birds, we mark some of them with rings so that we can follow their further fate. The sea-eagle (pictured), successfully engaged in nesting right in the year of its release.

so we are happy for every successful release into the wild.

2: We released a black stork equipped with a radio and shared the course of its journey online to the public.



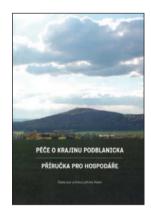


The region under the Blaník Mountain is described as an example of the picturesque Czech landscape, which enchanted many writers, artists, and musicians in the past. We are trying to return the landscape its picturesqueness, to make it welcoming for residents and visitors again and to restore all its eco-stabilizing functions.

The landscape of Podblanicko region, like most of the Czech Republic, was significantly damaged during the period of socialist reforms and collectivisation of the rural areas. During that time, the socialist regime ploughed thousands of kilometres of the hedgerows, hundreds of kilometres of the country roads and footpaths, removed hundreds of hectares of tree-shrub patches, cut, and pulled out thousands of fruit trees and drained tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land. Springs, small ponds, and pools were destroyed and forgotten, hundreds of kilometres of streams were drained into the pipelines or regulated. The Czech Union for Nature Conservation is trying to repair the damaged landscape. In cooperation with enlightened farmers and municipalities, we restore country roads and tree lines, break up large areas of arable land threatened by erosion, and return traditional fruit trees to the landscape. We strive to restore the hydrological regime of the landscape by restoring wetlands, pools and initiating the revitalization of streams.



We have been working closely with the towns and villages of Podblanicko Region for over twenty years to restore the once vanished elements of scattered greenery in the landscape. The photo features the **planting** of the tree on the **200th-kilometre of the tree alley**. We made it a special occasion and planted the tree with a presence of local mayors, Central Bohemian Regional Governor, and the Minister of Environment.



A close cooperation with the landowners and administrators is essential for the restoration of the landscape. We try to keep them updated on the possibilities, proven management strategies and guidelines as well as on the examples of good practice.



The state of the landscape has an impact on each of its inhabitants, but many are often unaware of it. Therefore, we inform the locals about the need to care for the landscape, and about the restoration of its hydrological regime. We inform through the media and in person, mainly during the discussions with the public and excursions for the public.

We Restore and Establish New Tree Alleys

1:







Restoration of tree alleys often separating vast fields is one of the most noticeable activities of the CUNC Vlašim. Perhaps every visitor to Podblanicko will notice that more trees alleys are planted here than elsewhere. We started the restoration of the alleys in 1998. First, we treated the trees and planted new ones in the linden alley at the Jemniště Chateau and in the fruit alley at Vlašim. Since then, we have restored more than 200 km of the alleys, which is a unique feat in the whole Czech Republic. The success is mainly due to an excellent cooperation with towns and villages in our region as well as with enlightened farmers, who provided the land, and contributed financially. Today, many of "our" tree alleys fulfil important functions in the landscape, and the fruit ones are a pleasant sight for the locals on their walks.

- 1: We return the scattered greenery to the agricultural landscape not only in the form of tree alleys, but also of **tree-shrub patches**, solitary trees or tree-bush belts fulfilling an antierosion function.
- 2: The planting of the tree alley by Domašín was also connected with the restoration of the historic road and its use for the popular circular bike path around the town of Vlašim.



There are two major reasons why we focus on wetlands: The first reason is water retention in the landscape, and the second is the creation of a habitat for wetland species of plants and animals. We created the first pools in the Podlesí National Nature Reserve in 1994. Since then, we have restored or created three hundred pools and wetlands in Podblanicko Region. We return water not only to the land that we own or manage, but we also cooperate with municipalities, owners, and

restored or created three hundred pools and wetlands in Podblanicko Region. We return water not only to the land that we own or manage, but we also cooperate with municipalities, owners, and economic entities to restore the water regime in the countryside. We strive to eliminate unnecessary drainage and draining ditches, restore springs and wells, revitalize streamlined flows, or leave them to the natural renaturation. The measures we have been able to initiate are often cited as exemplary.

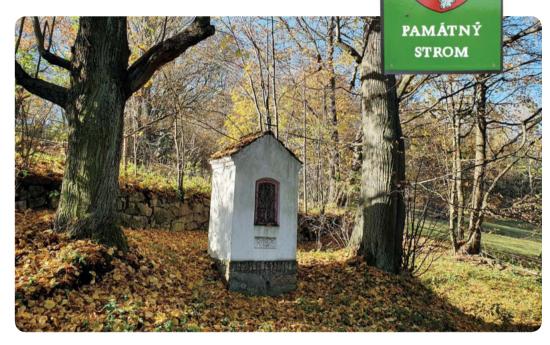
- 1: The Czech Union for Nature Conservation initiated, processed the assignment, and cooperated on the revitalization of the residential area of Vlašim with the application of flood control measures on the Blanice River. The most important step was to gain support for the revitalization of the river from the Vlašim Town Council and the administrator of the River, Povodí Vltavy s.p.
- 2: In the Jnošovské and Orlinské Valleys, we have created 17 smaller and more extensive pools, which today host one of the richest populations of the European fire-bellied toad in Podblanicko.

We Restore Hydrological Regime in the Landscape





We Care for Remarkable Trees

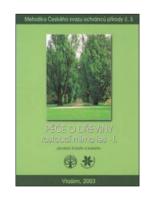


Podblanicko Region declared more than 200 trees as remarkable trees. We have been taking care of half of them. As early as in 1998, we prepared the first list of the remarkable trees of the Podblanicko Region. We described the health status of those trees, the owners of the trees, and recorded the proposals for the declaration of the trees as remarkable. Many trees from this list were then gradually declared remarkable. We still come across other important trees. When we do, we try to apply adequate protection. We communicate with the owners of the trees and give the trees proper treatment. For example, we initiated the declaration of 88 linden trees growing on Loreta u Vlašimi Hill as remarkable. Later, we treated those linden trees with a health cut. Less stable trees were given a secure binding to prevent further breaking.



We treat remarkable and significant trees using tree climbing techniques (the picture features the treatment of the remarkable oak in Mašim) or a lift platform.

We have been taking care of the trees and woody plants both physically and theoretically. We collect domestic and foreign knowledge in this field and, complemented by our own experience, we publish it. Our two-volume methodology "The Care of Woody



Plants Growing Outside the Forest" has become essential arborist literature.



Old varieties of fruits, unlike modern ones, do not suffer so much from diseases, they do not need intensive care, and most importantly, each has a different taste, aroma, and wide use in cooking. Selected fruits of the old varieties, suitable for longer storage, stay fresh until spring. Unfortunately, they are grown very little in nurseries today and gradually disappear from the landscape. Therefore, we search for individual trees and orchards in the landscape, we document them and try to save them. Every year we organize a meeting of pomologists, where growers bring their fruit for identification and where we provide valuable advice on how to care for fruit trees.

In the autumn, the CUNC Eco-Centre in Vlašim runs regular exhibitions of old varieties of fruit. Visitors can enjoy tens of varieties of fruit, mainly of apples and pears that constituted common varieties in the past. Occasionally, some growers identify some old variety or similar variety in their own garden.



We Preserve Old 4.4 Varieties of Fruit Trees in the Landscape



We have established our own multi-hectare fruit orchard in Jetřichovice by Sedlec-Prčice. Here we keep historical plantings and on new stock we graft older varieties found in Podblanicko Region to preserve them for next generations.





The children who now attend school and the programs we organize, will live in a slightly different world than we adults know today.

Developing children's relationship to nature through direct positive experience is our priority. On this basis, we strive to build such knowledge, attitudes and habits that will allow them to cope with the current and future environmental problems as best as possible.

Our basic tools are short-term as well as residential teaching programs for schools and extracurricular activities for children and youth. We put a great stress on the cooperation with teachers who have a long-term contact with their students.



The aim of our educational programs is to promote values important for solving environmental issues. We promote cooperation rather than competitiveness, creativity rather than ownership, critical thinking rather than passively receiving information.

 Getting to know the creatures living below the water surface in the garden of the CUNC's Podblanické Eco-Centre awakens interest in discovering hitherto unknown parts of the world.



Our lecturers love nature and their work with children. The whole team of lecturers is regularly educated in new knowledge and methods in environmental education. We study the impacts of our programs and continuously evaluate and improve them.



We prefer to teach about the nature directly in the field. If field work is not possible, we have several well-equipped classrooms at our disposal.



Both CUNC Podblanické Eco-Centre in Vlašim and the Water House are proud holders of the EVVO Program Provider Certificate.

We are one of the five regional centres of EVVO Program in the Central Bohemian Region, and we are members of the network of centres for ecological education, Pavučina.

We Educate Children







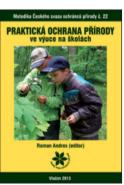
All three of our facilities, the CUNC Podblanické Eco-Centre, the Water House, and the House of Nature Blaník, offer short-term educational programs for schools from kindergarten children to secondary school students. In addition, the Podblanické Eco-Centre organizes three to five-day stay programs. For such purposes, we have built our own beautiful accommodation facility. Thanks to a new stimulating environment and experienced lecturers, the educational programs stand for an ideal complement to the environmental education teachers provide in schools. Every year there is a participation of about eight thousand scholars, mainly first graders from primary schools. For schools, we also organize excursions, guided tours, and specialized lectures.

- 1: We are looking for new effective forms of work with children proportional to their age. For kindergartens we offer educational interactive theatres, e.g., with the theme of life in the gardens.
- 2: The pupils attending the second grade of the primary school learn about the impact of their daily decisions on the environment. We run an educative workshop called "Package Free" where children conduct their research in supermarkets.



Unlike us, the teachers can influence their pupils all year round. Therefore, we help teachers with the search for inspiration, sources of information and the choice of methods suitable for environmental education in schools. We have carried out several specialized studies for the school coordinators of EVVO Program. We organize a conference for teachers and several seminars every year. In cooperation with the Association of the Centres for Ecological Education, Pavučina, we coordinate a network of schools and kindergartens in Central Bohemia called "Mrkev" (Carrot) and "Mrkvička" (Baby Carrot).





We publish methodological publications and create methodological aids for teachers.

We Motivate Teachers 5.2



Since 2000 we have been organizing EWO Teachers Conference as part of the Ministry of Environment Program. Teachers always have a choice of several workshops according to their focus.



The teachers have a chance to brush up their knowledge and skills in nature science, which they will use during their own field programs with their students.

We Enable the Children to Spend their Free Time in a Meaningful Way



We organise **summer camps** where children first experience eating lunch, which they cooked themselves.





Since the establishment of the CUNC Vlašim, we have been running a group of young nature conservationists. Through a long-term work with children, we not only bring up future members of our organization, but also the citizens that will project their warm attitude to the nature into various future professions. Every year we organize a summer camp in our own campsite in a National Nature Monument "Na Ostrově" near Nemíž. The CUNC Vlašim's Podblanické Eco-Centre organises summer day camps. During the camps and group meetings we try to get children involved in our conservation activities.

Young conservationists have a unique opportunity to get to know the animals in ParaZOO up close and ← participate in the care of them at group meetings.





We Organize 5.4 the Central Bohemian **Ecological Olympiad**







The Central Bohemian round of the Ecological Olympiad has been organized by our organization on an annual basis since 1996. This competition differs from similar school Olympiads mainly in the number of contestants in one team (it is 3 here) and that, in addition to knowledge, it also considers practical skills and promotes teamwork. Traditionally, in September, dozens of secondary school students of the Central Bohemian region, accompanied by their teachers. come to the Podblanické Eco-Centre. In two busy days, they go through a theoretical part of the competition with an identification contest and a test, followed by two practical parts - in the first, the contestants solve a selected problem in the environmental field and defend their solution before the commission. In the second round, they take up the tools and try a bit of a physical labour in practical nature conservation contest.

- 1: The identification contest poses a real challenge to all team members. To succeed, the contestants need to cooperate and distribute the tasks in the team.
- 2: The final part of the contest has a practical impact on the protection of some of the nearby sites in our care. The students will help, for example, with mowing of waterlogged meadows and thus find out what the work of a conservationist looks like.





We are part of the local community, which we try to inspire to the relationship and protection of nature and landscape in Podblanicko Region. We motivate the public to go out for walks and introduce them to interesting sites. We also introduce them to our activities and their implementation in the picturesque countryside under the Blaník Mountain.

At our seminars, workshops, and lectures, we mediate meetings with those who can teach us about everyday environmental protection. Our eco-advisers advise citizens, mayors, and companies. We publish methodologies and other printed materials. We publish information in the media and on social networks.

Over 20 years we have been building a library of natural history and regional literature, which is available to teachers, students, and the public.



One of our most visited traditional events is the autumn exhibition of mushrooms attended by a mycologist. We organize it in the Blaník House of Nature in cooperation with the Nature Conservation Agency.



At the workshops we teach new and forgotten skills that help to protect nature.



We work with the media to bring people closer to less accessible natural places.



← It all starts with a relationship with the local natural heritage. We show people the nature around them.



We Hold Events for the Public







Every year we organize about twenty events for the public. These include lectures and talks, exhibitions, field excursions, and events for families with children. Meeting local fellow citizens at our contact events is an important opportunity for us to share our values, activities, and visions for the future. For those interested in various topics, we organize seminars and workshops where they can acquire new skills and meet with experts.

- 1: The most visited events are those for families with children, such as the **Day of Water Bugs** in the Water House. We are happy to offer parents the opportunity to spend their free time with their children in a meaningful way.
- 2: Regional and global topics are debated and lectured either in the CUNC Vlašim's Podblanické Eco-Centre or in the Water House.



CUNC Vlašim's Eco-Consulting (Ekoporadna) helps residents and institutions in our area to act environmentally friendly. We answer about 400 registered gueries a year. Most of the queries concern animals and their protection, followed by consumer lifestyle, ecology,

and home. Every year, we devote special attention to several cases of systematic consulting. Most often, we are approached by the citizens from Podblanicko. schools and authorities. Eco-Consulting takes place in the CUNC Vlašim's Podblanické Eco-Centre, where the first contact point for the visitors is the reception and little souvenir shop. In addition to the advice, the visitors have a range of publications, regional and promotional items, and small snacks on offer. Making a purchase in our store or e-shop (www.eko-obchod.cz) will support our work.





We Give Advice on How to Help Nature and Protect 5.2 the Environment



Occasionally, we organise mobile eco-consulting and give advice on the road. We also disseminate information through printed materials, articles in local newspapers, through the website and social networks.



The library of natural history and regional literature in CUNC Vlašim's Podblanické Eco-Centre is open to the public. Students are its most frequent visitors.



We want our local citizens and visitors to be aware of the value of cultural monuments and valuable natural sites. Their preservation for future generations would be difficult without the support and understanding of the public. We have created several nature trails and exhibits. In addition to that, we provide interpretive signage to the sites under our care.

Our guides provide personal interpretation in a form of guided walks or guided tours. Geocaching enthusiasts may experience four series of caches as well as single caches focusing on less known locations. We also use modern technologies, such as marking the sites with QR codes. We developed mobile phone applications with recommended routes. Our guides, trail planners and exhibit designers are regularly educated in current trends and methods of interpretation.



To create the trails, we also collaborate with artists. This stone statue representing the knight en route the *nature trail on the Velký Blaník Mountain* perfectly complements the atmosphere of the place and stands for a sought-after attraction.



When interpreting, we try to involve as many human senses as possible. Pictured is a serpentine rock garden on the Water House premises.



We also use our experience in custom-made designs of trails for other entities. An example may be The Story of the Sázava River in Zruč nad Sázavou.

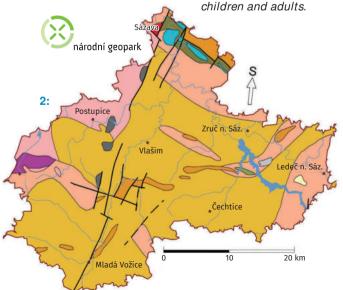


 The start of the nature trail Roudný focusing on the history of a former gold mine. We present hidden and less known locations with the help of geocaching.

KRAJ BLANICKÝCH RYTÍŘŮ geopark



At events in the Geopark we remind the public of the history of gold mining in the vicinity of the Blaník Mountain. Gold panning entertains both





In 2014, in cooperation with geologists and local experts and municipalities, we were awarded the National Geopark title for the Region of Blaník Knights. The National Geopark Platform enables us to develop sustainable tourism. In Geopark we take care of the documentation, protection and interpretation of geological sites and montane monuments. We organize lectures, events and educational programs for schools focused on geological sites. We publish publications. We connect similarly focused activities and institutions in the region. Since 2020 we are members of the Association of Geoparks of the Czech Republic.

- 1: The mascot of the Geopark and the tourist region The Region of Blaník Knights has been the Blaník Knight. The knight recalls the legend of a mythical army sleeping inside the Velký Blaník Mountain.
- 2: Simplified geological map of the Geopark. The Region of Blaník Knights: Most of the Geopark's territory is made up of the Monotonous Moldanubian Group, to a lesser extent the Varied Moldanubian Group and the Central Bohemian Plutonic Complex. The most significant phenomena of the Geopark territory are the Blanická Brázda rift valley and the Sázava River. The region has a varied mining past, the remains of which we can discover when wandering through the countryside.

www.geopark-kbr.cz





In 2016, we opened a visitor centre near the dam of the Švihov Reservoir. Official name of the centre is the Water House. The Centre informs and educates the public in an entertaining way about the importance of water for nature and man. The Švihov Water Reservoir is a valuable example of major importance. The Želivka Water Reservoir represents the values from the point of view of natural history and stands as a site of community importance.

The indoor exhibit will guide visitors through five comprehensive sections. On the premises of the Water House, the visitors may take a trail explaining the role of water in the landscape and the role of protected natural sites through interpretive signage. The Water House offers educational programs for all ages of children - from kindergarten to school children. Visitors may also book a tour of the Svihov Dam.

- 1: The architecturally interesting building of the Water House was awarded the Czech Architecture Prize in 2017. The low-energy building does not disturb the character of the surrounding landscape and uses local construction material-serpentinite rock from a nearby quarry.
- 2: Families with children are the most frequent type of visitors to the Water House. Over 27,000 people visit the Water House every year. In addition to the official visitor count, about two thousand pupils visit the venue as part of the school curriculum.

www.vodni-dum.cz















We built and operate the Blaník House of Nature, a visitor centre of the Blaník Protected Landscape Area (PLA) and of the National Geopark of the Region of Blaník Knights. In addition to the permanent exhibition, the visitors can enjoy the films about the Geopark as well as short-term exhibitions. The exhibition focuses on three most important habitats of the Blaník PLA – scree woodlands, serpentine pine forests and wetland meadows. We also describe the geology of the region and the famous legend of the sleeping knights. The mascot of the Blaník House of Nature is St. Wenceslas. The House of Nature is an ideal starting point for our interactive nature trail Climbing the Blaník Mountain with the Blaník Knight. The visitor centre is part of the national network of the Houses of Nature under the patronage of the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic.

- 1: The most interesting exhibit of the Blaník House of Nature is a 3D model of the Blanická Brázda Rift Valley, or its parts belonging to the National Geopark of the Region of Blaník Knights.
- 2: The outdoor area of the Blaník House of Nature represents the geology of Podblanicko Region.
 In addition to the exhibition of rocks, the House of Nature also features educational interactive elements and pleasant seating area. Those who succeed in solving the quiz will receive the badge of the Blaník Geology Knight.

 www.dumprirody.cz/ blanik



Nature Trails 7.4 and Interpretive Signage





We have built several nature trails in the most significant points of interest. The trails were built as part of our own projects or in cooperation with public administration. We try to make our trails attractive for families and provide visitors with information about the observed places in the context.

Our "flagship" nature trails include Climbing the Blaník Mountain with the Blaník Knight (2007). Roudný Gold Mine Nature Trail (2012) and the Vlašim Castle Park Trail (1995, extended and restored in 2014). We provide expert counselling to local municipalities and organisations in planning and design of trails and exhibitions.

- 1: We complement our nature trails with interactive elements that entertain, while, at the same time, educate both children and adults. The photo features Vlašim Castle Park Trail.
- 2: We have installed several interpretive panels in two quarries in the vicinity of Vlašim that are accessible to public. The panels explain to visitors the origin and use of local rocks and the current life in the quarry. The photo features the panel installed in the Křížovský Quarry.



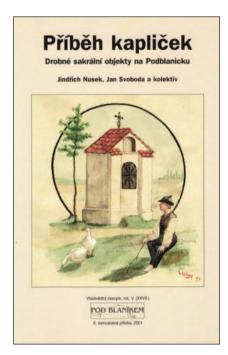
The region under the Blaník Mountain has been shaped by humans for thousands of years. The gently undulating, harmonious landscape, traditionally farmed and forested with small, scattered settlements acquired its spiritual dimension from its Christian founders. The Romanesque churches in an unprecedented concentration have been preserved here to this day. Through art, literature, theatre, and music inspired especially by the Blaník Mountain and the legend of the Blaník Knights, Podblanicko has become an exceptional associative landscape.

For thirty years, in close cooperation with the Podblanicko Museum, we have been trying to document all the preserved cultural heritage of the region. We take care of the selected monuments ourselves – from small to large-scale units, or we initiate their restoration on the part of the owners. We try to make the monuments accessible to the public. We take the cultural and natural heritage as one indivisible whole and try to interpret it in this way for residents and visitors of the Blaník Region.



We often interpret both natural and historical monuments at the same time. The photo shows an information point near Borovsko village, where we present the National Nature Monument of Dolnokralovické Serpentine Rocks and at the same time a technical monument – the unfinished motorway built during the First Republic.

← Undoubtedly, the most extensive project of restoration and care of cultural heritage implemented by our organization is the restoration of the Vlašim Castle Park.



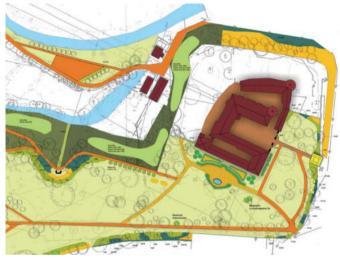
One of the first projects of CUNC Vlašim was the **mapping of small religious buildings** in Podblanicko Region. We published their inventory in a book.





One of the reasons for the establishment of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation in Vlašim was to stop the massive felling of 300-year-old oaks in the Vlašim Castle Park in the winter of 1989-1990. We halted the plundering of the park. Subsequently, we managed to convince the town of Vlašim of the importance of the park, which was, at that time, very neglected, due to a half-century-long absence of care. At the suggestion of the CUNC Vlašim, the town established a park administration and the regulations for the visitors. As early as in 1995, we established a nature trail in the park to show its extraordinary cultural and natural values to its visitors.

Nowadays it is hard to believe that the park had not been known or visited even by many of the Vlašim residents. Not surprisingly. The Park vegetation was overgrown at that time, the meadows were not mowed, and the roads were not in a good shape. What's more, in front of the shabby-looking castle there was a storage of building materials and a concrete mixing plant. Gradually, in cooperation with the town of Vlašim and thanks to its continuous support, it was possible to implement nine projects of restoration of natural elements and monuments and today the park stands yet again for a gem of the Podblanicko Region.



The meadows, water areas and footpaths in the park were gradually restored. Thousands of new trees were planted, and dozens of old trees were treated.



In 2014, we built a new interactive nature trail in the park.



We Collect Works of Artists 3.2 in Podblanická Gallery

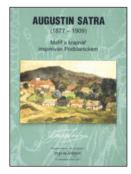
Probably every Czech knows about the Blaník Mountain and the legend about the Blaník Knights. Blaník became an inspiration for all forms of art. The topic of the Blaník legend can be found in prose and poetry, among the most famous compositions, operas, theatre performances and films. Blaník inspired many painters and sculptors. Gradually, Blaník has become a national icon. The spiritual dimension of the Podblanicko landscape cannot be seen at first sight. It can hardly be photographed. However, the artists are successful. Either those who live in the area or those who perform their art there. We collect their works. and we make them accessible to the public in the CUNC Podblanická Gallery in Vlašim Gate and seasonal exhibitions in CUNC Vlašim's Podblanické Eco-Centre and in the House of Nature near Blaník.

www.podblanicka-galerie.cz



For regional artists, we organize an annual Podblanický Plein Air Painting, where they can present their works to the public.



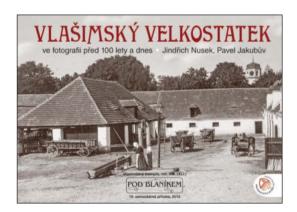


We document and publish representations of Blaník and Blaník legend in art and we publish this art.

We Publish National History and Science Quarterly, "Pod Blaníkem"







The magazine is distributed to all schools and municipalities in Podblanicko Region and to the subscribers. It is also sold on the shelves of bookstores, and in visitor and information centres.

Since 1997, the CUNC Vlašim. in association with the Podblanicko Museum, Nature Conservation Agency and the Administration of Blaník PLA. has been publishing a regional national history magazine called "Pod Blaníkem". We followed up on the magazine of the same name, which was founded in 1921 and which had been published for 22 years in the past. Its First Republic predecessor was edited mostly by local teachers and its purpose was to strengthen the regional and patriotic feeling.

To better understand the cultural and natural heritage of the region, we continue with the publishing of the magazine today. It is only when we recognize the values around us that we can protect and care for them. We publish the Pod Blaníkem magazine as quarterly (so far, we have published 100 issues of the magazine) in a total circulation of 800 copies.





Someone may consider the Blaník Knights a myth. We, who live in the region below the Blaník Mountain know, without any doubt, that Blaník knights exist and even walk among us. They are often hard to spot, modest and always endlessly hardworking. Already in 1995, we felt the need to discover these knights for our community. So, the idea to award the Blaník Knight Award to individuals who have significantly contributed to the preservation and development of the natural and cultural heritage of Podblanicko Region was born. Other non-profit organizations from the region were inspired by this idea, and since 1999 the award has been handed out annually. From the very first years, the ceremony has been receiving great publicity and has been highly appreciated. Most realize that it is important to thank for the work done for others, for the region, and that the efforts of the Blaník Knights can be an inspiration for others.

www.blanickyrytir.cz

We Administer 3.4 the Blaník Knight Awards



The award is symbolically handed over on the day when the Blaník Mountain opens, that is, on Good Friday, in the Ceremonial Hall of the Vlašim Castle.





The CUNC Vlašim is an integral part of the life of the region. In addition to nature conservation, we strive to promote such economic activities that make careful use of local cultural and natural heritage and benefit the local people. Tourism-related activities are associated under the same brand – The Region of Blaník Knights. The brand is attributed to a National Geopark (see the Geopark chapter), tourism destination and regional products.

In performing of these activities, we work closely with the towns and small municipalities in our region, Nature Conservation Agency – Administration of the Blaník PLA, the Museum of Podblanicko, The Region of Blaník Knights, z.s., tourist destination company, entrepreneurs, and local action groups.



The sustainable tourism products of the CUNC Vlašim and other entities are associated under the symbol of the St. Wenceslas' helmet, which also constitutes a part of the Region of Blaník Knights logo. Photo from the Climbing the Blaník Mountain with the Blaník Knight nature trail.



Our tourist destinations are part of tourism products such as *multiple entry tickets* for Želivka Dam Experience and the Day in Vlašim.

← The knight in armour is the mascot of The Region of Blaník Knights tourist destination.

We Support Sustainable Regional Tourism



The Region of Blaník Knights thrives on the cooperation of partner municipalities, non-profit organisations, and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry.



The visitors to the Geopark can use a mobile phone application with planned routes, which we developed.



At the beginning of the Region of Blaník Knights there was a free association of several municipalities and organizations that wanted to jointly develop tourism in the vicinity of the Blaník Mountain. Both the brand and the project itself have become successful, and soon other municipalities and towns joined in. The CUNC Vlašim coordinated the activities in the destination until 2018, when it, jointly with

other partners, established a tourism organisation called: The Region of Blaník Knights, z.s. We continue to be an active member of the organisation and cooperate in activities related to the National Geopark and promoting of our Visitor Centres, ParaZOO, nature trails, accommodation facilities and other tourism activities.







www.blanik.net



We coordinate the brand, THE REGION OF BLANÍK KNIGHTS Regional Product®, which we grant to products, tourist services and experiences in Podblanicko Region. The promotion of local consumption goes hand in hand with reducing the impact of our consumption on the environment and with the desire of visitors to experience or take away from the trip "something local". Our brand is part of the Association of Regional Brands, z.s.

- 1: Sightseeing tours of THE REGION OF BLANÍK KNIGHTS Regional Product® help promoting regional producers to the inhabitants of the region, i.e., potential consumers.
- 2: Each applicant for a regional product label must meet the criteria relating to regional origin, quality, and environmental impact. The certificate is granted for two years and entitles the holder to use the brand logo.
- 3: In 2020, THE REGION OF BLANÍK KNIGHTS Regional Product® brand was used by a total of 34 products and services.



We Support Local **Producers and Service 9.2 Providers**







www.regionalni-znacky.cz/ kraj-blanickych-rytiru





The Czech Union for Nature Conservation, Vlašim Group, was founded by Pavel Pešout (during his university studies), in cooperation with his friend and nature lover Jiří Nosek, an ornithologist and secondary school biology professor, Pavel Čech and the fighter for public greenery and the protection of the Vlašim Castle Park, a teacher, Eva Dočkalová. Lubomír Hanel, the nature protection inspector, and Karel Bárta, the director of the Museum of the Benešov District, also significantly contributed to the establishing of the organization.

It was at a time of great social changes after 1989, when the state of the environment began to be openly discussed, and when the protection of nature and landscape came to the forefront of public interest. The main impetus to the establishment of the organization was the massive felling of memorable oaks in Vlašim Castle Park. The constituent meeting was held on **25 September, 1990**, in the Vlašim Castle.

The Czech Union for Nature Conservation, Vlašim Group, adheres to the legacy of the Association for the Beautification and Protection of the Homeland, which was established in Vlašim on 23 April, 1899. The activities of the Vlašim conservationists have been based on close cooperation with the town of Vlašim and other towns and villages in the region, the Podblanicko Museum, regional associations, owners, and farmers.

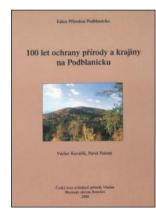


← At the time of the founding of the organisation, the state nature protection in the Benešov District was provided by a single person – a nature protection inspector. Therefore, the care for protected areas could not do without volunteers. The picture from 1992 shows marking the boundaries of the Čížov by Týnec nad Sázavou National Nature Reserve.

At first, the organization was seated in the apartments of the officials of the organization. In 1991, the CUNC Vlašim rented two basement rooms in a hostel in Benešovská Street in Vlašim. From 1994 until today it resides in a building in Pláteníkova Street in the historical centre of Vlašim, which was gradually reconstructed and bought into the CUNC ownership.



The Vlašim Reporter informed on the founding of the organisation.



On the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the organisation, we published the publication called: The History of Nature and Landscape Protection in Podblanicko Region.

Our Thanks

The long-standing activity of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation, Vlašim Group, would not have been possible without the support of many institutions and friends. In our annual reports and on our website, we try to list them all, unfortunately, there is not enough space for this now. We would like to thank at least to some of our long-standing partners. First, it is the Town of Vlašim, with which we have been connected by common projects throughout the existence of our organisation. We also cooperate very well with the Central Bohemian Region right from the time of its establishment. We also consider very

special, our 30-year partnership with the Museum of Podblanicko and with the Nature Conservation Agency, and the Administration of the PLA Blaník. We appreciate our long-term cooperation with local action groups, many landowners, and farmers. We could not carry out so many activities without our supporters. We are proud that every year, several hundred of small companies and big donors are willing to contribute to our activities Some of them have been contributing on a regular basis for many years. We would like to thank to all our friends, partners, and supporters!











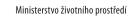






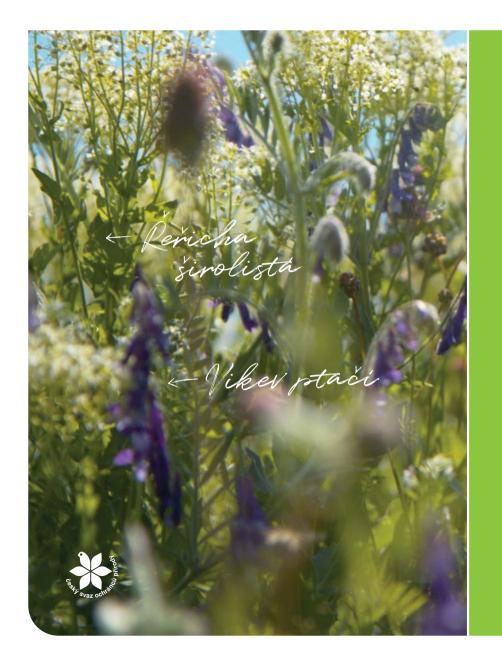












Bringing Nature Back to Prague

For several years, in association with the Czech Union for Nature Conservation, we have been developing a project to increase natural diversity on our premises.

Grassland on the roof habitat of the water reservoir at Prague's Flora was additionally sown with the meadow plants' seeds from specially protected areas of the capital city of Prague. Every year it blooms beautifully with dozens of plant species. On the habitat we use technological waters from the reservoir to supply the pond and automatic drip irrigation. The pond also serves as a drinking place for birds.

In other areas we have implemented the sowing of flower meadows, built birdhouses and insect houses. We also keep bees. All living things are interconnected, which is why the protection and restoration of natural diversity is our priority. $674\,000\,\mathrm{m}^2$

green water management area in Prague

100+

birdhouses and insect houses

24

hives in five areas

ightarrow www.pvk.cz

