



Wooden monument in the Sumava Biosphere Reserve, Czech pilot area. Photo: Josef Štemberk

## PARTICIPATION IN PROTECTED AREAS

### HOW TO COMMUNICATE RESTRICTIONS WITH THE PUBLIC?

Everywhere in Europe (and in the world), protected areas have an utmost positive image. We all like Biosphere Reserves, National Parks and protected landscapes. We enjoy watching wild animals, listening to rare birds, sitting on the shore clean lakes and rivers. This holds true in our holidays and during weekends when we use nature for leisure activities.

But what about people who are living constantly in such a region? Very often, they feel negatively influenced and limited in their activities by various restrictions, e.g. concerning the extension of settlements and the construction of houses. There are a lot of examples where inhabitants and communities actively oppose against the installation of a protected area and/or struggle against the respective administrations.

How to deal with such a situation? How to avoid confrontation and unnecessary blockades? How to involve local people in the planning and development of 'their' region? How to convince regional administrations and stakeholders that they will benefit in the long run?

These questions are part of the VITAL LANDSCAPES project, mainly executed by the Czech partner PP5 in the Sumava Biosphere reserve. In this Newsletter we introduce these and some others activities and results of projects in protected areas.

We wish you an interesting lecture and recreative summer holidays. Enjoy the landscape wherever you may stay!

*Jörn Freyer & Burkhardt Kolbmüller (coordinators)*

# WORK WITH LOCAL PEOPLE IN SUMAVA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

## HOW TO OVERCOME PREJUDICES AND GRIDLOCKED STRUCTURES

Šumava Mts. region is located at the Czech-Bavaria-Upper Austria borderland. It can be described as a cultural landscape, inhabited for centuries, with nature of high quality. Therefore state-run large scale nature protection has been practiced there in a long term. The region is used as a Czech pilot within VITAL LANDSCAPES.

The project has opened the chance for the Czech team to continue in the process of practical implementation of the UNESCO concept of biosphere reserve. The concept is being applied worldwide. At this moment biosphere reserves form a network composed of 598 sites located in 117 countries<sup>1</sup>. Each of them is used to test in situ the chance of finding way in which local people can live in a peace with nature. Territories having a status of biosphere reserve are supposed to have three missions – protection of biological diversity, enabling research and education while supporting sustainable economic activities. Hence, biosphere reserves are called learning sites for sustainable development. To achieve this ambitious goal, communication and cooperation of wide range of stakeholders is necessary, which needs to be facilitated and institutionalised somehow.

Therefore, PP5 initiated negotiations between the Šumava National Park Administration<sup>2</sup> and the Šumava Regional Development Agency<sup>3</sup> as to the cooperation. In summer 2011 the Memorandum of Understanding between both parties was signed. By doing so, parties formed regional platform where in-

terests of nature protection and regional development could be communicated. Regional Development Agency was agreed to as an institutional representative of the Šumava Biosphere reserve. It made a solid base for our next steps.

Firstly, by use of interviewing of local key personalities we identified expectations local community have as to the biosphere reserve and its role in the region. Consequently, workshop of key personalities, including mayors, entrepreneurs and representatives of the Šumava National Park was organised in the pilot region with the aim to jointly specify biosphere reserve activities. On this basis, biosphere reserve was mandated to facilitate communication among already existing project and activities and support sense of attachment of local people to the region. Following the line in more practical terms we designed the biosphere reserve webpage ([www.br-sumava.cz](http://www.br-sumava.cz)) as an information channel in the first stage and communication base prospectively. The photo-competition was launched to address school children from the biosphere reserve to get to know the history of the place they live in. The information as to the activities of the newly established biosphere reserve has been spread within the region by use of two issues of local newspaper “Doma na Šumavě” (summer and winter 2012), and by use of radio (broadcasting) events which are planned to be realised during the 2012 summer holidays.

The Šumava biosphere reserve is thus promoted on local level. As well activities are communicated on national level within the framework of regular Czech MaB Committee meetings. We also plan to build on international experiences. Therefore we are going to organize workshop in the region for Central European biosphere reserves operators, in cooperation with the Austrian MaB Committee in the spring of 2013.

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Kids discovering their homeland, Sumava Mountains.  
Photo: Monika Kytlicová

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/natural-sciences/environment/ecological-sciences/biosphere-reserves/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.npsumava.cz/en/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.rra-sumava.cz/>



# SUPPORTING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT IN SAXONY ANHALT

## HOW TO INVOLVE LOCAL PEOPLE IN LANDSCAPE AND NATURE PROTECTION

A central goal of Cultural Heritage Association Saxony-Anhalt (PP 2) is to raise awareness regarding the value of cultural landscapes and by doing so to maintain natural and cultural values. The key is the work with local people. Only if we succeed to sensitize locals for the values of their own region we will be able to preserve our cultural landscapes in the long run. Within the VITAL LANDSCAPES Project PP 2 implements the following activities:

### Training of cultural landscape guides:

A cultural landscape guide is an ambassador of his region. He is able to present the treasures of his homeland in a fascinating and exciting way and to introduce his guests to remarkable historical details. With two courses of 80 hrs each the training provides abilities and knowledge on regional landscape history, research work and how to guide a group properly.

### Thematic excursions:

Even if landscapes are lying directly in front of our door steps – their values are often unknown respectively considered as mean. In the consequence landscapes face disregard and damage. To provide information, to introduce cultural landscape elements and to establish an emotional linkage to the regional cultural landscape PP 2 regularly organizes excursions with 30 to 60 participants each e.g. to present topics like water, historic trails or execution places.

### Support of regional networks and local stakeholders:

Through regional workshops, seminars and exchange of experiences PP 2 supports those who engage themselves already in the field of cultural heritage and landscape, e.g. in local NGOs. Besides providing information and knowledge the motivation and inter-connections of stakeholders are largely strengthened.

Altogether it has to be stated that mentioned activities significantly helped to improve civic engagement in the region and to qualify the work of local stakeholders. For further information please visit [www.lhbsa.de](http://www.lhbsa.de)



Thematic excursions with local people are one of the activities of PP2, Cultural Heritage Association Saxony-Anhalt.  
Photo: LHBSA

## VITAL LANDSCAPES PROJECT MEETING IN HUNGARY



Study tour to Nagyberek pilot region. Photo: Jörn Freyer

From 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> June the VITAL LANDSCAPES project team, supported by external experts, met in Budapest/Hungary to continue the common work, mostly related to the implementation of pilot projects (WP4 work group meeting). The meeting was combined with a scientific conference at the Corvinus University (topics a.o.: *Civil approach to landscapes*, *Vital Nagyberek Website development and public participation options*, *community-based landscape management guideline*) and an excursion to the Hungarian pilot region Nagyberek. For more details see [www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu).

## PROJECT NEWS

### Final Conference scheduled

The VITAL LANDSCAPES Final Conference was scheduled to 14/15 February 2013 in Vienna/AT. Hosted by PP2 University of Applied Life Science, the Project will present its results and findings and at the same time discuss options of follow-up activities. External participants and contributions are very welcome!

### Next Project Workshop

The next project workshop with meeting of the VL Steering committee will be held on 22/23 October 2012 in Naumburg/DE, hosted by the Lead Partner.

### Project Photo Calendar

Inspired by the JTS photo competition and a similar VITAL LANDSCAPES activity, the PPs decided to edit a project calendar presenting photos and stories of Central European landscapes. The calendar will be available soon.



[www.vital-landscapes.eu](http://www.vital-landscapes.eu)

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## PP5: FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH BOHEMIA IN ČESKÉ BUDĚJOVICE

The Faculty of Agriculture is one of eight faculties composing the body of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice. It is the oldest among the others, as it was established in 1960, and is the one which participated in the process of the University foundation in 1991. The present portfolio of the faculty fully reflects the recent European trends – to complement the primary productive function of agriculture with its non-productive ones. The broader perspective encompasses then the context in which agriculture operates, including social, economic and cultural aspects. Rural space/countryside/landscape issues attract still growing interest as both the subject of teaching and research realized at the Faculty (<http://www.zf.jcu.cz/>)

The PP5 team forms a part of the Department of Landscape Management. It moved to the Faculty in 2009 from the Institute of Landscape Ecology Academy of Sciences, where it had been gradually built since 1994. Since its inception the team is engaged in a long-run research focused on social aspects of large-scale protected areas management. Šumava Mts. have been model area for the team since 1995, when the international project titled “Sustainable development of the Šumava biosphere reserve” was launched there, followed by many others the team participated in<sup>1</sup>. Methodologically we build on ideas of action research. Practically we do it in terms of combining practically oriented projects with the more theoretical ones. In this

scheme, the project Vital landscapes represents the practical aspect of our research while the project “Protected areas – Social Deal on Nature Protection” run in parallel, funded by the Czech Scientific Foundation, tries to reflect the process of biosphere reserve implementation theoretically.

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainable development strategy for Šumava Biosphere reserve. UNEP-GEF project on Biodiversity protection in the Czech Republic, World Bank, 1995–1997

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**Landscape in the Šumava Biosphere Reserve.**

Photo: Vladimír Silovský