

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

The Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	2
MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME AND BIOSPHERE RESERVES	4
LOWER MORAVA BIOSPHERE RESERVE	5
ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE CORPORATION	7
IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN 2014	10
OTHER ACTIVITIES	18
EXPECTED DEVELOPMENT OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2015	23
DONORS AND PARTNERS	23

INTRODUCTION

2

Dear friends,

2014 represented an important milestone for the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve (LMBR). In this year the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, Public Benefit Corporation (PBC) completed ten years of service. Its activities and the fulfilment of criteria of the Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme were evaluated by a Periodic Review, which each BR is obliged to prepare and present every ten years. The periodic review is submitted to the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves in Paris, which in turn draws up a proposal evaluation of the given BR which is submitted to and approved by the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (ICC MAB – hereinafter the Council), the governing body of MAB. The Council held its 26th session on 10–13th June 2014 in Sweden. In its comprehensive and highly positive evaluation the Council highlights the fact that the model of Lower Morava BR management through a non-governmental organization based on the principles of direct participation of the stakeholders and balanced decision-making should serve as a model for the entire world network of biosphere reserves! **Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve thus became the first Czech BR to be presented as a model for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.**

One of our long-term activities, also highly praised by the Council, is our involvement in cultural landscape management with the aim to enhance some characteristics of agricultural landscape. In collaboration with mayors of ten selected municipalities whose cadastres were subject to complex land consolidation we launched landscape projects supported by the Operational Programme Environment of the Czech Republic (OPE CR), which received substantial and in some cases 100 % funding for their implementation. Together with project designers and experts from the Nature Conservation Agency in Brno we imbued the term Territorial System of Ecological Stability (TSES) with the tangible form of green elements with matching tree and shrub species planted within them or herb-rich meadows within vast fields of arable land. These measures will improve soil conservation, prevent erosion and facilitate the development of desired plant and animal communities in future.

If you visit our website (www.dolnimorava.org), you can get acquainted with every biosphere reserve in the world thanks to an interactive map created upon our initiative. You will also get the chance to browse through a photo gallery or a collection of over 100 paintings by children from ten primary schools within the Lower Morava BR who took part in a contest commemorating the 10th anniversary of our PBC. Final evaluation of artworks submitted in 2014 took place in the newly restored Lednice Chateau Riding Hall at the occasion of our October festive gathering of founding members, partners and friends of Lower Morava BR, PBC, commemorating this anniversary. We will continue our collaboration with primary school teachers and students within our BR, as well as with students of Mendel University in Brno and other members of the general public. To this end we will employ our expositions on Lower Morava BR which are part of the Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre.

The section focusing on regional products from sustainably managed land on the Lower Morava BR territory or from environmentally sound practices is becoming a self-contained part of our website. All these products were granted the Lower Morava BR, PBC certificate.

The ten years of our Public Benefit Corporation service have shown that developing the region and building a civil society on the principles of interdisciplinary communication, respect for expert arguments and awareness of as many social, cultural, economic and environmental contexts as possible have their unquestionable logic. The philosophy of the Man and the Biosphere Programme and therefore of our Lower Morava BR, PBC, is based on these very principles.

The achievements of Lower Morava BR, PBC, would not have been possible without the active help of our founding members, representatives of our governing bodies, partners and our many consultants and supporters. Our heartfelt thanks go out to all of them. I trust that we will jointly manage to pursue the ideal of a harmonious development of the South Moravian cultural landscape and a civil society.

Lednice, March 2015

Jan Vybíral



3

MAN AND THE BIOSPHERE (MAB) PROGRAMME AND BIOSPHERE RESERVES

4

Biosphere reserves are places which give rise to illustrative and scientifically valuable examples of sustainable relations between human activities and ecosystems. **Biosphere reserves are not “protected areas”, “museums” or “monuments”, although they can encompass such sites.** They represent living regions with prospering and happy communities. Biosphere reserves are viewed as outstanding places which provide a model for organizing interaction between the community and ecosystems at both local and regional levels. Biosphere reserves provide innovative solutions which combine ecosystems, local communities, traditional and modern farming in a sustainable manner.

Since the 1970s, when the international UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MaB) Programme was established, its primary objective has been to improve the relationship between man and the environment through sensible and sustainable management of natural resources and through the application of scientific knowledge and traditional practices.

The goals of the MAB Programme are met in specially selected areas called biosphere reserves (BR), which are associated in the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Unfortunately, the term “reserve” incorrectly stresses purely the conservational aspect of BR operation, which, despite its indisputable importance, constitutes but one of the many objectives of the MAB Programme. These, among other, include fostering partnerships for generating and sharing information, research and monitoring, education or participatory management. In practice, it involves **looking for ways of flexible, dynamic and sustainable protection of natural and cultural values through everyday human activities.** Thanks to these, biosphere reserves are sometimes referred to “living laboratories” or teaching laboratories for sustainable development.

As a rule, biosphere reserves do not represent primary tools for protecting natural and cultural diversity, since nature and historical monument protection as their sole objective is provided by other, highly specialized,

usually governmental institutions in most countries. BRs may therefore remain more open to stakeholder participation, the scope of their activities is broader and more balanced and they can act more as “sustainable development agencies” rather than purely conservation-focused organizations.

Every BR must conform to a specific set of criteria and has to be able to deliver a given set of functions. Its size must be sufficient to allow the fulfilment of tasks assigned, it must be sufficiently varied with respect to its natural and cultural diversity and must provide home and livelihood to enough people who will in turn participate in its protection and development.

All world BRs are bound to fulfil three equally important functions:

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

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

It is imperative that every BR actively promotes participatory management, which requires equal collaboration and participation of all stakeholders, including local governments and inhabitants, state administration, representatives of local businesses and conservation

groups as well as natural and social scientists. Lower Morava BR is the only BR in the Czech Republic to directly and equally involve various stakeholders in the management and decision-making processes on the platform of a Public Benefit Corporation.

Biosphere reserves are nominated by national governments and designated by the MAB International Coordinating Council. The area of every BR also encompasses sites protected under the respective national

systems or other internationally recognized areas (World Heritage Sites, Ramsar Wetlands, Natura 2000 sites, etc.).

In 2014, the World Network of Biosphere Reserves encompassed a total of 631 BRs in 119 countries, six of them on the territory of the Czech Republic (Krkonoše, Křivoklátsko, Šumava, Třeboň Basin, Bílé Karpaty and the Lower Morava BR).

LOWER MORAVA BIOSPHERE RESERVE

The Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve was designated in July 2003 as an extension of the former Pálava Biosphere Reserve (designated in 1986), encompassing the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (LVCL) and the floodplain forests at the confluence of the Morava and Dyje Rivers.

The Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, Public Benefit Corporation, was established on August 31, 2004 and was entrusted with organizational, institutional, factual and personnel provision of activities administered by the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve as part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves. Stakeholders and local municipalities participated in its establishment in accordance with Seville Strategy for biosphere reserves and the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves. It was founded by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic, MND a.s., the Czech Union of Nature Conservationists and the Břeclav District Chamber of Commerce. In 2012 the Ministry of the Environment left due to internal organization and system-related reasons and gave up its post of a founding member as well as its posts in the corporation's governing bodies.

In the context of the Czech Republic we are the only biosphere reserve represented by a non-governmental organization with a stakeholder-based management structure which involves representatives of local businesses, state administration bodies, municipalities, professional associations and non-governmental organizations active on the territory of the BR. This management model is unique within the country, as the existing Czech BRs have always been administered by some state nature conservation body, be it a Protected Landscape Area or a National Park.

Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, PBC, provides the following public benefit services:

- organizational, institutional, factual and personnel provision of activities administered by the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve (hereinafter BR) as part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves,
- participation in activities relevant to the Lower Morava BR, including the coordination of these activities with state administration bodies, municipal authorities, stakeholders, educational and scientific institutions, businesses, general public and other bodies,

- participation in mediating and procuring advisory, financial and coordinating services which relate to the Lower Morava BR and its development, in accordance with the UNESCO regulations on the World Network of Biosphere Reserves,
- safeguarding the commissioning, development and regular update of an open information database on the Lower Morava BR and on the scientific, economic and development activities relating to the area or existence of the BR,
- participation in publishing both periodic and non-periodic materials and proceedings, including informative and methodological publications printed, electronic, audio-visual and multimedia, as well as their presentation, distribution and sale,
- participation in educational activities in a spirit of promoting the principles of sustainable lifestyle, in particular those of nature and landscape conservation and the rational management of natural resources,
- providing information services for the general public,
- participation in organizing scientific conferences, forums, training courses and exhibitions relating to the Lower Morava BR,
- establishment and management of model facilities,
- fostering international cooperation in matters relating to the Lower Morava BR and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves,
- promoting and enforcing activities aimed at economic and demographic development of the Lower Morava BR and the entire region,
- providing mediatory services in cases of disputes and conflicts arising from the existence and activities of the Lower Morava BR.

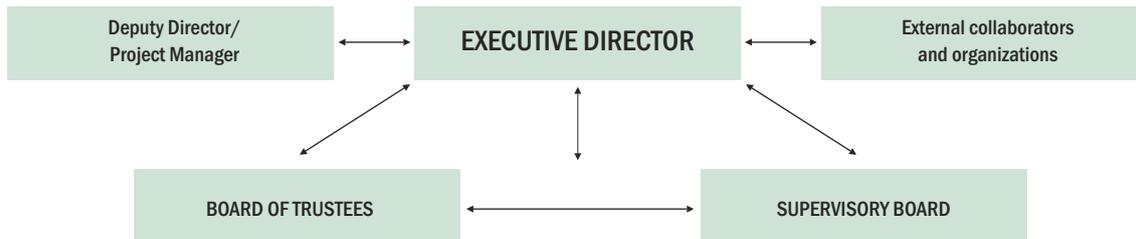
The corporation provides public benefit services under equal conditions with the objective to support all stakeholders and activities aimed at the development of the BR territory in accordance with conditions and regulations stipulated by the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme. All activities conducted in 2014 were in accordance with the 2014-2020 Action Plan and in concord with the conditions of the Man and the Biosphere Programme.

6



ORGANIZATION CHART OF THE CORPORATION

Registered seat: Zámecké nám. 69, 691 44 Lednice
Registration number: 269 38 171
Legal form: Public Benefit Corporation



The governing bodies include the Board of Trustees, Supervisory Board and the Executive Director. The structure of governing bodies reflects the efforts towards the broadest participation of all stakeholders within the Biosphere Reserve.

The Executive Director acts as a statutory representative of the corporation.

Composition of Lower Morava BR, PBC governing bodies in 2014:

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is a nine-member managing body of the Biosphere Reserve which encompasses representatives of the founding members along with three representatives of municipalities and regions whose territory the BR covers, a representative of the District Chamber of Agriculture and a representative of Mendel University in Brno, which simultaneously acts as the principal scientific advisory body of the BR.

Libor Kabát	Chairman	Municipalities of the LVCL Region
Miroslav Svoboda	Vice-Chairman	Forests of the Czech Republic, S.E.
Petr Maděra	2 nd Vice-Chairman	Mendel University in Brno
František Fabičovic		Břeclav District Chamber of Commerce
Ctirad Petrla		Podluží Region
Libor Ambrozek		Czech Union of Nature Conservationists
Antonín Homola		Břeclav District Chamber of Agriculture (since May 1 st , 2014)
Pavel Kotásek		MND, a.s.
Roman Koprivňanský		Mikulovsko Region (since March 1 st , 2014)

As of 2012, Mr. Stanislav Koukal, Head of the Pálava Protected Landscape Area Administration and the Regional Office of the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, has been acting as a permanent guest of the Board of Trustees.

Supervisory Board

The Supervisory Board is a six-member supervisory body of the corporation. It includes representatives of the founding members, a joint representative of municipalities of the three regions whose territory the BR covers and a representative of Mendel University.

Libor Opluštíl	Chairman	Czech Union of Nature Conservationists
Zbyněk Parma		MND, a.s.
Miroslav Volařík		Břeclav District Chamber of Commerce
Václav Lidický		Forests of the Czech Republic. State Enterprise
Alena Salašová		Mendel University
Luboš Krátký		Podluží, Mikulovsko and the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape regions

In 2014 the Board of Trustees met four times and the Supervisory Board held one meeting.

In 2014 the Public Benefit Corporation employed two employees full-time.



IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES IN 2014

10

The milestone of 2014 was the historically first Lower Morava BR Periodic Review submitted by the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme. This highly positive review officially places us among model biosphere reserves. The entire year 2014 marked the 10th anniversary since the establishment of the Lower Morava BR, P.B.C. Apart from activities commemorating this anniversary, we focused primarily on successful implementation of projects designed to partially restore the formerly diverse landscape structure. The aim of these projects, which we process on behalf of our stakeholder municipalities, is to create and complement the Territorial System of Ecological Stability (TSES). Through the planting of trees and establishment of meadow communities in biocentres, biocorridors and interactive elements we enhance biodiversity in the agricultural landscape of South Moravia. A considerable share of our activities also focused on active involvement of students and stakeholder groups.

Results of the Lower Morava BR Periodic Review published by the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (ICC MAB)

The UNESCO General Conference adopted criteria for an area to be qualified for designation as a biosphere reserve. This document foresees the obligation to prepare a periodic review every ten years which is to be forwarded to the Secretariat by the state concerned. There is a form available which should help the states prepare their national reports and update the data available to the MAB Secretariat on the biosphere reserve concerned. The reports should enable the Council to review how each BR fulfils the criteria of the Statutory Framework, its three primary functions in particular. Possible failure to fulfil the criteria may result in a proposal to withdraw the BR from the UNESCO list.

Lower Morava BR prepared its first Period Review, which upon approval by the Board of Trustees was forwarded via the Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to UNESCO to be in turn officially submitted to the MAB

Secretariat. The report was examined by the International Advisory Committee for Biosphere Reserves at its session held on 17–21. 3. 2014 in Paris. The Committee issued recommendations which were submitted to the International Co-ordinating Council (ICC MAB, hereinafter the Council), the highest governing body of the MAB Programme. The council held its session on 10–13. 6. 2014 in Sweden.

The official review issued stated the following:

- The Council welcomed the first Periodic Review of the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, designated in 2003. The committee commended the Czech authorities for the very well-prepared Periodic Report. The Council took note of the fact that the site was managed by a stakeholder-based NGO in the form of a public benefit corporation. The Council welcomed this innovative stakeholder-based biosphere reserve management structure with direct participation and balanced decision-making.
- The council noted with appreciation the cooperation among various stakeholders based on partnerships. It also welcomed the various projects targeted towards biodiversity conservation, sustainable development, tourism promotion and habitat restoration.
- It acknowledged intensive networking and sharing of knowledge and experience with other biosphere reserves at international level.
- It noted the BR interactive web page, the establishment and restoration of biocentres and the territorial system of ecological stability as successful projects, along with the project of elimination of environmental burdens, which may be shared with other biosphere reserves as well.
- The Council acknowledged the change in the surface area of the Biosphere Reserve due to the use of modernized GIS technology and noted that the zonation was in place and that the biosphere reserve was in the process of improving zonation as part of an international project for information exchange.

- The Council stated that the biosphere reserve meets the criteria of the Statutory Framework of the World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- The Council encouraged cooperation with other biosphere reserves which are also multi-international designated sites. It also recommended initiating future research to include socio-economic studies and tourist impact assessments. It recommended that Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve be used as a model stakeholder-based management structure.

Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve thus became the first Czech biosphere reserve to be appointed as a model for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves!

Photo contest “People and the Nature of Lower Morava BR”

In collaboration with its partners Lower Morava BR organized a photo contest called “People and the Nature of Lower Morava BR” to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the Lower Morava BR, Public Benefit Corporation.

The contest was open for both amateur and professional photographers who met the conditions of the contest. A total of 35 photographs by 11 photographers were submitted.

On October 7, 2014 a formal meeting commemorating the 10th anniversary of Lower Morava BR, P.B.C. was held at the Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre, in the course of which the best photo was selected.

Over 50 guests from the entire country chose Mrs. Lena Vacenovská from Břeclav and her photo “Minaret” as winner.

The contest was supported by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, MND, a.s. and the Municipality of Lednice in collaboration with the Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre.

Art contest “Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve as seen by children...”

Lower Morava BR, P.B.C., Forests of the Czech Republic, S.E., MND, a.s. and the Municipality of Lednice in collaboration with the Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre organized an art contest to commemorate the 10th

anniversary of Lower Morava BR, P.B.C. The contest was open for primary school children within the Lower Morava BR and its subject matter was the biosphere reserve itself and the life and work of people inhabiting it. The children focused on the natural, historical and cultural aspects of the region, particularly its people, such as winemakers, foresters, fruit growers and other professions, who inhabit and enhance our beautiful landscape.

Seven schools participated in the contest and over 100 children entered their lovely artworks.

On October 7, 2014 a formal meeting commemorating the 10th anniversary of Lower Morava BR, P.B.C. was held at the Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre, in the course of which the best works in individual categories were selected.

Winners of individual categories:

Category 1: Jana Baránková Podluží folk costumes

Tvrdonice Primary School

Category 2: Kateřina Kružliaková Work in the fields

Tvrdonice Primary School

Category 3: Šárka Kalužiková Beauty of our folk costumes

Tvrdonice Primary School

Category 4: Kateřina Nešporová Field work

Tvrdonice Primary School

MND Prize

Martina Mádle Kingfisher Slovácká Břeclav PS

Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre Prize

Veronika Mackovčínova Mikulov in spring Slovácká Břeclav PS

Municipality of Lednice Prize

Nela Gajdušková At the local festival Mor. Nová Ves PS

Establishment and restoration of biocenters and TSES elements in the Pohořelice and Nová Ves cadastrs, Brno-venkov District

Completion of a project launched in 2011, whose recipient is the Pohořelice municipality. The area for which the project was designed comprised vast stretches of arable land, usually devoid of complementary linear

greenery, with minimum ecological stability and susceptible to wind erosion. With this in mind, two TSES biocenters were established, complementing the existing biocorridors (a windbreak and the Jihlava River) with new interaction elements in the form of tree alleys and groves. Within these, natural plant communities which were missing in the interest area were established. The vast stretches of farmland were intersected by the interaction elements which enhanced the biodiversity as well as the aesthetic and hygienic functions of the landscape.

The implementation stage was launched in 2013 and completed in 2014. The project represents probably the most extensive implemented project focusing on the establishment and complementation of South Moravian TSES to date. The area planted with trees and shrubs combined with grassy areas covered 54 ha and the implementation cost was CZK 33 mil. Our PBC initiated the project, prepared project documentation, applied successfully for funding and provides implementation project management.

The project was funded through the State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic and Operational Programme Environment.

International event “River Jump 2014”

“River Jump! 2014” is an initiative supported by the European Union and its “Youth in Action” programme, which is coordinated by the Brontosaurus Movement in the Czech Republic. On 3–7th July 2014 an event was organized in Lanžhot under the initiative, with 60 young participants (20 people from Austria, Czech Republic and Slovakia each). The event encompassed a number of excursions and workshops focusing on the environment, along with a music evening and other leisure time programmes. Our PBC prepared a 40-kilometre cycling tour for one of the groups within the Soutok Game Preserve, including a lecture about BR and MAB, sustainable landscape management and related topics. Another 42-kilometre track was prepared in the area of Tvrdonice. The participants were given basic information about floodplain forests, forest management, nature conservation and PBC activities related to floodplain ecosystems and (agri)cultural landscape. The highlight of the

festival was collection and disposal of waste. In collaboration and with direct support of Forests of the Czech Republic, Židlochovice Forest Enterprise and the Morava River Basin, State Enterprise, we identified the most frequented hiking trails in the floodplain forests around Soutok and Tvrdonice which were then cleared by six-member groups of volunteers participating in the festival.

Proposed system for mitigating tourism impact on the Soutok Game Preserve

Until 1989 the territory of Soutok was subject to a special management regime due to its immediate vicinity of the Austrian state border and the related strict border control. Free access and economic activities were limited to forest and game management. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain the territory has been open to tourists whose numbers have been continually increasing.

The area is highly attractive to tourists, encompassing the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO), parts of which are contained in the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape (World Heritage Site), two national nature reserves (Ranšpurk, Cahnov), the Soutok-Tvrdonicko Special Protection Area (Birds Directive) and the Soutok-Podluží Site of Community Importance which is part of Natura 2000. Owing to these combined highlights the entire area is subject to strong tourism impact. In 2007 our PBC in collaboration with stakeholders proposed a strategy of sustainable tourism development in the area of Soutok but due to a number of reasons this strategy has not been implemented.

In 2014 our PBC revived the project thanks to funding provided by Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise and its Židlochovice Forest Enterprise. Following consultations with key stakeholders (Židlochovice Forest Enterprise, the Town of Břeclav, Town of Lanžhot, Nature Conservation Agency in Brno and others) we designed a visitor system for the area of Soutok, which will mitigate tourism impact to prevent possible devaluation, particularly of its natural potential. The outputs included a proposed system of tourist movement in the area of Soutok, including infrastructure to support and control this movement.

The project allowed us to rekindle the debate on the future of tourism at Soutok. It should be noted that debates took place in an atmosphere of optimism and collaboration, with visible mutual support among the South Moravian Region, Forests of the Czech Republic – Židlochovice Forest Enterprise, the Lednice, Valtice and Podluží regions and nature conservation bodies with respect to the issue discussed.

The implementation of the tourism impact mitigation system in the Soutok Game Preserve can be expected in 2015.

The project was funded by the Židlochovice Forest Enterprise, Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise.

Establishment and restoration of biocenters and TSES elements in the Vlasatice cadastre

The area where the project is implemented has been subject to long-term intensive farming and particularly in the 1960s – 1970s during the socialist transformation of rural areas it was transformed into a cultural steppe with limited biodiversity. The key objective of this landscape project is the establishment and enhancement of the existing TSES system functions along with the restoration of a number of habitats in the originally diverse cultural landscape.

The enhanced environmental characteristics of the landscape will improve biodiversity. An increase e.g. in hare and partridge populations, which are important bioindicators of environmental quality of the rural landscape, is expected. The proposed measures will decrease the amount of soil loss, reduce the dust burden and improve moisture retention characteristics of the landscape. It is expected that the newly established basic TSES structure will be complemented by related measures in the rural landscape, such as the establishment of transitions between field crops and linear elements, bird watering places and wetlands.

Our PBC initiated the project, prepared project documentation, applied successfully for funding and has provided implementation project management.

The project is funded through the State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic and Operational Programme Environment. In 2014 tenders were concluded and the implementation stage will be launched in spring 2015.

Restoration of landscape vegetation in the Lužice u Hodonína cadastre

The key objective of this project implemented in an area partly degraded by illegal dumps and overgrown with non-native tree and herb species was to establish an interesting natural site in the vicinity of the municipality which would work as a pleasing space for leisure time activities of local residents as well as a biocentre enhancing the development of plant and animal species. A forest steppe site of a natural character with mowed cultural “butterfly meadows”, soft field roads and trails and groves of forest trees and native shrubs was created. The establishment of this element based on TSES biocentre principles has triggered a number of positive changes in the surrounding cultural landscape. In future the ongoing succession processes will create conditions for the enhancement and stabilization of populations of many species and will open possibilities for occupation of the newly established ecological niches.

Our PBC initiated the project, prepared project documentation, applied successfully for funding and provided project management.

The project was funded through the State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic and Operational Programme Environment.

Establishment and restoration of biocenters and Territorial System of Ecological Stability (TSES) elements in the Drnholec cadastre

The territory which the project targets is subject to intensive farm management and its vast stretches have been transformed into a cultural steppe with severely limited biodiversity. The key objective of this complex landscape project is the establishment of a basic structure of the TSES system along with restoration of a number of habitats in an originally diverse cultural landscape. The establishment of TSES elements will positively enhance the ecosystem character at the landscape level. The proposed measures will dramatically improve biodiversity of all groups of living organisms, decrease wind and water erosion, decrease the temperature sum in the growing season or improve the soil moisture conditions. Cultivation and harvesting measures taken in the municipal

forest stands represent an important follow-up project. The municipality of Drnholec took the decision to eliminate the danger of non-indigenous tree species spreading into the newly established TSES and to create refuges for the development of invertebrate and fungi species in ancient and rotting trees and stumps.

Our PBC initiated the project, prepared project documentation, applied successfully for funding and has provided project management.

The implementation stage was launched by opening and evaluating tenders in 2014. The project is to be completed in 2015.

Landscaping of the historic greenery on the south bank of Hlohovecký Fishpond

The project is a follow-up of activities conducted under the Restoration of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape Structures” and should have featured in several concurrent projects whose aim would be the landscaping of the north and south banks of the Lednice Fishponds in collaboration with the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic and Forests of the Czech Republic. Sadly, the remaining projects could not have been implemented so far due to system and legislative reasons, keeping the complex project at its initial stage.

The project may serve as an example of practical cultural landscape management whose aim is to restore the habitat diversity of a park landscape on the bank of Hlohovecký Fishpond. The implemented measures have helped to restore the character of a well-kept nature park with ancient solitary trees, groves of forest stands of various age classes and herb-rich meadows. The biological function of permanent high and low vegetation as interwoven habitats with a number of ecotone zones was restored.

Our PBC initiated the project, prepared project documentation, applied successfully for funding and provided project management.

The project was funded through the State Environmental Fund of the Czech Republic and Operational Programme Environment.

Public benefit activities support provided by MND, a.s.

MND, joint stock company, is the biggest Czech company dealing with surveying, crude oil and natural gas extraction and one of the founding members of the Lower Morava BR, PBC. MND are aware of their position and the ensuing responsibility and their activities are therefore motivated by principles of sustaining environmental balance, an awareness of the environment and fostering partnerships at various levels within the entire Lower Morava BR region. MND is one of the major private donors in the South Moravian region supporting projects related to nature conservation and its sustainable development. As one of our founding members they regularly provide support of public benefit activities and projects implemented by our PBC. The funding we received in 2014 was used for the following purposes:

- provision for activities of the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, as part of the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves,
- participation in activities related to BR, including coordination of the said activities,
- mediation and procurement of advisory and coordinating services related to BR,
- updating the information database on BR,
- participation in educating the general public, procurement of further education and training of young people,
- organizing conferences, forums and training courses,
- promoting international cooperation in matters related to BR and the World Network of Biosphere Reserves,
- promoting and implementing activities aimed at the economic and demographic development of the BR and its region.

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

Performing the duties of Site Manager of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape, World Heritage Site

The issue of cultural landscape management represents a complex system with numerous specific requirements, particularly in the area of the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape. The necessity to ensure interdisciplinary coordination, communication and continuous awareness of all the stakeholders in the area require a full involvement of a Site Manager, or a coordinator within the LVCL area. Lower Morava BR, PBC, has been performing the Site Manager duties since 2007 when it was nominated for this post by the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL. The Site Manager duties are conditioned by the obligation to ensure protection, management and sustainable development upon preserving the outstanding value of the LVCL landscape inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1996.

In 2014 we secured the procurement of site-managerial tasks and in collaboration with experts participated in all the relevant activities in LVCL. As a legal entity we fulfilled the role of a platform intended for coordination and interdisciplinary exchange of expert information, which was safeguarded through the application of participatory management in our PBC and our direct participation in the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL.

On September 19th 2014 a meeting of the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL chaired by Ing. Vladimír Dolejský, Ph.D., the Deputy Minister of the Environment, was held in Lednice. Its new Secretary, Mgr. Petra Kolářová, who specializes in Operational Programmes and EU funds, was introduced during the session. Doc. Alena Salašová presented a project of the Faculty of Horticulture called "Protection of values and LVCL heritage zone management". The current state of the LVCL Management Plan was presented. The issue of LVCL Site Manager was subject to lengthy discussion and the Ministry of the Environment pledged to secure funding for the position of LVCL Site Manager and prepare a legal proposal to ensure its institutionalization within the relevant structures.

Programmes implemented with the support of Forests of the Czech Republic, S.E.

Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, are the principal manager of protected areas and a key partner of nature conservation bodies in the Czech Republic. The company is the major manager of forest land in the country and within the Lower Morava BR itself. Sustainable forest management, which is the basis of their long-term strategy, safeguards the fulfillment of production and other functions of the managed forests.

Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, are one of the founding members of Lower Morava BR and have traditionally supported our activities both inside and outside the BR via specific programmes:

- a) Conservation of the natural and cultural diversity of cultural landscapes
- b) Cultural landscape management
- c) Environmental education and training
- d) Information and cooperation with the general public

The said programmes were designed in compliance with the statutes and the founding agreement of our PBC and cover a broad scope of activities which enhance biodiversity in agricultural landscape, promote sustainable development in the region, collaboration with municipalities or educational activities.

Thanks to the financial support from Forests of the Czech Republic, S.E., in 2014 our BR succeeded in fulfilling the three principal functions stipulated by the MAB Programme and UNESCO binding documents.

Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre

The need to restore and rehabilitate the building of the Lednice Chateau Riding Hall motivated the establishment of an interest group of legal persons called "Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre", whose members include the South Moravian Region, Municipality of Lednice, Mendel University in Brno, Masaryk University in Brno and the Tourist Authority South Moravia. Lower Morava BR participates in the project as a partner.

The group and its project team, which includes our BR, implemented the project "Lednice Chateau Riding Hall – Multi-functional Centre" concluded

at the end of 2014. The newly established multi-functional centre will provide spaces for educational and cultural activities. These programmes will primarily focus on cultural landscapes, using the Lednice-Valtice Cultural Landscape, World Heritage Site, as a model example. The permanent exhibitions cover three thematic units: Rehabilitation of the Riding Hall, Through a Landscape of Gardens and Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve.

Upon its successful completion the project was open to public at the beginning of 2015. It represents a fully-fledged, comprehensive and contemporary use of historical premises which are part of the Lednice Chateau, National Cultural Monument.

Funding of the project was provided by the Integrated Operational Programme (IOP) 5.1 National Support for the Utilization of the Cultural Heritage Potential called "Bringing Cultural Monuments Back to Life" (IOP CZ. 1.06/5.1.00/01.06095).

16

Mount of Olives in Mikulov

The project called "Pannonian grove under Mount of Olives – Reminiscences of the Garden of Gethsemane" was completed in 2014. It represents a joint work of a team of experts coordinated by our PBC. The project was implemented by Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve, PBC, the Pálava Protected Landscape Area Administration and the Regional Office of the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic in collaboration with the Mikulov municipality and Regional Museum in Mikulov.

Svatý kopeček (or Holy Hill) on the outskirts of Mikulov represents a beautiful example of a cultural landscape blending natural and historical values. It houses rare remnants of native thermophilic oak forests with pubescent oak, European cornel and mahaleb cherry. The forests are notable for their open character, with sparsely stocked forest clearings and forest edges. This type of open forests, or Pannonian groves (commonly referred to as forest steppes), represent one of Mikulov landmarks and attract large numbers of researchers and visitors.

Its south-western slope bears the name Mount of Olives. At its foot is situated a former limestone quarry where non-native shrub and tree

species were planted at the onset of the last century. These unprofessional interventions disrupted the natural structure of the existing stands. The aim of this project, for which the municipality enlisted the help of a number of experts and institutions, is to at least partially restore the original forest-steppe character of the site.

The project of restoring close-to-nature conditions in a former limestone quarry took inspiration and information from a Diploma Thesis of Ms. Františka Šatná of the Faculty of Horticulture at Mendel University published in 2012.

The project involved the removal of ill and unsuitable tree and shrub species, along with planting of new trees and shrubs and the establishment of grass-herbaceous formations corresponding to the natural habitat of the site. In the long-term horizon the site is to acquire typical features of an open pubescent oak forest with admixed European cornel and mahaleb cherry growing on limestone outcrops with their unique steppe vegetation. Newly placed benches and information panels with important historical and natural science information will enhance the experience of people visiting this unique place.

The project received funding from MND a.s.

PEFC membership of Lower Morava BR, PBC

Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes (PEFC) is an independent, non-profit international organization registered in Geneva which represents a framework for creating and mutual recognition of independent national certification systems. The Czech Republic is one of the 11 founding member states which formed PEFC Council in 1999.

Since 2012 our PBC has been a member of PEFC CR, an interest association of legal persons acting as the national managing body of the Czech system of forest certification. PEFC CR unites representatives of forestry, wood processing industry and other interest groups. As a PEFC CR member, our PBC endorsed sustainable forest management and its contribution to enhancing biodiversity and the environment in 2014 as well. It also gained access to independent control of sustainable forest management.

Individual PEFC members are divided into three chambers based on their respective dominant activities. The “other interest groups” chamber, of which our PBC is a member, unites PEFC CR members representing other forest management organizations, such as educational and research institutions, trade unions, environmental organizations, state administration and other. The current members include Forests of the Czech Republic, S.E., Faculty of Forest Management of Czech University of Life Sciences, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology of Mendel University in Brno, Czech Forestry Association and the Trade Union of Wood-processing Industry and Forest Management.

On April 30th 2014 a national PEFC congress took place in Kostelec nad Černými lesy. It reviewed the year 2013 which was marked by stepped-up PR activities, addressing retail chains with the objective to raise awareness of PEFC being the most widely used certification scheme which guarantees the sustainable origin of timber.

Meeting of PBC founding members and partners to commemorate the 10th anniversary of its establishment

The meeting took place on October 7th 2014 in the newly restored Lednice Chateau riding hall and was attended by 52 guests. To highlight the festive atmosphere, exhibitions of photographs, children artworks, posters presenting our PBC activities as well as presentations of Mendel University in Brno, Volařík Wines and the Training Forest Enterprise of Mendel University were organized. The participants were welcomed by RNDr. Libor Kabát, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, RNDr. Eva Řezáčová provided information about the Lednice Chateau Multi-functional Centre and the PBC Executive Director Jan Vybíral delivered the keynote address about ten years of Public Benefit Corporation operation. All participants viewed the event as pleasant and friendly, with a high expert and social credit.

Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve Certificate

Since 2012 our PBC has made efforts to create its own marketing tool which would allow Lower Morava BR to promote sustainable management and sensible use of natural resources. The aim of the project is to enhance the development of the Lower Morava BR territory, promote local products and services which are produced and delivered sensibly, in a traditional manner and in concord with the cultural landscape interests. The certificate should enhance sustainable tourism by guaranteeing the origin of the certified product in the region, consideration of both the producer and the product to the environment and direct succession of the activity in the given area.

The certificate guarantees that the producer or service provider meets the following criteria:

- a) operates in a way which is sensible to the environment and in concord with the principles of sustainable existence and land use
- b) is related to Lower Morava BR, i.e. operates within the BR territory
- c) endorses the philosophy of Lower Morava BR and MAB Programme and promotes it actively (e.g. a link on their web page, etc.)
- d) guarantees sustainable quality of their product or service.

The project drew on experience with existing and well-established product and services certification schemes, e.g. Asociace regionálních značek, o.s. (Association of Regional Products) or Tradice Bílých Karpat, o.s. (White Carpathians Traditions) as well as information provided by foreign biosphere reserves where similar certification schemes already exist.

At the end of 2014 the Board of Trustees approved a regulation concerning the process of awarding the Certificate and initiated negotiations with first applicants.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Out of the activities which representatives of our PBC implemented or participated in throughout 2014 we would like to mention the following:

Lectures and field excursions for Czech and international students

Lectures and field excursions for Czech and international students, most of whom studied at Mendel University in Brno. On March 25th a lecture “From virgin nature to the third millennium cultural landscape not only in Europe” was delivered for students of the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology (FFWT) specializing in tropics and subtropics forest management. Another lecture “Role of BR in sustainable land use” was delivered for further 30 students on April 3rd. On April 22nd students of the Faculty of Horticulture in Lednice were given presentation about the experience of our PBC related to cultural landscape management. There were 71 students present. In May we prepared a field excursion for international students of FFWT focusing on “Cultural landscape management, or the issues related to the Czech agricultural landscape”. A field excursion to LVCL and Pálava was organized for 34 students and teachers from the Vocational School of Forestry in Trutnov in September.

Interview for the Czech Radio Brno

On January 21st the PBC Executive Director Jan Vybíral was interviewed by Czech Radio Brno. The interview focused on landscaping projects which our PBC implements in collaboration with the local municipalities and the Nature Conservation Agency in Brno. The Pohořelice TSES project was selected as a model case. A concurrent interview was provided by the mayor of Pohořelice, Ing. Svoboda. The programme was broadcasted on January 22nd.

Meeting with officials of Lanžhot municipality

Throughout the year we held negotiations with officials of the town of Lanžhot regarding our ongoing collaboration under the project Visitor Centre Lanžhot, a cross-border project focusing on the monitoring and preventative measures taken against outbreak mosquito species and the preparation of a study of complex measures and land use between Lanžhot and the floodplain forest south of the town. Provisions for concluding a contract for preparing a study as a basis for negotiations on complex land consolidation were prepared and the “mosquito” project was elaborated.

Negotiations related to projects in the vicinity of Mlýnský Fishpond

The meeting took place on February 7th at the dam of Mlýnský Fishpond in Lednice and its aim was to identify the existing conditions at the site where the municipality is intending to build a safe path away from the neighbouring dangerous narrow road to connect the municipality with the monument Apollo's Temple. Conditions for establishing a combined biocentre and a park with wetlands and aquatic habitats were outlined in a broader context.

Negotiations about collaboration with the town of Břeclav

On February 10th bilateral coordination and collaboration related to public lectures in Břeclav in the course of 2014 was preliminarily agreed. Our PBC is prepared to collaborate both with the town of Břeclav and with the Lužánek Civic Association from Lanžhot under a project whose funding Lužánek applied for.

Workshop on landscape projects implemented by our PBC

A workshop on landscape projects implemented by our PBC designed for experts from the Pálava Protected Landscape Area Administration and the

Nature Conservation Agency in Brno was organized in collaboration with Volařík Wines in March. The workshop was followed by an exchange of information and opinions on the significance, implementation manner and further concepts in the field of securing funding for enhancing the characteristics of South Moravian agricultural landscape.

Negotiation on the creation and implementation of a model project in Lower Morava BR

The meeting took place in Brno on March 6th. Its agenda focused on the implementation of a project in LM BR which would represent a model use of an area under very high voltage lines (VHV). In collaboration with Doc. Černý and Ing. Pavelka, a site in the Mušlov cadaastre was selected. The project foresees the removal of unsuitable tree growths from areas under VHV lines and consequent regular mowing and enhancement of the existing seed bank through grass and herbaceous steppe species from the neighbouring Liščí kopec Nature Reserve with the objective to transform the area into a herb-rich meadow of a steppe character. The project will be implemented as part of a Doctoral Thesis at the Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology of Mendel University in Brno and in collaboration with the VHV lines owner, Pálava PLA Administration and our PBC which will act as an expert partner in the project. The project might result in the establishment of a management system within selected sites under VHV lines throughout the entire Czech Republic.

Presentation for mayors of the Voluntary Association of Municipalities of the LVCL Region (VAM)

A presentation was delivered to mayors of the VAM LVCL with the objective to share experience gained in the course of successful projects implemented in close collaboration with municipalities and to present possibilities of securing funding from the Operational Programme Environment in the finishing programming period mediated by Ing Koukal of the Nature Conservation Agency in Brno. The following discussion and exchange of information focused on the demanding administration of the said projects.

Field excursion for foresters

A thematic field excursion was organized for the foresters from the Coloredo Mannsfeld Forest and Fisheries Administration in Zbiroh and for workers of the Šternberg Forests on March 14th. It focused on Mikulov and its surroundings, including a hiking trip to Pálava.

Presentation for the management of Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise

As part of a Forests of the Czech Republic Supervisory Board meeting which took place on April 24th at the Židlochovice Chateau a presentation “10 years of Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve or ... No Man is a Prophet in Their Own Land” was delivered. The following discussion acknowledged the role of our PBC in landscape management and further activities within LM BR and outside it were openly supported.

Meeting at the Morava River Basin, State Enterprise

In an April meeting, collaboration of the enterprise in the area of Lower Morava BR was discussed with RNDr. Jan Hodovský, General Director of the Morava River Basin. Mr Hodovský stressed the importance of changing and intensifying the existing level of contact. Possible areas of collaboration, e.g. measures to control mosquito outbreaks, restoration of selected parts of the lower reaches of the Dyje River or the issue of beavers, were suggested and discussed.

The issue of maintenance in the vicinity of Lednice Fishponds

A work meeting to discuss the issue of maintenance in the vicinity of Lednice Fishponds took place in early May and was attended by representatives of our PBC, relevant municipalities, Forests of the Czech Republic, Pálava PLA Administration and the Nature Conservation Agency in Brno. Its objective was to specify current priorities and a strategy of joint and mutually complementary activities to maximize the effect in the following areas: greenery maintenance, safeguarding good quality for hiking and cycling trails, protection of stakeholder interests, placing benches and information boards along the educational trail, possible

solutions to property rights in the vicinity of Apollo's Temple and the neighbouring beach. The participants agreed to coordinate their activities and to collaborate with the aim to maximize the use of available funding, municipal budgets and the potential of individual stakeholders.

Presentation of creative student project teams from the Faculty of Horticulture of Mendel University

On May 9th eight projects created for selected sites near the town of Mikulov within LM BR were presented at the Faculty of Horticulture. The student project teams dealt with specific landscape issues, such as protection of arable land resources, enhancement of agricultural landscape characteristics, landscape revitalization, enhancement of aesthetic values and sustainable development of tourism. The team projects and their presentations were of a good quality and the mayors and stakeholders present agreed with this assessment.

20

An interview for Brno TV

As part of collaboration with Ing Pondělíčková, PR manager from the Lesnická práce s.r.o. publishing house, our PBC prepared a proposal for the Brno TV editorial team of the "Vlna z Brna" talk show. An interview with the PBC Executive Director took place on May 27th. The half-hour show focused on the following topics: Lower Morava BR, Man and the Biosphere Programme, activities of our PBC, 10th anniversary of the PBC, founding members and cooperating stakeholders, successful projects and plans for the near future. The interview was broadcasted as part of the regular talk show in a virtually unedited version in a nationwide cable network on June 3rd. It can be watched in the Brno TV archive on <http://www.b-tv.cz/videoarchiv>

Assignment of a Doctoral Thesis for Mendel University in Brno, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology

Following a meeting with Doc. Klimánek of Mendel University in Brno, reconnaissance of an area between the town of Lanžhot and the floodplain forest south-east of the town was conducted and a doctoral thesis plan

was prepared focusing on the use of GIS technology in the revitalization planning in selected areas. A part of the Lanžhot cadastre was identified as a suitable site for revitalization and the establishment of a close-to-nature forest park. Property rights need to be addressed under the planned complex land consolidation and the existing technical facilities (irrigation system, flood control facilities) together with other limitations, such as farming operations, need to be taken into account. The aim of the thesis is to propose optimized land use which would facilitate development of the town in relation to sports and leisure areas and provide the municipality with well-founded arguments for complex land consolidation. Our PBC initiated the project and assumed the role of an expert adviser.

Presentation delivered as part of events commemorating the 20th anniversary of the establishment of IFER – Institute of Forest Ecosystem Research in Průhonice

IFER, a renowned Czech private institute of forest ecosystem research collaborates with partners in many countries. They invited guests from across the Czech Republic – representatives of universities, ministries, state administration and other entities – to celebrate 20 years of operation in the fields of forest management and environment. Landscape management projects implemented by Lower Morava BR, PBC were presented at the event.

Field excursion for foresters from central Bohemia

The newly appointed management of the largest private forest estate in the Czech Republic – Coloredo Mannsfel Ltd. – expressed interest in the issue of Lower Morava BR management. The field excursion took place on June 11th and included interesting historical and natural sites within Mikulov and LVCL.

Work meeting with Deputy Minister of the Environment

On June 13th a long-scheduled work meeting took place in Lednice. It was initiated by RNDr Kabát, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of our PBC, with

the objective to inform Ing. Vladimír Dolejský, PhD, Deputy Minister of the Environment and Chairman of the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL, about the multidisciplinary issue of LVCL management and the role which the Interdisciplinary Workgroup might and could play in LVCL development, protection and management.

Coordination meeting to discuss mosquito-related projects in the vicinity of Břeclav

A meeting with Doc. Gelbič and RNDr. Šebesta was organized in the second half of June to discuss the possibilities of using available funding sources for a project of preventative measures against outbreak mosquito species in the area of LM BR. The optimum project holder and investigator within the LIFE+ programme should be either a research institution or a university, with participating Forests of the Czech Republic, local governments and PBC. The main constraint is a relatively high financial participation. Other possible sources of funding are expected in relation to the GAČR, NAZV and OPŽP programmes or regional trans-boundary projects in the new EU programming period.

Practical training in LM BR

Practical training of Bc. Jarmila Konecká, student of Palacký University in Olomouc, took place in our PBC in July. Under the expert guidance of our staff the student was allowed to create a matrix and collect data for an interactive map of sites of natural and conservation significance within LM BR which will be used for educational and presentation purposes in future.

Meeting discussing revision and delimitation of the Supra-regional Bio-corridor K 161 (SRBC)

The meeting took place at the Dolní Věstonice Municipal Office on July 15th and was attended by representatives of the municipality, our PBC and a design office appointed by the Ministry of the Environment. The aim of the meeting was to remove discrepancies related to the delimitation of a SRBC on the right bank of the Nové Mlýny Reservoirs. The failure to respect actual natural site conditions and delineation of the so-called buffer zone, which

is not legally backed, prevents land owners from any construction work and does not allow the municipality to set clear conditions of the site development within the respective spatial development plan, turned out to be a major discrepancy in the original SRBC plan. An agreement was reached, stipulating that the actual natural conditions in the said locality, which make it impossible to outline a wetland riparian habitat in the Věstonice cadastre, must be respected and that there will be two alternatives of the SRBC boundaries (the existing water level and planned level decreased by 40 cm).

Work meeting with the representatives of the town of Třeboň

A work meeting with the mayor of Lednice and representatives of our PBC initiated by the administration of the town of Třeboň was held in late July. The aim of the meeting was to share experience related to obtaining the World Heritage Site status. RNDr. Kabát, Mayor of Lednice and Chairman of the PBC Board of Trustees, delivered a detailed presentation. PBC Executive Director shared information on the role and operation of LVCL Site Manager.

Field excursion for the Institute of Forest Ecology Research (IFER)

A field excursion for 36 participants of an international conference organized by IFER took place on October 3rd. Participants from eight countries focused on the issue of floodplain forests and visited Pohansko, Lánské Meadows, Ranšpurk and Soutok.

Off-site meeting of the Czech MAB National Committee in Děčín

Representatives of our PBC participated in the off-site meeting of the Czech MAB National Committee which took place on October 16th as part of a seminar on "Invasive plants in protected areas" in Děčín. The agenda of the meeting included a report on the Czech MAB National Committee activities in 2013/2014. It discussed changes in the Committee's staffing and the possibility to include other members – representatives of landscape professions – in the Committee. The next point on the agenda

focused on changes in the rules of organization and procedure. Information on the latest session of the International Coordinating Council of the Man and the Biosphere Programme (ICC MAB) was delivered as part of the agenda as well. The key information came in the form of a report on the periodic reviews of three Czech BRs (Lower Morava, Krkonoše and Bílé Karpaty BR). All three BRs meet the MAB criteria, Krkonoše and Bílé Karpaty with recommendations. It was noted that Lower Morava BR was recommended as a model stakeholder-based management structure. Although this is the first time for a Czech BR to become a model for the World Network of Biosphere Reserves, the Czech MAB National Committee did not highlight this fact in any way nor suggested its capitalization, either in endorsing the MAB Programme in the Czech Republic or in everyday practice. The meeting continued with a theoretical presentation of PhDr. Rynda called “How to elevate BR to the centre of attention”, information on a project “The study and support of processes of participatory creation of regional strategies of sustainable territorial development upon using the method of participant observation” and reports on the activities in individual BRs in the Czech Republic. The meeting was concluded by reflections on a possible extension of the Krkonoše BR interconnected with the Jizerské hory PLA in a way that the newly established BR area would not be completely covered by one of the existing nature protection layers.

Seminar “Forest parks – an example of man in harmony with nature”

This event was organized for expert public by the Czech Forestry Association in collaboration with Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise, and Military Forests and Farms, State Enterprise, in Kostelec nad Černými lesy at the end of October. Presentation “10 years of Lower Morava BR” delivered by its Executive Director was very well received. Three forest parks – Křivoklátsko (13. 5. 2010), Masaryk Forest Training Forest Enterprise in Křtiny (22. 4. 2011) and Bezděz (11. 5. 2011) are looking for types of suitable institutionalization and our PBC experience was viewed as highly inspirational.

Seminar on tourism at Soutok (Confluence)

The South Moravian Region (SMR) organized a seminar called “The Morava and Dyje Confluence for tourists – building tourist infrastructure at the Czech-Austrian border” at the occasion of opening a new plank path in the vicinity of Soutok on October 24th. Our PBC presented a paper “Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve and the project of Strategy of Promoting Sustainable Tourism at the Confluence”, taking note of the currently implemented project “Proposed system for mitigating tourism impact on the Soutok Game Preserve”. The atmosphere of the following discussion and the ongoing collaboration can be viewed as optimistic, with visible understanding among SMR, Forests of the Czech Republic – Židlochovice Forest Enterprise, the LVCL and Podluží regions and nature protection authorities with respect to the issue. Our PBC contributed with its experience related to a project that could have solved the problems, which have deepened since then, as early as in 2005–2006. Our PBC is viewed as a logical choice of a partner for the important stakeholders mentioned earlier, including the Morava River Basin.

Meeting at the AdMaS Centre at the Brno University of Technology

Following the joint activities of our PBC and Mendel University launched earlier, a meeting with Ing. JUDr. Zdeněk Dufek, PhD., director of the AdMaS Centre (Advanced Materials, Structures and Technologies) took place in November. AdMaS is a modern science centre and a comprehensive civil engineering research institution which is part of the Faculty of Civil Engineering of Brno University of Technology. The meeting focused on preparation of a project “Efficient maintenance of protection zones along high voltage lines and enhancement of cultural landscape biodiversity” which will focus on the use of land under power transmission networks with the objective to enhance biodiversity in the surrounding cultural landscape. Our PBC should administer the role of a project coordinator. If required funding is granted, the launch of the project is expected in 2015.

EXPECTED DEVELOPMENT OF OUR ACTIVITIES IN 2015

In 2015 Lower Morava BR, P.B.C. will focus on expert and logistic support provided to municipalities in the course of implementing projects which may be eligible to funding from the Operational Programme Environment. These projects will focus on the establishment of territorial systems of ecological stability (TSES) in the agricultural landscape. An important share of our work in 2015 will be devoted to the project "The Red Book of Tree Species of the Czech Republic, the Red Book of Threatened

Floodplain Forest Species in Lower Morava BR and the Red List of Threatened Species at the Křtiny Training Forest Enterprise" funded by Norway Grants. As the LVCL Site Manager, our PBC will take part in optimizing the LVCL tourist infrastructure and finalizing the system solution of the LVCL Site Manager status under an agreement with the Interdisciplinary Workgroup for LVCL.

DONORS AND PARTNERS

23

With respect to its management, the Lower Morava Biosphere, Public Benefit Corporation, as a non-profit entity is striving to secure long-term and multiple-source funding for all its activities.

Our activities and projects implemented both in the Lower Morava Biosphere Reserve and outside it would not be possible without the

funding of grant and support programmes, nor without the contributions from individual donors and project partners. We wish to express our thanks to all those without whose financial support we would not be able to fulfil our mission.

MND, a.s., MND Drilling & Services, Alca Plast, s.r.o., Forests of the Czech Republic, State Enterprise,

Klement, a.s., Zahrada Olomouc, s.r.o., Voluntary Association of Municipalities of the LVCL Region,

Židlochovice Forest Enterprise, Vinařství Volařík, s.r.o. and Onyx Trade, s.r.o.