

Václav Zelený: PLA Blaník –an example of small-scale protected areas of Central Bohemia

The Protected Landscape Area (PLA) Blaník is situated on the middle course of the Blanice River south of town Vlašim. The picturesque region below Blaník Hill has always been a charming miniature of a typical Czech landscape. It was also one of the motives to declare it as a natural monument, established by the Decree of the Ministry of Culture in December 1981. Its surface occupies 41 km², its highest point being Velký Blaník peak (638 m), the lowest point being the river Blanice near village Ostrov. In this region four Nature Reserves (Velký Blaník Hill, Malý Blaník Hill, Cástrovice Ponds and Spring Meadows at Podlesí) with a total area of 121 ha and 23 monumental trees have been designated.

A natural axis of the region is represented by the small Blanice River, which flows and meanders in a wide lowland landscape of the Blaník trench. The area consists of metamorphic Moldanubial rocks originating in Archeozoic. Approximately in the centre there is a horst of Velký and Malý Blaník consisting of resistant, mildly directed orthogneiss („gneisose granite“) projecting on the sides of hills in the form of conspicuous outcrops and forming big boulder screes. Along the eastern border of the area we can find the relics of Permian fills. At the west border of the area important goldmine of Roudný is situated, where 60 tonnes of gold in total was mined. Gold had been extracted here since the Middle Ages until the 1930's.

Medium to heavily acid brown earths prevail in this region, changing locally into acid rankers on the Blaník slopes and into pseudogleys in flat areas with heavy loams. The average yearly precipitation is 632 mm, the average yearly temperature being 6,8 °C.

The main mission of the region is to protect all landscape values, its typical signs and natural resources and to create a balanced environment. The typical central Bohemian landscape preserved here is a rich patchwork of woodland, fields and meadows, enriched with lanes and dispersed greenery, interwoven with brooks and biologically valuable ponds.

Initially the whole area was covered with forest, that corresponds to the vegetation belt - mostly acidophilous oak to fir-oak woods, changing into beech woods, primarily woodrush - and beech woods along the eastern edge of the region. At present time more than a half of the area is deforested and the remaining woods have mostly been changed into needle forest (spruce, pine). Beech woods with fragmentary sycamore-maple and lime trees have been preserved on top of the Blaník Hill and Křížovská hora, the oak-hornbeam forests are found on the warm slopes bordering the Blanice floodplain. Forest management includes exemplary models of small-scale beech and fir stand reforestation in small deepenings on marginal forest clearings. With regard to well-preserved habitat most woody species rejuvenate fairly well; but also the indigenous trees are cultivated.

The most valuable vegetation concentrates today on the spring meadows and wetlands near the ponds. So far 20 plant species protected by law have been recorded in the area PLA, such as *Naumburgia thyrsoiflora*, *Parnassia palustris*, *Menyanthes trifoliata*, *Pedicularis palustris*, *Carex lasiocarpa*, *Dactylorhiza majalis*, *Eriophorum latifolium*, *Drosera rotundifolia* (mostly in peat-meadows) at spring meadows, *Calla palustris* at banks of the ponds, *Orchis morio*, *Platanthera bifolia* at dry meadows and forest borders, *Daphne mezereum*, *Lilium martagon*, *Aconitum variegatum*, *Epipactis helleborine* in broad-leaved forests. Recently some new or very rare lichens for the territory of Czech Republic were discovered in the area Blaník, e. g. *Caloplana flavocitrina*, *Spirographa fusisporella*, *Unguiculariopsis thallophilla* and even *Carboea distans* var. *buelliarum* – the second discovery in the world..

The fauna of the Protected Landscape Area is mainly characterized by species of the central European deciduous broad-leaved forests. In total about 40 protected species have been recorded in the area. These are for example amphibians *Triturus alpestris*, *Rana lessonae*, *Rana ridibunda*, *Rana arvalis*, *Hyla arborea*, The number of birds nesting in the area includes *Saxicola rubetra*, *Accipiter gentilis*, *Bubo bubo*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Scolopax rusticola*, *Podiceps ruficollis*,

Gallinago gallinago, *Alcedo atthis*. There are other species that have been observed, such as *Aquila pomarina*. Interesting mammal species are for example *Lutra lutra* or some bats (*Barbastella barbastellus*, *Myotis myotis*). Reptile species living in this landscape are e.g. *Lacerta vivipara*, *Coronella austriaca*, *Natrix tessellata*. There should also be mentioned a number of heavily threatened animal species particularly *Lampetra planeri*, *Cobitis taenis*, and invertebrates *Astacus astacus*, *Calopteryx splendens*, *Leucorrhinia pectoralis*. In the Blanice River *Unio pictorum* is found, at Velký Blaník interesting slugs as *Aegopis verticillus*, *Discus ruderatus* and very rare *Balea perversa* have been recorded.

The woods are subjected to standard, sensitively applied management. Almost two thirds of the remaining area is exploited for agricultural purposes, including the cultivation of potatoes, wheat, barley, rape, red clover, alfalfa, poppy and other agriculturally important plants.

The administration of (PLA) Blaník in Lounovice promotes the development of ecological agriculture by supporting the maintenance of valuable areas (e.g. by extensive grazing), pays attention to the restoration of prominent elements in the agricultural landscape, e.g. hedges, lanes, solitary trees, supports splitting up of once combined plots and stands and promotes ecological farming methods.

The area is also very interesting from historic point of view. Celtic settlement was located near the top of Velký Blaník during second half of the first millennium B.C. . Various objects of ancient culture, particularly ceramics, from 12. to 16. century A. C. were found in Malý Blaník. Several very old churches are situated in villages in the region, especially roman church in Kondrac and Liboun , renaissance- and baroque mansion in Lounovice, baroque mansion with a park and gothic church in Naceradec. Many fine folk buildings can be found all around the region. Blaník had entered people's consciousness thanks to a number of legends that have made it a hill surrounded with a mystery. The area has retained the unrepeatable atmosphere of typical Bohemian landscape at the boundary between Central Bohemia and Bohemian – Moravian Highlands, which has not been significantly damaged by the construction of conspicuous buildings, industry or any devastating economic activities.

At the top of Velký Blaník Hill wooden lookout tower was build up in accordance with Husiten tradition in 1940. From this point the entire protected landscape region can be surveyed during fine weather.