



View of Čerchov, the highest peak in Český Les

Welcome to the landscape of the Český Les (also known as the Upper Palatine Forest or Böhmischer Wald) mountain range. It lies on a strip of forested hills that has always been the natural border between Bohemia and Upper Palatinate (Oberpfalz) in Bavaria, and has preserved many traces from the history of the local landscape. A careful visitor has the opportunity to follow the mutual interaction between nature and man that has taken place here for centuries. As a result of human use, the originally forested landscape developed into a variegated mosaic of places which are home to plant and animal species that would be unable to live in a forested land.



Diana Nature Reserve

Originally there were fir and beech forests, with peat bog patches and waterlogged spruce forests in moist locations. Over the course of time, they were accompanied by pastures, meadows, fields and orchards. On small mountain rivers, little lakes, pools and flumes were created. Settlements developed. However, after World War II most of the local German inhabitants were displaced, villages were demolished and the so-called Iron Curtain was built as an inaccessible zone along the border. Nature again took over the remnants of human settlement.

The Český Les Protected Landscape Area was declared in 2005 over an area of 473 sq. km. It covers most of the Český Les borderline range, going from Folmava in the south to Broumov in the north. The Český Les House of Nature is the gateway to the local landscape. The permanent

exhibition shows its transformations over the course of time, from the primary colonisation of the border forests, through the development of agriculture and industrial production, especially the glassmaking industry, the post-war displacement of the locals and the establishment of the forbidden border zone. Parts of the exhibition show vanished villages, their history and current condition, and also grassland plant communities and water in the landscape. It also features a film inviting visitors for a trip to interesting and attractive places in Český Les.

The House of Nature is located in the Stará pošta ('Old Post Office') building on the square in Klenčí pod Čerchovem. The history of this, one of the oldest and most important post offices in Bohemia, goes back to the mid-16th century when Klenčí was on the important Prague – Pilsen – Regensburg postal route.

The White stork, your guide through the Český Les House of Nature



The White stork is a typical example of an animal that successfully adapted to changes in the landscape and closely bound its life with people. The bird is also a natural traveller and therefore was chosen as the guide through the Český Les House of Nature exhibition.



Lučina, a vanished village



The Český Les House of Nature ('Dům přírody Českého lesa') is a visitor centre which runs a permanent outdoor and indoor exhibition showing the natural, cultural and historical monuments of the unique border area of Český Les. Schools and other visitors are welcome to use our specialised programmes both in the House of Nature and outdoors, which can be ordered via the e-mail address below. Tickets and souvenirs are sold on the ground floor. The goods we offer are from local producers. A conference room is available.

Klenčí pod Čerchovem 4,
345 34 Klenčí pod Čerchovem, CZ,
GPS 49.4362586N, 12.8158461E
Tel.: 00420 379 795 325
E-mail: tic.kultura@klenci.cz
ceskyles.dumprrody.cz

The Český Les House of Nature is operated by the municipality:
Městys Klenčí pod Čerchovem, č. p. 118,
345 34 Klenčí pod Čerchovem, CZ
E-mail: tic.kultura@klenci.cz
www.klenci.cz

The Český Les Protected Landscape Area is administered and managed by the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, regional office Správa chráněné krajinné oblasti Český les, náměstí Republiky 287, 348 06 Přimda, CZ, Tel.: +420 374 611 021, e-mail: ceskyles@nature.cz
www.ceskyles.ochranaprirody.cz

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Marsh gentian



Fire salamander

Did you know that...

- ✿ More than 80 % of the area of the Český Les PLA is covered in forest?
- ✿ More than 40 families of the European beaver live in the Český Les PLA?
- ✿ In the Český Les PLA you can find the highly endangered Marsh gentian, along with the rare Alcon large blue butterfly (*Phengaris alcon*)?
- ✿ More than 60 villages vanished in the area of Český Les after 1945?
- ✿ Almost 60 glassworks were once in operation in Český Les?
- ✿ The largest preserved plate glass polishing machine in the Czech Republic can be seen in the Arnoštova glass polishing shop, which lies on the Glassmaking trail near Lesná?

Thank you for being considerate towards our natural heritage and for:

- ✿ camping and lighting fires only in designated places
- ✿ driving and parking your car only where permitted
- ✿ keeping to marked trails
- ✿ riding your bicycle on cycle paths and respecting nature and other visitors
- ✿ leaving animals and plants alone in their natural habitats
- ✿ not damaging nature and natural monuments
- ✿ taking your rubbish with you

Tip for a trip: In the Footsteps of Glassmaking in Český Les

The twelve stations of the educational trail will guide you through the history of glassmaking in Český Les. The trail begins in Stará Knížecí Huť, where cars may be parked on entering the village. A 6-km long trail runs along asphalt roads. We recommend you take enough food and drink with you. Perhaps the best attraction along the trail is the original plate glass polishing machine, unique in its size and preservation. The trail also offers information on nature conservation with interactive features for children and adults.

Tip for a trip: The Capartice Meadows Nature Trail

The Capartice meadows (‘Capartické louky’) are among the most valuable meadows in the Český Les PLA. Visitors are guided along the nature trail with gaming features that runs along forest and meadow paths in an easy terrain suitable also for children, with a length of less than 2 km. You will become acquainted with common grassland species and also rare orchids, such as the lesser twayblade or the greater butterfly orchid. You will learn why formerly common blooming meadows are becoming rare, what is harmful to them and what helps them. The best time to visit is in spring and early summer. A paid car park in Capartice is available, together with a small pub.

Tip for a trip: The Aquatic World Nature Trail

The Aquatic World (‘Vodní svět’) Nature Trail presents the nature in the long-abandoned water reservoirs at the Na Kolmu site. The main attraction is a beaver observation tower on the bank of one of the fishponds. With a wooden pier in another fishpond, visitors are able to walk above the water surface, where they can observe aquatic invertebrates and amphibians. The 2-km long trail also features a model of a beaver dam, a children’s puzzle and a tourist sound board. If your journey starts in Lesná, it is two kilometres to get to Na Kolmu. Take food and drink.

Tip for a trip: The Podkovák Nature Trail

This nature trail presents the peat bogs, which can be found in the northern part of Český Les, approx. 1 km south of the road from Lesná to Stará Knížecí Huť. Cars can be parked some 2 km from Lesná at an intersection of roads in the forest. The peat bogs are accessible via a wooden walkway winding through unique bog pine stands. The trail ends in a roofed viewing gallery offering a view of the pools and rare plant species, such as the Labrador-tea, round-leaved sundew and the butterwort.



Arnoštova plate glass polishing workshop



Meadow rich in species



The European beaver



Beaver dam on the Aquatic World nature trail



Walkway in peat bogs on the Podkovák nature trail

Man and Forest



The Iron Curtain. The establishment of a closely observed border zone disrupted the continuity of the development of man and landscape. The return to the natural and balanced relationship between nature and people now underway is quite difficult.



Development of industry in Český Les. Man began to use machinery and water power, which largely changed the landscape’s character. This happened along with a reduction of forests and their first controlled renewal after logging.

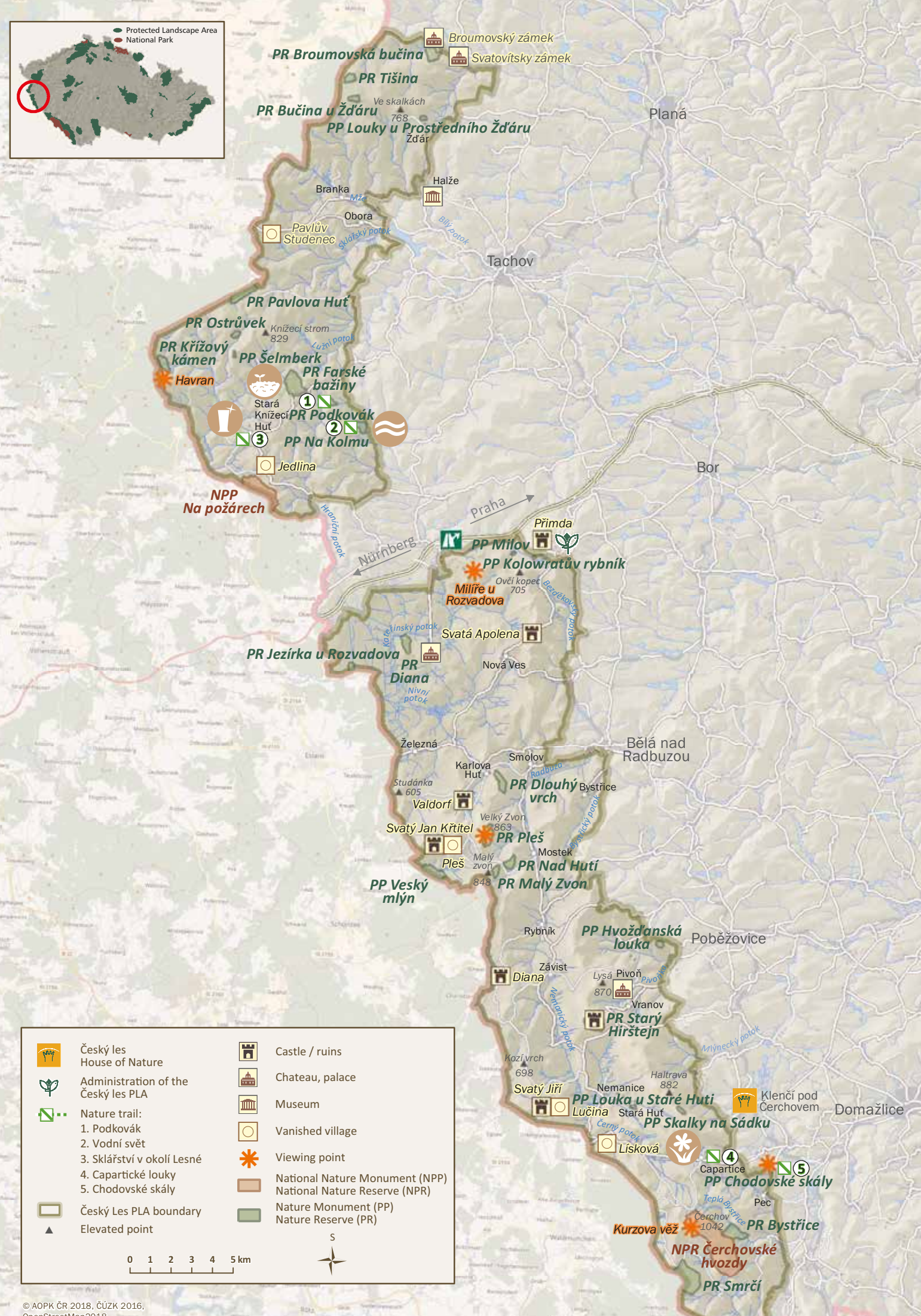


Mediaeval colonisation of Český Les. Controlled inhabitation of Český Les and planning of land use changed the appearance of the landscape and resulted in rich variegated landscape mosaics.



Forest before the arrival of man. Before the arrival of the first colonisers it was an impermeable primary forest with swamps and marshes.

From the Český Les House of Nature permanent exhibition. Illustrations by Marek Zákostelecký



Český les
House of Nature

Administration of the
Český les PLA

Nature trail:
1. Podkovák
2. Vodní svět
3. Vodlářství v okolí Lesné
4. Capartické louky
5. Chodovské skály

Český Les PLA boundary

Elevated point

Castle / ruins

Chateau, palace

Museum

Vanished village

Viewing point

National Nature Monument (NPP)
National Nature Reserve (NPR)
Nature Monument (PP)
Nature Reserve (PR)

0 1 2 3 4 5 km

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