



A floodplain forest landscape in spring

Welcome to Litovelské Pomoraví Protected Landscape Area, a land of floodplain forests and the dark, muddy-smelling waters of the River Morava, Moravia's largest river, meandering through the massive layers of sandy gravel and alluvial silts in the broad floodplain between Mohelnice and Olomouc. Welcome to the labyrinth of old and new river channels, joined together by distributaries, abandoned riverbeds and pools, from which the gently rolling Doubrava Hills rise, including the prominent limestone hill Třesín that cloaks the Mladeč Cave system, which contains the greatest snake cave in Europe.



Meanders of the River Morava

Litovelské Pomoraví Protected Landscape Area was declared in 1990 and covers an area of 96 km². It is situated on a 3–8 km wide strip of floodplain forests along the River Morava, between Olomouc and Mohelnice. Moravia's largest river meanders through the old underlying rocks of the Bohemian Massif, flows through the cut of Mohelnická Brázda and, in the east, enters the valley Hornomoravský Úval. In the northern part of the PLA the floodplain on the Morava's left bank is bordered by the Doubrava hills, which consist of greywackes and slates; and on its right bank, the limestone hill Třesín. Inside this hill, the Mladeč Caves formed. They are open to the public and better known for their archaeological finds than their dripstone decorations.



The House of Nature, a low-energy building

Litovelské Pomoraví House of Nature is a visitor centre that familiarises people with the exceptional values of this internationally acclaimed wetland. The wetland's moist environment is conducive to great biodiversity and the organisms that are bound to it and it enables people to spend some healthy time in the landscape, whether they are living here or visiting. So, take a stroll through the outdoor gallery by yourself or stop by the visitor centre to pick up keys to Rajská zahrada (Paradise Garden) and Sluneční hora (Sunny Hill). Uncover the secrets of the outdoor gallery in one of the search games. Equipped with an exploration kit, you can set out to explore nature in the surroundings. Come to one of our events for parents and children or listen to a talk. Book a guided tour or an all-day outing.

More on www.dumprirody.cz/litovelskepomoravi

The Litovelské Pomoraví House of Nature visitor centre, including **the Litovelské Pomoraví PLA information centre at Šargoun**, is operated by the Sluňákov Centre for Environmental Activities, City of Olomouc, Skrběšská 669/70, Horka nad Moravou, GPS 49.6419325N, 17.1997617E, tel.: +420 585 154 711, e-mail: info@slunakov.cz www.slunakov.cz

Litovelské Pomoraví Protected Landscape Area is administered and managed by the Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic's Olomoucko regional office (Litovelské Pomoraví PLA Administration), Husova 906/5, 784 01 Litovel, tel.: 951425155, email: litpom@nature.cz, <https://litovelskepomoravi.ochranaprirody.cz>

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The greatest assets of Central Moravia include well-preserved floodplain forests, in which mighty bison and aurochs once lived. In sites that undergo regular and prolonged flooding, and where the water deposits nutrient-rich sediments, a **softwood forest** grows, with ash trees, willows and black poplars. In sites only seldom reached by the floodwater, a **hardwood forest** can be found, with European oak, linden and elm trees. The arrival of spring is marked by a white carpet of flowering snowdrops and spring snowflakes, followed by early stars-of-Bethlehem, *Corydalis* species, wood anemones, cowslip primroses and *Isopyrum thalictroides*. Then the bear leeks flower; later, a lush summer vegetation with nettles and hops grows.

Litovelské Pomoraví ranks among the most important areas in Central Europe for the conservation of **temporary pool communities**, which include such unusual animals as the branchiopoda – fairy shrimps and tadpole shrimps. The PLA is also home to the largest population in Moravia of the critically endangered clouded Apollo butterfly. Large coppers and critically endangered dusky large blues fly about the wet meadows in summer. Thirty species of fish live in the River Morava, the most common being European chub, common nase and common barbel. The floodplain landscape is a real paradise for amphibians and birds. The rare little ringed plover sits on its nest in the gravel alluvium of the river, and kingfishers dig their burrows into the steep river banks.

The best-known animal here is the **Eurasian beaver**, which had been driven to extinction in the past in most of Europe. The beaver population in the PLA currently boasts 200–250 animals. Although they are rarely to be seen, the traces of their activity are often evident, such as gnawed tree trunks and beaver dams built on the streams.



The Garden of Eden

The European oak, mascot of the House of Nature



I am a tree called an oak. I derive my strength and beauty from the landscape where the earth and water meet the air and fire. I stand on the bank of the river, its water coursing through my roots. The wind ruffles the leaves in my crown, the earth supports me and the sun nourishes me. Drop by and listen to the remarkable story of the floodplain landscape; listen to the story of the people who settled here long ago and drank the clean water, caught the fish and breathed the clean air of the dense forests. With my wood they fed their fires, which provided them defence, hope and a place to gather around. With my help, they became more courageous and faster, until they lost all sense of proportion. They forgot about the simple fact that their bodies and souls – the same as we trees – are closely connected with nature and its secrets: with water, air, earth and fire.



The Solar Mountain



Information centre at Šargoun

Did you know that ...

- the symbol of Litovelské Pomoraví is the largest river in Moravia, the Morava?
- the Morava branches into permanent and periodic distributaries, which are locally called 'smuhy' ('smohe' in the Hanakian dialect)?
- in the temporary pools you can find real animal oddities, namely fairy shrimps and tadpole shrimps?
- in the forests of Litovelské Pomoraví the European crab apple grows occasionally, which is one of the ancestors of today's apple cultivars?
- one of the northernmost, largest and also oldest Cro-Magnon dwellings from the Palaeolithic period was discovered in the Mladeč cave system?
- our smallest heron species, the little bittern, nests on Chomoutov Lake?

Thank you for your considerate conduct towards our shared natural heritage and for:

- camping and lighting fires only in places so designated
- driving and parking only where permitted
- walking only on marked trails
- riding your bicycle on cycle paths and being respectful to nature and other visitors
- leaving alone the animals and plants in their natural habitats
- not damaging the non-living parts of nature and valuable monuments
- taking your rubbish home with you.

Tip for a trip:
Mladeč Caves

To the west of Litovel the flat landscape rises up to the limestone ridge of Třesín. Mladeč Cave was formed by the two-way action of water and earth, resulting in a fascinating underworld that hides a complex labyrinth of fracture caves with dripstone decorations. The cave is a globally acclaimed archaeological and palaeontological site. As early as 34 000 years ago, it was inhabited by Cro-Magnon type humans. The cave and its surroundings probably served these people as a ritual grave site.

Tip for a trip:
The Romantic landscape surrounding Nové Zámky

In the surroundings of Nové Zámky a Romantically designed landscape adjoins the floodplain forest complex. From 1597 to 1945 the grounds of Nové Zámky were part of the extensive manorial estate of the Liechtenstein family of Úsov, the oldest feudal family in Central Europe. The chateau building that forms the centre was built in 1690. It is surrounded by an extensive landscaped park with a collection of smaller Romantic constructions: an obelisk, known as 'Chimney', an imitation of an antique temple called Rytířská síň (Knights' Hall), Čertův most (Devil's Bridge), the Temple of Friendship, and a modified cave called Podkova. Between these, sweeping views into the landscape were created through tree-lined avenues.

Tip for a trip:
Follow the Litovelské luhy (Litovel Floodplain Forest) Nature Trail

You can set out on foot or by bicycle from Litovel and go all the way to Poděbrady Lake through the most extensive complex of floodplain forests still intact in the Czech Republic. The trail leads through the richest ecosystem in Central European conditions, where the River Morava has formed an inland delta. The water pushes its way through the main riverbed as well as flowing into distributaries, over fallen trees and gravel alluvium. Occasionally, it floods temporary pools and channels. It is after the spring floods, when the floodplain forests and adjacent meadows fill up with the meltwaters of Hrubý Jeseník and Králický Sněžník, that Litovelské Pomoraví is at its most charming. However, during the summer months, visitors are advised to expect large numbers of mosquitoes.

Tip for a trip:
Open-air Gallery

The Open-air Gallery at the House of Nature in Horka nad Moravou presents the unique landscape of the floodplain forests. The artworks of František Skála, Miloš Šejn, Miloslav Fekar and Marcel Hubáček, displayed along a circuit trail, serve as a place to commune with nature and are there for all to enjoy. Secluded corners, mysterious spaces in buildings, winding trails and wooden bridges all refresh the senses of the visitor for a while. The trail is suitable for a stroll with a pram or a bike ride.



Mladeč Caves



Devil's Bridge at Třesín



Fairy shrimp



Floodplain forest along the River Morava

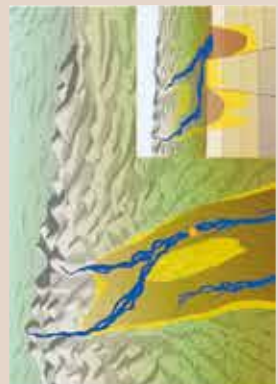


Solar Mountain

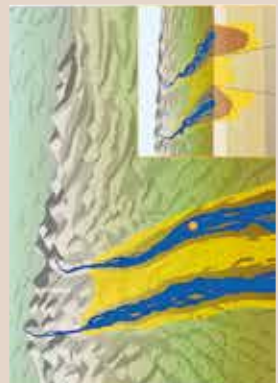
How the River Morava formed



During the last few millennia
5000 years ago the deposition of gravel declined and alluvial silts began to be deposited when the river overflowed its banks during spring floods. Silt deposits were boosted by human activities such as clearing forests and farming.



0.5 million years ago
The River Morava relocated to the north-east near Litovel. It made a new riverbed, merged with the River Oskava above Olomouc and together they flowed toward Vyškov. The River Blata established its riverbed on the site of the Morava's original bed.



1 million years ago
The river was influenced by alternating glacial and interglacial periods. Meltwater scoured the underlying rocks in the mountains and deposited the eroded material in the lowlands. Deep riverbeds with sediments of up to 100 m formed.



5 million years ago
Along the river, a sequence of gravel, sand and clay up to 150 m deep was deposited. These deposits protrude from the surface as islands near Olomouc, Králůvka and Střelice. The River Morava was located further to the west, where the River Blata is today.



25 million years ago
The River Morava flowed from Králický Sněžník mountain to the west into an estuary of a sea that reached to where Brno and Olomouc are today. Parallel to the River Morava, the River Oskava flowed from the Hrubý Jeseník mountain range.

Illustration: Martin Mág Škarda

