

LIFE projects help our nature and not only that...

Through the LIFE program, the European Union finances activities aimed at the environment, especially nature and landscape protection. It serves to support hobby activities that are not primarily commercial, just as the CULTURE program supports culture, or perhaps the most interesting SOCRATES program supports education.

When my colleagues and I wrote our first texts on Life projects in issue 4/2019, the editor-in-chief wrote that Life means life. How apt. He also means my life, that is, his great piece. At the same time, it is the culmination of my life's work, which began at the age of seven with a love of nature, later enriched by the need to protect, a culmination that came with the approval of the first project aimed at invasive plant species. But hop to start.

My relationship with nature began with mineralogy. In the second grade, botany came when my friends from the apartment building could not find our favourite games because they had to do herbariums for school. What was I supposed to do? I went with them to the woods and to the meadows and worked as a herbarium. While for them it ended with a surrender to the teacher, I surrendered to botany and continued herbarium for another few years. Then came the years of biological olympiads, natural sciences, circles, buzzard counts, tree plantings and amphibian mapping. Later, the Faculty of Science, specifically physical geography, was added, and then, beware, I suddenly began to make a living by studying nature and landscape while studying. Specifically, the creation of territorial systems of stability, mapping of important landscape elements, planning the revitalization of watercourses, later also by carving raids and mowing on Beskydy meadows and pastures or planting firs, maples and elms. Only then came the first mentioned Life project focused on the elimination of invasive plant species around the Morávka River and I felt that it was my floor, that I wanted to stay here, that I did not want to go anywhere else for something new.

So what are these spectacular projects? For me personally, the most likable thing is something that is not their primary goal. I like that they give stability and space for the shift and development of many skilled people and organizations, similarly to me and ČSOP Salamandr on the Morávka River. And I don't even have to talk anymore. They will tell you all these clever people in their articles in this issue of Veronika themselves. Because this issue really introduces all Life projects related to nature and landscape protection that have ever been launched in the Czech Republic and have run or are still running.

I will briefly mention the first, somewhat prehistoric Life projects very briefly now. Although they are really quite ancient, their content, the people who worked on them, and the organizations that presented them at the time, continue to live. The very first was Life Rupicolous in 2005, which would simply translate the saddle as a rock, focused on the Moravian Karst. The second project was the already mentioned Life Morávka, which, among other things, launched several similar projects. The third LIFE Informs project in the Czech Republic, which is so far the only information project in the field of environmental protection in the Czech Republic focused primarily on NATURE 2000, but also, for example, on the protection of greenery or the fight against black motocross, also overlapped with it.

You can read about all the others, not only Czech, but also foreign ones, especially Slovak ones, where the Czechs are partners, in this issue.

To summarize the previous ones, most of the texts of the first issue of this year are dedicated to the Life program. We wanted to help make this important EU project for nature and landscape protection more visible by publishing all currently ongoing projects in the Czech Republic. The lyrics will take you through interesting activities that have a big goal. In addition to the protection of endangered species and landscapes,

they want to involve the public, the inhabitants of the affected regions, landowners, local governments and, last but not least, schools of all levels.

Apart from LIFE, which means life, other texts have also found their place in this issue. The railway returns regularly, so it will certainly please the lines on which it is presented as the green backbone of the Czech Republic. You will learn how the Svárovská Alley case continues, the first place in the Alej 2020 poll complicated the mutual washing of the hands of the building lobby and their minions from the political representation. Michala Mariňáková could not decide which landscape is best for her heart, so she introduced us to at least her favorite places in our home. Naďa Johanišová gathered arguments against the liquidation of gardening colonies in Brno, which developers and some politicians consider a survival, while older people and especially families with small children living in apartment buildings describe them as rescue and the opportunity to live nature actively in the city itself. The Windmills section deals with the traumas brought about by the current pandemic crisis, we will have fun with a colorful bird by Roman Zajíček, Jiří Šafránek will currently introduce us to a pair of Nile geese, which brought out their young unusually early this year. In conclusion, we will remember our dear colleague doc. Jan Lacina, who left us just a year ago, to my professional and human life teacher.

A total of 67 pages awaits you, hopefully a nice read, just turn the page ...

Roman Barták