



The area of the Karst Living Museum is situated between the villages of Sežana and Lipica and the Italian-Slovenian border. Following the selected itineraries one can admire the exceptional beauty of the nature and encounter the unique cultural heritage, the characteristics of the entire Karst area. A visitor will discover a region formed by calcareous soil, water, a north-east wind – *bora* and Mediterranean influences. Through the centuries the *gmajna* (common uncultivated land) had been cleaned out and the stones had been piled up in *grize* (large pieces of land with karst rocks), *suhi zidovi* (stone walls), *pastirske hiške* (shepherds' huts) and *kali* (water pounds for cattle). Besides a great number of geomorphological karst features, fossil remains and archaeological finds, the area represents an extremely interesting biodiversity, including abundant colourful vegetation and wildlife. The Karst Living Museum offers the pleasure of discovery. Start your journey with joy, curiosity and - above all - the intention to protect nature and cultural heritage! During the entire year the area is also a hunting area. It is recommended to observe the instructions at the entrance of the area.



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REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA
MINISTRSTVO ZA GOSPODARSKI
RAZVOJ IN TEHNOLOGIJO



Ministero dell'Economia
e delle Finanze

DISCOVER THE MYSTERIES OF THE KARST

visit the Karst Living Museum and
discover a treasure of karst phenomena



ŽIVI KRAS-CARSO
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hidden treasure of nature



KARST NATURE AND LANDSCAPE



The Karst landscape reflects an exciting tale of time. The Nature had created geomorphologic shapes, which became a synonym for the karst phenomena and gave a basis to the science of karstology. The main reason for the creation of Karst relief is the solubility – the **corrosion** of limestone as a consequence of the chemical action between water, CO₂ and organic acids.

The surface shaped of limestone have specific names like the **rills** (*žlebiči*), **karens** (*škraplje* – *škraplijšča*), **kamenitzas** (*škaune*), **stone tables-mushrooms** (*kamnite mize-gobe*), **hums** (*osamelci*), **karst rocks** (*grize*) etc. Other, bigger forms of the Karst surface are represented by **shallow valleys** (*dolinice*) and deeper valleys. They can have round and elongated shape, dish-shaped or stepped-shape. Deep, steep and kettle-shaped valleys with a narrow and close bottom are called sinkholes (*vrtače*). Deeper and larger than sinkholes are called **collapse dolines** (*udorne doline*). They were created hundred thousands years ago in the Late Pleistocene during the long-term destruction of the ceilings of the underground caves. The cave **Golokratna jama** is one of this dolines, situated in the area of the Karst Living Museum.

In The Karst area there are no surface water resources. Water courses disappear in the underground where they - through deepening and changing of their directions - formed numerous **caves**. The Karst underground caves present numerous calcareous formations. There can be found many different rock shapes and sediments (mainly caves clay). Some underground water courses never changed their way and today are the same as in the past. In 2003 the cave explorers of the Jamarsko društvo Sežana (Society of Cave Exploration) reached the underground stream of the Reka River in **jama Kanjudice** (Kanjaduce cave) and followed it for about 800 metres. A year later they reached the stream of the Reka River in a depth of 340 metres inside an abyss in **Stržinkna dolina** (Stržinkna valley).



BIODIVERSITY



It is for centuries that the autochthonous Karst vegetation has been resisting bora and draught on the shallow Karst soil. Biotic diversity consists of sub-Mediterranean vegetation with xerophilic Illyrian species and the Middle Europe vegetation. The preservation of ecosystems is of extreme importance.

Discovering the Karst Living Museum you can find: **common houseleek**, **wild asparagus**, **mountain anemone**, **wild peony** and **hellebore**. In the area of Lipica you will find crocus. On the slopes of Orleška Draga, where cold air is trapped near the ground due to temperature inversion, grows **auricula** – mountain cowslip or bear's ears and some other plants of higher altitudes. From spring to autumn the following flowers spring out: violets, primroses, lilies of the valley, daffodils, golden daisies, peonies and cyclamens.

The landscape of Lipica Stud Farm (*Kobilarna Lipica*) is marked by mighty **oaks** (downy oak, turkey oak, durmast oak). On these ancient trees lives a parasite - the **mistletoe**. Characteristic for the Lipica surroundings are **field maple**, **minor maple** and **linden**.

Among the original deciduous trees you can notice **hop hornbeam**, **common hornbeam**, **ash**, **hazel** and **wild cherry**. The shrubs majorly

present are **blackthorn**, **juniper**, **smoke tree**, **barberry**, **common elder** and **mahaleb cherry**.

The Karst landscape is also a habitat of many animal species. In the forest live **roe deer**, **brown hares**, **squirrels**, **dormice**, **badgers**, **wild boars** and **common deer**. Night predators as **foxes**, **wild cats**, **beech marten** and **weasels** are frequent. **Jackal**, **wolf** and **brown bear** can be noticed. Birds also contribute to the nature diversity: **titmouse**, **nuthatch**, **jay**, **black woodpecker**, **crow**, **little owl** and other rare and endangered species: **eagle owl**, **scops owl**, **skylark**, **nightjar**, **hoopoe**, **honey buzzard** and **short-toed snake eagle**. On the rocky slopes you can meet **bats** and rare **rock pigeons**.

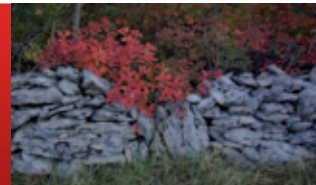
In the dark, underground streams and lakes live organisms are also present. In the abyss of *Stržinkna dolina* (Stržinkna Valley) a human fish (Proteus anguina) and various underground fauna have been found.

The Karst *gmajna* (common uncultivated land) is a home of: horned viper, viper, black snake, green lizard and sand lizard. In *kali* (puddles) you can meet grass-snake, on the gardens a small snake, in devastated facilities also a rat snake.

On *gmajna* live the **nose-horned viper**, **western wip snake** and lizards - **the green lizard** and **the common wall lizard**. In ponds we can meet the **grass snake**, the **slow-worm** in gardens and the **aesculapian snake** in abandoned buildings.



CULTURAL HERITAGE



For centuries the only source of water for the Karst people were **ponds** (*kali*) and **wells** (*štirne*). They provided the potable water for household and cattle. The ponds were obtained from natural basins. The slope was leveled and the bottom deepened. The layer of clay (20 cm thick) was laid down and pressed into the soil to seal the bottom. The clay was protected by stone lining (*škrle* – flat stones, slates). The cattle pressed the stone grounding with its own weight during watering, thus clay preserved moisture and sealing. The village people used to meet near ponds and in the winter the children used to skate on ice. The locals used the ponds also to obtain ice. In the winter they cut ice and conserved it in special facilities – **ice houses** (*ledenice*). In the summer they used to drive the ice by old carts to Trieste. The nearest preserved ice house with stairs is situated in the area of Lipica Stud Farm (*Kobilarna Lipica*), close to the existing pond.

The rainwater was collected also by building **wells**. A strong will and hard work was needed to obtain potable water. The construction of **New well Sežana-Orlek** (*Nova štirna Sežana-Orlek*), one of rare preserved samples of wells, built in the middle of a common land (*gmajna*), confirms that. New well has a round shape, with a diameter of about 9 meters and it's 3 meters deep. Two-sided staircase leads to it. Behind piled-up stone blocks, on the bottom of the well, stuffed clay maintains the rain water on the surface. After 1822, in a similar way, were built a well in Štirna Valley (*Štirna dolina*, a small valley beside the road Sežana – Orlek) and a well in Lusca in Orlek.

An important achievement was the construction of the **village community well** in 1880. The rain water was collected from the nearby roofs and conduced through the constructed canal and clay pipes into a well. The excess water went into a pound. The local people who did not have their own wells, used the water from the village well. At the lack of water the well was locked and custodians delivered water to the village people. Wealthier village people built wells on their own yards (*borjač*). Wells were excavated in the stony ground. The wells were surrounded by finely sculptured stones and sealed by clay. The above part of the *štirna* is **šap**

(stone frame of a well), made of one or several pieces. In the village Orlek you can admire the **Čotova štirna** from 1881 and over 250 years-old **Stržinkna štirna**. A real relief for the whole Karst was the construction of the main water pipeline from Brestovica to Komen across the entire Karst after 1982.

Karst shepherds' huts (*Kraške pastirske hiške*) are an expression of the life of a Karst man, famer by his nature. They are a typical example of folk architecture using raw stone, removed from *gmajna* (common uncultivated land), as constructing material. The huts offered shelter to shepherds against bora and summer rain and were built as free-standing or leaned on big rocks and dry walls. In small huts there is place for two or three persons, while in the bigger ones seven people can be accommodated.

Karst dry stone walls (*Kraški suhi zidovi*) today represent a special Karst feature giving the characteristic and aesthetic look to the Karst landscape. While clearing the pastures and meadows, people built walls using removed stones. The name dry walls means that they were built without using mortar or other binders.

Boundary stones are unique part of the culture heritage; they show us how the property was governed at the time and how land was used. The boundary stones were used to mark administrative boundaries, to distinguish properties and to manage the territorial administration for tax collection. The boundary stones preserve not only the memory of real events and phenomena, but also of mystic happenings.

Stone milestones (*Kamniti mejniki*) are a specific cultural heritage witnessing how people used to settle the land property relations and the use of lands. The milestones in nature marked administrative boundaries, which determined ownership, division of authority and management of sites regarding tax-raising. The stone signs preserve the memory of the real and also mystic events and phenomena.



ARCHEOLOGIC AND GEOLOGIC HERITAGE



The area of the Karst Living Museum is an abundant archaeological site with various findings of fossils, animal bones and ancient artefacts. In the cave **Ludvikova jama** (Ludvik's Cave), in the vicinity of Orlek, animal fossil bones from the Pleistocene period were found. The bones belong to a **wolverine** (*Gulo gulo*), the biggest marten, living today in the arctic and subarctic areas of the globe. Other prehistoric sites are cave **Jama v Partu pri Ogradi**, the rock of *Krnavica* and the rock-shelter **Malenca**, where the remains of earware and coal were found, together to faunal remains of sheep, goats and wild animals (deer). In the cave **Jama v sežanski gmajni** pieces of earware from **late Roman period** were found.

The Karst area contain abundant Paleontological heritage. A collection of fossils from the Cretaceous collected by local inhabitant Viktor Saksida is exposed in the Sežana Municipality. In the botanic park in Sežana is exhibited a geological collection of the most important Karst rocks from more than 100 million years-old limestone of Brje formation, up to shallow water rocks of Povir formation and the well-known Komen limestone with the fossils of fish and reptiles. There can be seen typical types of rudist limestones, flat limestones with well-preserved fossils and plenty of chert, an indispensable soil component for Teran growing. Sedimentation environment was favourable also for the creation of thin layers of high calorific black coal. The museum collection also presents different types of flysch rocks.



THE SEŽANA – BASOVIZZA ROAD

Sežana was mentioned as settlement in 1152 already, whereas Basovizza in 1297. Throughout the centuries, both towns were on trade paths towards Trieste port. In the 18th century, a moment of a great trading progress, the **Vienna Road** (Vienna – Trieste) put connection between Basovizza and Sežana. In the middle of the 19th century active trade with wine, wood, flour and other products towards the sea and inland took place in the area. A dirt road was built during the period of Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. At the end of the 19th century the road was for the last time renovated. In 1947 the traffic was completely stopped by a new border between Italy and Yugoslavia. After Slovenia's joining the EU the road has been used for recreation purposes.

Today it represents the central axis of the Karst Living Museum, the connection of hiking and biking trails leading to many interesting landscape sites. One can reach the **Lipica Stud Farm** and continue along the **Josef Ressel forest educational trail** to the **Naturalistic educational centre in Basovizza**. Crossing the border one can also visit the Dispersed Museum of water. Embraced by the Karst, we can take our time to visit the cave **Vilenica**, picturesque **Škocjan Caves (Škocjanske jame)**, town of **Štanjel**, **Karst wine road** and other Karst attractions.