

Project Update: February 2019.

First and foremost, we had the opportunity to present our project at the 3rd Rufford Small Grants conference "Explore and protect the natural beauty of Balkans", which was held in our country at Silver Lake, Serbia. We participated with an oral presentation entitled „Unraveling the hidden corners of Serbian nature". This was an amazing opportunity to exchange ideas, get important feedback and discuss difficulties with other RSG holders while establishing new connections and collaborations.

The abstract from the conference is available at:

<https://www.rufford.org/files/Serbia%20Conference%202018.pdf>



The Rufford Small Grants Conference at Silver Lake, Serbia. Photo from: <https://epnbalkans.com/>

Other project activities proceeded as planned:

FIELDWORK (RHA assessment, documentary filming and interviewing):

- 🌿 Nature monument "Stabla hrasta lužnjaka na Paliću" (Subotica, 25 acres). We spent 6 days at the Ludaš lake „JP Palić-Ludaš" guest house, we were welcomed by the protected area managers. We interviewed rangers and other staff members as well as locals. We visited the surrounding areas and Zoo Palić.

- 🌿 Nature monument “Cerjanska pećina”(Niš, 96 acres). We entered the cave with The Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and we filmed the documentary with the experts. We had the luck to encounter some very rare troglobite species.
- 🌿 Nature monument “Lalinačka slatina” (Niš, merošina, 75 acres). Filming with the researchers form the University of Niš, Faculty of Science and mathematics. We intewieved botanist Maja Jovanović who is conducting the research on the salt marsh flora.
- 🌿 We organised a photo safari and educational field trip to the gorge of river Jerma and the narrowest canyon in the Balkans „Cedilka“ in cooperation with NGO Dr „Sava Petrović“. Ornithologist Msc Ivan Medenica held a lecture on endangered bird species of the area.



Left: Team members visiting River Jerma Canyon. ©Danilo Penić. Right: Researching and filming the documentary inside the Cerjanska cave. ©Nikola Spasić.



Left: Early morning monitoring and filming at he lake Ludaš in Vojvodina, Serbia. ©Nikola Radović. Right: Dr Miloš Popović making of the „Hidden Serbia“ documentary in Vojvodina. ©Marko Nikolić.





PROMOTION AND COLLABORATON:


- 🌿 The Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, in the year of marking 70 years of institutional protection of nature in our country, has marked very significant jubilee - 20 years since the establishment of the Institute's office in Niš. At the ceremony, the film "The Nature Awakens" was premiered. This short documentary was realised

by our team in cooperation of the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia with Biological Society "Dr Sava Petrović" from Niš, within our project "Hidden Corners of Serbia". You can read more at: <http://www.zzps.rs/novo/index.php?jezik=en&strana=vest&n=578-1> and <http://hiddenserbia.bddsp.org.rs/proslava-jubileja-uz-budenje-prirode/>

We are very grateful for the invitation for collaboration from the institute and very happy to share this short documentary with you. It is now available at our projects YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2mgutIEgaDo&list=PLqCRdZP6 DrsVeZXYWN nulhKPtIA-WQ2ql&index=2>

-  Cooperation with the national television RTS and agreement on future collaboration. Part of our original video material was broadcasted within a documentary „Biodiverzitet-mreža života“ (eng: „Biodiversity – the web of life“).
-  Future collaboration with Dr Miloš Popović on video making for his project on butterflies is under discussion. We agreed to exchange our projects videos and photos over the website <http://wildbalkans.com/en/>
-  Collaboration with the local NGO „Zoo Planet Pantelej“ that maintains an animal shelter near the city of Niš. Our volunteers and team members have been visiting the shelter and working on future colaboration.
-  We held lectures on freshwater conservation for the students of primary and secondary schools. We would like to emphasise the invitation to broadcast our docummetnaries from the Youth Center of the town of Babušnica :

<https://www.facebook.com/kzmbabusnica/photos/pcb.2146086995425669/2146064485427920/?type=3&theater>
-  Our team members have been guests at several radio and TV shows:
http://radioglas.rs/Newsview.asp?ID=153&fbclid=IwAR2m-6l_G_wTg4GqQCKsY_U61oZ_awj2KESMWG1EtGYQTqwNJsJhWoNVs

In the winter months we are preparing the video material for broadcasting, working on the promotion of the project and sorting the results of our field research trips for the assessment of freshwater habitats that we visited. All photo and video material is regularly updated on our Facebook, Instagram and project website.

We would like to thank the people who have participated in the creation of our documentary series. We have to emphasise the response of the public to our documentaries – it is greater than expected and we noticed that it triggerd some verry unusual collaborations. We like to believe that our project is allready making an impact on the local community, but also on establishing connections between different experts.



Left: Drone footage from our documentary "The nature awakens". ©Miroslav Mitić, MMD studio Niš. Right: Lectures on freshwater conservation at a local school in Babušnica. ©Marko Nikolić.



Left: Visit to the animal shelter "ZOO Planet Pantelej" and hanging around with the rescued animals. ©Marko Nikolić. Right: Amazing waters of the River Jerma in the South of Serbia. ©Nikola Spasić.