



**Closer
to Nature**

PRESS RELEASE

The secret Lušová Valley shelters rare species of butterflies and orchids while welcoming visitors

Lušová, June 23, 2014 – The Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP) has a new destination for the public to enjoy excursions and walks in. An information board presents locations in the Moravian Wallachian countryside where orchids grow in the spring and rare butterflies appear in the summer. The NET4GAS Closer to Nature program has also introduced a place to sit by the well at the site. Lušová Valley is located 19 km from Vsetín and can be visited at any time of the year.

"We wanted to showcase this Moravian Wallachian countryside on the border of Halenkov and Nový Hrozenkov to locals and tourists from further afield. We also wanted to show that the people here who are still small-scale farmers are maintaining natural resources both for us and for future generations. This daunting work has resulted in diverse woodlands, fragrant meadows and cultivated grasslands, establishing conditions suitable for a large family of flora and fauna," says Jiří Pavelka, Chairman of ČSOP Orchidea Wallachia.

Lušová Valley is an example of a very well-preserved fragment of the Carpathian pastoral landscape. The new information board contains educational passages and photographs of the landscape from the past and present. As a result, it documents major changes in the landscape over the last few decades. It also presents several species of animals and plants that are dependent on the continuous, but considerate, maintenance of the Carpathian pastures and meadows for their survival. These include the western marsh orchid and butterflies such as the Large Blue, which needs rich Thymus vegetation and then the follow-up care of ants, including grazed meadows. Another endangered representative is the Scotch Argus, which cannot be found anywhere in Moravia other than in this valley. It seeks out forest meadows, but these too are disappearing. If this continues, our countryside will also lose this species of butterfly.

"Failing to protect natural resources, such as Lušová Valley, would result in an irreplaceable loss. Therefore, we are pleased that, with our financial assistance, the guardians at ČSOP Orchidea Wallachia have made this beautiful corner of the country a bit more accessible to the public," says Zuzana Kučerová, who is in charge of the Closer to Nature program at NET4GAS.

A wooden bench has been installed next to the information board. Together with the well-maintained well, this is a pleasant place to rest and learn for locals and tourists alike.

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The **Czech Union for Nature Conservation** (Český svaz ochránců přírody) is a club of people who love nature and wish to actively contribute to its conservation. Today, we have almost 7,000 members, among them expert ecologists, as well as enthusiastic volunteers, both adults and children. Everyone can make a difference. Are you a friend of nature? Come join us! Visit www.csop.cz for additional information.

NET4GAS is the reliable and safe gas transmission system operator, and has been developing a responsible policy for protecting nature and the environment that takes into account the interests of future generations. The line of business in which NET4GAS is active is closely related to the issue of nature conservation, which fact is the point of departure for the firm's long-term strategy being implemented under the colors of NET4GAS Closer To Nature. Since 2007, NET4GAS has been acting as the general partner of the CSOP, while the firm also supports other projects that endorse the motto "Closer To Nature" as an integral part of sustainable development. Detailed information on the sites that we have opened thus far, and on other natural points of interest, as well as tips for excursions, can be found on the website www.blizpriode.cz.