



**Closer
to Nature**

PRESS RELEASE

New Educational Trail Leads Through Jungled Alluvial Forest

Pňov-Předhradí (August 31, 2013): The new Pňovský luh educational trail was opened to the general public in a festive ceremony on the last Saturday in August. The site can be found near Poděbrady, and, together with the adjacent forests of Veltrubský luh and Libický luh, they form the largest and best-preserved complex of alluvial forests in the Czech Republic. The hiking trail has been enhanced with interactive elements for children, and thus speaks to visitors both great and small.

The educational trail leads the inquisitive hiker through burgeoning vegetation in places reminiscent of a primeval forest, with numerous ancient trees and countless insects, birds, and forest flowers. Those who venture along the trail also get to see a number of still backwaters, which are the remnants of the old riverbed before the Labe (Elbe) was reigned in by 19th century regulation. The pools are home to many amphibian species. In spring, one comes across “mats” of purple corydalis, yellow lesser celandine, and white anemone. In summer, the banks of the Labe river are thick with water lily and broad-leaf arrowhead flowers. In summers abundant with rain, parts of the forest may turn into impenetrable jungles, full of small bogs and vines, and teeming with insect life.

The veiled beauty of this spot was brought to wider attention on the website of the Closer To Nature program by Hana Rampírová, a Pňov local. *“I am so glad that this project could be implemented. In the beginning, it seemed just a crazy idea, but in cooperation with the local Elbe Valley chapter of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation (ČSOP), it has become a reality. To put it simply, it is a great pleasure to see that dreams can come true,”* commented Rampírová. *“For no less than seven years, we have worked in partnership with the ČSOP, which has allowed us to make 58 unique natural landmarks accessible to the general public. In choosing which projects to support, we are always guided by the desire to motivate people in an entertaining, yet instructive manner to go out and explore nature. I wish the new trail many considerate and curious visitors,”* said Zuzana Kučerová, Promotion Specialist at NET4GAS. Luboš Vaněk, the president of the local (Elbe Valley) chapter of the ČSOP, added: *“The trail communicates the rich history, flora and fauna that is to be found here to locals and tourists alike. Taking a walk through the alluvial forest in full bloom, or venturing into the overgrown primeval forest in summer must make the heart beat faster with excitement in anyone who has an adventurous streak in them.”*

The 8.5 km route has 11 stations, and is well signposted for the convenience of visitors. Three benches have been installed for weary wanderers, and kids will appreciate, among other attractions, a wooden maze and a puzzle. A section of the educational trail is open to cyclists (who can then get on the Elbe River Cycle Route at Oseček). A parking lot marks the trailhead, the GPS coordinates of which are 50°5'33.182"N, 15°9'6.447"E.

The festivities were attended by local citizens, the mayor of Pňov-Předhradí Tomáš Tůma, and representatives of the ČSOP and NET4GAS. As part of the ceremony, participants explored the trail and took part in the release into the wild of animals that had been nursed back to health at the shelter in Pátek near Poděbrady (which is also operated by the Elbe Valley chapter of the ČSOP). Later, over refreshments, lively discussions took place concerning the history of the ancient Elbe meanders, local legends, and one of the oldest castles in our country – Oldřiš, which still stood proud on the territory of the municipality of Pňov-Předhradí in the 11th century, but sadly was to eventually disappear from the face of the Earth without a trace.

For more details please contact:

Lucie Matulová
Office of the ČSOP Central Executive Council
Phone: +420 731 760 872
E-mail: info@csop.cz

Milan Řepka
NET4GAS spokesperson
Phone: +420 739 537 461
E-mail: milan.repka@net4gas.cz

The Czech Union for Nature Conservation is a civic association of people who share an active interest in nature conservation and the environment. ČSOP's mission is to protect and restore nature, the landscape and the environment, to promote environmental education and support sustainable living. The Union currently has 9,000 members coming from the ranks of professional naturalists, experienced volunteers as well as pure enthusiasts who simply love nature. For more information please go to www.csop.cz.

NET4GAS is aware of its social responsibility and therefore develops and constantly deepens its concept of corporate philanthropy and sponsorship. The company acts as a reliable and safe gas transmission system operator and develops a responsible environmental policy that takes into account the interests of future generations. The NET4GAS long-term strategy - which is put into practice through the NET4GAS Closer to Nature programme - springs from the close relation between the core business pursued by NET4GAS on the one hand, and nature-conservation and environmental issues on the other. NET4GAS is the general partner of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation since 2007 and supports other projects for which the motto "Closer to Nature" represents an integral part of sustainable development. For detailed information on the localities newly opened to the public and on other nature spots of interest, as well as for destination tips, please visit www.closetonature.cz.