



**Closer
to Nature**

PRESS RELEASE

Ecologists Invite Nature Lovers to Visit Sulfur Fountains near Zádveřice

(Zádveřice-Raková, October 23, 2013) An attractive new hiking spot in the Zlín Region was presented to the general public today – a series of sulfur plunge pools, well kempt and connected to one another by way of an educational mini-trail. This trail was built, and several springs restored, by the Czech Union for Nature Conservation in Valašské Meziříčí within the program NET4GAS Closer to Nature.

Sulfur springs are a typical and unique natural phenomenon in Eastern Moravia. One finds them along a strip of land close to the national border, roughly running from Hostýnské vrchy to Kyjov. Outside the West Carpathians, the occurrence of sulfur or hydrogen sulfide water in the Czech Republic is rare, which is why we ought to give these springs special care and attention. Their telltale sign is a smell reminiscent of rotten eggs, caused by the release of hydrogen sulfide, which has earned them a variety of mocking nicknames in the local vernacular, among them “záprtkovice” (fart-ripper), egg water, farting water, smelly swill (“smrdávka”), or the etymologically intriguing “štyngár” (actually a distorted loanword from the German “Stinker”). In the past, they were very popular in the spa industry, thanks to their broad range of beneficial effects: immersion baths were used to cure orthopedic, rheumatic, neurological, and dermatological ailments, such as psoriasis and various forms of dermatosis, and are even said to help with chronic fatigue syndrome. Ingesting the water as part of a drinking regimen alleviates stomach problems. Sulfuric water can also be used to prepare excellent black coffee – when brought to a boil, the hydrogen sulfide evaporates, and so does the unpleasant smell, but the water retains minerals that enhance the taste of coffee.

A number of all-but-forgotten sulfur springs, which nonetheless produce rather large quantities of high-quality spring water, come to the surface in Zádveřice-Raková in the Zlín area. The local chapter of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation in Valašské Meziříčí set up a short (approx. 2 km) excursion trail, which they called the “path to the sulfur fountains” and which provides access to five mineral springs surfacing along the bed of the Horský potok. It is designed for a one-way excursion, and was conceived as an educational trail with two stations and two starting points, the first being the bus stop “Zádveřice, paseky”, from where the trail leads to the fountain U Staré Hájenky, and then through forest land to Sirkovice about one kilometer away – the most productive and also the cleanest sulfur spring in the vicinity of the village. Above Sirkovice, there is a second starting point at the parking lot on the road to Luhačovice. The trail then continues along the brook to two springs only a meter apart, and ends at a slightly higher elevation at the Jurčák spring. The latter, according to forest ranger František Jurčák, was in the past used for the purposes of folk medicine and house remedies.

In addition to signposting the trail, the project, which was financially supported by the program NET4GAS Closer to Nature, also comprised the construction of a protective cover for three of a total of five springs, and the installation of new wooden benches at three springs, where hikers can take a welcome rest. “A fourth spring has been canopied by the municipality itself, and a fifth spring is being cared for by Mr. Vladimír Hurta. The locals also deserve big thanks for their generous help in prepping the trail, and so does the mayor of Zádveřice for overseeing the installation of a crossing over the brook and other necessary landscaping to make the trail accessible. Over the past decades, we have seen a great number of smaller sulfur springs in Eastern Moravia being neglected and abandoned. It is great to see that Zádveřice has not forgotten about them, and that local citizens look

after them and maintain them,” stresses Jiří Jurečka from the Valašské Meziříčí chapter of the Czech Union for Nature Conservation.

“We are pleased that our program, Closer to Nature, was instrumental in restoring this unique site. I am confident that it will become a popular site for excursions, which will contribute to keeping it alive, so that it won't slip back into oblivion,” adds Zuzana Kučerová of NET4GAS.

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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.closertonature.cz.