

## Project Update: December 2017

We have successfully identified around 80 species of plants living on the EGS inhabited pastures, with weeds, medicinal plants and forage plants – grasses, clovers and alfalfa - among them. We have established a herbarium collection of dried specimens and a leaf tissue collection. The latter is preserved in alcohol until the reference microscope slides are made of it. We are currently making microphotographs of slides and analysing the samples. The preliminary results suggest high occurrence of fescue and clover species as the animals' food choices, which confirms our hypothesis that European ground squirrel is not a threat to agricultural yield.



We have also held several lectures to elementary school children at which we talked about the species, habitat preservation and feeding habits. The children were given promotional material – badges with the project logo, t shirts and some posters from our previous project. Even though the schools we held the lectures in were in villages very close to ground squirrel colonies, most of the children and their teachers never heard of the animal nor have they seen it. We are happy to see that most of them did want us to take them to the field, and we are happy to do it sometimes next spring. Due to some administrative delays and lack of agility on behalf of the people working at the "Fruska Gora National park" public enterprise, the planned restoration action is postponed to early spring.

