

Project Update: June 2019

In the past months we visited the rest of our sites for field research and filming. The data is now processed and gathered into a database which will be open to the experts and students of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics who were helping us with our project research activities. The sites were following:

- Nature monument "Ripaljka", Sokobanja (82 acres);
- Nature monument "Bigrena akumulacija Beli izvorac", Majdanpek (2 acres);
- Nature monument "Bigrena akumulacija kod manastira Tumane, Golubac" (85 acres);
- Nature monument "Prebreza", Blace (86 acres);
- Nature monument "Lalinačka slatina", Niš, merošina (75 acres).

Field parameters were obtained by our team members following SVAP (Stream Visual Assessment Protocol) and RHA (Rapid Habitat Assessments) protocols (Newton et al. 1998; Barbour et al. 1999). Several students from the faculty, as well as members of BDDSP have been learning the process along the way and tried sampling themselves. We took the chance to establish connections with the locals, hand over leaflets and discuss future mutual actions. Due to wonderful cooperation with the Faculty of Science and mathematics and their enthusiasm about our documentaries, two of our team members (me and Djordje Vukojević) made a short promotional video for the Department of Biology and Ecology, available on the official faculty website (<https://www.pmf.ni.ac.rs/departman/biologija-i-ekologija/>) and YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gplx7mJ2HiA>).

In addition we organised a 5 day photo safari in the area of the largest national park of our country "Djerdap" along the gorges of River Danube, which was led by our team member Marko Nikolić. We took the chance to film the part of Marko's research he and his team are conducting on tortoises in this area, and are discussing further possibilities on collaboration on his project number 26448-B.



Left: Socio-economic situation at our research sites in one picture. In the distance our team strolling to our research area. © Dimitrija S.-Z. Right: Our team and volunteers in front of Ripaljka waterfall at the research site nature monument "Ripaljka" near Sokobanja.

This was also a period of promotion and dissemination of the project results. Our documentaries have been broadcasted at conservation events and science festivals in Niš, enabling our volunteers to speak about the hidden corners of Serbia that we have discovered and handle the leaflets and promotional material. Special thanks to Slobodan Marković who was leading volunteers and organising broadcasting and educational activities.

- "Earth hour" – international WWF event that was organised by the biological society "Dr Sava Petrović" in the center of the city of Niš as the only event of this kind in southeastern Serbia. Visitors of the event were more than happy to hear about our project and the documentaries had a great response of the public (Photos from the event: https://www.facebook.com/pg/drsavapetrovic/photos/?tab=album&album_id=1100323470154407)
- "Nauk nije bauk" – locally organised, but largest festival for science popularization in the region;
- "Biology night" within the European "Night of museums"



Our team members with BDDSP talking about hidden corners of Serbia at festivals "Nauk nije bauk" and "biology night". © Slobodan Marković

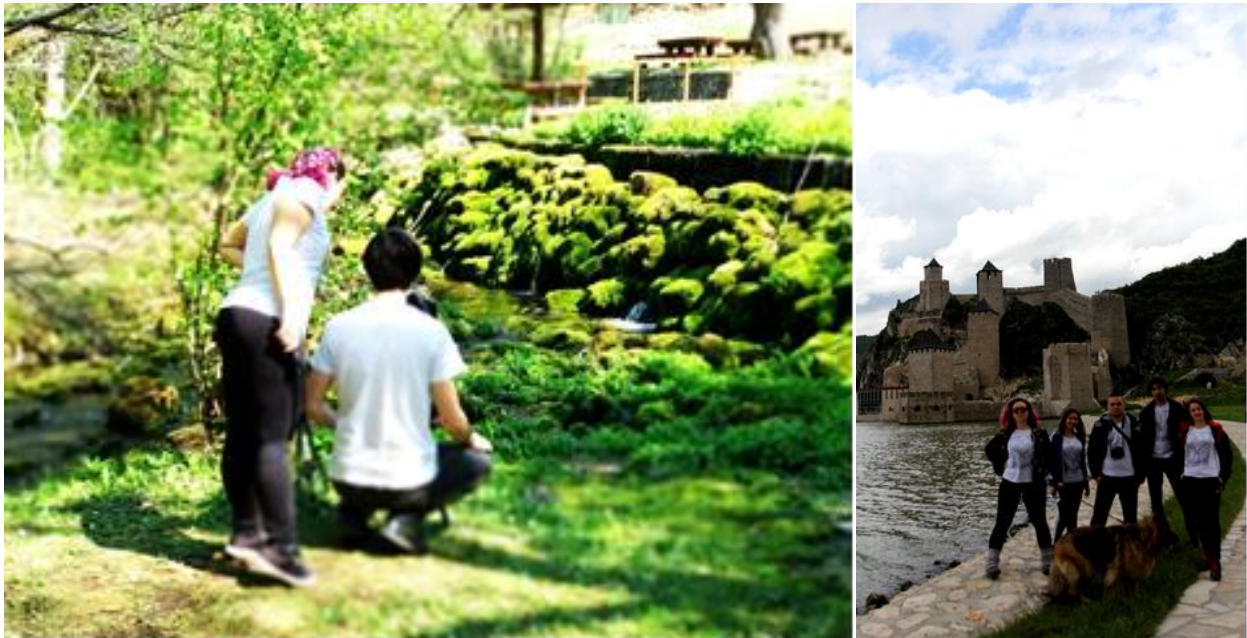
Our documentaries are to be broadcasted at two upcoming scientific conferences. At these conferences we will take the chance to organise another open tribune in cooperation with the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and talk about our efforts to draw the attention of scientific community towards „neglected“ protected areas that we have come to encounter during the course of our project.

- 13th Symposium on the flora of southeastern Serbia and neighboring regions, that will be held from 20th to 23th June 2019 at Stara planina mountain in eastern Serbia (official website: <http://www.sfses.com/>);
- The XII Symposium of Serbian Entomologists that will be held in The City of Niš, 25-29. 09. 2019 (official website: http://www.eds.org.rs/EDS_SES_e.html).

In August 2019 we will take part in the "Outdoor fest Jerma" (official website: <http://neat-serbia.com/outdoor-fest/program-avantura/>) a large festival in southern Serbia of active tourism which is supported by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the city of Pirot. Several of our team members will lead ecological and research activities with adults and will be leading workshops with children on several conservation topics which are estimated to be visited by at least 200 people. In addition we will be broadcasting our documentaries and trying to reach broad public while helping in touristic promotion of the area. We give special thanks to "Adventure travel network" for inviting us to participate in this event.

We are in the process of editing the short documentaries that we have filmed for the past year, out of which we would like to emphasise the one edited by our team member Djordje Vukojević, available on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbD98ZyR6rc&list=PLqCRdZP6DrsVeZXYWNnuihKPtIA-WQ2ql&index=3>

The rest of the documentaries will be uploaded in the future period (we are in the process of negotiating the broadcast on TV and potential application to several "green" festivals, therefore we are unable to upload them at the moment).



Left: Visit to the youngest protected area of our country "Rtanj mountain". © Marko Zdravković. Right: Our team paying a visit to the medieval fortress of Golubac in the national park "Djerdap". © Marko Zdravković.

At the moment we are organising a photo competition in collaboration with the project "In touch with the nature" by Marko Nikolić, sponsored by Wikimedia Serbia, which will be open till September. Exhibition of collected photos will be organized at the Faculty of Science and Mathematics in Niš, "Oficirski dom" Gallery, "Super radio" gallery and in all major Universities in Serbia and all the photos will be uploaded to Wikipedia where they will reach a vast audience.

We are happy that, although there have been some issues and obstacles along the way, we have formed a great team that is ready to continue on the path of exploring Serbian nature from both artistic and scientific side.



Scan To See Hidden Corners of Serbia in our Instagram Gallery