

# Boletina. Habitat of the Pasque Flower.

LIFE04NAT/SI/000240 project

"Natura 2000 in Slovenia –  
management models and information system"

Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation  
Regional Unit of Celje



## Boletina near Ponikva

Boletina is a small village in the vicinity of Ponikva near Gobelno northeast of Celje. The rare Pasque Flower – a steppe plant – thrives in a meadow no more than a few hundred metres away from the centre of the village. The site, which covers 1.8 ha, is the largest of the four currently known Pasque Flower sites in Slovenia and presents the extreme southwestern limit of its range. In 1993, the larger part of the site was protected by a municipal decree issued by the Municipality of Šentjur. In Slovenia, the Pasque Flower is protected and inscribed on the Red list of endangered plant species.

### Nature-conservancy status of the Pasque Flower's site at Boletina near Ponikva

- special protected area – Natura 2000 area (Decree on special protected areas (Natura 2000 areas), Official Gazette of the RS, Nos. 49/04, 110/04);
- area of ecological concern (Decree on ecologically significant areas, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 48/04);
- natural treasure (Regulations on stipulation and protection of natural reaches, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 111/04);
- nature monument (Decree on proclamation of nature monuments and treasures in the Šentjur Council, Official Gazette of the RS, No. 45/93).



Map of the Boletina area

## Karst terrain and dry grasslands

The Pasque Flower's favourable growing conditions are enabled by the area's karst terrain. The surroundings of Ponikva are known for their solitary karst with disappear underground karst phenomena which, however, are not as distinct as in the Classical Karst. The stream running nearby disappears on one side of the site and reappears on its other side. As the layer of lithotamnian limestone, which forms the site's geological substratum, is permeable to water, the atmospheric precipitations run off the site rapidly, leaving the surface dry. On this geological substratum, a semi-natural dry grassland was formed.



Boletina

Dry grasslands are the result of various natural characteristics and moderate extensive farming. The excessive fertilization, abandonment of mowing and, in turn, overgrowing with bush species threaten this habitat and thus the existence of the characteristic plant species. In Slovenia, dry grasslands can still be found mainly in montane country, such as Goričko, Boč, Donačka gora, Kozjansko, the Posavje mountains, Bela krajina and the Slovene Karst, while elsewhere in Europe this type of habitat is already very rare.

## Pasque Flower (*Pulsatilla grandis*) and its relatives

The Pasque Flower is a steppe plant, thriving particularly in sunny, stony and dry grasslands, on limestone substratum as well as on shingly ground and in open forests. It belongs to the genus *Pulsatilla*, whose prime characteristics are gentle silky cilia. In Slovenia, one can also find, apart from *Pulsatilla grandis* (also known as the Great Pasque Flower), White and Alpine Pasque Flowers, which are characteristic of Alpine districts, as well as Mountain and Common Pasque Flowers that inhabit dry grasslands all over the country. All plants of the genus *Pulsatilla* are protected. They are highly endangered due to the increasing diminishing of their habitat caused by intensive farming and overgrowing of the meadows.



Mountain Pasque Flower



(Great) Pasque Flower

In early spring, the Pasque Flower initially develops upright bell-shaped flowers. They consist of six light violet petals with silky cilia on the outside. The Pasque Flower is in full bloom usually at Easter, which is the reason why the plant is commonly known as Easter Flower in Slovenia. The Pasque Flower is pollinated by bees and bumblebees. The green leaves develop after efflorescence and are palmately divided into two to three segments. The seed pod is a nut with strongly elongated and hairy neck for easier spreading of the seeds by the wind. With the aid of a special motive mechanism, the seeds bore themselves down to 20 cm into the ground. During seed ripening, the stalk can grow even up to 60 cm in height.

In the summer, when seeds are ripe, flower buds begin to develop for the ensuing year. By the end of the summer, the petals already develop into a strong bud, which protects itself for the winter with a thick hairy capsule, which enables the Pasque Flower to blossom in the earliest spring.

## Arrangement of the Pasque Flower's site

Each year, the blossoming Pasque Flower attracts numerous visitors who, however, often leave trodden down turf and flowers behind them. This is the reason why we decided to build a fence made of wooden posts and steel cable, which in an unobtrusive way prevents access to the fragile plants. A long-term conservation of the Boletina site is also provided by the Pasque Flower's protection during its efflorescence.



Pasque Flower in full bloom



Information board at the site



The fence around the site was put up in 2006 within the LIFE project framework.



Each year, the flowering Pasque Flower attracts numerous visitors.

## Boletina, pilot area of the LIFE III – Nature project:

“Natura 2000 in Slovenia – management models and information system”, LIFE04NAT/SI/000240

LIFE III – Nature project is a financial instrument of the European Union, which supports the nature-conservancy endeavours to conserve the significant European species and their habitats, associated in the Natura 2000 network.

The project, lasting from January 1<sup>st</sup> to December 31<sup>st</sup>, is at the Boletina site being implemented by the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Nature Conservation and the local partner Municipality of Šentjur and in association with the Ponikva Tourist Association and Local Community of Ponikva.

### The project activities within the Boletina pilot area:

- preparation of the site's management plan,
- purchase of the land,
- fencing of the site,
- regular mowing,
- removal of bushes,
- monitoring of the site during the Pasque Flower's blossoming,
- setting up of an information board,
- publishing of this brochure,
- other informative activities (lectures in the local school, competition for the best poster in primary schools, preparation of info material, etc.).



### Project beneficiary:



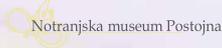
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Boletina

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