

The Karst Biosphere Reserve

The World Network of Biosphere Reserves has been established under the UNESCO's Programme on Man and the Biosphere (MAB) that develops the basis for the sustainable use and conservation of biological diversity. There are 459 biosphere reserves in 97 countries.

Only 19 MAB Biosphere Reserves are also internationally recognized World heritage and Ramsar wetland sites - the Škocjan Caves Regional Park being one of them.



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MAB Man and Biosphere

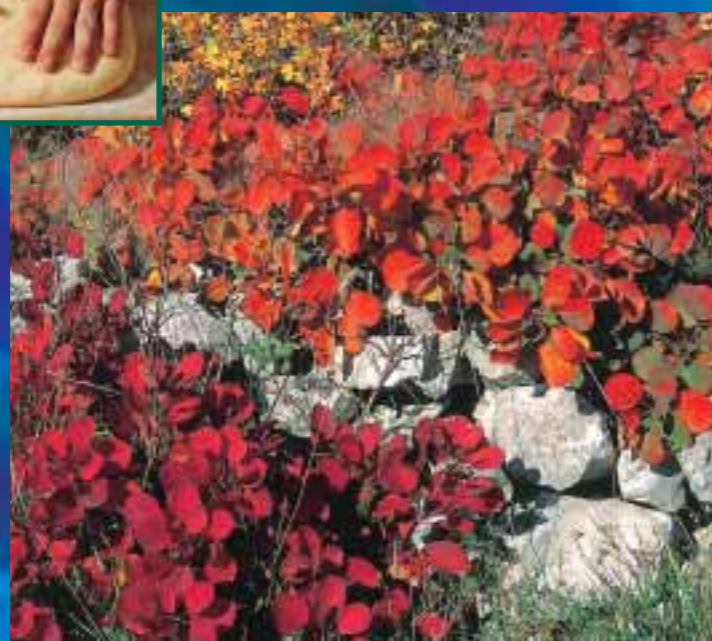


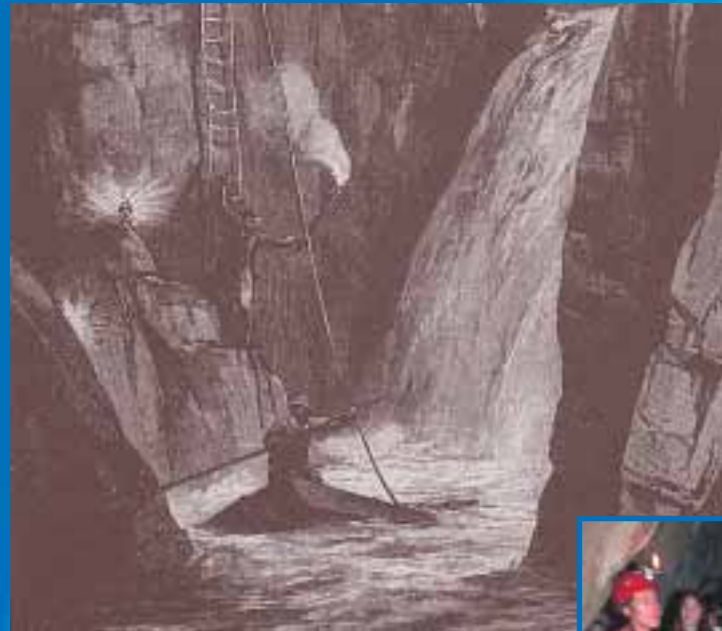
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Scarce soil on karst surface has always called for much effort and resourcefulness. People cultivated fields and maintained pastures, woods and fruit gardens in balance with nature; these were the beginnings of sustainable development that promotes such activities nowadays.

The Karst Biosphere Reserve is not only significant for its biodiversity and rare plant and animal species; there are also numerous tight connections between the surface and the underground, between soil and water and between all living beings, which have found their real home here.





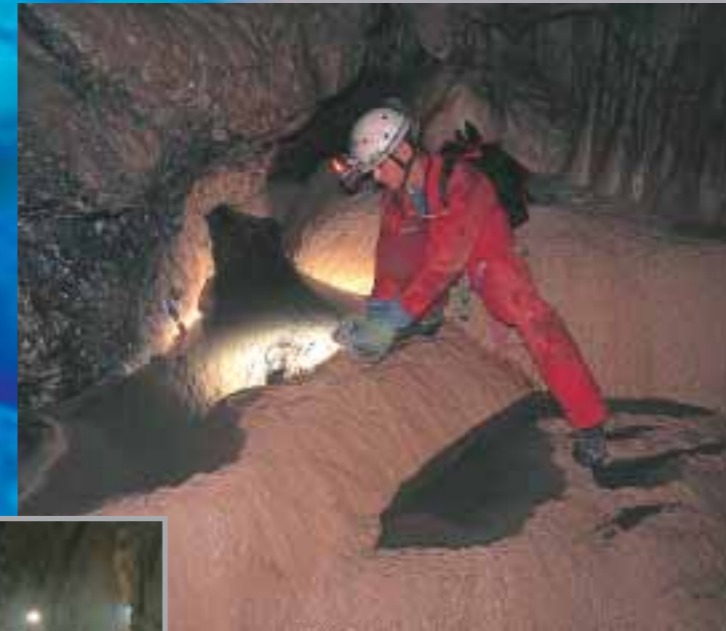
On 29th October 2004 the Škocjan Caves Park, Slovenia, was included in the UNESCO - MAB World Network of Biosphere Reserves under the name of the Karst Biosphere Reserve; the area reveals the interdependence of man and nature and the importance of education to maintain the existing level of welfare.



Exploring the underground waters in the Škocjan Caves and in the Classical Karst is a part of scientific heritage, which nowadays contributes a lot to the safeguarding of the Reka River and other superficial streams. Water links the buffer zone (45,000 ha) and the central area of the Park (413 ha).



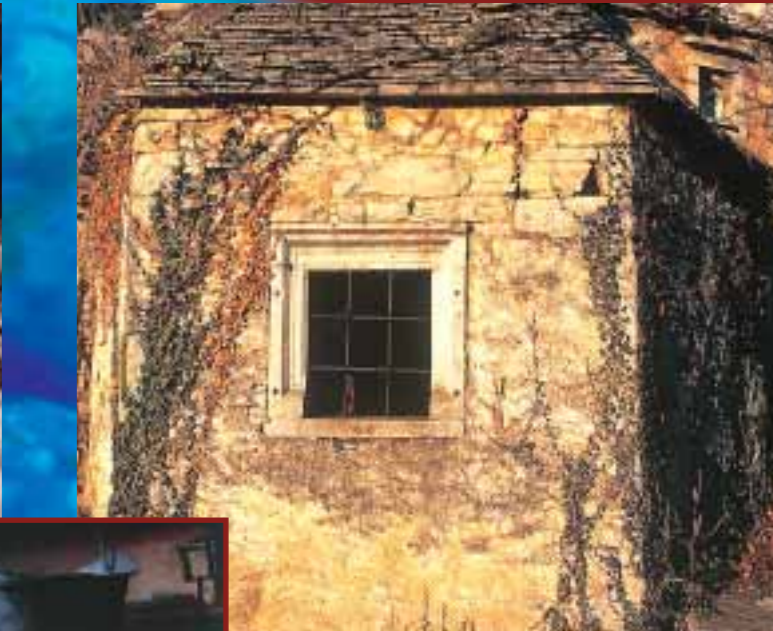
The underground world is a unique record of long terrestrial history. Numerous explorers and local people enabled man to explore and admire the karst phenomena in the Škocjan Caves system and in the transition area (14,780 ha).



Constant speleological research, cave climate and water monitoring contribute to the preservation of the exceptional natural heritage in the area and promote the safeguarding of vulnerable cave ecosystems.



Water used to be a valuable source of energy for numerous mills and saw-mills along the Reka River. Dry karst land has taught man how to respect water and has brought about its sustainable use.



Cultural heritage of the Karst Biosphere Reserve is composed of architectural and stonemasonry pieces of art; many of them have been carefully renovated and brought to life again. Explorations unveil past-days' records and enable us to gain the knowledge about and safeguard the heritage of our ancestors.

