Project "Conservation of the Natural and Cultural Heritage in Wetlands"
Ramsar Culture Network Development in the Carpathian Region
Questionnaire

I.	**Name of the wetland site** with cultural aspect(s)
Ramsar Site – **Wetlands of Orava Basin** (SiteCode: 933), within Natura 2000 network – Rašeliniská Oravskej kotliny (SiteCode: SKUEV0057), Jelešňa (SiteCode: SKUEV0222), Zimník (SiteCode: SKUEV0193), Oravská vodná nádrž (SiteCode: SKUEV0304), Rašeliniská Bielej Oravy (SiteCode: SKUEV0191)	
II.	**Location details** (country, general location, administrative region, municipality, geographical coordinates)
County: Žilinský; District: Námestovo, Tvrdošín; Cadastre: Slanica, Ústie nad Priehradou, Trstená, Bobrov, Oravské Hámre, Osada, Suchá hora, Vitanová, Liesek; GPS: 49.4167406N, 19.6187044E; The Orava Reservoir (Oravská vodná nádrž) is part of the water management construction Orava (including the levelling dam Tvrdošín), built on the confluence of the rivers Biela and Čierna Orava. It is located in the north of Slovakia, in the region of the same name.	
III.	**Time period** to which identified value or practice relates (historical dates/earliest known origins, date at which it ceased to be present, or specify that it is still of continuing relevance if this is the case)
The construction work has commenced on 24th of July 1941 and the dam launched into operation in 1954. Its waters buried several villages: Slanica, Osada, Hámre, Ústie, lower part of the village Bobrov and two thirds of the town Námestovo. This is the reason why this town lacks the historical centre. The only two objects peaking from above the water surface are the remains of the small hill belonging to the Slanica village. The first one is called Slanický ostrov Island or Ostrov umenia (The Art Island) and the second one is the Vtáčí ostrov (the Bird Island). Their interconnection is visible during the low water levels. The Orava reservoir, together with its banks and islands belongs to the most important waterfowl sites in Slovakia. It lies on the cross border waterfowl migration route (between Slovakia and Poland). Most of peatlands are degraded due to land management. Peatland Rudné was excavated in 1957 for the first time, the excavations stopped in 1998.	

IV.	**Typologies of cultural values and practices**

Please select for each identified site

□ The site provides a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland.

□ The site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilisations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland.

□ The site where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities.

□ The site where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland.

Please describe of what type is the site (Wetland related human activities)

1. **Habitation**
   - 1.1 Cultural landscapes
   - 1.2 Cultural heritage sites (including religious heritage – monasteries, sanctuaries, hermitages, chapels)
   - 1.3 Settlements and structures
     - 1.3.1 Ancient sites and structures (up to 1599)
     - 1.3.2 Traditional and modern settlements and structures
   - 1.4 Wetland archaeology
   - 1.5 Infrastructure
     - 1.5.1 Terrestrial transportation networks
     - 1.5.2 Water management and facilities and networks

2. **Primary uses of wetland resources**
   - 2.1 Wetland related agriculture
   - 2.2 Stock-breeding
   - 2.3 Fishing and aquaculture
   - 2.4 Management of forest wetland types
   - 2.5 Hunting
   - 2.6 Salt extraction, mineral extraction, mining
   - 2.7 Water use
     - 2.7.1 Irrigation
     - 2.7.2 Domestic use
     - 2.7.3 Water transfer infrastructure
     - 2.7.4 Energy production
     - 2.7.5 Other water uses (water mills, saw mills etc.)
   - 2.8 Use of other wetland natural resources
     - 2.8.1 Biomass extraction
     - 2.8.2 Sustainable use of medicinal plants

3. **Secondary use of wetland resources**
   - 3.1 Food processing
     - 3.1.1 Traditional methods of food preservation
     - 3.1.2 Culinary heritage
   - 3.2 Craftsmanship
     - 3.2.1 Artefacts (of ancient origin – up to 1599 / traditional and modern artefacts)
     - 3.2.2 Handicrafts and tools (of ancient origin / traditional and modern)
     - 3.2.3 Transportation means (boats etc.) (ancient / traditional and modern)
   - 3.3 Traditional building construction
     - 3.3.1 Dwellings
     - 3.3.2 Utilitarian buildings
     - 3.3.3 Public buildings
   - 3.4 Wetland-based traditional marketing
   - 3.5 Tourism – eco-tourism and cultural tourism
   - 3.6 Leisure and sports
     - 3.6.1 Hiking, climbing

- 3.6.2 Rafting and kayaking
- 3.6.3 Sailing and boating
- 3.6.4 Diving
- 3.6.5 Speleology

3.7 Social practices and methods

3.8 Festivals, fairs, celebrations and events

4. Knowledge, belief systems and social practices

4.1 Scientific research and education

4.2 Traditional knowledge

- 4.2.1 Oral traditions and expressions, sayings
- 4.2.2 Languages, dialects and special terms
- 4.2.3 Relevant place names and their etymologies
- 4.2.4 Practice of traditional medicine

4.3 Spirituality and belief systems (including processions, pilgrimages, nature rituals and ceremonies)

4.4 Sacred natural sites or landscapes (e.g. caves, islands, rivers, springs, mountains…)

4.5 Artistic expression

- 4.5.1 Dances and traditional rural games
- 4.5.2 Music and traditional songs
- 4.5.3 Nature photography
- 4.5.4 Literature of wetlands nature, traditional legends and stories*
- 4.5.5 Movies and TV shows
- 4.5.6 Painting landscapes and nature

Please provide details and comments if necessary.

* Please send the text of legend/story identified relevant to the aims of this project in English (Word format) to be published in the final publication.

Agriculture

Wetland habitats in the area, depending on the specifics of local conditions, were usually mowed and, for its low fodder quality, the biomass was used for animal bedding. The less wet areas were grazed. Today, these areas are mostly abandoned.

Forestry

Rafting (timber transport) at the Orava River has seen the highest development during the 19th century, which relates to a rapid growth of the rafting as a whole in Slovakia and with the development of timber industry. Rafting was not only the way to transport the timber, there were many other types of products transported as well, such as crafts products of people living in mountain areas rich in timber. Rafters have largely contributed to the development of national as well as international trade. The long-distance rafting has reached the Black Sea, where the spruce of the Carpathian origin was a much-sought-for material for building the lamp-posts of the ocean liners. This type of rafting has ceased to exist with the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. However, even during its last development phase in Slovakia, rafting in Orava has still played an important role as a timber products' way of transport up until 1953, even if locally only. In 1953, the Orava Dam was built, which brought an end to rafting at the River.

V.	**The main exponents, practitioners or beneficiaries of the documented values and practices.**
Forest ecosystems are managed by urbariats (groups of owners), individual private owners and State Forests Enterprise.	
VI.	**Specialised or vernacular terms used locally** (including in local languages) to refer to

	the values and practices concerned
It is possible to hear the goral dialect spoken in several villages. The word wetland in goral dialect is „Bor“.	
VII.	**Relative significance of the values and practices concerned** (e.g. in terms of rarity, magnitude, degree of formal recognition, or diversity in combination with other values)
Not known.	
VIII.	**Transcription of any pertinent officially-adopted descriptions of the values and practices concerned**, specifying the source in each case
Not known.	
IX.	**Conservation implications of the cultural values/practices for the wetland(s)**
Partly mentioned in the chapters above.	
X.	**Status of the cultural values/practices** Clarify whether the values or practices relate to a former period of history or whether they are continuing. If they relate to a former period of history, the time of their cessation and the reasons of it (if known) should be noted. If they are continuing, it should be clarified whether any changes have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur in relation to the values or practices concerned.
Not known.	
XI.	Current **touristic use** and potential for **sustainable tourism** development in the area, tourism influence in the area
Orava reservoir belongs to popular tourist centres. Thousands of tourists visit this area each year. The south and west part of the dam is most visited in the summer. During the times of heavy frost it is used to for winter sports and walks over the frozen water surface, and that not only by locals. The banks of the reservoir are used for recreational purposes, swimming, yachting, water-cycling, boat trips, windsurfing and other water sports and attractions. There are many places in the town Námestovo that offer accommodation and catering, several hotels, many cottages and camps in the vicinity of the dam. Water cruises to the island are offered in the summer. The most important recreational centres are Slanická Osada, Prístav, Studnička and the beaches near Námestovo. Slanický ostrov umenia, which is the remnant of the inundated village Slanica, bears a Roman Catholic church built in the 18th century and a lapidary. The church building holds a permanent exhibition of Orava region folk art, plastic art and paintings. Ceremonial concerts are held here occasionally. There is an increase in the development of cycling in this area, which lead to building of several new cyclo-routes by using already existing communications. The best known is the cyclo-route Trstená – Nowy Targ (in Poland), which follows the restored embankment of former railway and which was launched into operation in 2015.	
XII.	**Suggestions for conservation actions** (for example to address threats, restore or enhance values, improve integrated management or strengthen policy) – see 4.1 above
The area is attacked for more reasons. The biggest problem is an agreement with the owners and land users on the protection of the rarest sites, which require restrictions in the land management. There are points made in the management plan of the area and the problem is also addresses in communication with the land owners. Restoration of a large peatland area near Suchá Hora, our suggestion is to split the area in half, where one would be used for harvest and the other for nature conservation. Environmental education activities would contribute to better understanding of conservation values of these areas.	
XIII.	**Ongoing management activities** at the site (if any)
Klinské rašelinisko peatland - removal of fast-growing self-seeding plants. Improvement of nesting conditions at the Bird Island by scything. Conservation measures incorporated into forest	

management plan to protect forest peatlands (Sosnina and Suchohorské and Hladovské bory or Surdíky) and alluvial forests (around Orava reservoir and adjacent brooks).	
XIV.	Please include reference sources (and links to them where relevant), images, illustrations, maps, data tables, interview results, further detail on case examples, useful contacts and anything else deemed appropriate

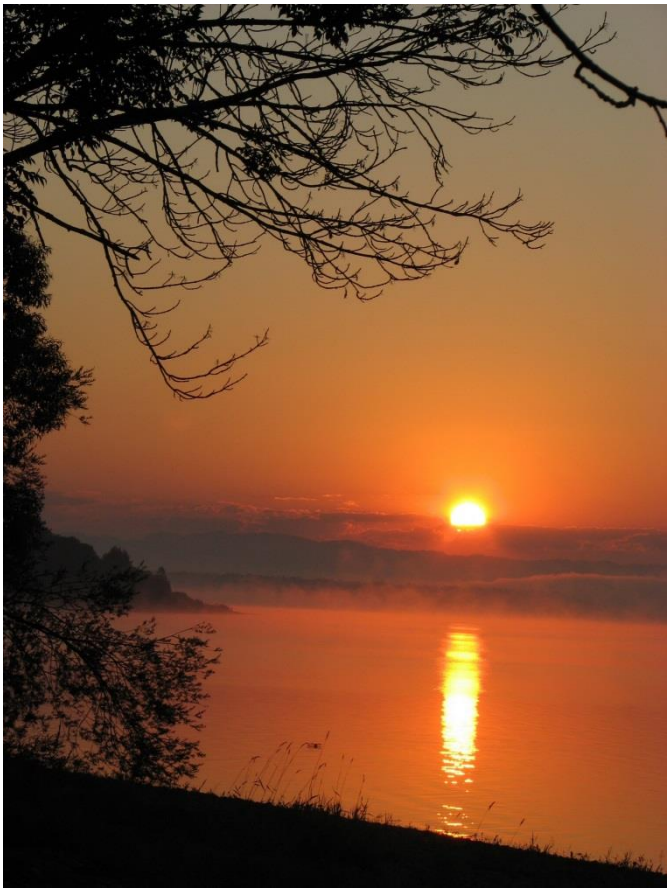
TRNKA, R., KOPILEC, R., (eds.) 2007: Horná Orava – európsky významné chránené územie. Štátna ochrana prírody SR, Banská Bystrica.
Management plan of SPA Horná Orava 2017 – 2046, 2016.
Proposal for optimal use of Suchá Hora peatland, 2003.
https://sk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oravsk%C3%A1_priehrada

Name of compiler	Mgr. Ivan Šustr
Organization / Address	ŠOP SR, Horná Orava PLA Administration, Bernolákova 408, 029 01 Námestovo, Slovakia
E-mail	ivan.sustr@sopsr.sk
Phone number	+421 903 298 411

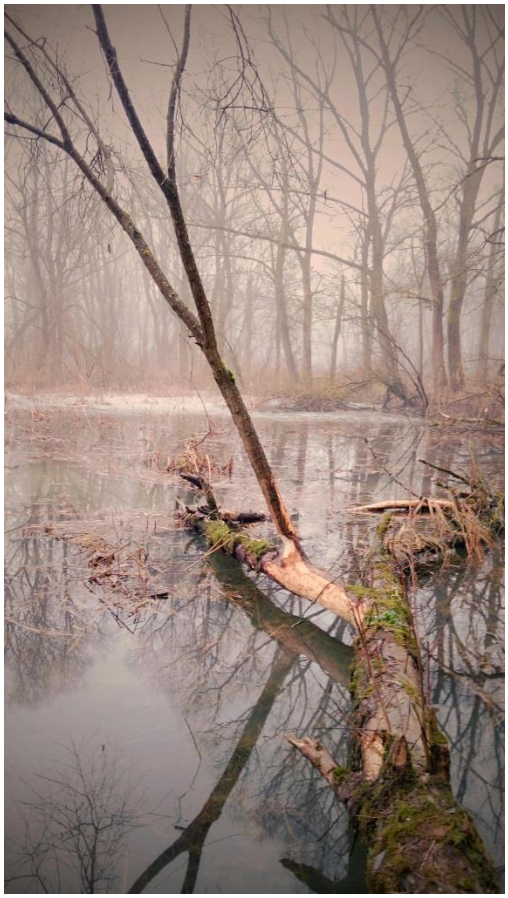
Photo: Z. Kertysová

Orava Reservoir, Zubrohlavská zátoka bay, Photo: Z. Kertysová

Orava Reservoir, Photo: I. Šustr



Orava Reservoir, Photo: R. Trnka



Jelešňa River, Photo: Z. Kertysová