

## THE FORESTS OF VELEBIT, INCLUDING CRNOPAC, ARE CHARACTERISED BY:

- great biodiversity
- endangered and protected animal species
- rare and endangered habitats
- indigenous trees of different species and ages
- protected tree species [yew]
- dry and decaying trees [biodiversity treasury]
- rare, endangered, and endemic species
- wealth of speleological objects [so far, more than 200 speleological complexes have been explored in Crnopac]
- endangered bird species [forest habitat quality indicators].



Cerovačke  
špilje  
CEROVAC CAVES

The total value of the project is HRK 68,453,850.00, of which EU funds in the amount of HRK 53,233,632.80 are provided from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the Operational Programme "Competitiveness and Cohesion 2014-2020". The implementation of the project began on 4 April 2018 and will last until 31 December 2021. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to the sustainable use of natural resources, environmental protection, and protection of natural heritage by strengthening the model of sustainable management of protected areas of the Republic of Croatia, as well as those of the European Union. This, in turn, helps develop and diversify the Adriatic region's tourist offer, thus contributing to its sustainable socio-economic development. The specific goal of the project is to develop a new, competitive, and integrated tourist offer by developing a new supported infrastructure for visitors in the area of the Velebit Nature Park, to increase the park's educational, interpretive, and professional and scientific potential, and to establish an efficient and sustainable management and business system of the Velebit Nature Park.

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
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**Beneficiary:**

**Project partners:**



**VELEBIT**  
Park prirode • Nature Park



ZADARSKA  
ŽUPANIJA



Natura Jadera



ZAGREBAČKI SPELEOLOŠKI  
SAVEZ



Cerovačke  
špilje  
CEROVAC CAVES



**CRNOPAC**  
**FOREST DIVERSITY IN KARST**



EUROPSKA UNIJA  
Zajedno do fondova EU



EUROPSKI STRUKTURNI  
I INVESTICIJSKI FONDOVI



Operativni program  
KONKURENTNOST  
I KOHEZIJA

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For more information on EU funds:  
[www.strukturnifondovi.hr](http://www.strukturnifondovi.hr)

## GEOGRAPHICAL AND GEOMORPHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

Crnopac is the southernmost part of Velebit, characterised by numerous surface and underground karst phenomena, among which the most famous are the **Cerovac Caves**. Besides the northern Velebit, the area of Crnopac is speleologically the most important part of the Dinaric Karst.

The extremely rugged terrain is full of deep sinkholes and steep cliffs; it represents a real labyrinth of swallow holes and white limestone hills. The main ridge is mostly grassy, and extends in a north-west – south-east direction, while the hills at its base have characteristics of limestone pavement.



## FOREST DIVERSITY

The area of Crnopac is especially interesting from the floristic and vegetation aspect. Forests in this area are dominated by beech, which is one of the most widespread European forest species. In the area of the Velebit Nature Park, beech forests are the most common and occupy about 53% of the area, and together with beech-fir forests [31%] they dominate all forested areas.

While climbing Crnopac, we first enter the thick shade of the mountain beech forest. Except for beech, in the lower areas you can also find common hornbeam and sessile oak, and in the higher areas sycamore maple, blue sow thistles, common ash and wych elm. An extremely large number of species grow in the ground layer. As altitude increases, beech is joined by slender fir treetops. The Dinaric beech-fir forest represents the basic forest community of the Croatian mountain belt, between two areas of relatively pure beech forests. Fir does not grow at an altitude above 1100 metres: here, subalpine beech forests can be found. The growing season is short, so the trees are lower, with knotty branches facing in the direction of the wind, and the trunks bent by the weight of the snow.



The slopes of Crnopac on the coastal side are warmer, so thermophilic communities appear. On the highest slopes, a coastal beech forest can be found – a border forest community between the Mediterranean and the continent. It is followed by forests of hophornbeam and autumn moor grass, a forest community that has been continually spreading over Velebit for the last fifty years due to the lack of grazing and extensive use.

Forests, in addition to representing a rich forest flora, are habitats of innumerable animal species. The target forest species of the Natura 2000 ecological network for this area are the wolf, lynx, brown bear, western barbastelle, Bechstein's bat, Jersey tiger and *Mormus funereus*.

