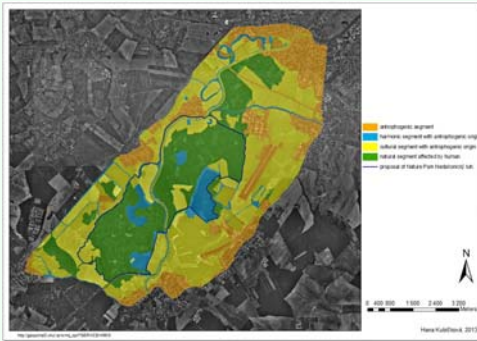


LANDSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT ON THE EXAMPLE OF THE MORAVA RIVER BOTTOMLAND

Hana Kubíčková, Jitka Fialová

Department of Landscape Management, Faculty of Forestry and Wood Technology,
Mendel University in Brno, Zemědělská 3, 613 00 Brno, Czech Republic

This article deals with the landscape character of bottomland of the Morava River between towns Uherské Hradiště and Uherský Ostroh. The landscape was assessed using two methodologies. The methodology for landscape mapping elaborated by Vondrušková et al. in 1994 for the determination of the current condition of the landscape segment and the methodology for landscape character elaborated by the Agency for Nature and Landscape Protection in 1999. The beginning of this article is concerned with generic problems of the landscape character and generic identification of the area. The second part deals with the description and usage of the methodology for landscape mapping and landscape character.



The proposal of the scale of the landscape character quality; the proposed area Nature Park Nedakonický luh included



Map of the Morava River in the 17th century: a meandering current of the Morava River had a completely different shape in the 17th century – it surrounded Uherské Hradiště and Uherský Ostroh, creating a strategic position for both towns, which thus gained a character of water forts. The map also shows the distribution of forests, which nowadays take up a much smaller part. The map is oriented towards the south (Slovácké muzeum, collections, H 1451)

Assessment of landscape character

The assessment of landscape character [1] is based on the establishment of the degree to which the landscape character has been preserved in the given place. This is done by comparing a set of features typical of such an area of landscape character with a set of features preserved in the assessed place.

A *place of landscape character* is an individual visually interconnected landscape space with an area of 10–100 ha. The smallest place of landscape character is a basic landscape unit, higher is a higher landscape unit (e.g. Kunovice forest).

A *basic landscape unit* is an individual landscape space delimited by visual barriers with an area from 1 to 100 ha. Examples are an inner environment of a forest or a field surrounded by a forest. Basic landscape units can be closed, half-open or open (e.g. the territory of Ostroh lakes).

A *higher landscape unit* is a landscape space formed by wider views into distance. It usually contains more basic landscape units. Its area ranges around 1000–10 000 ha.

An *area of landscape character* is a wide part of area (>1000 ha) with the same typical features or a very similar set of typical features reflecting its sustainable condition and development. Examples can be the agricultural areas of Polešovičko and Ostrožsko, which are separated by a floodplain forest.

Typical features of landscape character are separate features of the landscape that are perceived by human beings as the signs of the landscape and that form the image of the landscape.

Typical features can be divided into dominant, main and accompanying ones.

Dominant features are determining for the given area and the area would lose its identity without them. The dominant feature of the research area is the flat relief and the Morava River, which are determining for this area and create its identity.

Main features describe the area and are perceived as the main components of the landscape character. The main features of this area are the remnants of the bottomland forest, oxbow lakes or cut-off meanders of the Morava River, and Nová Ves lakes, which are perceived as the main components of the landscape character.

Accompanying features complete the image of the landscape but are not significant for the area. Accompanying features of this area are arable lands and the character of their division.

The dominant and the main features have a determining effect on the landscape character. The accompanying features only complete the image of the landscape character.



Písecká avenue end of 19th century. (In: Rašicová et al. 2000: Uherský Ostroh, Slovačské muzeum, city Uherský Ostroh, page 19)



Today



Calvary, probably he 19th century, cadastral Ostrožská Nová Ves, (Slovačké Museum, photo archive, inv 006)



Today

Proposal of a scale of landscape character quality in the research area

The following four-degree scale was proposed for the purpose of the final graphical processing of the quality of the landscape character. The scale includes the significance of the assessed segment from the perspective of its perception as a part of the landscape character. The scale has no general validity, it has been proposed for the research area:

1. *anthropogenic segments*, perceived as "common", without any significant value for the quality of the landscape characters (inside towns...)
2. *harmonious segments of anthropogenic origin*, forming significant or attractive elements of the landscape character (grass and herbs, extensive orchards, lakes for gravel extraction, historical country features...)
3. *cultural segments of anthropogenic origin*, forming a traditional part of the landscape but not contributing to the quality of the landscape character (arable lands...)
4. *natural segments, affected by human activity*, in the landscape with higher values of ecological stability, forming the quality of the landscape character.

By quality of the landscape character or landscape character quality we mean positively perceived landscape characteristics.

The research area was assessed as a landscape that has been affected by farming since the Neolithic. Therefore, this is a human-affected landscape. For this reason, the following scale of landscape character quality was proposed: anthropogenic segments, cultural segments of anthropogenic origin, harmonious segments of anthropogenic origin and natural segments affected by human activity.

The division of the area into particular segments and the creation of a map of the current condition of the landscape yielded the following results. The landscape is divided into arable land (1970 ha), forests (1456 ha) and internal spaces of municipalities (721 ha). Based on the AOPK methodology, natural, cultural and historical aspects affecting the landscape character were established. Thus a map of the assessment of the landscape character was created. Further, we created a map of the landscape character quality scale within the research area. The research area was also assessed as regards its dominants; this work concentrated on significant landscape features, especially crosses. The crosses were surveyed using GPS and captured in the map and thus a map of significant landscape features – crosses – in the area was created. Finally, Nature Park Nedakonický luh was proposed including the corresponding map.

5. REFERENCES

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Acknowledgements The work was supported from the International Visegrad Fund's, Strategic Grant "Assessment of the quality of the environment in the V4 Countries" - Standard Grant No. 21210018. The paper was created with support from Internal Grant Agency project "Optimization of functional usage of a small basin in the landscape".

