



Litwa – Polska

Program Współpracy Interreg VI-A Litwa – Polska

LTPL00256 – Wildlife Undercover

ALL RESERVES

Piłackie Hills Reserve

"Piłackie Wzgórza" (Piła Hills) is a reserve where nature reveals its most picturesque face. The undulating landscape of the Garbate Mazury region, dotted with glacial hills and covered with deciduous forests, creates an ideal place for peaceful hikes. From the hills, breathtaking panoramas of the surrounding lakes and valleys unfold, while shady corners of the forest conceal a wealth of protected plants and rare animal species.

It's a haven for nature lovers, photographers, and those longing for contact with untouched landscapes. Every walk here offers the chance to discover something new – from blooming orchids to flitting deer and birds of prey circling the hills. The reserve delights in every season – in spring it's immersed in greenery, in summer it tempts with a variety of flowers, in autumn it captivates with a riot of color, and in winter it reveals a peaceful, austere charm.

"Borki" Reserve (Borecka Forest)

The "Borki" Reserve is the true heart of the Borki Forest – one of the most valuable forest complexes in Poland. Here, vast coniferous and oak-hornbeam forests have provided a haven for wildlife for centuries. The extraordinary diversity of habitats makes it a paradise for birdwatchers – you can spot the lesser spotted eagle and black stork, among others. The forest floor harbors rare plant species, and the treetops are filled with the sounds of songbirds.

The reserve has long been a symbol of wildlife and a place where one can experience the power of nature. It is in its vicinity that one can see bison – majestic animals that have long been the pride of the Borki Forest. "Borki" is an ideal place for hiking, allowing one to slow down, immerse themselves in the shade of ancient trees, and experience the feeling that places still exist where humans are merely guests in the natural world.

"Lipowy Jar" Reserve (Borecka Forest)

"Lipowy Jar" is one of the most picturesque corners of the Borecka Forest. The reserve protects unique fragments of deciduous forest, dominated by linden, maple, and oak trees, creating a fairytale valley. In the shade of stately trees, green carpets of mosses, ferns, and flowering undergrowth plants stretch, and the air is filled with the scent of damp earth and the sound of birdsong.

This place enchants with its harmony and tranquility – perfect for those seeking a moment of respite. "Lipowy Jar" is like a natural cathedral – massive trees resemble pillars, and dense canopies create a verdant vault. Walking through this reserve, you can feel part of a primeval world where time slows down and nature sets its own rhythm. It's an excellent option for tourists wishing to explore lesser-known, yet exceptionally charming, parts of the Borki Forest.

"Mazury" Reserve (Borecka Forest)

The "Mazury" reserve encompasses ancient beech and oak stands, one of the most valuable natural features of the entire Borki Forest. The mighty, ancient trees inspire awe and allow us to imagine what the Masurian forests looked like hundreds of years ago. This place is particularly valuable for scientists and naturalists, but also for tourists seeking an encounter with nature in its purest form.

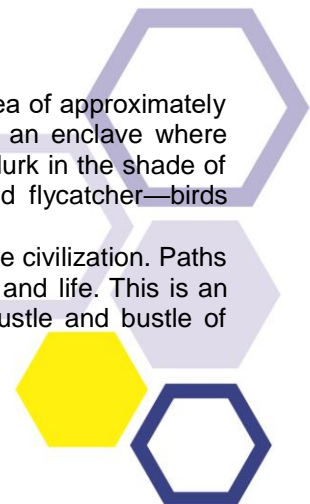
"Masuria" is not just about trees – it's also a rich undergrowth and microcosm, teeming with insects, birds, and mammals. Here, you can spot rare species of forest birds or listen to the sounds of the forest, which have remained unchanged for centuries. The reserve is a true lesson in biology – every tree, every nook and cranny tells a story about natural processes and the harmony of nature.

"Mokra Góra" Reserve (Borecka Forest)

"Mokra Góra" is the newest reserve in the Borecka Forest, established in 2024. It covers an area of approximately 60 hectares, protecting moist oak-hornbeam forests and rare plant and animal species. It is an enclave where nature develops at its own pace, undisturbed by human interference. Unique lichens and fungi lurk in the shade of the trees, and the air is filled with the song of the collared flycatcher and the red-breasted flycatcher—birds associated with shady deciduous forests.

The reserve captivates with its tranquility and wilderness – a place that truly allows you to escape civilization. Paths lead through sections of the forest, reminiscent of a natural sanctuary, full of moisture, shade, and life. This is an option for those who appreciate communing with nature in its purest form, away from the hustle and bustle of popular tourist routes.

"Ostoja Bobrów Bartosze" Reserve (near Elk)





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"Ostoja Beavers Bartosze" is a reserve covering nearly 190 hectares, encompassing peat bogs, marshes, wet forests, and a section of Lake Szarek. It was originally established to protect the European beaver, which is now abundant in the region. The character of this place is defined by contrasts: from calm waters, through flooded alder forests and marshy meadows, to dense pine forests.

This is an ideal destination for nature lovers – here you can observe not only beavers but also numerous wetland birds and rare peat bog vegetation. In Bartosze, nature reveals its wild, untamed side – full of moisture, scents, and sounds. Walking through the reserve, it's easy to feel like you're just a guest in a world that has been shaped by water and time for thousands of years.

Grasslands in the Elk Lake District (Natura 2000 area)

The grasslands of the Elk Lake District are one of the most unique Natura 2000 sites in the region. They encompass four kame hills near Stradun – post-glacial hills covered with thermophilous sandy grasslands. This rare habitat, rarely found in Poland, is crucial for preserving biodiversity.

The hills rise several meters above the surrounding area, offering beautiful views of the valleys and lakes. In summer, the grasslands transform into a colorful carpet full of flowering plants and insects – especially butterflies, bees, and hymenopterans. This place will delight photography and nature enthusiasts, as well as anyone seeking peace and quiet and the opportunity to contemplate the extraordinary landscape. It's also a great option for a short walk or a stopover on a journey through the Elk Lake District.

Lake Woszczelskie (Natura 2000 area)

Lake Woszczelskie is a unique reservoir in the Elk Lake District, protected under the Natura 2000 network. Covering over 170 hectares, it was formed by the melting of dead ice. Surrounded by peat bogs, shrubs, and wet meadows, the lake creates a unique landscape and supports the development of numerous plant and animal species.

The lake is mesotrophic, meaning its waters are clean and rich in nutrients. This allows for the development of diverse aquatic vegetation, including valuable charophyte meadows. By the waters, you can observe a wealth of waterfowl and marsh birds, and enjoy the peace and quiet. This is an ideal place for lovers of eco-tourism – hiking, nature photography, or relaxation away from the hustle and bustle.

BICYCLE, HIKING, AND KAYAKING TRAILS

Cycling trails

Michał Kajka Trail

Route: Elk – Chruściele – Tracze – Mostołty - Pistki – Klusy – Lake Kraksztyn – Ogródek – Skomack Wielki – Lake Orzysz.

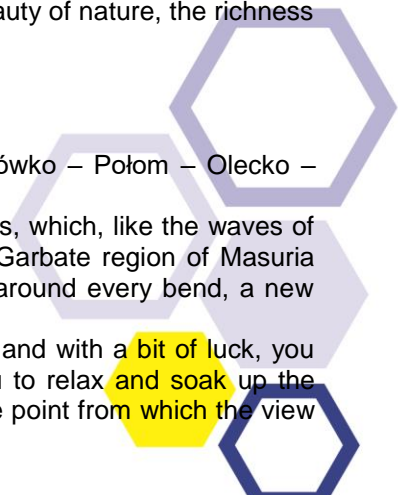
The Michał Kajka Trail is a thirty- seven-kilometer route leading from Elk to Skomack Wielki. It's a unique journey through picturesque landscapes shaped by a glacier thousands of years ago. Rolling moraine hills conceal crystal-clear blue lakes that shimmer in the sun and create unique views. Along the way, you can see the richness of Masurian nature – cranes, black storks, and grey herons – while in the forests you'll encounter deer and foxes. One of the most important stops on the trail is Ogródek, a village associated with the folk poet Michał Kajka. At his museum, you can learn about the work and history of this exceptional artist, who made Masuria famous in his poems. The trail ends in Skomack Wielki, where a former Yotvingian stronghold stands on a hill above Lake Orzysz – a site testifying to the long history of settlement in this area. This trail combines the beauty of nature, the richness of post-glacial landscapes, and the cultural tradition of Masuria.

The Humpback Masuria Trail

Route: Elk – Siedliska – Straduny – Malinówka – Stare Juchy – Szczecinowo – Garłówko – Połom – Olecko – Czerwony Dwór – Godap.

This trail is a true scenic epic – over 130 kilometers of winding roads through rolling hills, which, like the waves of the sea, were stopped here thousands of years ago when the glacier retreated. The Garbate region of Masuria reveals its wildest and most monumental side: serpentine trails climb steep hills, and around every bend, a new panorama of lakes, forests, and valleys opens up.

Hiking through the Borecka Forest, you can hear the rustle of ancient oaks and pines, and with a bit of luck, you might even spot the king of the forest – the bison. Stare Juchy and Olecko invite you to relax and soak up the atmosphere of Masurian towns, and at the end, you'll find Szeskie Wzgórza – a vantage point from which the view





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Program Współpracy Interreg VI-A Litwa – Polska stretches far beyond the lake region. This trail is for those who long to experience the power of nature and discover the Garbate Mazury region in all its majesty.

Trail of Memorials

The route of the trail: Elk – Mrozy Wielkie – Sordachy – Koziki – Giże – Borodowo – Laski Małe – Sypitki – Makosieje – Laski Wielkie – Sędki – Lega – Szeligi – Elk.

This loop loops around Lake Selment Wielki – a body of water so vast it almost feels like a sea. The banks, overgrown with reeds and rushes, teem with birdlife: grebes, coots, ducks, and herons, and a white-tailed eagle often circles the water. Here, nature intertwines with history – amidst rolling fields and quiet forests, stand monuments, old cemeteries, and memorial plaques.

It's a trail of reflection and wonder at once. As the sun sets over the water and birdsong drifts through the reeds, it's easy to feel that this is a land that remembers both nature and people. This is a trail that teaches, moves, and allows one to relax in the arms of nature.

Moraine Hills Trail

Route: Elk – Oracze – Płociczno – Straduny – Piaski – Malinówka – Bałamutowo – Czerwonka – Woszczele – Chrzanowo – Elk.

Here, nature has created a fairytale landscape – rolling moraine hills, nestled between blue lakes, illuminated by the sun and surrounded by forests. The route leads through Straduny, Piaski, Malinówka, and Woszczele, and the most impressive panorama is that of Lake Łaśmiady, stretching like a giant mirror among the green hills.

Along the way, we'll pass the historic church in Straduny and the Orthodox church in Chrzanów, but it's the landscapes that impress us most: vast meadows, forests teeming with birds, and lakes reflecting the sky. This is a trail that soothes and delights—a journey through a land where time slows down.

The trail around Lake Elk

Route of the trail: Ecological Education Center in Elk – Barany – Chruściele – Elk.

This is the trail closest to the residents' hearts – around Lake Elk, whose shores are wrapped by a promenade. The lake's surface sparkles at any time of day, and the island on which the ruins of a Teutonic castle stand offers a view of the city.

This lake formed in a glacial trough, with a shoreline dotted with bays and meanders where swans and cormorants nest. A walk or bike ride around the lake is not only recreational but also an encounter with history and nature – right in the heart of Elk.

Hiking trails

The Humpback Masuria Trail

The route: Elk – Siedliska – Straduny – Malinówka – Stare Juchy -Szczecinowo – Garłówko – Połom – Olecko – Czerwony Dwór – Gołdap.

This is a walking tour through a land filled with hills, valleys, and lakes, where every step reveals a new panorama. The route leads from Elk to Gołdap, passing through Straduny, Stare Juchy, and Olecko – places where history intertwines with nature.

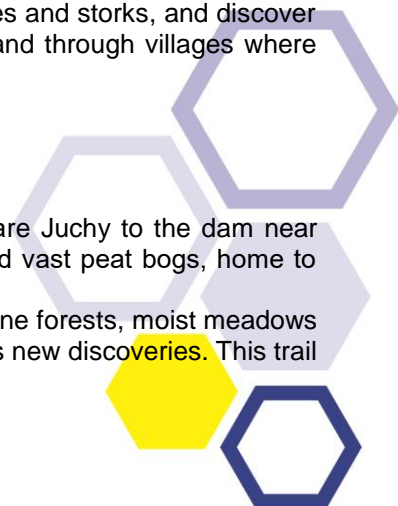
Hiking this trail, you can experience the silence of the Masurian forests, encounter cranes and storks, and discover ancient traces of the Yotvingians. It's a route through landscapes shaped by glaciers and through villages where time stood still long ago.

Green Tourist Trail

Route of the trail: Ogródek – Stare Juchy – Dam near Rajgród.

This monumental trail is a 120-kilometer adventure, leading from Ogródek through Stare Juchy to the dam near Rajgród. The trail passes through the Elk River valley, lakes hidden among forests, and vast peat bogs, home to cranes and beavers.

This trail truly captures the wildness of Masuria. The extraordinary contrasts—fragrant pine forests, moist meadows brimming with herbs, and vast reed beds by the water—mean that every kilometer brings new discoveries. This trail allows you to immerse yourself in nature and feel its rhythm.





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Black trail "Around Elk"

Route: Elk – Szeligi – Elk – Miluki – Oracze.

This eighteen-kilometer route, peaceful and beautiful, encircles Elk and leads through its immediate surroundings. The picturesque shores of Lake Elk, gentle hills, and fields stretching to the horizon make the hike feel effortless. This trail is perfect for family walks, but also for longer, leisurely hikes. The tranquility of nature blends with the proximity of the city – a perfect combination for those looking to relax without losing touch with civilization.

Green trail no. two "Tatar Trail"

Route: Elk - Ostrykół - Prostki - Bogusze.

The twenty-six kilometers from Ostrykół, through Prostki, to Bogusze are a journey deep into history and nature. Here, you can see the famous border post from 1545, as well as memorials related to past wars. At the same time, it's a trail brimming with nature—clear-water lakes, river valleys, and moraine hills create a setting where you can easily feel the spirit of bygone times. This route combines reflection on history with admiration for the beauty of Masuria.

Red trail

Route of the trail: Ecological Education Centre in Elk – Miluki – Płociczno – Świdry – Kijewo – Gąsiorówka – Kleszczewo – Puchówka – Dorsze – Szeszki – Wierzbowo.

This over 38 -kilometer route is a journey through Masurian landscapes and history. The first section leads through glacial valleys, where lakes shimmer among the hills. The second section leads through villages where wooden cottages and historic buildings have been preserved – testaments to bygone life.

This trail delights with the richness of nature: forests brimming with mushrooms, meadows fragrant with flowers, and birds accompanying the hike with their songs. It's a journey through time and space, where every step reveals a new story.

Kayaking trails

Łażna Struga kayaking trail

Route of the trail: Masuria – Lake Szwałk Wielki – Lake Pilwąg – Lake Łażno – Lake Litygajno – Łażna Struga River – Lake Łaśmiady – Lake Straduńskie – Lake Haleckie – Elk River – Lake Ełckie – Elk – Elk River – Nowa Wieś Ełcka – Prostki – Grajewo – Rudzki Canal – Osowiec.

It's over a hundred kilometers of kayaking adventure through wild and untamed nature. The river flows through lakes and forests, and its banks are covered with peat bogs teeming with birds and insects. Here, you can encounter beavers, otters, and even bison emerging from the Borecka Forest, and you might even spot a white-tailed eagle soaring over the water.

This is a trail that is best enjoyed during a multi-day trip – a night under the stars, silence interrupted only by the roar of water and the sounds of nature make it an unforgettable journey.

The Michał Kajka kayaking trail

The route: Elk – Lake Ełckie – Judziki (here we carry kayaks for about five kilometers) – Różyńsk – Lake Druglin Duży – Klusy – Lake Kraksztyn – Ogródek – Lake Kaleńskie – Lake Rostki – Kamińskie – Lake Orzysz – Orzysz.

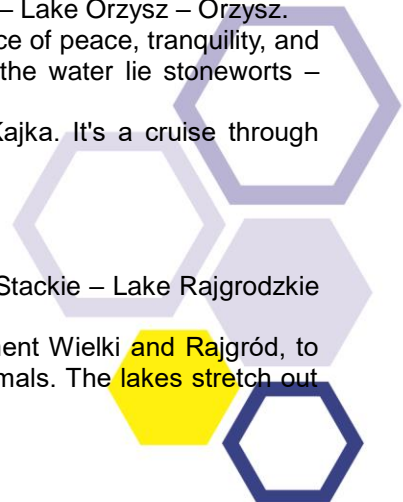
This trail is a waterway through lakes Ełckie, Kraksztyn, Kaleńskie, and Orzysz – a space of peace, tranquility, and wildlife. The lake shores, overgrown with reeds, are a haven for birds, and beneath the water lie stoneworts – plants that testify to the exceptional purity of the waters.

This trail allows you to experience the poetry of Masuria—as described by Michał Kajka. It's a cruise through landscapes that have remained unchanged for centuries, filled with harmony and peace.

Masurian-Augustów Trail

Route: Olecko, Lake Olecko – Lega River – Selmęt Wielki Lake – Małkin River – Lake Stackie – Lake Rajgrodzkie – Jerzgnia River – Augustów Canal – Augustów.

The longest waterway in the Elk Lake District travels from Olecko, through Lake Selment Wielki and Rajgród, to Augustów. It's a story about waters that have always been a lifeline for people and animals. The lakes stretch out like mirrors here, and canals and rivers connect them into a single, cohesive whole.





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This trail demonstrates how nature and humanity can work together – the construction of the Augustów Canal connected the Masurian lakes with the vast network of European waterways. It's a water epic brimming with beauty and history.

Kayaking trail on the Lega River

The route of the trail: Lake Oleckie Małe – Nowy Młyn – Starosty – Nory – Kleszczewo – Bartkowski Dwór – Gašiorówko – Gašiorowo – Pomiany – Babki Gądeckie – Chełchy – Lega – Sędko – Lake Selment Wielki – Makosieje – Sypitki - Kucze – Stacze – Lake Stackie – Lake Rajgrodzkie – Rajgród.

The 63-kilometer Lega River is a journey through some of the most beautiful landscapes in Masuria. The river meanders through fields and forests, its meanders creating natural landscape masterpieces. Along the way, you'll see old watermills, a reminder of how humans have harnessed the power of the river for centuries.

This is a demanding route, full of excitement, but also captivating in its silence and beauty. The Lega allows you to feel how the powerful forces of nature shaped the earth, and the kayak becomes a time machine.

Ełk – Prostki kayaking trail

Route: Ełk - Lake Ełckie - Barany - Ełk River - Nowa Wieś Ełcka - Ostryków - Bogusze.

A fifteen-kilometer stretch of the Ełk River is perfect for a one-day kayaking trip. The meandering river winds through valleys and meadows, providing a haven for numerous bird and fish species. Along the way, you'll see the wooden church in Ostrykole, and the kayaking trip ends in Prostki. It's a perfect option for a peaceful family getaway surrounded by nature. Kayakers will appreciate the river's tranquility, beautiful views, and the opportunity to observe wildlife. This trail is ideal for beginners, but also for those who want to slow down and experience the true beauty of the Masurian region.

FACILITIES IN EŁK

Water Tower and the Water Drop Museum in Ełk

The water tower in Ełk was built in 1895 and for many decades played a key role in the city's water supply system. Today, the building is a tourist attraction, housing the Water Drop Museum. Inside, visitors can see hydraulic equipment, fire pumps, old ridge horns, photographs of old Ełk from the turn of the 20th century, and other exhibits related to the history of the city's water supply.

At the top of the tower there is an observation deck offering a spectacular panorama of the city and surrounding area.

The neo-Gothic church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Ełk

The Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was built between 1847 and 1850 as a Lutheran church in the neo-Gothic style.

After the destruction of war, it was rebuilt between 1920 and 1925.

The church's interior is captivating with its neo-Gothic design, architectural details, and stained glass windows. Since 1945, the church has served as a Catholic church.

The neo-Gothic cathedral of Saint Adalbert in Ełk

The Cathedral of Saint Adalbert in Ełk was built in the second half of the nineteenth century, between 1853 and 1895.

The neo-Gothic style temple is an important point in the city's panorama and serves as the diocesan cathedral.

The Town Hall in Ełk – the seat of the city authorities

The Ełk Town Hall, located at 4 Marszałka Józefa Piłsudskiego Street, was opened in 1912 as the new seat of the city authorities.

To this day, it serves as an administrative center, housing the city hall. The four-story building represents a style characteristic of the early twentieth century.

Narrow-gauge railway station and the Historical Museum in Ełk

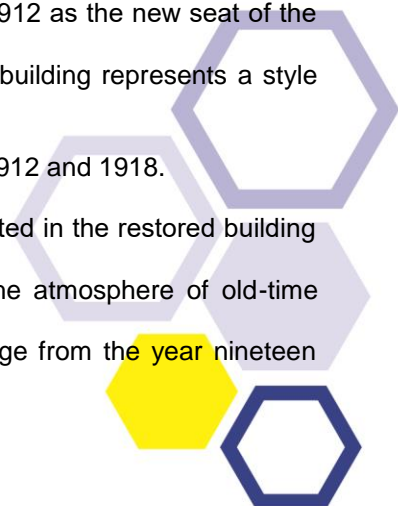
The Ełk Narrow Gauge Railway, one of the few operating in Poland, was built between 1912 and 1918.

In nineteen ninety-one it was entered into the register of monuments.

Since 2014, it has been operating as part of the Historical Museum in Ełk, which is located in the restored building of the former station.

Today, the railway serves tourist journeys, presenting the historic rolling stock and the atmosphere of old-time travel.

The ruins of the former Teutonic Castle from the fourteenth century, along with a bridge from the year nineteen hundred and thirteen, in Ełk





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On an island in Lake Ełk lie the ruins of a Teutonic castle, built at the end of the fourteenth century, between 1398 and 1406. Construction was led by Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen.

The stronghold served various functions: the seat of the mayor, a court, and even a prison.

In the nineteenth century the island was connected by a causeway, and in 1913 a bridge was built, making it easier to get to the ruins.

This place, although only partially preserved, arouses great interest and allows you to feel the atmosphere of bygone ages.

The 19th-century buildings of the Ełk city center – Art Nouveau and eclectic tenement houses

The center of Ełk has preserved many tenement houses from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, representing the Art Nouveau and eclecticism styles.

The most valuable buildings include those at Wojska Polskiego Street, numbers fifteen, thirty-eight and fifty-seven, at Mickiewicza Street, eleven, as well as at Armii Krajowej Street, numbers ten, eighteen, twenty, twenty-one, twenty-three, twenty-five, thirty-three, thirty-five, thirty-seven, forty-two and fifty-eight, at Trzeciego Maja Street, ten, and at Szopena Street, twelve.

The tenement houses at Armii Krajowej 23 and Wojska Polskiego 38 are examples of Viennese Art Nouveau. The building at Wojska Polskiego 20 is a rare example of Flame Art Nouveau. The tenement house at Armii Krajowej 21 is also among the most original in the city.

Ecological Education Center in Ełk with a garden

The Environmental Education Centre in Ełk was established at the beginning of the twenty-first century and has been operating as a municipal government unit since 2005.

It is located at Parkowa Street twelve and is surrounded by a park and an educational garden.

Inside, there is the Lake Museum with aquariums showcasing local aquatic fauna and flora, while outside there are educational trails, exhibitions and installations promoting renewable energy sources.

The Center conducts classes, workshops, competitions and programs for children, youth and adults, promoting ecological knowledge and environmental protection.

GATEWAY TO ADVENTURE + PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AREAS

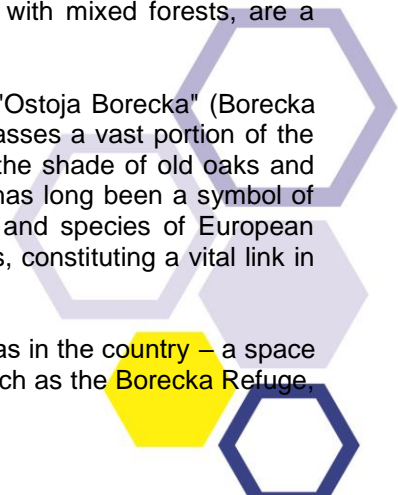
The Ełk Lake District is a true "Gateway to Adventure," allowing every tourist to enter the extraordinary world of Masurian nature and its diverse forms of conservation. Located in the heart of northeastern Poland, it forms part of the vast Masurian Lake District—a land shaped by glaciers, full of lakes, moraine hills, and forests where time seems to slow down. This is a place where adventure begins with the first step into nature.

The Ełk Lake District lies at the junction of the Warmian-Masurian and Podlaskie Voivodeships, and its heart is Ełk – a city surrounded by lakes and forests, an excellent base for exploring the region's natural treasures. To the east, it borders the Augustów Basin, to the west the Masurian Lake District, and to the south, it merges with the Biebrza Basin. The Ełk, Lega, and Jegrznia rivers flow through this area, creating a network of waterways that drain through the Biebrza River into the Narew River basin, enlivening the entire landscape.

It is within this mosaic of lakes, peat bogs, and forests that lie hidden "protected landscape areas" and reserves where nature still preserves its pristine rhythm. The "Rajgrodzkie Lakes Reserve," part of the European Natura 2000 network within the Rajgrodzkie Refuge – PLH200016, protects a complex of glacial lakes and peat bogs that provide a haven for cranes, white-tailed eagles, and grebes. The "Oleckie Lakes Reserve" encompasses a group of lakes with crystalline waters, natural shores, and rich reedbeds – an enclave of peace and harmony. The "Lega Valley Reserve," in turn, protects a meandering river along with oxbow lakes and riparian forests, creating one of the most valuable natural areas of the Lake District. The "Dybowski Hills," covered with mixed forests, are a reminder of the powerful and picturesque traces left here by the glacier.

North of Ełk, where the forest becomes denser and the silence deeper, stretches the "Ostoja Borecka" (Borecka Refuge) – PLH280016 – one of the largest Natura 2000 sites in the region. It encompasses a vast portion of the Borecka Forest – a land of lakes, peat bogs, meadows, and ancient forests. Here, in the shade of old oaks and spruces, you can encounter cranes, black storks, and even the majestic bison, which has long been a symbol of this forest. The Borecka Refuge plays a special role in the conservation of habitats and species of European importance – it protects marsh forests, peat bogs, oligotrophic lakes, and natural stands, constituting a vital link in the natural system of northeastern Poland.

The Ełk Lake District and its surroundings constitute one of the most diverse natural areas in the country – a space where small reserves and protected landscape areas combine into larger complexes, such as the Borecka Refuge, creating a coherent network of life.





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Hiking the local trails, it's easy to see this harmony. The trail from Olecko to Lake Garbas is particularly picturesque, leading through tranquil forests, rolling fields, and shimmering lakes. Each step allows you to experience nature—wild, untamed, yet close to humanity.

The Elk Lake District is not just a place for relaxation—it's a land where nature and humanity learn to work together. The Adventure Gate opens onto a world where conservation and discovery go hand in hand, and every journey becomes a lesson in respect for the landscape and its inhabitants. This is a place where adventure begins in the heart and ends with gratitude for the nature that allows us to be part of its story.

LAKE EŁCKIE

Lake Ełckie is one of the largest and deepest lakes in the region. Its surface area is approximately three hundred and eighty hectares and its depth exceeds fifty meters. The reservoir has a distinctive boomerang-like shape, and its two parts—the northern, known as Little Ełckie, and the southern, known as Big Ełckie—are connected by a narrowing bridge leading to an island containing the ruins of a Teutonic castle.

The lake's shores are varied – in parts low and gentle, in others steeper, often overgrown with reeds. The bottom conceals depths and shallow areas that give the lake a unique character. The Elk River flows through the reservoir, and is additionally fed by smaller streams from nearby lakes, promoting a rich biodiversity.

The lake is surrounded by the buildings of the city of Elk and neighboring villages, as well as fields and meadows that add to the picturesque landscape. This area serves as the heart of the city, with a popular promenade, beaches, and recreational facilities surrounding the lake. It's an ideal space for both water sports enthusiasts and those seeking peace and beautiful views in the heart of Masuria.

REGIONAL ATTRACTIONS

Bunelka Hill

Bunelka is a picturesque moraine hill, one hundred and sixty-seven meters above sea level, one of the most beautiful viewpoints in the Elk Lake District. In good weather, you can admire the panorama of Elk, Protki, and even Grajewo, twenty kilometers away. This place combines the beauty of nature with history – at the summit lies a cemetery of Russian and German soldiers who died during World War I. A wooden cross on a stone plinth, surrounded by a stone fence and commemorative plaques, gives this place a unique character. Bunelka is not only a viewpoint but also a space for contemplation and reflection, ideal for a moment of rest while traveling through the region.

Żabie Oczko Lake

A small, picturesque, and charming heart-shaped lake. Surrounded by forest, it is an oasis of peace and quiet, where you can admire wildlife and relax away from the hustle and bustle. Żabie Oczko is especially enchanting in the morning, when the water reflects the rising sun, creating a magical atmosphere. Open-Air Museum of Border

Fortifications in Świdry

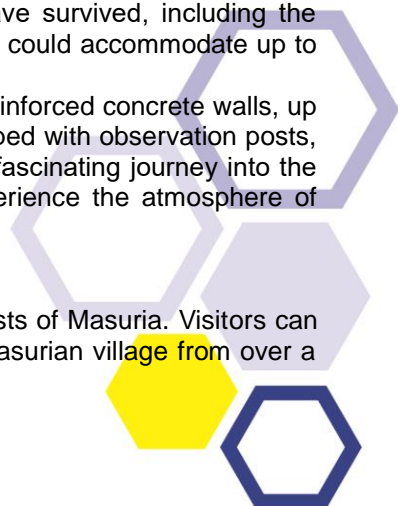
At the Masurian Border Position – a line of massive fortifications built by the Germans before World War II – you can still see a variety of combat bunkers that were intended to protect East Prussia from the Polish army. At the Świdry strongpoint, both small passive bunkers and massive defensive structures have survived, including the impressive Regelbau 113d with an armored dome and six embrasures. Such structures could accommodate up to twenty-five soldiers and provide massive machine gun fire.

The bunkers were connected by a system of anti-tank trenches and ditches, and their reinforced concrete walls, up to five and a half meters thick, provided a solid barrier against attack. Many were equipped with observation posts, ventilation systems, and emergency exits. Today, the open-air museum in Świdry is a fascinating journey into the past – a place where the history of World War II comes alive, and visitors can experience the atmosphere of bygone times and witness the military preparations of over eighty years ago.

Michał Kajka Museum in the Garden

A cozy museum in the home of folk poet Michał Kajka – one of the most prominent artists of Masuria. Visitors can see original interiors, manuscripts, and memorabilia, and experience the spirit of the Masurian village from over a century ago. This is a place where literary history meets the traditions of the region.

Church of Our Lady Queen of Poland in Straduny





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This 19th-century neo-Gothic church captivates with its beautiful brick architecture and slender tower towering over the village. The interior houses valuable furnishings and a unique atmosphere that attracts both the faithful and tourists interested in religious art. A marker dating back to the Kingdom of Prussia is located on the church wall. The church houses a historic eighteenth-century organ, tombstones of local noble families from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and a painting of the Crucifixion. It is an important cultural landmark in the Elk Lake District.

Bartosze War Cemetery

A place of remembrance and reflection, where soldiers who died during World Wars I and II are buried. The necropolis has a unique, peaceful character and reminds us of the region's turbulent history. It is not only a monument but also a space for reflection on the fates of those who shaped the history of this land.

Windmill

One of the most extraordinary attractions of the Elk Lake District! The nineteenth-century Dutch windmill in Grądzkie served residents for years to grind grain, and today it is regaining its former glory as a center of art and culture. Thanks to the efforts of the Masurian Foundation - WIATRAK, it is becoming a meeting place for artists, music lovers, and travelers. Picturesquely situated, surrounded by the Masurian landscape, it captivates not only with its history but also with its atmosphere. An ideal spot for a rest, photos, and a moment of reflection while hiking in the region.

Border Post in Bogusze

One of the oldest border markers in Poland – erected in 1545 at the meeting point of the borders of the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and Ducal Prussia. The post resembles a roadside shrine and impresses with its architectural details – red roof tiles and a plaque with the national coat of arms. It is a place where history meets the beautiful landscape of the Elk Lake District – perfect for a walk, photos, and a moment of reflection on the region's past.

Napoleon Oak – A Natural Monument in the Borecka Forest

In the heart of the Borecka Forest, in the Sarnianka Forest District, stands an extraordinary natural monument – the Napoleon Oak. Although not the oldest tree in the region, its age is estimated at around three hundred years. According to local legend, Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte rested under this oak during his retreat from Moscow in 1812, waiting for his damaged carriage to be repaired.

The Napoleon Oak has become a symbol of the Borecki Forest and is one of the oldest trees in the region. It is a place worth visiting.

Visit to experience the spirit of history and commune with nature in one of the most beautiful corners of Masuria.

The European Bison Farm in Wolisko – Encounter with the King of the Forest

In the heart of the Borki Forest, in the village of Wolisko, lies a unique place – the European Bison Farm. This breeding and nature education center allows for close encounters with Europe's largest land mammal.

The farm covers approximately seven hectares and is home to a herd of European bison, which can be observed from a safe distance from a viewing platform. It is a perfect place for families, nature lovers, and photographers. A visit to Wolisko is an unforgettable experience that allows you to feel close to the wild nature of Masuria and admire the majesty of European bison in their natural habitat.

The Devil's Boulder – A Natural Monument and a Legend of Masuria

In the heart of the Borki Forest, in the village of Krukłanki, stands a massive erratic boulder known as the Devil's Boulder. It is an inanimate natural monument with a circumference of approximately thirteen meters and a height of approximately two and a half meters. Its surface is covered with characteristic indentations, which, according to legend, are the marks of the devil's paw.

A story is associated with this place, about a poor peasant, Marcin, who made a pact with the devil to gain wealth. The devil was supposed to help him build a stone inn, but while he was lifting the largest boulder, the peasant's wife threw the devil's coat into the fire, causing the devil to lose his power and the stone to fall.

The Devil's Rock is open to tourists and is an attractive landmark on the map of Masuria. It is a place that combines the beauty of nature with the region's rich traditions and legends.

Elk Narrow-Gauge Railway – A Journey Through Time Through Masurian Landscapes

The Elk Narrow-Gauge Railway is one of the few attractions of its kind in Poland, and the only one in Warmia and Mazury still in operation today. It was built between 1911 and 1918, commissioned by Carl Suermondt, the starost of Elk. The single-track, 1,000-millimeter-gauge line initially covered approximately forty-seven kilometers, connecting Elk with Turów and Zawady Tworki. Currently, the railway offers narrow-gauge tourist rides on the Elk-



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Sypitki-Elk route, where passengers can admire the picturesque Masurian landscapes. The trains are pulled by a diesel or steam locomotive, and consist of closed and open-top carriages, known as "summer wagons." The journey takes approximately three hours, including an hour and a half break for a bonfire and a visit to the Sypitki halt station. The Elk Narrow-Gauge Railway is not only a journey through time but also a fascinating lesson in history and technology. Early 20th-Century Water Mill in Babki Gąseckie – a Witness to the Region's History and Tradition

The water mill in Babki Gąseckie, located in the Olecko commune, is a historic industrial facility from the early 20th century and a valuable element of the region's cultural heritage. Preserved in good condition, the mill is an example of traditional milling technology that has served the local community for centuries.

Thanks to its authenticity and preserved structure, the mill in Babki Gąseckie is an interesting tourist attraction in the region, attracting enthusiasts of history, architecture, and milling traditions.

Piaskowa Mountain and Lake Jędzelewo – the Nature and Geology of Masuria

Near Stare Juchy is Piaskowa Mountain – a remarkable geological and natural attraction. It was created as a result of human activity as a spoil tip from a former gravel pit, creating a picturesque hill with a beautiful view of the surrounding area. At its foot lies Lake Jędzelewo, a channel-like reservoir with a surface area of approximately 150 hectares, an average depth of 3.2 meters, and a maximum depth of 13.3 meters. Surrounded by coniferous forests, fields, and meadows, the lake is an important element of the Elk Lake District Protected Landscape Area.

The surrounding area, including the Młyńska Struga stream flowing through Stare Juchy, is an excellent place for walks, nature observation, and active recreation. Piaskowa Mountain and Lake Jędzelewo combine scenic, natural, and geological values, creating an attractive spot on the region's tourist map.

Viewing Tower in Stare Juchy – Panoramas of Masuria

The viewing tower in Stare Juchy allows for admiring the picturesque landscapes of Masuria – Lake Jędzelewo, forests, fields, and meadows. It is twenty meters high and located atop a hill, enhancing the aesthetic experience. It is a perfect place for nature lovers, photography and hiking enthusiasts, and nearby there is also the opportunity to relax and sample local dishes at an agritourism farm.

THE CITY OF ELK

Elk – the heart of Masuria with water and history

Elk is the largest city in Masuria, picturesquely situated on Lake Elk and the Elk River. It's a place where history meets modernity, where water tourism and active recreation combine with a rich cultural and culinary offerings. One of the city's greatest attractions is the lakeside promenade – perfect for a stroll, a bike ride, or an evening relaxing by the water. The ruins of a Teutonic castle tower over the lake, and right next door is the modern city center with numerous cafes, restaurants, and meeting spaces. Elk is also an excellent base for exploring the Elk Lake District and the entire Masurian region. The narrow-gauge railway, numerous hiking, biking, and kayaking trails, cultural events, and a wide range of water sports ensure that everyone will find something for themselves, regardless of age or interests. This vibrant city combines Masurian nature with a vibrant city center – the perfect place for a vacation, a weekend getaway, or a family holiday.

The interactive model of the Elk Lake District is part of the project "LTPL000256 Wildlife Undercover," "Strengthening partnership cooperation between Poland and Lithuania for the development of sustainable tourism and environmental education in the cross-border area." The program is co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund under the European Territorial Cooperation objective for 2021-2027. The program is a continuation of cooperation initiated under the Lithuania-Poland ETC Cross-border Cooperation Programme 2007-2013 and 2014-2020.

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More information about the Interreg VI-A Lithuania-Poland Programme for 2021-2027 can be found on the website <https://lietuva-polska.eu>

