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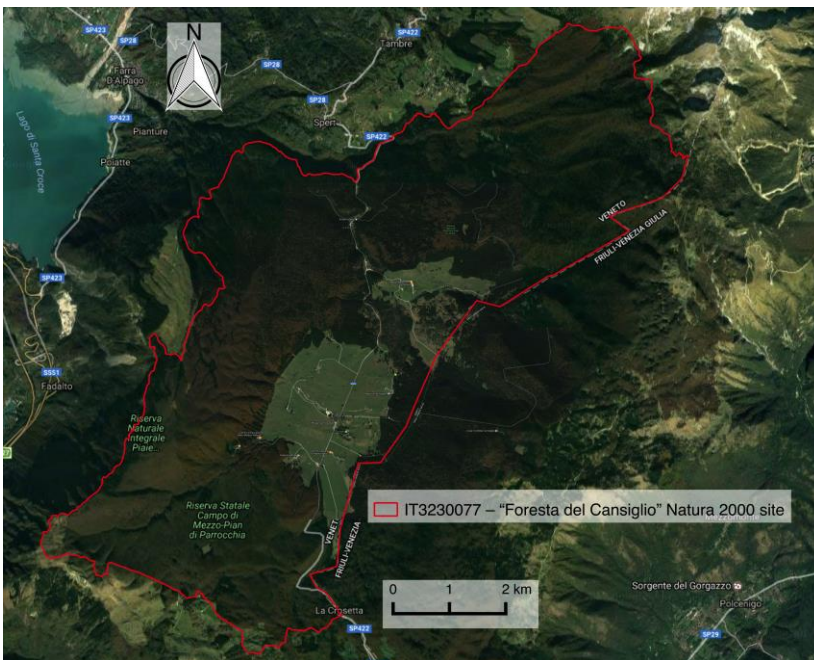
Hosted by
Department of Land, Environment, Agriculture and Forestry (TESAF)
University of Padova

SITE VISITS



Pian Cansiglio – forest and grasslands sites

The field visit will take place in Pian Cansiglio that is part of the IT3230077 – “Foresta del Cansiglio” Natura 2000 site and is located in the north-eastern Italian Pre-Alps. The Natura 2000 site covers 50.6 km². It is both Site of Community Interest and Special Protection Area. The karst area of the Cansiglio has a bowl-shaped morphology with a central plain area at about 1000 m a.s.l. that is surrounded by mountain peaks.



The IT3230077 – “Foresta del Cansiglio” Natura 2000 site

The Cansiglio forest covers around 87% of the area and it has a long history of management. During the XVI century the Cansiglio forest was of strategic value for the *Serenissima* Republic of Venice for the provisioning of timber to build its ships. Beech was particularly important for the production of oars; while, fir and spruce were more heavily exploited during the XVII century after that technical innovation required different material for ship construction (e.g. yard). In the first part of the XX century forest management aimed to preserve and increase growing stock. Currently, beech forests dominate and in particular the 9130 “*Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forest”. Other relevant

forest habitat types found in the area are 9410 “Acidophilous *Picea* forests of the montane to alpine levels (*Vaccinio-Piceetea*)” and 9140 “Medio-European subalpine beech woods with *Acer* and *Rumex arifolius*”.

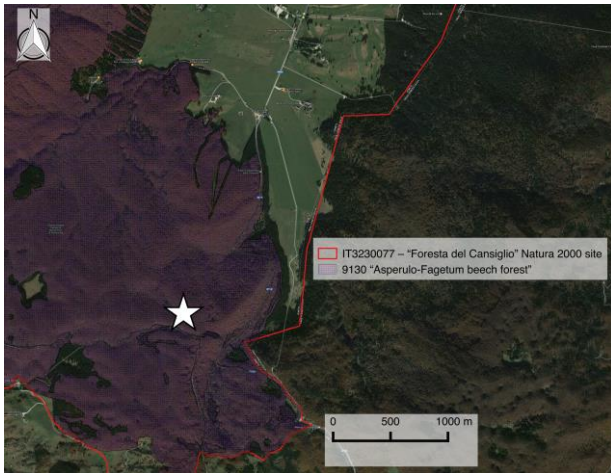
Grasslands and meadows represent around 12.6% of the Natura 2000 site and are of great importance for their aesthetic value in the landscape. Among these habitats the major habitat types are 6230* “Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)” and 6510 “Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)”. Other habitat categories are also present in the area such as ponds, bogs, and shrublands with a great importance as habitat of species.

Two areas have been selected for the visit: a forest site and a grassland site. The former is within a 9130 “*Asperulo-Fagetum* beech forest” in which a shelterwood silvicultural system is applied. The latter is within a mosaic of grassland habitats 6230* “Species-rich *Nardus* grasslands, on siliceous substrates in mountain areas (and submountain areas, in Continental Europe)”, 6510 “Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*)”, and other non-habitat grasslands.

Forest site: mature beech forest

A multifunctional forest management plan provides a schedule of shelterwood silvicultural interventions for these beech forests. The growing stock is 397 m³/ha and the forest management plan foresees a yield of 3.18 m³/ha/y representing 49% of the annual growth. Furthermore, around 4.6 m³/ha/y were harvested between 1991 and 2002.

The forest site falls between two compartments with mature even aged beech stands. Part of one compartment will soon be harvested and trees to be cut have been marked. The area is suitable for *Tetrao urogallus* and woodpeckers. Two leks were identified near the site and harvesting was forbidden, following the conservation measures for *T. urogallus*, within a 100-m radius. Furthermore, a small pond most probably maintained by red deer hosts *Triturus alpestris* individuals. Indeed, deer density is high and its browsing pressure on seedling and saplings, in particular of silver fir, is posing a threat to forest regeneration.



Grassland site: mosaic of grasslands and pond habitat types

The grassland site is located nearby a conifer forest and is managed by a dairy farm. Mowing and cattle grazing are used to manage and maintain grasslands in the Pian del Cansiglio. Furthermore, management of these grasslands is linked to the requirements of the Nitrate Directive (e.g. fertilization is prohibited on certain grassland habitat types). The nearby pond, used by cattle during specific periods of the year, was identified as a 3150 "Natural eutrophic lakes with *Magnopotamion* or *Hydrocharition*-type vegetation" and hosts, among other amphibians, *Triturus carnifex* individuals.

