

EDEN Foundation

Twenty hectares for nature and Ondřej Hes

At the end of 2023, as part of the economic and property inventory of the land of the „Private Nature Reserve of Professor M.D. Ondřej Hes“, which was created and can operate mainly thanks to the EDEN Foundation, we were pleased to note that the area of the reserve has reached 20 hectares.

I have been actively involved in nature conservation for thirty years, I founded and manage the Voluntary Ecological Society – Protection of Birds (DES OP), I am the head of the Pilsen Animal Rescue Station, thousands of animal patients have passed through my hands, I carry out hundreds of interventions, trips and events every year, but none of this compares to what was born by pure chance in November 2020.

That's when, thanks to the support of two key partners and a small group of donors, DES OP bought its first 5.6 hectares of waterlogged farmland for less than CZK 1 million. The land, uncultivable for farmers, was the floodplain of the Kateřinský potok (Catherine's brook) below the village of Hošťka in the western Tachov region. An impassable swamp, where the best water manager I know has been operating for 15 years! An incredibly hard-working animal that has saved many man-ruined sites as part of its work in the landscape. Originally extinct, the European beaver, an animal that has returned to our countryside after a rather long absence from our neighbours in Germany, where its benefits to nature and people have long been understood. An animal that, without knowing it, works for us without a single stamp or claim to a fee!

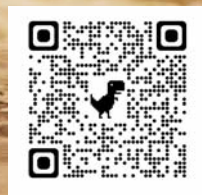
An animal that brings water and life back to our arid Czech landscape and thanks to which the EDEN was founded.

I can still see the absolutely excited Ondrej Hes, a member and one of the most active members of DES OP, in his boots and with amazement on his face mapping all the beaver dams in our first great natural oasis! The silence was interspersed with amazement, joy and a blissful feeling of finally having something more than just a pool for the frogs in Teresov! Our 5.6 hectares are now working perfectly. Finally we have a piece of beautiful land where nature can show its full strength and regenerative capacity. A place where we can show everyone how everything actually works on its own. What it looks like when water returns to where it once was, and when we respect it.

Less than a week later, Ondrej Hes received information that he had managed to convince his colleague, his chief and his friend Professor M.D. Michal for our plan. He could not resist Ondra's sincere enthusiasm and the possibility of buying more land



Prof. MUDr. Ondřej Hes Ph.D.





on the site, which he knew very well from his years of military basic service, when he served there as a doctor. And so it was Professor Michal Michal who initiated the establishment of the Eden Foundation, giving our dream a real shape, form and face. Thus, on Prof. Michal's initiative, the Eden NF was established in 2021 and additional land adjacent to the site was purchased. It is a total of 91 small pieces of land scattered around Hoštka, but after their consolidation and land improvements, the boundaries of our private reserve will move at least 500 m further upstream on both banks of the Kateřinský potok (Catherine's brook)!

With each new piece of land Ondra and I discovered what a unique place we had found, and at the same time we discovered that if you really want to protect any place, you have to own it! Along with the sites comes a growing list of rare species and organisms that we are returning to their original home. Ondra and I are at the peak of our professional careers. Finally, it all makes sense and it's working!

Unfortunately, in July 2022, cruel fate threw a handful of sand into the gears of perfection in a totally unexpected way. The second most important person and founder of NF Eden, the world renowned physician Professor M.D. Ondřej Hes Ph.D died of a sudden stroke at the age of 54.

Under the pressure of events and the pain of losing a colleague, the „Private Nature Reserve“ almost immediately became the "Private Nature Reserve of Ondřej Hes", which, in addition to its contribution to the ecosystem, bears not only his name but

also his life's legacy. With the proposal for the NF Board of Trustees and Supervisory Board, the Chairman of the NF, came Prof. Michal Michal, who was shocked by the unexpected passing of his colleague and friend, whom he respected very much for his philosophy of life and sense of nature conservation.

At the same time, he is seeking economic backing for the purchase of additional land to expand the Ondřej Hes' Reserve. Already in 2023, the Eden Foundation is purchasing adjoining and biologically valuable land. In addition to more beaver dams, we are acquiring an ash crane nesting site, a portion of Mrtvý potok (Dead brook), which is a tributary to the Katerinský potok (Catherine's brook), and other nearby wetlands.

As of today, the „Ondřej Hes Private Nature Reserve“ has over 20 hectares of the most valuable nature reserve in the upper reaches of the Kateřinský potok (Catherine's brook). We are currently in the process of purchasing additional land on one of the inflowing tributaries. Everything that the Eden Foundation has acquired and obtained is going to be legally preserved by the NF Board of Trustees for at least 100 years so that nature can continue to operate in its full mode on all these lands and show how wisely it can work!

The Eden Foundation is not only the strategic owner of most of the land of the private nature reserve, but also the guarantee and guardian of the legacy and memory of its founder, biologist and world-renowned physician, professor and colleague

M.D. Ondřej Hes Ph.D. That is why in April 2023 we proposed and asked the new President of the Republic to award the highest state decoration "In memoriam" to Professor Ondřej Hes Ph.D. for his lifetime contribution to medicine, research and science, taking into account his life philosophy and still living legacy.

You can find out more about NF EDEN and Ondřej Hes on the information board at the memorial on the Kateřinský potok (Catherine's brook) below Hoštka or directly from Ondřej Hes (QR code).

■ Za DES OP a NF Eden Karel Makoň
<https://fondeden.cz/>
<https://www.desop.cz/>

