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## Travelling through the Scottish Highlands with the LAG Highland partners

The mutual visits and project activities relevant to the transnational cooperation initiative named “Landscape Architectures in European Rural Areas: a new approach to the local development design” are proceeding quickly. This projects involves the LAG Vallecamonica and Val di Scalve in partnership with other 7 European LAGs. After the meeting held at the end of June in Saxony (Germany) and hosted by the LAG Lag Flechtinger Höhenzug, from 16th to 19th September our delegation, headed by the President Walter Sala, visited the Scottish Highlands.

The agenda of the working session, as usual, foresaw a phase of study and exchange among the territorial members involved in the project, and also a number of visits in the field, aimed to observe directly how partners manage the activities and the projects strategies of landscape promotion and protection.

The first day, in the village of Kyle of Lochalsh, we started with the analysis of the common section of the project web site, followed by the assessment of the texts and images sent by each LAG to design common promotional brochures. The core of the meeting focused on “Forestry landscape as opportunity of development”, when each partner highlighted local best practices and provided suggestions and ideas. This theoretical part was followed by a visit to the Highlands, where we learnt the local methods of forestry and pasture management.

The visit to the Skye Isle, to the Clan Donald castle and, above all, the activity of fishing with spontaneous gathering (a survival experience) in order to “provide one's food ”, were the starting point for another working session, resulting in the proposal to enhance partners’ areas by the promotion of a slow tourism, easy to be implemented in wide and scarcely populated areas, as Scotland is. The idea that came out from the session is that – starting from the main and maybe unique resource of the area, the nature – it could be possible to create packages without building any tourism infrastructures on the territory and without any strong impact on the environment. Finally the group decided to extend the project to March 2014: in spring there will be the presentation of the “Guidelines” at the LAG Oglio Po offices, when the common activities will come to an end, while local activities will continue. The initiative is financed by the 421 Measure that – further to the funding of the transnational exchanges – fosters the realization of trails and territorial promotional activities at local level .

<b>Steve Robertson</b> (Lag Highland Scotland)	<b>Walter Sala</b> (president of the LAG Vallecamonica)
“We completed the project of control of the main invasive species of our area, the arboreal rhododendron and thus we achieved the main objective. Now the second step foresees visit exchanges with Italy members, when two groups of our researchers will visit the Valcamonica and Valsabbia. The third step will consist in an exchange on the way the two communities interact with woodlands and the differences between Italy and Scotland.	“We could implement a package that includes a complete tourism offer comprising accommodation, transport, guided tours to visit the territory, and a proposal of itinerary for each area. All itineraries should be linked to each others, as a network, in order to be promoted locally by every partner. This would lead to increase tourism in all areas: it could be a new approach to self-promotion and marketing as well.



### **Scottish people in Vallecamonica: a double visit to learn our secrets of territory management**

The last May, Steve Robertson by LAG Highland (Scotland) visited Vallecamonica in order to learn our forestry management techniques. He then decided to organize two study visits in our area for two heterogeneous groups made by professionals interested in landscape and agriculture management, tourism development and in the increase of further synergies among seemingly different rural areas with similar problems. The aim of the visits was to strengthen mutual project and management capacities, through best practices exchange.

#### **Let's start...on 3rd and 4th October**

The first team arrived in the Brescia province on 1st October and spent two days in Valsabbia, then moved to Valcamonica and visited the Giovetto di Borno woodlands, the Lozio and Ossimo areas, witnessing the interventions carried out on forestry roads and woodland upsoil, the vineyards of the Concarena cone, in particular the wine-producers' district of Losine. When in Val di Scalve, the group went through the Via Mala natural canyon, and observed the intervention of Dezzo pasture widening, the Azzone area and the water saw mill.

#### **Then... on 24th and 25th October**

The second group was hosted in Valsabbia at the beginning, then in Valcamonica on 24th and 25th October. After the stop on Garda lake, the group had the chance to explore the itinerary "Among chestnut trees and the green road" in the Paisco Valley and to see the high Valley area, particularly the Two Parks Forestry Consortium, the forestry and roads improvements in the Vione and Ponte di Legno areas and the remote heating plant by forestry biomass.

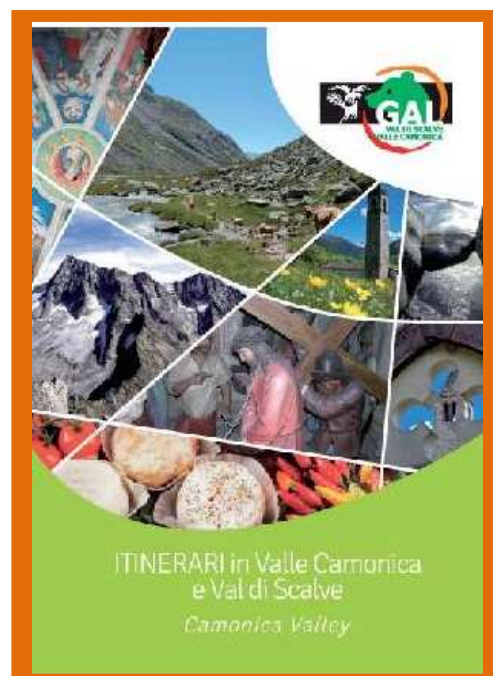


# Visit Vallecamonica and its itineraries

Vallecamonica has hundreds of paths and itineraries, for a total extension of 2.155 km. There is a lot of choice: hiking, trekking, cultural, religious and spiritual itineraries, paths running along the middle of a slope; you can explore them riding a horse, by bike, and discover local wine and food, churches and castles. The Local Action Group Vallecamonica Val di Scalve made the difference and took care of the enhancement of rural tourism and its itineraries. Thanks to the Leader transnational cooperation project and the Local Strategy, the LAG identified seven trails along the Valley, fixed some damaged portions, placed the road signs, prepared the advertising material and now it is caring about marketing and distribution. By the cooperation project the LAG is promoting the nature and local products as an opportunity of social aggregation. Along the Wine Trail, the Chestnut Trail and the Green Trail a set of suitable signs was placed; a series of maps and guides were published, a web site, a number of dedicated social media profiles and Apps were created. All these tools are meant to help hikers and bikers to discover the surroundings. The old and new trails will be promoted both locally and internationally, after creating a set of captivating offers, working with local tour operators. The aim is to encourage tourists to spend two or more days in Vallecamonica, with the availability of a set of suitable offers. Along the trails tourists will find road signs with a common design, information boards, direction arrows, and also leaflets describing trails' features and containing information on point of interests and specific maps of the itinerary chosen. Finally, promotional activities (all the itineraries will be systematized) will help to create a local system, involving local operators (hotels, restaurants, tour guides, farm housing and other partners) in the marketing work. There are seven itineraries identified by the LAG on which the works are in progress, along the whole Valley, whose natural and cultural features and local products are different. To learn more about the trails, you can visit the web site [www.galvallecamonicaavaldiscalve.it](http://www.galvallecamonicaavaldiscalve.it): a dedicated area will give you the chance to check the trails, download the maps, and get all needed information (you can find also the descriptions of the points of interest along the path). Last but not least, an App will be available very soon, to help tourists to visit the Valley.

Vallecamonica created two other associations: a Cultural District and a Nature Network; the structure of their itineraries is in line with the one of the LAG. The results of the joint work and the future developments were presented during the conference "The Signs Valley and its itineraries", held last October 18th at the meeting centre of Boario. During the meeting all the partners involved in touristic promotion tried to sum up all the activities implemented, presenting the new itineraries that should increase the appeal of the territory and foster the creation of tourist facilities. You can read more about it on the web site [www.galvallecamonicaavaldiscalve.it](http://www.galvallecamonicaavaldiscalve.it)

All promotional leaflets were collected in an elegant folder, containing an introduction to Vallecamonica territory and its resources, a brochure for each trail, the relevant map, the description of the points of interest and other useful information. All contents are translated in English. The promotional kit can be requested writing and e- mail to [info@galvallecamonicaavaldiscalve.it](mailto:info@galvallecamonicaavaldiscalve.it)





# Let's have a look at the seven itineraries

## **Among trees of bread (Villages of Capo di Ponte, Paspardo, Cimbergo)**

Leaving from Capo di Ponte Infopoint, let's go up to Paspardo, moving along the old mule-tracks through centuries-old chestnut trees in Deria for about 4/5 hours, then going back to Cimbergo and to the Infopoint again. Chestnut trees and their fruits are the core of the hike and you can visit three historical areas of the three towns, the Chestnut Consortium, the Cimbergo castle, the engraved rocks parks. On the way back you can directly go to Naquane or visit the prehistorical village (a reconstruction) in the woodlands of Nadro and then go to Naquane, to see the Church of Sante and Capo di Ponte.



## **“Among vineyards and wine” from Capo di Ponte to Breno**

Leaving from Capo di Ponte Infopoint, let's pass through the territories of Ono San Pietro and Cerveno up to Losine, following the ancient Valeriana road, traversing the Concarena cone among vineyards, fields and meadows, until you reach the town of Breno. There is also an alternative ring path, that leads to Capo di Ponte along the low valley bike track, running along the wide stretches of the Oglio river. Each hamlet you meet has cultural, environmental and historical treasures to offer. Along the itinerary there are many cellars, where you can taste the Vallecamonica branded wines (indicated as typical geographical product).



## **Among chestnut trees and the green road (Valle di Paisco and Val di Scalve)**

It's a ring trail developing between Valcamonica and Val di Scalve, with an high altitude variation, from the low valley to the high pastures, among chestnut trees and pine woods. You can leave from Forno Allione and go up for some kilometers on the mule-track through woodlands to the village of Paisco, where you can stop and then proceed to the pass of Vivione into Val di Scalve and go down to Schilpario. Then you can move to Dezzo of Scalve, finally going up again to Paline of Borno and the woodlands of Giovetto.



## **Among wines and olive trees (Darfo Boario, Piancogno, Angolo)**

The path starts near Villa Gheza in Pianborno and gives you the chance to proceed along a double itinerary. The first trail is quite hard, with a considerable gradient, and leads to Annunciata place, on a road with a hard slope, among vineyards and meadows. The second path starts still from Villa Gheza but it leads to lake Moro, among vineyards, meadows, woodlands and cultivated lands. At the beginning you go up to Annunciata place and at the first traversing crossroad you go towards the flat path



leading to Erbanno; after the hamlet, and the towns of Boario Alta and Gorzone, you arrive at lake Moro.

### **Trekking on the Altopiano del Sole (Borno, Ossimo, Lozio)**

It's a traversing path that links the villages of the Altopiano (table land): you leave from Borno and you get to the town of Ossimo Superiore and Creelone place. Then you reach the località Pat, where there is the homonymous archeological site and the Anvoia hill. There are picnic areas and a welcome center hosting an exhibition hall, an educational area and restrooms. From here you can move into a new rural road and arrive to Lozio, with a path stopping by an abandoned mine, and then go up to Lozio or return to Ossimo walking through an asphalted roadway.

### **Trekking of the mountain huts (Edolo, Monno)**

Leaving from the central square of Edolo towards Mola, through an old road crossing small mountain hamlets (in the past, inhabited all the yearlong), you go up and reach the small lake of Mortirolo, moving along crests at the bottom of Cima Verda. Then you go on till you reach the beginning of the Mortirolo pass, lying along the boundary of Valtellina, reaching the Val Varadega through many alpine pastures, where you can still find cows grazing. Along the itinerary you can meet ungulates while in Val Varadega you will find a small hut used as shelter, now restored (cheese was stored in this hut to reach maturation), giving you the chance to see how rural buildings were in the past.

### **Among alpine pastures and trenches (Ponte di Legno, Passo del Tonale, Val di Sole)**

It's a tough ring itinerary developing for more than 60 Kilometers between the Val di Sole and Valcamonica, leaving from Ponte di Legno to the Val di Viso, through Pezzo and reaching Case di Viso. From here, an old mule track leads to the amphitheater of Montozzo and the Bozzi hut. You can choose to traverse following a path leading to Tonale pass, with a stop in the mountain hut Cadì or to go on till the saddle of Montozzo, (the border between Lombardia and Trentino). From here, you descend to lake Pian Palù and shortly you get to the mountain hut Cellerino, finally moving to the path leading to Fontanino di Pejo and Pejo.



## **Be connected to Valcamonica**

To learn in detail each topic of interest, discover the valley and have more information or join the local communities' initiatives, click on:

[www.galvallecamonicavaldiscalve.it](http://www.galvallecamonicavaldiscalve.it) : LAG Valcamonica Val di Scalve

[www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it](http://www.cmvallecamonica.bs.it) : Mountain Community Council of Valcamonica

[www.vallecamonicacultura.it](http://www.vallecamonicacultura.it) : Cultural District of Valcamonica

[www.parcoadamello.it](http://www.parcoadamello.it) : Adamello Park

[www.turismovallecamonica.it](http://www.turismovallecamonica.it) : tourism in Valcamonica

[www.saporidivallecamonica.it](http://www.saporidivallecamonica.it): local products and craftsmanship

PSR 2007-2013 Gal Valle Camonica Val di Scalve – Misura 421 “Cooperazione”



Fondo Europeo Agricolo per lo Sviluppo Rurale: l'Europa investe nelle zone rurali  
PSR 2007-2013 Direzione Generale Agricoltura



**Valcamonica: choices and identity**

Valcamonica is different from any other place. The first Italian Unesco Site is here: the engraved rocks parks represents the primitive art, spread all over the valley. Ancient romans knew the quality of the territory, and they chose to settle in Valcamonica, leaving unique marks for future generations. An example is the Minerva Sanctuary (a place that had already been considered sacred by local communities of previous ages). The temple reveals the love of Roman Empire for the valley, and it's connected with other small and big archaeological remains (like an amphitheater hosting a gladiators gym). Ancient peoples chose the places to live in following simple principles: quality of the land, good climate, water courses... Their presence along the centuries granted a peculiar atmosphere to Valcamonica, shown in the traditions of the rural world of the valley-dwellers. An universe linking agricultural cultivations, local productions and the hospitality that Valcamonica is retrieving and enhancing. Let's remember some products of this rural and mountain identity to give an example: Rosa Camuna, Silter, Casolet, Casatta... This is the task of a Local Action Group: to understand entirely the identity of the territory and implement initiatives enhancing and promoting it. The act to recover chestnut trees and vineyards represents the respect of the values of the peoples living in the valley throughout the centuries. The promotion and the suggestion of natural, cultural and agricultural resources to visitors and tourists activate new opportunities for a sustainable growth based on the visible and invisible landscape that distinguishes the valley from any other land.

**Identity and Governance: union is strength**

The richness of a land is witnessed also by the governance choices. Valcamonica can be surprising also for its capacity to create consistent and innovative strategies and actions. Aware of the identity that differentiates the valley from all the other mountain and rural areas, local representatives made the difference, acting like the hard-working ancient craftsmen: they built real tools to recover, enhance and renew the valley. The Mountain Community Council is the local authority that develops the managing strategy of the main objectives the Valley is interested in, promoting systemic actions for all the 41 involved municipalities. Local development is entrusted to the Local Action Group Vallecamonica Val di Scalve: the agricultural world is at the center of all interventions aimed to requalify the land to create new job opportunities. Among the most important actions of the LAG, we have to mention the projects for recovering chestnut trees and vineyards, the coordination on itineraries and trails project, the promotion of activities like the truffles production. And, last but not least, let us remember the role given to the tourism as the sector that connects agriculture and sustainable economic development, also by creating suitable types of accommodation, like B&B and hostels. The effectiveness of the LAG is related to the integration with the initiatives of other local actors, like the Adamello Park and the Cultural District of Valle Camonica. Common projects on agriculture, nature and culture interact and amplify their outputs, with actions involving the main economic and social sectors. All results does not represent a final achievement, but a starting point towards new goals like EXPO 2015 and European projects. Thanks to the LAG, the Valley projects itself to other lands, to paths of development of regional and European level, like the project on landscape (named LANDsARE) or the Greenways road, running on the Oglio river and crossing the Region. All LAG Vallecamonica Val di Scalve projects are carried out in compliance with the Leader method, involving public and private partners, with a bottom-up approach and promoting the cooperation with other rural areas to exchange best practices and know-how.