

PROTECTION OF NATURE AND THE LANDSCAPE MURÁNSKA PLANINA NATIONAL PARK

The National Bank of Slovakia is preparing to issue the sixth commemorative coin with the theme of protection of nature and landscape in March 2006. Commemorative coins with designs connected with the national parks in the territory of Slovakia are progressively being produced in this framework. Coins devoted to the Slovenský raj (1994), Pieniny (1997), Tatry (1998), Malá Fatra (2001) and Slovenský kras (2005) national parks have already appeared.

The Muránska planina national park is situated on the boundary between Central and Eastern Slovakia in the western part of the Slovenské rudohorie mountains. It was established in 1997 over an area of 20,318 ha. It consists of extraordinarily precious natural landscape areas, relatively little disturbed by the influence of civilization. Four geomorphological units meet in its area: the Veporské vrchy (mountains), Spišsko-gemerský kras (karst), Slotické vrchy (mountains) and Horehronské podolie (valley). The result is varied karst and non-karst relief. The action of water on the limestones and dolomites produced deep valleys such as the impressive Javorníková dolina with several waterfalls. The park contains many caves, sinkholes, springs and surface karst formations. The highest peak is Fabova hoľa – 1439 m above sea level, the deepest pothole is Michňova with a depth of 105 m and the most extensive cave system is Bobačka with a length of 3000 m. There is rich flora with abundant alpine and sub-alpine species. The most typical and most important plant is *Daphne arbuscula*, an endemite of the

Muránska planina, which grows nowhere else in the world. The fauna is also varied. The half-wild breed of horse – Noric of the Muráň type on Veľká lúka is typical. The past is recalled by the ruins of the once glorious Muráň Castle with the Gypsy rock, which towers over



the village of Muráň and is an important botanical, zoological, historical, archaeological and tourist locality.

The National Bank of Slovakia declared an anonymous public competition to find an artistic design for the commemorative coin. Eight artists entered nine designs for it. The expert commission recommended production of the design by Karol Ličko, which gained a lowered first prize. The design was evaluated as the most appropriate and best expression of the given theme. The commission appreciated the compositional harmony of the obverse and reverse and the impressive representation of the characteristic attributes of the national park.

Daphne arbuscula flowers are depicted on the obverse with the ruins of Muráň Castle above them. The reverse bears a depiction of part of the panorama of the national park with a pair of horses (Norics of the Muráň type) in the foreground. At the request of the commission, the artist adjusted the depiction of the horses to show them from the side instead of from the front.

Karol Ličko was also awarded second prize. Especially the excellent



relief stylization of the depiction of the selected motifs of the national park addressed the commission – a black grouse with a tree in the background on the obverse and flowers of *Daphne arbuscula* with a landscape motif on the reverse.



PhDr. Kliment Mitura was awarded third prize. He places flowers of *Daphne arbuscula* and the gate of Muráň Castle on the obverse. For the reverse, he produced interesting landscape motifs showing an above ground part with flowers and a landscape and an underground cave part with decoration formed by dripping water.

The commemorative coin with a value of 500 Sk, diameter of 40 mm and weight of 33.63 g is struck from silver with a fineness of 925/1000 at the Kremnica Mint.

4,000 pieces of standard quality and 2,600 pieces of proof quality have been produced. Striking is limited to a maximum of 8,500 standard and 5,000 proof pieces. The edge bears an inscription: „OCHRANA PRÍRODY A KRAJINY“ (Protection of nature and the landscape), preceded by a mark in the form of a flower.

Ing. Dagmar Flaché, Photo: Ing. Štefan Fröhlich