

Michel and his Buffaloes

The ecologist Michel Jacobi came to Ukraine from Germany to preserve Ukraine's ecosystem and traditional stock-breeding practices.

Despite the fact that modern animal husbandry norms prefer cows and intensive farming practices, Michel began to breed buffaloes. In the early 20th century, raising buffalo was common in Zakarpattia; there were several thousand buffaloes in the neighboring villages. When the communists came to power they placed all the buffaloes in collective farms. But the female buffaloes did not like their new conditions in the collective farms and stopped producing milk. By the 1990s, the buffalo population declined from a few thousand to around one hundred.

— I thought that in Ukraine I could find the same natural environment and lifestyle of our ancestors since they don't exist in Germany anymore. People need to live in harmony with nature. I want to show this by my own example.

With the support of a few charity foundations and a few village leaders who gave him a leftover land that once belonged to the collective farms, Michel began collecting his buffalo herd from the surrounding areas.

Michel watches over his herd at farms in Chumalovo and Stebilivka and works on a breed registry. Michel also ensures that his buffaloes also live in the semi-wild shores of the Danube.





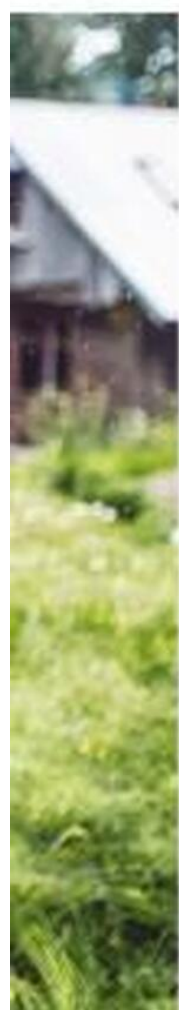
Mount Yavirnyk. Yanko Derevlianyi

Artist, sculptor, and architect Yanko Derevlianyi, looking for a place to live in harmony with nature, chose Yavirnyk, a mountain near the town of Velykyi Bereznyi, to set up his workshop. Yanko first came to Yavirnyk in 1974 when he was working as an interior-designer at Soviet-era tourist

complex. Since then he has been very active in the area designing and building huts and fire-pits for travelers.

— Even cats run wild on the mountain, and it's a rare soul that can spend much time here.









Synevyr is the largest mountain lake in Ukraine, located at an elevation of 989 metres above sea level in the Vnutrishni (inner) Gorgany mountain range in the Carpathians.



Borzhava Narrow-Gauge Railway

Locals call the Borzhava narrow-gauge railway, built at the beginning of the 20th century, by its diminutive name 'Antsia'. The train is drawn by an old diesel locomotive TU-2, produced in the 1950s. Vynohradiv train station is one of the favourite meeting points for the locals that also hosts a market.

Antsia is only one of a few active narrow-gauge railways in Ukraine, with a rail width of 750 millimetres. Its route, from Vynohradiv through Khmilnyk to Irshava, is 123 kilometres long. The main rail goes along the Borzhava River, from which the name of the railway comes from. The two carriages and the old locomotive cross the market in Vynohradiv carrying the passengers through Zakarpattia.



