



Situated in the community area of Leithaprodersdorf, the “European Conservation Area Frauenwiesen and Johannesbach“ covers approximately 49 ha and comprises 5 parts:

1. Johannesbach (ca. 8.5 ha)

2. Weierwiesen (ca. 8.5 ha)

3. Odelwiesen (ca. 10 ha)

4. Fronwiesen (ca. 17 ha)

5. Connecting Ditches (ca. 5 ha)

The brook Johannesbach has its source at the foot of the Leithagebirge Mountains in the eastern Wiener Becken south of the village Leithaprodersdorf. After flowing 6.5 km to the north-east, it runs into the River Leitha near the Kotzenmühle south-east of Seibersdorf. The catchment area of the brook Johannesbach lies in the Leitha Basin which belongs to the natural area "Feuchte Ebene", the wet plain.

The Weierwiesen meadows can be found south of the Johannesbach and are traditional hay meadows. Due to their wetland properties these meadows are not really appropriate for agriculture and have thus been preserved up to now. Diverse management types (intensity of fertilizer application, time of mowing) and the fragmentary relief structure have led to an enormous diversity of meadow types: Intensively managed False Oat meadows with predominating Tall Fescue (*Festuca arundinacea*), fertilized and thus poor in species, but also semi-dry grasslands with Erect Brome (*Bromus erectus*) that are rich in species. In a trough formed by the former course of the brook Johannesbach, a real specialty, a *Molinia* meadow, has been preserved.

The Odelwiesen Meadows are a group of different, mostly still managed meadow types which are situated north of the community Loretto and bordered by ditches. The Frauenwiesen Meadows on the northern edge of the Leithagebirge Mountains near Loretto are among the most beautiful and botanically richest wet meadows in the Burgenland. The 17 ha site, sloping slightly to the north-west, consists of Pannonian clays and sands, soil formation is influenced by mountainside springs of the near Leithagebirge Mountains. In low lying sites affected by groundwater, formation of gleys occurs whereas in higher and dryer sites soils develop into chernosems. The large meadow area is divided by several troughs in which grey willow shrubs have established themselves.

In the south-east of the conservation area there is a small Brown Bog-Rush-calcareous fen with some very rare plant species here in Burgenland: Bird's Eye Primrose (*Primula farinosa*), Common Butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*), False Asphodel (*Tofieldia calyculata*), Broad-leaved Cottongrass (*Eriophorum latifolium*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes trifoliata*) and Loose Marsh Orchid (*Orchis palustris*).

In the Molinia Meadows, the Fragrant Leek (*Allium suaveolens*) has its only occurrence in the Burgenland. Stand-forming grasses are the name-giving Purple Moor Grass (*Molinia caerulea*) and the Blue Sesleria (*Sesleria uliginosa*). Among the characteristic and remarkable plant species there are orchids such as the Fragrant Orchid (*Gymnadenia conopsea*), the Early Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza incarnata*), the Marsh Helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*), the Broad-leaved Marsh Orchid (*Dactylorhiza majalis*) and the Marsh Gentian (*Gentiana pneumonanthe*), the Hungarian Flat Pea (*Lathyrus pannonicus*), Viper's Grass (*Scorzonera humilis*), the Creeping Willow (*Salix repens* subsp. *rosmarinifolia*), the Globeflower (*Trollius europaeus*) and the White False Hellebore (*Veratrum album*), an alpine floral element that can be found quite frequently here.

In higher level parts of the Frauenwiesen semi-dry grassland with predominant stands of Erect Brome (*Bromus erectus*) and Fescue (*Festuca rupicola*) have developed. Remarkable stands of the Austrian Gentian (*Gentianella austriaca*) and the Military Orchid (*Orchis militaris*) and very small occurrences of small sedge communities predominated by the Brown Sedge (*Carex disticha*) can be found, a true peculiarity here is the Buxbaum's Sedge (*Carex buxbaumii*).

Flowing water ditches connecting the different sites act as corridors and biotope links between the individual habitat parts.

Protected Features:

Corresponding to the different site conditions ranging from long-lasting degrees of wetness near spring outlets to early dryness of higher altitudes there are several different types of meadows in that area. The ecological variety comprises meadows from Brown Bog-Rush-calcareous fen and Small Sedge communities of the habitat type 7230 Alkaline Fens over Purple Mooregrass-‘Streuwiesen’ (traditionally these meadows were only mown once a year in autumn and the cuttings were used as bedding in stables) categorised as type 6410 Molinia meadows on calcareous, peaty or clayey-silt-laden soils (*Molinion caeruleae*) to semi dry grassland corresponding to type 6210 Semi-natural dry grasslands and scrubland facies on calcareous

substrates (Festuco-Brometalia). More intensively-used sites provide False Oat grass-fertilized meadows of the habitat type 6510 Lowland hay meadows (*Alopecurus pratensis*, *Sanguisorba officinalis*).

The brook Johannesbach is shelter to a numerous population of the Thick-shelled River Mussel (*Unio crassus*), which is the densest population in Burgenland, and, as well, a rich population of the Amur Bitterling (*Rhodeus sericeus amarus*).