



### BACKGROUND

Union of Municipalities of Biferno is made up of the Municipalities of Bojano, San Massimo, Campochiaro, Spinete, Colle D'Anchise, Guardiaregia and San Polo Matese. The Union promotes the integration of municipalities and their development. It promotes socio-economic development, favoring the participation and collaboration of public and private entities. It protects the environment and nature, heritage and cultural, historical and artistic heritage traditions. It supports the improvement of the quality of life of the whole community and of professionals and personal growth.

### NATURAL ASPECTS

The whole Union area has sites of naturalistic interest. The WWF Guardiaregia-Campochiaro Oasis is located within a Site of Community Importance in the Municipalities of Guardiaregia and Campochiaro (Cb). It is also a Special Protection Area. The area, of 3135 hectares, is one of the largest and wildest oases managed by the WWF. The environment is mountain and forest with



spectacular karst phenomena, such as the canyon of the Quirino stream, San Nicola waterfall (total jump of 100m.), the caves of Pozzo della Neve (depth - 1048 m.) and Cul di Bove (depth - 913 m.) which are among the deepest abysses in Europe.

### HIKING ROUTES

Campitello Matese, a renowned winter sports center in southern Italy, falls within the territory of San Massimo. The station is part of the Matese massif, witness of signs of remote civilizations, the history of this mountainous complex begins over 25 centuries or is the work of the first inhabitants of Italic origin, while the Greek colonists who, despite having such an impact on the new plains they had little influence on the inhabitants of the Matese area. In 216 BC this territory was also invaded by Carthaginian soldiers led by Hannibal. The mountain group is part of the Matese, a karst area with woods, caves, panoramas, fossils and more; an important feature is its plain: the surrounding mountains in fact close around a large flat valley, which in spring, with the melting of the snow, leads to the formation of a large mountain lake on the high ground, Matese Lake. Also in spring you can see the characteristic snowdrop flowers that decorate the mountains with their natural beauty. Various sports are practiced on these mountains, from skiing to mountain biking, rock climbing, up to paragliding.



### REGIONAL PARK OF MATESE

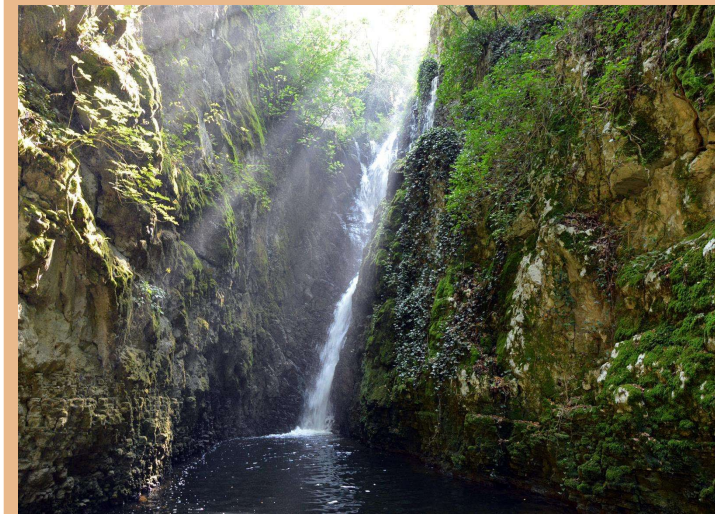
One of the major attractions of the area included in the Union is the Matese Regional Park, a paradise for hikers and sportsmen: mountain biking, trekking, grass and alpine skiing, hang gliding, but also horse riding and caving excursions. The territory of the Matese consists of a chain of mainly calcareous mountains. It is a territory rich in wild places, populated by wolves and golden eagles, sweet landscapes, with lakes with blue waters in which the peaks of the mountains are reflected, original and well-preserved historical centers, a lot of history, also made up of the always tense relationships between Romans and Samnites, typical genuine, unique and tasty products.



## MOLISE the beauty of Matese



Rosario Barricelli







### BIFERNO RIVER

Certainly an important resource of the Matese, in the Molise area, a connecting element between its hills and its coastline is the Biferno river. Biferno is the only river in Molise whose path winds through the entire region. The watercourse, 93 kilometers long, originates from the sources of the Majella, Santa Maria dei Rivoli, Pietre Cadute and Rio Freddo at the foot of the Matese mountain range, near the city of Bojano. The springs ensure a fairly regular flow of water to the river, especially in the first section. The flow of the Biferno is also reinvigorated by the waters of various tributaries and by a series of other streams that accompany it to the mouth, after entering the artificial lake of Guardialfiera. For some years now, the watercourse has been rediscovered in its profound authenticity. Lovers of pleasant and unspoiled landscapes have begun to strongly appreciate its extraordinary nature and the richness of the ecosystem in which it is immersed. Recently, many enthusiasts have begun to travel the river aboard canoes, ushering in the season of river walks.

### HISTORY AND TRADITION AMONG THE ANCIENT VILLAGES OF THE UNION

Among the municipalities of the union, San Polo Matese, a small village perched on one of the buttresses of the Matese Massif, also deserves a mention.



The origin of the inhabited center, of clear Samnite age: in the Camponi district the remains of two necropolises were found: the first dating back to the VIII-VII century BC, the other of the IV-III century BC. The first official documents date back to the year 1080, the year in which the Count of Boiano, Ugone, having recently completed the construction of the Cathedral, also included that of San Polo among the fiefdoms assigned to it. It thus became an ecclesiastical fiefdom, and remained so for about seven centuries. Walking through the center, between alleys and streets, you can see the typical characteristics of a medieval town. The town slowly took shape around a fortress built in the Lombard period. The major medieval testimonies are represented by what remains of the castle and the parish church. The first was almost completely dismantled. An idea of how it must have been is given by the surviving tower, recently restored. The Parish Church is that of S. Pietro in Vincoli, dating back to 1200. Due to several earthquakes the church has undergone numerous reconstructions that have almost hidden the peculiar characteri-



stics of the medieval construction. Inside the church there is a baptismery from 1552, a stoup from 1616 and a splendid wooden statue of the Madonna and Child by Di Zinno (1755). On the façade there is the bell tower, an ancient re-adapted and plastered tower that has two bells and a square-shaped clock. Near the tower there are some rocks of a carbonate platform which date back to about 100 million years ago and which contain numerous fossils of ancient bivalves, especially rudist ones. In fact, in the Cretaceous period the sea reached here; then, around ten million years ago, the Matese Massif began to emerge enclosing tons of fossils among its carbonate rocks.

### FAUNA

The historical presence of the wolf on the Matese, includes reports. Other mammals present are the fox, the stone marten, the marten, the skunk, the weasel, the badger, the wild boar, the squirrel, the dormouse and the more elusive wild cat and otter. In 2008, 23 roe deer were reintroduced in the Matese Regional Park. Among the birds over 200 species (the black kite is undoubtedly the symbolic species of the Matese).



### GEOLOGY

The geological history of the Matese, starting from the Triassic period (because its oldest rocks date back to that time), closely related to the more general but more explanatory one of the central-southern Apennines, is indicated here as an account of the most documented interpretations on evolution paleogeographic of the region. Particular attention is paid to paleontological and paleoecological knowledge, since the interest considered in this context is essentially directed towards these aspects.