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Dati tecnici

Itinerary code: EALA2420000

I Villaggi di Pietra

Category: Hiking Routes
Titolo: The
Descrizione del percorso: Interesting route, situated in one of the remotest and wildest corners of the province of Alessandria, which joins Vegni and Croso, hamlets of Carrega Ligure, a municipality with 80 residents on an area that covers almost 60 km2, with an extremely low population density.

The trail meanders in an uncontaminated environment, inside the Upper Val Borbera Natural Park and touches three small villages which have been abandoned for decades. Now in ruins, they still bear witness to the great construction ability and the extraordinary spirit of adaptation of the generations that populated these mountains.

In Vegni, park in the square at the start of the village, where you will find a trail descriptive board; the first section of the trail (marker 242) is one kilometer long, and has been equipped with a handrail and braille board for use by visually impaired and blind people.

From the square, take the road to the right, go past the fork in the road with trail 240 and, beyond the last houses take the road to the left; after a dozen metres leave the deviation of trail 245 on the right and proceed on the main road which meanders up the hillside between beech and maple trees, which allow to catch a glimpse of the village of Agneto on the opposite slope, with the terraces which were cultivated in the past.

Following a long straight section, you arrive at a fork in the road, where you must continue straight on, leaving the main road which turns sharp left; shortly after comes a scenic point, Sella of Campassi, where the section with handrail ends: from here, you can enjoy a beautiful view of Monte Antola and the green valley of Rio Campassi.

Take the trail downhill and, after turning left, continue into the wood of oak and hornbeam; after passing several watersheds the oak will be replaced by chestnut, some of which are of imposing size, at one time they were cultivated for their fruits. Shortly after, you arrive at the first abandoned village, Casoni: the stone houses, though mostly collapsed, are often invaded by vegetation, but they can still be admired for the technical ability with which they were built centuries ago, using only materials that were available locally, wood and stone.

Beyond this ancient village the trail starts to climb for a short section and then continues up the hillside, where it is still possible to observe the remains of the terraces realized by the local population to grow cereals and potatoes and now covered by the vegetation.

After another relatively flat section you arrive at the small village of Ferrazza, situated in a sun-kissed position on a small plateau, it has been partly renovated and is used in the summer season.

Continue on the narrow trail in the wood, until you reach the abandoned village of Reneuzzi, located on the slopes of Monte Antola (1075 m); at the entrance to the village you will find the cemetery, some say it is "the smallest in Italy" and, a few meters on, the small Church of San Bernardo, with a lovely bell gable, quite rare in the area.

You can stop in the rest area, contemplating the ruins of the ancient stone houses which hosted numerous families until the post-war period; the village was abandoned by the last residents in 1961 and a special feature which can be noted is the presence of some houses with a rounded shape and no edges, to facilitate the passage of sleighs and mules which transported fodder and other commodities.

When you arrive close to one of these circular shaped houses, you must turn right, leaving, on the left, the fork in the road with trail 243 which leads to Sella Banchiera, pass among the remains of other buildings and arrive at the end of the small village.

Stop for a moment to observe the last house, with a dignified appearance and a lovely wooden balcony, it probably belonged to a family of good financial standing; continue along the narrow trail between the vegetation and, almost immediately, you will encounter three large mountain maples, on which there are several plants of mistletoe.

Continue downhill in the wood, between oak and hornbeam, following the mule track which descends with a few hairpin bends; arrived at the valley bottom, walk along the Rio Campassi for a short section as far as the Gelato Mill, a special feature of the upper Val Borbera. Instead of an external wheel it had a Pelton type turbine, with large wooden spoons made by hand which, unfortunately, are no longer present.

Beyond the small wooden bridge which crosses the rio follow the trail which leads to another structure, the Gatti Mill, which still has two circular millstones inside which were used to prepare food for the animals.

Stop to contemplate the beauty of this place, probably the most isolated and remotest of all our province, where the wild nature reigns supreme and the silence is broken only by the noise of the water of the rio which flows between the rocks.

After admiring this enchanting place, climb back up the mule track which meanders among the beeches, where you can still note several sections of dry-stone walls, now covered by moss, on which it is possible to meet the spotted salamander, typically black and yellow, which lives in these humid environments.

Pass a last section with a gentler slope and arrive at Croso, a small hamlet of Carrega Ligure, where this beautiful trail ends.

Tappe del percorso e punti di interesse:
Upper Val Borbera Natural Park
Age-old villages of Casoni, Ferrazza and Reneuzzi
Gelato Mill and Gatti Mill

Support points:
Art Bed & Breakfast – Location Croso, 26 15060 Carrega Ligure Tel. 348 5733138

- Agriturismo “Capanne di Carrega” SP 147 Location Huts 15060 Carrega Ligure Tel. 347 9790789

Accesso: Go up provincial road SP 140 as far as km 27,400, then take SP 147 to the right in the direction of Carrega Ligure; after 3.8 km turn right onto the municipal road and after 5 km you wil arrive to the hamlet of Vegni, where you can park on the square at the beginning of the settlement.

Dati di riepilogo

Classification: Medium and low mountain provincial
distance KM: 7.24
Downhill height difference in metres: 359
Arrival altitude: 1002
Departure altitude: 1044
Periodo consigliato: All year round
Rating : Hiking trail
Travel time (sec): 10800
Uphill height difference in metres: 317
Maximum altitude: 1142
Mobile coverage: not complete

Arrival point address

Address: frazione Croso - 15060 - Carrega Ligure
Services for the disabled: Yes
Certificato da Regione Piemonte:

Photos