



## THE ALBANO VALLEY

You can find this point of interest in Dongo - Path 1 - Stage 2

### DESCRIPTION

(Silvia Fasana)

The Albano Valley borders northwards with the Liro and San Jorio Valleys, and southwards with Valleys Sanagra and Cavargna. It runs on a longitudinal axis on an East-West direction and is furrowed at its centre by the Albano river, from which it takes its name; it is also known as Dongana Valley, due to the connection with the village of Dongo, which acts as a geographical “anteroom” of sorts. In the course of centuries the San Jorio Pass (approx. 2015 m) has been an important bridge between Italy and the Swiss Federation thanks to cultural and trade exchanges between the two territories.

The Albano river springs from the hollow of Sommafiume at 1750 metres, and, as all other waterways in the area, is characterized by sudden and impressive changes in the flow, the average values of which are extremely variable.

The peculiarities of the valley are linked in particular to naturalistic, historical and ethnographic aspects. For instance, if we consider the valley from a naturalistic point of view, an important feature of the river Albano is the presence of the brown trout – a fish otherwise rarely to be found nowadays, due to genetic and environmental pollution; moreover, the river hosts many species of amphibians and aquatic invertebrates such as mayflies and caddis-flies, which act as ecological indicators of the good health of waters. The lower portion of the sides of the valley is occupied by beeches, mountain maples, aspens and sycamores, while coniferous forests, mainly characterized by spruce-trees, can be found higher up. However, the most widespread vegetation formations are grasslands, which are the home to deer, chamois and wild boars, while shrubs are colonized by white hares, dormice, black grouse and many warblers.

As far as ethnography is concerned, the typical buildings used for farming and agricultural activities, called *masoni*, are worthy of mention.

In order to preserve this territory, the “Parco Locale di Interesse Sovracomunale” (*Inter-Municipal Park*) of the Albano Valley was created in 2005, further to Provincial Government Decision no. 365/53042 of 17 November 2005. The protected area - located at the head of the valley and covering approx. 650 hectares, now entirely under the Municipality of Gravedona ed Uniti -, is the home to many species which are typical of the Alps and is of utmost importance for the safeguard of biodiversity and mountain environment.