

Introduction

The Green Velo Eastern Cycle Trail, covering 1980 km, is the longest cycle route in Poland. It goes through five regions in the eastern part of the country: Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Podlaskie, Lubelskie, Podkarpackie, and Świętokrzyskie Voivodeships. Just one glance at the map is enough to make one realise how many different regions the trail combines, and how diverse it is in terms of landscapes and culture. Among seaside sceneries and highlands, along lake lands, through primeval forests and big urban centres, Green Velo takes us on a journey discovering the most beautiful features of the lands where various religions and denominations have co-existed for centuries.

Cyclists travelling between Gnojno and Chełm will have a chance to admire the landscapes formed by the Bug River, including the picturesque Bug Gorge. On your way, you will pass the world famous Arabian stud farm in Janów Podlaski, shrines of various religions in Kostomłoty, Kodeń, and Jabłeczna, the uniquely multicultural cities of Włodawa and Chełm, as well as Sobibór Forest – a complex of vast forests and peat bogs, and the country's largest European pond turtle breeding area. The section of the route described here runs almost entirely through lowlands, allowing you to enjoy a purely recreational ride.

Attractions along the route

FROM GNOJNO TO CHEŁM

Niemirów - Gnojno. This exceptionally charming section of the Bug River is the location of a ferry crossing. The ferry that runs here does not have an engine; it moves to one bank thanks to the river's current, and returns pushed by the ferrymen.

Wygoda. The former farm near Janów Podlaski houses the world famous stud farm of Arabian purebreds and Anglo-Arabian horses. Established in 1817, the farm is



○ Horse stable in Wygoda, by J. Gumowski

square also presents a true automotive gem – one of the oldest petrol stations in Poland, with an original, manual fuel pump manufactured by Temper Extakt in 1928. A few kilometres south of Janów lies the Uroczysko Zaborek Hotel – a complex of historic wooden buildings (including a church, a presbytery, a manor house, and a windmill) which has been transformed into a modern hotel.

one of the oldest in Europe. The most beautiful stables, the Clock Stable and Front Stable, were designed in the first half of the 19th century by a well-known neo-classical architect – Enrico Marconi. The prestigious “Pride of Poland” auction takes place here every August. The high value of the mounts from Wygoda is demonstrated by the amounts paid by buyers – El Paso, a stallion, was purchased by Armand Hammer for a million dollars in 1981.

Pratulín. Here in this small village on the Bug River, a Uniate parish functioned separately from the Roman Catholic one from 1676. During the period of the Partitions of Poland, the Tsarist occupying regime increased its pressure on the Uniates, forcing them to convert to Orthodox Christianity. On 24 January 1874 thirteen Uniates lost their lives at the hands of Russian soldiers. The Pratulín parish Church of Sts. Peter and Paul from 1838 is home to the Shrine of Podlaskie

Janów Podlaski. Once a colourful town, today a quiet village with the ruins of the Bishops' Palace from 1770, surrounded by a park and a farm building complex. The village centre features the impressive baroque Church of the Holy Trinity and the 18th-century seminary building right next to it, which nowadays serves as a school. The market

○ Kostomłoty, Sanctuary of Podlaskie's Uniates, by J. Gumowski



Martyrs. Nearby, you will find yet another wooden temple, called the Martyrium Pratulíńskie. It was erected at the very spot the Uniates defended.

Kostomłoty. In Kostomłoty, the preserved wooden Church of St. Nikita the Martyr from 1631 forms the Sanctuary of Podlaskie's Uniates. The temple has an iconostasis with a 17th-century icon depicting the patron of the temple. It is the Poland's only Neo-Uniate parish that observes the Byzantine-Slavonic rites. It is frequently visited by pilgrims and tourists.

○ Basilica in Kodeń, by J. Gumowski

Kodeń. The basilica in Kodeń was built in the 17th century. Its construction was funded through a donation made by Mikołaj Sapieha. You will be amazed by its rich Lublin Renaissance stuccos. This was a unique architectural trend developed in the Lublin region at the turn of the 17th century. Crowds are attracted by the miraculous painting of Our Lady of Kodeń – the Queen of Podlaskie, which originally came from the papal chapel in Rome. The Ornithology-Missionary Museum

○ Orthodox church in Jabłeczna, by J. Gumowski



was established in the monastery of Missionary Oblates behind the church.

Jabłeczna. According to legend, the icon of St. Humphrey, floating along the Bug River, was washed ashore and indicated the site for the construction of an Orthodox monastery, which has been operating continually since the 15th century. You will find two wooden chapels from the beginning of the 20th century among the Bug River meadows, in the vicinity of the church. Each year on 24 and 25 June thousands of people come here to celebrate the feast of St. Humphrey.

Ślawatycze. In Ślawatycze on the Bug River, visitors are greeted by two churches facing each other: the Church of Our Lady of the

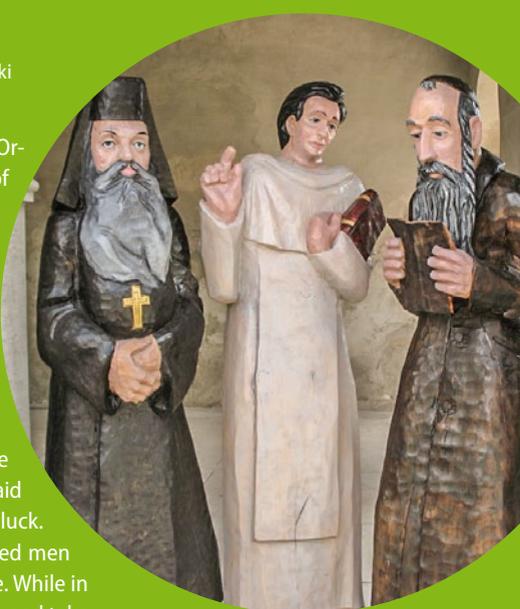


○ Ślawatycze, by J. Gumowski

Rosary and the Orthodox Church of the Our Lady of Protection. Each year during the last three days of December, the *ślawatycy brodacze* (bearded men of Ślawatycze), men dressed in linen beards and traditional hats made of flowers, walk the streets of Ślawatycze. It is said that meeting them brings luck. Wooden figures of these bearded men can be seen on the town square. While in Ślawatycze you can go kayaking and take a closer look at the untamed wilderness surrounding the Bug River.

Włodawa. This town is a place where three cultures meet. The temples bear witness to this coexistence: the baroque Church of St. Louis from mid-eighteenth century, the Orthodox Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary from the 19th century, and the 18th-century Great Synagogue – one of the finest synagogues in the former Commonwealth, now the site of the Museum of the Łęczna and Włodawa Lake District. The Festival of Three cultures is held here in September. It is an annual event commemorating the city's multicultural history.

○ Włodawa, by M. Tarajko



Okuninka. A popular summer resort on Jezioro Białe (White Lake), about 7 kilometres south of Włodawa. There is always something going on in Okuninka. In summers you might get the impression that this place never sleeps. The exceptionally clean waters of the lake are a perfect place for swimmers, divers, and fans of boat cruises.

○ Okuninka, Lake Białe, by S. Turski



○ Ferry crossing on the Bug near Gnojno, by J. Gumowski



Białoruś

Brest (Brześć)

Biała Podlaska

Ukraina

From Gnojno to Chełm

Włodawa. Tourist Information Centre, ul. Partyzantów 25, tel.: +48 82 5717073, it.wlodawa@gmail.com. FHU Grażka II – Tourist Information Centre, Rynek 4, tel.: +48 82 5722069, grazka.2@wp.pl.

Sobibór Forest. In the vast Sobibór Forest you will find charming lakes and bogs. The most valuable parts of this woodland complex are protected as a nature reserve. One of the most interesting reserves is Żółwiowe Błota (Turtle Bogs Reserve), created to protect the country's largest breeding ground of the European pond turtle.



Sobibór forest – Lake Perespa, by J. Gumowski

Sobibór station. During World War II a Nazi death camp was located in the Sobibór Forest. Approximately 250,000 Jews were exterminated here. In the summer of 1943 its prisoners

organized an escape, and approximately 300 managed to run away. After this event, the camp was razed to the ground and then ploughed over. Today, at this site you will find a symbolic mound, a remembrance alley and a memorial to the camp's victims. There is also the Museum of the Former Sobibór Death Camp.

Museum of the Former Sobibór Death Camp, by S. Turski



Serebryskie Bog.

The Bagno Serebryskie nature reserve, located within Chełm Landscape Park, includes vast carbonate peat bogs. Its unique nature is demonstrated by the rare and protected species of plants and animals found in this area. The birds deserve special attention, including the harrier, the aquatic warbler, and the Eurasian curlew.



Chełm, by J. Gumowski

Chełm. The hallmark of this city on the Uherka River is Mount Chełm. A baroque basilica situated on the hill is visible to visitors even from afar. The skyline of the city and its surroundings can be enjoyed from the observation deck on the bell

A large Jewish community lived here for centuries. The oldest tombstone in the local *kirkut* (Jewish cemetery) is from 1442. While in Chełm, make sure you visit the historic chalk underground tunnels, which form a unique testament to the chalk mining industry in Europe and the world.

Chełm. Tourist Information Centre in Chełm, ul. Lubelska 63, tel.: +48 82 5653667, www.itchełm.pl.

tower next to the temple. Other important monuments in Chełm include the Uściługska Gate, the late-Baroque Church of the Sending of the Apostles, the neo-classical Orthodox Church of John the Evangelist, and the Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas.

Serebryskie Bog, by J. Gumowski



LUBLIN VOIVODESHIP GREEN VELO EASTERN CYCLE TRAIL

Section from Gnojno to Chełm

A chain of attractions



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ul. Ściegiennego 2, 25-033 Kielce
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