



Consorci de
L'Espai Rural
de Gallecs



Surface area : 526 hectares
Population : 200 000 residents
Region: Catalunya

Managing entity: Consorci de l'Espai Rural de Gallecs
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Gallecs Rural Area, which covers 526 ha, belongs to the Vallès Oriental region in Barcelona. It is known as an area of land which has survived massive construction and any other actions which tend to threaten areas situated on the outskirts of big cities, in this case Barcelona's metropolitan area.

It is a rural area which lies in the middle of the Vallès Plain. The geography of the place includes slightly undulating hills, which are not very steep, and various streams, all of which flow into the Besòs River.

The area shows a combination of agricultural and forest landscape with a predominance of extensive herbaceous dry farming, such as barley, wheat or sunflowers. They also grow fodder, vegetables and a few vineyards. In addition, there are some forests and farms of high architectural value.

Moreover, it has been verified that this area is a migration passage for many birds, which makes it even more valuable environmentally speaking. Therefore, it works as a biological link, both locally and on a large scale, since it is situated in the centre of Barcelona's Green Belt and very near to other areas classified as being of Natural Interest.

Natural Heritage

Among the different crop fields, in Gallecs Rural Area we can find various forests. The vegetation is typically Mediterranean. There are trees and bushes, adapted to summer droughts, with persistent leaves, small and hard, which often have prickles, and also aromatic flowers. In the forests there is a predominance of pine trees (*Pinus halepensis*), ilexes (*Quercus ilex*) and oak trees (*Quercus cerruoides*) with an undergrowth which hardly exists in some areas, but which can be very thick and impenetrable in others.

This undergrowth basically consists of white maple trees (*Crataegus mongyna*), brambles (*Rubus sp.*), furze (*Ulex parviflorus*), rosemary (*Rosmarinus officinalis*), traveller's joy (*Clematis vitalba*), holly oak (*Quercus coccifera*) and many reappearing ilexes (*Quercus ilex*) and oak trees (*Quercus cerruoides*).

It is important to draw attention to the existence of a wet area with water plants such as the yellow iris (*Iris psedacorus*), which is a migration passage for many birds.

Historical heritage

In Gallecs we can find a great number of architectural elements of great historical and artistic interest. Some of them date back to the 10th and 11th centuries, as for example Santa Maria de Gallecs Church, of Romanesque style, from the 11th and 12th centuries, and The Malla Tower, from the 10th century, which has two defensive towers and an interior quarter.

Apart from this, various farmhouses, scattered round Gallecs, are also part of its architectural heritage. For example, Can Mulà, from the 10th century, Can Jornet, a farmhouse from the 14th century, which has two bodies where the arcades in the main façade stand out, and others such as The Malla Tower Washing Place, which is an ancient building of Roman origin used for washing clothes.

Activities

The main activities in the park are basically two. On the one hand, **the consolidation of the agricultural activity**, with the creation of indigenous products having their own brand name, and the organization of training courses for farmers with the aim of making agricultural population take root on the land. On the other hand, there is **the cultural and environmental education** with educational programmes for all groups of ages, which allow people to know about the great environmental potential of the area and which also approach them to the rural and natural world through various routes, guided visits...

Other activities are based on the consolidation of the architectural heritage, the management of the environment and the execution of cultural popularising programmes in the area.

