



MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY OF THE MATESE ZONE · PNRR M2C1 Green Communities · Investment 3.2 · CUP: E14H25000590006 Intervention No. 4 "Experiential Geo-Tourism of the Matese" · Item A - Mapping and Storytelling · Year 2026

TITLE

TRAIL P01 · GEO-NATURALISTIC · PRATA SANNITA · MATESE REGIONAL PARK

The Trail of Oblivion along the River Lete

Medieval village · Karst gorges · Former hydroelectric plant · Blue Lagoon

TECHNICAL DATA

Length	Elevation Gain	Duration	Difficulty	Type	Season
11.31 km	+280/-280 m	4-5 hours	Medium (E)	Loop	April - October

ROUTE MAP - SCHEMATIC LAYOUT

SCALA

~1:15.000 · Sistema di riferimento WGS84 · Stile cartografico schematico. Traccia di riferimento: Wikiloc "Cascate del Lete dal Borgo Medievale di Prata Sannita" (2025) - 11.31 km, D+280 m.



GPX

GPX 1.1 file attached: P01_Sentiero_Oblio_Lete (waypoint + provisional loop track). Confirmed Wikiloc track: <https://it.wikiloc.com/percorsi-escursionismo/cascate-del-lete-dal-borgo-medioevale-di-prata-sannita-ce-219987193>

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

DESC	Trail P01 - The Trail of Oblivion along the Lete River (Prata Sannita, Province of Caserta, Campania) 11.31 km loop trail Elevation gain +280/-280 m Duration 4-5 h Difficulty: Medium (CAI grade E) Best: April-October The Trail of Oblivion explores the spectacular karstic gorges of the Lete River in the western Matese mountains. Starting from the Roman Bridge parking area at the foot of the medieval village of Prata Sannita (285 m asl), the route follows the Lete River upstream through its carved limestone gorges, past a disused early-20th-century hydroelectric plant, and up to the iconic Blue Lagoon - a natural karst spring pool with crystal-clear, turquoise-blue water maintained at a constant 10-14°C. The River Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>), the Southern Freshwater Crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> , Dir. 92/43) and the Mediterranean Brown Trout (<i>Salmo trutta</i>) inhabit the Lete. The trail's name recalls the mythological River Lethe. GPX track available. Swimming in the Blue Lagoon: July-August.
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POINTS OF INTEREST - TRIPARTITE GEO / FAUNA / HISTORY ANALYSIS

POI-01	Chiosco a Ponte Car Park - Start/Finish (285 m a.s.l.)
GEO	Alluvial terrace of the Lete on Quaternary deposits. Underlying Cretaceous carbonate substrate.
FAUNA	Mallard, Common Coot, Common Kingfisher in the Lete. Freshwater crayfish (<i>Austropotamobius pallipes</i> , Dir. 92/43).
HISTORY	Historic rest point on the drover transhumance routes. Geo-Matese Panel #01 with QR audio-guide.

POI-02	Medieval Village and Castello Pandone (310 m a.s.l.)
GEO	Village on Upper Cretaceous calcarenites. Alleyways oriented perpendicularly to the limestone strata.
FAUNA	Pallid Swift, Savi's Pipistrelle, Crag Martin (<i>Ptyonoprogne rupestris</i>) in the historic cornices.
HISTORY	Castello Pandone (10th century). Gothic-Catalan portal of Palazzo Pandone (15th century) - link to the Aragonese Crown. Ferrante I of Aragon stayed here in 1459.

POI-03	Former Hydroelectric Plant - Industrial Archaeology (320 m a.s.l.)
GEO	The perennial flow of the Lete - guaranteed by the massif's karst system - made the hydroelectric installation possible. An exemplary case of geodiversity → local economic history.
FAUNA	Common Kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>), Grey Heron, Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) recorded by ISPRA in the Lete.
HISTORY	Giolittian-era plant, early 1900s. Decommissioned after ENEL nationalisation (1962). Structure in local limestone.

POI-04	Lete Gorges and Waterfalls (~12 m) - KARST GEOSITE (380 m a.s.l.)
GEO	Karst galleries formed by CaCO_3 dissolution. Stalactites, stalagmites, potholes. Triassic-Jurassic limestones/dolomites (220-145 Ma). Pleistocene pyroclastic deposits visible in the bank sections.
FAUNA	Fire Salamander, Italian Stream Frog, White-throated Dipper, Otter. 12 dragonfly species. <i>Calopteryx haemorrhoidalis</i> .
HISTORY	The name "Lete" evokes the River of Oblivion from classical mythology (Plato, Phaedo). The Romans identified this Campanian river with the Underworld river during the Samnite Wars (343-290 BC).

POI-05	Blue Lagoon and Grotta della Poesia - HYDROLOGICAL GEOSITE (410-420 m a.s.l.)
GEO	Karst resurgence pool. Blue-green colour due to Ca^{2+} and HCO_3^- ions. Constant temperature 10-14°C year-round. Deep recharge from the Gallo Matese-Letino karst basin.
FAUNA	Freshwater crayfish (Ann. II Dir. 92/43), Brown Trout, Bullhead, Otter. Flora: Ranunculus fluitans, Nasturtium officinale.
HISTORY	Legends of "water fairies" in the tradition of Prata Sannita (De Simone, Lombardi Satriani). La Grotta della Poesia is accessible ONLY with a qualified speleological guide.

GEOHISTORY OF THE PLACE

Narrative	The Lete carries one of the most evocative names in classical mythology: it was the River of Oblivion, whose waters souls drank to forget earthly life before reincarnation. Here, in the heart of the Samnite Matese, the cold, silent waters of this karst river seem truly capable of making time disappear. The limestone gorges preserve the geological memory of millions of years: when this was a sea, when the rocks were uplifted, when water began its patient work of carving. The Samnite shepherds who came down from the drover roads in summer knew well the coolness of these waters, and the Romans - who followed the Lete upstream during the Samnite Wars (343-290 BC) - recorded its name in their geographical texts, identifying this Campanian river with Plato's Underworld river. Families of Prata Sannita still preserve stories of "water fairies" said to inhabit the Blue Lagoon on full-moon nights. Local folklore is not separate from geology: the waters that emerge at constant temperature, that colour the lagoon blue, that echo in the gorges like distant voices - were explicable only through the supernatural, before karst geology offered its answers.
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EXPERIENTIAL TOURISMPACKAGE

PACKAGE PKG-01	"The Water That Forgets" - Geo-cultural excursion to the River Lete
Target: Famiglie (10+ anni), scolaresche II-III ciclo, turisti outdoor ITA/ENG	Half-day or full day. Geo-mythological storytelling, nature observation, summer swimming, cave visit (speleological guide). Link to local gastronomy.
Duration: 4 h (half-day) or full day	Difficulty: ● Medium - suitable from age 10
Season: May-September (swimming Jul-Aug)	Mobility: Walking loop - Chiosco a Ponte car park
Features:	GAE guided excursion · QR audio-guide "The Myth of the Lete" (ITA/ENG) · Grotta della Poesia visit (speleological guide) · Blue Lagoon swimming (summer) · Cheese and cured meat tasting, Prata Sannita · Bilingual brochure

SAFETY WARNINGS

	Trail slippery and unstable after rain. Do not enter the gorges when the Lete is in flood. Non-slip trekking footwear mandatory. Grotta della Poesia: qualified speleological guide + torch mandatory. In summer the Blue Lagoon is very busy: set off by 8:00. Water min. 1.5 L/person. Keep to the marked path in the gorges: crumbling walls.
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ACCESS AND LOGISTICS

Start	Chiosco a Ponte car park, Prata Sannita (41.4246°N, 14.2033°E). Panel #01.
By car	From Naples: A1 exit Caianello → SS6 → SS85 → Prata Sannita (~80 km, 1h).
TPL	Air Campania 17-CE and 31-CE, stop Largo Padre Pio. ~10 min on foot from the car park.
Facilities	Chiosco a Ponte (bar, facilities, seasonal). Picnic area. Fountain at the Roman Bridge.
Emergencies	CNSAS: 112 / +39 0823 1923501. Hospital Venafrò (IS): ~25 km.

IDENTIFIED ISSUES

Issues	Description	Priority
Route	Verificare in campo i tratti aggiuntivi (11.31 km vs 7,2 km orig.). Possibile boscaglia segnalata su Wikiloc.	HIGH
Signage	Not waymarked by CAI for the full extent. Installation of red-and-white markers required.	HIGH
Cave	Qualified speleological guide mandatory. Agreement with local CAI speleologists required.	MEDIUM
GPX	Official GPS survey to be carried out. Provisional track does not fully cover the Blue Lagoon and Cave.	HIGH

WEB REFERENCES

- geo-matese.it - Geo-Matese Platform (Item B Specification M4)
- www.parcoregionaledelmatese.it - Matese Regional Park Authority
- www.wikiloc.com - Traccia di riferimento P01 (11.31 km): [wikiloc.com/.../cascate-del-lete-dal-borgo-medioevale-di-prata-sannita-ce-219987193](https://www.wikiloc.com/.../cascate-del-lete-dal-borgo-medioevale-di-prata-sannita-ce-219987193)
- www.komoot.com - Alternative Smart Tour: "Prata Sannita e Cascate del Lete" (8.32 km)
- www.sentieroitalia.cai.it - Sentiero Italia CAI: classification and waymarking
- geoportale.mite.gov.it - ISPRA/MITE Geoportal: geosites, Natura 2000 habitats
- www.opentopomap.org - Free topographic maps: cartographic survey base
- www.borghipiubelliditalia.it - Most Beautiful Villages of Italy
- www.geoparchi.eu - European UNESCO Geoparks Network: candidacy guidelines

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PROGRAMME REFERENCES

- Mountain Community of the Matese Zone (2026) - Special Contract Specification, Intervention No. 4 Experiential Geo-Tourism of the Matese. CUP E14H25000590006.
- CAI Club Alpino Italiano (2020) - Trail classification and waymarking standards. Milan: CAI.
- ISPRA (2019) - Italian geosites: tools for geological heritage enhancement. Rome: ISPRA Reports 307/2019.
- Amato V. et al. (2014) - Geomorphology and late Quaternary evolution of the Matese Massif (S. Apennines). Geomorphology, 214, 223-241.
- Grimaldi S. et al. (2018) - Hydrogeological characterization of the Matese karst aquifer (Campania, Italy). Journal of Hydrology, 556, 321-338.
- EUROPARC Federation (2019) - Loving them to death? Sustainable tourism in Europe's Protected Areas. Regensburg: EUROPARC.
- UNESCO (2017) - Guidelines and Criteria for National Geoparks seeking UNESCO Global Geopark status. Paris: UNESCO.

GPS TRACKS AND MAPS ON OUTDOOR PLATFORMS

Wikiloc	Cascate del Lete dal Borgo Medievale di Prata Sannita (CE) - 11.31 km https://it.wikiloc.com/percorsi-escursionismo/cascate-del-lete-dal-borgo-medioevale-di-prata-sannita-ce-219987193
Komoot	Prata Sannita e le Cascate del Lete - anello nel Parco del Matese · 8,32 km · 2h35 · Difficile https://www.komoot.com/it-it/smarttour/e1339022064/prata-sannita-e-le-cascate-del-lete-giro-ad-anello-nel-parco-regionale-del-matese
AllTrails	Parco Regionale del Matese - raccolta sentieri e mappe interattive https://www.alltrails.com/it-it/parchi/italy/campania/parco-regionale-del-matese

⚠ Tracks on Wikiloc/Komoot are user-uploaded and may differ from the official route described in this data sheet.