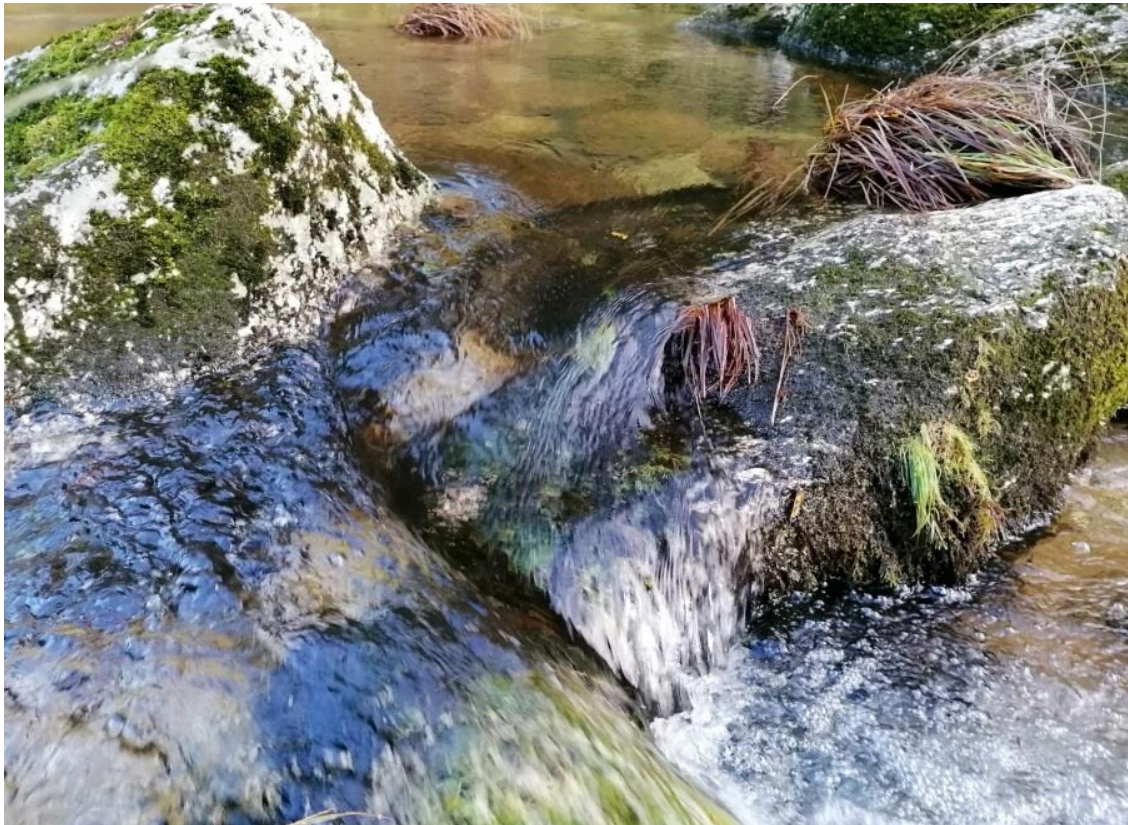


Images and words around the River Alva

Some students involved in the LivingRiver project described a photo they took on one of the field trips to the River Alva section, under study in this project. With this article we intend to share some of the images and words each student wrote and, thus, raise awareness to aspects of the river and its surrounding area.

Here we have the presentation of the image and corresponding description each student made.

João Pais's image described in his own words



In this picture, we can observe a section of a river that runs along kilometres through rocks and the moss covering them. It's a quiet place where everything happens naturally and Nature reigns.

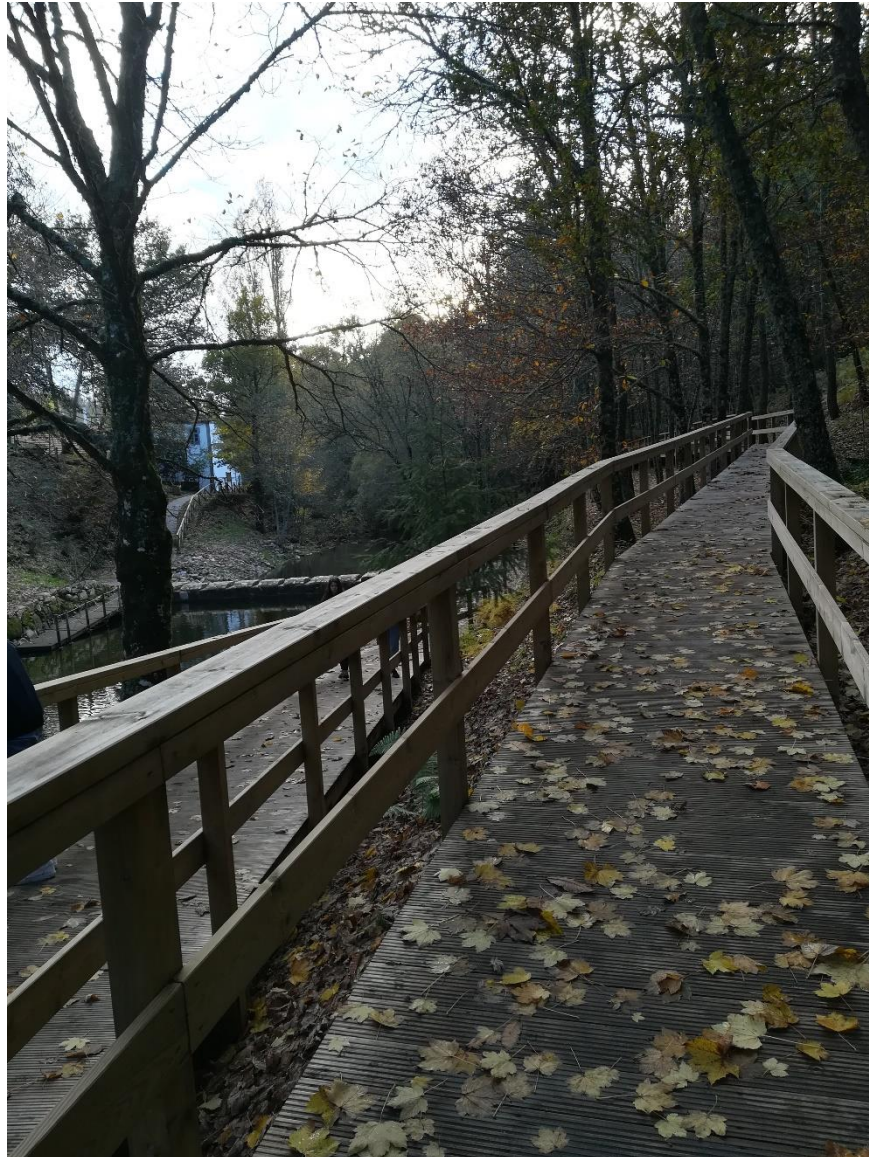
Everything in this picture tell us that this place hasn't been affected by human influence: from the small river that has been flowing from its spring and is still going to run for so many more kilometres, the greenish moss that is stuck to the rocks covered by shiny crystals, the plants bathed in this clear and pristine water to the small waterfalls that are formed in this place, due to the relationship between the glassy rocks and the clear water that runs along them.

In this authentic place nothing is changed abruptly. The changes have been happening slowly over thousands of years, which gives it a special beauty, a beauty that only Nature can offer us. Here we can breathe harmony, feel the aroma of peace and enjoy the freedom we feel on every touch of crystal water, on the shining rocks or on the untouched plants of this sublime

place. The only noises produced here are sweet and convey the tranquillity that is often indispensable in our lives.

This picture portrays what nature can offer us: places endowed with infinity beauty that can make us travel, forget all the problems and, for moments, relax.

Francisco Alves's image described in his own words



The image I have chosen to describe presents us with a rural and natural space, but where the traces of human intervention are also visible.

In the distance, the sky has a very light blue tone, very close to white, most likely due to the intense light coming from the sun. On a distant level, a significant group of trees can be observed. We can see that this grove is a constant presence throughout the image, being the natural element that stands out, whether seen from a closer or more distant perspective, from left to right.

Most of these trees are bare and their leaves that have already fallen cover the ground below them. The leaves are yellow, brown and red, some with small deformations and without stem, therefore, proving that the photograph was taken during autumn.

On the left side of the image, among the trees, we can see a white house with small and modest windows and a greenish-orange roof, which is possibly the result of many rainy winters and the shade of the trees, now leafless.

on a closer level, we see a small stream of clear water and greenish colour on the surface, due to the reflection of the evergreens, which resist the wintery season. There we can see in detail a tree with a thick trunk and long branches, completely stripped of its leaves. Due to the proximity to the observation point, it looks larger than the others in the image.

The watercourse is crossed by a dark and irregular stone bridge, which allows access to a house through a wooden walkway. This walkway continues to the other side of the bridge, extending along the grove, on the right bank of the stream. The whole walkway is made of light wood, protected by wide slatted guards, with strong dark stains, which show the effects of the rain. It allows those who visit this bucolic and idyllic place to have a pleasant walk, where nature is the main company.

In conclusion, the space described takes us to a place where small clearings let light in, but the density of vegetation and trees, crossed by a stream, make it, at this time of year, very dark and humid. It is an ideal place for rest and relaxation during spring or summer, or for the study of nature thanks to its unique landscape elements and to its biodiversity.

Lara Amaro's image described in her own words



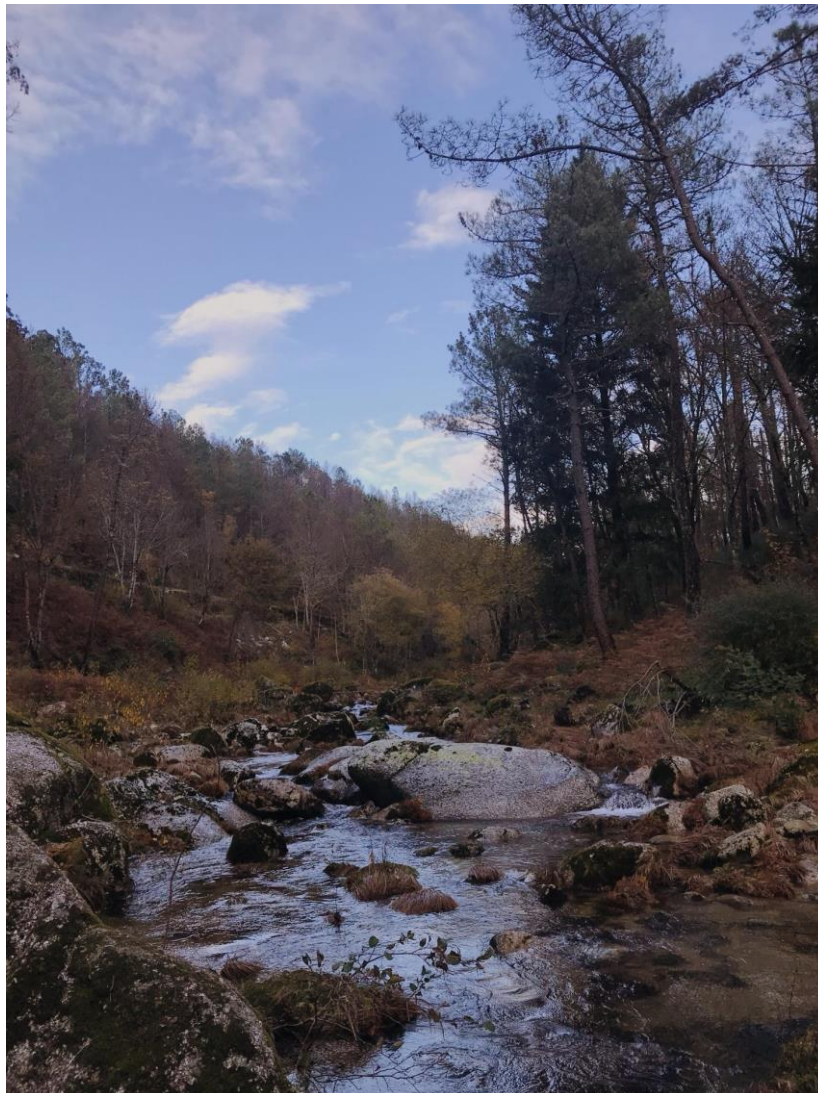
It is an open place and with lots of living beings, especially various types trees and shrubs. On a first level, we see the Museum of Electricity all white, with red tangled and a part of a big green pine tree.

On a second level, the mountain covered with trees, brown and leafless, what is normal because it is winter. There are also power lines in sky. The sun is lighting up the landscape, that has become brighter. I can also see part of a wall with moss, and it looks like it the photo was taken from there.

On a more distant plan, I see the blue sky, just with a cloud on the right corner, so I can say the weather is fine there.

It's an appealing image, because it calls people's attention. It's a pretty image, very clear, and it highlights nature, for example, the pine tree in front of the Museum.

Jéssica Oliveira's image described in her own words



The image represents part of rural nature. It was captured from the riverside and we were able to observe several elements.

From a closer perspective, we see rocks of different sizes in greyish tones and covered with moss and other types of wild plants. We also see crystal clear water that moves in a smooth and delicate current among the obstacles in its path.

On a more distant level, we continue to glimpse the stream bed that narrows increasingly and is full of rocks. On its banks we notice the presence of small trees, while, along the slopes, the trees become gradually taller and more robust with the increase in altitude. The plants have different shades in colour, some are darker green, others reddish brown but not very intense yellow.

On an even more distant plane, we can distinguish the sky that presents a tenuous and beautiful shade of blue. The sky is also filled with some clouds, but not intense clouds, just pleasant clouds on a sunny day.

While capturing this beautiful image, I heard the pleasant sound of running water and birds chirping happily. This melody produced by nature was music that caressed my ears. I also felt the light and cold breeze on my face that brought me to the coldest and most fragile memories. And an intense aroma of leaves and wet soil that led me to conclude that on the previous days there had been rain. When I moved, I noticed the uneven, unstable soil, covered with small herbs and insects. The steps I took whispered old childhood memories that led me to reflect on the evolution of that old landscape.

Finally, I must conclude that this photographic record gives me an indistinguishable and incomparable peace.

João Cardoso's image described in his own words



The image shows an open place, outdoors and with lots of light. The terrain shown in the image is sloped. Along, it extends a vast vegetation until the river.

At the top, it is possible to see several trees, tall and with thin trunks. Some of these trees have brown leaves, some with brighter colors than others. Some of these trees have green trunks due to the presence of moss.

In the middle of the terrain, you can see gorse and other shrubs of smaller size. These are green in color and the other shrubs and plants are brownish.

At the bottom of the image, we can see a river, which has little water. It is also observed that it contains some algae.

Along the river, there are several rocks of various sizes, rounded and mossy and smooth on the surface. There is also a plant with branches and thin leaves, light green at the top.

Still at the edge of the river, on the bottom right corner of the image, a green bush stands out. Behind that same bush, you can see another plant identical to the one described above, which may be of the same species.

Contemplating the image, there is, at first, a pleasant feeling of being in a calm and peaceful place (away from the bustle of the city), where only you can hear the sounds of the river flowing.

This place conveys inner peace, because being in a natural environment makes the spirit remain in tranquility.

Through the brightness of the photograph, the colors of the vegetation and the fact that some trees are bare give a pleasant feeling of a sunny winter day.

As I observe the landscape, the feeling of freedom increases, and I imagine myself running towards the river. Then, the clear river water transmits a feeling of freshness, awakening in me the desire to touch it to realize how cold it is.

This outdoor space conveys feelings of happiness, because I can breathe fresh air and be in contact with nature, in its healthy and natural state, without the presence of man.

This place still offers the sensation of the power of loud sound and I can only hear my voice echoing beyond the sound of running water and the typical sound of someone who is alone in a forest, with the sound of the wind in the trees and reptiles and birds that pass by over there.

The forest, as shown in the image, clean and without traces of a fire having been there, is a precious asset for all living beings and must continue to be preserved as such.