The rich diversity of the moraine landscape

The Narochansky National Park is situated in Pooserje, a region in the north-western part of the country, near the border with Lithuania. Twenty percent of the park consists of traditional and natural grasslands. According to the grassland vegetation classification of Stepanovitch (Stepanovitch, 2000, with additions by Sapegin, 1985, Sapegin, 2000) 8 classes, 12 orders and 21 alliances can be found within the boundaries of the national park. This great variety is the result of the high diversity of abiotic components: great differences in aspect and inclination of slopes, soils varying from very acid peat and sand through neutral to basic and chalk rich and from very wet to very dry.

This high diversity in abiotic conditions is a legacy from the ice coverage resulting from the last two ice ages. The park belongs to two physical-geographical nature districts: the first is the Sventsyanskye Gryady, the second is the lowland of Narochano-Vilejskaya with the Pooserje or Valdai Glacier where the ice cover lasted the longest in Belarus. The Northern part of the park shows the heavy impact of this glacier with strongly differentiated relief although the differences in height do not exceed 50 metres. It is a typical moraine landscape with great variation. Most characteristic is the rare combination of lakes surrounded by moraine hills. Groups of hills and ridges with steep slopes (up to 45°) create a landscape with the

Figure 1 Map of Narochansky National Park