

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN WHITE CARPATHIANS PROTECTED LANDSCAPE AREA

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Abstract

Protected Landscape Area (PLA) Biele Karpaty The White Carpathians offer great natural potential which attract many domestic and foreign tourists. This region can become a valuable asset for sustainable tourism development. The purpose of the paper is to identify the types of sustainable tourism that can be carried out in the PLA. We will also define existing prevention and protection measures that reduce the risk of biodiversity degradation in the White Carpathians.

Key words: Biodiversity, CHKO Biele Karpaty, nature reserve (NR), national nature reserve (NNR), nature-based tourism, orchids.

Introduction

Over the recent years, demand for nature-based tourism has increased. More tourists are searching for meaningful travel experience including aspects as nature conservation and natural life, cultural authenticity, contact with local communities, information about local flora and fauna. All requests stated above are hidden in the treasure of the White Carpathians region. For the richness of natural phenomena, biodiversity and relatively well preserved conditions, the Carpathians were included among the most important ecoregions of the world which need to be protected, preserved and sustainable use in the future ensured (Kadlečík, 2016). Basic function of the PLA is protection of all merits of landscape, its feature and typical badges and nature resources.

Ecotourism is a sustainable form of natural resource-based tourism that focuses primarily on experiencing and learning about nature, and which is ethically managed to be low-impact, non-consumptive, and locally-oriented. It typically occurs in natural areas, and should contribute to the conservation or preservation of such areas. (Fennell, 1999: 43. *Ecotourism: An Introduction*).

Location and specification

The White Carpathians are a long mountain range situated at the frontier between the Slovak Republic and Morava; the landscape with valuable meadow biotopes, large woods, pastures, rich orchid grasslands and limestone edges. The highest peak of the White Carpathians is Velká Javorina (970 meters).



Fig. 1: The Highest Peak of the White Carpathians Velká Javorina © L., Škvareninová

The PLA stretches on an area of 44 568 ha. In order to preserve its beautiful scenery, diverse species of flora and fauna, to enhance the demonstration parts of the impressive landscape of climatic, aquatic, soil and forest ratios, health-creative values, the White Carpathians PLA were proclaimed in 1979. They have the highest species diversity of orchids in Central Europe.



Fig. 2: Orchis/ neotinea tridentata, NR Beckovské Skalice © L., Škvareninová

Butterfly *Parnassius apollo* Linnaeus is playing irreplaceable role in the ecosystems in the Slovak nature. His population is under the serious threat of an extinction, but the greatest number can be found in the NNR Vršatské Bradlá.



Fig. 3: *Parnassius apollo* Linnaeus, NNR Vršatské Bradlá. © L., Škvareninová

Materials and methods

Our research methodology is based on secondary sources- statistic data collection, scientific document analysis, in-depth assessment. In order to achieve the following objectives, we combined the scientific documentation with direct observation conducted in the field; carried out with the support of the White Carpathians PLA Administration members. Administration of the PLA Biele Karpaty seats in Nemšová, Trenčín region.

Results

Soft forms of tourism in the PLA have a great potential for sustainable socio-economic development and conservation of natural and cultural activities. The main types of tourism activities are as follows:

1. Hiking- *Chmeľová (925m)*
2. Cycling routes- *Pruské- Krivoklát- Cottage Gilianka, Ilava- Červený Kameň via border to Morava*

3. Walking Trails- 1. *Around Vršatec*; 2. *From Castle to Castle*; 3. *Through the Biely Vrch to Krivoklát*
4. Birdwatching – *Special Protection Area Dubnické Štrkovisko*
5. Butterfly-watching- *NNR Vršatské Bradlá*
6. Wild fruits and mushroom picking- *Forests of the White Carpathians*
7. Visiting ruins of medieval castles- *Vršatec Castle, Beckov Castle*
8. Fishing- *Váh river*

Visitors can enjoy variety of above mentioned activities, meanwhile they can build relationship with the nature and understand how to protect it. The role of White Carpathians PLA besides conservation measures is to provide an environmental education, operate information centers and to monitor all illegal actions that degrade flora and fauna in the territory. Educating the local tourists is the most effective way how to ensure long-term goals of sustainable tourism. The responsibility for the management of the PLA is attributed to central, regional or local government, NGO's, private sector or to local communities. Preserving the values of ecosystems in ecotourism destinations implies the need to constantly monitor the evolution of ecotourism and the associated impact in such destinations (Mateoc-Sîrb, N.; Albu, S. , et al., 2022). Managers and PLA planners play a key role in order to ensure that tourism does not possess any risks to biodiversity. PLA administration constantly and collectively tracks and monitors the state and development of biodiversity and natural values of the whole region. Nature conservation in Slovakia (the White Carpathians PLA respectively) is based on species and area protection, both of which are regulated by national (Act. No. 543/2002 on Nature and Landscape Protection, as amended) and EU legislation. The State Nature Conservancy of Slovak Republic is the central expert organization for nature and landscape conservation in Slovakia. The main tasks include work on legislation, policy, and guidelines documents as well as management of protected area, surveys and research provision and habitats monitoring.

Conclusion

The White Carpathians PLA plays an essential role in protecting biodiversity, ecological stability of the territory and other natural assets. In this paper, we have identified all possible types of sustainable tourism. The main goal is to sustain the balance between the nature conservation and biodiversity degradation. In order to avoid risks of nature degradation caused by tourism, the White Carpathians PLA administration also plays inevitable role to monitor tourist activities in the territory. However, cooperation of all, public and private bodies, is important with the aim to reduce environmental impacts, to address the needs of visitors and the host communities.

In the forthcoming future, the White Carpathians may become an attractive touristic destination, in particular for ecotourism, nature-based tourism and culture tourism. It is necessary to further develop research and monitoring oriented towards species, habitats and ecosystems management, biodiversity threats and various management measures applicability and effectiveness.

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Souhrn

Chráněná krajinná oblast Bílé Karpaty skrývá vzácné přírodní bohatství, které objevuje stále více domácích i zahraničních turistů. Cílem této práce bylo definovat možnosti dlouhodobě udržitelného cestovního ruchu, který zároveň zaručí ochranu vzácných druhů rostlin a živočichů. Důležitým faktorem pro dosažení rovnováhy mezi dopady cestovního ruchu a zásahy do původních struktur krajiny je pravidelný monitoring území, aby nedocházelo k porušování zákona č. 543/2002 Sb. o ochraně přírody a krajiny.

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