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Conference Paper

THE RIVER BASIN APPROACH IN TOURISM PLANNING

45th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Land Use and Water Management in a Sustainable Network Society", 23-27 August 2005, Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Provided in Cooperation with:

European Regional Science Association (ERSA)

Suggested Citation: Slara, Agita (2005) : THE RIVER BASIN APPROACH IN TOURISM PLANNING, 45th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Land Use and Water Management in a Sustainable Network Society", 23-27 August 2005, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, European Regional Science Association (ERSA), Louvain-la-Neuve

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/117854>

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45TH CONGRESS OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION
23-27 AUGUST, 2005 VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM
LAND USE AND WATER MANAGEMENT IN A SUSTAINABLE NETWORK SOCIETY

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THE RIVER BASIN APPROACH IN TOURISM PLANNING

Abstract

The article describes advantages and disadvantages in tourism planning, using the river basins as background territory and borders. Tourism development planning is taking place according administrative territorial borders till nowadays in Latvia and in other tourism destinations in abroad.

According tourist and visitor needs and environmental friendly approach it is more appropriate to use river basins in tourism planning. Tourists are not interested in administrative borders, but in qualitative tourism products and services. Tourism industry is integrated sector including: traffic, communication, accommodation, energy, public catering, attractions, travel and destination organizers and institutional support to industry. Tourism planning in administrative borders supports fractioned human, nature and financial resources, which finally gives weak and unpopular tourism products.

The author has selected as case study for tourism planning Daugava river basin, exactly Ogre – Daugava’s right side tributary - basin. Daugava river basin is in 15th place in ecoregion “Baltic Province” and in 5th place in ecoregion “Baltic Sea” according Water structure directive EEC 2000/60/EC; 11 annex. In year 2003 there is finished project “Daugava basin area management plan” which focuses on planning issues according river basins (*Daugava project Latvia Sweden, 2003*). The author has selected tributary Ogre basin (area 1730km²), it is 3rd largest river in Latvia (188km) and one of the most attractive rivers for water tourists. It is crucial to develop and strengthen tourism services along the Ogre river, if local enterprises want to receive profit from water tourism. One legal accommodation and two places for tents are situated in Ogre riverbanks. In the course of tourism planning at least primary problems must be solved: lack of toilets, collection of waste, types of water transport.

The article prepared using practical observation of the Ogre river basin, interviews with local enterprisers and water tourists in the area. The main conclusions are lack of understanding role of river basin in sustainable way and administrative obstacles for common cooperation. Tourism planning according river basins approach gives preconditions for elaboration sustainable tourism development services and tourism products.

Key words: tourism planning, tributary river basin in planning

Introduction

The author has selected as case study for tourism planning Daugava river basin, exactly Ogre – Daugava’s right side tributary - basin. Daugava river basin is in 15th place in ecoregion “Baltic Province” and in 5th place in ecoregion “Baltic Sea” according Water structure directive EEC 2000/60/EC; 11 annex. In year 2003 there is finished project “Daugava basin area management plan” which focuses on planning issues according river basins (*Daugava project Latvia Sweden, 2003*). The author has selected tributary Ogre basin (area 1730km²), it is 3rd largest river in Latvia (188km) and one of the most attractive rivers for water tourists. Tributary Ogre basin is located in three administrative district territories in Latvia, which are include 13 local municipalities. Tributary Ogre basin located between two important international highway corridors – Riga-Moscow and Riga- Pskov as well as railway Riga-Moscow. In tributary Ogre basin are preconditions for tourism development, using geographical and nature resources

advantages in this territory. Tourism specialists are noted that the river basin potential is not used for tourism development fully.

Evaluation of tourism infrastructure

The most important tourism infrastructure elements are accommodation, catering, transport, rent of tourism inventory (bicycles, boats) and tourism information, including tourism signs. According to practical observation of the research territory, the tourism infrastructure is not developed. There are only two legally registered holiday homes on the Ogre riverbank. Of course water tourists can use tents and sleep in forest under trees, but people who choose active tourism forms in weekends want to receive qualitative and comfortable services in the riverbank at the night time. It is a right possibility for local people to get income from tourists.

There is another opportunity just to ask owners to make a tent in his/her property, but attitudes are different from owners. There are owners who do not want to see tourists. Another problem of water tourists and especially for bicyclists is encounter with dogs.

Food products can be bought only in one shop in the water route from Ergli till Mengele, but exist other shops and cafes in tributary Ogre basin. These places are located 5 km from the riverbank, it is long distance for walking to shop for products or to have a lunch.

Advantages of river basin approach

In case of using river basin as territory for tourism planning are various advantages:

- Larger territory: more nature and culture resources;
- Integrated planning approach of separate tourism infrastructure elements;
- Tourism planning of all necessity elements, using river as back for tourism development;
- Possibility to generate separate tourism zones in the river basin;
- Common information sources and signs in all the river basin territory. More understandable for tourists;
- To reduce seasonality, including other activities in this region, for example bicycle tours in middle of summer time, using river as landscape and main element;
- The main tourism forms are: water tourism, nature tourism and culture tourism in the Ogre river basin.

Disadvantage for river basin planning

- Different local municipalities and districts are involved in tourism planning. The main problem could be financial contribution in tourism planning crossing administrative borders.

Reference: Daugava river basin management plan. Latvia Sweden project.2003