

## ECOTOURISM IN RODNA MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK

Helena Maria SABO

*Faculty of Psychology and Science of Education, UBB,  
Sindicatelor Street. No.7, Cluj-Napoca, Romania  
E-mail: ildi62004@yahoo.com*

**Abstract.** *Nature loving tourism, also known as "ecological tourism" or ecotourism, is a relatively recent phenomenon, which represents a segment of the tourist industry. However, what means "ecological tourism"? First, it involves the development of all economic activity, not only tourism, in an unaltered environment. The environment is considered now a top priority politics in all developed countries. Second, economic restructuring and technical adjustments, remodeling the management of the environment for the purposes of taking over the qualitative aspects to satisfy the needs of this population, free of affecting the inheritance of the future generations takes the adoption of a new economic behavior. Thirdly, ecotourism involves a conscious tourism, individual, or in-group. I could give here some examples: a forest needs 60-80 years to recover, while a stalagmite and stalactite needs tens or thousands of years. Conclusion: the forest is designed to recreation, maintaining a clean atmosphere, physical and psychological recovery*

*while the caves are designated to for people's admiration for his natural shapes and for destruction! These counts the Rodna Mountains National Park, an exceptional natural area by the valences of recreational, aesthetic, educational, and scientific, which is the tourist attraction of an special importance. The flora and fauna must be saved by acquiring an education and an adequate environmental ethic by creating natural ecosystems, like Rodna Mountains National Park, which keeps the nature in its essence. Environmental Education for Nature Conservation and potential tourism should be made permanent for all ages, but it is important to start in childhood. Environmental education activities can be carried out through conferences, lectures, radio, and TV, press screenings, tours, tourism and nature protection associations, etc. The possibility to assimilate the existent knowledge about nature, but it must be done in parallel with environmental education, the two sides of the same process, knowledge and care, are inseparable.*

**Key words:** *natural reservation, ecotourism, landscape protection, education*

### INTRODUCTION

We are not mistaken if we say that the ecotourism has appeared as a practical manifestation, applicative to all planetary space to materialize the provisions enshrined in the Paris Convention on the Protection of Natural and Cultural World Heritage, emanation of UNESCO World Conference (1972), the first document which achieve a reconciliation of the two elements of the environment: natural and cultural.

### MATERIAL AND METHODS

As study, we stopped on the Rodna Mountains National Park.

Considering all mentioned above, it was the purpose of establishing the protected areas and national parks, the practice of the ecological tourism at rates as high.

Rodna Mountains National Park is an exceptional natural area by the valences of recreational, aesthetic, and scientific, which makes it an important touristic attraction.

Even before this area to be declared as protected area, it have been practiced and is still practiced the tourism, but not unorganized and uncontrolled.

In the name of tourism, sometimes take place the destruction of natural landscapes, often destroying natural vegetation and take place the replacement with most important

decorative species. All this means a serious degradation of the geographical environment.

On the other hand, we should not forget the tourists themselves who let behind tons of waste (paper, cans, bottles, plastic containers), exhaust gas from increasingly numerous vehicles that are released in nature, smaller or larger areas devastated to collect certain flowers.

Tonic murmur of nature was replaced with that of horsepower and transistor and the beauty and/or the variety of flowers, shrubs, and trees that are not harmonized with the natural framework of the Park and with the wastes, which "mark" the place to spend the weekend.

For the man to still enjoy all the benefits of this corner of country he need to arrange, restore, refresh what was destroyed before and to practice an ecological tourism.

It is necessary the protection of rare species (natural monument), the evolution is irreversible, the species disappeared once no longer recover.

Here are listed some of the plants and animals protected by law from Rodna Mountains National Park area: Edelweiss (*Leontopodium alpinum*), daffodil (*Narcissus stellaris*), bulging mountain (*Trollius europaeus*), *Rhododendron kotschyi*.

Among the animals under protection, we mention the: black goat (*Rupicapra rupicapra*) eagle rock (*Aquila chrysaetos*), grouse (*Tetrao urogallus*).

The flora and fauna must be saved by acquiring an education and an adequate environmental ethic by creating natural ecosystems, like Rodna Mountains National Park, which keeps the nature in its essence.

Given all the above issues, a strategy is required for this type of tourism - *Ecological Tourism* -, which protects the tourism resources. The strategy was developed by the National Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico, in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Nature, which promotes the idea of a balance between nature and tourism.

We quote below the following segments:

1. The areas where ecotourism is practiced we need to be considered continental or global interest, to make part from the heritage of the planet and here to be respected more strictly the traditional territories with styles of local populations;

2. Through ecotourism we tried to minimize the negative effects on the local and natural environment, and on the local population;



Figure 1. Ecological actions on the bed of Băilor River

3. The ecotourism need to help to manage the protected areas and improve relations between local communities and personal ability to handle these protected areas;

4. New tourism can promote an authentic interaction between the reception people and tourists, as a real interest for sustainable development and protection of natural areas both

in the receivers and in the issuing of tourists;

5. Through ecotourism tries to expend the spectrum of traditional economic activities (agriculture, livestock, and fishing) without marginalize or replace them, because the local economy to not be subordinated to the changes and to the internal and external influences.

From this point of view, the management and organization of the Rodna Mountains National Park, have understood the practical importance of this type of tourism, especially since the park helps to maintain in the nature the status quo and preservation of a reservoir of flora and fauna, which can repopulate anytime other depleted areas. In this regard, the Park can offer natural treasures to a civilized tourism, and above all, clean air and clear waters for the all area.

The role of sustainable development for tourism in Rodna Mountains National Park.

The concept of "*sustainable tourism*" was defined since 1991 by U.I.C.N - International Union for Conservation of Nature, WNF – World Nature Protection Federation, PNABE- European Federation of National and Natural Parks: "All forms of tourism development, tourism management and marketing which to respect the natural integrity, economic and social of the environment, ensuring exploitation of the natural and cultural resources for future generations".

The concept of sustainable tourism is linked to the growth of population, to the level of living and his support capacity of the natural environment, and has as base a partnership between the main factors called to take the decisions on achieving this.

Joint action plans regarding sustainable development of tourism in Rodna Mountains National Park require knowledge and solving the following problems:

- establishing from the beginning, the goals of protection for the Park area with the participation of specialists and all those interested to capitalize his touristic using;
- inventory of all natural and cultural particularities of PNMR that can form the basis of the potential tourism and analysis of all obtained information's;
- ensure partnership working conditions and in multidisciplinary teams with a better collaboration with the local population with the regional and local organizations interested in tourism;
- identification of all values and all possibilities which can stay at the basis of the sustainable tourism in the PNMR area;
- the following and analysis of domestic and international market requirements and develop tourism to diversify the activities of tourism in the Park;
- providing a specialized consultant in supporting travel agencies, or economics interested in developing activities in the PNMR area, which to be consistent with the national and local policy for the environmental protection;
- initiation in the Park area of a new tourism product based on the amplification of the educational, teaching and scientific role;
- existence of an adequate management of sustainable development systems in transport in PNMR area, but also its surrounding areas;
- need for specific management so that, depending on the intern zoning of the Park to chose those activities which have tangent the interpretation and education;
- complete exposure of the promotional and communication strategy for promoting the idea of *Rodna Mountains National Park = Biosphere Reserve* in the context of achieving new tourism products and applying a new technical management in this area;
- establish monitoring programs of the information on the Rodna Mountains National Park regarding the touristic activities, consequences and review of touristic development plans in order to comply with environmental quality standards;

- analysis of the exploitation of resources and taking into account park protection requirements;

- implementing the necessary conditions in practice development plans of the Park and complex economic use of this;

Today, unfortunately, tourism in natural areas and national parks and biosphere reserves in developed European countries, does not meet the attributes of sustainable tourism.

Therefore, presentation of the principles underlying the development and recovery of touristic projects of protected areas has an important role for the improvement of Romania touristic national parks, especially to avoid negative sides of the country present of other countries, related to the their economic exploitation.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Tourism, more than any other field of activity is dependent of environment, representing the "raw material" subject and the activity matter and tourism activity being his framework support carrier of its resources. The tourism is underway in the environment and the environmental "quality" or denies it can promote the activities of tourism.

In these circumstances, the tourism-environment relationship has special significance, development, and environmental protection representing a sine qua non of tourism, any change produced and damaging its tourism potential by reducing or even canceling its resources.

Recently, the tourism is an industry of the holidays and leisure continuing to attract in its sphere of action also the protected areas.

These exceptional natural areas by their recreational valences, aesthetic, educational, scientific, shall constitute as tourist attractions of a special importance, some are unique nationally and internationally.

One of such an exception is the natural space *National Park of Rodna Mountains* which is crossed by mountains with the same name, "a priceless natural treasure", and where tourism does not mean only recreation, but also nature protection.

Rodna Mountains National Park, interest as I have seen, an important number of urge people to become the subject of Science and scientific tourism. He has also a cultural function. Tourists who visit the Rodna Mountains National Park (RMNP) are familiarized with the great natural phenomena, with morphological particularities, geological and biological characteristics to which adds ethno-social, cultural and historical monuments of the area.

RMNP as a natural laboratory is very useful for educational work in support of nature conservation. The Park is also the natural museum and the study of components is an educative method and thus can become a target for youth. The social functions (closeness between people) and economic (through tourism) are very important.

The Park with an authentic environment with places of restoration and cultural experiences serves the society with the condition that the nature protection and preservation of natural values not be neglected. Protection of nature must be done for man and not against it being the only rescue chance under material and spiritual aspect.

To all these ads, the socio-economic advantages of the practice and development of tourism in the Rodna Mountains National Park. These advantages can be expressed by presenting the following aspects:

- the tourism in RMNP creates locally a good recovery of natural and cultural potential recovery and contribute to job growth directly in tourism and other ancillary services sectors and local resource management;

- stimulate national profitable activities (hotel, restaurants, transportation network, service guides etc.);

- diversify the local economy, especially agriculture do not have too much development possibilities, and the mining industry specific to Rodna - so "flourishing" with years ago, is now down;
- stimulate the rural economy by applying additional agricultural products and financial capital contribution;
- helps to the improvement of local infrastructure in transport, communications, and engineering services with benefits for the local peoples;
- the tourism in the area RMNP encourage the productive use of land as poor agricultural output, which allows keeping intact areas under natural vegetation;
- development of visitor facilities and equipment appropriate for this protected area, which can be used both for local people and for foreign tourists;
- practiced ecotourism in RMNP favorite the intercultural understanding and free communication between residents and tourists;
- the diverse touristic activities from park can lead to increasing interest in environmental protection, convincing local officials, regional and public generally about the importance of these protected natural areas.

Implementation in practice of these socio-economic goals for tourism in RMNP, would imply the existence of government plans and efforts for the local population called to contribute to the development of tourism activities in this protected area.

Practice of a system of tax incentives, a system of concessions of many private tourism services, auto financing can be the basis for Rodna Mountains National Park and gradual cessation of government budgetary resources.

In time and space, however, tourist activities from RMNP may have undesirable effects, especially when not observed loading capacity of ecological and environmental features of the Park.

I mention tourist activities with great negative influence on the natural landscape of the Park:

- granting of too large facilities, lack of the legal and operational Regulations shall permit the development of "hard" tourism and with mass character;
- a high number of tourists by traffic and noise can disturb the natural flora and fauna lives in the park.
- existence of a great number of trails and paths, access roads and visiting in groups of more than 25-30 people in sensitive areas of RMNP, perturb the ecological balance;
- practice on extended areas of winter and summer sports and too much diversification can lead to the destruction of the activities of soil, flora, and fauna.
- other touristic activities who practiced in excess, in time and space, can lead to unwanted effects and damage are presented in the following table:

**Negative impacts that needs to be reduced**

*Table 1.*

A list with negative effects, potential impacts of tourism on environment from the protected areas

No.	Action Factors	Impact on environment quality	Comments
1	Increased touristic flow	Environmental disturbances, changes in animal behavior	Irritation, loss of environmental quality in tourism services. It is necessary to reduce the access of visitors.
2.	Excessive development	The emergence of inadequate rural houses, congestion of population and urban infrastructure.	heavy urban type arrangements
3.	Recreational activities		
	a. at limit of protected areas	Disturbance on wildlife	Undesirable influences on periods and breeding areas: noise pollution

No.	Action Factors	Impact on environment quality	Comments
	b. fishing and protected areas	In any	Unwanted competition for natural predators
	c. pedestrian safari	Disturbances on flora, fauna	Excessive exploitation of trails and access roads
4.	Pollution		
	a. noise	To voluntarily cover of the natural noise	Irritation on wildlife
	b. waste	Degradation of the natural landscape	Aesthetic disturbance. Health risks to wildlife, residents, visitors
	c. vandalism	Destruction of plant panels, decorations of existing natural elements	Loss in quality of natural elements. Destruction of existing equipment
5.	Feeding animals	Changes in animal behavior. Hazards for tourists	Withdrawal of normal animals
6.	Vehicles		
	a. speeding	Accidents and death of fauna	Deep green changes
	b. off-road driving at night	Soil and vegetation degradation	Disturbances on flora, fauna
7.	Other activities		
	a. collection of natural memories	Gradual destruction of natural curiosities, disruption of natural processes	Clams, snails, coral, horn, various trophies, rare plants
	b. collection, cutting firewood	High destruction on death and small vertebrates	Disturbances on the balance and the natural wildlife food chains
	c. Road, excavation	Reduction of natural habitats, changes, drainage, landscape and reduce violations of environmental value by inadequate construction	Discounts and destruction of the aesthetic and environmental values. Degradation of ecosystems.
	d. high voltage, telecommunication etc.	Destruction of vegetation and soil	Aesthetic impacts
	e. the signaling of artificial water supplies with salt (NaCl)	Abnormal concentrations of species of fauna. Degradation of vegetation	The need for change the soil
	f. introduction of native plants and exotic animals,	Competition for local flora and fauna, wild	Confusion to the public. Disturbances in the natural food chains

Here therefore is necessary for man to learn to have it act as part of biocenoses and not as an intruder who let behind biological disasters, to act as part of the sensible and efficient gear of nature, not as its master, and especially to protect her, protects her own good and for future generations.

### CONCLUSIONS

The actions of environmental protection and tourism potential of Rodna Mountains National Park include:

- Adequate planning and organizing and at a higher level of the areas, routes or sightseeing in the RMNP;
- Organization and touristic operation of the park ensuring protection and conservation of the great touristic attraction, enriching, and diversifying the Romanian tourism offer with new tourism products;

- Looking forward on the development of mountain tourism in RMNP needs a suitably organizing the knowledge of the mountain landscapes and areas, and other resources which to provide the basis for future tourist designing;
- Another group of measures is related to the building facilities for touristic information in RMNP, about requiring a proper tourist equipment modern and ecological tourism;
- Environmental protection and tourism heritage of RMNP is largely influenced and ecological awareness of people and the feeling of love and respect for nature its homeland, historic sites and architectural monuments of art created over time. This can be achieved through sustained action on environmental education and tourism potential of the Park, action that must be done for all population of Park and its surrounding areas, as well as the entire nation by instilling an attitude of respect and responsibility front of Park and its natural resources for their care.

Environmental Education for Nature Conservation and potential tourism should be made permanent for all ages, but it is important to start in childhood. Environmental education activities can be carried out through conferences, lectures, radio, and TV, press screenings, tours, tourism and nature protection associations, etc.

The possibility to assimilate the existent knowledge about nature, but it must be done in parallel with environmental education, the two sides of the same process, knowledge and care, are inseparable.

Only an early environmental education can lead to achieving the dream of so many generations: man and nature in harmony for the good life on Earth.

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