

The Planning and Management of Protected Areas – Strategic Guidelines for Titel Loess Plateau as a potential geotourism destination

Ivo Mulec

Faculty of Science, Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Trg Dositeja Obradovica 3, 21000 Novi Sad

The link between protected areas and tourism is vital. Protected areas need tourism and vice versa. This mutual relationship is complex, sometimes adversarial, but tourism is always a critical component to consider in the planning and management of protected areas, such as potential geosites. Protected areas normally achieve recognition and enhanced protection when sufficient numbers of people visit and appreciate them. Sustainable tourism practice within protected areas is a long-term commitment. It is important for protected area planners to develop incentive measures that will influence decision-making processes within society. Protected area managers need to make ongoing efforts to communicate with all stakeholders. Only with the broad support of the local community will management be successful in the long term. While protected area planners and managers can do much to build a more constructive relationship with the tourism sector, they operate within legal, political, economic and cultural contexts that are beyond their influence. Their success depends in part on actions taken by governments, for example, in updating legislation related to protected areas and tourism, or introducing economic incentives to encourage sustainable forms of tourism. Nonetheless, managers can and do play a critical role by working with a broad range of stakeholders and they can do much to ensure that tourism works for their protected area and for the people living in it or nearby.

Geotourism has been considered a form of niche tourism or special interest tourism, an actively growing tourism market. Vojvodina has several potential geotourism destinations and Titel Loess Plateau is one of them. This paper presents several strategic guidelines for planners, managers and other stakeholders in the planning and management of Titel Loess Plateau, so that tourism can develop in a sustainable way, while respecting local conditions and local communities. At the end a short discussion of the role of visitor management, including techniques that control and limit impacts of use, while allowing maximum enjoyment of as many visitors as can be accommodated within the limits set by environmental and social conditions.

Keywords: Protected Areas Planning, Protected Areas Management, Visitor Management, Sustainable Tourism, Geotourism, Titel Loess Plateau.

Corresponding author: ivo@agencija-vangogh.si