

## Artificial Lake “Barje” – the Center of Ecotourism

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The artificial lake “Barje” is located in the southern Serbia, 30km southwesterly from Leskovac. In average, the lake is 5.5 km long and at 400m above sea level. The purpose of the exploration was to determine the ecotouristic value of the geological, hydrological and ethnographical characteristics of the artificial lake “Barje”. For determining geological characteristics and water quality, standard hydrological and hydro-chemical methods and geological mapping were used. Also, the ethnographical characteristics were determined according to the interview with local people and recordings. Regarding geological structure, the explored area is mostly composed of crystal shale, gneiss, and amphiboles. There are also sand and clay in

the field near the village of Barje. The exploration was done in two parts-field and cabinetwork. The results show that there are six rocks, which could be interesting for possible tourists. The most interesting things about these rocks are their position, size and many legends about their names and shape. Furthermore, the results show that the water of the lake and five springs around it belongs to I and II class, which means that it can be used for drinking. There also many legends, which are connected with the names of the springs (“Tair’s spring”, “Ajdar’s spring”, “Saint Nikola’s spring”). As for the ethnographical characteristics, several objects were determined, as the most suitable for developing the ecotourism:

1. the church devote to Saint Kozma and Damjan-Vracevi,
2. the church devoted to Saint archangel Gavril,
3. the house of Zivkovic Stojan, which dates back from XIX century,
4. authentic meals
5. specific handcraft,
6. authentic pottery
7. genuine national garb.

Concerning all the researched natural resources, it can be concluded that this field gives a great opportunity for developing adventurous and picnic ecotourism. In order to achieve more complex information about the natural resources, it has to be done some biological research, which will also show the qualities of this lake. Moreover, the explored field could also be widen, because the area called “Porecje” also has great resources for developing tourism, especially ecotourism.