



**Basic directions of ecological
tourism functioning in
Russia at the present time**



BASIC DIRECTIONS OF ECOLOGICAL TOURISM FUNCTIONING IN RUSSIA AT THE PRESENT TIME

DIRECCIONES BÁSICAS DEL TURISMO ECOLÓGICO QUE FUNCIONAN EN RUSIA EN LA ACTUALIDAD

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Fecha de recibido: 14 de noviembre de 2019

Fecha de aceptado para publicación: 30 de noviembre de 2019

Fecha de publicación: 10 de diciembre de 2019

Abstract

The paper considers the current development of ecological tourism in the Russian Federation. The causes of backwardness of Russia from the leading countries in the development of ecological tourism are presented. This work reveals the enormous potential that the Russian Federation possesses in terms of the ecological tourism development and describes many specially protected natural areas that can contribute to its brisk growth.

The authors identified the main barriers to the development of ecological tourism in Russia. The role and importance of city parks in the development of eco-tourism are illustrated by the example of creating a park for recreation and reading named after G. Tukay in the city of Nizhnekamsk, Republic of Tatarstan.

The main functions performed by modern city parks to familiarize the population with nature, the desire to preserve nature objects and increase interest in ecological tourism are described.

Key words: ecological tourism, natural complexes, specially protected natural zones, ecological routes, transport infrastructure.

El documento considera el desarrollo actual del turismo ecológico en la Federación de Rusia. Se presentan las causas del atraso de Rusia por parte de los países líderes en el desarrollo del turismo ecológico. Este trabajo revela el enorme potencial que posee la Federación Rusa en términos del desarrollo del turismo ecológico y describe muchas áreas naturales especialmente protegidas que pueden contribuir a su rápido crecimiento.

Los autores identificaron las principales barreras para el desarrollo del turismo ecológico en Rusia. El papel y la importancia de los parques de la ciudad en el desarrollo del ecoturismo se ilustran con el ejemplo de la creación de un parque de recreación y lectura con el nombre de G. Tukay en la ciudad de Nizhnekamsk, República de Tatarstán.

Se describen las funciones principales que realizan los parques modernos de la ciudad para familiarizar a la población con la naturaleza, el deseo de preservar los objetos naturales y aumentar el interés en el turismo ecológico.

Palabras clave: turismo ecológico, complejos naturales, zonas naturales especialmente protegidas, rutas ecológicas, infraestructura de transporte.



Introduction

Despite the rapid growth of tourism industry indicators throughout the world as a whole and in the Russian Federation, in particular, it has to be noted that the main increase in tourist flows in our country was achieved, first of all, due to cultural, educational, eventful, sports, business and partly beach tourism [1]. At the same time, the role and importance of ecological tourism in our country are not too great, and it occupies a rather modest position among other types of tourism. In this matter, Russia is significantly behind many countries, and its share remains very low, not exceeding a few percentage points.

All this is due to many reasons, among which the main ones can be distinguished.

1. Low environmental literacy and culture of a significant part of the Russian population, which is caused by the lack of a focused state system to support the environmental education of the younger generation.

2. Inadequate activity and social significance of various environmental organizations at the federal, regional and local levels

3. The absence of strong political parties in the "green" part of the country's public life spectrum which are pursuing the goals of not only protecting the environment but also improving it to raise the quality of life of future generations.

4. Lack of attention to environmental issues and problems on the part of federal and regional, as well as local levels of government in many regions of the Russian Federation.

5. The limited investment resources available in Russia to solve many environmental problems that exist in various regions, including the development of ecological tourism.

6. The lack of development, despite existing public requests, of scientifically justified federal, regional, and municipal programs for the implementation of ecological tourism in the Russian Federation,

All of the above factors significantly impede the development of eco-tourism in our country.

Methods

Russia has a unique natural potential and a huge variety of specially protected natural areas that can contribute to the brisk growth of ecological tourism. The existence of a large number of such objects testifies to the enormous opportunities that are currently not being realized enough to attract large groups of tourists from the most remote corners of the globe.

Lake Baikal, without any doubt, can be attributed to the most amazing natural complexes located on the territory of Russia. As is well known, this is the deepest and largest lake in the world, a unique reservoir of the purest freshwater, pristine nature, almost untouched by the influence of the anthropogenic factor, as well as many species of unique animals living only in these places.

Currently, more and more tourists are coming to Lake Baikal from all over the globe to admire this miracle of nature, to join the unknown place shrouded in ancient legends and secrets. It should be noted that recently tourist flows to this region are constantly growing at any time of the year.



Another amazing pearl of the north of Russia is Wrangel Island. It should be noted that the creation of a popular tourist route to this place is a matter of the future, but it has good prospects precisely in terms of the development of ecological tourism. This is a cold and remote polar island in the Arctic Ocean, which was the last home of woolly mammoths. Wrangel Island is a unique, self-sufficient ecosystem that has a very high level of biodiversity in the Arctic. It has the largest Pacific walrus population in the world and is the main habitat for polar bears.

Wrangel Island is an attractive destination for Arctic explorers and courageous tourists, although it is considered one of the least accessible nature reserves in the world.

Without a doubt, a completely unique natural monument is the Lena Pillars, which are titanic monoliths up to 200 meters high, lined up along the banks of the Lena River, about 110 kilometres from the city of Yakutsk in Eastern Siberia.

They were a sacred place for the indigenous Yakuts and Evenki tribes. In ancient times, people were afraid of the spirit of rocks and did not dare to approach these unique natural sites. Only elders and shamans could safely approach what they believe turned people into stone.

In this national park, one can find numerous caves, ancient cave paintings and abundant Cambrian fossils.

The true pearl on the map of tourist ecological routes of the Russian Federation is the Golden Mountains of Altai, located in the south of Siberia. They are undoubtedly one of the cleanest and most beautiful regions of Russia. This is a permanent habitat for many rare and endangered species of animals, such as, for example, the snow leopard. The region covers two large Siberian rivers, the Ob and Irtysh Rivers, and is currently one of the most popular places for tourists and climbers from all over the country. Here one can truly appreciate the pristine beauty of Siberian nature, its uniqueness and originality.

One of the most amazing places on earth is the Kamchatka Peninsula. Ancient volcanic and glacial activity carved it into a fantastically beautiful landscape of fire and ice. Six Kamchatka volcanic objects were designated as World Heritage Sites since they determine the peculiarities of the volcanic nature of the peninsula. They feature the constant volcanic activity and the high seismicity of this region. At the same time, Kamchatka is considered a region with very large species diversity of many valuable species which include animals and birds.

The Caucasus Mountains are extremely attractive for tourists. There it is possible to build and operate ski resorts efficiently, as well as to occupy in mountaineering, taking into account the unique natural features of this region: healing mountain air, a wide variety of ecosystems with important endemic plants and wildlife.

The Western Caucasus located 50 km northeast of the Black Sea, is one of the few large mountain regions of Europe where there was no significant human impact on nature. Holidays in the Caucasus Mountains are very good for health and attractive for tourists from all over the world.

Even such a very short list of the diverse natural complexes of the Russian Federation occupying a vast territory gives a good opportunity to understand what significant, untapped resources for the development of ecological tourism are available in our country.



At the same time, it should be noted that the practical tourist development of such vast remote territories is associated with big problems. Below we list some of these barriers that impede the development of tourism in our country.

1. Underdeveloped transport infrastructure of many regions of the Russian Federation located in Siberia, the Far East, and also in the north of the European part of the country: in the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions, the Republic of Karelia.

2. A small number of ecological routes laid in the most popular tourist areas, and lack of their arrangement in terms of providing comfortable accommodation, as well as modern high-quality services in the field of tourism and hospitality.

3. The lack of guarantees for the safety of tourists due to complex environmental factors, extreme climatic conditions, and the presence of vast sparsely populated or completely uninhabited places in the Russian Federation, such as, for example, Wrangel Island, Novosibirsk Islands, Franz Josef Land, Novaya Zemlya, etc.

4. The high cost of many environmental tourism events, due to the high cost of air travel and the inability to get to unique natural complexes by rail and road.

5. The inability to make the majority of trips with young children and elderly people due to their unpreparedness for following the ecological tourism routes which are of increased complexity and have special requirements for the preparation of tourists.

At the same time, it is now necessary to overcome the rather developed misconception of a large number of people that ecological tourism is almost always associated with extreme conditions of the "wild" pristine nature, that it is very difficult and long to get to the venues for ecological tourism. In this regard, this trip can cost a lot of time, money, material resources, and also require unpretentiousness, good physical preparation and endurance, the ability to quickly adapt to the most unforeseen situations arising in the natural environment.

Results And Discussion

Currently, significant opportunities for the development of ecological tourism for residents of large cities are provided by the functioning of park and forest park zones located near large megacities, and sometimes located inside the city limits. It should be noted that the word "park" itself indicates its belonging to natural complexes [2, 3]. This is a part of the natural landscape, on which human activity has been superimposed, turning this corner of nature into an element of the urban cultural environment.

So, in modern conditions, large city parks can include all kinds of pavilions, attractions, sports facilities, catering facilities, children's playgrounds, bicycle paths, places for walking pets and much more. Thus, it can be noted that parks are becoming a genuine "centre of attraction" for people not only from all over the city but also from nearby settlements.

It is in the parks where people often bring their young children, where many citizens begin their first communication with nature, where love for it arises, which subsequently sweeps through life. In some parks of large cities, there are very picturesque places that are the habitat of many rare species of flowers, shrubs, trees, insects, birds and animals. Here we can see waterfowl, squirrels, and sometimes larger animals such as deers, elks, wild



boars, etc. Adults, together with their children, can feed squirrels and ducks by hand; they get aesthetic pleasure from communicating with nature without going far from their home [4, 5].

Being located within easy reach from the places of permanent residence of a fairly large number of people, parks can perform a variety of functions to meet people's needs. Such functions, in particular, may include:

1. Recreational function, which consists in restoring the normal well-being of people, increasing their performance, reducing nervous overwork, overcoming stress. The recreational function is one of the main functions of ecotourism, as a result of which parks can act as an important element in introducing people to the "living" nature, the ability to "plunge" into it without leaving the usual rhythm of everyday life

2. The cultural function, which consists of holding mass cultural and leisure activities for the population of nearby residential areas, in providing them with maximum opportunities for recreation and all kinds of entertainment. Sometimes in the parks various concerts, lectures, talks, meetings with interesting people from the world of cinema, sports, science, show business, etc. are held.

3. Sports and fitness function, which consists in mass independent occupations of the population by various sports, such as volleyball, soccer, hockey, athletics, skiing and some others. Many people in the parks are engaged in jogging, strength training, Nordic walking, riding bicycles, scooters, roller skates, etc. Parks today are becoming an integral element of a healthy lifestyle, an inexhaustible source of energy for many generations of people [6].

Currently, there is an active development of parks not only in large but also in medium and small cities. The formation of unique concepts for creating park structures is becoming an important urban development task, which many talented Russian architects are working on [7].

Summary

An example of creating a unique park economy is the opening in Nizhnekamsk, the Republic of Tatarstan, of a park for recreation and reading named after G. Tukay. It can be described as comfortable, compact, multifunctional, intelligent, sporty, musical, very popular and fabulous.

Park for rest and reading named after G. Tukay is a place where people can spend their free time, get to know each other better in a safe environment, relax from the hustle and bustle of the city and just enjoy nature. After all, all the conditions for a pleasant pastime of citizens in open space are created here.

Artistic and the architectural setting of the park also contrast with the city. The park for rest and reading named after G. Tukay is the only park in the Republic of Tatarstan and in Russia built and dedicated to the work of the great poet of the Tatar people, based on his fairy-tale characters.

The large main arch 9m high and the small arch 5m high are made in the style of the Tatar national ornament "tulip". What is noteworthy, the same ornament is repeated on the central decorative element of the screen on the stage, on the walls of the fountain, the fences of the territory, on the illumination poles, on benches and litter-boxes, on the



decorative bridge, children's playground equipment and on the multi-coloured rubber coating of children's playgrounds, and on Tatar courtyard houses. It unites all the images and ideological content of the whole park, gives it integrity and recognisability as a decorative element of the Tatar tulip ornament. "Tulip" combines all the images and ideological content of the entire park gives it integrity and recognition.

The central and main composition of the fairy tale zone is a 2-level fountain. At the upper level, there is a sculpture of "Su Anasy" on the bridge, surrounded by stones. Water flows out through a jug lying on the stones, replenishes the fountain bowl, and through the diagonal wall of the bowl turns into a waterfall; it falls to the lower level, together with jets of 145 nozzles and 5 foam columns create the effect of a noisy waterfall, dynamically playing with jets of power and volume of water supplied. Multi-coloured illumination paints a water surface making thousands of gems from it.

The park is filled with sculptural compositions of the heroes of fairy tales by G. Tukai: "The Boy Behind the Bush", "Mother's Prayer", "Funny Student", "Shurale and Batyr", "Goat and Tup", "Girl with a Butterfly". Next to each of them is an open book with instructive quatrains from fairy tales in the Tatar and Russian languages that have not lost their relevance to this day. The park has totems (small architectural forms) on the theme inspired by forest inhabitants. Residential houses of the Tatar courtyard and the Big Book on the reading platform with an annotation about G. Tukai and some well-known poetry tales in 2 languages fit very beautifully the landscape of the park.

Monument to G. Tukay, footpaths of multi-coloured pavers, which are illuminated in the evening, giving the park a fabulous and mysterious nature... Children's playgrounds in 4 places of the park, coatings on children's playgrounds and bicycle paths made of natural rubber (crumb rubber) of 5 colours... Sports sites for young people and adults, beautiful grass cover, flower beds, 50-year-old trees of various species, carefully preserved to this day, and very young, recently planted from more modern rocks - all this creates comfortable nests for relaxation.

Silence, the alternation of open and shaded spaces, and the fountain form a favourable recreational environment and have a positive effect on the nervous system, mood and well-being of visitors.

The above example shows how, even inside urban space, we can recreate oases of "living" nature, create all the necessary conditions for familiarizing people with the beautiful, preserving and improving the environment [8].

Conclusion

Thus, we can conclude that in modern Russia there are all necessary and sufficient conditions for the development of ecological tourism. This meets the needs and demands of the overwhelming majority of the country's population, since it helps to increase the pace of socio-economic development, create new jobs, attract domestic and foreign investments, as well as increase the tourist and recreational attractiveness of many regions of Russia [9, 10].

Acknowledgements

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.



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