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ANTHROPOGENIC TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN FOREST AREAS

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ABSTRACT: Anthropogenic tourist attractions are an important element and essential segment of the tourism industry, which stimulates the interest in travelling and ensures the satisfaction of visitors. The more anthropogenic attractions in a given area, the more demand for tourist services is observed. Anthropogenic attractions are characterized by the fact that demand for them depends on innovativeness and entrepreneurship of service providers. Another feature is their variability and diversity, which does not cause monotony by visiting specific places and localities. According to A. Lew (Lew, 1974), without tourist attractions there would be no tourism and without tourism there would be no tourist attractions. Due to the particular value of forest areas, the construction of anthropogenic attractions in these areas is most welcome. In general, it can be said that anthropogenic tourist attractions should be a magnet attracting tourists to the region.

KEY WORDS: forest areas, anthropogenic attractions, the functions of forest areas

 JEL: R11, R52

Introduction

Forest areas are a multi-layer, plant community, in which trees are predominant. They are not only used for firewood harvesting, the production of various wood products and groundcover, but they are also a place for tourism and recreation. Many benefits can be derived from forest areas, but on condition that they are exploited in a well-thought and well-managed manner in terms of tourism. Apart from the natural values of forest areas, it is advisable to create as many anthropogenic attractions as possible. These can be recreational facilities and equipment, closely linked to tourism activities, which are man-made and constitute a valuable tourist objects.

Forest areas is also "oxygen" factory, which provides an unpolluted environment, silence, peace, tranquility, birds' singing and contact with nature. They also fulfil a social function as a place for tourism and recreation. If anthropogenic attractions are added to the advantages (natural values) mentioned above, this area will be used exclusively for the regeneration of mental and physical health. According to various sources the morbidity rate in our society is steadily increasing, including mainly diseases of the 21st century (cancer, mental illnesses, heart attack, hemorrhage, etc.), and in this case forest areas area desirable place to spend free time and at the same time they can help extend the average human lifespan. It should be remembered that health is the highest human value.

In many European countries, such as Germany, Switzerland, Austria, France and others, forest areas are used to regenerate mental and physical health using anthropogenic attractions. Forest areas also fulfill many other functions that can be defined as the totality of tangible and intangible values use values of the services and benefits provided by forests. Each of the functions is very important, but the most important is the social (health) function.

The aim of the study is to present the importance of anthropogenic attractions in forest areas in order to improve physical and mental health, as well as the possibility of managing leisure time for potential tourists by using the above-mentioned attractions.

The functions of forest areas

Forest areas are a plant formation in which trees dominate where a peculiar ecosystem is created, in which plants, animals, soil, water and microclimate function, forming an indivisible whole. They are the most complex and sustainable terrestrial ecosystem in the world. Forest areas can be created naturally and with human intervention. In a natural way, forest areas evolve, taking up new treeless areas (succession), and with them also other elements of the natural environment change.

Health function is an important function for the renewal and maintenance of a person's physical and mental health. Therefore, it is advisable to recommend forest areas for rest, where there is a specific and unique microclimate, among harmoniously colored trees, in unpolluted environment, saturated with essential oils, containing phytoncides (volatile compounds which have healing effects in some diseases of the respiratory system, characterized by bacteriostatic properties), and in the result physical and mental health can be improved (Muszyński, Kozioł, 2013).

It is the statutory obligation of the State Forest Enterprise (Państwowe Gospodarstwa Leśne Lasy Państwowe) to manage forests in a securely sustainable manner aimed at maintaining the sustainability of forests and increasing forest resources. Forest areas fulfil various and very important functions, and these are:

- ecological functions
  - production and replenishment of oxygen in the atmosphere,
  - binding of carbon dioxide and thereby mitigating the "greenhouse effect",
  - intercepting dust and gas pollutants of air,
  - control of water conditions in and near the area,
  - shaping the global and local climate,
  - counteracting floods, avalanches and landslides,
  - enabling the livelihood of many plant and animal species.
- economic functions
  - the source of timber used as building, furniture, heating and paper material,
  - the source of biomass,
  - the place of food production (forest animal meat, mushrooms, and forest fruit),
  - a place of refuge for animals,
  - a workplace for many people.
- social functions
  - health function,

– tourism and recreation,
– the education of society.

Forest areas are an important factor in the attractiveness of the area and, with an efficient and optimal forest policy, they can be a significant element in the development of tourism. The development of tourism and recreation in forest areas is one of the most important forms of using the non-productive functions of forests. It should be added that forest areas are exposed to atmospheric, ecological, social and economic activities.

An analysis of the historical links between man and forestry shows that forestry is a form of land use that provides many different benefits. The extent and level of forest functions depends both on the nature of the forest and the way the forest management is carried out. Forest areas are also valuable natural areas, which should be protected and at the same time a development strategy should be proposed which would allow to protect all desirable resources and natural values without limiting the socio-economic development opportunities of local communities.

One of the most important advantages of forest areas is the absorption of carbon dioxide and oxygen release, which is why everyone feels very good in the forest. In general, it can be said that forest areas should be used primarily by humans and not the other way round. The biotherapeutic properties of tree species and forest communities have been known since ancient times. For example, pine and mixed coniferous forests have a healing effect on respiratory diseases, while volatile substances have a disinfecting, bactericidal and fungicidal effect and reduce blood pressure. On the other hand, forest fruits are the source of the most valuable vitamins and the most assimilable sugars (Jalinik, 2016).

Forest areas create favorable health and recreational conditions for society, provide the development of ecological education of society and they are a place of rest for artists, poets, writers, prose writers, musicians, and painters and they are often places of inspiration. They are also an excellent place for consumer tourism, i.e. the tourism combined with hunting, the harvesting of forest vegetation (mushrooms, edible fruits and herbs), as well as gathering exhibits (Grochowski, 1992). Non-consumption tourism is very valuable for health, consisting only in staying in forest areas and walking through healthy and charming places. This creates exceptionally favorable conditions for rest, relaxation and health regeneration, mainly for the elderly and people who are advanced in years.

In the development of tourism and recreation in forest areas, their role in social life is increasingly emphasized. Modern tourism is not a homogenous and a compact economic sector, but a complex one. It is characterized by numerous links to many areas of social and economic life.

The types of exemplary anthropogenic tourist attractions

Forest areas are a common good, but they should be properly managed in terms of tourism. It should be remembered that the development of tourism depends on many factors, and tourist attractions are a bug that attracts large groups of tourists and are one of the most important components of tourism. The concept of "tourist attractions" was introduced to professional literature by Cohen in 1972 (Cohen, 1972). Lundberg interprets tourist attractions in a simplified way (Lundberg, 1985), as anything that interests tourists". Goodall, on the other hand, regards tourist attractions as a "characteristic, often unique place, e.g. natural environment, historical monument or such events as festivals and sporting events" (Goodall, 1990). According to Podemski "tourist attractions" include not only the elements of nature and culture, but also e. g. the level of prices, the attitudes of local population toward tourists and tourism and tourist facilities together with the entire technical infrastructure (Podemski, 2004).

According to Sikora (Sikora, 2012), anthropogenic attractions are a human work in a given area, which may be conducive to the development of tourism. The author also lists other types of attractions, such as the following:

- natural, including national parks, landscape parks, forest areas, gardens, orchards, and nature trails;
- architectonic – churches, monuments, palaces, manor houses, cemeteries, and the ruins of castles;
- cultural – festivals, shows, exhibitions, fairs, flea markets, church fairs, canoeing rafting, sports competitions and festivities;
- recreational – walking, canoeing, skiing, horse riding, hunting, observation of forest animals, cycle paths, Nordic walking and rope parks.

The greater the variety of human-made attractions offered, the greater are possibilities to satisfy the requirements of tourists who will willingly decide to extend their stay in a given area or to repeat their arrival and visit, as well as to pass on their positive opinions to friends and family.

Taking into account the existing values and tourist attractions in a given area, it is necessary to undertake actions aimed at developing the area, which would be not only an open-air museum, but also a place of rest, recreation and education. Planning measures should therefore be taken to obtain financial resources for the development of a forest area that would serve tourism and recreation purposes.

There are many forest areas in Poland, where anthropogenic attractions could be created, creating the possibility of an attractive way of spending free time. The most interesting are shown in the pictures below (figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1. An example of a rope parking a forest area
Source: www.polskieparkilinowe.pl [12-10-2017].

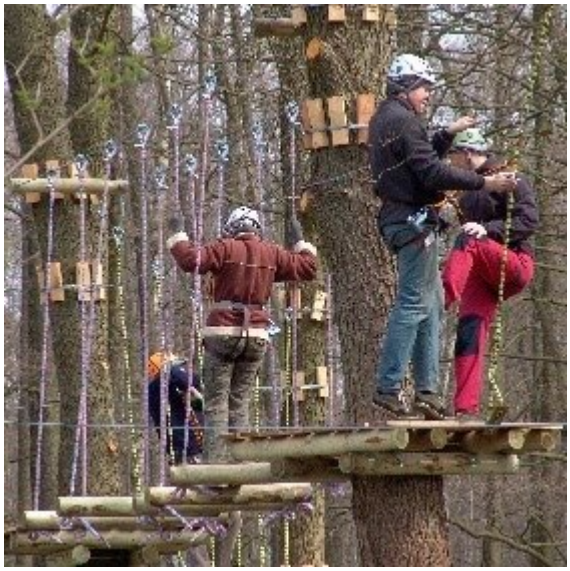

Figure 2. An example of a rope parking a forest area
Source: www.polskieparkilinowe.pl [12-10-2017].

The rope park is a special type of a publicly accessible sport and recreational attraction, consisting of ropes, ladders, bridges and platforms spread at various heights (even up to several meters above the ground, often in forest areas, between trees, but it can also be constructed in an open space between specially arranged columns). Rope and balance exercises not only have a positive impact on the physical condition but also improve physical fitness, as well as help find non-standard solutions in planning and making strategic decisions.

Rope parks provide unforgettable experiences and outdoor activities. It is a form of recreation for children, young people, adults and the elderly. The only limitations are too small height and ill health, which may even deteriorate by physical effort. The vogue for active recreation and extreme sports makes such parks very common in many European countries. As for Poland they have just started to appear. For example, in 2005, four new rope parks were set up, and at the end of 2008 there were already forty-five of them, spread throughout Poland. In 2016 there were more than two hundred rope parks, and new ones were constantly being built (*www.polskieparkilinowe.pl*).

Recreational pathways, often referred to as health paths, also have an impact on the improvement of physical and mental health. Most often they should be built in forests or tree-covered areas. They consist of a set of exercise equipment, which is arranged along a walking trail of about approx. 100 meters from one station to another (figure 3).

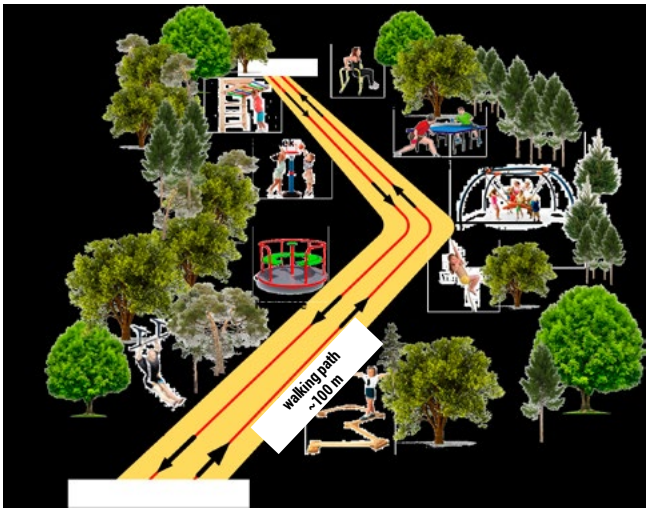

Figure 3. Recreational path (health path)

A railing set; a ladder set; ping-pong tables; basketball backboards; swings; carousels; climbing ropes – lifting rods; balance beams; a walking path (ca. 100 m – approx.. 100 m)

Source: authors'own work.

Recreational (health) paths are used in many European countries, such as Germany, Austria, Belgium or Switzerland, which can be confirmed by the author of this paper. Recreational facilities should be constructed on one side of the walking path in order to have a moment of rest before reaching the next station.

Another form of recreation in forest areas should be paths for bicycles and pedestrians (figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4. An example bicycle path in a forest area

Source: www. polskanarowery.sport.pl [20-09-2017].

Figure 5. People doing attractive Nordic walking on a walking path

Source: www.lasy.gov.pl/informacje/wydarzenia/nordic-walking-w-lesie [10-09-2017].

Cycling in forest areas is a suitable form of recreation. Riders are not at risk of danger from motor vehicles and inhalation of exhaust fumes. The riders do not have to pay attention to road signs and riding is quiet and noiseless. Riding people listen to birds singing and the sound of trees. The scent of flowers, resin or blooming lime trees is scattered everywhere. Cycling in forest areas, it is possible to come into contact with wild animals and admire the whole range of colors, dozens of shades of green in spring or yellow and brown in autumn. In forest areas it is possible to ride side by side with impunity, even in a group of four people, if you have a sufficiently wide road, and riding in a group brings people together and facilitates interpersonal contacts.

It is also worth mentioning that when cycling through forest areas, it is possible to pick up mushrooms, berries, raspberries or wild strawberries, whose taste and smell cannot be compared to other garden fruit, and in the heat, nothing will replace the coolness that a forest cluster can give us. It is similar when walking in the forest or doing Nordic walking (figure 5).

The anthropogenic attractions, in contrast to natural attractions, are characterized by the fact that their character, shape and attractiveness change. There may be other ideas and organizational solutions that will interest visitors at any time.

In addition to the paths for pedestrians and cyclists, educational paths should be built in forest areas (figure 6). They are one of the most common elements of recreational forest management. Forest educational paths play a very important role in passing on forest knowledge and related issues to various groups of people. According to Ważyński, educational paths are specially designed walking routes designed for active recreation in the forest (Ważyński, 1997). The way they are delineated, the subject matter in the stops, as well as other parameters, such as their length, can determine the success or failure of a newly built path. An obvious advantage of educational paths is the combination of educational and tourist functions, and an important task of the paths is to "develop" respect for a forest and the work of foresters.

Visitors have the opportunity to learn about the structure of a forest ecosystem, tree and shrub species, and herbaceous plants and animals living there. Educational paths play a special role in forest areas and, for example, they provide information about threats in the forest (fires, harmful insects, dangerous animals and others) and methods used by foresters to prevent them.

The sleigh ride with a bonfire is also an anthropogenic attraction (figure 7). According to the fans of this form of recreation, it is the most attractive winter form of spending leisure time. It is possible to enjoy the nature while riding

through the forest areas. It is much time to watch the snow cover of the trees. The sleigh ride is an excellent form of integrating people of different social and professional groups.

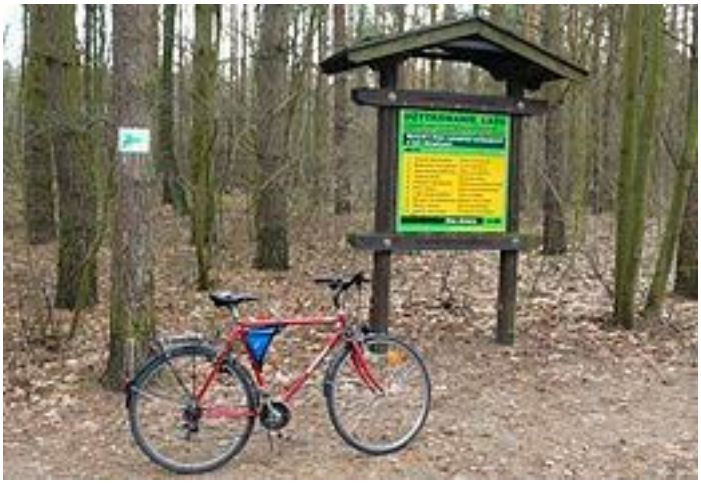

Figure 6. An example educational path in a forest area

Source: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ścieżka_przyrodniczo-leśna_w_Lesie_Marcelińskim [02-10-2017].

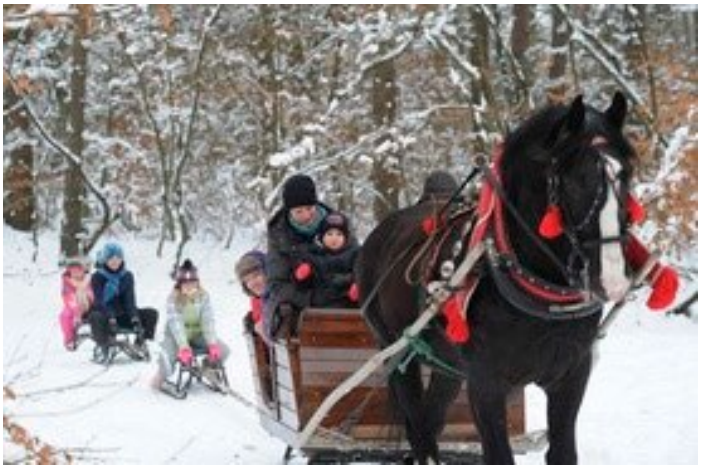

Figure 7. Sleigh rides in forest areas

Source: www.malygosc.pl [10-10-2017].

Sleigh rides also have a cultural dimension. During a sleigh ride in some regions of the country, Polish national dances are performed such as cracoviennes, mazurkas, polonaises, kouiaviacs with oberek, as well as regional

polkas and drabants. Sleigh rides are often accompanied by music, singing and playing at the bonfire. In the evening, the sleigh ride is often lit up with torches, which is a unique attraction.

Summary

Tourist anthropogenic attractions are considered to be a key component of the tourism market and an important tourist factor for every tourist. Attractions stimulate interest in travelling to the destination and ensure the satisfaction of visitors to places in forest areas.

In the group of anthropogenic attractions, a significant number of features can be distinguished that influence the quality of rest. These are facilities and material objects, closely related to human activity and produced by it, which are valuable in terms of tourism. Every object or device that is an anthropogenic attraction is distinguished by the following features:

- it "attracts" tourists;
- it has a core (*nucleus*), which is a feature that distinguish it from other objects or devices;
- it has a designator (marker), i.e. appropriate information about the core, thanks to which the tourist knows about the existence of attractions (e. g. information boards, descriptions in a guide book or other publications).

Anthropogenic attractions as opposed to natural attractions are characterized by innovativeness, variability (uniqueness) and for this reason they are a magnet attracting tourists to the region, and at the same time they stimulate the demand for other tourist services. The greater is their number, the more attractive is the region. Therefore, the aim should be to have as many of them as possible, which will contribute to increased tourist traffic and improve the budgets of communities and inhabitants living in forest areas.

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