



Research note

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THE IMPORTANCE OF NATURE-BASED TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT—A REPORT FROM THE SELECTED BIOSPHERE RESERVE

Igor Trišić^{1*}, Snežana Štetić¹, Donatella Privitera²

¹Balkan Network of Tourism Experts, Belgrade, Serbia; e-mails: trisici@hotmail.com; snegics@gmail.com

²University of Catania, Department of Educational Sciences, Catania, Italy; e-mail: donatella.privitera@unict.it

Abstract: Special Nature Reserve (SNR) Gornje Podunavlje is located in the northwestern part of Serbia, on the left bank of the Danube, along the border of Croatia and Serbia. This area is a significant spatial unit for the development of nature-based tourism and ecotourism. It is part of Bačko Podunavlje Biosphere Reserve, protected by UNESCO, and a wider area of Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura–Drava–Danube, which includes 10 protected natural areas in five countries. The research aims to examine the attitudes of the local population about the state of sustainable tourism development in the SNR Gornje Podunavlje using a questionnaire. A total of 205 respondents expressed their satisfaction with the environmental, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of sustainability. After quantitative analysis, the results of the research can provide nature conservation guidelines and specify the role of protected natural areas in sustainable tourism development. As the most important dimensions of sustainability, the residents highlighted the Socio-cultural and Institutional dimensions of sustainable tourism development. Slightly lower values, according to the attitudes of residents, were given to Environmental and Economic sustainability. The results of the research indicate that this destination can be important for the development of sustainable tourism. By adopting the planned management measures, this protected natural area can be a significant destination for ecotourism and other forms of nature-based tourism.

Keywords: Special Nature Reserve Gornje Podunavlje; nature-based tourism; Biosphere Reserve; sustainable tourism development

Introduction

Special Nature Reserve (SNR) Gornje Podunavlje represents an area within Bačko Podunavlje Biosphere Reserve, protected by UNESCO (with a total surface area of 176,635 ha), and it is part of Transboundary Biosphere Reserve Mura–Drava–Danube, so-called “Europe’s Amazon”. It includes 10 protected areas in the following five countries: Austria, Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, and Serbia. Therefore, this nature reserve can be an important destination for international tourism. SNR Gornje Podunavlje is a unique mosaic of aquatic, wetland, and terrestrial ecosystems (Stojanović & Savić, 2013). It is a significant center of ecosystem, species, and genetic diversity. Within the reserve, a large number of rare and endangered plant species that are of national and international

*Corresponding author, e-mail: trisici@hotmail.com