

PROTECTED AREA OF ARAD COUNTY

C.P. BURCĂ¹, I. CSÖSZI, SIMONA CRISTINA MARTIN¹, OANA IANOȘEVICI¹,
GABRIELA POPESCU¹, C. RUJESCU¹

¹*Banat's University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, Timișoara, Faculty of Agricultural Management, Timișoara, Romania; cipri_burca@yahoo.com*

Abstract: *Arad county attract tourists attention through the multitude and variety of its natural resources. The forms of relief, hydrography, flora and fauna species provide to the county the quality of tourist area. Almost without exception, the most important 10 dendrologic parks and 24 natural reserves in Arad County belong to the old mansion or castles, built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nature lovers, as a sign of recognizing the importance of forest for the balance of natural ecosystems or from the desire to have outstanding gardens, the former owners have brought various ornamental and native species, some of particular interest in terms of landscape or scientific purposes (ginkgo, sequoia, Cedrus, Taxodium) or others which are protected by law, such as yew. With over 161 ha, these parks and reserves are located along Mures River at Odvos, Săvârșin, Petris, Capalnas, Bulci, Neudorf, in the basin of Crișul Alb at Gurahonț and Mocrea and in the plain area at Mănăștur and Mace.*

Key words: *variety of natural resources; tourist area; parks; ecosystems.*

INTRODUCTION

Arad County is situated in western country and covers an area of 7.754 km² being located at the intersection of major national and international traffic roads. Gateway between Western Europe and south-east of the continent, the county is neighboring to north with Bihor County to east with Hunedoara and Alba Counties, to south with Timis county and to west with Hungary. Arad County is a good example of a harmonious combination of nature people, history and present, which are reflected in the daily life of its inhabitants. The nature places offer and always offered, favorable conditions for human activities: a large amphitheater, stepped down smoothly from east to west in three complementary natural units (mountains, hills and depressions, plains), a pleasant and moderate climate, without significant difference, a rich hydrography (dominated by the majestic Mures River), a vegetation cover, soils with high productivity and subsoil richness, which complete the natural wealth of the county.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The authors of this paper have completed two phases. In the first phase, it has been required a theoretical and bibliographical documentation concerning Arad County and natural parks and reservation. It has been defined the issue and formulation of the main hypotheses in order to constitute an explanatory and convincing model, inducing the importance and activity of the researched subject. The final phase has been drawn up and completed by the collected information. The drafting of this paper was made in laboratory, based on the notes from the ground, the existing material and consulted bibliography.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Among representative natural protected areas of the county Arad, we note :

1. Botanical protected areas

Laurului Dosul is located in village of Gurahonț, occupying an area of 32.2 ha and represents an area to protect species of laurel (*Ilex aquifolium*).

Meadow with Daffodils of Rovine is near the town of Ineu and has an effective area of approximately 10 acres. It is a meadow where in April-May, the family of daffodils blossoms.

The pond of Gurahonț is located in the village of Gurahonț, on a protected area of 2 hectares and represents a botanical reserve which is also present *Centaurea simonkaiana*, a rare species, protected and unique in the county.

2. Zoological protected areas

The pond Rovina has an area of 120 ha which varies depending on the water level. It is a place of spring and autumn passage for the species: spoonbill, black stork, eagle, bittern or pewit.

The pond Șoimoș is located in near the fortress Soimos in the floodplain of Mures River. It has an area of 1 ha with variable water surface depending on the Mures level.

Gray herons of Sac. The colony of gray herons is located in village Carand and has an area of 17.8 ha.

3. Speological protected areas

The cave with water mill is located on the territory of Moneasa and occupies an area of 5 ha. Besides the significant development compared to the rest of the caves in the region, significant accumulation of aragonite crystals, fauna fossils and colonies of bats were noticed in this cave.

The Cave of Duțu is located in the village of Săvârșin. In the cave there are a lot of bats colonies. In the Cave of Duțu, several fossil species of bats were identified in the walls of galleries, using the cave as a shelter.

Sinesie Cave is located in Arad, in the village of Săvârșin on the common pasture in the south-east of the village. In the cave, there are several colonies of bats.

4. Paleontological protected areas

The fossiliferous place of Zăbaț. The natural reserve is located in the northeast of the village in a place called "Yellow Hole". It has an area of 5 ha and represents a fossiliferous with deposits place of fossil fauna.

The fossiliferous place of Monoroștia. The natural reserve covers an area of 0,10 ha and represents a fossiliferous point with deposits placed from the shells of molluscs. It is a tourist attraction recently discovered.

5. Forest protected areas

The reserve Runcu - Groși is a range of beech trees, quasivirgin, with particular genetic traits. The average age of trees in this reserve ranges from 150-250 years, their heights reaching up to 35 m. Its area is 262,6 ha.

The beech trees of Raul Mic has an area of 165.6 ha. It impresses by their height and diameter as well as the quality of wood.

The beech forest of Archișel. It is a virgin forest in a compact body with full consistency, comprising species of beech with canopy cover grouped up and with straight and clean trunks.

The pubescent oak forests of Carand. The natural reserve located in the northwestern part of the village Carand, has an area of 2.10 hectares and represents a protection zone for arboreal species of the pubescent oak.

6. Mixed protected areas

Mocrea Hill Reserve. It is a botanical and geological reserve. The reserve was established to protect the quasivirgin forest of pubescent oak, beech and maple, with rare species that reach the age of 300 years, and sandstone formed by volcanic activity.

Bezdin Prundu-Mare Reserve is an area of great importance which offers optimal food and nesting conditions for some rare bird species (small egret, Danube falcon, spotted eagle, black stork, owl). Here, it is also located the lake Bezdin.

The mixed natural reserve of Moneasa. The reserve area covers 6273,1 ha at an altitude of 260 to 1096 m. It is one of the last forested karsts in Europe. In the pond 67 caves and avens was discovered, which represents 60% of the caves of Codru Moma mountains.

Salty soils reserve of Socodor has 95 ha of pasture which is the subject of research and experimentation. The flora and vegetation are determined by the nature and characteristics of salty soils.

The hillock with thorns of Patârș sums 111.7 ha and forms an subshrub layer on the entire ridge of the hill Măgura.

The forest with thorns of Grosi and Peștiș is located in the village of Săvârșin with an area of 470,9 ha.

Pleșa Hill. The reserve is located in Arad, near the city of Sebis, with an area of 290.6 ha. The station includes thermophilic herbaceous species and rare woody species.

7. Scientific protected areas

Arboretum of Macea. The reserve is located in Arad, village of Macea and has an area of 20.5 ha. The botanical garden of Macea serves today as an educational, scientific and recreational base, being presented 2142 of taxonomic units for trees and shrubs, 16 protected ornamental trees and a dendrological collection with 5 plant sectors grouped by the geographical origin.

8. Natural parks

The Natural Park of Mures floodplain is a protected area established in Romania, classified as a national natural park and as protected landscape in international taxonomy.

The dendrological park "Arboretum Silva" of Gurahont. It is located in the village of Gurahont. The park area is 12,5 ha. Currently, in the park there are about 2600 taxonomic units of which approximately 500 represent rare or unique species.

The dendrological park of Neudorf is located in the village of Zabrani, and it sums 73 ha.

The dendrological park of Bulci. The park, with an area of 4 hectares, is the place of leisure for the sick hospitalized in this station and was founded by Baron Mocsony who has owned the castle, now transformed into an outside station of city hospital.

The dendrological park of Săvârșin has an area of 19.5 ha. The landscape should not be overlooked by the association of existing species and secular trees, also present in the park.

The dendrological park of Capalnas. It is situated in the village of Birchiș, within the hospital of chronic diseases. The park area is 10 ha and includes rare species of Magnolia, Platanus orientalis, etc.

The dendrological park of Mocrea. It has an area of 8 ha and it is important by its varieties and landscaping.

The park of Mănăstur. It is located in the village of Vinga. It is important due to existing species of which are distinguished Ginkgo biloba.

The park of Ineu. Located in the city of Ineu, it has an area of 12 ha. It was set 400 years ago, on the structure of a natural forest, as evidenced by the existence of old trees.

The park of Odvos. Located in the village of Conop, it has an area of 2.3 ha and represents a place for leisure and entertainment for students during the summer.

CONCLUSIONS

A general conclusion which results from the presentation of this potential is the poor exploitation reflected by the lack of tourist facilities, tourist information panels. This poor exploitation leads to not achieve the necessary conditions for practicing tourism forms by the existing resources, including ecotourism, rural tourism, agrotourism.

Therefore, it is required, as a fundamental step, the necessity to consider the tourism as an activity that should contribute both to economic revitalization of the area through the additional revenue and to keep the traditional specificity of the county through the tourist capitalization of ethno-folkloric elements, traditional costume, customs, specific activities and handicrafts.

These initiatives should start locally by involving public authorities to take measures and design projects, to attract investors and funds for these projects and to support and inform local people on benefits that rural tourism can bring.

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