

**TOURISM IN THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE –
AN ATTEMPT TO CREATE NEW VALUE
IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE MEDVEDNICA NATURE PARK, CROATIA**

Ph.D. Jasenka Kranjčević, Institute for Tourism, Croatia

jasenka.kranjcevic@iztzg.hr

Sanja Šaban, B. Arch. E., Institute IGH d.d., Croatia

sanja.saban@igh.hr

Keywords: Tourism, Cultural Landscape, New Values, Medvednica Nature Park, Croatia

Abstract

This paper seeks to show how area of the Nature Park Medvednica has immense potential for tourism development in the metropolitan region of the City of Zagreb and, on the other side, to warn that unplanned tourism can lead to devastation of space and reducing the value of landscape in every sense.

Tourism in the cultural landscape has the increasing development opportunities, on the global and local level. For the last few years on the global tourist market, the cultural landscape, as a tourist resource base, are getting even more significance. Social processes of modernization are doing pressure on the landscape and we must looking for new forms in approaching to solve these problems. As a tourist resource base, cultural landscape becomes an element for the development of different forms of tourism (urban tourism, rural tourism etc.).

In order to include the Nature Park Medvednica in the quality of tourist offer of Zagreb and its surroundings, it is necessary to update the spatial plan for the whole area and also to create programs with content and border facilities on the basis of which will create projects for each location. These plans and programs should be designed in a way so as to achieve symbiosis of modern lifestyles and traditional cultural landscapes and all those who are interested in order to create new space values (economic, social, cultural, landscape, ecological etc.).

Based on the analysis and tourist evaluation of Nature Park Medvednica allocates eight key attraction, which also represent the eight separate large-scale projects for the future development of the Nature Park and the City of Zagreb. For the key attractions, we can be able to anticipate the various forms of tourism (urban tourism, rural tourism, wine tourism, religious tourism etc.) that would enable the development of the city and also villages on the outskirts of the Nature Park. Planned programs (or projects) should be selected according to the criterion of adaptability to existing conditions and with minimum impact on the changing physical environment to preserve the natural state and at the same time enable the socio-economic development of the local community.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to show that the Medvednica Nature Park, as a protected part of nature, has potential for the development of tourism because it is located in the immediate vicinity of the capital city of Croatia – Zagreb. Of the 11 nature parks in Croatia, Medvednica Nature Park has the “easiest” opportunities for the development of tourism (easy access, possibility of reaching a large number of visitors, etc.), but also the “highest” chance for the devastation of the natural “resource – capital” (construction, number of visitors, easy access, etc.).

Picture 1. Nature parks in Croatia



It is a fact that tourism is highly space dependent. In order to develop tourism, the space has to be beautiful and attractive, regardless of whether it refers to natural or cultural beauties and assets. In the field of tourism, the segment concerned with space design, i.e. the esthetic value, constitutes an important component of space and architecture. Human activities can preserve or improve the beauties and assets of a space up to the point that it does not become overcrowded or disfigured by development. Once a certain limit is crossed, improvement turns into destruction. This is not only about a protective position, but also about a more limited economic position. If space is a resource for the purposes of tourism, it is exhausted on the spot and cannot be replenished from another location as a raw material.

In the Medvednica Nature Park, as a protected part of nature, the development of any economic activity, tourism included, is limited. It is understandable that any limitation on space use causes conflicts both between certain forms of space use and with the local population. The inhabitants of the protected areas are not exempt from the laws of the free market or capital, and they desire investments, new jobs, modernization, etc. In view of the fact that the space of protected parts of nature constitutes a tourist resource - capital, the inhabitants see an opportunity to “sell” the natural beauties as either an experience or a property. For the purpose of preserving and improving different forms of cultural heritage (architectural heritage, cultural custom, language, etc.), natural assets (landscape, basic phenomena, certain agricultural activities, etc.), it is essential for the inhabitants to remain in the protected areas and to live there.

It is a fact that the protected parts of nature constitute a resource for different activities (preservation of biological diversity, development of tourism, development of agriculture,

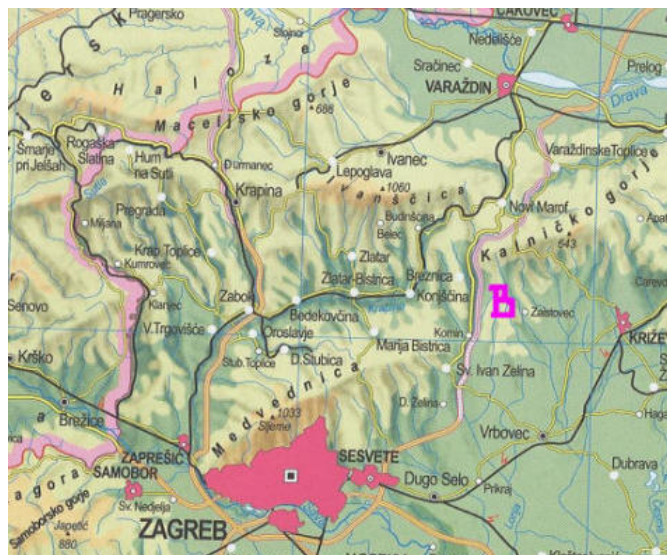
development of forestry, housing, etc.). In order for the inhabitants and users of these parts of nature to feel good, one expects the space to provide an attractive environment, a quality life, quality services, etc. This is the reason why physical planners, architects, persons working in the field of tourism, property owners, farmers, politicians and other users of these spaces are faced with the question of how to plan, i.e. adapt tourism in the cultural landscape to the preservation and development of the space, to the living and working needs, and thereby also to development? How to find the limit for “opening” nature parks to tourists? How to provide for funding in protected nature areas for the rehabilitation of its endangered areas and the preservation of endangered plant and animal species? When drafting plans for protected areas, for the Medvednica Nature Park in this particular case, physical planners should definitely ask themselves to what extent it is “worth destroying” a given space for the purpose of the development of tourism?

2. MEDVEDNICA NATURE PARK

2.1. Location

The Medvednica mountain is located in the northwestern part of Croatia and extends from the southwest to the northeast over a length of approximately 40 km and a width of 9 km; it constitutes the northern border of the territory of the capital city of Croatia - Zagreb. The highest peak is Sljeme, with an elevation of 1035 m above sea level, while Zagreb is located on an average altitude of 120 m above sea level. The southern boundary of Medvednica literally fuses with Zagreb in the form of large park areas. In the northern part of Medvednica, on the slopes of Hrvatsko Zagorje, there is a large number of picturesque hamlets.

Picture 2. Position of Medvednica



The area of the Medvednica Nature Park extends over 3 counties. It was proclaimed a Nature Park in 1981 and covers a surface area of 22,826 ha. The basic phenomenon of the park is the good preservation of natural forest and forest community, while the remaining part consists of orchards, vineyards, crops and the existing settlements on the boundary of the Park.

Table 1. Basic data on Medvednica

MEDVEDNICA NATURE PARK	
Identity Card – Current Status	
Year of proclamation of Medvednica a Nature Park:	1981 (Law on the Proclamation of the Western Part of Medvednica a Nature Park, “Official Gazette” of the Republic of Croatia, No. 24/81)
Surface area of the Nature Park:	22,826 ha
Elevation:	120 to 1035 m above sea level
Highest peak:	Sljeme
Direction in which it extends:	from the southwest to the northeast over a length of 42 km
Territorial boundaries:	City of Zagreb Krapina-Zagorje County Zagreb County
Number of settlements entirely/partly located in the Nature Park - total:	41
in the City of Zagreb:	13
in the Zagreb County:	9
in the Krapina-Zagorje County:	19
Number of inhabitants in the Nature Park, 2001 estimate:	33,413
on the Prigorje (Zagreb) side	62%
on the Zagorje side	38%
Access:	by foot, car, bicycle, cableway
Forest areas:	14,550 ha
in State ownership:	60.4%
in private ownership:	39.6%
Characteristic landscaping macro-units:	
integral forest complex:	64% of the surface area of the Park
access area:	36% of the surface area of the Park
Protection of the particular parts of nature:	
special reserves (forest vegetation reserves):	8
protected landscapes:	1
natural monuments (rare tree samples):	3
natural monuments (geomorphologic):	1
park architecture monuments:	3
Water springs	75
Mining facilities (quarries)	
active	4
disused	8
Cultural goods:	historical architectural sites - settlements historical complexes and buildings (civil and sacral) ethnological heritage archeological heritage memorial heritage (cemeteries)
Management:	Public institution “Medvednica Nature Park”

2.2. Importance of the Medvednica Nature Park

Medvednica represents a beautiful natural and climatic dam, enabling Zagreb to develop under favorable conditions. The relations between Medvednica and Zagreb have significantly determined the development of the city and its urban physiognomy. When looking from above, one will notice that there is no strict limit between Zagreb and Medvednica due to the fact that the Sljeme forest reaches practically to the center of the city.

In addition to the experience of Medvednica as an ecological oasis, the fact that Medvednica is part of the picture and physiognomy of Zagreb and the Zagorje region confers a special position to it. Today, approximately 33,000 inhabitants live in the settlements that surround the forest area of Medvednica.

The special position of Medvednica is also due to the fact that, compared with other Zagreb areas, it has been subject to fewer industrial and technical transformation processes over time although it has not been entirely spared of such changes. The changes are reflected in the natural environment of Medvednica, in changes in the nature and mode of use of the facilities, in the mode of reaching Medvednica, in road corridors and transmission lines, and the like. The changes have mostly affected the southern part, i.e. the Zagreb part of the access area, where a relatively large-scale development has modified the picture of the historical settlements. This is the reason why a Resolution was passed in 2008 reducing the boundaries of the Park so that almost the whole boundary part at the foot of Medvednica has been excluded from the Nature Park.

However, in spite of this, Medvednica has to a great extent retained the appearance of a natural area with a series of special features, places, values and tradition.

2.3. Cultural Landscapes of the Medvednica Nature Park

If we accept the definition that a cultural landscape is part of an area with an appearance determined by the action and interaction of natural and human factors, i.e. that they represent topographically defined areas with a recognizable quality of cohabitation of natural structures and architectural forms, then the area of the Medvednica Nature Park is certainly the best example on which to investigate how to reconcile the need for protecting a space with the need for its future development.

Picture 3. Landscape of Medvednica in summer



Picture 4. Landscape of Medvednica in winter



The area of the Nature Park consists of two, by nature, different but complementary areas: an integral forest complex (central area of the Nature Park) and an access (tampon) zone. The access zone is enclosed on all sides by an integral forest complex and is characterized by typical landscapes from Prigorje and Zagorje with parts of urban and suburban settlements and villages, agricultural lands and isolated minor forest areas.

Due to its status of protected natural and cultural heritage, the whole area of the Park represents a tourist attraction. However, some of its parts that are particularly attractive stand out in this area.

2.4. Protection zones of the Medvednica Nature Park

Since the Nature Park represents a system of particularly valuable and protected parts of nature, their valuation in the Physical Plan has resulted in the proposal of a network of specific space assets of the park as a basis for discovering options and ways to use the Park.

In order to ensure the fundamental protection structures, the zoning of the whole area of the Nature Park was performed upon the valuation of the space (flora, fauna, habitats, ecological processes, cultural and historical assets, and the like) in order to ensure the best and most purposeful space protection. A separate management, use, development and protection regime has been established for each of these zones.

Three protection zones have been proposed for the Medvednica Nature Park: a) Zone I – special protection zone; b) Zone II – oriented protection and use zone; and c) Zone III – oriented settlement development and planning zone.

3. TOURIST ATTRACTIONS OF THE MEDVEDNICA NATURE PARK

In compliance with the objectives set under the Plan (to maximally preserve the already traditional and characteristic localities and forms of use; to relieve the area of the summit of Medvednica and to improve, through the planned interventions both in structures and space, the offer of Medvednica as primarily a holiday- and recreation-oriented space), the following technical studies have been carried out: Conservation Study of the Protection of Cultural Goods, Areas for Holiday and Recreation in the Medvednica Nature Park, Valuation of the Tourist Resources of the Medvednica Nature Park.

The space of the Nature Park has been valued in the context of the protection and preservation of intangible cultural goods in compliance with modern European principles. They start from the integral valuation and protection of cultural and natural heritage, based upon the known fact that an architectural form of any kind and significance is indivisibly related to the immediate environment and thereby also with the wider regional space and landscape.

A high level of preservation and the values of the natural and anthropogenic elements of the space, the pronounced visual, esthetic, environmental and sociological features, a space in which the historical continuity of human population and the specific functions and modes of use are recognizable and noticeable, are a set of values that also determine Medvednica as a specific cultural landscape.

The basic objective is to establish an integral cultural and natural heritage protection system in order to preserve and improve the natural and cultural assets and to include them in the development programs.

Therefore, guidelines and recommendations have been issued for all interventions in intangible cultural goods and other factors that shape the cultural and historical identity of a space by following the principle that the cultural and historical identity of a space must be

fully preserved and affirmed by the quality of new developments, the use and intended use of the space.

Pursuant to the technical analyses, a total of 58 localities, which are defined as areas for holiday and recreation under the Plan, have been isolated within the Nature Park. These are most frequently localities, as a general rule with a long tradition, that are located in favorable locations in terms of natural and cultural and historical beauty, connected with other characteristic locations, and that are characterized by the construction of structures, the installation of different equipment, their mode of use, characteristic groups of regular visitors, characteristic traditional events, and the like.

Picture 5. Kraljičin Zdenac (Queen's Well)



Picture 6. Bliznec forester's cabin



In order to include the area of Medvednica in the tourist offer of Zagreb and the greater area, it will be necessary to prepare programs detailing the features and limit capacities, on the basis of which projects will be prepared for the particular locations, which are, as follows:

A) Sljeme – peak/upper cableway station/belvedere

This zone covers the area of the peak of Medvednica itself, the ensemble of the pronounced cultural and historical and environmental values, where the following can be found: TV antenna tower, upper gondola cableway station, a number of catering establishments and spaces used by ski clubs and a belvedere.

The existing upper cableway station is protected as an element of the cultural and historical identity; after the construction of a new gondola cableway and station, this facility will be converted for another use in accordance with the conceptual design that will define all the features and capacity of the space.

In accordance with the objectives set under the Plan, it is vital to relieve the peak zone from inappropriate structures and unlawful constructions, while the environment needs to be arranged with respect to the existing tall vegetation as well as other floor arrangements.

A new gondola connection on the northern side of Medvednica, from Sljeme to Gornja Bistra, has been planned, which requires additional research into the corridor and position of the station. When determining more specifically the location of the upper stations, the transport and architectural aspects of the location must be subordinated to the environmental protection conditions, and in particular to the preservation of the remaining forest vegetation of the peak area.

Picture 7. Peak of Medvednica/ TV antenna tower



Picture 8. Ski trails on Sljeme



B) Ski complex

The ski resort on Sljeme was developed for the purposes of the organization of the 2004 Ski World Cup and it is already featured in the tourist offer as a place for holiday and recreation. It includes meadows that stretch to the peak of Sljeme on the northern and eastern side, and ski-lifts, a pumping and compressor station with a restaurant next to the retention-accumulation reservoir.

The space of the ski complex was developed by using the best efforts in order to preserve the forest boundaries and maintain the meadows, while no technical interventions whatsoever that might affect the environment were permitted.

C) Brestovac

This area includes the complex of buildings of the former Brestovac sanatorium, the first hospital specializing in lung diseases in this part of Europe. The complex was built in 1908, and closed in 1967. It covers approximately 20 ha. Today, the complex is in a completely dilapidated state.

In the scope of a conservation study, it has been established that the location of the former sanatorium possesses an environmental and historical value and that Brestovac represents thereby one of the elements of the historical identity of Medvednica.

The physical plan provides for the reconstruction of the complex as well as for the reconstruction of the former park. The following uses can be envisaged: education, recreation, wellness, health (for rehabilitation). After having defined the features, it is necessary to draw up the program study and conceptual design for the entire zone of Brestovac.

Picture 9. Brestovac in the 30's



Picture 10. Brestovac in the 30's



D) Rebar Villa

The area of the former Rebar Villa is located in the access zone of the Nature Park. The building is surrounded by an oak and chestnut forest that gave a basic characteristic to the wider area. The surrounding facilities were mutually connected by paths and green spaces, and with the pertaining tennis courts they formed a complex that was almost completely destroyed by fire.

Picture 11. Remains of the Rebar Villa



E) Medvedgrad

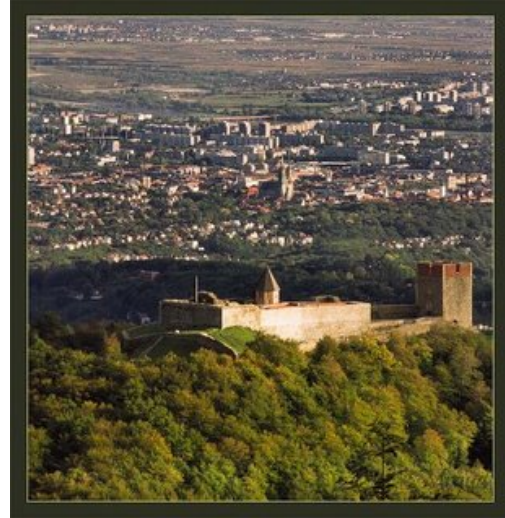
Medvedgrad is an old fortified town that was erected in the 13th century, after the Tatar invasion, on land then belonging to the King, on a detached steep hill on the southern part of Medvednica. This was one of the major towns in Croatia. Already at the time of the construction of Medvedgrad, a feudal estate was established next to the fortress with the pertaining villages, arable land and vineyards; however, the major part of the territory of the manorial estate of Medvedgrad was covered with forests. Due to its exceptional position and strategic importance, the feudal landowners, the King and the Zagreb Diocese were constantly fighting to get the mastery over Medvedgrad. The fortress of Medvedgrad was heavily damaged during the earthquake in 1590, when it was deserted by its last inhabitants. In Medvedgrad there is the Early Gothic chapel of St. Philip and St. James. Medvedgrad offers a beautiful view of Zagreb.

Its walls, surrounded by forest, offer one of the most beautiful views of the City of Zagreb. After its reconstruction at the end of the last century, it has become an inevitable part of the tourist offer of the City.

Picture 12. Medvedgrad



Picture 13. View of Zagreb

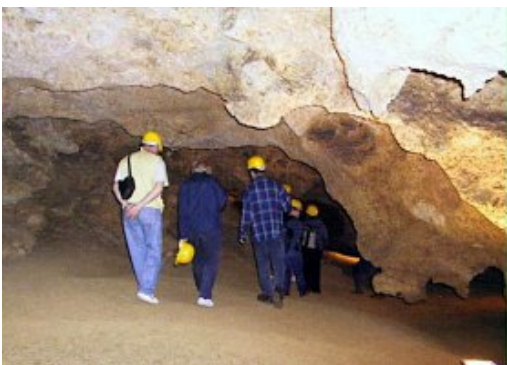


F) Veternica Cave

Veternica is the fourth longest cave in Croatia and the longest in northern Croatia. It is a significant archeology and paleontology site and an enlightening example of karst phenomena.

The part of Veternica that has been developed for tourist purposes shows geomorphologic phenomena that are rarely seen in classical caves open to tourists. Fourteen bat species inhabit or hibernate in both the entire cave and the part of the cave accessible to tourists.

Picture 14. Cave entrance



Picture 15. Bat habitat



The Veternica cave is protected as a geomorphologic monument of nature. The area for holiday and recreation, as defined under the Physical Plan, covers the zone of the adjacent mountain house and the Veternica cave.

The Physical Plan has also defined the basic guidelines for the elaboration of a program for the development and use of this space as well as the future acceptable facilities.

G) Ivanec quarry – change in use

The currently active quarries are in the process of being rehabilitated, which means that any further expansion of the existing quarries or the opening of new quarries within the protected area is not allowed. Several projects have been prepared for the existing Ivanec quarry, which is located on the northern part of Medvednica. These projects provide for the use of the space to be converted so as to accommodate facilities that are more suitable to the landscape of a Nature Park. Most of the facilities are related to the tourist offer such as, for instance, spas, amusement park, adrenaline park, sports and recreation center.

Picture 16. Location of the Ivanec quarry



H) Planina – a village as center of rural tourism

The village of Planina Donja is located in the eastern access area of Medvednica. The Church of St. George stands out among the protected cultural monuments in this locality. The Planina area has plenty of preserved traditional architectural structures and in view of its exceptional natural environment it provides a great potential for the development of organic and biological (ecological) agriculture. Therefore it is necessary to develop special programs in order to provide incentive measures for the development of rural tourism, ecotourism and tourism on agricultural farms.

Picture 17. Church of St. George - Planina Donja



I) Complex entrance zone in Gračani

The gondola cableway, with a capacity of 4 persons, which connects Zagreb (Dolje) and the peak of Sljeme, was built in 1963. It was closed down after almost half a century of regular service to tourists. In view of the fact that the cableway forms part of the public transportation system of Zagreb and that it is instrumental in relieving the peak zone from car traffic, it will be replaced by a new modern cableway with a capacity of 15 persons, which will use the same route, whereby the starting station will be relocated 1 km to the south, near the tramway terminal station. For this purpose, a public planning and architectonic invitation to tender was launched for the Gračani-Dolje area and a Detailed Development Plan has been prepared, which covers the construction of a two-level underground parking facility for 500 vehicles, the starting cableway station junction with storage and ancillary facilities, an information counter of the Public Institution of the Medvednica Nature Park, etc. The planned projects are expected to go ahead.

Picture 18. Zagreb-Sljeme cableway



J) Complex entrance zone in Bistra

The northeastern part of the disused quarry in Gornja Bistra has been naturally rehabilitated to a major extent, while the southwestern parts are steeper and more exposed. A complex entrance zone has been planned to be developed for this area, which is located approximately 1.4 km deep in the Nature Park. The construction of a parking facility for cars and buses, a municipal bus station and a starting station for the new cabin cableway with the ancillary facilities has been planned for this area. This area is subject to the mandatory elaboration of a special program and spatial design and to the performance of an environmental impact assessment. The final use of the space, the capacity, road and utilities infrastructure, and the terms of use, development and protection of the space will be defined in the scope of a detailed elaboration.

In addition to these 10 briefly described major tourist attractions, various forms of farm tourism have been planned, which should boost the development of tourism in the Nature Park. This includes: various tours including hiking (hiking trails, meadows, trim tracks), horse-riding, cycling, sports and field activities (climbing, mountaineering, cliff descent, speleology), discovery of natural and other features of interest, cultural activities, activities of a health-related nature (fitness and the like). All these activities can be developed as a complementary activity by the inhabitants, whereby the development of healthy food and other traditional activities shall be encouraged along with these activities.

The planned programs should be selected according to the criteria of their adaptability to the existing conditions and to a minimal impact on changes in the physical environment, i.e. they

should preserve the natural state and provide at the same time an economic interest to the local community.

3. CONCLUSION

When considering all the possible tourism-related risks for the space, the basic assumptions for the development of tourism should definitely be based upon the principles of sustainable development. Tourism is connected in various ways with the space, the community, the economy, the culture and the environment (transportation, tourism, agricultural production, forestry, etc.). All this points to the reassessment of the effects of tourism in a social, economic, cultural and spatial and political context on the local, county or national level in Croatia. Tourism should be comprehended in a new spirit and with the appropriate future human needs, while space should be comprehended on the basis of the idea of a multiple meaning of space in the scope of sustainable development and of the idea of the equal importance of all functions. Shaping the relationship between space and tourism in a quality way relies on the knowledge that the particular sectors do not behave independently from others. Likewise, solving the problems of overall development may not be reduced to the development of one activity only or even to the detriment of any other activity. This means that the overall development in the protected parts of nature may not be based on the development of tourism only. Should the development of tourism be based only on the achievement of economic profits by individuals or companies, it might have a negative impact on the space. The careful planning of tourism can contribute to the creation of new space values in any sense – social, economic, cultural, environmental, esthetic and spatial values.

A solution to the complex problems of the Medvednica Nature Park is being sought in the preparation of complete analyses and the valuation of this space; the definition of different protection levels that would allow the development of both different forms of tourism and other activities; the preservation and improvement of natural assets; the creation of the conditions required for users of the space to live and work there as well as for the development of the existing settlements.

It should not be forgotten thereby that overall development, in this particular case the development of tourism and the preservation and improvement of the space, depend on competence, cooperation and coordination.

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