

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES IN THE PUTNA – VRANCEA NATURE PARK

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During the last years tourism in natural environments noted an increase in demand from the part of touristy products consumers. The Vrancea mountain area, though having a divers touristy potential, is not very well known on the tourism market. The Putna – Vrancea Nature Park, recently established, has real odds to be included in touristy programs made by traveling agencies. This article present the possibilities of tourism development in the area so the good protection of the nature variety is still achieved, but with a minimalist influence on the environment and also beneficial for the local community..

Keywords: *nature park, environment protection, environment education, tourism in natural environments.*

1. Introduction

The occurrence of protected area in the Vrancea mountain area is a consequence from the fact that people became aware that the activities deployed in time by local communities (animal farming, forestry) had a negative influence on the environment, almost fully destroying vegetation and triggering geological and morphological processes (land slides, erosion). Tourism is in an incipient stage, touristy flows directed towards this area originating mostly from the neighboring counties. Still, the area has a various natural and human potential, which through adequate putting to use may lead to the touristy development of the area and to its inclusion into tourist circuits. Considering the raising demand for tourism in natural environments, the Vrancea mountain area, especially through the establishment of the Putna – Vrancea Nature Park, may have actual chances to assert itself on the tourism market. The Nature Park, according to the Government Ordinance 236/2000, corresponds to the V UICN Category (protected landscape: protected area mainly administered with a view to conserving the scenery and recreation). Nature Parks are defined as those natural protected areas, the purpose of which is to protect and preserve scenery sets in which the interaction of human activities with nature in time created a distinct area, of significant scenery and / or cultural value, often marked by large biological diversity. The

management of nature parks aims at maintaining harmony in the interaction of man and nature, by protecting the diversity of habitats and sceneries, promoting the traditional use of land, encouraging and strengthening the traditional activities, practices and culture of the local community.

2. The location of Putna-Vrancea Nature Park

Putna – Vrancea Nature Park is located center – north of the mountain area of Vrancea County, being assigned a protected policy through the Government Decision 2151/2004; it covers an area of 38204 hectares.

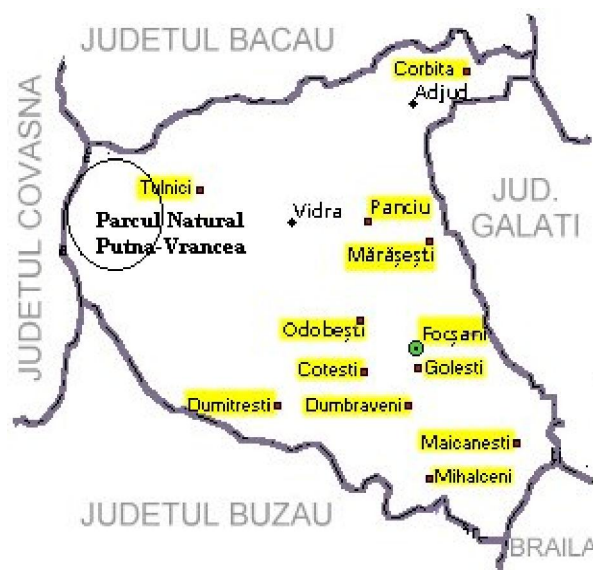
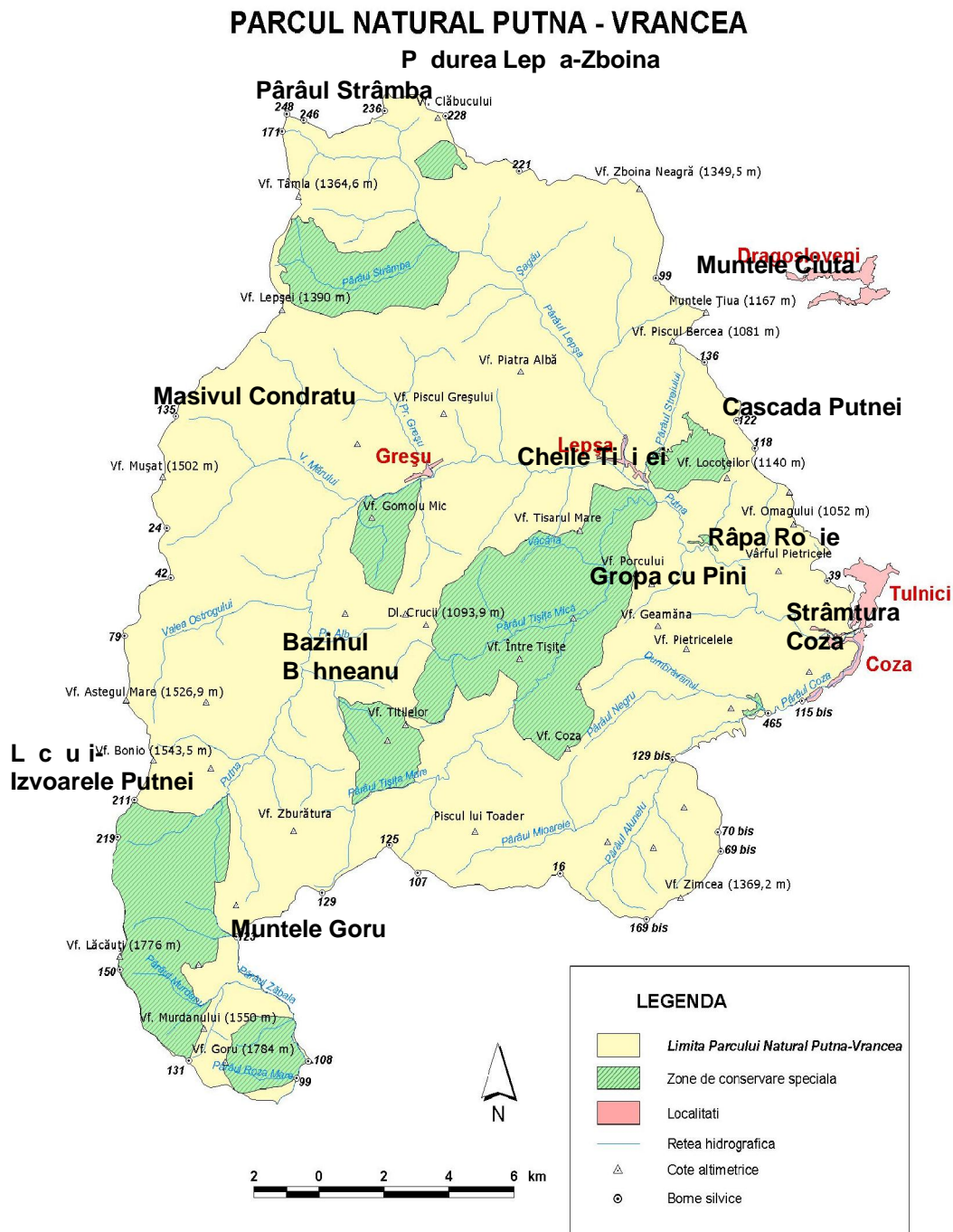


Fig.1 The location of Putna-Vrancea Nature Park in Vrancea County

Putna – Vrancea Nature Park includes a series of natural reserves such as: the Lepsa – Zboina Forest, Tisita Gorges, the Putna Fall, Lacauti – the source of Putna, the Goru Mountain, and natural monuments such as: the Red Steep Ravine, the

Pine Pit, and the Coza Pass. The same Government Decision specifies special preservation areas such as: the Ciuta Mountain, the Strâmba Brooke, the B hneanu Basin and the Condratu Massif.



2. Turistic objectives in Putna-Vrancea Nature Park

The Putna – Vrancea Nature Park includes a large variety of natural touristy attractions, most of them within the framework of reserves and natural monuments of this nature park. Tisita Gorges are the largest protected area, taking most of the hydrographic basin of Tisita Brooke. The relief is characterized by strong tectonic hydrologic fragmentation, with deep canyon-like valley, large meadows as well as high spectacular peaks, which spread along watersheds. One should also remark the presence of numerous endemic species of plants and animals, as well as species declared monuments of nature, such as edelweiss and carthusian pink. The Lepsa – Zboina Forest is located near Lepsa, in the higher basin of Lepsa Creek.

This area preserves forest bushes of a basin natural type, aged from 100 to 200 years, as well as flora that due to the varied stationary conditions is very rich in vulnerable or rare endemic species, such as *Cypripedium Calceolus*, *Trollius Europaeus*. The Putna Fall is also located near Lepsa, is spread on a fissure with a difference of level of over 12 meters, and downstream at about 200 meters on the left bank there is an old falls deserted due to geotectonic movement that led to the change of course of the Putna to the right – a unique phenomenon in Romania.

The Coza Pass is located near the Coza Village. The tectonic processes (breakdown of deposits) and surface erosion marked multicolored lithological successions of great scenery value. The Pine Pit, in the basin of the Coza Creek, was probably formed by the dry sliding of lithological strata and it shows geological structures to date of great scenery value due to the alternation of colors: yellow, grey, purple, linked to the higher and lower Tisaru Strata showing traces of fossil

The Red Steep Ravine is located on the horizon of the salt breccia which was strongly fragmented by rain erosion that modeled grooves, canyons, towers, funnels and suffusional avens, giving a spectacular pseudo-karstic character to the landscape. Goru Mountain covers a large part of the boreal forest level and most of the sub alpine level of this peak (1785 m). The protected core of

this area is represented by the vegetation, specific to the sub alpine layer, the main constituent being the juniper trees, unique in Vrancea Mountains.

3. Perspectives for tourism development

The tourism became important in this area after 1990, especially in Lepsa-Tulnici zone. This turned into a touristic destination at regional level, with an accelerated growth in the number of pensions and holiday centers. The main tourists flows are directed to this area as it is the most equipped and endowed in the entire mountain area.

Presently the tourism activities are poor, mostly due to difficult access towards interest points for tourists. The communication ways system is undeveloped discouraging the tourism activities. The access to various objectives is realized by means of marked paths and forest roads, who often present high risk due to either present geomorphologic processes frequent enough in certain areas, either numerous large mammals (the bear). Therefore, a first step in the proper tourism development of the area would be the modernization of the communication ways network, the marking of tourism routes, as well as their endowment with explanatory and orientation panels for the ease of wayfaring.

The accommodation structures are well represented in Tulnici-Lepsa zone, but rarely in the other locations in the area. Outside localities, in Putna-Vrancea Nature Park accommodation can be found only as small forest huts or sheepfolds. This aspect represents a second weak point for the tourism in the area, being necessary the arrangement of camping places and huts along the long mountain routes, that would enable tourists to find good and safe shelter.

Moreover, an effective management of protected areas is required, taking into account that up to present such areas were established only on paper, without the specialized personnel who would deal with their proper administration, with the supervision of the tourism phenomenon so there will be no damage to the environment and who would offer a minimum information for the purpose of tourists and locals education regarding the importance of a protected area.

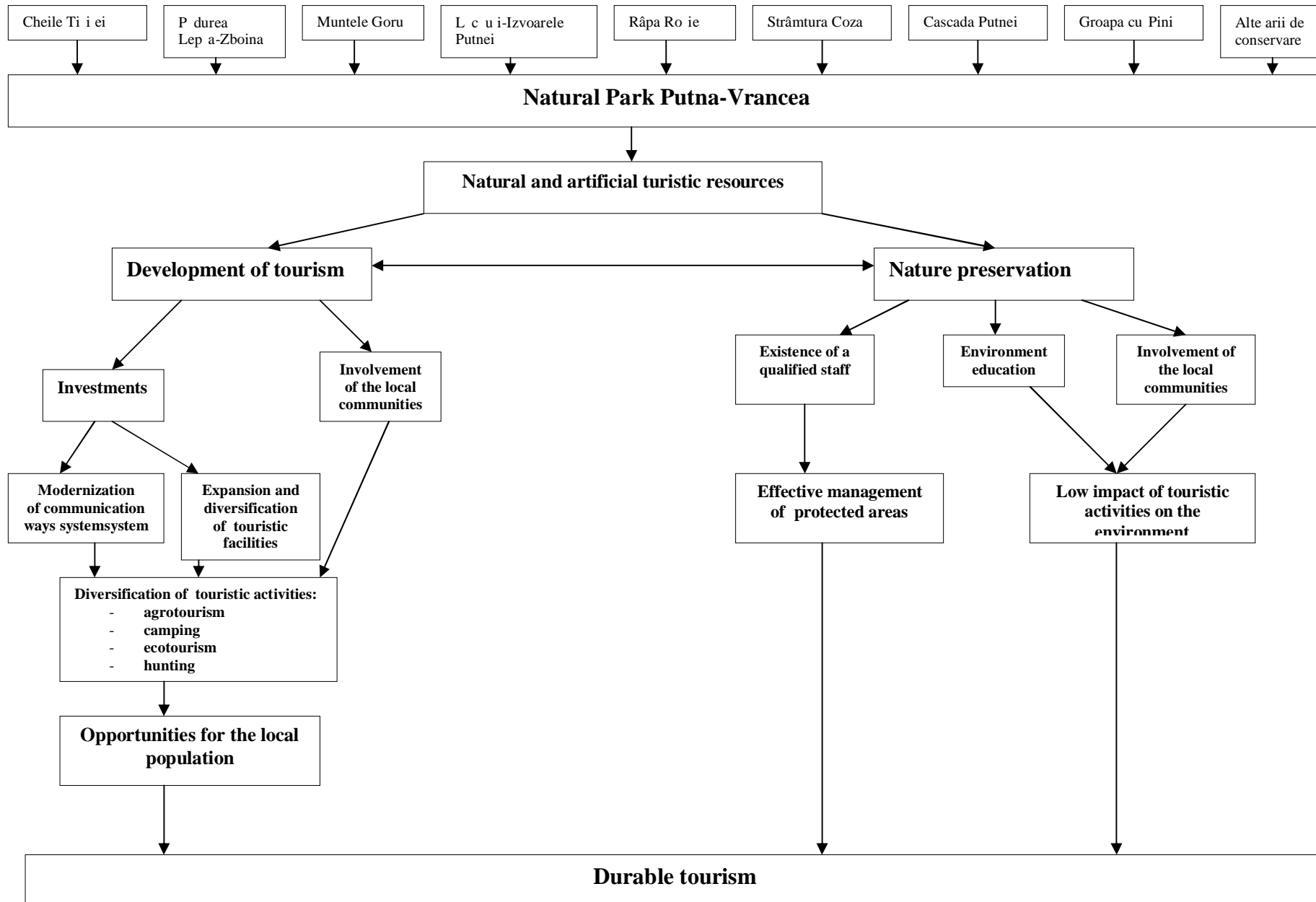


Fig. 2 Tourism development perspectives in the Putna-Vrancea Nature Park

There is a large range of tourism activities practicable in the area, but this means a proper endowment for their safe realization: mountain wayfaring, admiring flora and fauna, cycling, ecological mountaineering, habitats restoration activities. Complementary structures can be developed for transportation, equipment rent, recreation and leisure facilities. The nature park also comprises localities, which could constitute tourism resources by means of their religious, musical, dancing and living traditions, folkloric costumes, specific crafts, culinary art.

The local communities represent the key to success in obtaining benefits from tourism. They can be included in tourism activities meaning local guides for tourists, of suppliers for the accommodation structures. Last but not least, for a positive evolution of tourism flows, an intense advertising of tourism resources in the area is required by both printed materials (leaflets, booklets, maps) and Internet

Conclusions

Thus, though Nature Park Putna-Vrancea enjoys the existence of a rich fund of natural and anthropic tourism resources, it is not enough for tourism development since the accommodation structure as well as the access ways network is insufficient and inadequate. For the future, an effective management of this nature park is required, management that will be implemented

by skilled personnel who will consider two major objectives: tourism development and nature preservation. For the accomplishment of those objectives is necessary to attract investors willing to modernize the area and to cooperate with local communities who can represent an important manpower and be at the same time the main beneficiary of the incomes resulted from tourism activities. Unfortunately, until the realization of those ideas, the tourism as well as other economic activities is performed without proper surveillance, causing damage, some times irreparable, to the environment.

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