

Evaluation of the success of visitor flow management projects in the Nature Park Southern Blackforest

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The Nature Park Southern Blackforest, which is situated in southwest of Germany and includes an area of 3.300 km², is the biggest of this kind in Germany. It offers a variety of sports and touristic activities as well as many protected areas. The Nature Park Management pursues an extensive sport tourism strategy in order to examine potential conflicts and perspectives for development. The Institute of Outdoor Sports and Environment has been working out this study and published its results by the end of 2000 (Roth & Krämer 2000). Apart from a detailed status quo analysis, the main focus was to work out guidelines and possibilities for development. The project was carried out according to principles of "Sport Use Management" (Krämer 2003) which means that there is a defined succession of planning and channeling measures. The main focus is being put on positive guidance.

Different pre-operating studies were initiated while the main emphasis was to offer innovative sports activities in view of sustainability and specific guidance of visitors.

Now, three years later, the projects and measures are supposed to be examined with regard on the original goals. In the following, visitor guidance measures and their effects are shown by the examples mountainbiking, hiking and nordic walking. At the same time, a game monitoring project is carried out by the Forest Research Institute of Baden Württemberg, a governmental forestry organisation. This institute is going to examine the results of habitat features, habitat changes and touristic activities on animal population and their behaviour (Suchant & Schäfer 2002).

Concerning hiking and nordic walking, the results are very positive. E.g. for hiking, the "Schwarzwaldverein" (the Blackforest Hiking Club) went over several thousand kilometres of the already existing track network where a new sign system was installed. For both kinds of sports, channelling aims were reached through revision or new conception of the track network and extensive information campaigns. Apart from clearly increasing quality for sport offers, sensitive areas have been calmed and their value was increased by habitat cultivation measures. In contrast to that the quality of the applied measures for mountainbiking are on a way lower level. This lack of development is due to the high diversity of the main user group of mountainbiking, unlike of hiking and nordic walking.

References:

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