

# Paths and wood building for horses: new and modern operations for the economic and social development of the Casentino National Forest Park (Italy).

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One of the primary factors of the social economic development of the rural and mountain landscape is that tourism in these areas finds its maximum expression in hiking. The “green tourism” by horse is increasing and several people, Italian and foreign, want to spend holidays by horse visiting one of the many protected areas in Italy. Indeed to improve the presence of tourists in the protected areas it is important to guarantee all kinds of hiking, one of these is that by horse. To demonstrate how horse hiking can be a way to promote the social and economic development of a protected area, one of the most beautiful Italian National Parks, has been examined - the Casentino National Forest Park between Tuscany and Romagna Region.

When identifying and projecting hiking paths to satisfy all types of excursions, it is fundamental to always consider that a “horse way” must have suitable characteristics of slope, ground and dimensions, so that they can be also used by foot and mountain bike. It’s important to locate the best path that at the same time, is adapted to being covered by horse, trekking and mountain-bikes. To do this we have considered three points of view: the environmental, the horse and the tourist. The paths have been located before on the map and then on the field with the collaboration of different instruments like G.P.S. and software like G.I.S.

It’s important also to realize some infrastructures for the needs of the riders and the horses along the paths or just close. Three different type of stables for horses have been designed especially for places far away from accommodation structures. These wooden and stone buildings have an area with 6 – 8 places for horses and an area for saddles, for feed storage, and for resting of riders.

The final result is a net of paths along the National Park that gives the opportunity to all different kinds of hiking, not only riders, and to see the entire area protected during every season. Above all there is more possibility of tourism during the low season, because the spring and the autumn are very suitable for tourism by horse, and this is very good for people that work in tourism and with horses.

Key-words: paths for horses, wood building, economic development, protected area, nature tourism, reclassification of landscape.