

SUSTAINABLE RECREATION IN CZECH FORESTS: FOCUS ON TRAIL INFRASTRUCTURE

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Abstract

The strong and wholehearted tradition of Czech outdoor recreation prevails at the beginning of the 21st century. Yet, contrary to vague claims about recreation provision through non-timber forestry services management of Czech forests prioritises timber production. Some municipalities have started to look towards green / forest recreation as a viable way to improve quality of life in periurban surroundings and as a source of revenue in tourist destinations. The influx of European funds opens possibilities for developing a heritage recreational infrastructure for such purposes. However, the prevailing timber production centred economy has to be yet harmonised with strategic development in this manner. Additionally, rather than following the green values of Czech outdoor movement tradition, especially in relationship to cycling provision, the current projects slip into constructing over-built asphalt ways. Our poster and its background paper shows that state agencies are stuck with traditional models of forest management, restrictive approach to visitor management and hollow approach to recreation/tourism marketing. Hence they are unable to recognize this EU funded trend as mis-targeted, mis-managed and environmentally unsustainable. Most importantly, they are unable to develop suitable policy tools. Czech mountain bikers, organised in ČEMBA (Czech Mountainbiking Association), invest their effort into drawing attention to this problem. They propose a nationwide focus on sustainable shared-used close-to-nature trails that is inspired by the values of the Czech outdoor movement. ČEMBA claims that strategic development of sustainable trail development is in fact the easiest ways to implement recreational provision without substantially altering timber production capacities. They call for intensive know-how transfer in design and construction and for collaborative policy development. Such a policy should encourage incorporation of non-timber services into forest management, incorporation of non-restrictive visitor management into nature conservation and incorporation of a focus on more tangible, well-targeted product into recreation/tourism marketing.

Key Words

recreation infrastructure; sustainable trails; outdoor recreation policy; forest management; Czech Mountainbiking Association.

Key References

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