

"GREEN" TOURISM IN FORESTRY ENTERPRISES OF BELARUS

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Abstract: *The article provides a description of the positive and negative effects, the main directions of development of ecological tourism, analyzes factors constraining the development of tourism in the Republic of Belarus and the activities of state forestry agencies and consider innovative tools to promote tourism services. 16 "green" tourist routes were proposed in three forestry enterprises of Belarus.*

Keywords: *ecological tourism, "green" tourism, forestry, negative impacts, environment*

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this article is to propose "green" routes based on study of characteristics of tourism to the forestry enterprises of Belarus.

"Green" tourism is a specialized form of travel aimed at a careful and harmonious attitude towards wild nature, combined with the study of its objects and phenomena and carried out within the boundaries of specially protected natural areas: reserves, national parks, nature reserves, and monuments, as well as through the development of tourism in forestry and agro-ecotourism. It represents a form of purposeful, flexible, decentralized tourism, which is perceived as an inexpensive and convenient form of recreation that best corresponds to the basic principles of sustainable development strategy.

The most attractive places for "green" tourism are reserves, national parks, coral reefs, mountains, and forests.

As a form of active recreation, ecotourism has both negative and positive aspects.

Negative impacts of tourism on the environment include [Nagle, G., p.157]:

- reduction of habitat and changes in species composition;
- violation of vegetation cover;
- soil erosion;
- restrictions on free animal mating;
- destruction of animals for sports purposes or for souvenir making.

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In addition, tourism activities lead to air and water pollution, noise pollution, and waste accumulation.

The positive impact of ecotourism is manifested in the following:

- a complex of measures to protect animals to attract tourists;
- tourism revenue used for restoration purposes;
- improvement of infrastructure to attract tourists;
- measures for environmental improvement;
- opportunities for the use of marginal and unproductive lands;
- improvement of natural territories, such as the development of urban wastelands;
- revival and modernization of architectural ensembles;
- restoration and use of abandoned buildings of historical value, and much more.

"Green" tourism is aimed at preventing negative impact from tourists and minimizing risks.

Belarus does not have a sea, mountains, or coral reefs, but the country has a rich natural heritage with a wide variety of representatives of plant and animal life, including those listed in the Red Book.

Belarus has 20,800 rivers and about 11,000 lakes, as well as 1,650 reservoirs. Swamps occupy 6% of the territory and are a unique ecosystem.

The Table 1 shows the data of rare and endangered wildlife animal and plant species from 1995 to 2022 in Belarus.

Table 1. Rare and endangered wildlife animal and plant species

species	1995	2022	deviation
Rare and endangered wildlife animal species			
mammals	14	20	+6
birds	75	70	-5
reptiles	2	2	0
amphibians	2	2	0
fish	5	9	+4
Rare and endangered wildlife plant species			
vascular	156	189	+33
mosses	15	34	+19
lichens	17	25	+8
fungi	17	34	+17

According to the Table 1, the number of rare and endangered wildlife animal and plant species in Belarus was increasing from 1995 to 2022, which indicate an increase in an anthropogenic pressure.

The forested area of Belarus is 40.1% of the country's territory. There is about 1 hectare of forest per inhabitant. The total area of the forest fund is 9.7 million hectares. Belarusian forests are 60% coniferous and 40% deciduous.

The area of specially protected areas in 2021 was 18,893 square kilometers or 9.1% of the country's territory.

Ecotourism on ecological trails is conducted in two reserves (the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve and the Polessky Radiation and Ecological Reserve), four national parks (Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Narochansky, Braslav Lakes, and Pripyatsky), 85 reserves, and 95 forestry enterprises in the Republic of Belarus.

Over 70 ecological routes and trails have been developed in the territories of reserves, national parks, wildlife preserves, and forestry enterprises. There are 21 eco-trails and 3 bike routes in Minsk. These positive aspects determine the relevance of the scientific analysis of "green" tourism in order to identify its peculiarities in the forestry enterprises of Belarus.

METHODOLOGY

The main research methods are the following: economic analysis based on statistical data and induction allowing to take a general conclusion based on study of particular facts of individual forestry enterprises in the field of tourism.

The content of "green" tourism is not only its definition as a form of active leisure, but also a broad familiarization of people with the natural attractions of a particular region, with the aim of gaining an understanding of the natural and cultural-ethnographic characteristics. The peculiarity of "green" tourism is obtaining information about the impact of human activity on natural ecosystems in order to contribute to nature conservation and socio-economic development.

The main directions of development of ecological tourism in Belarus include [Ermonina, I.]:

- organization of ecological tours;
- organization of excursions along ecological trails in relatively untouched corners of nature;
- hiking, skiing, cycling, horseback riding, and water trips, excursions, tours;

- excursions to places where wild berries, mushrooms, and medicinal plants grow;
- excursions to wetland areas;
- fishing tours;
- film and photo hunting for representatives of the animal and plant world in their natural habitats;
- day trips;
- excursions to historical, cultural, and manor-park complexes.

The development of ecological tourism in a forestry enterprise in the context of the "green" economy affects:

- increased income,
- creation of new "green" jobs,
- development of an industry related to the production of eco-friendly tourist services,
- formation of social and "green" infrastructure,
- activation of folk crafts related to the production of eco-souvenirs and the development of culture,
- improved standard of living for the local population.

The following main trends are observed in the development of the tourism industry [Tarasenk, A.]:

- globalization and concentration of business, optimization of offerings with regard to market demands and trends;
- work towards long-term perspective and use of sustainable development strategy;
- personalization of service and complete focus on customer requests and needs;
- introduction of new technologies into the corporate strategy of organizations.

The listed trends in the development of the tourism industry indicate the emergence of promising areas of activity, which highlights the need to search for new innovative tools for promoting "green" tourism services in the Republic of Belarus. These tools include internet marketing and the creation of tourism clusters.

Tourism clusters will allow for the use of natural, personnel, and integration potential, and with proper organization, will provide sustainable competitive positions in the global market.

The forestry enterprises of Belarus are the most convenient places for creating tourism clusters because:

- The Ministry of Forestry can act as an organizer and coordinator;

- more than 30 ecological trails and routes have been developed in forestry enterprises;
- there is developed infrastructure (there are 78 forest hunting farms with hunter's cabins of a modern level of comfort);
- there are specialists who are well-trained in the fields of forestry and tourism;
- services are offered at reasonably acceptable prices and there is accumulated experience in hunting and tourism activities.

Among the special accommodations for tourists in Belarus (sanatoriums, prophylactic centers, health centers, tourist bases and sports and health centers, holiday homes, recreation centers, boarding houses), 28.1% are hunting and/or fishing lodges and hunting complexes. [Tourism and Tourist Resources, p.22]:

Tourist demands are constantly increasing, and it is necessary to expand cultural, educational, folkloric, and ethnographic programs. In the Pinsk forestry enterprise, only one ecological route (the "Beaver" trail) has been developed, and there are 11 tourist routes in the city of Pinsk. Therefore, there is a need to create new "green" routes that would cover all the landmarks of the forestry enterprises, for example:

- the "Middle Pripyat" republican-level reserve;
- the bus-pedestrian route - the (biological) "Izin" local-level reserve - the natural forest lake "Bogatyrevka" - the (biological) "Konchitsy" local-level reserve;
- the Duga Struve bus-pedestrian route - the (botanical) "Veimutova Pine Plantations" local-level natural monument;
- the tourist route to the lakes of Okunino-Karasin-Zavishye;
- the bus-pedestrian route - the "Duboe Manor-Park Complex" - the (botanical) "Gnedetskoe Zapolye" local-level natural monument - the (biological) "Ovrovo" local-level reserve - the (biological) "Zavishye" local-level biological reserve;
- the bus-pedestrian route - the "Zapolskaya Dacha Park" - the Porechsky Park.

In the Smorgon experimental forestry enterprise, the following routes are possible:

- the bus-pedestrian route "Through the Pages of Korotkevich's Books" (the "Krevo - Boruny - Golshany" route);
- the water route "Zalesye - Mikhalishki";
- the tourist route "Through the Historical Smorgon";
- through the "Blue Lakes" landscape reserve;
- through the "Novoselki" hydrological reserve;
- through the (zoological) "Mitskevichsky" local-level biological reserve;

- through the "Dubatovskoe" republican-level biological (cranberry) reserve;
- visiting the Vishnevskoye lake.

In the Grodno forestry, income from "green" tourism accounts for 6% of the total revenue from tourism activities. Three eco-trails have been developed in the forestry: eco-therapy near the Augustow Canal, an excursion along an ecological trail with a visit to a forest nursery, and an excursion with a visit to an animal enclosure. The following routes are possible:

- Sopotskin forestry, village of Svyatsk (a palace resembling Versailles) - Sopotskin (Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary) - Dombrovka Lock - village of Sonichi (Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary) - Nemново Lock of the Augustow Canal (route 42 km).

- City of Grodno - village of Naumovichy (military structures (forts) - town of Sopotskin - village of Sonichi (route 65 km).

RESULTS

We offer 16 ecological routes: 6 in the Pinsk forestry, 8 in the Smorgon forestry and 2 in Grodno to develop "green" tourism in Belarus.

"Green" tourism will allow use of natural and human potential without harming the environment and, if properly organized, will ensure stable competitive Belarusian tourism positions in the world market, as element of global economy.

"Green" routes contribute to environmental education, as they expand knowledge in the field of sustainable development of water, biological, land and forest resources in combination with history and culture.

In order to improve ecological tourism in forestry enterprises, measures need to be taken to provide additional financing for tourism, increase the degree of innovation implementation to reduce costs of providing tourism services and utilize digitization in business organization and management; implement more flexible pricing policies for providing tourism services; improve the system of ecological education in accordance with international standards and requirements.

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