

Landscape parks: sustaining regional identity.

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Development of 'landscape parks' in Poland as basic elements of the system of protected areas play important role in maintaining good quality landscape. Protection of natural and cultural values in Poland has a long tradition and created diversified system respecting a whole hierarchy of these values, type and related protection measures. The most severe protection measures, concerning mainly natural values, are implemented in national parks and natural reserves. Another type of protection is organized in the form of landscape parks and areas of protected landscape, which are created to protect natural, cultural and landscape values. Both national parks and landscape parks are usually surrounded by protection zones preventing violation of the parks' substance from the outside harmful activities.

To landscape parks belong areas that characterize legitimate visual value. Creating a new landscape park is specified by the act/law concerning nature protection (of 16th April 2003). According to developed in Gdańsk research environment/ team principle of "triple protection" (Pankau, Przewoźniak, 1998) as it is considered on three parallel and integrated levels taking into account natural, cultural and landscape values of the landscape park area. The concept of "triple protection" has been implemented in recent years in the Region of Gdańsk (Pomeranian Province) within the frames of plans of landscape parks protection. It regards the following landscape parks: 1) Wysoczyzny Elbląskiej, 2) Kaszubian, 3) Wdzydzki, 4) Nadgoplański, 5) Trójmiejski, 6) The Lower Vistula Valley, 7) Zaborski.



location of landscape parks

The main aims of "triple protection" are:

- 1) holistic/comprehensive approach to complementary aspects of protection taking into account natural environment, cultural values and landscape;
- 2) integrated treatment of material and immaterial values of the region
- 3) spatial development in accordance with interrelated natural and cultural processes which are reflected in landscape.

In recent years it can be observed that the processes of degradation is gradually progressing and as a consequence of expansive summer recreational and tourist developments in rural areas. It happens also within the recognized boundary of landscape parks where people searching for untouched landscape want to "possess" their own private beautiful place.

Standarisation and naïve globalization: one can observe the process of copying alien forms of architecture and spatial development and implementing them into different

context. As a result most villages and whole rural regions are deprived from their individual and unique character and the landscape as such becomes chaotic.

However there is potential for development of regional tourism in landscape parks. Preservation of harmony of natural setting and regional identity in landscape parks depends on certain conditions: 1) Protection of places where original landscape of villages is maintained; 2) Continuation of characteristic local building patterns and landscape forms; 3) Protection of areas where can be still observed harmonious co-existence of human activity and natural environment.

To maintain the specific spatial features of landscape parks it is important to continue observation and assessment of landscape character in terms of good exposition in the form of open landscape views along existing local 'scenic routes'; and esthetic values of landscape composition.