Nature sports, leisure activities and regional nature Parks in France:

WHY? WHAT? HOW? PERSPECTIVES?

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« NATURE SPORTS », WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT?

Law about sports 2000 :

✶ All sports practised as an outdoor activity on private and/or public ground (Article 50-1 de la loi du 6 juillet 2000)

✶ Nature, agriculture and forested areas

✶ Land, underground, water, air

Don’t forget :

✶ All activities belonging to recreation and competition, to discover natural and cultural heritage, to maintain health for everyone

✶ Regional nature Parks : motor sports not in the definition (not to develop, to limit !)
THE REGIONAL NATURE PARKS, DIVERSITY OF LIVING LANDSCAPES

- 46 regional nature Parks
- 3706 communities = 3706 mayors
- 3 habitants
- 7 ha = 13% of France
- 320 000 companies (7% of societies in France)
- 5 of 7 Biosphere reserves UNESCO
- 12% of Parks territories = « Natura 2000 » (national average 8%)
- 34% of tourist nights in a community being a protected area (2006)
- 26% of tourists come to practise a nature sport in nature: alpinism, climbing, canyoning, sailing, horse riding, hiking,… (2006)

Attractive landscapes where people live, not a museum or a resort!
5 key objectives of a regional nature Park:

- To protect natural and cultural heritage
- To manage and organise, land planning
- To link social and local development based on its heritage (nature & culture)
- To welcome, inform and educate habitants and visitors
- To experiment about the 4 other objectives

To built up a project with local communities to protect, to valorise and to develop = sustainable development
What kind of activities can be found in a regional parc?

- All kinds of sports and nature activities
- Importance of activities linked to a trail
- High development during the last 20 years
- Potential of development (socio-éco)
- Impacts on the environment
- Development of motor activities

Activities:
- Randonnée pédestre
- Randonnée équestre
- Randonnée VTT
- Pêche
- Cyclotourisme
- Parapente, deltaplane, ULM
- Escalade
- CO, trial
- Balnéothérapie
- PAF, accrobranche
- Randonnée canoë-kayak
- Voile, aviron, CK
- Ski de fond
- Eaux-vives
- Spéléologie
- Ski de piste
- Montgolfière
- Sports nautiques motorisés
- Tourisme fluvial
- Via ferrata
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF NATURE PARKS IN NATURE SPORT MANAGEMENT?

- Important implication of Parks
- Linking protection and tourism
- Diversity: organise, maintain, promote…
- “Concertation” / mediation
- Participation in trainings and information
- Few links to environmental education
- Possibility to do more
WHAT ARE THE KEY ISSUES FOR NATURE PARKS TO WORK ABOUT SPORTS?

To develop tourism, outdoor and sport activities in coherence with environmental protection issues: sustainable development of nature sports.
KEY OBJECTIVES

1) **Better knowledge about nature sports and leisure activities and its positive and negative impacts.**

2) **Inform and form the network to promote the sustainable development of nature sports.**

3) **Create tools based on case studies and experimentation.**

4) **Promote actions and knowledge of Parks to be recognised as an actor of sustainable development.**

5) **Link nature sports and leisure activities to the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism.**

6) **Enhance partnerships with protected areas, ministries, sport federations to create tools, joint-meetings, conferences, …**
Based on evaluation, monitoring, working groups and pilot projects, examples:

- Guidelines to welcome and evaluate sport events
- Guidelines and statement about motor sports and its « management »
- Experimental studies about the evaluation of social and economic impacts of nature sports
- Case studies about the environmental impact of activities
- Working with enterprises by using the brand « Park »
- National working groups : « Ranger = ecogardes », « connecting parks by a trail »

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Workshop B6: Protected Areas, Tourism and Recreation: an Engine for Sustainable Development
EUROPARC Conference, Strömstad, Sweden, 9th - 12/09/2009
Guidebook for protected areas
Sports de nature, Outils pratiques pour leur gestion, ATEN Cahier Technique n°80, 2007

Methods and tools to promote best-practises and exemples based on case studies that links development to protection issues

Evaluation of environmental impacts: case studies

- To have methods of evaluation that are scientifically proofed
- To have a better knowledge about impacts
- To have arguments for management plans
- Activity - habitat or species (fauna/flora)

New Project: Guidebook « sport events, evaluation & Natura 2000 »

To propose a pedagogical guide for organisers

✓ To give advise how to evaluate a projetct in natura 2000
✓ To give exemples and to connect organisators, and operators of Natura 2000
Cross different viewpoints to enhance partnerships by exchange of practices for a better understanding

- Rencontres nationales du tourisme et loisirs sportives = national conference of tourism, leisure and sport activities
- Organised by the different sectors concerned by sport activities to enhance, train, develop, understand....
- Regular meeting crossing different actors, stakeholders (700 participants)
- Parks: important role to identify practices, recognised by different “sides”

- 5th meeting mai 2010: Nantes, focus on water activities
- 6th meeting 2011: focus on European experiences
A management plan for nature sports and outdoor activities connected to the sustainable tourism development plan:

**Objectives**

- A protected high-quality area open for all publics
- Axe 1: Improve the conditions to practise outdoor activities
- Axe 2: Diversify the offer by « soft activities »
- Axe 3: Build up a special offer by the brand « Parc » and the European Charter of Sustainable Tourism

**Examples**

Consider the importance of outdoor activities linked to nature conversation and tourism development, team of 5 project managers in the Park.

- Working with rangers to inform to manage, to be in contact on the field
- Develop a offer to discover the Park (brand)
- Organise events to inform the public about impacts, best practises, engagements,… (days without cars, Gaminades du Verdon, Fête du Parc...)
- Consulting of local communities in the case of law conflicts, constructions in protected areas, marinating aces, … etc.
CONCLUSION: SOME IDEAS...

Needs

- Lack of research and knowledge: impacts, understand the behaviour of people,
- Necessary to be faster than the development of new activities (anticipation)
- Linking social aspects, live quality and educational aspects
- Work with private and public actors to change from “hard” to “soft” activities

Solutions?

- Exchange best practises and tools on European level
- Identify European programs and founding
- Link nature sports to the European Charta of Sustainable Tourism
INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Fédération des Parcs naturels régionaux de France :

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- http://centre-de-ressources.parcs-naturels-regionaux.fr/

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TANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!