

CAMP DESCRIPTION

21-28 July 2012

EVALUATION & REPORT

Organisers

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Rangers and Mentors

The general feedback from all Rangers and Mentors, was really positive. They all enjoyed the camp and said it was very well organised and managed.

Main expectations were to discover a new park, exchange with other rangers and mentors, discover how JR programme is managed in other parks, collect inputs for activities to be done at home with JR... For some it was good to see they are not alone in their difficulties/challenges.

Concerning the theme of the camp on information boards and panels, the main comments were positive, even if it was not easy to involve the youth. Many said it would have been better to discuss more the subject during the activities, to link them better to the topic, maybe organise specific games, and try to involve a bit more the JR during the excursions or other activities, to see their opinions and maybe try to create something together. (Information board are just a tiny part of the nature interpretation, would have been interesting to see the wider picture: see a visitor centre or interpretation plan of the park.)

No main remarks on the accommodation and facilities: perfect location, easy access to nature and to the town. Super service and food. Make sure there are enough toilets and showers for big groups!

Timing was ok, good variety of activities, with good equilibrium between demanding and relaxing... Some thought the free time was too long, and would have been happy to finish earlier. Dancing/music and local tradition are a useful tool to create a good atmosphere: try to keep this in the programme. Might be used also at the beginning as icebreaking. The JR can prepare games and icebreaker at home.

Concerning the activities all were very interesting and everybody enjoyed the good mixture. More manual and practical work would be suitable in the future, possibly related to the camp topic. It's always nice to build or leave something that the JR have done for the hosting park and for nature conservation. More use of Rangers and more icebreaking/games at the beginning of the camp. Would expect more info on wildlife management in the park.

Was good to meet and have during the camp the support and active involvement of other park staff and rangers!

JR presentations were good, but some quite impersonal, too much support from Rangers. Might be good to have less PPT and use more creativity. Make them more interactive, as some were boring, find new methods.

Role of Rangers not always clear. Most think it would be good to involve them more actively to share their experience and knowledge with JR. Rangers could manage activities, workshop, games during the camp. Mentors meetings should be more structured.

Someone suggests to have sort of debriefing with JR every evening.

Information, documents and pre-camp organisation, registration process were very clear, on time and useful;

Junior Rangers Feedback

Unfortunately not much to say here... The Junior Rangers were really enthusiastic of the camp, and their main expectations have been met: meeting new and old friends, discover the park, learn about the panels in other countries, do some hiking in the alps...

In general the feedback were very positive, and expectations were satisfied!

My comments

The camp was in general very well organised, good timing and camp preparation well managed. The National Park, even if in a difficult financial period, found the resources to realise a camp of very high quality, involving in the programme also the transboundary park partner.

The main objective of the camp was to raise the awareness of the participants about the importance of good and clear information in protected areas for visitors. We have been mainly focusing on panels and signs along the paths. These goal was successfully reached thanks to the various activities that have been organised during the camp. Participants have presented how information boards are set in their parks, the hosting park showed different examples of panels in the Triglav, JR have distributed questionnaires to visitors on the same topic...

Good distribution of activities across the week. Start slow and get more intense in the second part of the camp. JR Presentations in the second half was a good choice. We were on time for registrations and documents. New registration form worked well. The park was a bit late with the programme.

The coordination and lead of the camp was clear and well managed! Rules clear and simple. Not always clear the role of the two JR helping for the organisation. Difficult for me to find space in the coordination team.

Location in the building was even too perfect. No logistic issue to deal with: cookers and cleaner were taking very good care of all... This makes obviously easier life in such camps. Probably too much free time for JR, which was useful for interaction, but we would need a bit more social/interactive activities organised. (Kids were playing all the time with IPod, laptop, Smart-phones... Too much comfort)

The park tried a bit too much to replicate their JR camp format, which was positive from one side, but it has been hard to share decisions or get involved in the

programming phase. The person in charge of the camp, was on holidays before the camp, that's something we should try to avoid in future.

Two formal meetings with Rangers and mentors were organised, always hard to get their active participation, attention and involvement. Mentors and Rangers not taking much care of their JR in the breaks and evenings.

It is important to present nicely the activities (not as school homework) to involve JR in the activities in constructive/positive way. Frequently the JR are passive, simply following a sequence of activities, while I would like to see them more active...

Too many excursions not finalised, and some activities weren't concluded: the diaries, was a nice idea, and some JR did it nicely, but we didn't share or present them. Other activities were not really connected with the rest or not properly introduced...

More activities on communication, we could have done something for the park, like creating or restoring panels... "use" JR's knowledge, competences, creativity and experience... orienteering...

We should improve the evaluation activity with JR and with Rangers

Suggestions/Ideas for future camp

We should try to involve more the accompanying Rangers in the camp programme, as thought in 2011. A day could be directly managed by the rangers, organising and managing specific activities prepared at home. We have to find a way to make them protagonists... Every day give to one of the attending parks the time to manage an activity?

It would be interesting to do a research with the junior rangers who have attended the camps in previous years: what are they doing now? Did the experience as JR influenced their study/work choice? Are they still in touch with Parks? ...

From previous years: Rangers don't feel the need of specific training to support their work. They would like more support from their parks for managing the activities during the year. We need to work to persuade the Park managers on the benefits that the JR programme can provide for PAs. One of the difficulties is that frequently Rangers are more in charge of surveillance and nature management rather than education !!!

Rangers and mentors need a support (at least from my point of view) to improve their ability to plan activities and build socio-educational process, where the nature and the specific activity are not the ultimate goal, but always a tool to reach a wider objective: a contribution to the educational process of youth.

Provide more information about EUROPARC: who we are, what we do, the JR programme across Europe.

Involve JRs in the European Day of Parks

Last year a new compromise was set for the camp and for the future with the rangers and mentors. Rules for alcohol of the hosting country apply. In any case no alcohol to the JR. Rangers agreed that no alcohol could be drink in front of the kids and during the camp activities. In the evening, after the end of the activities, rangers and mentors are allowed to have a drink, respecting the spirit of the camp and with moderation.

This is still very hard to be understood by the Rangers!