

Interpretation Plans and Visitor Management Policies in Czech PLAs

Tomas Ruzicka, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, Czech,

tomas.ruzicka@nature.cz

Ondrej Vitek, Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic, Czech, ondrej.vitek@nature.cz

Nature Conservation Agency of the Czech Republic (“NCA”) administrates 24 Protected Landscape Areas (“PLAs”). Management plans are being compiled for all the PLAs, but it is too large document for detailed planning in visitor management.

First of all, interpretation plans were introduced in 2006 in connection to the House of Nature Programme (visitor centres in Czech PLAs, see Pešout et al. 2016). While Houses of Nature are one of measures how to interpret PLAs, PLA Interpretation Plans propose many other measures, e. g. web pages, guide service or another visitor infrastructure. When planning interpretation of PLA, it must be clear, which parts of the area are too sensitive, which offer suitable features for interpretation, which are already overcrowded. Visitor monitoring data is therefore a part of a PLA Interpretation Plan. With this knowledge, we can plan not only interpretation, but also measures to prevent damage caused by visitors. Some trails might be stabilised, while others closed or new ones created. These issues do not fit into interpretation plans, as they have nothing in common with interpretation. Nevertheless, they need to be considered. And all this has to be planned and later performed not only by the NCA, but by partners in the area as well. This is another reason, why it cannot be included in PLA management plans.

Visitor Management Policy (“VMP”) was introduced as a tool to interconnect PLA interpretation plans with visitor infrastructure planning. The VMP scheme does not reflect to any similar approach that may exist in other countries. VMP structure was simply compiled from a structure of Interpretation Plan, to which other visitor management agenda was added. VMP goals are: 1/ define and confirm basic restrictions for tourism development, 2/ propose solutions to eliminate tourism negative impacts to nature, and 3/ create PLA interpretation plan. VMP structure is followed by process of its creation: analysis – planning – application – evaluation. Issues for VMP are discussed at meetings, round tables and other discussions organised by external VMP authors with NCA staff, operators of infocentres, tourism destination agencies, municipalities, museums, NGOs, tour operators etc. Compiled methodology for VMP was revised upon finishing first three VMPs (PLAs Beskydy, Český kras and Pálava). The documents are currently discussed with the Ministry of the Environment of the Czech Republic.

Reference

Pešout, P., Šoltysová, L., Vitek, O. (2016): Nature Houses in the Czech Republic. In: Vasiljevic [ed.]: Monitoring and Management of Visitors in Recreational and Protected Areas, pp. 214-215).