

Monitoring tourism and its negative impacts on the environment of two Pragues' forests

Monitoring recreational usage and analysing its negative impacts on the environment of two suburban forests in Prague: ěáblický Forest and Kamýk

Suburban forests are very important and at the same time endangered natural areas – erosion, visitors walking off the paths, waste, investor pressure to construct in the surroundings or a reduction in the acreage of greenery. On an averagely sunny weekend day 700 people visit the Kamýk Forest. More than half of the visitors perceive the intensity of pedestrians and cyclists in Kamýk to be at an optimum, a quarter perceive it as too high.

The project's aim was to ascertain the burden placed on selected suburban forests in Prague and propose measures to provide integrated environmental protection in their territory. The project monitored the overall burden from tourism, evaluated the visitor structure and investigated their opinions and behaviour, including their perception of the present state of the environment. The aim was to determine the possible negative impacts influencing the environment or an effective protection for these forests – for instance the burden from tourism and recreation, the existing and expected development of activities in the territory or in its close proximity and, at the same time, increase the visitors' environmental awareness. Once a month at selected counting locations (the most frequented crossroads in the localities) there was a regular monitoring of the burden from tourism.

The monitoring took place on days that had comparable climatic conditions (sunny). Apart from the regular monthly monitoring there was also a random probe during which records were made of the number of persons entering and leaving both forests at various locations. At the same time the visitors were given a questionnaire.