

RECREATION SECTOR - GROWTH POLE OF SARATOV REGION ECONOMY

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Keywords: recreation potential, recreation sector, evaluation of recreation potential, model of recreational sector of region economy, recreation area.

This article includes both theoretical and practical aspects of recreation and tourism development in Saratov Region, as well as the results of recreation typology and Saratov Region territory zoning.

By the end of the 20th century the development of recreation sector has become one of the major strongly marked trends of economic development in the world. One of the necessary conditions for development of recreation sector is the availability of recreation potential which can be evaluated on various levels: in world as a whole, in country, in region etc.

Although such expression as "recreation potential" can be found in scientific literature, now it has no clear scientifically accepted definition. There is a variety of opinions that belong to various authors. In fact, some authors even use such expressions as "tourism and recreation potential" and "tourism and recreation sector", but it may be not methodologically correct to use these expressions. It should be noted that tourism and tourist activities are part of recreation and recreation activities. Thus there is no reason to say "tourism and recreation" potential. The author strongly recommends using expressions "tourism potential" and "recreation potential" separately from one another.

According to D.V. Nikolaenko, recreation potential is a complex of natural, cultural, historical, social and economical prerequisites for organization of recreation activities in particular territory. Some define recreation potential as the ratio between actual and marginal amount of tourists determined by recreation resource availability.

Many use this expression when they speak about the territory that has some unique objects or, at least, places interesting for foreigners. N.F. Reimers define recreation potential as one of the indicators of natural-resources potential - an extent of natural territory ability to have a positive physical, psychological and social-psychological impact on a human being during his/her rest. Recreation potential of the territory can change and it depends on the features of social and cultural formation of the said territory.

Until recently the recreation territory formation was mainly influenced by natural factors as they were seen as the primary prerequisite for creation and development of recreation sector of the territory economy. But nowadays the influence of anthropogenic factors, such as fixed assets of the territory, implementation of transport and technical equipment, qualitative and quantitative characteristics of territory population, is increasing.

The evaluation of the actual territory potential must take into consideration such important parameters as uniqueness, availability and spread range of objects located within the territory, as well as their diversity, complexity and current state.

At the present time many regions of Russia can be characterized by low spread range of tourism and recreation areas, poor developed transport nets (thus, bad availability), bad current state and the lack of complexity. In order to evaluate the recreation potential, integral parameters and point-based systems are used; this allows to rank federal subjects and to estimate their contribution to recreation sector of RF economy. The majority of analysts gives a high rank only to the following federal subjects of the Russian Federation: Moscow Region, Leningrad Region, Vladimir Region, Yaroslavl Region and the cities of St. Petersburg and Moscow. Other federal subjects have a great natural, cultural and historical potential, but there are some problems that significantly complicate the use of recreation potential or decrease qualitative parameters. One of the most important problems is the cost factor, the level of economic development of the region, gross regional product per capita, the volume of investments appropriated for the development of recreation sector. This problem is unique because it affects the rate of development of the whole recreation sector as well as its various subsections.

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Designing the model of recreation sector formation and development is the primary step of this problem solution. The important part of this step is the classification of the available territory into three types of areas: first - prominent areas that need a lot of concentrated effort and resource management in order to develop, second - the "reserve" areas, third - areas where the development of recreation and tourism infrastructure would be economically inefficient.

Tourism is a part of recreation sector, thus, it must be duly organized. A well organized tourism can bring much profit to the region, and the abundance of tourist regions in the world proves that. But if the tourism was developed chaotically, it can be the cause of many problems. These problems hinder not only the development of tourist sector, but the economy of the region as a whole.

Thus, in order to develop recreation sector of the region successfully, two major conditions should be put into life: effective management and preliminary calculation and planning of tourist traffic.

The state and structure of recreation sector of Saratov Region economy were not described properly in scientific literature, that's why this article contains actual and new information.

Saratov Region has a high recreation potential i.e. kindly climate conditions, unique natural, cultural and historical objects such as the river Volga and "Khvalynsky" national park. At the moment this potential is not used to its full extent, as the above mentioned aspects are de-

veloped separately and are not embodied into the recreation complex of the region.

Saratov Region has a lot of various places of interest including 124 natural monuments, nature reserves, more than 300 architectural monuments, 27 state museums, 223 therapeutic resorts and tourist objects and 62 hotels of various types.

10 cities of Saratov Region have the status of "historical city of Russia".

The total area of recreation territories is 4647.3 sq. km. The area of recreation territories is distributed as shown in figure.

Regional special programs (RSP) define the development of Saratov Region recreation complex as one of the top priority trends of the region economic activity and land-use planning.

According to RSP titled "Plan of tourism development in Saratov Region for the years 2002 - 2005" 7.5 million rubles were planned for recreation sector development.

During the implementation of RSP it was found out that both foreign and Russian tourist traffic had increased. The increase of tourist traffic in recent years proves that the region has become more attractive for tourists and this is a sign of recreation sector improvement.

The amount of bedspace in hotels, recreation and retreat centers, health resorts etc. has increased by 6.8% (from 3500 rooms in 2006 to 3700 rooms in 2007).

The events planned in the RSP helped to attract tourists, increase the volume of investments, increase the quality of travel catering. In 2006 226.9 million rubles were invested to the

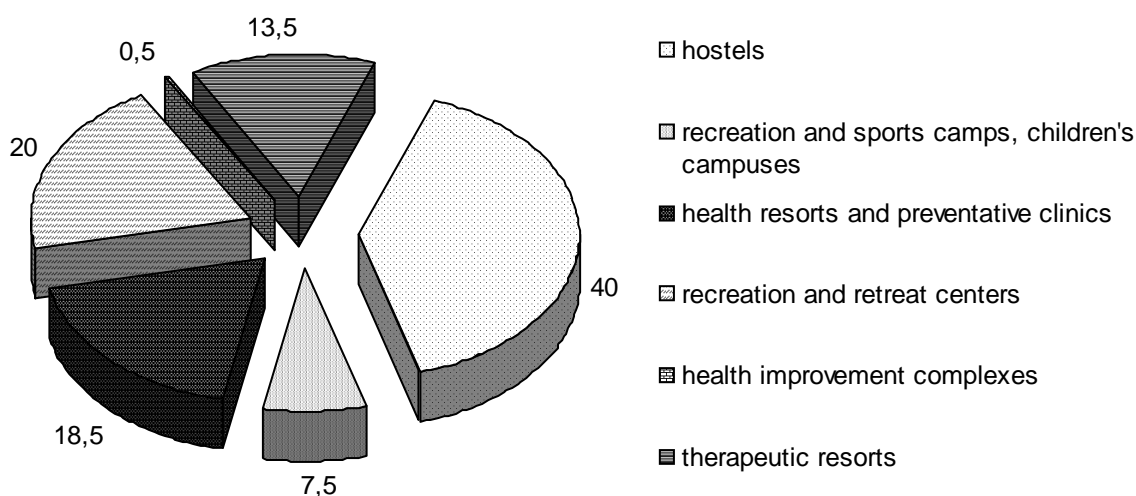


Fig. The distribution of recreation territory area of Saratov Region, %, year 2006 (according to the data obtained for the local agency of Federal State Statistics Service in Saratov Region)

basic capital of communal accommodation facilities sector which exceeded the sum invested with the similar purpose in 2005 by 45 % (mainly because new extrabudgetary resources were found).

The number of persons working in the tourist sector (including related sectors) has increased by 1.7% - from 8919 in 2006 to 9068 persons in 2007.

The number of travel companies working within the territory of Saratov Region has increased almost twice - from 48 in 2001 to 83 by the end of 2006.

According to "Saratov Region Area Planning Scheme", three primary recreation areas - "Volzhskiy", "Khopersky" and "Medveditsky" - named by the rivers flowing through their territory, are defined as well as secondary (local) areas adjacent to rivers of Bolshoy Uzen and Maliy Uzen. The first primary recreation area will be the territory along the banks of the river Volga. It will include "Khvalynsky" national park as well as various therapeutic resorts, health centers, recreation and tourist camps. According to the plan, this area will include the territory of Saratovsky, Engelsky, Marksovsky, Balakovsky, Khvalynsky, Krasnoarmeysky, Tatishchevsky, Volsky, Voskresensky, Novoburassky, Rovensky, Bazamo-Karbulaksky, Dukhovnitsky, Pugachyovsky, Krasnopartizansky and Sovetskiy Municipal Districts. This region will have two service centers - the cities of Saratov and Khvalynsk. The region will contain long-term recreation area, children recreation area and tourist area. The long-term recreation area will include the territory on the left bank of the river Volga - the territory of Voskresenskoye, Krasnoarmeysk and Engels Municipal Districts. The children recreation area will be created on the basis of existing children recreation camps located within the territory of Marksovsky, Rovensky and Balakovsky Districts. The tourist area is planned within the Engels Municipal District; it will be located near the place where the first cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin has landed in 1961. This area is going to be a business tourism area; thus, the whole complex of buildings will be built including hotels, conference halls, restaurants etc.

The territory along the banks of Khoper River and its tributaries is going to be the second primary recreation area containing areas for both children and long-term adult recreation. It will include the territory of Rtishchevsky, Arkadaksky, Turkovsky, Balashovsky and Romanovsky Municipal Districts. The service center will be located in the city of Balashov.

The third primary recreation area will be the territory along the bank of the river Medveditsa and its tributaries, and it will include the territory of Atkarsky, Kalininsky, Lyso-gorsky, Petrovsky and Ekaterinovskiy Municipal Districts. The plans for this area mostly deal with the development of children recreation area in Atkarsky District. The service center will be located in the city of Atkarsk.

Local recreation areas will be developed along the banks of rivers Bolshoy Uzen and Maliy Uzen in Kransokitsky, Pitersky and Ershovsky Districts.

In general, mild climate conditions, the presence of unique places of cultural importance and historical cities and settlements as well as recreation resources can serve as the prerequisites for further development of recreation and tourist complex of interregional and federal importance. This complex may become one of the top priority aspects of business activities of the region that may promote the further development of Saratov Region territory.

But the further development of tourism in the region is hindered by lack of modern accommodation facilities, poor state of automobile roads and the absence of system able to attract private and foreign investments into regional economy.

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