

Implementation of Sustainable Tourism Concept by the Tourists Visiting National Parks

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Abstract: The aim of the article is to analyze tourists' attitudes and behavior in the national parks, in terms of the principles and criteria of sustainable tourism. The problem is the lack of sustainable behavior of tourists visiting the national parks.

The article consists of four basic parts. The idea of sustainable tourism as a "subsystem" of sustainable development and the theoretical model of sustainable tourist are the main goals and principles described in the first part. The second part contains a presentation of the place of research and a methodology of survey performed in 2009 and 2010 on a group of 769 tourists that visited the national parks in northeastern Poland. In the last two parts, the tourist model consistent with the concept of sustainable tourism is compared with the market realities observed in the course of the empirical survey performed in the national parks.

The results show that the concept of sustainable tourism is not sufficiently understood by tourists. Thus, the rules of this form of tourism are not properly observed by them. This requires, above all, an educational effort carried out over a number of years.

Key words: *sustainable development, sustainable tourism, tourist, environment, national park.*

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