

National natural park “Svyatie gory” is a perspective destination for the development of recreation and ecotourism.

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The National Natural Park (NNP) “Svyatie Gory” (“Saint Mountains”) was created by the Decree of the President of Ukraine on February 13th, 1997 in order to protect, restore and use rationally the landscapes of the Donetsk region with unique natural complexes that have important scientific, recreational, religious and cultural significance. The NNP is situated in the middle flow of the Donets river’s on the territories of Slavyansk, Artymovsk, Krasnolimansk and the town of Slavyanogorsk, Donetsk region. The total area of the park is 40589 hectares; including 11878 hectares that are given to permanent usage, and 28711 – grounds of other users. The territory of the park has the following structure: 39585 hectares (97,5%) – forest grounds of Slavyansk and Krasnolimansk; 967 hectares (2,4%) – grounds of Slavyanogorsk; 37 hectares (0,1%) – water territories.

The flora and fauna of the NNP are rich and various. According to the scientific data there are 943 kinds of plants and 48 of them are in the Red Book of Ukraine, 12 of them are protected at the international level. The territory of the park provides necessary conditions for existence of 2000 kinds of species. 50 of them are in the Red Book and 12 are in the European Red List.

The NNP is famous for its rich historical and cultural heritage. 129 objects and 73 historical monuments are situated on its territory. Svyato-Yspenskaya Lavra with its churches is known all over the world. Up to 21 historical and architectural monuments can be found among the unique beauty of the NNP. The NNP “Svyatie Gori” is known as a standard of harmonious combination of cultural and natural heritage among the parks of Ukraine. The UNESCO experts have admitted that the natural, cultural and historical heritage of the NNP fit the main requirements to the objects that have world importance.

The NNP is rich in climate, forest and water resources. Special microclimate is created by chalk hills as high as 120 meters, which protect the valley of the river Donets from blowing winds. Picturesque forests, rivers, numerous lakes, convenient geographical location of the park, cure conditions give the park high recreational and tourist potential. The ecotourism can be developed here.

№	The notion of ecotourism	Main factors	
		resources	influence on the nature
1	Watching untouched parts of nature or “communication” with wild nature.	+	-
2	Ecotourism or sustainable tourism that uses technologies making the minimal influence on the environment.	-	+
3	Natural tourism that includes walking tours, tours by bikes, horses, boats.	+	+
4	Specific market for ecologically conscious tourists enjoying to watch the nature	+	-
5	Responsible trips which help to save natural and cultural heritage and bring profit to the local population	-	+
6	Tourism that has technological and management decisions that let use natural resources and conditions together with protection of nature	+	+

The basic forms and kinds of recreation on the territory of the park are as follows:

- walking recreation – walking, health improvement, cognitive, picnic;
- sports and physical recreation – organization of sports and health improvement activities;
- extraction recreation – gathering the forest products for private consumption (mushrooms, berries), fishing;
- cure-healthy (climate) in sanatoriums, health children camps;

Uncontrolled tourism can damage the natural complexes of the National Natural Park. The amount of holidaymakers reaches 1100 people per hectare at the comfortable time of the day, that is considerably over the acceptable recreational loading. This situation causes the degradation of natural resources.

In order to save the National Natural Park the following tasks should be solved:

- to arrange the whole territory of the recreational zones of the NNP;
- to open new ecological paths and tourists’ routes;
- to implement payment for recreational and excursion activities on the territory of the park;
- to control groups of people travelling by themselves and holidaymakers in order to prevent degradation of the nature;
- to set up recreational and informational centers, museum of nature, advertising materials, to held excursion and ecological entertainments;
- to work out and make true long-term program which provides effective usage of the recreational and natural resources of the NNP and its safety;

The NNP “Svyatye Gory” is naturally protected, recreational, cultural, religious and scientific establishment, which possesses rich recreational resources with high recreational potential that makes it a perspective destination for the development of recreation and ecotorism.