



Datum: 04.09.2018
Medij: CorD
Rubrika: Bez naslova
Autori: Redakcija
Teme: Etnografski muzej Srbije

Napomena:
Površina: 502
Tiraž: 4104



Naslov: Nature's Treasure Trove

Strana: 36

business
bdialogue

DRAGIĆ KARAKLIĆ, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC COMPANY "NATIONAL PARK TARA"

Nature's Treasure Trove



In addition to naturalists, Tara is also being explored increasingly by archaeologists

monuments. How is your cooperation with other institutions in maintaining such a complex of nature and history?

Diverse natural and cultural heritage requires special care from the state and managers, along with a multidisciplinary scientific approach. However, for many years Tara was only explored by "naturalists", i.e. experts from the Faculty of Forestry and Biology, the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, the Natural History Museum, the

One of our important tasks is to promote the values of National Park Tara in domestic and international frameworks, so we have begun working in cooperation with the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade to create a new visual identity for the park. We are currently affirming NP Tara at the international level through the realising of extremely successful cooperation with renowned Hungarian photographers and the Photography Association of Serbia. With master photographer Béla Szabó in 2012, along with the help and support of the Tourist Organisation of Serbia and the Institute for Nature Conservation, we launched the Photo-safari "Tara" promotional event, which is being realised in continuity, and the photographs have been exhibited at numerous exhibitions in the region.

Last year saw NP Tara and NP Black Canyon of Gunison from Colorado sign a five-year Cooperation Agreement. What kind of results has this cooperation yielded to date and what are plans like?

The agreement envisages the exchange of knowledge, experiences, technologies and employees from different fields – from the management of natural resources, via the monitoring of rare species, the development of educational programmes and planning in the domain of tourism, all the way to mutual promotion. Modalities of cooperation and priority areas have so far been considered, while cooperation is expected to achieve full effect as of next year.

On the basis of this cooperation, we also launched an initiative for twinning with Bajina Bašta and Montrose, the two cities that rely on these two national parks.

The basic phenomenon of our National Park is represented by forests that cover 80 per cent of this protected area and are among the most well-preserved, highest-quality and most productive in Europe, says Dragić Karaklić, Director of National Park Tara

What distinguishes National Park Tara from other national parks in Serbia?

Tara National Park is a treasure trove of nature and a habitat for numerous species from the distant past. Standing out in particular are the Serbian spruce (*Picea omorika*) and Serbian grasshopper (*Pyrgomorphula serbica*), while it should also be emphasised that this area represents the most important habitat for bears and wild goat in Serbia. However, the main phenomenon of this national park is the forests that cover 80 per cent of this protected area and are among the most well-preserved, best-quality and most productive in Europe. Moreover, Tara also has significant cultural and historical monuments, the most famous of which are the Stećci medieval tombstones that are listed by UNESCO and Rača Monastery, which is a 13th century endowment of King Dragutin.

Apart from its rich nature, Tara is also abundant in significant cultural and historical

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Geological Institute and other institutions. However, since 2006 there has also been archaeological research conducted here in cooperation with the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, followed by the National Museum from Belgrade and Užice, the National Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and other institutions. It should be noted that, in cooperation with the Ethnographic Museum, we implemented a project of ethnological research in the wider area of National Park Tara, with the aim of researching and preserving this rich tradition.

