



Sustainable Spatial Development of the Tara National Park

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Keywords:

Sustainable spatial development;
Tara National Park;
Republic of Serbia;
Spatial and urban planning



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Abstract: *The paper points out the importance of sustainable spatial development of the Tara National Park, one of the five national parks in the Republic of Serbia. The research of sustainable spatial development was carried out at four planning levels of the area of the Tara National Park, at the international, national, regional and local levels. The paper emphasizes the importance of adopting planning documents at all four planning levels, as these are important instruments for achieving integral and sustainable development of the protected area. The importance of the planning documents is confirmed, in terms of providing a spatial framework for the protection and management of the natural and built environment of this territory. In accordance with the above, this paper aims to point out the importance of sustainable spatial development for the protection and sustainable use of the Tara National Park and to give suggestions for its improvement.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The Tara National Park with a total area of 24.991,82 ha is located in the Western part of the Republic of Serbia, on the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina. It acquired the status of a national park 40 years ago, and today it is one of the five national parks in the Republic of Serbia. It was named after the Illyrian, highland tribe of the Autarchy, who lived in this area during the Bronze Age. It is a rare mountain in this part of the Balkan Peninsula with very well preserved original forest ecosystems. Some types of pure or mixed forests of deciduous and coniferous trees are old several hundred years (Javno preduzeće “Nacionalni park Tara”, 2020). The beginnings of nature protection in this area date back to the 19th century. The largest part of the Tara Mountain in a total area of 19.175,00 ha was declared a national park in 1981, by the Law on the Tara National Park (“Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije”, no 41/1981). From then until today, a number of amendments and changes were made to the law (1983, 1988 and 1993), so that according to the latest Law on National Parks (“Službeni glasnik Republike Srbije”, br. 84/2015 i 95/2018 - dr. zakon), the Tara National Park was protected on a larger area of a total of 24.991,82 ha.

Appropriate planning documents adopted at different levels of management can contribute to the sustainable spatial development of the protected areas, including the Tara National Park. Thus, at the international level, one of the most important documents for the sustainable spatial development of an area, the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (UN-Habitat, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2015a), defined the principles and recommendations for urban and territorial planning at all levels of management. The spatial framework and other guidelines for sustainable spatial development of this area provide planning documents that have an impact on this area with their planning decisions. These are primarily spatial plans adopted for the territory of the Republic of Serbia, regions, special purpose areas and municipalities, as well as urban plans. These documents must be mutually harmonized, reflect the political will and harmonization of the interests of different actors in space. In addition to the above, integrated and

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sustainable planning implies that the natural and cultural capital of a territory is integrated into sectoral policies, especially those that have territorial implications for a given area (Dobričić & Josimović, 2018).

The Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of the Tara National Park was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Serbia in 2020 (“Službeni glasnik RS”, broj 44/2020), and it represents an important document for long-term protection and sustainable management of this area. It is at the same time a strategic and regulatory plan, and the third spatial plan for the special purpose for this area, after the previously made ones in 1989 and 2010. In general, spatial plans for special purpose areas are adopted for areas that require a special regime of organization, arrangement, use and protection of space, which includes national parks. In accordance with the above, the aim of this paper is to point out the importance of sustainable spatial development for the protection and sustainable use of the Tara National Park and make suggestions for its improvement.

2. METODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The paper researches the sustainable spatial development of the Tara National Park at the international, national, regional and local levels. The research uses documents adopted at various levels, such as the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (UN-Habitat, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2015a) at the international level; the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2020. (“Službeni glasnik RS”, broj 88/2010) at the national level; the Regional Spatial Plan for Zlatibor and Moravica Administrative Districts („Službeni glasnik RS”, broj 1/2013) and the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of the Tara National Park (“Službeni glasnik RS”, broj 44/2020) at the regional level; and the Spatial Plan for the Municipality of Bajina Bašta („Službeni list opštine Bajina Bašta”, broj 10/2012) and urban plans, at the local level. In addition to the mentioned documents, the Management Plan for the Tara National Park 2020-2029, which was prepared by the manager of the national park (Javno preduzeće “Nacionalni park Tara”, 2020), was also consulted. The research in this paper is focused on the analysis of the mentioned documents and the guidelines they provide in relation to the sustainable spatial development of this area, and gives suggestions for its improvement.

3. ABOUT TARA NATIONAL PARK

The Tara National Park, established in 1981, is one of the five national parks in the Republic of Serbia. It is located in Western Serbia, and it is a part of Dinaric Alps. Its length is 50 km, it is 22 km wide, with an average height of 1200 m above sea level. Its highest point is Kozji rid, 1591 m. It is located on the border with Bosnia and Herzegovina, covers an area limited along the Drina River, between Višegrad and Bajina Bašta, and consists of the mountain massifs of Zvezda, Crni vrh and Ravna Tara. On the east side, the area is separated by the Solotuška River and the Ponikve plateau, and on the south by the Kreman and Mokrogorska valleys. It covers part of the territory of Bajina Bašta, within 10 cadastral municipalities (Jagoštica, Rastište, Zaovine, Konjska reka, Perućac, Beserovina, Zaugline, Rača, Mala reka and Solotuša), with a total area of 24.991,82 ha, of which 13.588, 51 ha is in state ownership, and 11.403,36 ha in private and other forms of ownership. The first degree covers 13,35%, the second degree 34,07% and the third degree 52,58% of the total area (Zakon o nacionalnim parkovima, 2015-2018). The National Park is managed by the Public Company “Tara National Park” from Bajina Bašta (more about Tara National Park at: <https://www.nptara.rs/en/>; http://www.tara-planina.com/tara_eng).

html). In addition to the above, the Tara National Park is part of the national ecological network, potentially the EMERALD area, as well as the NATURA network of protected areas (Dobričić et al, 2017).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. International and national level

At the international level, an important document for sustainable spatial development is the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (UN-Habitat, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2015a), according to which urban and spatial planning can contribute to the sustainable development of an area, as well as the Tara National Park. According to this document, achieving sustainable spatial development requires political commitment and involvement of all actors who should participate in the processes of urban and spatial planning, such as authorities at all levels (national, regional and local), professional planners and their associations, as and civil society organizations-NGOs) (Popović et al, 2021). In accordance with the above, one of the principles defined according to this document is that urban and spatial planning is a powerful decision-making mechanism that ensures that sustainable economic growth, social development and sustainable environment harmoniously lead to promoting better connectivity at all spatial levels - principle 9.b (UN-Habitat, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2015a). On the other hand, this document emphasizes that urban and spatial planning should provide a spatial framework for the protection and management of natural and built environments, including their biodiversity, land and natural resources, as well as for ensuring integrated and sustainable development - principle 12. a (UN-Habitat, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2015a).

At the national level, the most important document for sustainable spatial development is the Spatial Plan of the Republic of Serbia from 2010 to 2020 (2010), with which all lower rank planning documents must be in accordance. According to this plan, the area of the Tara National Park abounds in natural potentials, which provide it with a specific role in the form of an important element of regional progress and development (Dobričić, 2007). The Tara area, declared as a national park, is an area of special purpose and conditions, but also an area of regional importance and potential international importance, which gives it one of the leading roles in the development of the Republic of Serbia (Prostorni plan Republike Srbije od 2010. do 2020. godine, 2010). In the area of use and protection of natural resources, the obligation to undertake activities on the development of pasture livestock, as well as the cultivation of rare medicinal plants and specialized crops and species, has been determined. The richness of rivers, hydro-accumulation, as well as two lakes and the Bajina Bašta Hydroelectric Power Plant, has included the area of Tara in the ranks of the strict regime of quality protection and prescribed use of water potential. In the field of sustainable development of transport and communications, an important goal is integration into a single transport system. In that direction, although outside the subject area, the main road M-5 Užice-Kremna-Kotroman stands out, which represents a segment of road E-761. The existing airport "Ponikve", which is located near the planning area, provides the opportunity to be used for civilian purposes, especially for tourist services. An important connection in the region is the Belgrade-Bar railway.

The passage of an important highway near the planning area and the fact that a potential goods and transport center is planned to be set up in Užice, which will enable the rationalization of macro and micro-distribution, improve the possibilities of product placement and economic development

of the Tara area. The protection and sustainable use of natural and cultural heritage and natural resources will form the basis of the identity of the Republic of Serbia and its regional units, but also the basis of future economic / tourist development. Tara is one of the priority areas in the Republic of Serbia for inclusion in the List of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO-MaB. There are numerous cultural monuments in this area, such as the 13th-century monastery of Rača, built by the Serbian king Dragutin, the archeological site of Skit St. Djordja in the gorge of the river Rača, archeological sites (necropolises in Perućac and Rastište) called Stećci Medieval Tombstone Graveyards and inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, 2016 (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1504>), etc. The area of Tara also belongs to the tourist cluster of western Serbia and represents a special tourist area with destinations, touring routes, tourist places and places for rest. At the same time, the Drina-Tara-Zlatibor area is a destination with a significant share of the year-round tourist offer.

4.2. Regional and local level

In relation to the regional level of planning, the area of the National Park Tara and Bajina Bašta belongs to the region of predominantly field and vegetable production and mixed livestock and the area of fruit and vegetable production and pasture livestock (Regionalni prostorni plan Zlatiborskog i Moravičkog upravnog okruga, 2013). Arrangement and use of forests and forest land will be carried out by permanent use of forests on the principles of sustainable development. From the aspect of tourism development, the area of the Tara National Park belongs to the Tara-Valjevo-Podrinje Mountains - Rudnik. This region represents the northern part of the tourist area “Western Serbia-south”. The main tourist offer of this region will be organized in three complexes, one of which is the complex Tara-Podrinje-Bajina Bašta. Tara (as part of the destination Drina-Tara-Zlatibor) is one of the primary tourist destinations with a significant share of the year-round offer. The main goal is the protection, arrangement and presentation of cultural heritage as a development resource, in a way that will contribute to the affirmation of regional and local identity.

For the regional planning level, the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of the Tara National Park (2020) is of special importance, in accordance with which the basic concept of use, organization and protection of space respects the aspiration for integral development. By choosing activities that do not jeopardize its primary function, the values of the national park are preserved. Elements of the concept of use, organization and protection of space are elaborated in terms of use and arrangement of space for zones and belts with special regimes for protection of water, natural and immovable cultural assets, belts of infrastructure corridors and sources of pollution; as well as the rules of construction and arrangement of space for basic categories of land (agricultural, water, forest and construction land) and different types of facilities.

Regarding the protection and sustainable use of the Tara National Park, the following basic regimes and protection measures have been established: (1) the first, highest degree implies strict protection of the most important natural and cultural-historical values, as well as elements of the natural environment for strict protection, with activities of scientific research, education and limited presentation to the public; (2) the second degree means immediate, transitional protection around areas in the first degree, protection of especially valuable units of the natural environment, with activities of scientific research, education, presentation of protected areas to the public; (3) the third degree, implies selective, limited use of natural resources and controlled interventions and activities in space if they are harmonized with the functions of the protected natural resource or are related to traditional forms of economic activities (agriculture and forestry) and housing, including tourism construction of recreation and sports, water manage-

ment, clean energy, renewable energy and transport; the third degree includes regulated forestry and animal husbandry, the full functions of tourism, recreation and sports, water management, clean energy, renewable energy and transport.

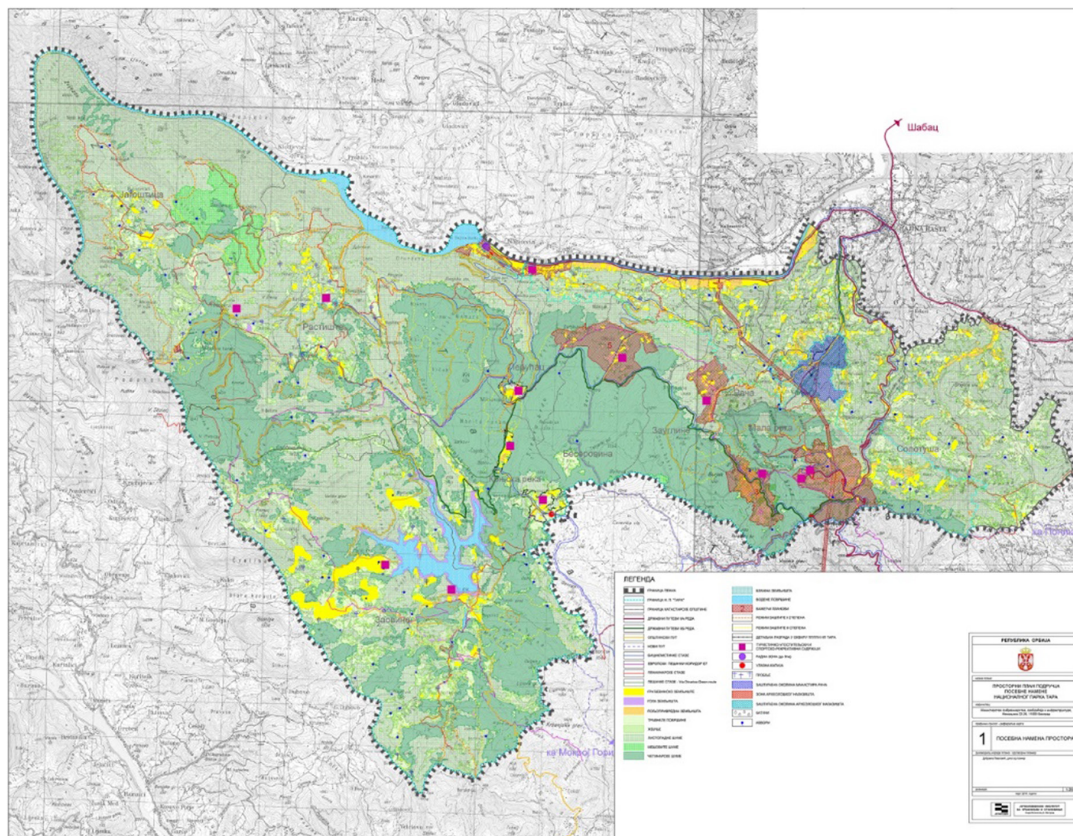


Figure 1. The map of special purpose area of the Tara National Park area

Source: Prostorni plan područja posebne namene Nacionalnog parka Tara (2020)

In addition to the above, this planning document also contains urban elaboration at a detailed level (up to the level of the cadastral parcel) for units such as: Rača Monastery and three settlements Mitrovac, Krnja Jela and Sekulić.

At the local level, the Spatial Plan for the Municipality of Bajina Bašta (2012) is especially important for sustainable spatial development, as well as urban plans, i.e. general regulation plans for certain zones on Tara (Kaluderske Bare, Račanska Šljivovica, Osluša and Sokolina), the General Regulation Plan of Perućac in the municipality of Bajina Bašta, detailed regulation plans for Omarska vrela, Krnja Jela, Eco-art-sport center Zaovine and other project documentation at the local level. According to the Spatial Plan for the Municipality of Bajina Bašta, the vision of spatial development of the planning area was presented in accordance with the basic goal of organized activation of all spatial potentials in accordance with economic possibilities and with the application of strict principles of environmental protection.

5. CONCLUSION

The preparation of planning documentation for the area of the Tara National Park within the limits determined by the Law on National Parks from 2015, relied on previous generations of planning documents for this area as well as planning solutions of current higher level planning

documentation. Special attention is paid to the functional connections with the surrounding areas, especially with the area of the Šargan–Mokra Gora Nature Park and the Zlatibor Nature Park, protected areas in the western part of the Republic of Serbia. Considering that this whole zone of western Serbia represents especially valuable natural areas, destined primarily for nature protection, forestry, mountain agriculture and tourism, it is planned to develop these economic branches in order to enable conditions for keeping the population in these areas, especially in the Tara National Park, which is one of the few national parks in the Republic of Serbia inhabited on almost its entire surface. Given the border character of the area, population retention and population development is particularly important. Therefore, the planning documentation proposes incentive measures to engage in various environmentally friendly activities, in accordance with the prescribed protection regimes, but also emphasizes the need to determine compensatory measures for the population, which, due to various restrictions caused by nature protection or other protection regimes, have limited opportunities for life and work in individual zones.

It is especially important that the Spatial Plan for the Special Purpose Area of the Tara National Park from 2020, contains several urban elaborations with the possibility of direct implementation, due to special national interests, in terms of protection of immovable cultural property, but also in relation to the interests of the local community for the planning of areas attacked by unplanned construction. In addition to the above, the planning framework and planning solutions of the prepared planning documentation are harmonized with the real potentials and limitations of the national park area in terms of sustainable development planning, appropriate contents and functions in the given area. Sustainable spatial development of the national park indicates the further application of recent achievements in this area, the inclusion of ecosystem services in defining the planning framework of this area, etc. (Dobričić & Sekulić, 2020; Stojkov & Dobričić, 2012). The national park manager has already taken certain steps through participation in the Interreg project Eko karst (identification of ecosystem types, ecosystem services and mapping and stakeholder analysis; more on: <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/eco-karst>). In addition, the sustainable spatial development of the Tara National Park can be improved by applying the recommendations and principles of the International Guidelines on Urban and Territorial Planning (UN-Habitat, 2015; UN-Habitat, 2015a). One of the recommendations refers to national authorities, according to which it is necessary to regulate and control the urban sprawl and limit the footprint, in order to effectively respond to the challenges caused by climate change, etc. On the other hand, at the local level of government, one of the recommendations is to formulate urban and spatial plans as a framework for mitigation and adaptation to climate change and greater resilience of settlements, especially those located in sensitive areas.

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