

CULTURE-ORIENTED TOURISM WITHIN THE PROTECTED AREAS (THE EXAMPLE OF THE BIEBRZA NATIONAL PARK)

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Abstract: The paper concerns the possibilities of developing tourism based upon the cultural resources in the area of the Biebrza National Park. Such type of tourism should be promoted in the valley of Biebrza river in order to prevent degradation of the natural resources of the area by the participants of mass tourism. Simultaneously, culture-oriented tourism could help in socio-economic activation of the region.

Key words: ecotourism, Biebrza National Park, culture-oriented tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Along with appearance of the so-called "alternative tourism" in the 1980s (Krippendorf, 1987), an increasing popularity has been gained by the ecological tourism ("ecotourism"). An essential fact linked with the development of tourism in the protected areas is that in view of the regulations concerning nature protection the tourist traffic has to be somehow limited. The limitations usually consist not only in the interdiction of entry into selected areas (nature reserves), but also in the tendency to maintain the number of tourists at a relatively low level within the whole area of a national park. That is also why a special role is assigned the cultural assets, which as a rule do not exist within the strict boundaries of the national parks (usually very sparsely populated), but rather in their vicinity. An essential significance has also to be attributed to the tourist-and-recreation infrastructure developed especially with the tourist visiting the protected areas in mind. The task of the cultural assets and the tourism-and-recreation

infrastructure is to create conditions for keeping a part of tourists outside of the areas featuring special natural value. This concerns first of all the participants of the mass tourist traffic, for whom the particular natural assets of the given park are not so much important. In accordance with the principles adopted, in case of the protected areas, the mass tourist traffic ought to be stopped at their fringes or in the designated locations, where the threat of degradation of natural assets is adequately lower. These locations are chosen for establishment of the so-called didactic paths, educational centers, enclosures with representatives of animal world, etc. It is frequently so that parking lots, tourist information outlets, low-cost hotels, motels, restaurants and bars, children playgrounds, or sports and leisure facilities are located nearby. This kind of facilities form the so called locks that are meant to withhold the majority of tourists in the zones determined, while those tourists who are genuinely interested in the nature of the protected areas (and who are usually a very distinct minority) are allowed to visit the places located deep in the park, though keeping to the regulations in force. These regulations define, in particular, the magnitude of groups which can visit the national park, the routes that can be accessed by the tourists, the obligation of using the service of a guide, or the limits to visiting of some particular areas during the close-season.

2. TOURISM IN THE BIEBRZA NATIONAL PARK

The Biebrza National Park (or Biebrza River National Park, BPN) is located in north-eastern Poland and is the largest national park in the country. The surface area of the park equals 59,233 hectares, and of the surrounding semi-protected zone - 66,824 hectares. The Park, established on September 9th, 1993 (until then - the Biebrza Landscape Park), occupies the area of the Biebrza river valley, and the majority of its surface is constituted by the unique in Europe marshy and boggy areas, as well as meadows. In addition, side by side with the valuable boggy forests (mainly aspen and birch forests), also pine and spruce forests, though of lesser importance, grow within the boundaries of the Park.

The Biebrza river valley is surrounded by the moraine areas. The valley itself is composed of three wet depressions. The largest of them is the so-called Southern Basin (the Lower Biebrza Basin), occupying the area stretching over 30 kms and 12-15 kms wide. The majority of this area is taken by the peat-bogs, divided by a not too high belt of dunes overgrown with the pine-and-spruce forest. The Middle Basin occupies also the peat-bog area of dimensions 20 kms by 40 kms, and only marginally covered by forests (mainly in the North). The smallest of the three is the Northern Basin (the Upper Biebrza Basin), having the form of a narrow valley of 40 kms of length and 3 kms of width. It is composed, as well, primarily of peat-bogs.

The very first nature reserve within the present area of the BPN was established already in 1925, when the moose reserve Czerwone Bagno (Red Swamp), encompassing 2172 hectares of surface, was created. Located in the northern part of the Middle Basin,

mostly overgrown with the wet forest, the Czerwone Bagno is the largest reserve within the Park.

Despite the significant differentiation of the vegetation cover and of the landscape, the main natural asset of the valley of Biebrza river is constituted by the unique in Europe bird nesting areas. The presence of altogether 262 bird species was established here, with 178 species nesting in the valley of Biebrza river. Of special value is aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*), having here - in the opinion of some ornithologists - the world largest nesting territory.

The value of the natural assets of the Biebrza valley causes that the Park is popular among those tourists who prefer the so-called ecological tourism, and especially among the amateurs of photo-safari and bird-watching.

At the end of 1990s the Park was being visited every year by some 16 thousand tourists (according to the number of tickets to the national park sold.) Although the actual number of persons visiting BPN is much higher (some areas can be reached without a ticket), the Park still is among those in Poland, which are frequented by the lowest number of tourists. The main reason for this state of affairs is the virgin character of the Park (excluding virtually the mass tourist traffic, due, in particular, to the limited hotel facilities and the few tourist routes), as well as quite an important distance separating the Park from the main Polish urban agglomerations (generating the demand for tourist services). A characteristic feature of the BPN is constituted, on the other hand, by the high share of foreigners among the visitors, especially Germans, Dutch, Englishmen and Americans. This fact is related to the fame that the Biebrza River Swamps enjoy in the countries of Western Europe, where they are known as one of the Europe's largest water and wetland bird sanctuaries. That is also why the persons interested in ornithology dominate among those visiting the Park. The very idea of establishing the national park in the Biebrza river valley found, anyway, a strong support abroad, primarily among the ornithological organizations in The Netherlands and in the World Wildlife Fund (these institutions having co-financed a number of initiatives related to the BPN). Until today, the foreign research centres actively participate in the studies conducted in the valley of Biebrza river.

In comparison with other national parks in Poland, the tourist-oriented development of the Park is rather poor. There are only 11 tourist routes, three camping sites, four watching towers, and one so called educational center (the didactic path in Osowiec-Twierdza). The accommodation facilities are limited to a couple of forester's lodges owned by the Park. A somewhat better situation exists within the surrounding zone of the Park, since side by side with the two hotels in Goniądz, there are the agro-tourist farm facilities in dozen or so localities. It is estimated that altogether within the Park and in its surroundings not more than 500 persons can be simultaneously provided overnight stay service (excluding camping sites, that is).

A significant problem in tourism in the area of the BPN is constituted by the concentration of visits in the central part (the area of Grzędy and the Red Swamp, and the area of Osowiec - Goniądz), and in the southern part (Ławki Swamp) of the Biebrza river valley. The upper part of the valley (upwards from Lipsk) is virtually not visited by

tourists. Concentration of tourism within the areas constituting just a portion of the Park is disadvantageous both in view of the threat to nature (the primary bird nesting places are located exactly there), and of the local economy, since an important part of inhabitants of the valley do not get any benefits from the presence of tourists.

Another issue is connected with the distinctly seasonal nature of tourism. This applies especially to foreign tourists, who visit the Park as a rule in the months of April through June (the nuptial and nesting period for the birds), and who are a particularly desired group of visitors from the point of view of the local economy.

Yet another problem - perhaps of a lesser significance - is constituted by the very fact that the ecological tourism dominates on the territory of the BPN. Similarly as elsewhere in the world, this takes place by the intermediary of the specialized travel agencies, located, as a rule, in large towns. Until quite recently also a large part of the guides having license to conduct groups around the Park would originate from quite distant agglomerations (mainly Białystok). This would mean that an important share of revenue related to tourism activities within the Park would go outside, with no advantage to the local economy (Boo, 1990; Butler, 1990; Cater, 1995; Place, 1995).

3. THE CULTURAL RESOURCES IN THE BIEBRZA NATIONAL PARK AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

There are only six villages within the area of the Park, and seven further ones are located in the enclaves formed also within the boundaries of the Park. Such enclaves were left out in view of the complex legal status of the areas included in the BPN, where only 30,674 hectares belong to the state (51.8%), and as much as 28,559 hectares are in the private hands (48.2% of surface). This situation leads to frequent conflicts between the local population and the local authorities on the one hand, and the management of the Park on the other. The conflicts mainly concern the manner of using meadows and forests formally belonging to private persons, but located within the Park, the limitations on construction of new objects, the waste disposal (illegal dumps), etc. Simultaneously, the fact that several hundred persons live inside the boundaries of the Park (719 in 1998) forces the management of the Park to attach a special significance to protection of cultural resources existing on the area that they are taking care of. Another cause for turning a particular attention to the cultural assets existing in the Biebrza river valley is the fact that both in the valley itself and in its direct vicinity numerous elements of material and non-material culture are preserved. These entities ought to become, given a better promotion, the object of interest for tourists visiting the BPN. This would allow safeguarding the particularly valuable nature elements within the Park from the excess tourist traffic, as some tourists would get stopped at the "locks" linked with the cultural assets.

3.1. The ethnographical assets

Since the very beginning of Polish colonization (13th-14th centuries) in the valley of Biebrza river, the forms of activity encountered there were rather unique for the territory of Poland. Thus, side by side with the extensive cattle grazing on the meadows along the river, fishing and rafting were significant activities. Since Biebrza river constituted the boundary between Poland and Ja wie - and later on Lithuania - the small gentry settled on the southern bank, entrusted along with the free peasants with guarding the river passages. The remnants of these specific forms of activity still persist. Thus, in some villages along the southern stretch of the Biebrza river valley grazing is conducted consisting in transporting on the rafts the men and the cattle across the river to the meadows surrounded by the swamps, and the herds would stay there together with the men for even up to several months.

Then, on the other hand, in the middle stretch of the valley (e.g. in Kopytkowo, Jagłowo, Polkowo) the tradition was preserved of fishing not with the use of nets or fishing rods, but with the specially designed fish pots. Although this way of fishing is nowadays legally forbidden in Poland - not only in the national parks, but generally - some of the inhabitants continue to fish in this traditional, though illegal, manner, considering other methods of fishing to be "not fit for men".

Another resource that can attract the interest of the tourists is constituted by local customs (especially in the villages inhabited by the Belarusian population), local cuisine (numerous kinds of potato-based dishes), as well as legends linked with the river and with the bogs which accompany it.

In some areas in the vicinity of the Park (like in the areas between Osowiec and Trzcianne, and in the area of Lipsk - Dąbrowa Białostocka) there is a wide usage of designations of individual families and persons living in a given village with the terms related to the nature of the Biebrza river valley - e.g. to the folk names of the birds, fish, or meadow plants of the area.

3.2. The archaeological resources

Within the area of the Park and the surrounding territory as many as 2026 archaeological sites have been established, among which in 1919 cases their chronology was determined. The primary areas of archaeological discoveries are the vicinities of Wizna and Tykocin, the area to the North of Suchowola, to the East of Goniądz, as well as the boggy areas to the North of the river (Czerwone Bagno). Since the majority of the sites are of surface nature, it is now difficult to precisely reconstruct the past human activities in the valley of Biebrza river. On the basis of the present status of research it can only be said that 626 sites are from the stone age, 139 date from the stone and bronze ages, 150 from the stone and iron ages, 66 from the bronze age, 28 from the bronze and iron ages, and 739 from the iron age.

3.3. The architectural monuments

Due to the relatively late development of the settlement processes within the area of the Park and its vicinity and the peripheral location of the region, the number of historical monuments in the valley of the Biebrza river has always been small. Since the beginning of the Polish and Belarusian colonization wooden structures dominated here, which, in view of frequent fires and numerous wars, as well as Polish uprisings, were to a large extent destroyed. The particularly heavy damages were inflicted by the fighting during the World War II in 1944 (especially in the eastern part of the valley). So, the few wooden and wood-and-stone houses dating from the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century are preserved mainly in the villages located in the middle and southern parts of the valley (e.g. Stare Dolistowo, Downary, Kuleszc, Budy, Chojnowo, Zubole, Okrasin, Łojc-Awissa).

Within the area of the Park and in its neighbourhood some valuable monuments of church architecture have been preserved, among which special attention should be paid to such ones as the church in Krasnybór (1584-89, previously an orthodox church), the wooden church in Kamienna Stara (17th century), the baroque churches in Radziłów and Stare Dolistowo (18th century), the wooden chapels in the area of Jaminy - Jaziewo (19th century), as well as the ornamented roadside crosses near the village of Karpowicze.

One should also mention the historical monuments of technology, connected with the channels built in the 19th century, linking Biebrza with the basin of Niemen (Nemunas) river (water locks in Dębowo and Sosnowo).

One of the more important kinds of architectural monuments, rarely occurring on the protected areas, while quite frequently encountered within the BPN and in its vicinity, are the fortifications (described in greater detail in the subsequent section devoted to the historical spatial forms).

3.4. The historical spatial forms

The undoubtedly most valuable spatial form from the past, existing in the Park and its broader area, is the Russian fortress of Osowiec, constructed at the end of the 19th century on the expected main direction of the German attack from East Prussia directed at Białystok. Although similar strongholds were constructed in several places of the north-eastern Poland (like, first of all, fortifications in Modlin and Łomża), yet, owing to the perfect implantation of this particular structure by the Russian civil engineers into the landscape, and the capable use of Biebrza river as the natural water body forming an obstacle, the fortress of Osowiec is considered to be the best example of the Russian fortification art of this type. It should be added that emergence of the stronghold in Osowiec had an essential influence on the landscape of this stretch of the Biebrza river valley, since it entailed not only construction of numerous ditches within the particular fortifications, but also of channels in the valley itself, the dikes, locks, etc., which, in turn, meant appearance of the bogs and water bodies, existing until today, in the places where yet in the 19th century there had been meadows and arable lands. Besides, in

accordance with the then handbooks of fortification engineering, the vegetation cover around the fortress was appropriately shaped, so that in some places natural vegetation was removed, and in some other whole groups of trees and shrubs were planted. That is why it should be assumed that the landscape in the radius of a couple of kilometres from the Osowiec fortress is of anthropogenic origin, in spite of the fact that, for instance, appearance of the boggy ecosystems may create the impression that this landscape is natural. One should also note that before construction started the former village of Osowiec had been entirely destroyed and moved a couple of kilometres to the north, to the other bank of Biebrza river.

The stronghold in Osowiec is composed of four forts, whose construction was started in 1882. The main fort of the stronghold is the Central Fort I (Fort Centralny). Currently, a part of it is in ruins (some of the structures were pulled down yet after the World War I, like the orthodox church), but most of the elements are still preserved in the state close to the original one. Although it is being even now used by the military, there is a possibility of visiting the main components of the fort by the organized tourist groups.

Another kind of the historical spatial forms are constituted by the town outlines, which date as a rule from the 16th and 17th century. Although there is no town proper within the boundaries of the Park, there are, in the direct vicinity of the Park, the towns of Goniądz (mentioned first as far back as in 1358, urban rights granted in 1547), Lipsk (town in the period 1580-1867 and then since 1983), and Suchowola (urban rights between 1777 and 1950, re-established few years ago), as well as villages featuring urban character: Radzilów (urban rights between 1466 and 1870), Sztabin, Trzcianne and Wizna (mentioned first in 1170, town in 1439-1870), these villages having preserved the original street design.

The last categories of the spatial forms existing within the area neighbouring upon the BPN are the manor house complexes. These structures were, however, largely destroyed in the 19th century and nowadays the most valuable manor house complex type form are the remnants of the manor in Kamienna Stara (mentioned already in the 16th century).

4. THE STRATEGY OF DEVELOPMENT OF CULTURE - ORIENTED TOURISM IN BIEBRZA NATIONAL PARK

Conform to the intention expressed in the general instruction on the elaboration of protection plans for the national parks (*Plan ochrony...* 1994), each plan ought to account for the effects and advantages in terms of both cultural and natural resources of a park. The procedures developed taking into account the above prerequisite should then be handed over to the management of a given national park in order to be made use of in taking of the strategic and current decisions within the framework of activities related to

protection of culture assets. Thus, the primary question related to the general conditions on the procedures in the domain of protection of cultural assets within and in the surrounding zone of the BPN should be to determine the agents whose participation in protection of cultural assets is indispensable. Since the objectives realised by the institutions functioning within a given area turn often to be divergent, the principle should be kept to of conducting a dialogue among the interested parties, with the assumption that the goal of the dialogue is to strike a compromise within the framework of the law in force (Kowalczyk, 1999).

Both Polish and foreign experience indicates that in each case of a national park a special significance among the internal conditions ought to be attributed to the relations between the authorities of the park on the one hand and the local self-government and population on the other. This applies also to the BPN, and so in June 1999, on the initiative of the Park management and the regional representatives of the World Wildlife Fund a meeting was held with the commune executives of all the communes ("gminy") located in Biebrza river valley, and one of the objectives of this meeting was to persuade the local authorities to form a unified association that could conduct lobbying for acquisition of the financial means (from Polish government, various European Union funds, and so on) to be spent on the development of tourism, agricultural conversion, expansion of the road infrastructure, etc.

4.1. Perception of tourist attractiveness of the Biebrza valley by its inhabitants

The perception of tourist attractiveness of the BPN was the subject of study of B. Pisarska (1997), though the author of this study emphasised primarily the aspects of nature and landscape.

An essential problem appearing in the valley of Biebrza river is related to the fact that while the local population is aware of the unique character of the natural assets of this area, they do not appreciate the role of cultural assets. This applies to a lesser extent to the local authorities and the management of the Park, who, though placing the main emphasis on promotion of nature resources, try also to attract tourists with the cultural assets and the tourism-and-recreation infrastructure, being entirely aware that this might activate the local labour market, trigger the development of the service sector, etc.

A confirmation of the proposition that the inhabitants of the Biebrza valley do not appraise very highly the role of monuments of culture in the tourist activation of the area, is provided by the results of the questionnaire-based survey conducted in the years 1998-1999 in a couple of dozen localities within and in the vicinity of the BPN. The results indicate that only a small fraction of the respondents recognize the cultural attractiveness of the Biebrza river valley, with the decidedly leading anthropogenic resource constituted by the fortress in Osowiec-Twierdza. It was merely a local phenomenon that the respondents would maintain that the tourist attractiveness of a given area is decisively influenced by the customs and activities of the population, the few remnants of the village architecture, the church structures, the archaeological

excavations, as well as the non-material past of these areas (primarily the events related to the Polish-Russian fighting in 1863, and to the military operations during the World Wars I and II).

Table 1 Factors attracting tourists to the valley of Biebrza river from the viewpoint of its inhabitants*

Type of factor	No. of persons	%
Clean air	102	90,3
Beautiful landscape	100	88,5
Nature	94	83,1
Calm and peace	89	78,8
Possibility of angling	82	72,6
Possibility of canoeing	64	56,6
Life of the inhabitants	12	10,6
Historical monuments	8	7,1
Other assets	6	5,3

* Note: data from the 113 questionnaires filled out in July 1999 by the adult inhabitants of Goniądz (in 1995 the town had 1905 inhabitants)

4.2. Proposals concerning the use of cultural resources of the Biebrza river valley by the management of the Biebrza National Park and other institutions

In spite of the fact that the tourist attractiveness of the cultural resources on the area and in the vicinity of the BPN is assessed by the local population as lower than that of the nature-related resources of the Biebrza river valley, both the management of the Park and the local authorities, along with other institutions located there, ought to undertake actions meant at promotion of such elements of material culture and culture itself which could be interesting for tourists. It appears that the main attracting elements for the tourists interested in culture-related assets of the valley of Biebrza should be for instance:

- ♦ the fortress complex in Osowiec-Twierdza, under the condition, though, that the army facilitates the tourists' entry into the area of the fortress, and that a museum is established within the area of the stronghold, which will not only inform the visitors of the history of the fortress, but also highlight the life of the soldiers who stationed there in the past, present the defence system erected by the Russians on the territory of Poland, etc.;
- ♦ the village of Stare Dolistowo (in 15th century the village of the so called "osoczniczy", the people who guarded the roads between Poland and Lithuania), where an historical-ethnographic museum could be established devoted to the life of inhabitants of Biebrza river valley, with special emphasis on the economy of this area (starting with the Ja wings living there in the Middle Ages, through the consecutive stages of

settling of Poles and the Ruthenian population in this region, until the time close to the present);

- ♦ the (partly) reconstructed village of Grzędy close to the Czerwone Bagno swamps, where an exhibition could be located presenting the origins of the settlement process in this area in the 19th century, as well as the pacification of the village by the Germans in 1943;
- ♦ the fortification system dating from 1939-41 ("Molotov line"); given that numerous elements of the system are destroyed and reconstruction of the system is impossible, at least one well preserved shelter should be found, hosting an exhibition devoted to the Soviet occupation in this region;

Since the decisive majority of the localities and places listed here are located outside of the area of the BPN, the activities of the Park management with this respect are by definition quite limited. The Park management ought to formulate the respective initiative concerning the establishment of a museum or an exhibition, while the concrete activities must be carried out by the appropriate governmental institutions, self-governmental authorities, inhabitants, as well as the NGO's. It is, on the other hand, perfectly within the competence of the management of the BPN to inform the tourists of the cultural monuments and other assets existing in the valley of Biebrza, to support the promotional activities undertaken by other institutions, etc.

5. CONCLUSION

Although the main emphasis in the functioning of the national parks is put on the activities oriented at nature protection, in view of the fact that in numerous parks and in their neighbourhood the structures related to the activity of man are encountered, the authorities of the national parks have also to deal with the protection of the cultural resources. This concerns not only the national parks in Poland, but those in other countries as well. The Biebrza National Park distinguishes itself among Polish national parks not only because private land constitutes a very large share in the overall surface area of the park, but also because of several significant objects of culture which exist in the close vicinity of the park. Putting forward these assets in the tourist offer of the Park can be advantageous both from the point of view of the primary tasks of the Park (meaning first of all protection of nature), and from the standpoint of the local population and local authorities, since this may allow broadening of the labour market, development of service, extension of transport infrastructure, etc. Thereby, the development of culture-oriented tourism within the protected areas should be regarded as an activity beneficial for the protection of nature (through pulling away of the tourists less interested in nature from staying in the particularly valuable parts of the given park) and for the socio-economic activation of the respective regions.

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Resume

Turystyka kulturalna na obszarach chronionych (przykład Biebrzańskiego Parku Narodowego)

Wraz z pojawieniem się w latach osiemdziesiątych tzw. turystyki alternatywnej coraz większą popularnością zaczęła się cieszyć turystyka ekologiczna. Istotnym problemem związanym z rozwojem turystyki na obszarach chronionych jest fakt, że ze względu na przepisy dotyczące ochrony przyrody ruch turystyczny musi być ograniczany. Ograniczenia te na ogół polegają nie tylko na zakazie wstępu na wybranc tereny, ale również na dążeniu do utrzymywania liczby turystów na niewielkim poziomie na całym obszarze parku. Z tego też względu szczególna rola przypada walorom kulturowym, które zazwyczaj nie występują w ścisłych granicach parków narodowych, ale w ich sąsiedztwie. Duże znaczenie ma również infrastruktura turystyczno - rekreacyjna utworzona specjalnie z myślą o turystach odwiedzających obszary chronione. Zadaniem zarówno walorów kulturowych, jak i infrastruktury turystyczno - rekreacyjnej jest stworzenie warunków do zatrzymania części turystów przybywających do parku narodowego poza terenami o szczególnych wartościach przyrodniczych.

Biebrzański Park Narodowy (BPN) leży w północno-wschodniej Polsce i jest największym parkiem narodowym w Polsce. Większą część jego obszaru zajmują

Biebrzański Park Narodowy (BPN) leży w północno-wschodniej Polsce i jest największym parkiem narodowym w Polsce. Większą część jego obszaru zajmują torfowiska. Mimo znacznego zróżnicowania szaty roślinnej oraz krajobrazu, głównym walorem przyrodniczym doliny Biebrzy są unikatowe w skali Europy obszary łąkowe ptaków. Dlatego też BPN jest chętnie odwiedzany przez turystów (rocznie około 16 tysięcy odwiedzających) uprawiających tzw. turystykę ekologiczną, a głównie zwolenników form ekoturystyki (często są to obcokrajowcy). Istotnym problemem turystyki na terenie BPN jest jej koncentracja, co jest niekorzystne zarówno ze względu na zagrożenie dla przyrody, jak i z punktu widzenia miejscowej gospodarki, gdyż znaczna część mieszkańców doliny nie czerpie korzyści z racji obecności turystów. Innym problemem - może mniej istotnym - jest właśnie fakt, że na terenie BPN dominuje turystyka ekologiczna, co często oznacza, że duża część dochodów związanych z turystyką jest odprowadzana na zewnątrz, bez korzyści dla miejscowej gospodarki.

W latach 1998-99 przeprowadzono badania mających na celu określenie głównych zasobów kulturowych na terenie i w otulinie BPN, jak również ustalenie zaleceń dla dyrekcji parku dotyczących możliwości ich wykorzystania. W trakcie badań stwierdzono, że szczególnie znaczenie turystyczne mają: twierdza w Osowcu (przełom XIX i XX w.) i fortyfikacje z okresu II wojny światowej, zabytki budownictwa wodnego z początku XIX w., założenia miejskie z XVI-XVII w. oraz nieliczne zachowane obiekty sakralne (niektóre z XVI-XVIII w.) i drewniane domy z końca XIX w. Istotne znaczenie dla promocji turystycznej terenu i otuliny BPN mogą też mieć zachowane w niektórych miejscowościach obrzędy i historia niematerialna regionu.