PEARLS OF THE PČINJA VALLEY – RURAL TOURISM ATTRACTIONS OF THIS AREA

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Abstract

River Valley Pčinja, with its source part and tributaries that make up the Aegean Sea with its configuration, where the gorge turns between nearby mountains and flat areas, meadows, gardens and of our arable land, remains of old mills, houses and villages, which, still do not leave the inhabitants of this region, contains tourist potential. This valley is adorned with rich flora and fauna where one can see examples of the unique flora and fauna, with its diversity and natural material in the form of a "devil's stone" Witness antiquities and places of worship as well as a special value of the Monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja. The pleasant climate and in some areas of the river gurgling disrupts primordial peace and makes the holiday for eyes, soul of every lover of nature

Keywords: *tourism, mountains, valleys, fauna, flora, monastery vacations, river basin.*

Introduction

Serbia is a country with very diverse tourist potentials. New time and a new way of life, must the motivate people for new sources of revenue, with use of the wealth that nature is gave them. This population does not lack inventiveness, ideas and creations. They lack the entrepreneurial spirit and willingness to develop them, what is not well known.

This content wants to launch initiatives, to show the natural resources, which makes the tourist potential of this desperately poor region. It is necessary; launching a new brand that called is rural tourism.

The idea for the development of rural and adventure tourism in this area is evident in the use of lighthouses on the Croatian part of the Adriatic coast as a special attraction high-class adventurer:

“However, because of the modernization and automation of lighting devices, lighthouses have been declared the monuments of the highest category, and at the beginning of this decade an extremely imaginative idea to turn their interiors into unique apartments for tourists has come up. This was the beginning of a new form of adventure tourism, renting a lighthouse, which is original enough even for the most demanding tourists, and it delights more and more visitors a year after a year”.¹

We will try to highlight, everything that is interesting in this valley, through which flows clear Mountains Rivers. To highlight the flora and fauna of the area and interesting attractions that would attract not only domestic tourists but also by the stranger, who loves nature and peace, but the history and culture of the region, as well as traditional events that are organized here for years. There are sacred, natural formations, swimming and enjoying the nature, hunting and fishing. Who loves urban life, in some thirty kilometers from the monastery St. Prohor of Pčinja are the cities Kumanovo-Macedonia or Vranje - Serbia.

Valleys and gorges of the upper catchment of the river Pčinja through Serbia

The Pčinja River is Aegean basin, with a total length of 135 kilometers. From the source, with several tributaries, makes the Black River near the town of Radovnica in the area of the western slopes of the mountain of Dukat. As a left tributary, flows into the Vardar River, near the village of Katlanovo. The source of this river is part of Serbia but flows through Macedonia, by the amount of water is one of

¹ I. Batinic, Croatian lighthouses - a new tourist attraction of The Adriatic, JPMNT - INTERNATIONAL, Vol.1, No.3, 2013.

the poorest tributary of Vardar River, but this is one of the cleanest rivers in Serbia.

Basin of this river has a total of 3 140 square kilometers, of which 1257 square kilometers located in Serbia, and 1893 square kilometers in Macedonia. This river, which is located in southeastern Serbia, with its valley separates the mountain Kozjak and Starac. River basin Pčinja make numerous tributaries, of which the largest river Surlička, Crna, Radovnička, Kozjedolska and other small rivers. Pčinja River basin is only 2.2% of Serbia's territory, in parts of the territory of the municipality of Trgoviste and Bujanovac, which also makes the space of the most underdeveloped areas of Serbia. Of the total length of the river, which is 135 km long, runs through Serbia with a length of 52 km or 38.5% of the total length of the basin. Below the top "White water" at 1664 m above sea level there are the most important springs. In the source area is called Black River, between the villages of Radovnica and Trgoviste name is Tripušnica and downstream of Trgoviste, upon receipt Kozjedolske River where the river flows to the west, named is Pčinja. Pčinja then flows to the north west of the mountains at the village of Šajince receive the right tributary Korućicu and continue south through a narrow valley between the Rujen and Kozjak Mountains. Villages Sajince and Novo Selo in the first half of the last century and previously, used by water the Pčinja River, to build the mill, where the people from remote villages, using livestock, fifteen or more hours, bringing grain to the grinding, waiting for days to make a flour. Creating your own windmill or a partnership in it at the time, it was a fortune. Of these mills still some persistent weather, such as: Esarova, Toncina, Balidzina, Djordjina...

Now these buildings may constitute a tourist attraction. In this valley, there is the village Prohor of Pcinja. Not far from there, after a 45-kilometer course through Serbia, river moved to the Macedonia in the Pelince village. Residents of Kumanovo used this part for

camping and swimming in the PČINJA River, as a weekend place.²

River Valley Pčinja includes the Mountains of Kozjak and Starac, and Pčinja River valley that separates the two ranges. Beauty and gorge the River Pčinja, deserve special attention. In this area, only 3 kilometers from the town Trgoviste, especially is the dominant region, known to locals as the "Vrazji Kamen" and Pčinja river which is one of the cleanest in Serbia, with a lot of historical cultural monuments, among which are the church of St. Bogorodica is located in the village of Donja Trnica, places of worship from the fourteenth century, dedicated to the Virgin.

The church is located on the dizzy height above the river basin Pčinja on a mound which is surrounded by stone figures of similar figures from "Djavalja varoš". People of Pčinja, are for years have built the church along the river Pčinja. Everything they built during the day, at night the devils would relate to the "Vrazji Kamen". This is created the church at a height of 60 meters, and peoples those stones called "Vrazji kamen".

According to legend in ancient times, loved the guy and the girl from the village of Donja Trnica. He was the only child of the richest houses in the village, and the maiden of the poorest. Their parents did not accept that love. Nonetheless, two of them have decided to get married. The wedding took place at the Church of the Holy Virgin, as the first wedding in the church. The story goes that from construction, no one getting married or baptized in the church because, according to legend, the first couple to be married died immediately after leaving the church - the horse that carried them felled down the slope.

Because of this legend the church was also known as "devil's church." In the second part, a source St. Prohor of Pčinja, treated the people from all kinds of fears. And at the end, the cultural, architectural and construction monastery complex of St. Prohor of Pcinja of 11 century makes this whole area particularly

² /<http://www.smedia.rs/srbijajenajlepsa/detalji/>

important from the standpoint of natural, cultural and historical values.³

This valley boasts a dam on the Tripušnici, which was built recently, after the devastating floods in Trgoviste, has become a tourist attraction where is the daily gathering of several hundred swimmers. If you do adequate tourism infrastructure and promotion, surely it would be economically justified tourist gathering place.

This dam was built to alleviate the decline of nearby landslides "Besno buce" that threatened the entire Trgoviste and did not think about the possibility of creating tourism potential.

Even when the architects of the rules contemplated in the project at the dam unless the practical application and the primary function, can be made part of which this will be designed for swimmers. Fortunately-moving landslides that currently gather at the dam are young people not only from Trgoviste, but also from towns and cities. Especially was visited over the weekend by weekenders, as the Pcinja valley populated, as natives, and weekenders. In certain areas of the valley, there is a pleasant the colorful forest, 100 year old unique specimens of trees, meadows and cottages, as well as old and renovated village house.

This makes an incredibly good base for rural tourism, which would contribute to the economic development of the region.

Valley area Pčinja adorned dams on the river above the monastery, which can be used as a swimming pool as well as the monastery Sv.Prohor Pcinjski, which was built on the wooded slopes of Kozjak, on the left bank of the river Pčinja, until, in the words of climate scientists reach the Mediterranean climate, which gives a special charm. The climate of this area, by Milosavljevic (1948) is a moderate continental climate with considerable influence of the Mediterranean climate that pervades the valley Pčinja. Air temperatures were a few degrees higher than

the north in Serbia, and that less precipitation, and the coefficient of the lowest rainfall and drought index for July and August.

Flora and fauna of the valley Pcinja

The extraordinary richness and great diversity and specificity of plant life growing in the valley Pcinja conditioned by its geological, geomorphologic, pedagogical, hydrological and other natural features. Configuration of the central part of the Balkan Peninsula, whom belongs and Serbia, had extremely heterogeneous and complex system.

Forest vegetation of the valley Pčinja, presented a mosaic phytocenosis shows relict character. Forest communities with distinct relict character develop in sheltered habitats, and characterized in the presence of certain tertiary relict species, which sometimes have a role edificatory.⁴

In this area, which is very rich in vegetation, plants can be grouped biologically diverse areas, depending on the amount of area. There are allocated areas covered by different forest types and has a scrub. It is characteristic of the presence of vegetation and to the rocky cliffs, which causes the curiosity of man and natural power. In addition Pčinja River is the dominant forest complex Kozjak.

This wooded area makes at least 50% of the protected area of special value. The amount of forest has multiple functions as a habitat for many plant and animal species rich biodiversity, which is known as the resource whose conservation is a priority. Numerous dominant forest communities are very specific and rare, and it is necessary to preserve them in an authentic situation. Their preservation indirectly protecting the habitat of many other species. Research has shown that due to the specific site conditions and the influence of Mediterranean and continental climate for many species this region is the north / south border distribution.⁵

³ <http://www.smedia.rs/srbijajenajlepsi/Dolina-reke-Pcinje.htm>

⁴ <http://dolinapcinje.com/fauna.htm>

⁵ <http://www.srbija.travel/priroda/predeli-izuzetnih-odlika/dolina-reke-pcinje/>

Instead to forest grows and ensure sustainable development, in this area lacks measures of evaluation of natural well-being, and notes, inappropriate behavior and unregulated logging, that is necessary to prevent, but not declarative protected areas, but the control activities carried out there.

In this area there are a large number of species of plants, as luck in scientific work, even more than 1000 species of higher plants in the group, makes a great natural resource. A large proportion of this plant is a natural resource wealth.

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In the valley of the river, there is evidence that there are over 140 species of medicinal plants. If we add to this the number of wild and edible plants, plants in chemistry, cosmetics and other industries, this number to significantly increases.⁶

Pćinja River Valley is not only rich in plant life, but also the animal. It can meet almost half of mammals living in Serbia, as many as 51 species.

The most interesting group of vertebrates are animals and large species that are most affected by man. We would like to single out: wolf, fox, wild cat marten and stone marten. We should mention the Balkan lynx is the most threatened of large wild animals, wild boar, rabbits and many species of rodents and more.⁷

The upper reaches of the river seems almost the most interesting part. There are rocky rapids that almost imperceptibly transformed into the whirls, which at first glance catches the eye every angler. Anglers can feel this, and patiently and silently come to catch some prey, like brown trout, which usually resides there.

Besides trout here can to be successfully fishing chub. The average size of these fish ranges 15-20 cm, although often surprised and capital specimens that are rare but valuable. Downstream, Pćinja becomes a bit of wide and gradually slowing down its flow, therefore the warmer water, and hence the more chub.

If you ever come to this area, and if you're angler, certainly should not miss fishing on the river PĆINJA that is very interesting for fishing.

To me, this is one of our most beautiful mountain rivers which are a paradise for fishing.

Of the river source to the Trgoviste, in the river is mostly found that brook trout and rainbow trout. With the beginning of the season in the spring, trout is can be found mainly near the coast where the water is calmer but only in the noon when the water becomes warmer.

The most important thing is that we must not disturb the existing harmony of the river. Sudden movements will force the removal of trout a rapid pace, to the already selected their alternative venue.

The chub is can catch here but downstream around the monastery Prohor Pćinjski, there are the dam that creates a small lake. One of the requirements is to be a longer period of sunny days and fish should be found in shallow water, where is already little warm. The best time to fishing maple is late May and early June, when the fish spawn and move from food, to compensate for the lost energy.⁸

River Pćinja with their sloping cliffs and wooded mountains, is the habitat of many species of birds, and makes a significant area of the protection of birds in Serbia and Europe and is on the list "wetland birds in Europe" / Important Birds Areas in Europe, Bird & Life International 2000/. Area called "Valley Pćinja". In this area, there is numerous bird species, of special national or international importance. Based on field research in this

⁶ dolinapcinje.com

⁷ Dolina pćinje

⁸ izuzetni predeli

area is recorded 67 species of birds, and there is a belief that it is more than recorded.

Some of the birds we noted as: Rock Partridge, Black-eared Wheatear, Egyptian Vulture, also called the White Scavenger Vulture or Pharaoh's Chicken, Long-legged Buzzard, Woodchat Shrike / in Serbia is estimated that there are between 130 to 210 pairs Woodchat Shrike and it is believed that there are at least 10 pairs /

In addition, there are and deserving attention: European Honey Buzzard, Short-toed Snake Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Black Stork, Rock Partridge, Eurasian Eagle-Owl, Sombre Tit, several species woodpecker: European Green Woodpecker, Middle Spotted Woodpecker and other birds of forest and other habitats.⁹

Pcinja Valley - protected areas of special interest

One part of the Pčinja Valley on the border with Macedonia in Serbia in the municipality of Bujanovac and cadastre of the village Starac, Jablanica and Vogance makes area of exceptional importance in order to preserve the existing natural resources and prevent negative impacts on the environment" The protected area is bounded by the slopes of the Starac Mountain (Staracka kula 840 m asl), on the northwest side of the slopes and the Kozjak Mountain (Kitka 1,211 m above sea level) on the southeast side (state border) whose valley, central part of the river flows Pčinja (east-west direction), gently meandering.

In the central part of the natural resource, the bend in the Pčinja River (436 m asl) is situated monastery complex St. Father Prohor of Pčinja of 11 century, the spiritual and cultural center of great importance for the Republic of Serbia.

All overall, landscape values, based on morphological differentiation, spatial alternation forms of vegetation, unaltered rural area and an unpolluted environment make to the special ambient value.

Preserve natural resource, uncontaminated soil, the richness of forest communities, flora

and fauna, surface water of the first category, the presence of small villages rural type and a thousand years Orthodox center, have placed are this part of the Pčinja Valley in the national natural heritage of great importance.

¹⁰

Safe areas seem an area of exceptional importance, the area Kozjak Mountain with part Pčinja River in an area of 2,485 hectares. Initiative by the decision of the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, was not included in the protected area near the monastery St. Prohor of Pcinja, as the subsequent decision of the Audits decision-regulation and bounds, and is based on research results and existing documentation set forth by the need to protect and improve the natural and man-made resources and the preservation of traditional ways of life in this area, to what is necessary presence of the Serbian Orthodox Church - Orthodox Diocese of Vranje. Also, returning Vranje dormitory in possession of the monastery St. Prohor of Pcinja, the monastery complex of the space and equipment qualified to carry out tasks, projects and activities related to the implementation of protection and development. Thus, the area around the monastery categorized as central safe area and management in this area is given Serbian Orthodox Church, so the long-term project activities defined development and preservation of the protected area.

Monastery St. Prohor of Pcinja - center of tourism in the Pcinja valley

This Monastery is one of the oldest Serbian Monasteries, situated on the border with the Republic of Macedonia, on the wooded slopes of Rujan and Kozjak **Mountains** on the left bank of the Pčinja River. Near the monastery there are the village Starac, Klenike, Sv.Petka, Sejace and the other with asphalt road from Davidovac to Trgoviste. It was built 30 kilometers south of Vranje, slightly less than Bujanovac in the Northeast. The Monastery is dedicated to Saint Prohor, who spent his monastic life in a secluded area of Nagoricano Mountains. The sacred space of monastery of

⁹ dolinapcinje.com/ptice

¹⁰ Pio Dolina Pcinje

St. Prohor of Pčinja is defined by the cult of Saint Prohor, one of the Balkan hermits from the 11th century.

His myrrh-flowing remains miraculously healed many sick people over the centuries who asked him to pray for them. The valley of the Vardar River and Pčinja River reaches Mediterranean climate, which here in the north becomes continental.

About the Monastery of Saint Prohor of Pčinja living legend as: "At the end of 10 century, Romanus Diogenes, the Byzantine military commander and member of the military aristocracy in Cappadocia, chasing a wounded deer during hunting which took refuge in Prohor, meets an old hermit, of whom he was afraid and began to run away. Clairvoyant old man Prohor called him and told him to go to Constantinople, where he will be elected Emperor. Diogenes soon became emperor (Romanus IV Diogenes, 1068. - 1071.), but forget about the prophet Prohora, making him the rebuke in his sleep. Emperor is sought hermit in the cave Nagoričkoj, before whom he met him, but as it is not found, raises temple at the site and made it Holy martyr St. George.

On the slopes of the mountain Kozjak is Hermitage of Saint Prohora, the place of his life and death, as well as prints of his feet in the stone. The fresco icon of St. Prohor has been painted on the rock in the woods, quite close to the monastery.

In the 11th century, the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja destroyed by the Ottomans in the 14th century rebuilt the Serbian King Milutin, engaging his court painters / Thessaloniki painters Michael and Astrapi. Monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja was destroyed several times and suffered major damage in 1371 by the Turks. Last time, more precisely in 1817 the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja was destroyed by Albanians. After the liberation from the Turks in 1878, built a magnificent monastery church, as it is today. New church with six domes and bell tower were built in 1898. Years and they surrounded the remains of the walls of the old temple. The old part of the church of Saint Prohor of Pčinja

and its north-western part of the apse is oriental. In the old part of the church of Saint Prohor of Pčinja in the north-western part is the oriental apse. Relics of St. Prohor stored in this part of the monastery, which gives it a special cultural and spiritual value. To the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja, since the time of Saint Sava, the monastery is located sanatoriums - hospitals and schools. The first teachers were monks, mainly from Hilandar Monastery. Primary school in the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja was founded in 1878 year and there were theological and icon-painting school. The frescoes of the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja, is very high quality, is painted towards the end of the 15th century, during the reconstruction of the temple. The rest of the church was painted by T. Jovanovic from Kumanovo in 1904. He painted several interesting compositions, depicting Abbot and greatest benefactor, who, together with the people from the surrounding villages restored monastery. On the south wall of the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja presented Old - Slovenian-hermits hermits Jovan Rilski, Joakim Osogovski and Serbian saints, including the St. Prince Lazar.¹¹

Monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja exudes a spiritual, peaceful and warm atmosphere, thanks to the incorruptible relics of Saint Prohor who was one of the most significant Christian saints. The monastery complex of St. Prohor of Pčinja makes two dormitories - Residence of the King Peter the Liberator's dormitory and Vranjski dormitory, traditional water mill of the 19th century, centuries-old oak trees and flowering meadows, craggy slopes Kozjaka and Rujan Mountains, separated impetuous Pčinja River. Most of the environmental values of the river flow Pčinja contain a number of viewpoints, from the lower area of meadows, forests and grasslands, through terraces and alluvial plains to the highest peaks of the surrounding mountains. Monumental Vranjski dormitory building is unique authentic architecture and one of the most beautiful buildings of this style in Serbia. It was built by between 1854 and 1862 the

¹¹ Manastir Sv.Prohoro Pcinjskog
http://www.panacomp.net/srbija?mesto=srbija_prohor%20pcinjsk

vranje merchant Hadzi - Mihajlo Pogacarevic. Vranjski dormitory monastery complex St. Prohora, with a total storage capacity of about 100 beds is now a remarkable tourist convention center.¹² This dormitory is furnished in the form of hotels and can be categorized as a high storage space with rooms and suites, equipped with authentic furniture from wood and natural materials, which the monastic serenity and whiteness of the facade make a special harmony.

For modern organization of conferences, meetings, presentations and other events there is the modern, technically fully equipped conference hall with 100 seats. In this framework, there are four separate club rooms with booths for simultaneous translation. Guests staying at the Residence of the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja, have available large restaurant traditional atmosphere, and ethno restaurant housed in a traditional mill from the 19th century, with serving traditional specialties, prepared technique "under the bell": *"The Monastic Garden"* (*manastirska bašta*), *"The Vranje style seethe"* (*vranjska klucanica*), *"Sour Hot meal"* (*kisela ljutenica*), *"Leskovac Salad"* (*leskovačka trljanica*), *"Metohija Meal"* (*metohijska tava*), *"Master Jefrem's Meal"* (*cooked in ceramic pot* (*gospodar Jefremovo grne*), *"Palmers kebab"* (*hadžijski čevap*), *"Kozjak roast"* (*kozjački smuk*), *"Fried meat"* (*beli uvijač*), *"Steak of the Nemanjic' Table"* (*biftek sa nemanjičke trpeze*) and a whole range of unusual and tasty forgotten old Serbian dishes.

Certainly, in this small space can't be displayed the beauty of antiquity. Necessary is to come, looking and listening to experts on the culture and art history. Below dormitory on the left bank Pcinja, stretches the beautiful meadows, which are used in the summer for camping and organization of naive art.

Across the river bank and the road leading to the crossing of Macedonia, there are cottage village, which is in summer very much alive. There is space and the many building lots that

are not built, because the municipality does not give permission for the construction of.

" Staying in the monastery of St. Prohor of Pčinja enabling many working-relaxing, spiritual and tourist activities and unforgettable experiences: romantic and authentic wedding, unforgettable baptism, the congress or meeting, relaxing and invigorating walks by meadows and dense forests, through untouched nature Kozjak and Rujan Mountains, tour of Saint Stephen and Saint Panteleimon Monastery, that are nearby the spiritual riches of Serbian culture, meditation in the monastery courtyard, visit the cave where St. Prohor spent his monastic life, seeing the church Assumption of the Virgin in the Mrtvica village 4 or 5 century, a trip to Vranje with sightseeing house, Father Justin Popovic and Bora Stankovic, tour the archaeological site of Kale – Krsevisa, trip to the monastery of St. George in Staro Nagoričane village, trips to Zebrnjak - memorial of the Serbian soldiers killed in Kumanovo Battle during the First Balkan War in Mlado Nagoricane village, sightseeing Neolithic megalithic observatory Kokino, reveille on the grass, hiking, collecting medicinal herbs and berries, bike tours, fishing."¹³

¹²http://www.panacomp.net/srbija?mesto=srbija_pr_ohor%20pcinjsk

¹³<http://www.panacomp.net/srbija>

The Monastery complex St. Prohor of Pcinja

It should be added the possibility of the development of hunting tourism by organizing hunting during the hunting season in certain birds and animals such as the wild boar hunt, or rabbits. It seems to be shall devise for those periods and hunting contests the allocation of awards or some hunting trophies. If hunting so designed, they could in this area and of these such events and to provide foreign exchange earnings, given that such events had to provide internationalization.

Tourists can be offered to go in the Bujanovac and Vranje spa. In the spas there is hotel accommodation as well as private, which mean that there are opportunities for the guests, which in addition to spa tourism could visit the jewels of the Pčinja Valley, rest your mind and enjoy the beauty of the area.

" Bujanovac mud is of volcanic origin and is considered to be among the best in the world. During treatment have three effects and mechanical, thermal and pharmacological. Bujanovac spa is the only spa in the country to modern methods using natural gas carbon dioxide in the treatment of disease. This is done by combining medical treatment and

healing methods with natural factors - mineral water, healing mud and natural gas.¹⁴

As far as accommodation facilities for tourists it is possible to use: motel near Vranje, Hotel Vranje, unforgettable Przar above Vranja and Haremluk - kitchen good food and good barbecue.

Conclusion

Many pearls Valley Pcinja make a fortune, as a gift of nature, who until recently never used. In this area, it is not like others that are specifically required considerable resources for tourism development. Here we have the necessary infrastructure - pretty good roads to the monastery of St. Prohor of Pcinja. Hence, there are most necessary tourist facilities in central and periphery area. We have villages and hospitable farmers, which could accommodate unexpected guests. We have something to show our guests and thus to

¹⁴ S.Trajkovic, Insufficiently utilized natural tourist resources of southern Serbia-(JPMNT) Journal of Process Management – New Technologies, International Vol. 1, No.3, 2013

satisfy, in order to provoke a desire to come back again and to point to a friend that he comes. We lack trained tourism and hospitality worker, who knew why guests are interested. We have not tourism management that his inventions created in the realization of the idea.

It is necessary to socio - political activity to initiate education future catering workers - tourism workers and managers. The big problems are human resources, who are not willing to build a long-term strategy tourism development and to develop operational activities that would provide the development strategy. It is expected social driver, to take advantage of this God's gift - pearl Pčinja Valley.

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