

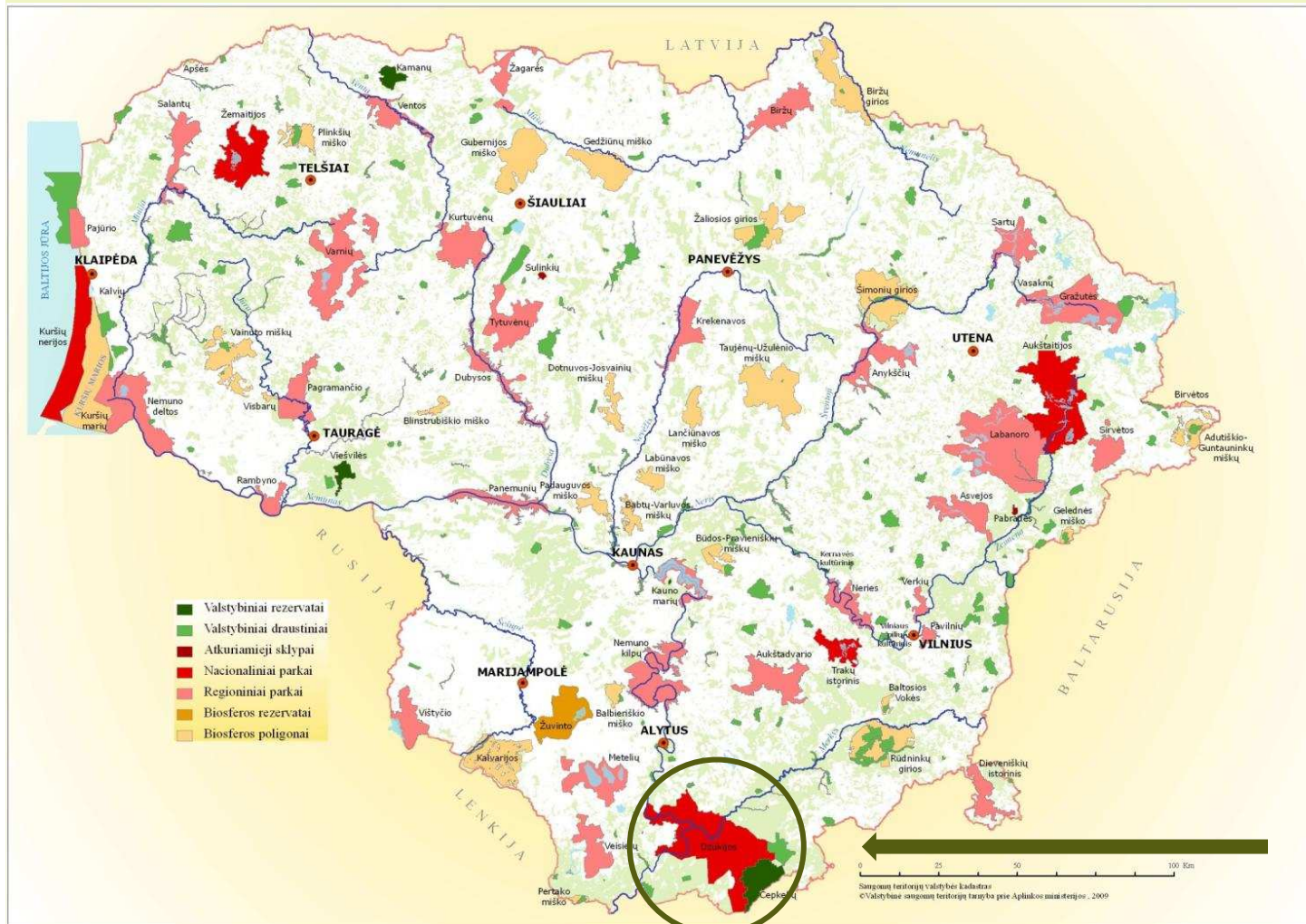


# Čepkeliai-Dzūkija PAN Park - new step toward nature tourism

Mindaugas Lapelė,  
Dzūkija National Park and Čepkeliai Nature  
Reserve Administration, Lithuania



# Protected areas - the best places for nature tourism



**Čepkeliai State  
Nature Reserve  
and  
Dzūkija National  
Park**



# Legal objectives for tourism in protected areas

## ■ Article 3. Objectives of Establishment of Protected Areas

Protected areas shall be established with a view to preserving territorial complexes and objects (properties) of natural and cultural heritage, landscape and biological diversity, ensuring the ecological balance of landscape, well-balanced use and restoration of natural resources, **providing conditions for cognitive tourism**, scientific research and monitoring of the condition of the environment, promoting territorial complexes and objects (properties) of natural and cultural heritage. LAW ON PROTECTED AREAS, 1993, 2001;

- 5. The aims of national park are:
- 5.6. to create possibilities for recreation activity, first of all **for educational and agrotourism**;
- 5.8. to take care of cultural traditions, handcrafts and traditional activity, to spread environment protection ideas and culture. STATUTE OF DZŪKIJA NATIONAL PARK, 1997, 2004





# Čepkeliai Strict Nature Reserve



- ✓ Protected since 1961
- ✓ Strict nature reserve from 1979

- ✓ 11,217 ha without any economical activity
- ✓ Largest raised bog in Lithuania – 5858 ha
- ✓ Ramsar area since 1993
- ✓ Double Natura 2000 territory









# Dzūkija National Park



- ✓ Protection of some areas since 1961, National Park from 1991
- ✓ The largest protected area in Lithuania (58,500 ha);
- ✓ Double Natura 2000 territory;
- ✓ Forests cover 84.6% of area;
- ✓ 36 rivers and rivulets;
- ✓ 80 villages, about 3600 inhabitants;
- ✓ Unique cultural landscapes - mosaic of small villages, fields and pastures, scattered in the woods



- ✓ Picturesque valleys of rivers, inland dunes, hills and lakes.
- ✓ Traditional way of living, old wooden architecture, and crafts









Žiogeliai



# A lot to see







# Create traditions of tourism in protected areas

- Building of infrastructure (trails, visitors centres, recreational facilities), awareness raising and promotion of areas
- Traditions are changing - from sunbathing on the lake shore through excursions on big busses to active tourism as hiking, biking or canoeing
- In protected areas conventional tourism still dominate with some addition of ecological education
- Our goal – increasing of small scale nature tourism with low impact on ecosystems and careful monitoring of consequences









# Tourism in nature not always good for nature

- Love to death – case of Ula river:
  - popularity and impacts on ecosystems,
  - disappointment of visitors,
  - regulation of canoe number
  - dissatisfaction of tour operators
- Countryside tourism - dominate hotels in rural areas, promoting feasts and adventures
- Problem of ecological consciousness of visitors and tourism organisers – are we ready for nature tourism







# What to do?



- Clarifying of priorities – where and what we want to achieve
- Looking for consensus with stakeholders but keeping untouchable key principles
- Researches on recreational capacity and tourism impact on ecosystems
- Management of visitors using territorial planning and some regulations
- Promotion of eco or nature tourism





# Obstacles for nature tourism

- No real understanding on decision making level
- Seeking for the fast and high profit
- Insufficient activity of local people
- Lack of qualified guides – a lot of environmentalists but not so many naturalists
- Knowledge of languages



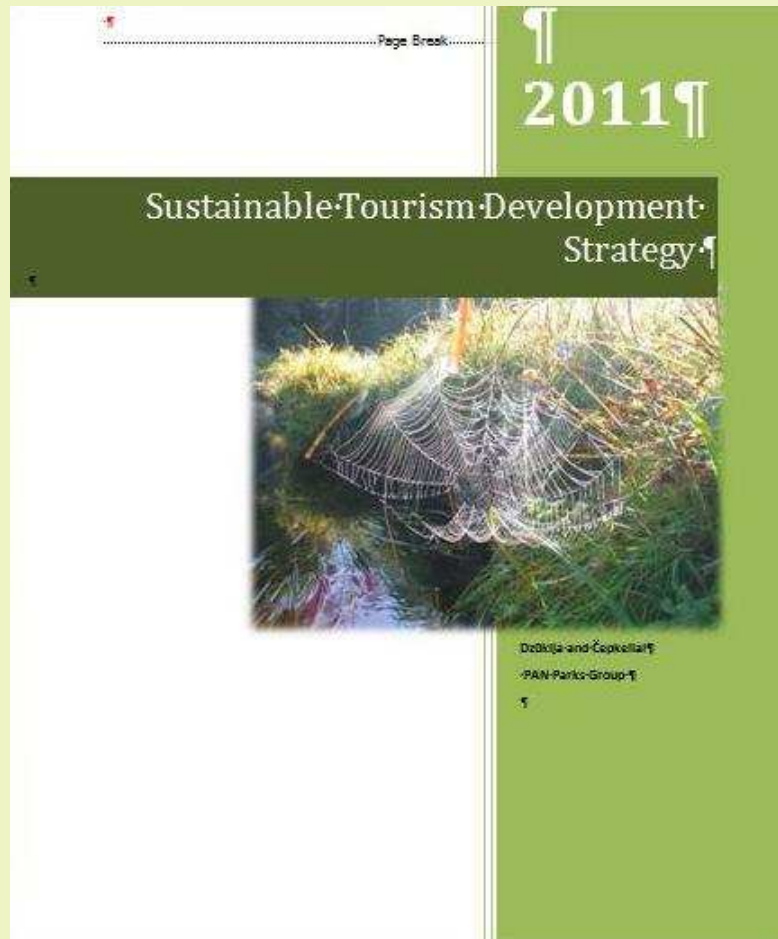


# Implementing of nature tourism

- PAN Park verification process 2007 – 2011
- Courses for local guides. Project of Dzūkija National Park Administration, 2008
- Strengthening institutional capacities by preparing nature guide programme for development of ecotourism in protected areas. Project of Nature Heritage Fund, 2009-2010
- Travel different . Project of Public institution „Consultants for communities’ relations“, 2011- 2012
- Travelling slowly. Project of BEF Lithuania 2011-2013
- Awareness raising about nature and culture heritage and ecological tourism resources use for sustainable development of Dzūkija National Park and Čepkeliai State Nature Reserve. Project of Dzūkija NP and Čepkeliai Reserve administration, 2011-2012



# Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy



- **Contents**
- **1. POTENTIAL OF NATURE TOURISM IN LITHUANIA**
- **2. BRIEF ANALYSIS OF NATURE TOURISM IN THE DZŪKIJA REGION**
- **3. VISITORS AND TOURISTS OF THE PROTECTED AREAS**
- **4. THE STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE ČEPKELIAI/DZŪKIJA NATURE REGION**
- **4.2. THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM IN THE PROTECTED AREA**
- **4.3. ESSENTIAL ASSUMPTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**
- **4.4. FURTHER COOPERATION PRINCIPLES**
- **4.5. DIRECTIONS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT**
- **4.6. SWOT ANALYSIS OF CONSIDERED CONDITION**
- **5. MISSION, VISION, GOALS**
- **6. ACTION PLAN FOR STRATEGIC**





NEWSROOM

LEARN

CONTACT

search..

OK

WHAT WE DO

WHAT YOU CAN DO

DONATE NOW



Extensive Lithuanian boglands are among the best of Europe's wildernesses

[read more](#)



Send a tweet to show your support for wilderness

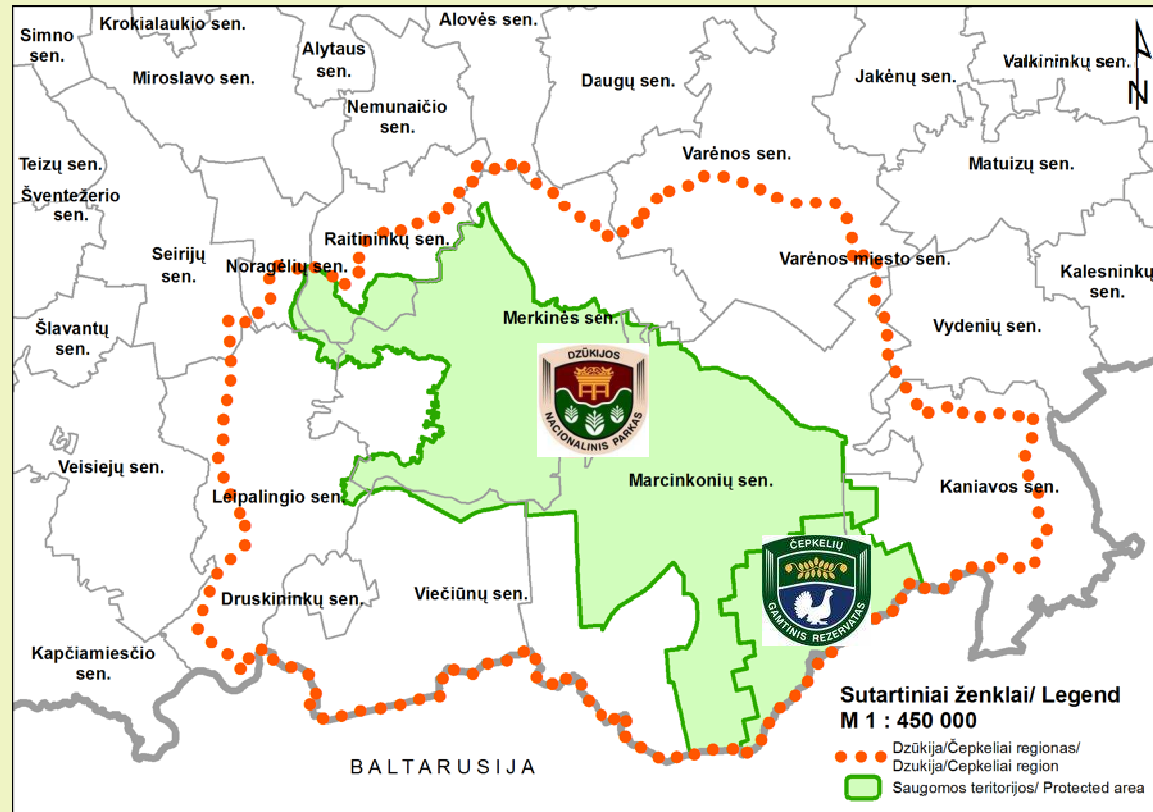
[read more](#)

- **Cepkeliai-Dzukija is the twelfth PAN Park, certified in 2011**
- Cepkeliai-Dzukija National Park in Lithuania joined the PAN Parks network of wilderness areas as it proved excellence in preserving wilderness, untouched nature providing refuge for a huge diversity of species.
- The large protected area's mires with bog woodlands and small lakes in the Cepkeliai reserve comprise the PAN Parks Wilderness area, while Dzukija National Park provides home to extended pine forests with rich diversity of species at protected riverine habitats and sand dune complexes.



# Čepkeliai – Dzūkija PAN Park

- Total area – 69746 ha
- Core area of Čepkeliai Nature Reserve - 11227 ha
- From 2010 these protected areas are managed by joint administration







# Benefits and challenges

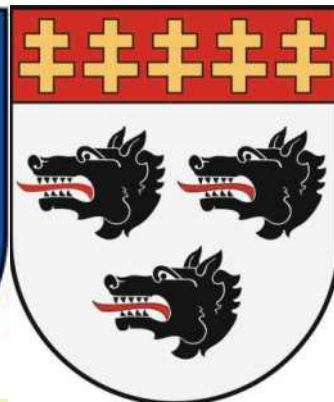
- The PAN Parks Foundation focuses its efforts on ensuring that Europeans protect wilderness areas so they remain free from the footprint of human development.
- Joining the PAN Parks network is an important tool for improving wilderness protection in our protected areas, involving local communities, sharing benefits of wilderness with the public.
- For municipalities and local communities it is international marketing, ecological tourism development and new possibilities for local business.
- It is a challenge for us how to transference these possibilities into real achievements

# Lessons to learn



- Process of verification was as much important as results
  - Increasing of communication and cooperation
  - Seeking for consensus with different stakeholders
  - Awareness raising possibilities
- Local authorities and people are expecting to much from protected areas administration instead to be more active themselves
- Our main role is to stimulate processes





# Increasing visitors number





# Mushrooms tourism





# Explaining nature through culture





# Workshop on edible plants



Learning



Collecting



Preparing



Enjoying results



# Profit which impossible to evaluate

- Discovering of another Lithuania
- Knowledge and appreciation of nature
- Good feelings and relaxing
- Relations between people – background for future cooperation
- Support for preservation of nature and cultural heritage





[www.cepkeliai-dzukija.lt](http://www.cepkeliai-dzukija.lt)