

---

# ANALYSIS OF SCIENTIFIC AND LEGAL TREATMENT OF PROTECTED NATURAL AREAS WITH REFERENCE TO THE MOST SIGNIFICANT ELEMENTS OF THE IMPACT OF TOURISM ON THE ENVIRONMENT

---

Bojana Drašković<sup>1</sup>, Olga Perović<sup>2</sup>

\*Corresponding author E-mail: [bodraskovic@gmail.com](mailto:bodraskovic@gmail.com)

---

## ARTICLE INFO

Review Article

Received: 02 February 2022

Accepted: 10 March 2022

doi:10.5937/ekoPolj2201281D

UDC 349.6:[338.48:502.131.1

---

### **Keywords:**

*Protected natural areas, Environment, Natural values, Tourism, Law on nature protection*

**JEL:** F64, K15, K32, O13, O44, P18, Q15, Q56, R11, Z32

## ABSTRACT

One of the main goals of the normative approach in the field of tourism development is a sustainable concept in tourism development. In this context, it is very interesting to look at the essence of the scientific and legal treatment of protected areas and the impact of tourism on the environment. The subject of analysis in the paper in the theoretical part was the relevant conceptual framework, and a brief elaboration of the scientific approach in the study of the characteristics and significance of tourism, natural values, protected natural assets, and protected areas in Serbia. In the research part of the paper, the subject of analysis was the legal treatment of protected areas, as well as the analysis of the impact of tourism on the environment, mostly determined by the network of primary and secondary impacts of tourism activities on elements and parameters of environmental quality. The purpose is to see the importance of protection and preservation of protected areas, and the pressures that the environment suffers due to tourism development, to emphasize the importance of timely understanding and assessment of the type and scope of impact of tourist activities on destination resources.

© 2022 EA. All rights reserved.

---

## Introduction

Tourism is a very important economic branch, which has experienced a strong expansion in the last two decades and is continuously developing every year.

The development of tourism is conditioned by numerous factors, and the largest number of them is determined by the characteristics of a specific locality. In that sense, a significant foundation for the development of tourism is certainly the predispositions

- 
- 1 Bojana Drašković, PhD, Associate Professor, Faculty for Construction Management, University „Union – Nikola Tesla“, Serbia, E-mail: [bodraskovic@gmail.com](mailto:bodraskovic@gmail.com), ORCID ID (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7213-0010>)
  - 2 Olga Perović, LLM, PhD candidate at the Faculty of Law for Commerce and Judiciary, The University Business Academy in Novi Sad, Serbia, E-mail: [odvjetnik.olga.perovic@gmail.com](mailto:odvjetnik.olga.perovic@gmail.com)

that a certain space has at its disposal, and which are mostly conditioned by the natural values of a given space. Therefore, over time, it has become quite certain that the development of tourist potential is, among other things, conditioned by many natural attractions, as well as the spatial diversity of natural potentials.

However, a significant feature of the expansive development of tourism is certainly the impact on the environment, which has its primary and secondary effects, so in this context, it is often pointed out that the development of tourism is associated with numerous opportunities for environmental pollution. The attitude of tourism towards the environment is conditioned not only by natural values and benefits that a locality has but also by the level of economic development of the country, cultural approach nurtured in the field of environmental protection, natural values, and natural assets, as well as adequate normative solutions (constitutional provisions, laws, and bylaws) in the field of management and protection of the environment and natural values of a particular area.

Therefore, what and how much impact tourism will have on the environment, natural values, protected natural assets, and within them, protected areas, largely depends on the attitude of the community expressed in clearly defined, sufficiently comprehensive, and following European standards, harmonized legal provisions.

According to Article 3, item 3 of the Law on Environmental Protection (“Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia”, no. 135/2004, 36/2009, 36/2009 – other law, 72/2009 - other law, 43/2011 – decision of the CC, 14/2016, 76/2018, 95/2018 - other law and 95/2018 - other law), “natural values are natural resources that make up: air, water, land, forests, geological resources, flora, and fauna.” The same article defines the concept of protected natural asset, in such a way that “a protected natural asset is a preserved part of nature of special values and characteristics (geodiversity, biodiversity, landscapes, landscapes, etc.), which has a lasting ecological, scientific, cultural, educational, health - recreational, tourist and other significance, due to which it enjoys special protection as good of general interest” (item 4). In Article 4, item 60 of the Law on Nature Protection (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 36/2009, 88/2010, 91/2010 - corrigendum, 14/2016, 95/2018 - other law and 71/2021), “natural values are parts of nature that deserve special protection due to their sensitivity, endangerment or rarity, to preserve biological, geological and morphological and landscape diversity, natural processes and ecosystem services or for scientific, cultural, educational, health-recreational and other public interest.”

Having this in mind, the paper will deal with the conceptual definition of relevant concepts, and a brief elaboration of the scientific approach in studying the characteristics and significance of tourism, natural values, protected natural assets, and protected areas in the Republic of Serbia. treatment of primarily protected areas, as the most important types of protected natural assets, as well as the impact of tourism on the environment, primarily determined by the network of primary and secondary impacts of tourism activities on the elements and parameters of environmental quality.

The paper is methodologically based on a theoretical analysis of relevant contemporary attitudes, in theory, normative analysis of applicable laws, and a qualitative assessment of particular conclusions, on the subject of research.

### Literature review

The environment “represents everything that surrounds us, that is, everything with which human life and production activity is directly or indirectly connected” (Hamidović, 2012: 235; Trišić, 2020; Luković et al., 2021; Živković et al., 2019). Therefore, the human right to a healthy environment is one of the basic human rights, which is defined as such in Article 74 of the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia.

Preservation and protection of the environment are imperative in modern society. The environment is one of the pillars of sustainable development. In this context, “environmental principles belong to the group of basic principles on which sustainable development, in general, is based, especially sustainable development of rural parts of a certain territory and imply above all respect for the natural diversity of the destination” (Cvijanović, Matijašević Obradović, Škorić 2017: 871). According to Jovašević (2009: 26), “finding the optimal relationship between unhindered economic growth and development and the preservation and protection of the environment is not an easy task.”

Sources of pollution of the environment and its elements, according to some theoretical views, can be natural and artificial (anthropogenic). Natural sources are “all processes that take place in the biosphere against the will of man (volcanoes, earthquakes, cosmic dust). Artificial (anthropogenic) are the products of all human activities (extraction and processing of mineral raw materials, thermal and nuclear power plants, agriculture, industry, traffic, tourism, etc.)” (Đorđević, 2018: 466). Indicators of endangering the environment “give us the right to determine that the social causes of endangerment are more prevalent than natural ones and that the organization of the system of its protection and improvement depends on understanding the causes of endangerment” (Keković, Todorović, 2008: 24).

This indicates a significant interactive relationship between tourism and the environment. What is particularly noteworthy in this area are the different environmental impacts of tourism. It is clear that the planned and realized tourist potential in a certain area, with a well-done analysis of the impact on the environment, does not manifest harmful effects (or at least not to a greater extent) on natural values, protected natural assets, and areas. Before analyzing the primary and secondary impacts of tourism on the environment, several important conceptual determinants and characteristics of tourism as an economic branch will be determined here.

The basic position during the conceptual definition of tourism is that this economic branch is essentially a voluntary migration of tourist services users, where their motives, needs, and aspirations determine the type or form of tourism. Thus, “tourism is considered all the activities of tourists when visiting certain locations, regardless of their duration” (Camilleri, 2018: 4). According to Article 3, item 42 of the Law on Tourism

(“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, no 17/2019), a tourist trip is defined as “a combination of two or more tourist services (transport, accommodation, and other tourist services), established or prepared by the travel organizer independently or at the request of the passenger, for more than 24 hours or a shorter period if it includes one night, as well as one or more nights that include only the accommodation service for a certain period or time sold at a single price.”

According to Cvijanović and associates, “a planned approach to the development of tourism is the backbone for its successful development” (Cvijanović, Vuković, Kljajić, 2011: 11.). Also, the field of tourism development necessarily includes the concept of sustainable development as a “modern development concept” (Matijašević Obradović, Škorić, 2017: 283), which “harmonizes the social, economic and environmental interests of present and future generations” (Ristić, 2013: 229), and the continuous development of modern forms of tourism can lead to a “new relationship between the environment, work, and leisure, in terms of sustainability of all, especially rural areas” (Fagioli, Diotallevi, Ciani, 2014: 166).

Tourism as an economic branch has proven to be especially important in the field of rural development. Namely, “on the one hand, tourism has a great impact on the development of rural areas, and on the other hand, the importance of tourism is reflected in the creation of markets for agricultural products, given that they are important inputs for hotels and restaurants” (Ćirić, Pocuca, Raicević, 2014: 26). In addition to the fact that the sustainable development of rural tourism must be economically justified, it must also contribute to the preservation of natural, social, and cultural characteristics of the tourist destination (Počuča, Matijašević Obradović, Drašković, 2017: 1252).

Sustainable development as a concept in the planning and implementation of tourism activities, with mandatory environmental impact analysis, greatly contributes to the preservation of natural values and protected natural assets, which include protected areas, protected species, and movable protected natural documents).

Natural resources are “elements of natural wealth, which differ from social wealth, such as buildings, equipment, and supplies of materials and goods, which are the result of combining natural goods with human labor and capital” (Milenković, 2000: 57).

The term natural resource should be understood as “those natural goods that a human being, at a given level of technological and economic organization, can transform within products or services and therefore put into economic function. Thus, for example, oil, certain minerals, and certain ore resources from the beginning of the last century were completely unusable goods - natural capital. Thus, they did not have the hallmark of economic resources. Only with fundamental, and then applied research and discoveries, oil becomes an economically usable fossil fuel, and therefore an economic category: energy, raw materials, goods, wealth, a resource important for development” (Avramović, 2014: 31).

According to the official data of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, “the nature of Serbia is characterized by a high diversity of flora and fauna and represents

a significant part of the wealth and diversity of European natural heritage. Its most representative, most preserved parts are placed under legal protection” (Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, Nature protection in Serbia, 2021).

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has defined the basic categories of natural resources presented in the following table.

**Table 1.** Protected natural assets according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature categorization

Category	Title	Purpose of protection
I (Ia i Ib)	Strict nature reserve / wilderness area	The protected area is managed only for scientific purposes or for wildlife protection
II	National park	The protected area is managed mainly for the protection of ecosystems and recreation
III	Natural monument	The protected area is managed mainly for the protection of special natural values
IV	Habitat / Species Management Area	The protected area is managed through management interventions
V	Protected land / sea landscape	The protected area is managed mainly to protect the landscape
VI	Resource management area	The protected area is managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems

Source: Avramović, 2014: 46.

According to Article 27 of the Law on Nature Protection (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 36/2009, 88/2010, 91/2010 - corrigendum, 14/2016, 95/2018 - other law and 71/2021), we distinguish the following categories of protected natural assets: protected areas (strict nature reserve, special nature reserve, national park, natural monument, protected habitat, landscape of exceptional features, nature park); protected species (strictly protected wild species, protected wild species); movable protected natural documents.

### Materials and methods

The subject of the analysis is the analysis of the legal treatment of primarily protected areas, as the most significant types of protected natural assets, as well as the analysis of the impact of tourism on the environment, primarily determined by the network of primary and secondary impacts of tourism activities on environmental quality elements and parameters. The paper is methodologically based on a theoretical analysis of relevant contemporary attitudes in theory, normative analysis of applicable laws, and a qualitative assessment of conclusions, on the subject of research.

The research is based on current laws and bylaws and official data of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia.

The legal provisions that will be consulted below are covered by the Law on Nature Protection (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia,” no. 36/2009, 88/2010, 91/2010

- corr., 14/2016, 95/2018 - other law and 71/2021), and bylaws by the Rulebook on evaluation criteria and the procedure of categorization of protected areas (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, no. 97/2015).

### **Research results and discussion**

According to Article 28 of the Law on Nature Protection, protected areas are those areas “that have a pronounced geological, biological, ecosystem and/or landscape diversity and that are important as habitats for bird species and other migratory species significant under international regulations may be declared protected areas of general interest. Protected areas can be connected cross-border with protected areas of neighboring countries. The management plan and protection measures of the protected area, which is cross-border connected with the protected area of the neighboring state, shall be determined by agreement with the competent authorities of that state, and with the consent of the Ministry.”

According to the official data of the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia, “based on the applied measures of institutional nature protection for seven decades, the area of protected areas in Serbia currently amounts to 678,237 ha or 7.66% of the territory of Serbia. There are 471 protected areas under protection: 5 national parks, 18 nature parks, 21 landscapes of exceptional features, 70 nature reserves, 6 protected habitats, 315 natural monuments, 36 areas of cultural and historical significance protected under the previous Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on the Protection of Cultural Monuments, as well as 1784 strictly protected wild species and 860 protected wild species of plants, animals, and fungi” (Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia, Nature protection in Serbia, 2021).

To protect its biodiversity resources, the Government of Serbia has “established the System of Protected Areas of Serbia, whose long-term goal is to establish a scientifically based and representative regional network of well-managed protected areas that are financed sustainably, as well as to ensure effective participation of local communities and achieve social and economic benefits” (Flores, Obradovic, 2015: 9).

Protected areas are areas “that have a pronounced geological, biological, ecosystem, and/or landscape diversity and are therefore declared protected areas of general interest by the act of protection. In addition to the stated values, the habitats of bird species and other migratory species important by international regulations have been defined, which can be declared protected areas of general interest” (Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia. Protected areas, 2021). Evaluation, i.e., determination of the value and significance of the protected area, according to the Rulebook on evaluation criteria and procedure of categorization of protected areas “is performed concerning the expression of main natural features, phenomena, and processes of interest for the protection of the area, as well as functions and purposes. Accordingly, protected areas are classified into 3 categories: of exceptional (international, national - I category), of large (regional - II category) and of local importance - III category.”

Category I, according to Article 6 of the Rulebook, includes an area that is declared: a strict nature reserve, natural monument or habitat, if it meets at least three of the mentioned criteria; special nature reserve, nature park, or landscape of exceptional features, if it meets at least four mentioned criteria; national park if it meets all seven criteria. Category II, according to Article 7 of the Rulebook, includes an area that does not meet the criteria and conditions of Article 6 and is declared: a strict nature reserve, natural monument or habitat, if it meets at least two criteria; special nature reserve, nature park or landscape of exceptional features, if it meets at least three criteria. According to Article 8 of the Rulebook, a protected area is classified in III category - local significance, if it meets the conditions for declaring protection under the law, has values of interest to the municipality or city, and does not meet the criteria from the previous two categories.

According to the provisions of the Law on Nature Protection, protected areas are classified into seven types: strict nature reserve, special nature reserve, national park, natural monument, protected habitat, the landscape of exceptional features, and nature park. An overview and normative determination of each category of protected areas are given in the following table.

**Table 2.** Review and normative regulation of protected areas according to the Law on Nature Protection in the Republic of Serbia

Protected area	Article of the law	Legislative provisions
Strict and special nature reserve	Article 29	The strict nature reserve is an area of unaltered natural features with representative natural ecosystems, intended exclusively for the preservation of native nature, gene pool, ecological balance, monitoring of natural phenomena and processes, scientific research that does not disturb natural features, values, phenomena, and processes. A special nature reserve is an area with unaltered or slightly altered nature, of special importance due to its uniqueness, rarity, or representativeness, and which includes the habitat of endangered wild species of plants, animals, and fungi, without settlements or with rare settlements in which man lives in harmony with nature, preservation of existing natural features, genetic fund, ecological balance, monitoring of natural phenomena and processes, scientific research and education, controlled visits and preservation of a traditional way of life.
National park	Article 30	The National Park is an area with a large number of diverse natural ecosystems of national importance, prominent landscape features, and cultural heritage in which man lives in harmony with nature, intended to preserve existing natural values and resources, overall landscape, geological and biological diversity, and meet scientific, educational, spiritual, aesthetic, cultural, tourist, health and recreational needs and other activities following the principles of nature protection and sustainable development.

Protected area	Article of the law	Legislative provisions
Natural monument	Article 31	A natural monument is a small unaltered or partially altered natural spatial whole, object or phenomenon, physically clearly expressed, recognizable and/or unique, representative geomorphological, geological, hydrographic, botanical, and/or other features, as well as botanical value formed by human work than scientific, of aesthetic, cultural or educational significance.
Protected habitat	Article 32	A protected habitat is an area that includes one or more types of natural habitats important for the conservation of one or more populations of wild species and their communities.
Landscape of exceptional features	Article 33	The landscape of exceptional features is an area of recognizable appearance with significant natural, biological-ecological, aesthetic, and cultural-historical values, which has developed over time as a result of the interaction of nature, natural potentials of the area, and traditional way of life of the local population.
Nature park	Article 34	Nature Park is an area of well-preserved natural values with mostly preserved natural ecosystems and picturesque landscapes, intended to preserve the overall geological, biological, and landscape diversity, as well as to meet scientific, educational, spiritual, aesthetic, cultural, tourist, health, and recreational needs and other activities. with a traditional way of life and the principles of sustainable development.

Source: Nature Protection Law, *Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia*, no. 36/2009, 88/2010, 91/2010 - corr., 14/2016, 95/2018 - other law and 71/2021

As can be seen from the attached table, the Law on Nature Protection in its six articles regulates each protected area, by defining the legal definition of the area, categorizing and classifying individual areas, determining measures and activities that cannot be taken in each specific area determined the manner of determining protection measures and stated the conditions of the visit to certain areas.

Thus, for example, according to Article 29 of the Law on Nature Protection, “a special nature reserve can be floristic, mycological, forest and other vegetation, zoological (ornithological, ichthyological, and others), geological, paleontological, hydrogeological, hydrological, and others. In a strict and special nature reserve, it is forbidden to perform actions and activities and perform activities that may impair the properties due to which they have been declared a protected natural asset (picking and destroying plants, disturbing, capturing and killing animals, introducing new biological species, etc.). Visiting a strict and special nature reserve for education can be done based on a permit issued by the manager of the protected area. The measures for the protection of the strict and special nature reserve are determined in more detail by the act on the proclamation of the protected area.”

According to Article 30, “actions and activities that do not endanger the originality of nature are allowed in the national park, as well as performing activities that are in the function of education, health-recreational and tourist needs, a continuation of the traditional way of life of local communities, and in the way that does not endanger the survival of species, natural ecosystems, and landscapes, following this law and the management plan issued by the manager. These activities may be limited to preserving



the originality of the nature of the national park. The measures for the protection of the national park and the manner of its use are determined in more detail by a special law.”

According to Article 31, “a natural monument may be geological, geomorphological, speleological, hydrological, botanical, and other. All actions and activities that endanger its features and values are prohibited on the natural monument. Measures for the protection of natural monuments and the manner of its use shall be determined in more detail by the act on the proclamation of a protected area.”

According to Article 32, “the goal of habitat protection is the protection of endangered and rare habitat types, ecosystems and/or indigenous wild species at the national and/or international level; ensuring the favorable condition of populations of indigenous wild species and/or species; enabling the uninterrupted development of some of the life phases of autochthonous wild species; protection of extremely endangered and vulnerable species; enabling gene flow between populations of the species; providing migratory routes and rest areas; enabling scientific research, population management, and education. Actions and activities that endanger or damage one or more habitat types are prohibited in a protected habitat. The act on the proclamation of a protected habitat determines in more detail its significance, purpose, and protection measures.”

According to Article 33, “a landscape of outstanding features may be a natural landscape of outstanding features and a cultural landscape of outstanding features. The natural landscape of exceptional features is an area of significant biological-ecological and aesthetic value, where the traditional way of life of the local population has not significantly disturbed nature and natural ecosystems. The cultural landscape of exceptional features is an area of significant landscape, aesthetic and cultural-historical value that has developed over time as a result of the interaction of nature, natural potentials of the area, and the traditional way of life of the local population. In the area of exceptional features, actions and activities that violate the primary natural and created values and the character of the landscape is prohibited. Protection measures, the manner of performing economic and traditional activities and the use of natural and created values in the area of exceptional features, are determined in more detail by the act on the proclamation of a protected area.”

According to Article 34, “economic and other activities and activities that endanger its essential features and values are not allowed in the nature park. Protection measures, the manner of performing economic activities and the use of natural values in the nature park are determined in more detail by the act on the proclamation of a protected area.”

Given the interactive relationship and impact of tourism on the environment, especially on protected natural assets and protected areas, and precisely because of the “potential danger that a poorly planned or implemented tourism program may have on the environment, it is necessary to develop precautions and remediation of harmful consequences” (Stojanović, 2011: 79). Because “each of the impacts on the environment entails secondary reactions, which in most cases are presented as measures for remediation and preventive protection of the environment” (Stojanović, 2011: 79). Therefore, any tourism activity should involve and include an environmental impact analysis.

In accordance with the above, the following table presents the analysis of the network of the primary and secondary impacts of tourism on the environment.

**Table 3.** Tourism and the network of primary and secondary impact on the environment

Activities	Pressure	Primary impact	Secondary influence - reaction
1.a Construction of necessary facilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban expansion</li> <li>• Traffic network</li> <li>• Tourist services</li> <li>• Marinas, ski lifts</li> </ul> 1.b Change in land use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of areas intended for recreation</li> </ul>	Changes in the local environment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of constructed facilities</li> <li>• Exclusion of areas from the primary purpose</li> </ul>	1. Habitat changes 2. Changes in the population of certain species 3. Changes in people's health and satisfaction 4. Changes in visual quality	Individual: Influence on aesthetic values. Collective measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expenditure on environmental improvement</li> <li>• Expenditure for the organization of protection</li> <li>• Planning for the protection of wildlife and national parks</li> <li>• Control of recreation area planning</li> </ul>
2. Pollutant emissions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urbanization</li> <li>• Traffic</li> </ul>	Pollutant deposition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emission</li> <li>• Wastewater spillage</li> <li>• Accumulation of solid waste</li> <li>• Noise (traffic, airports)</li> </ul>	1. Changes in the quality of the environment: Water Air Land 2. Health and condition of plant and animal species 3. Human health	Individual - defensive measures: Local population, measuring air quality, waste recycling, protests and attitudes towards tourists, changes in attitudes towards the environment, decrease in tourism revenues Collective-defensive measures: Measures to eliminate pollution originating from tourism, cleaning rivers and beaches
3. Tourist activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skiing</li> <li>• A walk</li> <li>• Hunting</li> <li>• Cycling</li> <li>• Collection of natural fruits</li> </ul>	Destruction of vegetation and land by stepping or in some other way	1. Habitat changes 2. Changes in the population of plant species	Collective-defensive measures: Elimination of influence through protection management Establishment of national parks and protection of certain species Control in access to recreational areas
4. Population dynamics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Population growth</li> </ul>	Density	1. Overload 2. The need for natural resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Earth and water</li> <li>• Energy</li> </ul>	Individual: Attitude towards this type of pollution Collective: Service support

Source: Stojanović, 2011: 80.

The analysis of the network of the primary and secondary impacts of tourism on the environment highlights the activities undertaken and the pressures that the environment suffers due to tourism development and expansion of tourism. Also, it especially emphasizes the primary influence and reaction (secondary influence) of the social community to the essence of the interactive relationship between tourism and the environment. The essence of this way of thinking is in the “timely understanding and assessment of the type and scope of the impact of tourist activities on the resources of the destination. The unwillingness of the population and their community to face the problem of negative impact as soon as possible will cause bigger, deeper and more serious problems, which leads to degradation with the scale of the catastrophe” (Stojanović, 2011: 80).

### **Conclusions**

One of the basic goals of the normative approach in the field of tourism development is a sustainable concept in tourism development, as well as planned sharing in this domain. Tourism is an economic branch that is in a highly interactive relationship with both natural and social values. Namely, on the one hand, users of tourist services are increasingly insisting on the inclusion of “untouched” natural values in the tourist offer, while on the other hand, tourism is often a factor in disrupting and degrading the elements of the environment. In that sense, a sustainable, i.e., “responsible” concept in the development of tourism is an approach that enables a responsible attitude of tourism towards the natural environment, which is at the same time one of the most important levers in the further development of tourism itself.

The subject of analysis in the paper in the theoretical part was the relevant conceptual framework, and a brief elaboration of the scientific approach in studying the characteristics and significance of tourism, natural values, protected natural assets, and protected areas in the Republic of Serbia. In the research part of the paper, the subject of analysis was the legal treatment of primarily protected areas, as the most important types of protected natural assets, as well as the analysis of the impact of tourism on the environment, primarily determined by the network of primary and secondary impacts of environmental activities. The paper is methodologically based on a theoretical analysis of relevant contemporary attitudes, normative analysis of applicable laws, as well as a qualitative assessment of conclusions, about research.

In conclusion, it can be pointed out that the Law on Nature Protection in its six articles regulates each protected area, by defining the legal definition of the area, categorizing and classifying individual areas, determining measures and activities that cannot be undertaken in each specific area, determining the method of determining protection measure and stated the conditions of the visit to certain areas.

The analysis of the network of the primary and secondary impact of tourism on the environment highlights the activities and pressures that the environment suffers due to tourism development and expansion of tourism, to emphasize the importance of timely understanding and assessing the type and scope of impact of tourism activities on destination resources.

## Conflict of interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## References

1. Avramović, D. (2014). Menadžment prirodnim resursima nacionalnih parkova Srbije - doktorska disertacija. Fakultet zaštite na radu, Niš. [in English: Avramović, D. (2014). Management of Natural Resources of National Parks of Serbia - Doctoral dissertation. Faculty of Occupational Safety, Niš.].
2. Camilleri, M. A. (2018). *Travel Marketing, Tourism Economics and the Airline Product - An Introduction to Theory and Practice*. Springer Nature, Switzerland.
3. Ćirić, M., Počuča, M. & Raičević, V. (2014). Level of customer orientation and customer protection in hotels in Serbia. *Economics of Agriculture*, 61(1), 25-39.
4. Cvijanović, D., Vuković, P. & Kljajić, N. (2011). Stanje i perspektive razvoja ruralnog turizma u Republici Srbiji. In M. Milanović, D. Cvijanović & S. Vujović (Eds.), *Meditranski dani Trebinje 2011 – Turizam i ruralni razvoj - Savremene tendencije, problemi i mogućnosti razvoja*, Bosna i Hercegovina, Trebinje, 11-21. [in English: Cvijanović, D., Vuković, P. & Kljajić, N. (2011). The State and Perspectives of Development of Rural Tourism in the Republic of Serbia. In M. Milanović, D. Cvijanović & S. Vujović (Eds.), *Mediterranean Days Trebinje 2011 - Tourism and rural development - Contemporary tendencies, problems and possibilities of development*, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Trebinje, 11-21].
5. Cvijanović, D., Matijašević-Obradović, J. & Škorić, S. (2017). The Impact of Air Quality conditioned by emission of pollutants to the development of rural tourism and potentials of rural areas. *Economics of Agriculture*, 64(3), 871-885, DOI: 10.5937/ekoPolj1703871C.
6. Đorđević, M. (2018). Zagađivanje i zaštita vazduha, vode i zemljišta. *Vojno delo*, 70(7), 465-474, DOI: 10.5937/vojdelo1807465D. [in English: Đorđević, M. (2018). Pollution and protection of air, water and soil. *Vojno delo*, 70(7), 465-474, DOI: 10.5937/vojdelo1807465D].
7. Fagioli, F. F., Diotallevi, F. & Ciani, A. (2014). Strengthening the sustainability of rural areas: the role of rural tourism and agritourism. *Rivista di Economia Agraria*, 69(2-3), 155-169.
8. Flores, M. & Obradović, V. (2015). *Vodič za finansiranje zaštićenih područja*. Kancelarija Programa Ujedinjenih nacija za razvoj u Srbiji, Beograd. [in English: Flores, M. & Obradović, V. (2015). *A Guide to financing Protected Areas*. United Nations Development Program Office in Serbia, Belgrade.].
9. Hamidović, Dž. (2012). Krivičnopravna zaštita životne sredine i održivi razvoj naše zemlje. *Socioeconomica*, 1(2), 235-245. [in English: Hamidović, Dž. (2012). Criminal Law protection of the environment and sustainable development of our country. *Socioeconomica*, 1(2), 235-245.].

10. Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia. Protected areas. Retrieved from <https://www.zzps.rs/wp/zasticena-podrucja/> (October 31, 2021)
11. Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia. Nature protection in Serbia. Retrieved from <https://www.zzps.rs/wp/osnovne-informacije/> (October 31, 2021)
12. Jovašević, D. (2009). Evropski standardi i zaštita životne sredine. *Evropsko zakonodavstvo*, 8(8), 125-141. [in English: Jovašević, D. (2009). European standards and environmental protection. *Evropsko zakonodavstvo*, 8(8), 125-141.].
13. Keković, Z. & Todorović, Z. (2008). Ugrožavanje životne sredine u Republici Srbiji - bezbedonosni aspekt. *NBP – žurnal za kriminalistiku i pravo*, 13(3), 23-40. [in English: Keković, Z., Todorović, Z. (2008). Endangering the environment in the Republic of Serbia - security aspect. *NBP – Journal of Criminalistics and Law*, 13(3), 23-40.].
14. Law on Environmental Protection, *Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia*, no. 135/2004, 36/2009, 36/2009 – other law, 72/2009 - other law, 43/2011 – decision of the CC, 14/2016, 76/2018, 95/2018 - other law and 95/2018 - other law.
15. Luković, M., Pantović, D., & Ćurčić, M. (2021). Wild edible plants in gourmet offer of ecotourism destinations: case from biosphere reserve „Golija-Studenica”. *Economics of Agriculture*, 68(4), 1061–1076. <https://doi.org/10.5937/ekoPolj2104061L>
16. Matijašević Obradović, J. & Škorić, S. (2017). Elementary Strategic and Legislative Treatment of Rural Development Policy. In J. Subić, B. Kuzman & A. J Vasiljević (Eds.), *Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development in terms of the Republic of Serbia strategic goals realization within the Danube Region - Support programs for the improvement of Agricultural and Rural Development*, Institute of Agricultural Economics, Belgrade, 282-299.
17. Milenović, B. (2000). *Ekološka ekonomija - teorija i primena*. Fakultet zaštite na radu, Niš. [in English: Milenković, B. (2000). Ecological economics - theory and application. Faculty of Occupational Safety, Niš.].
18. Nature Protection Law, *Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia*, no. 36/2009, 88/2010, 91/2010 - corr., 14/2016, 95/2018 - other law and 71/2021.
19. Počuča, M., Matijašević Obradović, J. & Drašković, B. (2017). Correlation Between the Air Quality Index SAQI\_11 and Sustainable Rural Development in The Republic of Serbia. *Economics of Agriculture*, 64(3), 1249-1262, DOI: 10.5937/ekoPolj1703249P.
20. Ristić, L. (2013). Strategijsko upravljanje održivim ruralnim razvojem u Republici Srbiji. *Ekonomski horizonti*, 15(3), 229 – 243, DOI: 10.5937/ekonhor1303229R. [in English: Ristić, L. (2013). Strategic management of Sustainable Rural Development in the Republic of Serbia. *Ekonomski horizonti*, 15(3), 229 – 243, DOI: 10.5937/ekonhor1303229R].

21. Rulebook on evaluation criteria and procedure for categorization of Protected Areas, *Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia*, no. 97/2015.
22. Stojanović, V. (2011). *Turizam i održivi razvoj*. Prirodno – matematički fakultet Univerziteta u Novom Sadu, Novi Sad. [in English: Stojanović, V. (2011). *Tourism and sustainable development*. Faculty of Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad.].
23. Tourism law, *Official Gazette of Republic of Serbia*, no. 17/2019.
24. Trišić, I. . (2020). Natural resources for the nature-based tourism development of the Vojvodina Province. *Hotel and Tourism Management*, 8(2), 101–112. <https://doi.org/10.5937/menhottur2002101T>
25. Živković, A., Pantić, N., & Rosić, M. (2019). Fiscal sustainability of the macroeconomic system of European Union members. *Oditor*, 5(2), 32-41. <https://doi.org/10.5937/Oditor1902033Z>