

**Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego
im. Eugeniusza Piaseckiego w Poznaniu
Katedra Teorii i Metodyki Rekreacji
Polskie Stowarzyszenie Naukowe Animacji Rekreacji i Turystyki**

**TEORIA I METODYKA REKREACJI
RUCHOWEJ W ŚWIETLE AKTUALNYCH
BADAŃ.**

Krzysztof Kwilecki, Maria Kwilecka, Arkadiusz Kwilecki

**MAZURY REGIONEM REKREACJI I TURYSTYKI
UZDROWISKOWEJ.**

**RECREATION AND SPA TOURISM IN MASURIA
REGION.**

Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe

Poznań 2012

Keywords: Masuria, spa tourisms, agritourism, healthy lifestyle.

SUMMARY

Over the years there has been a growing interest in spa tourism and agritourism in Masuria. It has become an interesting form of recreation for adults and families with children. Since the creation of spa tourism and agritourism, people have had the opportunity to evaluate the contrasting effects resulting from living in the city and living in the country.

The growing interest in spa tourism and agritourism stimulates the process of health resorts modernization and farm development in Masuria. Additionally, it also precipitates the improvement of catering and accommodation services for tourists. Because of their inherent nature, spa tourism and agritourism promote environmental responsibility. An example of spa tourism is Spa and Wellness Resorts, which are generally built in attractive areas within Masuria. Such resorts are also known as Health Resorts, which are embraced by the concept of modern medicine. Their significance is notable since they have a positive impact on health promotion, health education and healthy lifestyle. Health education could reduce mortality among many people, especially those relatively young. In broad terms, spa tourism and agritourism promote social responsibility not only in terms of environment, but also in terms of people who decide to stay there.

The aim of this paper is to outline the advantages of agritourist facilities in the vicinity of health resorts, sanatoriums and spa resorts as well as to demonstrate the influence of spa tourism on the development and health attractiveness of agritourist facilities in the Masurian village.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Masuria is located in the north-eastern Poland. It constitutes part of Masuria Lake District, and Iława Lake District. Inspiring in a multitude of ways, it is part of Warmia and Masuria Province covering an area of more than 13 thousand square kilometers. The region borders with Old Prussian Lowland, to the west with Iława Lake District, to the east with Lithuanian Lake District. The main towns situated in the region are: Elk, Giżycko, Morąg, Mragowo, Nidzica, Olecko, Gołdap, Ostróda, Write, Ruciane-Nida, Szczytno, Kętrzyn, Mikołajki and Węgorzewo.

The name of the region was established in the nineteenth century by the Prussian authorities. Masuria by all accounts belongs to the Polish land, which has experienced rich and stormy history. Abundance of diverse cultural and historical monuments are all its testimony. Masurian residents were mostly

Protestants, followers of Lutheranism, who used Polish language for communication. (Koziak 2002)

In Middle Ages Masuria was inhabited by numerous tribes of Prussia. Unfortunately, they failed to form any state, and so in the thirteenth century were handily conquered by Teutonic Knights. As early as in the fourteenth century many Poles and Lithuanians swarmed into the area. From 1525 these lands belonged to the Duchy of Prussia, accounting for Polish fief. Prussia gained its sovereignty, and was incorporated into the Kingdom of Prussia's, which was later transformed into the North German Union. However, despite the creation of the Second People's Republic the population residing in the areas of present Masuria opted for it becoming a membership country of the German territories, which was subsequently followed by intense germanization. Nevertheless, it was the Polish language that prevailed up until the outbreak of the Second World War. Since 1945 Masuria was reincorporated into the Polish land, albeit many Masurians left the state opting to live in Germany. The reason behind this migration was among others misguided policy of the People's Republic authorities. (www.mazury.porady24.org)

Masuria is by far one of the most attractive places in Poland. Its typical feature is the occurrence of more than 4,000 lakes in the region. Due to this fact, it is intriguing in terms of culture, history, tourism and spa resorts and is of great interest to many tourists. (Kowalczyk 2007)

The term tourism derives from the Latin word "tournus", meaning circular rotation referring to the movement of people. In French the word "tour" means a circuitous journey, trip, or a race back to the place from which one departed. As time went by the word evolved into "tourisme". (Łobożewicz, Bieńczyk 2001)

Other sources purport that the genesis of this term dates back to the eighteenth century, and in all probably is linked to "grand tour", which customarily referred to journeys to the continent (mainly to France, Germany and Italy), which were particularly popular among young Englishmen in pursuit of knowledge and entertainment. (Alejziak 2000)

Tourism, therefore, is a form of leisure that is taken up away from home. It is a voluntary movement of people with a view to changing their environment, location, and also the rhythm of life.

Tourism is by all means an expanding industry, also due to the fact that some people opt to leave their place of residence with the following purposes in mind:

- specialist – these are, among others, fishing, sailing, hunting attractions.
- holiday-making - these include attractions of the recreational environment, attractions of big cities and spa resorts,
- sightseeing - comprising elements of material and spiritual culture, nature and modern achievements of mankind. (Sikora 1999)

Tourist attractions determine a group of various environmental, historical and cultural factors. These factors result in an influx of tourists into a given area. Tourist attractions account for specific elements and features of the natural environment, as well as for manifestations of human activities that are of interest to tourists.

Masuria is referred to as the land of great lakes. This is an ideal place especially for sailors. Masuria is an excellent tourist area, in some places it continues to amaze with its wilderness. It has well-developed tourist facilities, particularly on the trail of the Great Lakes.

Masuria is an attractive region in terms of nature. One will find many forms of tourism such as trails for cycling, hiking, jogging, walking and horseback riding. Masuria is the site which abounds in animals, plants, birds and forests. The largest area is Borecka Forest which boasts four nature reserves. An undeniable attraction is the Bison Breeding Station in Wolisk. Masuria is a perfect spot for hiking, biking, fishing, mushroom-picking and water sports, etc. (Bronisz et al 2006)

The concept of spa tourism

Spa (wellness) tourism is defined as recreation trips to spa resorts, where natural factors such as water or climate are applied to regenerate the body. One can also come across the term 'spa tourism' as a general term for realizing the function of health tourism in a spa resort. (Gaworecki 2000)

Spa tourist is according to Z. Krasinski a person arriving in the spa for therapeutic purposes, and remaining under medical care. This term could also apply to any resort's patients. However, these concepts are not identical, because not every tourist spending time in a health resort is its patient. The patient is someone who stays at a spa is under constant medical supervision. It does not matter whether we have prevention or recreation in mind. Generally speaking, a spa tourist is any person who remains in the area recognized as a spa, on condition that it is not his/her place of permanent residence. The length of stay in the spa ranges from 7 days to one year at most. The main objective of staying in a spa is a desire to improve one's health condition, recreation, relaxation, prevention, restoration of mental and physical powers. There may also be other objectives and motives for such trips, e.g. sports, entertainment, meeting new people, change of environment, leisure, vacation. Spa tourist will also comprise patients. (Lewandowska, 2007)

Spa tourism main features:

- minimal seasonal activity,
- national nature of holidays (Szwichtenberg 2000),
- high rate of employment (100 jobs created in spa facilities make up over 200 jobs in other branches of economy),
- extended average length of stay in spa facilities (no fewer than 14 days). (Lewandowska, 2007)

The concept of agritourism

Tourism whose main purpose is communing with nature, including various forms of leisure and tourist services that are provided within a given farm is called agritourism. (Drzewiecki, 1995)

Agritourism is a form of tourism with high recreational and psychological attractions for adults and educational attractions for teenagers and children,

which relies heavily on active vacations and winter breaks spent in the countryside, directly on a farm. Tourists are allowed to take active part in meals that are served on the farm, do agricultural chores, deal with animals, and perform other activities that a farmhouse has on its offer. The aim of agritourism is to provide residents of towns and cities with a holiday in attractive regions of the country. In effect, financial situation of farmers who let their apartments and deal with catering issues is improved. The term "agritourism" has replaced terms such as "rural tourism", "village holiday" or the traditional "self-arranged countryside holiday." (Tauber, Siwinski 2008)

Rural tourism is characterized by peace and quiet, a small number of tourists, silence, isolation from city life, rest in rural areas, which is contrastingly different from living and working in the city, communing with nature, having the opportunity to learn about and participate in the family lives of villagers as well as accessing naturally-produced village food. Worthwhile is also participation in farm chores, contact with pets, local customs, and the opportunity to stay in unspoiled natural environment, mushroom picking, horseback riding, sleigh rides, visits to nearby areas, hunting, playing games, canoeing, working on the farm, hiking, and sightseeing trips, etc.

Based on numerous studies conducted in various countries, it was established that tourism is a source of income for many people. In Poland profitability of agricultural produce is on the decline, therefore people who own fields and farms are on the lookout for an additional source of income. Many farms will not be able to live off the fat of the land. Tourism and its development has also been triggered by the prevailing unemployment in the country.

It is notable that tourists' tastes have been changing significantly in recent years. Many of them want to relax in a quiet place, away from the hustle and bustle of towns and cities, and so they choose to stay in the countryside on a more regular basis. It is here that they will enjoy fresh air, tranquility, peace, healthier environment, and, above all, relax in nature. Due to holidays in such spots pro-ecological consciousness in human beings is also shaped. Agritourism also plays a significant part in promoting regions. (Musiał et al. 2005)

Holiday on a farm is an interesting form of recreation also for families with children. From an early age we have the opportunity to commune with nature, learn about the culture prevailing in the countryside, visit national parks, landscapes and nature reserves, as well as participate in special leisure programs. Additionally, it offers a contact with a healthy, fresh and natural environment, rural life, domestic animals, a variety of agricultural chores, knowledge about village craft and folklore. As a result, we avail ourselves of healthy food, peace and quiet and the comfort of little tourist traffic. (Gaworecki 2003)

The development of agritourism in Poland does not proceed uniformly in all regions of the country. Of particular importance are areas that have a special appeal among tourists, particularly those boasting natural beauty, leisure facilities as well as anthropogenic attractions. Moreover, these regions are characterized by the presence of small, albeit territorially attractive natural and primordial landscapes. They are often accompanied by harmoniously shaped cultural landscapes, with a small share of urban areas. Masuria is a land which is

fascinating in many ways. Hilly glacial terrain, dotted with silvery lakes, rivers and canals, encourages and inspires tourist activity. A wealth of historical and cultural monuments is a testimony to the remarkable fate of the land. Masuria is a region that needs no publicity. It is a perfect location for those who wish to enjoy their rest during summer holidays, it is also ideal for those who want to have fun skiing or sleigh riding during winter break. (Pascal's co-authors 2006) By all means unique, diverse and abundant flora and fauna found in Masuria lures many tourists into the region. To prevent its destruction numerous landscape parks and reserves have been established in the land of Warmia and Masuria. Thus, nature is protected whilst tourists have the opportunity to observe interesting natural phenomena. These will be exemplified by the floating island situated in reserve "Zakręt", or the phenomenon of disappearing rivers in reserve "Koniuszanka", "Łyna river springs" or "the Valley of River Wąsza". Areas that have been designated for protection, however, are still suitable for hiking, communing with nature, spending time in nature, enjoying the greenery of forests, watching birds and forest animals. Ages ago the land of Masuria resembled a wild forest. Even though there has been a multitude of transformations resulting from the influence of human activities that have taken place in this area, there can still be found spots that are virtually wild where, with a bit of luck, one may encounter the wild bison, or the majestic elk, which were once numerous in the local woods. (Koziak 2002)

Masuria has well-developed accommodation facilities; tourists wishing to relax here can choose from many offers, including agritourism. This area is ideal for those wishing to relax away from the hustle and bustle of the city, noise and car exhaust. Local population is focused predominantly on agritourism, adapting their households for visitors. Traditional architecture found in Masuria are small, wooden houses covered with ceramic tiles painted in red as well as bright yellow windows with white shutters. The pride of almost every house in Masuria are porches of various shapes and sizes, which are frequently supported on pillars.

Masuria is a land which attracts and fascinates tourists for a variety of reasons. Hilly glacial terrain dotted with silvery lakes, rivers and canals, undoubtedly encourages and inspires tourist activity. Within Masuria region one will find a wealth of historical and cultural monuments that are a testimony to the extraordinary fate of its indigenous people. Boulders will continually remind us of the glacial period, numerous castles, burial mounds, and sacrificial altars will bring back memories of the pagan Prussia. Fortified castles date back to the era of Teutonic Knights, while military strengthening of the Wolf's Lair illustrate recent historical events in the Land of Masuria.

Masuria is also a land of picturesque towns, villages and scattered settlements, where life goes at its natural, slow pace. Most of them were built in the days of Teutonic Order. Practically every city has its powerful Teutonic castles, once densely covering the entire area of the monastic state. Noteworthy are the castles in Olsztyn, Nidzica or Lidzbark Warmiński. The churches of this period served defensive functions. Noteworthy are many mansions and palaces that were built in various architectural shapes and styles, including the monastery located in Święta Lipka, which, owing to its interior design, harmonious

architecture, and many movable figures that act out Annunciation scenes, is called "the pearl of Baroque ." (Koziak 2002)

Masuria is also interesting because of numerous sites and attractions of recreational and leisure nature. In the Piska Forest flows river Krutynia, which ranks among the most beautiful in Europe. It hosts many kayaking events, which may present tourists with plentiful impressions and unforgettable experiences. Masuria attracts water sports enthusiasts, anglers, rowers, canoeists, and sailors. One of the greatest temptations is the Trail of the Great Masurian Lakes, and the cruise along Elbląg-Ostróda Canal. The former gives the possibility to commune with and understand wildlife, which has been preserved almost intact, the latter an opportunity to experience water architecture and the art of engineering. By visiting the above mentioned places, it is surely easier for us to understand the exquisite beauty of Warmia and Masuria. The area is favored by a relatively good tourist infrastructure. It allows untroubled and varied travel by bus, car, bicycle, boat, ship, canoe, sailing boat or even on foot. By every lake, regardless of whether it is small or large, one can find a perfect spot for camping, putting up a tent, lighting a bonfire. In areas for the more "picky" tourists there are holiday cottages, guest houses, resorts, campsites, farmhouses, as well as top class hotels with full service, including SPA. (Koziak 2002)

Augustów ranks among the most important towns located in the region of Masuria. Founded by King Zygmunt August in 1557, it owes its unique, picturesque landscape to Augustow Forest and lakes located around the towns of Sajno, Białe, Rospuda, Necko, Studzienicze and several less significant in size. Augustów is a town recognized as the center of water sports and active tourism. In summer one will encounter many tourists sailing, canoeing, water skiing, rowing, as well as swimming on motor boats. Trips are also organized in the so-called white fleet vessels and nacelles, which provide a great opportunity to enjoy the beauty of the Land of Augustów. Special interest is aroused by canoe trails that lead through the most picturesque corners of the region.. Water ski lift which is offered by Necko Lake, hiking, horse riding and cycling trails also top the list of tourist attractions. In recent years boulevards by river Netta and along Mostowa Street have been rebuilt and modernized so that they now account for interesting walking paths. Undoubtedly, one of the most renowned tourist attractions in Augustów is Augustowski Canal. It was the largest project of the Polish Kingdom in the nineteenth century. The total length of the Canal is 101.2 kilometers. It is a monument of hydrological construction. International Canoeing Event along Augustów Canal and River Niemen from Augustów to Druskienniki has been organized here for several years. The current priority is to rebuild and restore the Canal on the Belarusian side to allow for canoeing in its entirety (www.augustow.pl)

The town of Augustów obtained the status of spa as per decision issued on 10.14.1993 by the Minister of Health and Social Care. In Augustow one will receive treatment for lung diseases, mainly coal miner's pneumoconiosis as well as cardiac diseases. Water extracted in these areas will also play a critical part on health. It is "Augustowianka", rich in fluoride, which has been produced since 1970. (Batura 2003)

Another important town is Mrągowo. It is a large tourist resort, which is often associated with "Country Picnic". The town is situated on the hills by lakes Czos and Juno. People who enjoy hiking will certainly be interested in exploring walking path by lake Czos, on the other side of which there is a large amphitheater, which is home to the famous country music concerts and other cultural events. History lovers can learn about the history of the land in the Museum of Mrągowska Land. (Bronisz et al. 2006)

The third important town is Mikołajki. Described as the "Pearl of Masuria", it towers over narrow channel lakes: Mikołajskie and Tały. At the beginning it was only a fishing village, and it was only in 1726 that it obtained the status of town. With time more and more tourists flooded into town, and that is when it became a well-known summer resort. There is an evangelical church in the town's center, where one may admire wooden galleries, coffered ceiling and huge organs placed above the entrance. On the walls there are two precious portraits of pastors from the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The function of the old town is fulfilled by the Liberty Square. In the square one will appreciate the beauty of decorative houses and a former town hall, which is now the headquarters of Mazur Hotel. In the very center of the square there is a fountain with a figure of King Sielawa (which is also portrayed in the town's coat of arms). Mikołajki also hosts the festival of King Sielawa. During the festival a peculiar event takes place- the launching of a wooden fish which is attached to the bridge and floats on the river until autumn. The main street is called Kajka. It is probably one of the most interesting streets in town. There are a lot of old single-storey houses. One will infallibly notice the neo-Gothic Catholic church from 1910. Nearby Mikołajki, hardly 4 km away from town is the bird sanctuary by Lake Łuknajno. It is home to as many as two thousand swans and other bird species in summertime. This entire "bird kingdom" can also be seen from the observation tower. (Bronisz, et al.2006)

Goldap is yet another town worth visiting in Masuria. Being the northernmost town, it played a critical role at the beginning of its existence defending the Prussian state against the Lithuanians. The renowned Amber Trail ran in its vicinity, which contributed to the town's rapid growth and expansion. In 1570 it obtained its status as town; subsequently, mills, schools, breweries, distilleries, and printing presses houses mushroomed. The two world wars caused great destruction, nevertheless the town has successfully been rebuilt and its former importance has been restored. Moreover, it has been turned into the center of recreation and tourism. The Old Town is one of the largest of all old towns to be admired in the Masurian region. A valuable monument located here is the Gothic church of St. Mary. It is a hall-shaped building with a tower resembling those typical of "crusader" style with stair-shaped peaks. The church was destroyed in 1945, but in the eighties efforts were undertaken to rebuild it. The town also boasts a neo-Gothic church dating back to 1985 and several conventional small burgher houses.

Goldap is also famous for its climatic and health properties, and is recommended very often as a resort for people suffering from rheumatism, musculoskeletal system, and gynecological diseases. There is an event called

"Gołdap Stop" organized annually in town. In its vicinity there are excellent conditions for cycling, walking or water sports. One example of the myriad attractions is the Beautiful Mountain where one can admire breathtaking views from its peak in summertime, or avail oneself of a ski lift in winter. Also available are cross-country skiing routes. (Koziak 2002)

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

Tourism and spas are incredibly interconnected. Tourists selecting a resort will pay attention to its location and will also be sensitive enough to opt for ecologically clean spots that are well-endowed with natural beauty. All spas are of great importance for Polish economy, tourism and agritourism. In addition to many treatments they also offer other tourist products that interesting both for the domestic and foreign market segments. Spa resorts in Masuria, across the country, and in Europe are all popular and frequently visited centers of leisure and tourism. (Gotowt-Jeziorska A., Wyrzykowski J. 2005) Deciding to stay in a spa, people will not only improve their health through the use of different types of treatments, but they will also have a great opportunity to take up cycling, hiking, water sports. This facilitates rest and relaxation by offering the adventure of being in a new environment. Additionally, the positive impact of climate characteristic in this part of Poland and its drinking water cannot be underestimated. Natural environment is most attractive for tourists through the abiotic components of landscape. These will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the quality of rest.

People have been able to appreciate the healing effects of natural elements of the environment (mud, water and climate) for many years now. At the beginning the "miraculous healing" springs were only enjoyed by the locals but over time, with the introduction of modest bathrooms and other spa facilities, people living in other areas of the country started recognizing their value. Spas attribute its enormous popularity to the events from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Trips to spas were then considered part of the so-called social responsibilities. Also notable is the fact that many beautiful buildings in Polish health resorts date back to that period. The properties of spas have also been corroborated by science and various research. (Pascal's co-authors 2006)

References

Alejski A.(2000) Turystyka w obliczu wyzwań XXI wieku, wyd. Albis, Kraków

Batura J. i W (2003) „Po ziemi Augustowskiej, Przewodnik dla turysty i czasowicza, „Hańcza”

Bronisz S., Brygier W., Ciesielski M., Dudkiewicz A.(2006) Polska na lato, weekend nad wodą, Bielsko- Biała,

Drzewiecki M.(1995) Agroturystyka, Świadectwo, Bydgoszcz

- Gaworecki W.(2000)Turystyka, PWE, Warszawa
- Gaworecki W. (2003) Turystyka, Polskie wydawnictwo ekonomiczne, Warszawa
- Gotowt-Jeziorska A., Wyrzykowski J. (2005) Turystyka a uzdrowiska, Polskie Stowarzyszenie Turystyki, Warszawa
- Kowalczyk A.(2007)Walory turystyczne Pomorza, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Kazimierza Wielkiego, Bydgoszcz
- Koziak M.(2002) „Mazury i Warmia”, Wiedza i Zycie
- Lewandowska A.(2007) Turystyka uzdrowiskowa, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin
- Łobozewicz T., Bieńczyk G.(2001)Podstawy turystyki, Warszawa
- Musiak W., Kania J., Leśniak L.(2005) Agroturystyka i usługi towarzyszące, Małopolskie Stowarzyszenie Doradztwa Rolniczego, Kraków
- Powiat Augustowski (1999) wyd. „Promocja-Prestizż”, Bydgoszcz
- Sikora J. (1999)Organizacja ruchu turystycznego na wsi, WSiP, Warszawa
- Szwichtenberg A.(2000) Podstawy turystyki, Wyd. Politechniki Koszalińskiej, Koszalin
- Tauber R.D., Siwiński W. (2008) Leksykon turystyki i rekreacji, PSNARiT, Poznań
- Zespół autorów Pascala(2006) Polskie Uzdrowiska, Wydawnictwo Pascal, Bielsko- Biała

ŹRÓDŁA INTERNETOWE:

- www.gotoroztocze.pl
www.wikipedia.pl
www.anae.pl
www.augustow.pl
www.jezioro.com.pl