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Shaping the Future Through Dialogue, Quality and Education

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Aliya Aktymbayeva[1], Akmaral Sapiyeva[2], Yeldar Nuruly[3]:

Assessment of the possible development of agriturism in SNNP „Buiratau”

Abstract

At the present stage of agrarian reforms in Kazakhstan, a new socio-and innovation-oriented development model is replacing the territorial-sectoral concept of agrieconomic development. The basis of this strategy is the establishment of integrated relationships between agriculture, the social sphere of the village and other related industries, such as harvesting, processing of agricultural products, etc., which can ensure the sustainable development of the region.
Thus, this article is dedicated to the study of the possibilities of agritourism development at specially protected natural areas (SPNA) of Kazakhstan, and the state national nature park (SNNP) «Buyratau» in particular. Since the effective distribution of agritourism will ensure sustainable development and competitiveness of agrarian sector, agrarian sector itself can represent one of the directions for activating economy and multifunctional development of rural areas of the country. Agritourist potential of the country is accompanied by unique cultural and historical features, and the SPNA are considered as a resource bases of agritourism in Kazakhstan. Natural territories designated as «Specially Protected Natural Areas» are integral part of agriculture, since they are located on the lands of rural areas. SPNA are considered as a national wealth of the Republic of Kazakhstan, because they have a high degree of ecological, cultural, as well as scientific and historical significance. According to this, an attempt to assess possibilities of agritourism development at SPNA of Kazakhstan on the example of SNNP «Buyratau» is made in this article.

Keywords: agritourism, SNNP, SPNA, rural tourism, tourism in rural areas, activation of rural areas

Introduction

Agritourism is one of the most promising areas for the development of global tourism industry. Such rapid development of agritourism is due to the following factors: growth of urbanization, hypodynamia due to the development of science and technology, environmental degradation, alienation from nature, genetically modified food, etc. At the same time, traveling to rural areas is characterized by relatively low expenses and activates interconnection and interaction between city and village (Yerdavletov, 2017, p. 170).

Kazakhstan, in accordance with the Convention, has its obligations to conserve biological and geographical diversity. The legislation on PAs is based on the Constitution of RK and the Law of the Republic of Kazakhstan “On Specially Protected Natural Aries”. Currently in

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Kazakhstan under active protection there are: 10 reserves, 12 national parks and 5 nature reserves.

State national natural parks have the greatest potential for agritourism purposes. However, the initial task of the SNNP is the cultural and ecological education of agritourists (Luchenok, 2008, p. 198). National natural park is a site of area or water area where it has special ecological and aesthetic value. The national park has relatively mild conservation regime. So, for the protection of natural landscapes, the protection regime ensures implementation of three main objectives. First, the ecological goal, which is to maintain the ecological balance and preserve natural ecosystems. Secondly, recreational, namely the regulation of tourism and recreation of people. Thirdly, the goal is scientific, which is responsible for finding and applying such methods that are able to preserve the natural wealth during a mass visit of agritourists. In the natural depths of national parks there are zones designed for economic activity, which are the objects of agritourism.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that SNNP "Buiratau" is the last created and the newest natural national park of Kazakhstan. According to the "Concept of development of the tourism industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan until 2020" SNNP "Buiratau" is one of the key places of tourist interest in Astana cluster. It gives particular importance to each key object of the cluster, which is SNNP "Buiratau". And the development of agritourism in the national park, among other things, contributes to the sustainable development of specially protected natural area and the economy as a whole, as well as the emergence of new supply on the Kazakhstani tourist market.

SNNP "Buiratau" – the twelfth national park in Kazakhstan – was created on March 11, 2011 at the border of Akmola and Karaganda regions by the Forest and Hunting Committee of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Kazakhstan within the framework of the branch program implementation "Zhasyl Damu (Green Development) for 2011-2014" with the support of the Development Program project of the United Nations Global Environment Facility (UNDP / GEF) "Conservation and Sustainable Management of Steppe Ecosystems" (Aktymbayeva, 2017, p. 342). Kazakhstan has significant part of all the natural Pontic steppes preserved on Earth and since ancient times, the steppe here has played important economic, ecological role for the local population. However, today the steppe is the least protected type of ecosystems in Kazakhstan.

New national park "Buiratau" (translated from Kazakh as "Curly Mountains") is located in the transitional zone between the subzones of moderately arid and dry steppes, which causes the uniqueness of the territory in combination of steppe ecosystems with forest (birch groves, black alder trees) (Minakov, 2014, p. 24). The rarity and uniqueness of the park's ecosystems is characterized by the following features:

- the presence of relict forms;
- average degree of endemism;
- combination of species representing different ecosystems of fauna and flora, their diversity.

Note that one of the goals for the formation of this national park was the protection and reproduction of the deer population, "antlers" of which have valuable healing features for treating blood diseases and healing wounds, have restorative and tonic properties, reduce pressure, strengthen and stimulate the immune system, increase physical and mental performance, etc., which in turn are the unique agritourist resources of given area.

Initial data and research methods

The theoretical and methodological basis of the research were the scientific works of domestic and foreign authors in the field of agritourism, articles from scientific journals, conferences materials, periodicals, legislative acts and regulatory documents, as well as materials of the annual reports of SNNP "Buiratau", Internet sources and field data research. The following data sources should be particularly noted: materials of the research project through the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan № 0603/GF4 "Conceptual model of the activation of rural territories of the Republic of Kazakhstan through the development of agritourism" (scientific advisor – Doctor of Geography Sciences, Prof. Yerdavletov Stanislav Ramazanovich, statistical data of the Statistics Committee of the MNE of RK (Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan) and etc.

In the framework of this study, field works were carried out on the territory of 88,968 hectares of the state national natural park "Buiratau" which is located at the border of Akmola and Karaganda regions of the Republic of Kazakhstan, to explore its resource potential and prospects for the development of agritourism. In addition, interviews and consultations were held with the director of RSI SNNP "Buiratau" Zh.K. Khasenov, Research Fellow of the Department of Science and Monitoring of the National Park F.M. Ismailova, as well as with private entrepreneurs working on the territory of the national park under study (Ishmuratova, 2015, p. 70 – Kupriyanov, 2014, p. 3).

Were used general scientific methods, such as system analysis, content analysis, descriptive method, comparative method, analogy and mathematical methods. In addition, during research, private methods and techniques were widely used. Those are cartographic method of research and geo-information method, and to study the possibilities and prospects for the development of agritourism at SNNP "Buiratau", a methodology was used to assess the aggregate potential of agritourism development, developed on the basis of the assessment methodology of the aggregate tourist potential of S.R. Yerdavletov. The method is based on the method of ball-point crediting (Yerdavletov, 2010, p. 412).

The essence of this methodology is to assign points to the territory and objects located on it, according to the selected criteria for the four blocks of indicators relevant to the development of agritourism. These are following blocks: tourist attractiveness of natural landscapes, saturation of the territory with socio-economic tourist and recreational resources, objects of tourist facilities and objects of agriculture (Yerdavletov, 2004, p. 11). At the final stage of methodology application, the sum of all points is calculated, which is a comprehensive assessment of the aggregate potential of agritourism development, and the "Aggregate potential of agritourism development" map is compiled.

The disadvantage of the technique, in our case, is the relativity of evaluation. That is, it is relevant and practically feasible when there are several estimated territories and they can be compared with each other. Whereas the area of our research is a single national park, which is a small territory. But from the point of view of ordering and inventory, the method of assessing the aggregate potential of agritourism development is simply irreplaceable.

At the first stage of methodology application for assessing the development of agritourism, inventory and systematization of research data is carried out for each set of indicators, and tables are drawn up according to the selected criteria, containing total score by point system. The columns of the tables contain the indicators of the blocks in accordance with Figure 1, and the row is an array of data on the national park. Filling the tables is as follows: each specified object or type is estimated by one point. For example, 2 nature monuments on the territory of the national park give 2 points; or, if there are 3 types of animals on the territory, it gives the territory 3 points (Aktymbayeva, 2017, p. 35). The only exceptions are landscapes in the block "Tourist attractiveness of natural landscapes". Taking four-step value scale from 0

to 3 points, four types of territories of state national natural parks are distinguished with varying degrees of tourist attractiveness:

3 points – quite favorable;
2 points – favorable;
1 point – least favorable;
0 points – unfavorable.

Quite favorable are the landscapes of the SNNP territories, which have conditions for long and all types of short-term rest (mountains, forests, hydrographic objects), meaning these are landscapes where all of the components of the natural complex are present. Favorable are landscapes where one of the components of the complex is missing (for example, mountains). Least favorable – where there is 1 component of the natural complex. Unfavorable landscapes are those where components that are attractive for recreation and tourism are completely absent.

According to the methodology for assessing the total tourist potential, on the basis of landscape map, each landscape of natural complex is included, which are included in a specific territorial unit. The assessment of the attractiveness of the territorial unit for recreation and tourism is determined by the sum of all points of the landscapes included to this territorial unit. Since there is a small territorial unit, such as the national park, and also due to the lack of landscape map of "Buiratau" National Park, it would be appropriate and methodologically correct to assess the attractiveness of the national park's territory for recreation and tourism, if considering the whole territory of the national park as one landscape and estimate, respectively, from 0 to 3 points.

At the second stage of applying methodology, all resources are described and, thus, an inventory takes place, which allows eventually obtain additional information and create dynamic models and schemes. At the final stage, as was mentioned above, the final map "Aggregate potential of agritourism development" is compiled for presenting the results obtained in spatial aspect.

The collection of necessary information about the objects was carried out by viewing and analyzing a wide range of literary sources, local history, fund, project, statistical and cartographic materials (Yerdavletov, 2006, p. 20). The literary source includes mainly reference and monographic publications by the area of interest; to cartographic – tourist and other thematic maps contained in the National Atlas of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as published in separate editions (Minakov, 2014, p. 107).

Results and discussion

As a result of systematization and inventory of research data, the aggregate potential for the development of agritourism in the state national natural park "Buiratau" is equal 505 points. Tables 1–4 provide systematized information for each block of indicators.

The largest share of the aggregate potential for the development of agritourism consisted of the blocks "Tourist attractiveness of natural landscapes" and "Objects of agriculture" with 60.6% and 27.5% respectively. It is due to many factors, the main of which are: first, the territory, practically, any national park has rich and diverse natural conditions and resources; secondly, rural aries in the Republic of Kazakhstan prevail over urban ones; thirdly, such diversified development of agriculture is due to the heritage from the USSR and modern state programs for the support and development of the countryside.

As a result of the inventory carried out on the basis of the above methodology, it was determined that the tourist attractiveness of the natural landscapes of the state national natural park "Buiratau" is equal to 306 points, which is 304 natural tourist and recreational objects

including the landscape of the national park territories, relevant to the development of tourist and recreational activities (table 1).

Tourist attractiveness of the territory of SNNP "Buiratau" is estimated at a maximum of 3 points, despite the fact that the main landscape is the steppe. The natural complex of the national park has hydrographic network consisting of rivers, lakes and springs. Birch, aspen-birch forests and alder forests, as well as the Ereymentau Mountains, give additional tourist attractiveness.

Table 1. Tourist attractiveness of the natural landscapes of SNNP "Buiratau" (compiled by the authors)

Landscapes types			National parks	Reserv	Natural Monuments	Sights and objects	Eco routes and routes	Reservoirs	Rivers	Deposits of mineral and artesian water	Animals				Total
3 points	2 points	1 point									Animals	Birds	Fish	Etc.	
1	-	-	1	2		4	4	2	2	2	45	239	2	-	306

On the territory of SNNP "Buiratau" there are 49 objects of socio-economic tourist and recreational resources (Table 2). Taking into account that relatively small area in size was considered, then this indicator can be regarded as favorable.

Table 2. Socio-economic tourist and recreational resources of SNNP "Buiratau" (compiled by the authors)

Archaeological sites	Monuments	Memorable places	Museums, exhibition halls	Petroglyphs	Temples, mosques	Interesting objects of national economy			Interesting events or phenomena			Ethno. centers, museums	Handicraft Centers	Web site	Total
						Agriculture	Transport	Social complex	Ethno character	Eco character	Economic				
34	–	2	1	–	–	2	1	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	49

The weak side of the aggregate potential for the development of agritourism are the objects of the tourist industry (Official website of the State National Natural Park "Buiratau"), which has only 11 units (Table 3). Such phenomenon cannot be called unexpected, since, in general, the Republic of Kazakhstan is characterized by a weak development of tourism infrastructure, with the exception of the cities of Almaty and Astana.

Table 3. Objects of tourist facilities (compiled by the authors)

Travel agencies	Camp sites	Hotels	Sanatoriums, holiday homes	Ski resorts	Recreatio camps	Service stations	Parking (paid)	Food supply stations	Attraction points			Total
									Equip beaches, water parks	Tennis, bowling	Rope parks, centers of rocks.	
5	1	2	–	–	–	–	2	–	–	–	1	11

As was mentioned above, in the process of applying the methodology for assessing the aggregate potential of agritourism development, inventory was made with a detailed description of all resources and at the final stage map was compiled on the "Aggregate potential of agritourism development of SNPP "Buiratau", presented in Figure 2.

Table 4. Objects of agriculture (compiled by the authors)

Rural settlements (auls, villages, townships)	Peasant and farm enterprises	Guest houses	Food supply stations	Cultivated crops	Cultivated animals	Fish species	Rural fairs, bazaars and shops	Interesting objects	Interesting events	Total
15	76	2	1	24	9	2	9	–	1	139

From the conducted research based on the method of S.R. Yerdavletov, the aggregate potential of agritourism development of SNNP "Buiratau" with a value of 505 points can be considered as favorable. Despite the fact that tourism is a new direction in the structure of the economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan) and the entire Kazakhstani society, the population is already quite well informed about the opportunities and prospects arising from the operation of this socio-economic phenomenon.

Table 5. Aggregate potential of agritourism development of SNNP "Buiratau" (compiled by the authors)

Tourist attractiveness of natural landscapes	Socio-economic tourism and recreational resources	Tourist facilities	Objects of agriculture	Total
306	49	11	139	505

Currently, there are 2 guest houses on the territory adjacent to the national natural park "Buiratau". The development of tourism will allow local residents to earn income and such guest houses will be opened in every rural locality. The agrarian orientation of the economy of this area and the functioning of the state national natural park can make this place unique agritourist destination of interest to tourists from all over the world.

Northern Kazakhstan, being the breadbasket of the country in the Soviet period of its history, received a unique agricultural system, which continues to exist today. Agrarians of this region grow valuable solid varieties of spring wheat, as well as other grains. Agritourists can take part in the harvest and watch themselves the process of obtaining wheat flour, as well as the production of real rural bread, which can only be purchased in rural stores, prepared from spring wheat in the Ereimentau district of Akmola region near the SNNP "Buiratau" (Bertsekas, 2006, p. 133) In addition, local farms grow potatoes, tomatoes, cucumbers, beets, cabbage, pumpkins, peppers, and many different berries that have no taste analogues in the world.

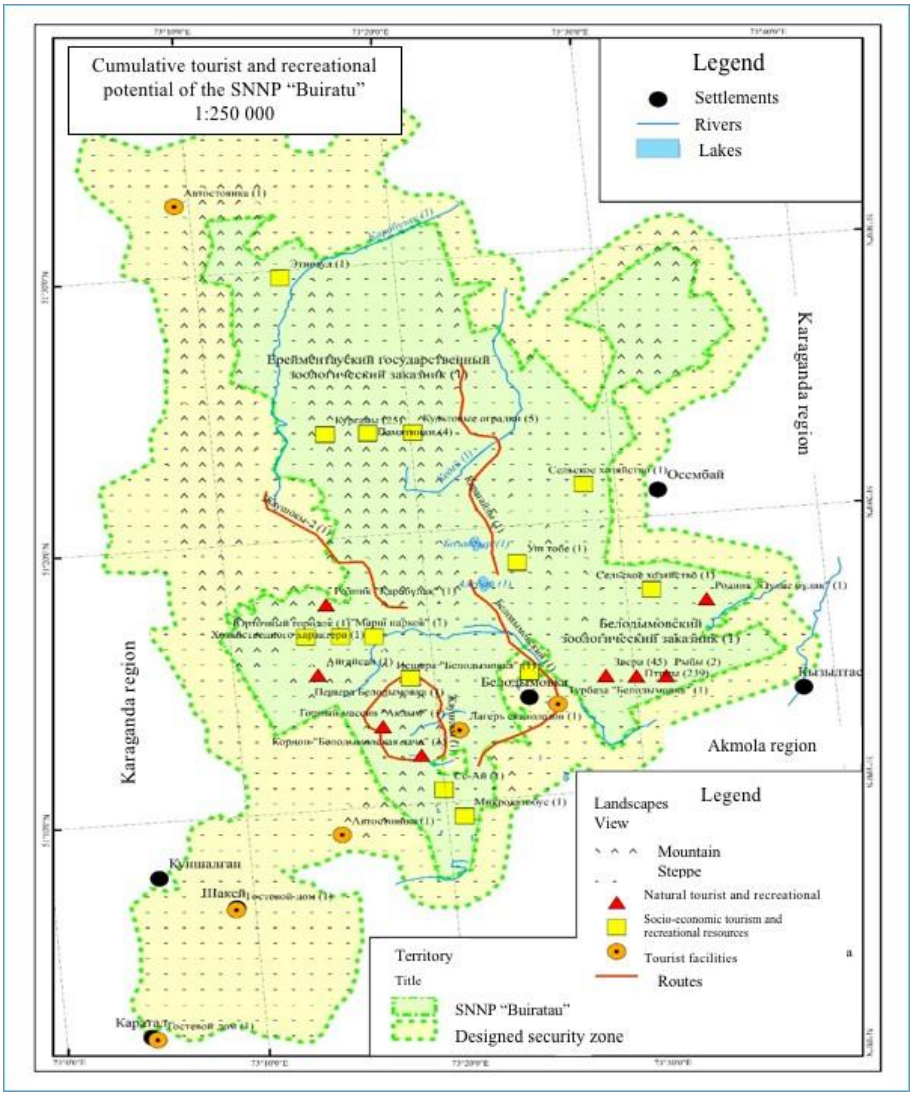

Figure 1 – Aggregate potential of agritourism development of SNNP "Buiratau" (compiled by the authors)

Communication and care for domestic pets and livestock is a therapy against stress that takes place every day in the life of every person. You can get this therapy in the peasant farms of the SNNP "Buiratau". Cows, horses, sheep, goats, pigs and birds are raised here (Rajiv, 2005, p. 145). And livestock products obtained in these farms have medical properties and are good for health.

In addition to staying in guest houses and farms, eating rustic food, participating in agricultural work, staying outdoors, exploring the culture of the Kazakh people, agritourists have the opportunity to travel along the tourist routes of SNNP "Buiratau" along the natural and historical attractions, as well as acquaintance with the unique nature of this region. A variety of landscapes makes this place attractive from the point of view of human psychology, creating a large number of border (boundary) zones.

Summary

Using the methodology of aggregate tourist potential of S.R. Yerdavletov, comprehensive study of the agritourist potential of new specially protected natural area was conducted. To carry out this study, the chosen methodology was adapted, as a result of which a new method

of aggregate potential of agritourism development was obtained, which consists of 4 blocks of indicators. These are the blocks: tourist attractiveness of natural landscapes, socio-economic tourist and recreational resources, objects of tourist facilities and objects of agriculture (Fischer S. 2002:8930). Each block of indicators assumes the collection of research data set based on the point-based method of assessing territory, as a result of which the researcher comes to a single unified result expressed in numerical equivalent. The disadvantage of the methodology is its comparative nature, but at the same time, it has no equal in systematization and ordering of research data, which is of great importance in tourism. The final result of the application of the methodology is a comprehensive map "Aggregate potential of agritourism development in the territory".

During application of obtained methodology, it was found that the aggregate potential of agritourism development of SNNP "Buiratau" is equal 505 points, which can be considered as favorable. Significant part of the aggregate potential of agritourism development in this case is made up of natural tourist and recreational resources and agricultural facilities (Tamara Ratz. 2002: 256). As an environmental institution, small amount of socio-economic tourism and recreational resources were noted. And the weak side of the aggregate potential of agritourism development of SNNP "Buiratau" is the development of tourism infrastructure, which is deterrent in the development of tourism and, in particular, agritourism, in the studied territory. The result of the research is a map compiled by the authors of the "Aggregate potential of agritourism development of SNNP "Buiratau", which allows to get comprehensive view and analyze the phenomenon under study.

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