



Journal of Geology, Geography and Geoecology

Journal home page: geology-dnu-dp.ua

ISSN 2617-2909 (print)
ISSN 2617-2119 (online)

Journ. Geol. Geograph.
Geology,
30(1), 122–132.
doi: 10.15421/112111

S.V. Melnychenko, H. I. Mykhaylichenko, Y. B. Zabaldina, S. S. Kravtsov, S. S. Skakovska Journ. Geol. Geograph. Geoecology, 30(1), 122–132.

The protected area as a tourism eco-brand

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Received: 17.12.2020

Received in revised form: 14.01.2021

Accepted: 21.01.2021

Abstract. Branding of the protected area plays an important role in the process of forming its attractiveness for the currently growing target market, focused on the consumption of environmental friendliness as an unconditional value. The results of literature review show that when the object of branding is a national nature park or any other nature protected object,

intangible elements of the brand (affirmative opinions, beliefs and associations) must be based on the principle of eco-friendliness, and the tangible elements (logo, colours, design, semantic and visual effects) reflect this primary value. This is the so-called eco-brand which provides the ecological prerogative of the positioning object. The aim of this paper is to analyze the tangible and intangible components of Ukrainian national nature parks brands, their current market positioning, as well as the development of proposals for eco-brand formation of the national parks. The study tested text and visual content of Internet sites of Ukrainian national natural parks and analyzed their logos. As a result, most logos can be considered environmentally friendly due to their symbology and colours, but Internet sites are not customer and business oriented, and don't reflect the national parks positioning. Based on a sample of 87 on-site visitor survey responses, two factors, the brand awareness and national parks attendance, were estimated. The brand awareness of Ukrainian national parks is critically small and directly depends on the brand awareness. The hiding place survey suggested that consumers do not identify national parks by logos and do not differentiate them well. The results of the survey of potential visitors were supported by the results of interviews with 8 ecotourism experts. Experts identified the current positioning for each national park, proposed changes in positioning based on the characteristics of the landscapes and hydrology, flora and fauna. Based on the findings of this study, the authors proposed a set of measures for the brand positioning of national parks within the framework of the eco-brand concept. The authors insist that the development of a national nature park in the concept of an eco-brand also means the introduction of environmental standards of landscape design, appropriate behaviour patterns and management approaches.

Keywords: brand, positioning, national nature park, tourism destination, ecotourism

Природоохоронна територія як туристичний екобренд

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Анотація. Брендинг природоохоронної території як туристичної дестинації відіграє важливу роль у процесі формування його атрактивності для зростаючого нині цільового ринку, орієнтованого на споживання екологічності як безумовної цінності. Встановлено, що у випадку, коли об'єктом брендингу є національний природний парк або будь-який інший природоохоронний об'єкт, нематеріальні елементи бренду (стверджувальні думки, переконання та асоціації) обов'язково мають ґрунтуватись на принципі eco-friendliness, а матеріальні (логотип, кольори, дизайн, семантичні та візуальні ефекти) – відбивати цю первинну цінність. Визначено, що в науковій літературі такий підхід називається еко-брендингом. Завданнями цієї статті став аналіз матеріальних і нематеріальних складових брендів національних природних парків України, їх поточне ринкове позиціонування, а також розроблення пропозицій щодо формування еко-брендів окремих національних природних парків. Проаналізовано контент інтернет сайтів національних природних парків України, їх логотипи та поточне позиціонування. Встановлено, що позиціонування більшості з них є неефективним внаслідок слабкої самоідентифікації та відсутності клієнто-та бізнес-орієнтації основних драйверів брендів. Виявлено, що екологічність бренду як така може і не призвести до бажаного ефекту – зростання атрактивності об'єкта, якщо сам бренд не відбиває його автентичність, не викликає у потенційного відвідувача сталі асоціації, бажання отримати унікальний досвід, не допомагає ідентифікувати та диференціювати. Оцінено

поінформованість цільових аудиторій щодо діяльності та специфіки НПП України та рівень впізнання брендів. Виділено групи НПП за критеріями «відвідуваність-інформованість», охарактеризовано закономірний зв'язок між цими критеріями. Методом експертної оцінки визначено рекомендації щодо екологічного позиціонування брендів національних природних парків України. Запропоновано заходи щодо валоризації та просування еко-брендів природоохоронних територій. Встановлено, що розвиток національного природного парку в концепції еко-бренду у тому числі означає запровадження екологічних стандартів ландшафтно-просторового дизайну, відповідних моделей поведінки та підходів управління.

Ключові слова: бренд, позиціонування, національний природний парк, туристична дестинація, екотуризм

Introduction.

The question of the development of tourist flow concentration zones has been reflected in numerous publications by representatives of British, Australian, New Zealand, European and American scientific schools, in particular, N. Leiper, P. Pierce, W. D. Dwyer, and H. Kim, D. Bukhalis. They introduced into the scientific literature and developed the concept «tourism destination» as a business unit. They see this term as territorial objects of different levels, scale, and specialization which have become or may become centers of concentration of tourist flows due to certain factors and the presence of specialized infrastructure. The first studies in which national parks and other nature conservation sites were considered as tourist destinations appeared back in the mid 1970s (E. Moyo, 1975). In the mid-1990s, due to the actualization of ecotourism research, national parks were perceived in the scientific literature as a special kind of the tourism destination (D.L. Andersen, 1994).

The view of the destination as a business unit that exists under the laws of business (Ritchie, JR Brent, Crouch, GI, 2003) forms the basis for sustainable development of the territory, as it allows one to ensure a certain balance of economic and environmental interests of all participants in the tourism process within the destination: enterprises in the field of tourism and related industries; state or local authorities; local communities; public organizations; tourists. Besides, it allows one to apply to destinations traditional business tools, including marketing ones.

Tourism destination marketing traditionally focuses on forming and maintaining the appropriate image of the latter to ensure the growth of tourist visits (Marija Jankovic, Anđela Jakšić Stojanović, 2019). When the object of marketing is a protected area – an ecotourism destination – the marketing balances between the tasks of attracting visitors and encouraging them to a certain pattern of behaviour that is optimal for the preservation of ecosystems (Lisa M. King, Stephen F. McCool, Peter Fredman, Elizabeth A. Halpenny, 2012). Marketing management of protected areas, based on the principles of sustainability, can significantly improve the preservation, protection, promotion, and valorization of both natural and cultural heritage and it is a necessary prerequisite for

their successful positioning in the global tourism market (Kvach, Koval, Hrymaliuk, 2018.).

Branding is the best tool for this task. Back in the early 1990s, specialists began to discuss the admissibility of the spread of branding technology in areas (Kotler, P., Gertner D., 2002). Further research has shown the scientific and practical feasibility of analyzing a tourist destination within the paradigm «destination – brand» if the brand is understood as a unique and competitive image of the territory for domestic and international positioning as an attractive place to visit (Davidenko, N. 2009). In fact, the territory of any configuration gets the opportunity to become a brand only when a potential visitor begins to identify it as some unique integrity, a theoretically possible place to travel. Thus, in the late twentieth century, it became clear that a destination with its resources, infrastructure, activities can be branded, although not as a regular product, but rather as a corporation (Ritchie, JR Brent, Crouch, GI, 2003) and, accordingly, can have its own brand capital with all its attributes.

Using branding strategies aimed at recognizing a specific protected area, its identification, and differentiation, it can attract the emotions of visitors and encourage positive behaviour, as well as improve the management of protected areas and ensure their sustainable development (Marija Jankovic, Anđela Jakšić Stojanović, 2019; Popova et al., 2020). Representation of a destination in the minds of visitors in modern research is seen as the main reason for choosing one particular object of visit over another, and therefore it can be used in competition at the regional level (L Dwyer, 2018). Highlighting the need to form several related associations to form a brand identity, Kotler & Keller (2008) emphasize the complex structure of the brand, which is formed not only of tangible but also intangible and visual elements. The intangible effects used for the presentation (Kotler & Keller, 2008) include the experience of visitors, their affirmative thoughts, beliefs, and associations (Echtner & Ritchie, 2003; Trung & Khalifa, 2019). This creates an emotional connection with a certain place, the desire to visit it, tell about it, and so on. Branding plays a key role not only in the promotion but also in the preservation and valorization of a cer-

tain area (Marija Jankovic, Andela Jakšić Stojanović, 2019) because the presence of strong beliefs about the need to protect the territory, careful treatment of ecosystem components also have a positive effect on visitors' behaviour during their stay within the protected area. Lisa M. King, Stephen F. McCool, Peter Fredman, Elizabeth A. Halpenny identify three main strategies for branding protected areas: brand awareness, visitor education, and brand building (2012). Building brand equity means creating stable emotional experiences, and educating visitors – encouraging positive behaviour models before, during, and after visiting the destination.

In the late 20th century, Aaker (1996) and Kotler (2000) introduced the definition of «green brand» as a set of attributes and benefits associated with the reduced impact of the brand on the environment and its perception as environmentally friendly and in 2009 R.J. Orsato scientifically substantiated the concept of eco-brand, which was based on the differentiation of brands based on ecological prerogatives (R.J. Orsato, 2009). This became possible due to changes in the cultural paradigm of society, and thus in consumer behaviour patterns in which environmental motivation is increasingly prevalent. Tourism has certainly been affected by this trend. Research shows that social and psychological desire to escape from habitual life and the search for natural sites – natural monuments, interesting landscapes, the ability to observe or simply immerse oneself in wildlife, etc., become increasingly a criteria of travel choices. (Phan, T.K.L., 2010).

In practical terms, the concept of eco-branding was implemented at the regional level in Denmark and Sweden (eco-positioning of Copenhagen and Malmö), Spain (Barranca del Rio Santiago), eco-resort «Ecopod» in the Scottish Highlands. The question of what makes a territorial or destination brand into an eco-brand, is now the subject of a lively debate among urban practitioners, but the scientific community hardly raises this issue. The situation is exacerbated by the idea of the apriority of environmental friendliness of the national park brand as a nature reserve.

Therefore, the identification of possibilities of application of the concept of eco-brand regarding the branding of national parks not only as ecological territories but also as special tourist destinations of Ukraine is extremely relevant.

In this context, the objectives of this article are:

- to define the essence of the concept of the “eco-brand” in relation to nature reserves;
- to analyze the material and intangible components of the brands of the national

parks of Ukraine, their current market positioning;

- to develop proposals for the formation of eco-brands of separate NPs.

Materials and methods of investigations.

The methodology of the study included a visual comparative analysis of the logos of 44 national parks in Ukraine; content analysis of digital information platforms on which the national parks of Ukraine are represented, including tourist topics; a survey of 87 representatives of the target market of ecological tourism in Ukraine concerning their perception of the tourist product of Ukrainian National Tourism and identification of logos by the hiding place tests; interviewing 8 experts of the market of ecological tourism, including by the association method, to determine the current and future positioning of the Ukrainian NPs.

Results.

Currently, 1,111,600 hectares, or 1.84 % of the area of Ukraine, are classified as national parks – environmental, recreational, cultural and scientific and research institutions of national importance – established for the purpose of preserving, reproducing, and effective use of natural complexes and objects with special environmental, health, historical, cultural, scientific, educational, and aesthetic value (Law of Ukraine «On the Natural Reserve Fund of Ukraine»). «The creation of conditions for organized tourism, recreation, and other types of recreational activities in natural conditions while respecting the regime of protection of protected natural complexes and objects» is one of the tasks of the National Natural Park according to Ukrainian Law.

The State Strategy for Regional Development of Ukraine for 2021-2027, approved by the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine on August 5, 2020, № 695, defines tasks in the direction of «Formation of a network of protected areas, conservation, and reproduction of ecosystems, improving the environment» (4) stimulating the economic environment and the development of employment around protected areas, including the definition of an economic mechanism to stimulate the creation and preservation of protected areas; (9) expansion of the network of tourist routes and trails within the territories and objects of the nature reserve fund of Ukraine with the use of interactive methods; (10) promoting public awareness of ecosystem services, including recreational and educational services, which are available in protected areas, with aim of developing related business, and as the

part of the task in the field of «Development of domestic tourism» – (14) promoting the formation of regional tourism brands and their promotion within the country and in the international arena, including using modern digital and network technologies (Strategy).

For the 52 national natural parks (NNP) of Ukraine this means the necessity of tourist product improvement, activation of marketing activities, including the development of branding strategies. Currently, 47 out of the 52 NNPs in Ukraine are characterized by the presence of certain signs of the brand's material component – logos, symbols, colours, elements of presentation design, but none of them has a holistic identity.

At the first stage of the study, the content analysis of websites of national nature parks (NNPs) of Ukraine was done, as they are the main sources of the brand's material component, in order to determine their self-positioning. The analysis showed that the structure of the websites and textual content of 35 NNPs out of 38 that have a website («Azov-Sivas», «Holy Mountains», «Meotida», «Nobel», «Dvorichansky», «Sinogora», «Beloozersky», «Kreminski Lisi», «Boykivshchyna», «Zalissia» do not have a website, while «Kamyanska Sich», «Khotynsky» use pages on social networks for this purpose), are quite standard, formal and do not reflect the specifics of the institutions. This means that the most important marketing tool of most NNPs does not fulfill its direct task (the park positioning) and does not apply to the target market. The language of the sites can be described as official, the content is poorly optimized in the searching system. Often the reason for creation of the park, its main tasks are reflected only in the constituent documents and are not obvious for visitors. In fact, the parks features that could become the basis of brands are hidden in the structural components of «Flora», «Fauna», «Landscapes», etc., the texts of which are written in a scientific style. The tourist component of the NNP activity is usually reflected in the sections of websites dedicated to tourist routes, eco-trails and recreational areas. Only there can a potential visitor find information about the park's features, and therefore the reason for the visit. Exceptions are NNP «Podilski Tovtry» and Carpathian NNP, whose websites are the most customer and business oriented and least formal, obviously aimed at attracting visitors. A sign of an effective marketing policy of national parks is also the availability of information about the activities of visitor centers, which obviously perform the functions of the Destination Marketing Organization.

In order to formalize the results, the NNP websites were evaluated on a 5-point system from four positions: (1) the target audience orientation; (2) the

orientation of the text content of the website to visitors; (3) attractive visual content; (4) attractive design that reflects the environmental friendliness of the object (Table 1).

The visual comparative analysis of the logos of national parks of Ukraine conducted at the second stage of the research revealed that the graphic and colour components of their logos quite accurately reflect the specifics of institutions and their assets, such as typical landscapes, hydrological objects, flora, and fauna, etc. Almost all of the studied logos are made in natural colours (table 2) and can be assessed as ecological. At the same time, almost all logos do not correspond to the modern trends of graphic design. They are overloaded with images and meanings and often are extremely similar to each other, which clearly complicates identification. The logos of Verkhovynsky National Park and Skole Beskydy; «Synevyr» and «Holy Mountains»; «Kremenets Mountains», Carpathian and Shatsk NNP substantially repeat each other, and some symbolic images are duplicated.

The method of penetration tests used in the survey of representatives of the target market of ecological tourism (the sample included 87 people aged from 20 to 55 years who travel at least twice a year and determine the motive for their trips as gaining an idea of natural and cultural and ethnographic features of the area), showed that the target audience does not identify logos with specific environmental objects. However, based on their own tourism experience, the respondents made reasonable assumptions about the logo of some NNPs. For example, most such speculations were made about logos depicting a bear («somewhere in the Carpathians»), a dolphin («connected to the sea») and river valleys (mostly respondents fluctuated between the Dniester and the Southern Bug).

Among the 44 proposed names of NNPs, respondents named only 10 («Carpathian», «Shatsky», «Podilsky Tovtry», «Bug Guard», «Synevyr», «Oleshkivsky Sands», «Holy Mountains», «Holosiivsky», «Dniester Canyon», «Kremenets Mountains») as well known. 81% of respondents visited NPP «Karpatsky», «Synevyr» – 79%, «Shatsky» – 78%, «Golosevsky» – 75%, «Bug Guard» – 49%, «Holy Mountains» – 32%, «Kremenets Mountains» – 21%, «Podilski Tovtry» and «Oleshkivski Pisky» – 17% each, «Dniester Canyon» – 7% of respondents. A significant percentage of respondents visited some NNPs without associating them with a specific type of protected area.

This applies to the above-mentioned ten NNPs, as well as to the parks «Dzharilgatsky», «Azov-Sivasky», «Beloberezhya Svyatoslava», «Hetmansky»,

Table 1. Rating of customer orientation parameters of websites of national natural parks of Ukraine

The name of national nature park	Navigation	Text content	Visual content	Design	The name of national nature park	Navigation	Text content	Visual content	Design
Getmanski	2	1	4	4	«Goloseevsky»	3	4	5	4
Ichnianski	1	1	2	1	«Hutsulshchyna»	3	4	5	5
Carpathian	5	4	5	4	«Tsumanska Pushcha»	4	3	3	4
Dermansko-Ostrozky	4	3	4	3	«Desnyansko–Starogutsky»	4	3	3	3
Mezynsky	4	3	4	4	«Dzharilgatsky»	3	3	2	3
«Bug Guard»	5	4	5	5	«Dniester Canyon»	2	2	2	3
«Great Meadow»	1	1	1	1	«Carmelite Podillya»	3	3	4	4
«Verkhovyna»	3	3	3	3	Kremenets Mountains	3	5	5	5
«Vyzhnytskyi»	1	1	1	1	«Galician»	4	4	3	4
«Cheremosky»	1	2	2	2	«Slobozhansky»	3	3	4	4
«Shatsky»	1	2	5	5	«Tuzla estuaries»	3	3	4	4
«Nizhnosulsky»	1	3	3	4	«Lower Dnieper»	3	4	4	3
«Oleshkiv sands»	2	2	4	3	«Gomilshansky forests»	4	5	2	2
«Pyriatynsky»	4	3	5	5	«Lower Dniester»	1	1	2	2
«Northern Podillya»	1	2	1	4	Uzhansky	5	3	3	4
«Podilsky Tovtry»	4	4	5	5	Yavorivsky	3	3	3	3
«Pripyat-Stokhid»	4	3	5	3	«Skole Beskids»	4	4	3	3
«Synevir»	3	2	3	3	«The Enchanted Land»	1	2	2	2
«Small Polissya»	1	3	4	4	«White Coast of Svyatoslav»	3	3	3	3

«Verkhovynsky», «Vyzhnytsky», «Hutsulshchyna», «Pyriatynsky», «Khotynsky», «Tuzla Estuaries», «Magic Harbor», «Cheremosky», «Uzhansky», «Priazovsky», «Yavorivsky», «Skolivsky Beskids», «Enchanted Land», «Small Polissya», «Slobozhansky», which clearly testifies to the weakness of the brands of the mentioned NPP institutions, the lack in the minds of visitors of the connection between the destination and its ecotourism specialization.

The names of many NNPs are associated exclusively with geographical names («Ichnyansky», «Dermansko-Ostroh», «Desnyansko-Starogutsky», «Lower Dnieper», «Lower Suldrovsky», «Pyriatynsky», «Northern Podillya», «Pripyat-Stokhid»); famous names («Carmelite Podillya»), tourist sites («Kamyanska Sich», «Mezynsky»). Respondents recognize only certain markers indicated in the names of the parks, but do not show interest in visiting. The level of awareness of respondents about the six NNPs (Tsumanska Pushcha, Velykyi Luh, Dvorichansky, Meotida, Nobelsky, Gomilshansky Forests), and therefore the desire to visit them, was zero.

The results of the survey allowed us to position the NNP of Ukraine according to the criteria of «reputation among target markets» and «attendance» (Table 3).

As shown in the table, the intentions of potential consumers to visit directly depend on the level of awareness of tourists, and therefore on the marketing policy of the parks.

Elements of the traditional method of associations for branding research were used in the survey. According to it, respondents named associations that are associated with the attractiveness of these NRF objects. These associations could include natural sites (landscapes, hydrological sites, representatives of flora and fauna), place names, cultural and historical sites, including events that take place on the territory of the NNP, as well as celebrities whose names are associated with the territory.

The study showed that currently the strongest positioning is that of the Shatsk NNP, which is clearly associated with the lake Svityaz, eel fish, Ukrainian Polissya as such. At the same time, if the positions of Shatsk NNP have been determined historically, then the strong positioning of NNP «Podilski Tovtry» is the result of special marketing efforts.

Specially created messages (such as «there are similar geological structures of relief only in the USA and Great Britain; Podilsky Tovtry Park is the largest in Europe; the highest bridge in Ukraine for bungee jumping is in Kamyanets-Podilsky; Atlantis

Table 2. Logos of national natural parks of Ukraine

<p>NNP «Getmanski»</p> 	<p>NNP «Desnyansko-Starogutsky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Podilsky Tovtry»</p> 	<p>NNP «Mezynsky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Hutsulshchyna»</p> 	<p>NNP «White Coast of Svyatoslav»</p> 
<p>NNP «Ichnianski»</p> 	<p>NNP «Dzharilgatsky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Pripyat-Stokhid»</p> 	<p>NNP «Holy Mountains»</p> 	<p>NNP «Khotyn»</p> 	<p>NNP «Bug Guard»</p> 
<p>NNP «Carpathian»</p> 	<p>NNP «Tuzla Estuaries»</p> 	<p>NNP «Synevir»</p> 	<p>NNP «Carmelyukove Podillya»</p> 	<p>NNP «Vyzhnytskyi»</p> 	<p>NNP «Great Meadow»</p> 
<p>NNP «Tsumanska Pushcha»</p> 	<p>NNP «Kamyanska Sich»</p> 	<p>NNP «Slobozhansky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Kremenets Mountains»</p> 	<p>NNP «Dniester Canyon»</p> 	<p>NNP «Verkhovyna»</p> 
<p>NNP «Magic Harbor»</p> 	<p>NNP «Oleshkiv Sands»</p> 	<p>NNP «Dvorichansky»</p> 	<p>Yavorivsky NNP</p> 	<p>NNP «Lower Dnieper»</p> 	<p>Lower Dniester NNP</p> 
<p>NNP «Cheremosky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Pyriatynsky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Dermansko-Ostrozky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Skole Beskids»</p> 	<p>NNP «Nizhnosulsky»</p> 	<p>NNP «Golosiivsky»</p> 
<p>NNP «Meotida»</p> 	<p>NNP «Northern Podillya»</p> 	<p>Shatsky NNP</p> 	<p>NNP «Galician»</p> 	<p>NNP «Gomilshansky Forests»</p> 	<p>NNP «The Enchanted Land»</p> 

Cave is the only one in Khmelnytsky region, which has 3 tiers») can become a model of positioning for other parks. The position of the «Holy Mountains» National Nature Park is clearly defined, but only due to the presence of the Holy Dormition Svyatogorsk Lavra on its territory and the chalk landscape, which is much praised in the media.

The group of NNPs located in the Ukrainian Carpathians is also in one way or another associated with this physical-geographical area. The Carpathian

NNP, the Verkhovyna NNP, the Hutsulshchyna NNP, the Synevir NNP, and to a much lesser extent the Uzhansky, Vyzhnytskyi, Cheremosky NNPs, and the Skolivsky Beskydy NNP are currently connected not only with the Carpathians themselves but also with hydrological objects (Lake Synevyr, the Vyzhnytia River, and the Cheremosh River); the brown bear, whose image has also recently been associated with the region; trout ; edelweiss flowers and red rue; the culture of the Hutsuls and other ethnic groups.

Table 3. Positioning of NNP of Ukraine according to the criteria «the level of awareness» and «the probability of attendance»

The level of awareness of the target market	High	–	–	–		«Holy Mountains»	«Carpathian, Shatsky»
	Above average	–	–	–	«Dzharilgatsky», «Bug Guard»	«Oleshkiivsky Sands», «Kremenets Mountains»	«Hutsul region», «Verkhovyna», «Synevyr»
	Average	«Mezinsky»	–	–	«Lower Dnieper», «Dniester Canyon», «Podilsky Tovtry», «Skoliv Beskids»	«Golosiivsky», «Tuzla Estuaries»	–
	Below average	–	–	«Lower Sula», «Khotyn», Lower Dniester, Priazovsky	«Cheremosky»	«Vyzhnytskyi »	–
	Low	«Dvorichansky», «Pyryatynsky», «Karmelyukove Podillya», «Halytsky»	«Meotida», «Dermansko–Ostrozky», «Northern Podillya», «Small Polissya», «Gomilshansky Forests»	«Desnyansko–Starogutsky», «Yavorivsky», «Pripyat–Stokhid», «Slobozhansky»	Azov–Sivasky	Uzhansky	–
	Null	Ichnyansky, «Magic Harbor», «Nobel», «Great Meadow»	«Tsumanskaya Pushcha», «Svyatoslav's White Coast», «The Enchanted Land»	Hetmansky, «Kamyanska Sich»	–	–	–
	Null	Low	Average	Above average	High	Occurred	
Probability of visiting the NNP							

Importantly, the identification of Carpathian national parks within the group is often quite vague – if Synevyr Park is associated with the lake of the same name, the positions of the other parks are not differentiated.

The positions of the next group of national nature parks have been identified in the minds of target audiences quite recently and are now quite strong – NPP «Dzharilgatsky» (spit of the same name, dolphins), «Oleshkiiv Sands» (semi-desert landscape), «Dniester Canyon» (canyon), «Bug Guard» (Migiy Rapids).

The positioning of the rest of the NNPs of Ukraine is associated exclusively with the words in the name, and not with the features of the parks. Thus, Azov–Sivasky, Priazovsky, Nizhnedneprovsky, Nizhnednistrovsky, Nizhnosulsky, Holosiyivsky, Dermansko–Ostrozky, Desnyansko–Starogutsky, Yavorivsky, Ichnyansky, Pyryatynsky NNP, as well as NNP «Northern Podillya», «Small Polissya», «Slobozhansky», «Khotynsky», «Pripyat–Stokhid», «Kremenets Mountains» are associated exclusively with toponyms that sound in the name; NPP «Meotida» – with Ancient Greece, NPP «Karmelyukove Podillya» and «White Coast of Svyatoslav» – with the corresponding characters. Other nature parks do not evoke any lasting associations in potential visitors.

Thus, it is possible to state with confidence that the specifics of most national parks in Ukraine nowadays are incomprehensible to tourists, and their perception is largely unrelated to the ecological dominant. The

main activities of parks, protected landscapes, natural monuments, flora, and fauna remain available for understanding only by a narrow circle of specialists.

Interviews with 8 experts of ecological tourism were aimed at determining the existing and potential positions of NNP brands in Ukraine, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of their marketing strategies. Tourism specialists, familiar with the specifics of all NNPs of Ukraine were selected for the in-depth interviews. During the interviews, the experts named the main expectations for visiting the parks for the target market, as well as the features of the NNPs that could become the basis of tourist brands in the future. It is worth noting the high level of coincidence between the associations obtained during the survey of visitors and the typical expectations cited by experts as reasons for travel.

The proposals of experts on the long-term positioning of the NNPs of Ukraine are given in Table 4 (while preserving the vocabulary of experts).

The interview also showed those aspects of the activities of national nature parks of Ukraine, which could, in the long run, become the basis of their branding as objects of the nature protection fund, to fix the territories in the minds of consumers in the context of clear symbols. It is worth noting that positioning the national nature parks within the concept of eco-branding, experts emphasized such objective features as landscape features, unique natural objects, rare

species of flora and fauna, etc. There were also those activities in the parks that could be perceived by the target market as benefits from visiting: escape from everyday life; photography; a place for a weekend; fishing; some sports activity; observation of birds, animals or natural phenomena. 5 of the 8 experts noted that reminding visitors about the “ecological purity” of the landscape or some individual components, the healing properties of air, water, etc., the mythologizing of the area arouse additional interest from visitor’s side.

But, even the presence of strong material components of the brand, expressed in effective positioning, does not make the brand of the national nature park an eco-brand. The analysis of the concept of eco-branding of individual territories of Europe allowed one to adapt their basic principles to the specifics of the national nature park. Thus, the generalization of concepts shows that at the territorial level the traditional components of the brand should be supplemented by three components: ecological landscape-spatial design, the formation of ecological models of human behaviour within the territory, and the application of the ecological approach in facility management (Stefan Anderberg, Eric Clark, 2013). Each of these components can be applied to the national nature park,

which will enhance the environmental friendliness of the brand. Thus, the National Parks Service of USA (NPS) has developed national park design standards, which include Architectural, Automated Controls, CAD & Drafting, Civil (Site) & Environmental Engineering, Cost Engineering & Estimating, Electrical Engineering, Fire Protection Engineering, Landscape Architecture standards. Lighting, Mechanical Engineering, Occupational Health & Safety, Engineering, Structural Engineering, Sustainability (<https://www.nps.gov>). In addition, the organization is guided by a special policy document the NPS Management Policies (The Guide to Managing the National Park System, 2006), which includes sections on the management of cultural resources, management of natural resources, use of parks and park structures, and many others, many of which directly affect the design and construction of facilities. Regarding the formation of ecological models of behaviour, some interesting concepts of eco-tourism management, including the concept of Limits of Acceptable Changes (LAC), Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP), Recreational Impact Management (VIM), Tourism Optimization Model (TOMM), Tourism Futures Simulator (TFS), etc., are developed and implemented in differ-

Table 4. Proposals for long-term positioning of national natural parks of Ukraine

Name of NPP	Natural objects	Anthropogenic objects
1	2	3
Azov-Sivasky NPP	Oz. Sivash, the islands of Churyuk and Kuyuk-Tuk	-
Hetman NNP	Vorskla River Valley, bird common crane	Hetman’s capital
Ichnia NNP	Valley of the Uday River and Ichenka	Ichnia ceramics
Carpathian NNP	Waterfalls, lakes Maricheyka and Nesamovyte, rocks and caves Dovbush Hoverla mountains, Pip Ivan, Hamster, Rudyak swamp, Kedruvate tract, rhododendron plant (red root)	Hutsul culture
NPP «Tsumanskaya Pushcha»	Bison animal, tract «Devil’s swamp», peat mud and mineral waters, oak forests	Heritage of the Radziwills
Mezynsky National Nature Park	Desna River Valley, Khotyn Lakes and Horseshoe Happiness, Tsar-Oak	Spruce Alley Mezynsky Archaeological Site, Palace
NPP «Holy Mountains»	Cretaceous landscapes, plant tulip, animal ermine, bird eagle owl, tract «Mayatskaya dacha»	Holy Dormition Svyatogorsk Lavra
«Svyatoslav Beloberezhya» National Park	Kinburn Spit and Solonets-Tuzla Lakes, orchid fields, sand dunes; alder, birch and oak nuts - sagas.	Sviatoslav the Brave, the cult of Achilles
NPP «Buzky Gard «	Gard and Protych tracts, Mygiivsky Canyon, the mouth of the River Velyka Korabelna, Arbuzynsky, Aktovsky and Petropavlovsky granite massifs	Herodotus, Exampey - a sacred way, the Cossacks
NPP «Great Meadow»	Plavni Dnieper, archipelago «Big and Small Kuchugury» and floodplain «Seven Lighthouses», riparian forests	Cossack winterers, the capital of the Golden Horde the city of Gulistan

Continuation of Table 4. Proposals for long-term positioning of national natural parks of Ukraine

1	2	3
NPP «Skolivsky Beskydy»	Animals bison and beaver, waterfall on the river Kamyanka, lake. Zhuravlyne, «Iron Water»	Boykivska culture, fortress «Tustan»
NPP «Enchanted Land»	Rare forms of rock relief, virgin beech forests, volcanic ridge, rivers Latorytsia and Borzhava, sphagnum swamp «Black Swamp»	-
NPP «Gomilshansky Forests»	Valley Seversky Donets, lake. White, Cossack Mountain	Korobovi Khutory
NPP «Shatsky»	Lake Svityaz and other lakes, fish, eel	-
NPP «Male Polissya»	Gorin River Valley, Holy and Blue Lakes, peat bogs	Ruins of the palace and castle, Izyaslav
NPP «Verkhovynsky»	White and Black Cheremosh, mineral waters , village. Burkut, group of rocks «Stone Baba»	Hutsul culture, «Shadows of forgotten ancestors», mofars
«Vyzhnytskyi» NNP	Nimchych Pass, Lekechensky Rocks, Dzherela Luzhky and Byk, cascade of waterfalls of Mala Vyzhenka River, Stizhok tract, Dovbush Cave	Jewish Synagogue, Yu. Fedkovych, N. Yaremchuk I. Mykolaychuk
NPP «Halytsky»	Halychyna caves, underground rivers and streams, limestone rocks, Halych Hora	-
NPP «Goloseevsky»	Centennial oaks	Museum of Architecture and Life , Observatory
NPP «Hutsulshchyna»	Oz. Lebedyn	Hutsul culture
NPP «Dvorichansky»	Cretaceous landscapes, animal marmot , peony valley, riparian forests	-
NPP «Dermansko-Ostrozky»	Biird black stork , plants orchid	Ostrog, castle ruins
Desnyansko-Starogutsky National Nature Park	Desna River Valley, Starogutsky Forest	Partisan Movement
NPP «Dzharilgatsky»	O. Dzharilgach, 200 lakes, dolphins and marine fauna	Achilles cult, old lighthouses
NPP «Dniester Canyon»	Dniester Canyon, Dzhurinsky waterfall, caves «Optimistic», «Blue Lakes», «Crystal», «Mills», «Verteba»	Palace and castle complexes
NPP «Kamyanska Sich»	Steppe landscapes, the valley of the Dnieper	Kamyanska Sich
NPP «Karmelyukove Podillya»	R. Savranka, orchids, Mediterranean forests	Ustym Karmalyuk
NPP «Kremenets Mountains»	Little Carpathians	Kremenets-Pochaiv State Historical and Architectural Reserve
NPP «Meotida»	Bilosarai Spit and «Polovtsian Steppe», Crooked Spit	Culture of the Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate
NPP «Lower Dnieper»	Delta of the Dnieper, floodplains	-
NNP «Nizhnosulsky»	Valley of the River Sula	-
NPP «Nobelsky»	Lakes Nobel , Mill	Narrow gauge railway
NPP «Oleshkiv Sands»	Desert and semi-desert landscapes, dunes, mounds, dunes, the largest semi-desert in Europe	-
NPP «Pyriatynskyi»	Udai River Valley, Berezova Rudka	Park Burty Tract
NPP «Northern Podillya»	Sources of the rivers Styr, Western Bug, Seret, rocks «Trinig», «Dead head», stone «Executioner»	Castles, black-smoked Gavaret ceramics
NPP «Podilski Tovtry»	Atlantis Cave, Kitaygorodskoe Outcrop, Smotrytsky Canyon, meanders of the Smotrych and Ternava rivers, mineral springs, Bakot Bay, Tovtrov Range - Remains (strands and atolls) of the Coral Reef of the Sarmatian Sea	National Historical and Architectural Reserve «Kamyanets», Ustym Karmalyuk
NPP «Pripyat-Stokhid»	Valleys of the river Pripyat and Stokhid «Ukrainian Amazon»	Authentic Ukrainian village Svalovychi
NPP «Synevyr»	Lake Synevyr, Gregoty Brown Bear Rehabilitation Center	Museum of log rafting on the Ozeryanka River

Continuation of Table 4. Proposals for long-term positioning of national natural parks of Ukraine

1	2	3
NPP «Slobozhansky»	Sphagnum bogs, relict lakes	Sharivsky Palace
NPP «Tuzlovsky Estuaries»	Estuaries and lakes Shagany, Alibey, Burnas, Magalevskoe, Martaza, Buduri, Karachaus, Hadzhider, Kurudiol, Solony, Dzhansheysky and Maly Sasyk, a nesting place of birds, pelicans, animal dolphin	Tuzliv Amazonia
NPP «Khotyn»	Dniester Walls, Tovtrov Range - Remains of the Coral Reef of the Sarmatian Sea, Caves and Waterfalls of Karst Origin	Khotyn Fortress
NPP «Cheremosky»	Mount Tomnatyk, Sokil rocks The confluence of the Perkalab and Saratatyva rivers	Pamir Military Base Gates of the Sarata River
Lower Dniester NNP	Area between the Dniester and Turunchuk rivers, floating land, animals, deer and mouflon, bat colony, plantation of yellow pitchers	Dniester
Priazovsky NNP	Estuaries Molochny, Utlyuisky, braids (Fedotova, Stepanovskaya, Berdyanskaya), plants Schrenck's tulip, iris, hyacinth	-
Uzhansky NPP	Mineral springs, «Dido Dub», virgin beech forests, Knyagininsky meteorite	6 old wooden churches of the XVII-XVIII centuries.
Yavoriv National Nature Park	Roztochchya, watershed of the Black and Baltic Seas, animal tarpan	Yavoriv toy, Krekhiv Monastery

ent counties and could also be used in domestic NNP. Such activities could help to form their eco-brands.

Conclusion.

Eco-branding of the national park as a tourist destination plays an important role in the process of forming its attractiveness for growing target segments focused on the consumption of environmental friendliness as an unconditional value. In the case where the object of branding is a national nature park or any other nature conservation object, the intangible elements of the brand must be based on eco-friendliness, and the material ones must reflect this primary value. It is obvious that the environmental friendliness of the brand as such may not lead to the desired effect - of increasing the attractiveness of the object if the brand itself does not reflect its authenticity, does not cause a potential visitor constant association, the desire to gain unique experience, does not help identify and differentiate, is not replicated by different communication platforms. The development of a national nature park in the concept of an eco-brand also means the introduction of environmental standards of landscape design, appropriate models of behaviour, and management approaches. National natural parks of Ukraine are currently in the first stage of forming their own eco-brands. Despite the presence of certain elements of brand identity, there is a lack of targeted marketing activities, lack of positioning, and, consequently, a low level of awareness of target

audiences about the activities of most of them. Therefore, the development of their brands in a holistic environmental concept can be considered the immediate task for each of them.

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