

BAIULUI (GÂRBOVA) MOUNTAINS THE MAJOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ISSUES

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***Abstract:** This study aims to analyse the touristic potential of Baiului Mountains, using the cartographic method, in order to represent the key elements by which these mountains assert in terms of tourism in Romanian landscape.*

Baiului Mountains, bounded by Prahova and Doftana Valley, are very climbable. Despite this fact, they are not well-kept. One of the problems Baiului Mountains face in terms of hiking and tourism development is the lack of markings. The content represents field research and illustrates the approval of a tourist route, very important for hikers, and not only.

***Keywords:** Baiului Mountains, degradation, development, landmarks, problems, Prahova Valley, tourism, trails*

The importance of the study

The Baiu Mountains belong to the Curvature Carpathians and are situated on its westernmost point. The northern boundary is given largely by the Azuga Valley, separating the Baiu Mountains from the Clabucetelor Predealului peaks then passing North of Mount Tigai, at an average altitude of 1350 m. Doftanei Valley separates the Baiu and Grohotis Mountains, the southern limit being given by Florei Valley, while in the west by Prahova Corridor.

Why Baiului Mountains?

- They are located near to Prahova Valley
- This Valley is the most visited area in Romania
- Baiului Mountains are overshadowed by Bucegi Mountains
- There are many unmarked trails



Fig. 1 Baiului Mountains – Location Map



Fig. 2 Baiului Mountains – General Map

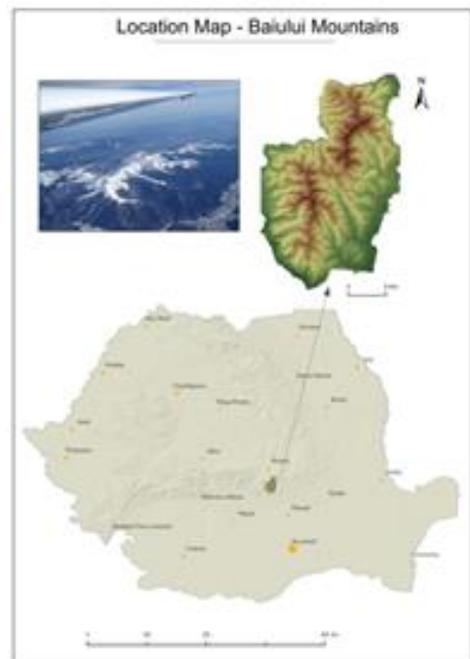


Fig. 3. Baiului Mountains –Ravines

Methodology

The data used for this study and maps are: topographic map 1: 25 000 (1981), touristic map of Baiului Mountains („Munții Noștri”, M. Ielenisc 1984), touristic map of Baiului, Piatra Mare and Postăvaru Mountains (Schubert&Franzke, 2015), touristic map Bucegi and Gârbova (R. Țițeica et al, 1930-1940)

For collection and validation of data were crossed more trails like: Azuga Valley, Piciorul Câinelui and some interested points like: Red Lake, Forest Nursery.

For the collections of data it was used a GPS Garmin 62s and the photos used in this study were taken on the routes from Baiului Mountains.

For the maps, it was used the software ArcGis 10.2 and CorelDraw X6

The main problems in Baiului Mountains:

1. Many ravines caused by deforestation, pasturing and the destruction of the juniper bushes.

2. Slope degradation:



Fig. 4 Baiului Mountains – Slope degradation

3. Deforestation which causes landslides:



Fig. 5 Baiului Mountains –Deforestation

4. Sheepfolds located near to the tourism trails. The dogs can be dangerous for the tourists.



Fig. 6 Baiului Mountains –Sheepfolds

5.The 4X4 cars.

This type of sport is destroying the land and the soil by creating ditches where the water can create ravines



Fig. 7 Baiului Mountains – 4x4 cars

Homologated tourist trails

In Baiului Mountains there are just five marked tourist trails:

- Azuga Valley (Trifoi Hut) – Susai Hut
- Limbășelu Hut – Gârbova Hut
- Clăbucetul Taurului Peak – Gârbova Hut
- Sorica Path – Gârbova Hut
- Păstrăvărie – Clăbucetul Azugii Peak – Susai Hut.

Approval of ski slopes and trails for recreation and the mountain routes are done by the National Tourism Authority together with county councils, in accordance with procedures developed by the National Tourism Authority and approved by the decision of the Government (Government Ordinance, No.58 / 1998, consolidated version on 11/07/2013)

Trail No	
Mountain Massif	Baiului Mountains
Trail Type	Trail that links Trifoi Hut (1150m) to the main peak through forest road
Landmark	Blue Triangle
The description of the trail	<p>The trail links the main peak marked with red line to the forest road that leads to Azuga through Trifoiu Hut. From this Hut the tourist can draw water and it's the main spot where the tourist can find accommodation.</p> <p>Thanks to this trail, the tourists can reach the main peak easily that leads to the highest peak from Baiului Mts. (Neamtu Peak 1923m). The slope is slightly tilted, so it is very accessible all year.</p> <p>The first part of the route is an easy climb on a forest road, approximately one hour after which the alpine stands but must take into account that it is a direct route into a forest nursery left to develop naturally.</p> <p>The trees have already reached maturity and they are like walls on each side of the path. It is a very pleasant walk, as the trail is wide, bloomed and the trees on one side and the other creates the feeling of protection.</p> <p>After entering the forest nursery, on the left is an "oasis" of light marked by a peat bog. Once you get past the forest nursery, you will meet a path through a small forest that gives the traveller the feeling of wildness because it seems hidden and drives the tourist closer to adventure.</p> <p>On the trail there is the possibility that the tourist will meet bears, grouses, deer's and plants like daffodils, clovers, Rumex Patientia, Crocus.</p>
Length in km	5 km
Level difference	700 m
Crossing time	2h30min
GPS Coordinates	N 45.483959, E 25.642832
Open during summer/winter/all year	Permanently
Equipment	Usual equipment
No. of landmarks	70
No. of indicator arrows	10
Trail Condition	good
Landmarks condition	It doesn't exist
Work to be performed	Emptying the path of fallen trees
Huts/Accommodation	Trifoi Hut
Huts Conditions	Trifoi Hut was recently renovated and has its own restaurant
The importance of the trail	This trail links Azuga Valley to the main peak in a very short time and is open all year
Access to the area	Forest road from Azuga Valley

Advised Mountain by Rescue Azuga
 Advised by County Council Prahova

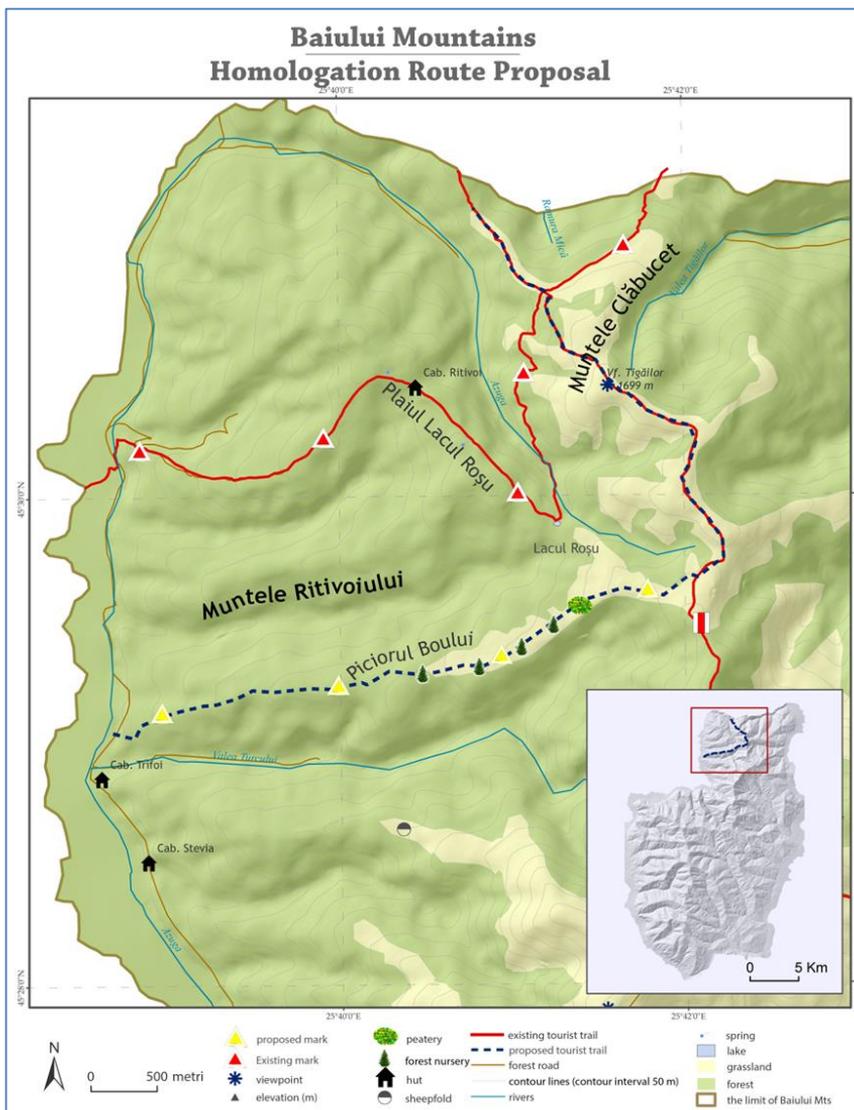


Fig. 8 Baiului Mountains – Homologation Route Proposal

The necessity of homologated tourist trails

1. **If there are no homologated tourist trails, there is no security.** The tourist can get lost easy, especially if is foggy weather. Markers are very important in the nearby ridge, in the alpine meadows, but also in forests so as to prevent accidents, encounter with wildlife and hazards.



Fig. 9 Baiului Mountains – Foggy weather

2. No landmarks, thousands of paths. “In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.” Judges 17:6

The Baiu Mountains, bordered by Prahova and Doftana Valley, are considered easily accessible. Despite this they, very few are managed. One of the problems facing the Baiu Mountains in terms of hiking and tourism development is the lack of markings. One can't talk of an organized tour, without clear indications after which the tourist can orient. Unfortunately, while going through these routes, I frequently encountered fog on the main summit and the lack of marking poles made from metal, hindered my study because it was difficult finding the road back. By Government Decision no. 77 of 23 January 2003 Section 1 (Planning , approval and maintenance of mountain routes), Annex 3 is mentioned “in the alpine meadows and large clearings, sign marks will be done on poles made of metal pipes; posts will be painted first with primer protection, then painted white and black, striped alternative 30 centimetres wide, they will be provided at the lower area with claws for the fixing cement foundation and then into the earth and at the top with a paddle for sign marks; in areas particularly circulated and exposed to the fog phenomenon, markers which will indicate the nearest alpine shelter or cabin will be matched by an acoustic or visual warning system, operated electrically or mechanically; in cabins cases their functioning will be the manager of the hut responsibility



Fig. 10 Baiului Mountains – paths created by cars

3. No landmarks, no organized tourism (no maps, no signs, no advertisements, no posters with representative flora and fauna)

In the absence of any well-established marks, the tourist has the right to create their own trails and routes, thus slowly but surely destroying the environment and the landscape. Considering that these mountains present an "open lesson" for geography and biology, informative panels should be placed explaining the natural elements found in the area. The Baiu Mountains presents the distribution of plant and animal diversity due to their deployment in the Curvature Carpathians, geographical location and orographic extent from 800 m to 1923m. The Baiu Mountains are not deprived of any natural reservations. They are present in the upper basin of Rele Valley, on the southern slope of Mount Cumpatu where the daffodil flowers (*Narcissus L. angustifolius*). In the Cumpătu district of Sinaia, on the 1.4 ha another reservation can be seen. In addition to the alder (*Alnus incana*), which is the defining element, other specimens meet are beech, hornbeam, maple, spruce, fir, red osier (*Salix purpurea*), larch, *Pirus pyraste*, *Malus sylvestris*, hazel, hawthorn, rose hips etc.

Another type of tourism: ECOTOURISM

The Sheepfolds can be an attraction for foreign tourists or travellers who do not know Romanian traditional culture.

At present Baiu Mountains have three cabins, hunting lodges, shelters, cantons and the most predominant sheepfolds. Sheepfolds can be a point of attraction for foreign tourists or for tourists who have never known Romanian traditional culture and obtaining dairy. Following a discussion with Petruş Lungu, fond of mountains and biking, I have discovered his story regarding tourism in the Baiu Mountains. He said that he discovered “ Baiu Mountains as a potential place for mountain biking, as the place where you can have authentic bulz at the sheepfold and as a place where you can leave yourself lost in your thoughts.” Following a trip made in Baiu Mountains on the trail from Azuga, Sorica Peak, Urechea Peak, Baiul Mare with return on Peak Zamora He said that the most expected halt was the one from the Zamora Sheepfold, as this was “a sheepfold that can offer a feast to the hungry customers who have had a long way”. He told he had a new experience that he will never be able to forget. He could be present at the making of the traditional products such as the polenta made in the pot, the sheep cheese, the real taste of blueberry drink; he had seen the cooking machine made from bricks, beaten with adobe soil. All these preceded a culinary surprise, the special polenta with the cheese made in the skin on the grill called “bulz” and sheep pastrami with polenta.



Fig. 12 Baiului Mountains – Zaora sheepfold - polenta



Fig. 13 Baiului Mountain – Zamora sheepfold - polenta

Conclusions

Although close to the touristic Valley of Prahova, the value of Baiului Mountains is gained by its unique grassland landscape and soft-trail tourism. Because there are no landmarks or established trails, there are many paths made by tourists. The deforestation causes many geomorphological processes that affect the soil, the land and the tourism.

The climb is not a difficult one as the mountains are accessible to the less trained travellers, the ones used with long walks on plain roads, parks and forests. Taking into account that the visitor facilities in the Garbova Mountains are missing, these massifs are a true attraction for the adventurous travellers who like challenges and who can also direct themselves only by the soil as marks are missing.

The mountain is the place where anybody can find himself, meditate and find God in every element of the nature. Despite the fact that the Baiului Mountains are in the vicinity of two arteries where there is intense traffic called Prahova Valley and Doftana Valley, they are a quiet oasis where the travellers can enjoy the mountains' beauty. Something that makes them special is the broad view that opens before the new and beauty lovers from the peaks of Baiului Mountains over the Eastern steep places of the Bucegi Mountains and over many other massifs from the Curvature Carpathians.

Even though they do not have great attractions, they have the most beautiful viewpoint toward Bucegi Mountains.

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