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## **Valorization of tourist attractiveness on the example of Lubrza municipality**

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**Abstract.** The work is based on materials collected during the field workshop of "sightseeing and valorization", which took place in May 2012. Selection of studies area was not accidental. All the elements of natural and cultural environment located in the northern part of the Lubrza municipality (Lubuskie) was analyzed.

The aim of the workshop was to show the tourism potential of the Lubrza municipality and to provide indexation as the optimal method of research in the field. For valorisation it was used grading score method prepared for the verification of a two-day sightseeing tourist resources.

The study provided detailed data, which often turned out to be surprising. The municipality was considered attractive for different forms of tourism.

**Key words:** valorisation, tourist attractiveness, Lubrza municipality.

### **Introduction and research area**

In the literature we often encounter the concept of tourist attractiveness. These are the characteristics of the area or locality due to the presence of natural and anthropogenic features, determining the visitors interest. Attraction is a notion folded and relative, dependent on psychophysical conditions of the recipient [Kurek 2007, Lijewski, Mikułowski, Wyrzykowski 2002].

The condition determining the tourist attractiveness of the area is an estimate of the value of resources that determine it.

One of its elements are:

- tourist values (tourist sources),
- tourist development,
- communications availability.

After the positive tourists assessment, tourist sources are becoming tourist assets, which together, or individually, are an object of tourist interests. Further division, taking the tourist demand into account, is demarcating advantages:

- natural, playing the greater role in the resort features of the leisure time,
- pose natural, cultural, closely connected with the human activity.

Tourism development, interchangeably referred to as infrastructure [Gołemb-ski 2006] is an adaptation of the area for tourism and recreation (to its various types and forms). It includes:

- accommodation base,
- catering base,
- communications base (often referred to as technical), which include all the elements and means of communication

through which it is possible to move around the target area of travel or in other words, tourist reception (for example hiking trails, mountain cable cars, ski lifts, airports, marinas, bus stops, etc.). They also determine the availability of values and tourist attractions.

The issue of valorisation of the human environment is a difficult methodological issue, since it affects the quality

characteristics perceived by each human individually, subjectively, making it difficult to verify the results [Kozuchowski 2005]. A north part of the Lubrza municipality was subjected to the evaluation of tourist attraction with fragments of neighbouring municipalities<sup>1</sup> in the Świebodzin district (lubuskie province) [Figure 1].

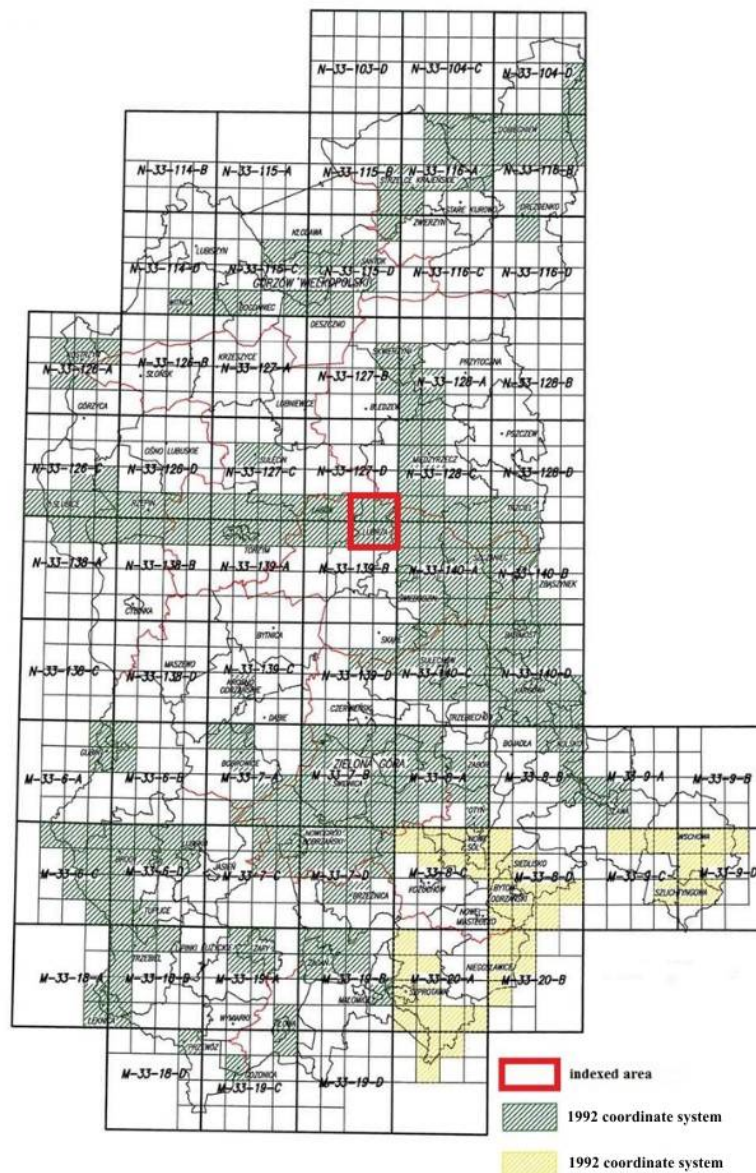


Figure 1. Location of research area in the lubuskie province on the 1992 and 1942 coordinate systems reference map

<sup>1</sup> neighbouring municipalities: Łągow, Świebodzin, Międzyrzecz

According to preliminary expectations Lubrza municipality on account of one's location in surrounding forests and lakes (a 47% of the area of the municipality is woodlands, a 38% is a farmlands, 7% lake areas)<sup>2</sup> is an ideal place for the holiday tourism practising, especially by families with children. Landscape values are one of the most important advantages of this place: with strips moraine hills, between which in the depressions there are lakes 1 and 2 purity class – Paklicko the Great and Niesłysz. Indexed area is a part of the Lubuskie Lake District, which belongs to the southern part of the greater unit of South Baltic Lake District [Kondracki 2002]. The area of the Lubrza municipality is covered with natural legally protected areas so as: areas of protected landscape occupying 5524.3 ha, which is

over the 45% of the area of the municipality, nature reserves occupying 11 ha of the area of the municipality and 15 natural features of historic importance. "Nietoperek" is the most well-known natural reserve in Międzyrzecki Fortified Region - winter resort for many thousand bats. Enthusiasts of the activity-based tourism - bicycle, horse, kayak, fishing - will satisfy their own travel needs. The main cultural attractions the area include hiking trails through the most interesting places in the area: "Lubrza Route of Fortifications" at Międzyrzecki Fortified Region (Boryszyn Loop) (by Lubrza runs ground, the southern part of the trail) [Figure 2], pedestrian and bike "Trail of Water Lilies" [Figure 3] and "Lubrza Canoe Trail."



Figure 2. Anti-tank barriers in Międzyrzecki Fortified Region  
source: photo by Karina Tessar

The interest of tourist values and stay within the municipality may provide constantly increasing steadily each year the number of tourists (Polish and foreigners) accommodated in hotels [Figure 4]. In 2011, enjoying the highest turnout of tourists, the number was almost 5

thousand users. Similarly, with the increasing number of people using accommodation in a hotel, a number of accommodation provided there is growing [Figure 5].

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.intur.com.pl/gmina.php?w=8&p=808>

In the busiest year 2011 there was granted more than 5 thousand nights. However objects of the group accommodation are showing a downward trend in

the number of persons using lodging objects (camping sites, camp fields and tourist houses).



Figure 3. Marking of the route of Water Lilies  
source: photo by Barbara Lewczuk

Every year number of tourists using accommodation is lower there. In 2011, the number of users of accommodation amounted a little more than 4 thousand people, while in 2006, the highest turnout of tourists amounted to more than 10

thousand people. Adequate is the situation with the number of nights. In 2011, awarded less than 15 thousand accommodation, while in 2006, more than 55 thousand.

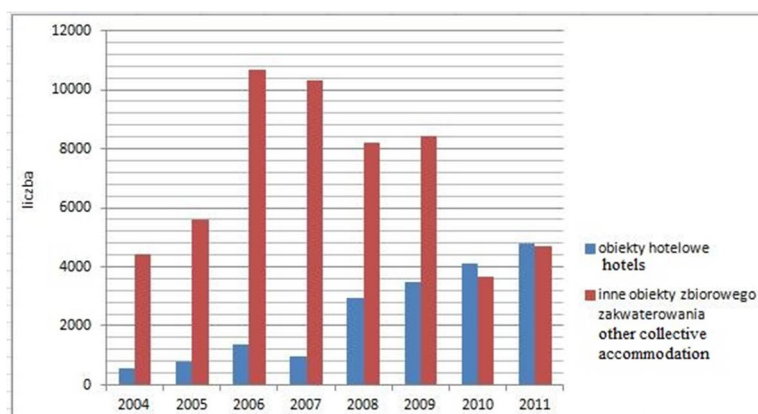


Figure 4. Total number of users of accommodation in the Lubrza municipality in the 2004-2011

source: own work based on files of Statistical Office

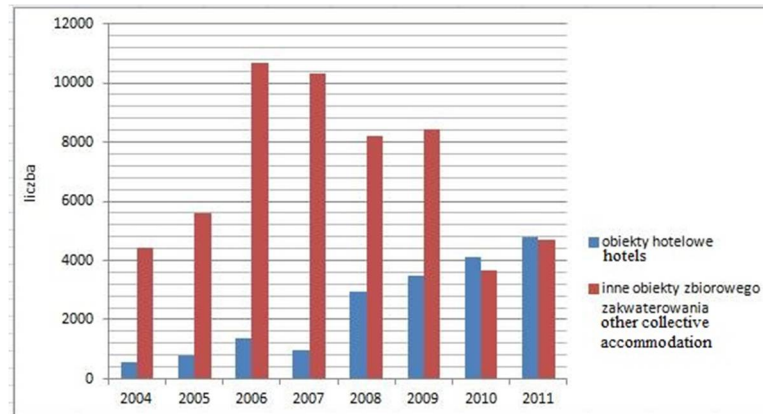


Figure 5. Number of overnight visitors in total in the Lubrza municipality in the years 2004-2011 Lubrza

source: own work based on files of Statistical Office

The problem of decreasing number of tourists from other than the hotel's collective accommodation may be due to, inter alia, growing interest in the foreign tourism departure. This can be due to equalization of the price level in the rest of the country and abroad. Competition for leisure at lakeland areas may be staying in the coastal area, which enjoys popularity among tourists. For example, in 2003, the strip of coastal municipalities of Polish Baltic coast has attracted as many as 16% of the total Polish tourist traffic, and in 2012 almost 14% [Lewczuk 2003, GUS 2012]. It is possible to seek the reason also in the perception of insufficient knowledge of lakeland areas as less attractive for tourists in spite of their considerable potential for touring. This fact is reflected in the volume of tourist traffic - Polish lakeland area it focuses only about 17%<sup>3</sup>. The most famous exception in the country scale is the Masurian Lake District, which through its extensive cultural offerings and service, and a greater concentration of marketing activities, conducive to a large number of tourists and

visitors [Tessar 2011]. It is also a good example of solving the problem of seasonality that affects all areas of lakeland country. The situation in the Lubuskie Lake District is not an exception. Lack of a wide range of cultural attractions and insufficient to promote existing translates into

a relatively short period of stay in accommodation establishments of Lubrza municipalities. Poor service offer, however, is only one of the problems associated with the seasonality of tourism. The problem is also the inadequacy of the existing infrastructure to provide services beyond the strict summer season, resulting, inter alia, from its inadequacy to lower temperatures and adverse weather conditions.

Average length of stay in hotel facilities of the Lubrza municipality [Table 1] amounts little over 1 day - these are objects of the arterial tourism, laid most often on the route of the longer ride, serving short stays and accommodating [Matczak 1998]. This value continues on the immutable level in discussed year

<sup>3</sup> Przybyszewska-Gudelis R., 1994, Strefa polskich pojezierzy: problemy rozwoju i promocji turystycznej [w:] Problemy Turystyki nr 1/1994, Instytut Turystyki, Warszawa, s. 79-86

2004 - 2011. Average length of stay in other collective accommodation (camping, campsites and tourist cottages teams) decreases from year to year. In 2005, amounted less than 7 days, in 2011, reached less than 3 days. Describing other collective accommodation establishments are serving the long-stay tourism practising. It involves the movement

of tourists from place of residence to the reception area, in which purposes of the stay are realized. It is most often departure about stationary character, and the whereabouts of the interesting natural environment. Among others sanatorium stays, colonies, campings etc., are included in forms of the that kind of tourism.

Table 1. The average tourists length of stay in accommodation establishments in the municipality of Lubrza

years	hotels	other collective accommodation
2004	1,13	6,59
2005	1,11	6,94
2006	1,24	5,22
2007	1,09	5,01
2008	1,05	4,30
2009	1,05	4,09
2010	1,11	5,44
2011	1,07	2,73

source: own work based on files of Statistical Office

## Methodology

Valorisation of tourist attraction, discussed among others by such authors as Król, Paulo [2007], Kożuchowski [2005], Słowik, Witt [2008], Nowacka [1984], Sołowiej [1987], is a research technique that allows to determine the suitability of the natural environment and cultural heritage for tourism and recreation. Indexation covered the northern part of the Lubrza municipality and fragments of neighboring municipalities. It was carried out based on the topographic map at a scale of 1:10000. The study area was divided into 36 areas with the same surface. The total area of land subjected to indexation was approximately 80 km<sup>2</sup>. In

order to obtain a high resolution for the basic field assumed a square with an area of approximately 2.2 km<sup>2</sup>. The research teams were given the task to carry out indexation of four areas chosen so that they contain all the elements of natural and cultural environment in that area. This was to ensure the greatest degree of objectivity of evaluation studies. This procedure allowed at the same time to obtain comparable information for all spatial units, which were included in the study. It is possible to assume that the indexation was conducted diligently and objectively - without inflating or understating the score, on account of the requirement of photographic documentation of all elements of the environment

characteristic of every area.

Valorisation was conducted with method of grading points. This method consists in assigning different components of the environment points according to the adopted scale of values - from 0 to 5 points. A negative score was used to the evaluation of elements negatively influencing attraction [Kucina 2004]. The sum get in this way of referring points to individual features of the environment let mark micro areas attractive from the tourists point of view. The consequence of this action is also a selection of places, which because of its location, terrain, natural, landscape and the nature and state of development, can be used for tourism and recreation. The choice of categories has been adapted to the specifics of the research place.

The entire research process was divided into five stages. First, most laborious, consisted in inventory – that is collecting comprehensive quantitative and qualitative data about the following elements of the environment: landform features, waters, flora and fauna, specialist advantages of the natural environment, the tourist development, elements creating tourist attraction and the communications availability.

The second phase - called indexation scheme - consisted of an assessment of the quantity and quality of the previously mentioned components of the environment and the state of its development. Landform features were diversified in six categories from firmly folded, being characterized by appearing of steep hillsides, ravines, on completely flat and dull finishing. A percentage share of water areas in the total surface of the area is a next examined element. The maximum score in this category obtain areas covered with water at least 30%. Appearing of different kinds of surface waters and their

attractiveness were also subject to an evaluation (e.g. artificial and natural basins, areas of the preservation of surface and underground waters). To most attractive and most scored or ranked was a stagnant water with natural beaches, which appearing enables water sports practicing. Least points got watercourses irrelevant for the purposes of recreation due to low flow and visible pollution. A flora and a fauna were next elements being subject to an evaluation. In their scope a participation of the forest area in the general area of studied area was judged – scored most areas with the greatest forestation rate, however greater participation (on the level 80-100 %) of meadows, forest clearings and arable fields was assessed, as unattractive for the development of tourism.

Forms of the conservation of nature appearing on the explored area were also put through an examination, so as nature reserves, landscape parks, natural features of historic importance, areas of protected landscape or areas of Nature 2000. Also diversifying the composition of the tree stand was examined, which high degree combined with the occurrence of large and homogeneous single-species complexes provide the basis to give the highest evaluation. Following Nowacka [1984] and Sołowiej [1987] can be concluded, that the factors which determine the attractiveness of tourism and recreation are, except sculpturing the land, surface water and vegetation. Among the special qualities of the natural environment, there have been isolated conditions for water sports practice, watching birds (called birdwatching), angling, horse riding, cycling and ski tourism during the winter time.

In the context of tourism development analyzed the occurrence of various types of accommodation and additional, like lodging about cosy and mass character, camp places, courts, fitness places in the open air, playgrounds, fitness trails and other. Also examined the incidence and length of tourist routes and nature trails per km<sup>2</sup>. The tourist attraction of the area could also pick up a high level of tourism development - including in particular the development of year-round (comprehensively developed accommodation, catering and accompanying with a high standard).

Factors affecting the attractiveness of tourism can be seen in both positive and negative. To enhance the attractiveness included, among others, the presence of monuments of national remembrance, cemeteries of historical objects and museum exhibitions, landscape, particularly rare species of flora and fauna, local folk groups, religious facilities, rubbish bins and tourist information points. In contrast, the presence of manufacturing plants, illegal waste dumps and the lack of rubbish bins near paths and hiking trails resulted in the award of negative points.

In terms of transport accessibility awarded one point for each mode of transport, which can be reached on the desired area.

The next step was to synthesize the results. For this purpose, summarized all the points obtained for the area has been tested. Attractiveness ratio was calculated according to the following formula:

$$Wa = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^n P}{\sum_{i=1}^n P \max}$$

$Wa$  - attractiveness of the area rate

$\sum_{i=1}^n P$  - the sum of points obtained by the spatial area as a result of valorisation (indexation)

$\sum_{i=1}^n P \max$  - sum of all points possible to get

Received values let for categorising all areas according to the following scale:

- over 0,8 – areas with outstanding tourist attractiveness
- 0,6 – 0,8 – areas with great tourist attractiveness
- 0,4 – 0,6 – areas with medium tourist attractiveness
- 0,2 – 0,4 – areas with low tourist attractiveness
- 0,1 – 0,2 – areas with very low tourist attractiveness
- below 0,1 – areas unattractive to tourists

The final step is to analyze valuation results.

### Results and the synthesis of research

After completing all the steps of valorization in the northern part of Lubrza municipality some following results of tourist attractiveness factor for each 36 areas were obtained [Table 2].

Among 36 separated areas within the northern part of Lubrza there were obtained:

- 2 areas with high tourist attractiveness
- 6 areas with the attractiveness of average
- 23 areas of low attractiveness
- 4 areas of very low attractiveness
- 1 area unattractive

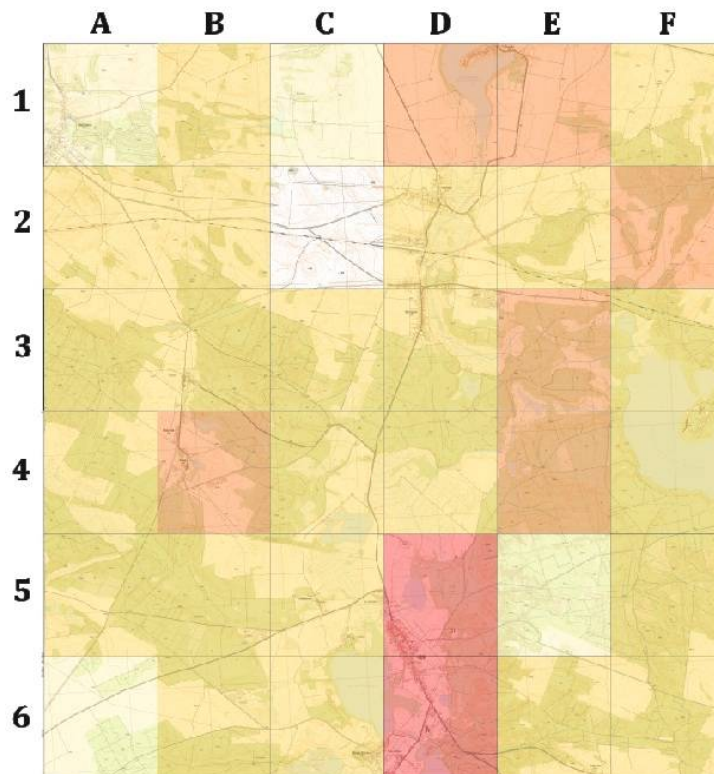
In order to visualize the results for the particular there was layer with a mesh of colors in accordance with the adopted scale imposed on the topographic map. Results are shown on the Figure 6.

Through the research it turned out that the most attractive tourist areas cover the Lubrza as a village and the



Goszcz lake connected by the Niesulicki Canal with the Lubrza lake. Other areas are the fields covering lakes Kociołek and Lubie. The areas of high-attractiveness are D5 and D6. As Bogdanowski (1998) shown, the landscape of a compact buildings construction gives the impression of order and composition. Between the lakes in Lubrza there is a compact string of residential, commercial and educational buildings, while around the lakes

the construction is characterized by cottages and resorts, staying in the vicinity of the existing residential and service buildings. There are also objects and places designed or adapted and suitable for qualified tourism, such as camping or campsites and a very well-developed tourist infrastructure. They are also open to the residents.



TOURIST ATTRACTIVENESS

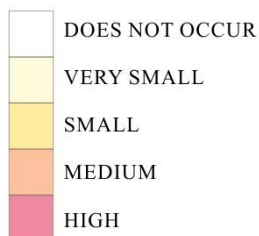


Figure 6. Map of tourist attractiveness of the northern part of Lubrza municipality  
 source: own study based on Topographical Map of CODGiK (Chief Surveyor of Poland, sheet N-33-127-Dd-4, N-33-127-Dd-3, N-33-139-Bb-1, N-33-139-Bb-2, Warsaw 2001)  
 źródło: opracowanie własne na podstawie Map Topograficznych z CODGiK (Główny Geodeta Kraju, arkusze N-33-127-D-d-4, N-33-127-D-d-3, N-33-139-B-b-1, N-33-139-B-b-2, Warszawa 2001)

Table 2. The values of the tourist attractiveness of particular areas of the northern part of Lubrza municipality

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	0,18	0,20	0,11	0,42	0,41	0,23
2	0,20	0,24	0,06	0,33	0,22	0,42
3	0,22	0,20	0,30	0,32	0,45	0,35
4	0,21	0,42	0,25	0,25	0,48	0,22
5	0,32	0,21	0,35	0,63	0,18	0,26
6	0,11	0,32	0,36	0,61	0,20	0,21

source: own study

Areas with the highest attractiveness factor are covered in 50% by forests and deciduous and coniferous groves, mainly pine. Around the lakes and watercourses as a vegetation appears grass and reed thickets. Morphology of the region takes different forms. There are hills in the wooded land coming up to 122 m, cut by numerous ravines, slopes, embankments and dikes. Not without significance is the area's adaptation to various sports and activities such as canoeing, Nordic walking [Figure 7] or fishing. The special charm of the Lubrza village is based on the trails with some unusual names as the green Trail of Water Lilies, laid out along the lakes Lubie and Goszcz or the blue Trail for Nordic walking. An undoubted advantage of this area is its communication accessibility. Similar factors contributed to the classification of some fields including the village Wysoka, the Paklicko lake (fields D1 and E1), areas east of the

Boryszyn village (field F2, E3 and E4) and around the Buczyna village (field B4) as areas with an average tourist attractiveness. Compared with areas of high tourist attractiveness, these fields concentrate a greater share areas of meadow, arable fields and glades. Almost 90% of the described land is not forested. A few percentage of land cover only deciduous forests. In their tracts there are incorporated orchards and allotments. Around the waters traditionally, especially along the Staropole Canal, there are wetlands and marshes, and the emerging vegetation contains mainly grass, low bushes and tall reeds. In several places there might be seen on the horizon some quite large residential and industrial buildings that fell into destruction.



Figure 7. Marking of the Trail for Nordic walking in Lubrza municipality  
source: photo by Barbara Lewczuk

The greater part of the researched area was classified as low attractive for tourists. The reasons and causes of this situation must be sought mainly in non-tourism use of the area, eg. for agricultural purposes. An example can be the field D2 and E2, which at first glance do not show the presence of any tourist attractions and which moreover are characterized by the flat terrain, a negligible degree of forest cover (less than 20 % of the area is covered by clumps of trees and shrubs) and monotonous to the eye view. The uniqueness of this area stems from the location of underground buildings and the several underground and above-ground trails of Międzyrzecki Fortified Region. Ventilation chimneys, bunkers and other military buildings are visible there on the horizon. Among them there are imposed rubble of stones and screes. Another reason for the low assessment of the attractiveness of the area for tourism and leisure purposes is the occurrence of the A2 motorway, which crosses the southern part of the area. This situation includes the fields E5, C5 or A4, which ar-

reas additionally have no varied morphology and no rich land cover as well. There is almost a lack of any form of development and although on the one hand, the highway course increases the region's accessibility of the communication, on the other hand, along the route also increases traffic noise. The A2 motorway is also not without influence on the evaluation of the esthetic value of the landscape. Fighting against esthetics disorders and traffic noise Lubrza municipal authorities could take into account some appropriate protective plantings. Damping Green not only inhibits blasts and retains impurities but also strengthens the sides of the road and above all it represents a more aesthetic and functional alternative to the current soundproof screens which are so commonly used. Only one field (C2) was evaluated as unattractive. It's unattractiveness follows from the low diversity of terrain, lack of houses or other buildings and any tourist infrastructure. The area of field C2 is in the vast majority a barren land. Another factor that exerts a strong influence at the esthetics of the landscape is the nearby railway line.

However, despite the occurrence of many low- and unattractive fields, it does not mean that these areas are devoid of tourism potential. This inconspicuous area abounds with interesting facts that could attract tourists, such as: Professional Recording Studio "RECPublica STUDIOS" in Boryszyn (D2), which guests the greatest musical fames and

where, among others, her album recorded a Polish singer Monika Brodka. Another interesting place to visit is one of the oldest in Poland (1873) lignite mine - Sieniawa (A1). The mine was one of the few in Poland that exploited their deposits by underground. An interesting place is also a small museum at the Universal Bar in Sieniawa that belongs to Mr. Marian Koszyk [Figure 8].



Figure 8. The museum exhibition at the Universal Bar in Sieniawa  
source: photo by Karina Tessar



Figure 9. Hanging bridge on the Beaver Trail  
source: resources of Martinez Resort in Lubrza (<http://www.martinez.com.pl>)

The exhibition consists of 1,600 beer mugs, 800 bottles and more than 1000 openers from all around the world. Nature-lovers would definitely find another interesting tourist attraction which is the Beaver Trail (D4). It leads through the most curious natural areas, with a low degree of human pressure. Along the route there are some objects of cultural and historical environment (eg. weir number 712 or bunker number 702) which are the part of the Fortified Group Körner in the Międzyrzecki Fortified Region. In addition to cultural values, there are beaver lodges, sawn wood, information and educational boards or a hanging wooden bridge [Figure 9] exposed on the trail. There is also a system of wooden walkways leading through the wetlands. The tourist offer of the region is completed by the rich calendar of events, such as Night of Water Lilies, fishing competitions, Military Vehicle Rally, Lubuskie Summer Film Festival.

## Summary

In a summary, the valorization of tourist attractiveness by way of grading point seems to be an adequate method to study human environment because it is based primarily on a thorough inventory of land and includes a subjective evaluation of researchers. At the same time, contrary to appearances, this method allows to make a fairly objective assessment of the environment, because it represents some average of the ratings done by various research groups. However, there is no one universal valorization form that can be applied to different types of environments. Other components of the landscape will raise the attractiveness of mountain areas and other of coastal areas and lowlands. That is the reason why the

valorization form should be adapted every time separately to each area of research.

Valorization of tourist attractiveness made in the northern part of the Lubrza municipality and fragments of neighboring municipalities showed that the area of research has a considerable potential for tourist sightseeing. This confirmed the assumption that the Lubrza municipality has a wide range of natural values. It was also shown that this inconspicuous area abounds with individual cultural curiosities that may surprise tourists and on which an interesting tourist offer for different audiences can be built.

It is quite difficult to unequivocally determine the trend of tourism development based on the number of tourists using accommodation, but it certainly can be said that the growing number of tourists in hotels follows a simultaneous decrease in other collective forms of accommodation.

Therefore the profile of the tourist changes. This should entail the tourist offer of the region to adapt to the needs of a new group of customers.

The northern part of the Lubrza municipality with fragments of neighboring municipalities that have been researched, proved to be diverse in terms of cultural and natural heritage. The high and medium (average) attractiveness of some areas was caused primarily by the cover and terrain morphology - a large number of moraine hills reaching the absolute height of over 120 m and the presence of both forest areas, lakes and urbanized territories. The impact of the quality of land for the various forms of leisure (eg. bird watching, fishing, Nordic walking) and tourism - active (canoeing, sailing, hiking, biking, horseback riding), sightseeing, cultural and rural tourism is absolutely worth mentioning. The fact

that the municipality offers not only hiking and biking trails, but also the possibility of recreation on the water can be considered as unique in this region. However, recreational values of the municipality only partially meet the expectations of tourists by providing permanent and seasonal tourist devices which - like collective accommodation - require development and modernization to meet also the needs of potential tourists.

The demonstrated natural potential of the Lubrza municipality may constitute the strength of the area. This is a fundamental factor, based on which sustainable tourism, otherwise known as, eg. green tourism can be developed. Responsible approach not only to travelling, but also to conducting tourism services can provide optimizing the use of the potential. That does not exclude the increase of tourism by simultaneous protecting and preserving the natural and cultural heritage of the unchanged region. It is worth noting that any form of sustainable tourism, including farm tourism, ecotourism and active tourism, may be the key to a long-term development of the areas that are nowadays struggling with not the best socio – economic situation. In this context, sustainable tourism development should be considered not only as a challenge but also as an opportunity for the Lubrza municipality.

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