

Shifting dune management on the Curonian Spit, a coastal UNESCO World Heritage landscape

Contact name

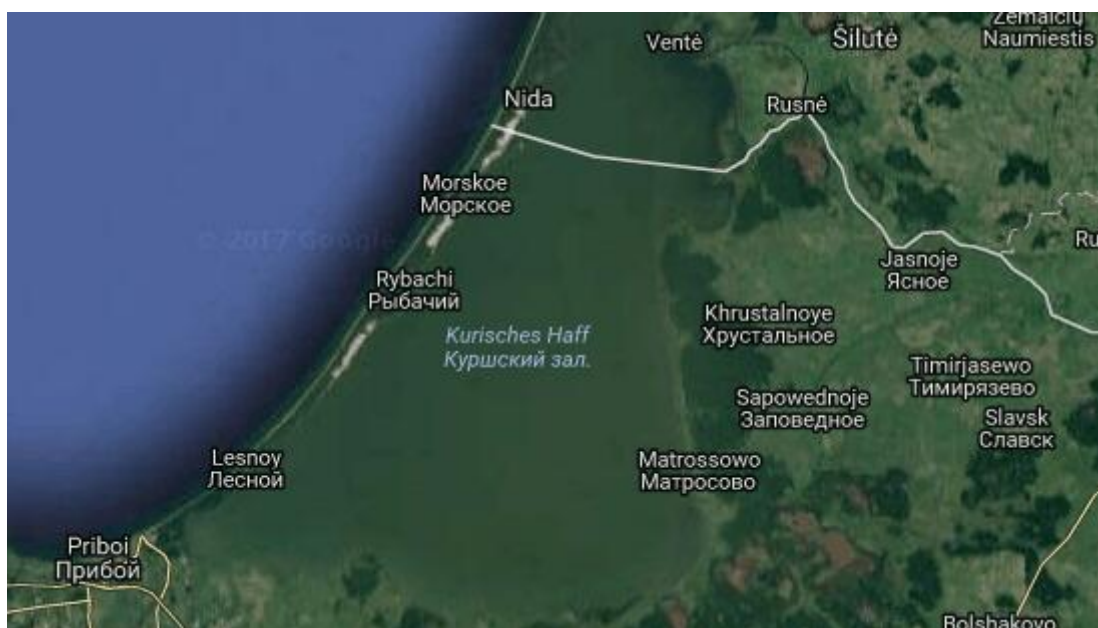
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Institution name

EUCC Baltic Office

Region & country

Lithuania



Summary

The **Grand Curonian Dune Ridge** stretches along the entire length of the **Curonian Spit**. Currently, there are **four strips of shifting white and grey dune habitats** still left on the Curonian Spit altogether comprising 31 km : 11 km of the shifting dunes located on the Lithuanian side of the border, and 20 km on the Russian side. **EUCC Baltic Office** working together with the **Kuršių Nerija National Park Administration** has proposed **changing the route of one of the self-guided dune trails and filling the eroded shifting dune gully with sand** to prevent any further dune landscape degradation.



Background of the project

The strips of shifting white and grey dune habitats are designated as strict nature reserves, where any access for visitors is limited just to three self-guided dune trails. Due to restricted access, thousands of visitors concentrate on these three trails speeding up the shifting dune erosion. Yet, the shifting dunes are the key tourist attraction being one of the main reasons why tourists visit the Curonian Spit.

The needs identified were the following ones:

- Research on habitat conservation, which is the priority issue of Lithuania's environmental policy according to the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region
- Change of the route of the self-guided dune trail, so that it will do less impact on the shifting dune habitat.

Solution and actions taken

After a brainstorming exercise among the stakeholders and support of experts, it was decided that the gully created by the human-induced dune erosion would be filled and the white dune habitat recreated.

The actions taken to reach this solutions were :

- **Organisation of round table discussions and negotiations among the stakeholders** facilitated by a third party (EUCC Baltic Office). These discussions have succeeded in suggesting an alternative route for the self-guided dune trail, which could continue catering for interests of tourists visiting the Curonian Spit and keeping its role as the most attractive dune tourism destination in the Baltic Sea Region.
- **Involvement of external experts in dune geomorphology and tourism management**, who have proposed the alternative route.

Other institutions or parties involved

- EUCC Baltic Office involved in the process
- Administration of Kursiu nerija National Park
- Local community of Kursiu Nerija.

Results

It has been a a '**win-win**' **solution** for a situation with conflicting interests among different stakeholders within the same area which is important both for local welfare and for nature conservation.

Challenges

No difficulties were found.

Lessons learned

The lesson learned during the implementation of the practice is that the key to success is in **timely involvement** of external experts, the administration of the national park and of local municipality.

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Website(s)

<http://www.kursiunerija.info>

