

Establishment of the Regional Nature Reserve Monte Patalecchia and Lorda and Longaniello rivers

Contact name

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Region & country

Molise Region - Italy



Summary

The establishment of the **Regional Nature Reserve “Monte Patalecchia – Torrenti Lorda e Longaniello”** occurred in 2010 with regional law n. 23/2004 “*Establishment and management of protected areas*”. It was preceded by a long phase, lasting over 20 years. It **started with the creation of small protected areas** in the municipalities currently part of the Reserve. The areas were institutionalized by Municipal Council resolutions; these resolutions had to be repeated in some cases because of administrative changes, but always got unanimous favourable votes. The task and goal of protected natural areas were highlighted in meetings with the inhabitants. The administrations actively promoted the Regional Nature Reserve organising activities to discover the natural and cultural beauties of the protected areas.



Photo by Alfonso Ianiro

Background of the project

The area includes the foothills of Matese in the province of Isernia, which is characterized by river and woodland. Prior to the establishment of the Natural Reserve, the territory was subjected to some **inappropriate interventions** along the streams. This territory was considered **marginal**, and was not well known despite of its important environmental and natural characteristics. **The area was not appealing to nature tourism lovers.**

It was necessary to **make people aware** about the environmental potential, the **natural values** and the objectives to be achieved with the primary need of protection and safeguard, and at the same time to **consider such a territory as a resource capable of inducing socio-economic development** with the creation of related activities.

Solution and actions taken

A series of meetings with inhabitants and local administrations were carried out in order to clearly show the positive aspects – but also the constraints – of a protected area:

- Meetings with the municipal administrations to make it clear that the establishment of the Municipal Natural Area could also create opportunities of employment and of exploitation initiatives
- Meetings with the inhabitants in order to illustrate the environmental characteristics of the protected area and the need to safeguard the gorge of the valley, the so called “forra” and surrounding environment

Other institutions or parties involved

The Municipal Administrations have been involved in the events carried out and also environmental associations have been involved in the initiatives promoted.

A number of naturalistic itineraries have been identified.

In addition, the University of Molise has been promoted a thesis on botanical aspects and the University of Florence has been involved in the creation of the Matese Regional Park

Results

The administrations and the inhabitants have reached a high environmental awareness level by becoming **curators of their territory**. The administrations had already believed in the need to protect the territory with the establishment of the first municipal parks and then the regional reserve. The territories of the reserve are now subject to control by the institutions and equipped to host public. It seems that the construction of new hydroelectric stations has been overcome.

Challenges

There were no difficulties in this first phase of management according to the assignment by the Molise Region and not even in the preparatory phase. Municipal administrations have always responded unanimously during the long run to reach the establishment of the Reserve.

Lately, there has been opposition to proposals for **uncontrolled water use for hydroelectric streams**.

Lessons learned

We feel that by knowing the potential of the environment and the territory as a resource, it has been possible to appreciate the need for protection and safeguard.

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Website(s)

http://www.italianostra.org/?page_id=1508