

## EXTENDED ABSTRACT

# ANALYSIS OF THE ACTIVITIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND TOURIST MANAGEMENT IN THE REGIONAL PARK OF CALBLANQUE, MONTE DE LAS CENIZAS AND PEÑA DEL ÁGUILA (MURCIA, SE SPAIN)

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The Regional Park of Calblanque, Monte de las Cenizas and Peña de Águila, is a Protected Natural Area of the Region of Murcia of great value, both ecological, geological and cultural, of great tourist and recreational interest, located to the south of the basin of the Mar Menor, in the easternmost part of the coast of the Region of Murcia. It has an area of 2,822.45 ha and extends over 13 km of coastline and includes territories within the municipalities of Cartagena and La Unión.

You can enjoy a great recreational, touristic and sporting offer, where in addition to traditional sun and beach tourism, it has hiking trails, where you can appreciate the great wealth of both botanical and wildlife associated with wetlands and desert areas. It also has geological strata such as fossil dunes and you can visit the abandoned military battery of Las Cenizas, declared a Site of Cultural Interest by the law of Spanish Historical Heritage, in addition to the impressive views that can be seen from the top of the Monte de la Ashes.

Until the start of the access control actions during the summer period in 2010, the massive flow of motor vehicles inside the park exceeded the capacity of admissible reception, especially in beach areas, assuming a factor of degradation of their values natural and landscaping.

The regulation of access to beaches is based on the establishment of a value of reception capacity of the car parks and road network, so that once overcome, an alternative device that allows the entry of visitors to the in order that the protected space suffer the least possible ecological impact while at the same time providing the greatest degree of satisfaction to the users.

The space has a series of management instruments linked to the declaration of Regional Park by the Law 4/1992 on the Regulation and Protection of the Territory of the Region

of Murcia, with a Plan for the Regulation of Natural Resources approved by Decree in 1995. It is also a Site of Community Importance (SCI), covered by the European Union within the framework of Council Directive 92/43 / EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora.

To carry out this work, we have consulted various reports and reports of the Environmental Administration of free access, as well as others of restricted use whose use was authorized by resolution of January 15, 2018.

The different initiatives that are developed annually generate the preparation of 3 types of reports: Annual Management Report, Annual Report of the Visitor Information and Attention Program and the Annual Access Control Report, as well as the minutes of the debates that are generated within the Governing Board of the Park, so there is excellent information on the efforts to maintain this space in the best possible state of conservation.

The protected area has a team of professionals who, under the coordination of the Director-Conservator of the Park, work for its maintenance and conservation, both from the Administration's own staff and from external contracted personnel. The annual budget allocated to the operation of the basic services of the Park is around 600 thousand euros per year, destined mainly for conservation and cleaning of infrastructures and public use areas, prevention and extinction of forest fires, information and attention to the visitor and social communication.

There is a team responsible for the good state of conservation and cleanliness of the infrastructures, public use areas and basic infrastructures for forest defense. Therefore, its functions are focused on the collection of waste, exterior equipment: recreational areas, camping areas, viewpoints, sidings, parking, trails, itineraries and most visited places of interest and major communication routes in the interior from the park. Currently there is a brigade formed by a person, exclusively dedicated to the Regional Park so that it carries out weekly cleaning routes.

The result reflects a decreasing trend in the volume of urban waste removed, which has been reduced between the 2011-2015 period by 42.5%, probably favored by the decrease in the number of people and vehicles accessing the Park due to control actions. accesses in the summer period.

The surveillance, prevention and extinction of fires is carried out by a 5-person brigade that, in addition to the Park, covers the whole region of Cartagena. They have the mission of keeping firebreaks and auxiliary strips in good condition by clearing and thinning them, although, the area intervened for fire prevention has decreased for the period 2012-2015 by 91.2%, from 9.12 ha in 2012 to 0.8 ha in 2015.

The information team of the Visitor Information and Services Service is composed of two informants-guides and a coordinator who also heads the Information Program of the Regional Park of Las Salinas and Arenales de San Pedro del Pinatar.

Between 2010 and 2017 the number of visitors served by the information point fluctuates between a maximum of 20,309 people in 2012 and a minimum of 6,946, depending on the different scenarios that arise from the Access Control located at the entrance of the Park.

The origin of the visitors attended on average between 2010-2016, come mostly from other Spanish autonomous communities by 37.8% on average, followed by people from

other municipalities in the Region of Murcia by 26.1% and foreigners by 20.6%, mostly British.

Most of the investment of the proactive management actions carried out in the Park are related to the conservation of the natural and cultural heritage, with investments in Infrastructure and defense of the natural environment. For the period 2010-2015 a minimum of € 228,917 has been allocated in 2011 and a maximum of € 673,751 in 2013. Investments have focused mainly on the biological adaptation of the Rasall salt pans, access management for habitat protection, restoration of burned areas, silvicultural treatments in the pine forests of Monte de las Cenizas, elimination of invasive allochthonous plants in the environment, former military batteries, improvement in the road network and implementation of the LIFE project in 2014 "Conservación del Hábitat 9570 \* , Forests of *Tetraclinis articulata* in the European continent ", priority habitats that intend to conserve this Ibero-African endemism.

The Autonomous Community of the Region of Murcia launches every summer since 2010 a device to order the access and parking of motor vehicles in this natural area, with the aim of minimizing the effects on coastal habitats. Between 2010 and 2013, the first limitations on access to parking were established: during the weekdays, access to motor vehicles is allowed until reaching the reception capacity of the car parks, while on weekends a service is provided of free buses, not allowing the access of motor vehicles inside the Park. To do this, previously the maximum capacity of the car parks was calculated in 466 vehicles, which the following year would be readjusted to a total of 528 parking spaces, which corresponds to a total of 1,584 people, considering that each vehicle accesses an average of 3 people.

In 2014, the Territory Custody Entity formed by the main owners of the parking areas of the Park, assumes the management of motor vehicle access to the areas, both private and public. But this system generated conflict with neighbors and environmental groups in the Region of Murcia, the first to have to pay daily if they wanted to get close to the beach and the second to consider it a purely collection measure, conflict that motivated this model to be suppressed next year.

In 2015, the Environmental Administration designs a system of access management that extends for 72 days, from June 27 to September 6. During this period, access to motor vehicles is allowed until reaching the admissible capacity for 3 parking areas (466 vehicles), at which time access to these areas will not be allowed. In the Atochar area, parking is free, while in Negrete and Las Salinas areas, owners can establish parking fees.

In 2016, the General Directorate of the Natural Environment, in collaboration with the City of Cartagena, promotes a new model for the Access to the Beaches of the LIC and the Calblanque Regional Park, which consists of the start-up of a bus service for the access of visitors to the beaches of the Park during the entire summer period, a model that seems to be giving good results, having the support of neighbors and ecology groups, as well as having a high degree of acceptance among visitors and tourists.

As conclusions, it should be noted that the ecological, tourist, recreational and cultural interest of the Regional Park make it an enclave where the environmental administration allocates an important effort to regulate uses for its conservation, in which 7 people work between staff of the regional administration and external personnel, with an annual budget

that exceeds 600 thousand euros per year for the operation of basic services, maintenance of infrastructures and equipment for public use and investment in management and conservation actions, among which the conservation actions of the priority habitats that form the forests of the Ibero-African endemism *Tetraclinis articulata* and the investment in the recovery and maintenance of the Salinas del Rasall, for the conservation of the species associated with aquatic saline environments.

The investments made in infrastructures have been destined mainly to the conditioning and improvement of the road network, while those made in equipment and public use especially to the adaptation of facilities for people with disabilities.

The implementation of the management of accesses during the summer period from 2010, in which different models were experimented, until checking the efficiency of a bus system that provides service to visitors from a car park located at the entrance of the Park up to the beaches and limiting the number of vehicles accessing the car parks, which has made it possible to avoid situations of collapse of car parks, traffic accidents and reduce dust in the environment of the roads that caused degradation of vegetation in their environment.