

## TOURISM IN NATURE CONSERVATION UNITS: A STUDY OF ACTIVITIES DEVELOPED IN `` PARQUE NACIONAL DE ILHA GRANDE `` AND `` APA FEDERAL DAS ILHAS E VÁRZEAS DO RIO PARANÁ ``

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**Abstract:** Among the tourism categories, tourism carried out in rural areas has gained prominence in the Brazilian scenario. Inserted in this environment are the Nature Conservation Units – UCs, which, among other duties, must support the sustainable use of natural resources in their protected spaces through tourism. This qualitative/descriptive methodology study, with a non-probabilistic sample using the SWOT matrix and data collection form, aimed to survey the potential of ``Parque Nacional da Ilha Grande`` (PNIG) and the ``APA Federal das Ilhas e Várzeas do Rio Paraná`` (APA Federal IVRP) in inducing tourism in rural areas in two projects in the municipality of Altônia-PR. To collect the data, semi-structured interviews and on-site visits were carried out, as a result of the brief survey, it was concluded that the PNIG and APA Federal IVRP conservation units currently have little impact, positively or negatively, on tourism activities, gaining prominence some opportunities that insertion into the legally protected natural environment can bring or maintain for tourism on its properties.

**Keywords:** SWOT matrix; Opportunities; Tourism in rural areas.

## INTRODUCTION

For the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2008, p. 1) “tourism is a social, cultural and economic phenomenon, which involves the movement of people to places outside their usual place of residence, generally for pleasure.”

One of the types of tourism is carried out in rural areas, using this environment as an inducer of tourist activity. According to Tulik (2010, p.13), tourism in rural areas “covers all manifestations of tourism in this space and the expression rural tourism itself, which is closely related to the rural environment”.

The Brazilian Ministry of Tourism, based

on Graziano (1998, p. 14), defines tourism in rural areas as:

All activities carried out in non-urban environments, which consist of leisure activities in rural areas in various modalities defined based on the offer: Rural Tourism, Ecological Tourism or Ecotourism, Adventure Tourism, Business Tourism and Events, Health Tourism, Tourism Cultural, Sports Tourism, activities that complement each other or not.

Tourism in rural areas has been growing in Brazil. According to Idestur (2012, p. 8):

Rural tourism in Brazil is no longer a trend of the future, but rather a market issue of the present. Businesses, involving rural tourist activities, developed mainly with a focus on creativity, the experience economy, production associated with tourism and sustainable development, emerged as market diversification and have assumed a different role, adding new features to traditional products on the shelves of the national tourist market.

Thus, according to Graziano (1998a, p.14 apud, MINISTRY OF TOURISM, 2008, p. 17), and recommended by the Ministry of Tourism, it can be considered that the terms tourism in rural areas, in the middle or in rural areas, be understood in the context of space:

Rural space is understood as a geographic area in which Rural Tourism is inserted. Thus, many tourist practices that occur in this environment are not necessarily Rural Tourism, but rather leisure practices and other activities that occur outside the environment in which they are inserted.

An important tourism practice is that developed within nature conservation units - UCs, generally located in rural environments and with beautiful natural landscapes, are capable of attracting the public in search of contact with nature, contemplation, escape from urban centers, well-being.

According to Job et al. (2017, p. 1697-

1718 apud BEZERRA, 2021, p. 56), “Tourism practiced in UCs provides physical and mental well-being to visitors, generally urban, by reconnecting them with nature. In addition to them, attention began to be paid to visiting the surrounding communities themselves, sometimes ignored in this process”.

According to its creation decree, federal decree s/n of September 30, 1997, the APA Federal IVRP has the following objectives (BRAZIL, 1997):

...

IV - Order ecological, scientific and cultural tourism, and other economic activities compatible with environmental conservation; (emphasis added)

...

VI - Ensure the sustainability of human action in the region, with particular emphasis on improving the survival conditions and quality of life of communities in the APA and surrounding areas.

Both the park and the APA are located in the Atlantic Forest biome, one of the most threatened in Brazil, with only 8% of its original coverage remaining (‘‘FUNDAÇÃO SOS MATA ATLÂNTICA’’ and INPE, 2002). According to Rylands, Brandon (2005) they are in a biodiversity hotspot, giving the country responsibility to protect these places with important biodiversity.

Therefore, biodiversity conservation goes beyond legal, fiscal and ecological aspects, conservation units are generally inserted in a very broad context of economic, environmental, political, historical and social relations, among these relations tourism carried out in the interior stands out. or surrounding these protected areas.

Based on the assumptions presented above, the research question arises: What are the potentialities of nature conservation units, ‘‘Parque Nacional de Ilha Grande’’ and ‘‘APA Federal das Ilhas e Várzeas do

Rio Paraná’’, for tourism activities in rural areas in enterprises located in their territory? interior and surroundings?

The objective of the study is to identify the potential of the PNIG and the APA Federal IVRP in inducing tourism in rural areas in two projects in the municipality of Altônia-PR, one of them with attractions located in the park and the other only with nature contemplation activities. and coffee production agroindustry, within the Federal APA of the IVRP and immediate surroundings of the PNIG.

## **RURAL TOURISM, CONSERVATION OF THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT**

No matter how small the interactions, man and nature are not dissociated at any time, however, the environment does not depend on the existence of the human species, nor is the opposite true.

According to Fontana, (2014, p. 8) “for sustainable tourism, more important than tourism itself is the preservation and conservation of the environment, the social insertion of residents, the generation of income and the improvement of quality of life” .

According to Weaver and Lawton (2017), symbiosis must be sought between visitation and conservation of units, thus visitation can be an ally of nature conservation, as long as it is properly managed and executed, on the other hand there is a risk of having conservation units for visitors, making the relationship conflictual.

Tourist activity can contribute to sustainable rural development, as it has great potential to generate extra income for producers, contribute to society by generating jobs and income and also conserve nature.

According to Souza and Klein (2019, p. 96):

Tourism is part of the socio-economic

development strategies of rural areas, both by affirming an attractive image, by enabling infrastructure and equipment, as well as by stimulating, direct and indirect, many activities, from civil construction to gastronomy, generating jobs and income, which in turn support new demands and clientele.

Among the strengths of the attractiveness of rural tourism, the landscape, nature, production processes, receptivity and hospitality of rural people commonly stand out.

According to Clemente (2010, p.15):

The creation of protected spaces is more aimed at increasing recreational and tourist activities than at promoting development activities in rural areas (tourism and leisure are included in the legislative definition of natural parks), and the valorization of its natural and cultural heritage often tends to place tourism alone as the panacea for all ills, destroying the basic idea of development in rural areas: that of the diversification of activities.

According to Tulik (2010, p.3) “Brazilian rural tourism was an alternative to overcome financial problems arising from agrarian crises”.

In the region where the Portal de Luz and Sítio Faria projects are located, there is the possibility of creating a route called “Estrada das Paineiras” that can increase the development of sustainable tourism in these properties. However, as pointed out by the interviewees, this initiative lacks institutional political support for it to be developed and bring direct and indirect benefits to visitors and owners of tourist enterprises.

According to Souza, et al. (2011, p. 108):

No type of technical assistance agency, whether public or private, can meet the needs of all interest groups in rural tourism; however, combining the resources of multiple technical assistance providers and developing long-term partnerships and

relationships allows substantial progress to be made in responding to local needs.

According to Lima and Eusébio (2010), tourist activity contributes to enhancing the diversification and differentiation of local offers and can contribute significantly to the economy. Regarding the integrity of the environment, Cals, Capellà and Vaqué (1995, p. 10-20) consider that “rural tourism is a phenomenon of response to the degradation of the environment on a planetary scale and the marginalization of non-urban areas.”

According to Graziano, Vilarinho and Dale (1998b, p.115 apud CALS, CAPELLÀ, VAQUÉ, 1995, p. 23), with regard to the environment in which it is located “tourism in rural areas has a fundamental role in the management of territory, given its ability to stimulate the use of the endogenous development potential of a given location”. Thus, tourism in rural areas can bring benefits to the management of conservation units by stimulating the sustainable development of the place where they are located, strengthening management relationships in rural areas.

Furthermore, according to Graziano (1998b), tourism in rural areas can be developed in regions that do not have extraordinary tourist resources, and can expand to large areas of the Brazilian territory, which corroborates the words of Fontana (2014, p. 9) when he states that “[...] Rural Tourism must harmonize the interests of the environment, the local community and the tourist himself, in a sustainable way, avoiding rural exodus and contributing to improving the quality of life of both visitors as well as those visited”.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

To fulfill the proposed objective, an on-site visit and interview with a semi-structured form for descriptive analysis were used as data collection instruments, complemented by bibliographic research. To survey the potentialities and weaknesses provided by nature conservation units for the development of tourism in rural areas in the two study properties, the SWOT Matrix was used, which is an acronym for the words Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, also known as F.O.F.A matrix, consists of a tool used in business.

According to Zimmerman (2015, p. 29).

It is a “photograph” taken of the environment as a whole, it provides a view of the terrain where the institution is located, it serves as support so that weaknesses are minimized and strengths maximized, better utilized, through a strategy that contemplates, at the same time, time, the opportunities in the environment and the best the organization can do to take advantage of them.

Although it is not the purpose of this work, the SWOT matrix provides important information, enabling the entrepreneur to create strategies with the results of internal and external environments “aiming to make the most of diagnosed opportunities, minimize threats, enhance strengths, exploring them. them in the best possible way, and reduce the negative impacts of weak points” (LANSA; MAZZUCHETTI, 2013, p. 2).

According to Rosa (2013, p.108) the SWOT matrix (F.O.F.A.) is “a simple and valuable analysis instrument. Its objective is to detect strengths and weaknesses, with the aim of making the company more efficient and competitive, thus correcting its deficiencies”. Through the SWOT matrix, it is possible to obtain clarity about the environment being researched, showing the internal strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats

that are linked to the external environment of the activities carried out in the enterprises, demonstrating in which situations the strengths and opportunities can be managed. to obtain better results, minimizing weaknesses and threats.

According to Zaccareli (2012), the matrix helps prevent future threats and makes it possible to take greater advantage of opportunities, minimizing weaknesses and strengthening the strengths of the enterprise. Many bibliographies feature the Swot tool, but do not attribute an origin or credit an author.

The investigation method used in the research is classified as qualitative, as it improves the understanding of the researched scenario. The SWOT matrix analysis was used, with the aim of raising and highlighting the strengths provided by the insertion of enterprises within or around nature conservation units, as a way of highlighting the benefits, threats and opportunities of the environment in which the enterprises of tourism in rural areas are included.

The research is classified in terms of objectives as descriptive and exploratory. According to Andrade (2009, p. 114), it constitutes the initial step of the research, as “the aim is to understand the subject in depth, in order to make it clearer or construct important questions for conducting the research”.

Following with a field visit where images were obtained and observation of landscape aspects, a semi-structured interview was also carried out with the owners of tourist attractions.

According to Gil (2008, p. 109), the interview consists of a social relationship between researcher and interviewee, “it is a form of asymmetric dialogue, in which one party seeks to collect data and the other presents itself as a source of information”.

## CHARACTERIZATION OF PROPERTIES

The properties are located in the municipality of Altônia-PR (see Figure 1) both within the APA Federal IVRP and surrounding the PNIG. Sítio Faria and Recanto Portal de Luz are 10.6 and 12.1 km away from the municipality, respectively, and develop agricultural activities and tourism in rural areas.

At the ``sítio Faria`` (Figure 2) there is a coffee agroindustry, where visitors can learn about the production process, from planting, irrigation system, to the processing of the product and ending with packaging.

The visit requires an appointment, starting with breakfast, where the owner tells the story of the family and coffee production. If they choose, visitors can learn about the agribusiness production process. Subsequently, the possibility of taking a walk in the rural environment is offered, taking a trail to the Xambrê lagoon where it is possible to contemplate the PNIG landscape.

On the way back, you pass in the shade of a jabuticaba tree orchard that provides the fruits for jelly produced by hand by Mrs. Geni (owner of the farm with her husband, Mr. Luiz) and offered for purchase at the end of the tour. In addition to the jelly, they also offer dulce de leite produced on site with ingredients supplied by neighbors (milk) and other artisanal products such as cachaça, produced by the owner's brother, wine from the Santa Catarina region. Mistress Geni is developing a support for a coffee strainer, using wood from her own farm, and intends to sell it alongside other products in a future store installation next to the agroindustry. The labor is provided by the couple who own the site, with occasional help from neighborhood day laborers when groups with larger numbers of people arrive.

The ``Recanto Portal de Luz`` (Figure 3),

according to the owner, Mistress Cida, was born at a possible lunch served for a group of businesspeople who were passing through her property, sparking an interest in the tourism and gastronomy sector.

The property produces citrus fruits and other fruits, due to the privileged location and on demand, it sparked a bias towards tourism, from then on the couple, with the help of a daughter and son-in-law, gradually set up infrastructure for overnight stays (chalets), food and contemplation of nature on a trail in the middle of the forest, opened in partnership with environmental institutions and enhanced with pedal boat and kayak tours in the Xambrê lagoon, inside the PNIG.

According to reports from both owners, "tourism is very enjoyable, has a large audience and generates financial results, on the other hand, it is very tiring to take care of agricultural production and serving the public."



**Figure 2:** Images of ``Sítio Faria`` (agribusiness infrastructure, Xambrê lagoon, handicrafts).

Source: The authors, 2022.



**Figure 3:** Images of ``Recanto Portal de Luz`` (infrastructure, place for nature contemplation, bathing, kayaking and pedal boating inside the PNIG. Source: The authors, 2022.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The information obtained made it possible to structure the SWOT matrix with data presented by the interviewed owners, which are shown in the following table:

As strengths of the tourism activities developed, the factors linked to the preservation of the natural environment that provide landscapes and attractions that encourage visitors to seek out these places for recreation in contact with nature, contemplation and escape from urban environments stand out.

According to Fontana (2014), the growth of rural tourism is seen as an activity of leisure, rest, entertainment, people seek nature, escape from the rush of big cities, culture and history that are no longer found in urbanized areas.

Although one of the entrepreneurs stated that the UCs do not influence the maintenance of the preserved natural environment, as they already had it that way even before

their creation, on the other hand he admits that they are important as means to lead to compliance with environmental preservation standards that go beyond the limits of individual properties, creating alternatives for monitoring, inspection and control that lead to compliance with the conservation of the natural environment in the region as a whole, such as soil management, water care and riparian forests.

In this sense, Hardin (1968), natural resources in common use will be explored by individuals, following their own interests to the point of exhaustion, so that this does not happen or is minimized reinforces the importance of control exercised by the State.

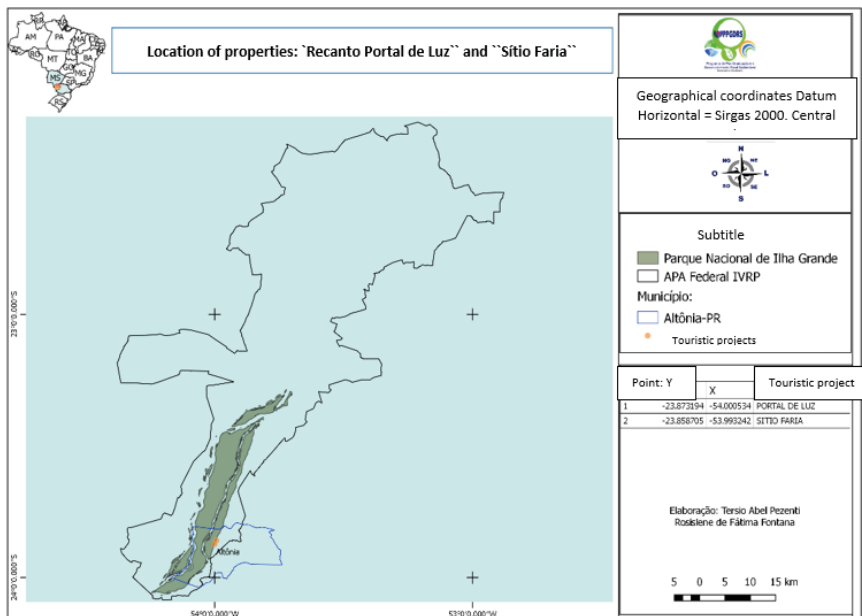
According to Almeida (2008), tourist activities can cause irreversible damage to the environment if they are not properly monitored and managed. Therefore, in this sense, the presence of State institutions can contribute to the regulation and sustainable use of environmental resources used by tourism within UCs.

The only weakness pointed out by one of the owners who maintains recreational activities in the lagoon, inside the PNIG, is related to visitor safety aspects regarding the necessary precautions to avoid accidents with bathers or when sailing with kayaks and pedal boats.

According to Souza and Dolci (2019, p. 37), "The administration of safety and quality, and the control of rural tourism enterprises, are still important challenges".

Direct concern also occurs with people who enter the recreational space clandestinely, ending up using nautical activities irregularly and without authorization, which may generate liability for any accident/incident.

According to Fontana and Dencker (2006), for rural tourism enterprises to be successful, there must be joint activity between the State, owners, educational and credit institutions.



**Figure 1:** Map of the location of tourism enterprises in rural areas.

Source: Prepared by the authors, 2022.

	STRONG POINTS	WEAK POINTS
INTERNAL FACTORS Controllable	<b>Strong points</b> (Strengths) Make the most of strengths by maximizing detected opportunities	<b>Weak points</b> (Weakness) Create strategies that minimize negative effects as opposed to seizing emerging opportunities
	<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> (Opportunities) Make the most of your strengths to maximize the opportunities found	<b>THREATS</b> (Threats) Make the most of strengths to minimize the effects of threats encountered

**Table 1:** Matrix SWOT (F.O.F.A). Source: Adapted by the authors (2022) from Sebrae (2013).

Internal Analysis	
Powers	Weak points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Protected natural environment;</li> <li>Abundant public;</li> <li>Trail on the edge of the lake;</li> <li>Soil conservation;</li> <li>Water conservation;</li> <li>Maintenance of the riparian forest;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unsafe use of the lagoon.</li> </ul>
External Analysis	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Viewpoint to view the landscape;</li> <li>Contemplation of nature;</li> <li>Training;</li> <li>Technical assistance</li> <li>Institutional presence;</li> <li>Presence of inspection and control bodies;</li> <li>Development of tourism within the Park (Lagoa)</li> <li>Use of the Park to increase tourism;</li> <li>Paineiras road</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pandemic;</li> <li>Malicious tourist;</li> <li>Poor maintenance of roads (no paving);</li> </ul>

**Table 2 – Analysis of the SWOT Matrix of the properties studied.** Source: Prepared by the authors based on research data, 2022.



There were several opportunities highlighted by those responsible for the properties studied, such as the implementation of infrastructure and nautical activities that can be developed, as long as they are authorized by the competent bodies, viewpoints for viewing the UCs' peculiar landscapes, indirect benefits due to the institutional presence in the region, providing control and monitoring more effectively, in addition to enhancing partnerships for training, technical assistance, and infrastructure to support safety and health.

In this sense, according to Malheiros, (1996, p.6):

Public authorities and society can manage environmental resources by adopting instruments that provide protection, preservation, conservation, control, improvement and recovery of environmental quality, and ensure favorable conditions for development to be achieved. sustainable.

The threat that gained prominence was related to the public health aspect caused by the emergence of the Covid19 pandemic, which prevented visits due to social isolation, making it impossible to serve the public and consequently the suspension of activities.

According to the Ministry of Tourism (2020) and publication by the Brazilian Ministry of Economy, through Ordinance Number 20,809, of September 14, 2020, tourist activities are among the sectors most affected by the public calamity caused by the Covid19 pandemic. On the other hand, it mentions that domestic tourism with short weekend trips, carried out by people who even traveled abroad, will be replaced by short trips traveled by their own car to avoid crowds at airports, planes and buses. This way, tourism in rural areas will possibly be the way forward as a tourist destination in the recovery as restrictions caused by the pandemic are reduced (BRASIL, 2020).

Other threats highlighted are related to the

risk of receiving malicious tourists who can be used as a means of accessing properties for hidden purposes and depredation of the natural environment. Still, as a threat to tourism that stands out, it is related to the poor maintenance of public roads that connect the urban to the rural environment, which, as they are not paved, end up causing cancellations of visits and even a reduction in attendance on occasions with heavy rain.

According to Junior and Pires (2011), within the concepts of sustainable tourism, it is not necessary to modify the construction techniques of roads but rather adapt them to the type of tourism that makes use of them, from studies, projects and implementation, reducing their impacts and better integration with the natural setting.

## CONCLUSION

The study made it possible to understand the potentialities and weaknesses that tourism enterprises in rural areas, Sítio Faria and Recanto Portal de Luz, have in view of the insertion of their businesses in the surroundings of the PNIG and interior of the APA Federal IVRP, federal conservation units, the first of indirect and restricted use of natural resources and the second of sustainable use which has among its creation objectives "to organize ecological, scientific and cultural tourism, and other economic activities compatible with environmental conservation". It is noted that there is a vague space regarding knowledge of the potential/opportunities and functions that conservation units aim for in their creation aspects, as well as the existence of many opportunities to be worked on and implemented, and that there are incipient threats to their business, however, the link between owners and UCs needs to be strengthened and better worked so that tourism is enhanced with the preservation of the natural environment, creating a symbiosis

between nature preservation and tourism.

It is concluded that the PNIG and Federal APA of the IVRP currently have limited potential to contribute and maintain tourism on properties, requiring greater clarification regarding the objectives of creating conservation units, possible uses legally compatible with each category, approximation

of owners of tourist enterprises to the management carried out by the official bodies responsible for the UCs, so that opportunities are implemented minimizing the few weaknesses glimpsed in the study, this way the UCs can enhance tourism in the locations subject to this investigation.

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