

The Essence of Valuable Natural Areas *Sensu Stricto* and *Sensu Largo*

Anetta Zielińska

Wrocław University of Economics, Faculty of Management,
Information Systems and Finance St. Komandorska 118/120,
53-345 Wrocław, Poland,
E-mail: anetta.zielinska@ue.wroc.pl

Abstract – Nature valuable area is an area protected in any of the three forms of nature protection (spatial protection: national parks, nature reserves, landscape parks, areas of protected landscape, Nature 2000 areas; individual protection: nature monuments, documentation site, ecological sites, nature and landscape complexes and species protection of plants, animals and fungi), which is *sensu stricto* approach, namely a concept as such. *Sensu stricto* areas require legal regulations and are protected or deserve to be protected by one of the forms of nature protection. However, the following three forms of natural valuable areas (botanical gardens; green areas; woodlots and separated protected zones: recreational parks, green squares, communal parks, cultural parks, historical parks and gardens, ectones, river valleys, geoparks, small nature's enclaves and ecological corridors) represent to wide approach to nature protection, namely *sensu largo*.

Natural valuable areas understood *sensu stricte* are valuable due to preservation of nature, namely biodiversity and geodiversity. However, natural valuable areas understood *sensu largo*, consist in broadening the scope of the notion „natural valuable areas” to include also the areas, which are valuable not only due to biodiversity, but also due to social objectives connected with nature protection, namely anthropogenic forms resulting directly or indirectly from the human's influence on the environment and the plants and animals living therein.

Key words – natural valuable areas, spatial protection, individual protection, botanical gardens, green areas, ecological corridors.

I. Introduction

In the common knowledge the term valuable natural area is understood as synonymous to the protected area¹. This is an important phenomenon, which needs to be developed. Is a valuable natural area really a protected area?

The dependence between protected areas and valuable natural areas is not reversible – all protected areas are undeniably valuable in terms of nature, but not all valuable natural areas are protected in any way. Thus, the best way to conserve valuable natural areas is to provide them with protection and award with an appropriate legal status. However, not all valuable natural areas are and might be in future legally protected. The protection of the structure and the function of valuable natural areas depends on their preciousness, then on establishing legislation and local zoning plans.

¹ Natural valuable areas are described additionally as : areas having natural values, areas important nature-wise, areas having important natural values [3].

The definitions of valuable natural areas might be formulated on the basis of different sciences. Nonetheless, the definitions formulated in natural sciences should be deemed as the starting point. All other definitions broaden or should broaden “natural sciences definitions” with additional aspects characteristic for a particular science, such as juridical or economics sciences. These definitions we will call derivative (Figure 1).

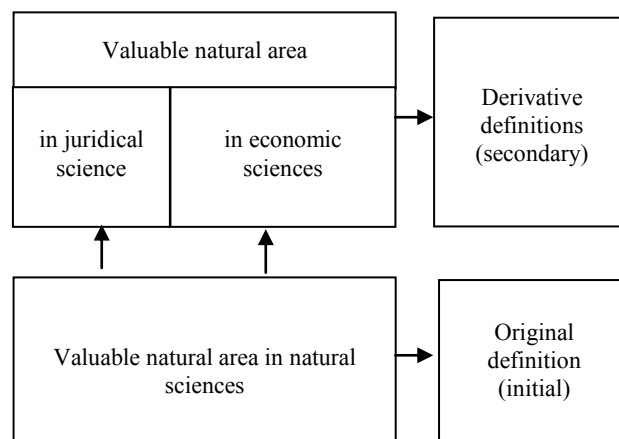


Fig. 1. Original and derivative definitions of natural valuable areas

Source: [9, p. 31].

II. Defining valuable natural area in natural sciences

Valuable natural areas are the most precious and beautiful areas of Poland. In natural sciences the valuable natural areas are understood as areas fulfilling mainly natural functions, which are of key importance for preserving ecological balance. Those valuable areas are very diverse, depending on the dominant natural function, which they have- from water management, through providing places for plant and animal vegetation and the possibility of their movement. Thus, these are areas with different characteristics concerning the habitat, plant community, properties of soil, undersurface water retention, etc., but also different in terms of the anthropogenic transformation (from nearly natural to half-natural) and the degree of resistance to anthropogenic threats (from sensitive to those of significant resistance), less or more isolated, perceived as typical or characteristic for a given region or rare and unique [1, p. 240]. As it is visible from the description, these are areas which significantly exceed legal and administrative definitions of protected areas (M. Kistowski [4] expresses a similar opinion).

The identification of valuable natural areas is the first step to the their protection. The next one is to assign an appropriate form of nature protection to the value of the area. The problem arises when the type of value or the legal and ownership status of the area makes it impossible to create a new form of protection. A solution might be a right entry in the local zoning plan. Local zoning plans at the local level (the study of land use conditions and directions) comprise the key instrument of preserving valuable natural areas not provided with protection.

III. Defining valuable natural area in juridical sciences

In juridical sciences the notion of a valuable natural area rarely occurs. One primarily encounters the notion of a protected area or its specific forms, which are used in legal and institutional solutions.

According to the binding law the protected areas include: [8, pp. s. 98-108]:

- 1) spatial forms of nature conservation, including:
 - traditional forms of conservation: national parks and nature reserves,
 - more recent forms of conservation: landscape parks and protected landscape areas,
 - European forms of nature conservation: Nature 2000 areas;
- 2) Individual forms of nature conservation, including: nature monuments, documentation site, ecological sites, nature and landscape complexes;
- 3) Forms of plant, animals and mushrooms species conservation, which take two forms:
 - protection *in situ*, that is the protection of ecosystems and natural habitats of species and conservation and restitution of populations able to survive in their natural environment, but in the case of domesticated or bread species – in the environment, where they have developed their particular properties,
 - protection *ex situ*, which consists of protection of the elements of biological biodiversity outside their natural environment.

The author believes that valuable natural area is any area protected under any of the forms of nature conservation named hereinabove – that is the approach *sensu stricto*, namely the concept in the very sense of the words. The *sensu stricto* areas require legal regulations and are protected or deserve to be protected by one of the forms of nature conservation. However, the following three forms of valuable natural areas comprise the broad approach, that is *sensu largo* [Figure 2]:

- 1) botanical gardens [7, chapter 3],
- 2) green areas; woodlots [7, chapter 4] and separated protected zones (recreational parks, green squares, communal parks, cultural parks, historical parks and gardens, ectones, river valleys, geoparks, small nature’s enclaves),
- 3) ecological corridors.

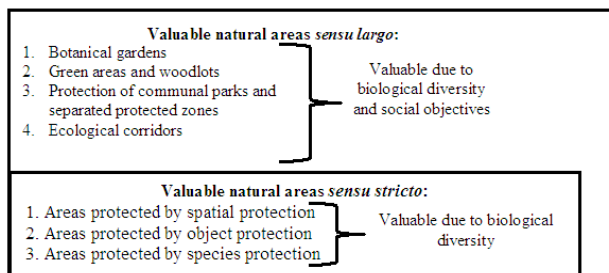


Fig. 2. Interpretation of valuable natural areas sensu stricto and sensu largo

Source: [9, p. 59].

The valuable natural areas *sensu stricto* are precious due to maintaining biodiversity and geodiversity². However, the broader approach to those areas suggested in the article (valuable natural areas *sensu largo*) consists of expanding the notion “valuable natural areas” to include also those areas, which are valuable not only due to biodiversity but also due to social aims connected with nature conservation (for example botanical gardens). That is, thus, expanding the category also to include anthropogenic forms, which result from either direct or indirect influence of a human onto the environment and the plants and species existing in such environment.

IV. Defining the valuable natural area in economic sciences

Finally, the outlook of economic sciences on the essence of valuable natural area, in particular – the manner of management. That perspective allows to distinguish valuable natural area with an identified management and areas managed directly by government bodies and local government bodies (Figure 3). The first group include: national parks, landscape parks, zoological garden, botanic garden, oceanarium and a protected body of water. The second group consists of: nature and landscape complexes, nature monuments, documentation site, ecological sites, protected landscape areas, nature reserves or Nature 2000 areas. In the first case, independent management bodies take up own activities, but also they require to correlate their own decisions with the decision of local government bodies or government administration authorities. The independence of management grants the organizations a totally different position in relation with local government bodies. It is easier to achieve protection objectives, although it sometimes creates a conflict of interest between the conservation of natural environment and business at the level of local communities.

Entities of a separate management body					Entities managed by government and local government authorities						
National parks	Landscape parks	Zoological gardens	Botanic garden	Oceanarium and protected body of water	Nature 2000 areas	Nature reserves	Protected landscape areas	Nature monuments	Ecological sites	Documentation sites	Nature and landscape complexes

Fig. 3. Nature conservation organizations according to the manner of management

Source: elaborated pursuant to: [6, p. 177].

² Geodiversity is defined as „natural diversification of the surface of the earth, including geological, geomorphological, soil and surface water forms and systems, arising as a result of natural processes, locally modified with anthropogenic influence of different nature” [5].

According to the economic criterion, a valuable natural area should be recognized if the biological and landscape biodiversity comprises or might comprise a dominant, important factor in terms of conducting business or significantly restricts conventional forms of management. A gauge measuring the value of areas due to biodiversity might be the lost profits connected with the possible limitation of freedom of management [2].

To sum up, a valuable natural area is a geographic area with natural values, which in cultural terms is important functionally, namely allowing sustained management of resources located thereon.

Conclusion

A valuable natural area fulfills a few important functions, such as:

- 1) maintaining and recreating the resources of natural capital,
- 2) preserving biodiversity,
- 3) preserving homeostasis of ecosystems,
- 4) preserving the efficiency of chemical cycling.

It means that valuable natural areas are of huge economic importance in the broad sense of this word. That is the reason why they should be protected to a sufficient extent to maintain the function of natural capital, restitution and they should be used in rational way.

One of the most significant motives for the establishment of valuable natural areas is the wellbeing of the human, who is a part of the nature and needs a high quality environment to live. On valuable natural areas, the natural, cultural and landscape values are protected, as they decide on the great value and attractiveness of the area for tourists. Natural and cultural values, if they exist on a given area, are priceless and practically impossible to recreate asset and advantage of the area.

References

- [1] Cieszewska A., 2008, *Zachowanie terenów cennych przyrodniczo w kształtowaniu struktury krajobrazu na poziomie miejscowego planu zagospodarowania przestrzennego*, Problemy Ekologii Krajobrazu, vol. 21 s. 240.
- [2] Dobrzański G., 2000, *Rozważania na temat pojęcia obszarów przyrodniczo cennych*, maszynopis, Politechnika Białostocka, Białystok.
- [3] Idle E.T., Bines T.J., 2004, *Planowanie ochrony obszarów cennych przyrodniczo – przewodnik dla praktyków i ich szefów*, Polski Klub Przyrodników, Świebodzin.
- [4] Kistowski M., 2007, *Kolizje i konflikty środowiskowe w planowaniu przestrzennym na obszarach cennych przyrodniczo*, Czasopismo Techniczne, z. 7-A.
- [5] Knapik R., Jała Z., Sobczyk A., Migoń P., Aleksandrowski P., Szuszkiewicz A., Krapiec M., Madej S., Krakowski K., 2009, *Inwentaryzacja i waloryzacja geostanowisk Karkonoskiego Parku Narodowego i jego otuliny oraz wykonanie mapy geologicznej tego obszaru*, materiały nie publikowane, Jelenia Góra.
- [6] Poskrobko B., 2007, *Zarządzanie środowiskiem*, PWE, Warszawa, s. 176-177.
- [7] Act of 16 April 2004 on nature conservation, Dz. U. [Journal of Laws]2009, no 151, item 1220 as amended
- [8] Zielińska A., 2007, *Prawo ochrony przyrody. Ochrona przyrody i gospodarowanie na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych*, [w:] *Prawo środowiskowe dla ekonomistów*, S. Czaja (red.), Wydawnictwo Akademii Ekonomicznej we Wrocławiu, Wrocław, s. 98-108.
- [9] Zielińska A., 2013, *Gospodarowanie na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych w Polsce w kontekście rozwoju zrównoważonego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu Seria: Monografie i Opracowania nr 236, Wrocław.