



TIPICI DEI PARCHI
A NETWORK OF MEDITERRANEAN EXCELLENCE

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Italy, thanks to its great cultural, environmental and biodiversity heritage, has a particularly advanced approach in its notion and management of protected natural resources, conceived as part of an integrated process of territorial development. The direct involvement of resident communities is one of its strengths and a major legislative innovation. Indeed, the law that founds parks in Italy ensures and guarantees the participation and direct involvement of communities, local institutions, economic and social forces of reference.

In practice, Italian parks measure themselves daily with local needs and opportunities, and seek to guide economic and political decisions towards sustainable projects designed to reinforce the idea that conservation creates development. A methodology that meets the increasing need for direct involvement of local stakeholders in defining a territory's sustainable development.

AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

This approach to territorial development has driven the implementation of many international initiatives and was given European institutional recognition in the European Environment Agency's *European Environment – State and Outlook 2015 Report*, which points out that environmental policy initiatives in Europe have been based on the concepts of “good ecological state” and “good environmental state” for bodies of water, or “favourable conservation state” for habitats and species. Now the entire eco system – of which a considerable portion is represented by human activities – must be considered and there are no longer specific objectives but an overall assessment of the resilience of the ecosystem. Consequently there is a shift from a typical northern European logic that considers the environment as a reservoir of resources for human activities, to a Euro-Mediterranean – above all Italian – approach, which considers natural resources and traditional human activities as a single integrated process.



The great beauty of Italy is Italy itself. All of Italy, from the Alps to the Apennines, from Piedmont to Sicily. A territory rich in natural resources that humanity has been able to modify with intense cultural effort distributed consistently throughout the country. Along the Apennine mountain range, the backbone of Italy, there is a single, boundless open-air museum that exhibits massifs and animals in their habitat, the amazing variety of trees and flowers, the art cities that preserve treasures of inestimable and acknowledged value.

All these communities together may be considered one big park with the highest concentration of biodiversity in Europe.

MAIN PLAYERS IN THE PARK NETWORK

The official birth of the parks as legal entities and the ensuing creation of networks of interests in the territories over time brought the awareness that only the activation of virtuous and sustainable economic processes could improve the quality of life and income of the people resident in these areas. For the inland districts – comprised mostly of small towns and thus small communities – to continue to be guardians of this heritage they must become active participants in their own economic future and overall quality of life.

For these reasons, as early as 1999, different players with different experiences and different organizational characteristics began to take action and networked to create partnerships of territorial development projects whose theme is the improvement of the economic conditions of local residents through their direct involvement.

FEDERPARCHI – the parks federation whose members include authorities and private legal entities managing protected areas, Legambiente (historic Italian association of scientific environmentalism), and Carsa (an integrated communications company) – has created a series of projects based on the idea of promoting the nature–territory–humanity triad. In other words, to demonstrate how preservation of nature and its biodiversity are possible, and certainly easier, if the processes and mechanisms are activated to allow local residents to derive income from what can be defined maintenance and protection of the territory. This allows better understanding of why a field planted with lentils favours the presence of rodents and becomes the proper game reserve for eagles or why the presence of the chestnut tree contributes to preventing landslides while feeding bears and squirrels. Last. But not least, territories that are well maintained can be used to grow crops that will fuel production of fine food and wine with a unique and inimitable identity.



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND CUISINE

Protection and conservation of nature, quality food and wine, and tourism can become the expression of the nature–territory–humanity triad, to promote environmentally sustainable economic development of the Italian Apennines.

Compagnia dei Parchi, ParkLife, Mediterre, Le Mille Dop, Ape Appennino Parco d'Europa, and Tipici dei Parchi, are the projects that have sustained this narrative. A holistic approach that since 1999 has progressed from *Compagnia dei Parchi* to *Tipici dei Parchi*, reinforcing the ideal motivations that generated this partnership, pumping in new lifeblood.

It all started with *Compagnia dei Parchi*, the activation of a “tourism system” based on widespread hospitality using the rich heritage of second homes. For the strategic value and ability to bring together in a virtuous cycle environment, territory, economy and



tourism, the *Compagnia dei Parchi* model was endorsed by the UN and added to the IDEASS Programme as a good practice to be adopted for the development of tourism in protected areas and for organization of sustainable tourism in developing countries. In this regard there are three international missions have been developed in Albania, Lebanon and Tunisia, sharing results and explaining good practices stemming from the *Compagnia dei Parchi*.

Following on from *Compagnia dei Parchi* came *Parklife, Mediterre, Le Mille Dop*, intermediate stages of a journey that become international and involved several Mediterranean and South American countries. A path that led directly to *Tipici dei Parchi* and renewed commitment to APE, the Apennines Park of Europe, which will be validated by the signing in L'Aquila (Abruzzo) of a new Memorandum of Understanding between Italian regions, in December of 2015.

TIPICI DEI PARCHI

Tipici dei Parchi is the last step on this road. This salon of typical products from Italian parks is a unique event of its kind, especially because the display and sale of quality food and wine is designed to give value to the eternal relationship that humans have with the land and with nature. The goal is to re-educate the population for a relationship with rural life. The narrative takes place through home cooking that showcases the greatness of Italian cuisine in a virtuous path able to embrace six aspects: agriculture, territory, environment, nutrition, cuisine and culture, tourism.

Tipici dei Parchi, the network that embodies agri-food products of quality and multi-site tourism, will aid the development of a new, sustainable economic model for large areas of the planet.



The KIP pavilion at EXPO Milano 2015 will be an opportunity to introduce visitors to the experience of Park communities engaged in strengthening the development processes of territories that embrace in one approach agriculture, environment, culture and gastronomy.

TO KNOW MORE

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