

Sharing of “nature sports” experiences (natural training) with tourism and healthcare professionals.

Contact name

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Institution name

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Region & country

Hauts-de-France region



Summary

There are numerous sport activities connected to nature inside regional natural parks. These outdoor sports practices (natural training, hiking, Nordic walking, nature-discovery and water sports) are known to be highly beneficial for the health and well-being of the inhabitants. In a joint collaboration, ENRx and the regional parks are promoting parks and sports activities.



Background of the project. Photo by Olivier Delvaux.

Background of the project

Health through nature has been widely evoked in the media and is well known in various European countries. ENRx and the regional parks are collaborating to promote the parks and sports activities in them, which are of potential interest for rural tourism actors (tourist equipment suppliers, holiday cottages, local governments) as well as healthcare professionals (doctors, social workers, thermal spas, etc.). The Regional Natural Parks have developed spaces that are worthy to be better known by the population.

The main need identified was to facilitate the practice of outdoor sports and recreational activities inside parks. Furthermore, it was important to consult and gather the opinions of healthcare professionals in this respect and adapt the offer of parks to the needs of both junior and senior visitors.

Solution and actions taken

A 2-day “Natural Training” course coached by a sports trainer and a nature guide was offered to personnel from the tourism offices, outdoor activities centres, holiday cottage owner-operators and non-profit association leaders for its implementation.

The actions taken aimed to experience the good effects of nature on health, promote the existing connection between nature and fitness and discover activities that may be reproduced in natural areas.

Other institutions or parties involved

- Regional Directorate for Youth and Sport and Social Cohesion (State regional administration);
- 3 Regional Natural Parks;

- The Federation of the *Gîtes de France*;
- Outdoor activities centres;
- Sports and leisure trainers and guides.

Results

We have witnessed a progressive development of recreational sports and outdoor activities designed for non-sportsmen, especially elderly and convalescent people.

Challenges

The main problem faced was finding top trainers and guides capable of integrating sports, nature and health.

Lessons learned

- The existing necessity of developing a health-sports offer that meets specific needs for different users.
- Also, the importance of maintaining relations with associations that offer support to people who are ill or have special needs.

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Website(s)

<http://www.enrx.fr/Boite-a-outils-ENRx/Doc-touristique>