

WWF Oasis Guardiaregia-Campochiaro Regional Reserve

Contact name

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Institution name

WWF Oasis Guardiaregia-Campochiaro Regional Reserve

Region & country

Molise Region - Italy



Summary

We deal with the establishment of a protected area managed by Environmental Association (WWF). The WWF Oasis has been created to protect and promote the portion of a Site of Community Interest not protected by any kind of protected area, neither national nor regional.

The WWF Oasis Guardiaregia-Campochiaro was established in 1997 through an agreement with the municipal administration of Guardiaregia and expanded in 2000 with a similar agreement with the City Council of Campochiaro. Finally, from 2010 it is managed by WWF Oasis as a Regional Reserve, in accordance with the Molise Region.



Guardiaregia-Campochiaro, Molise Region – Italy. Photo by WWF Oasis – Guardiaregia.

Background of the project

The territory in question was not protected. The whole area had not been studied sufficiently from a naturalistic point of view, it was almost unknown and with inconsistent touristic flows.

The main needs identified were:

- the protection of the natural environment of high value;
- the promotion of an eco-friendly tourism.

Solution and actions taken

The creation of a protected area to be managed by an NGO: the WWF Italy, an Organization dealing with the management of a network of protected areas.

Early contacts with the Guardiaregia municipal administration since 1996 to give a special form of protection to the territory. In March 1997, the first agreement between WWF Italia and Comune di Guardiaregia was signed, with the emergence of the WWF Oasis of Guardiaregia extended to 1056 hectares. In 2000, following the involvement of the Municipality of Campochiaro in the extension of the WWF Oasis in its municipal territory, the signing of the second ten-year agreement between WWF Italia, Comune di Guardiaregia and Comune di Campochiaro, was born on 2200 hectares 'WWF Oasis of Guardiaregia-Campochiaro. In 2010, the third enlargement leading to the total area of 3100 hectares and renewal of the 10-year convention between WWF Oasis and municipalities. With D.G.R. n. 789 of 27/09/2010, the Molise Region establishes the new territory of the WWF Oasis, the Regional Nature Reserve Guardiaregia-Campochiaro, entrusting WWF management to Oasis, a new subject of WWF Italy, dealing exclusively with the management of protected natural areas.

Other institutions or parties involved

Since 2010, **Molise Region** has been involved through a management agreement with **WWF Oasis**, a company directly linked to the WWF Italy, but having as specific characteristic: its nature of “Management Body” of natural areas. WWF Oasis has finally entrusted a company having as legal form that belonging to the Cooperative scheme foreseen by the national legislation for the management of local tourist flows and administration.

Results

Compared to a few years ago, the **situation as a whole is radically transformed**. There is a greater attention of the local population to the protection of their territory. Today, relations with the municipal administrations of Guardiaregia and Campochiaro are also based on the undeniable advantages that the establishment of the protected area has created on the territory. A steady increase in the total number of visitors to the protected area today, estimated at over 4500 people a year (half of whom are guided by WWF Oasis staff). A remarkable tourist attraction created in the last 10-12 years by the protected area, which in fact has made it possible for Guardiaregia to be born of 7 B & B and “agro-tourism” structures and a dozen catering facilities in both Guardiaregia and Campochiaro.

Challenges

- Operational economic autonomy;
- Relationships with residents and with the various administrations that have succeeded over the years in both towns, especially in the early periods;
- Difficulty to understand the aims of protected areas.

Lessons learned

The most important lesson is that even in a territory where seldom had been mentioned about environmental protection, the protection of the natural environment repays largely with a local economic and image return. Apart from that:

- Numerous WWF Oasis articles published by various national and local magazines dealing with nature and tourism.
- Various appearances (even live) in RAI broadcasts such as “Serene Variable” and “Geo & Geo”.
- At least 5 university thesis on the biodiversity of the Reserve. Naturalistic studies on the flora and fauna of the protected area, such as the most recent wolf wrap and amphibian monitoring, resulting from the ongoing management project between Molise Region and WWF Oasis

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Website(s)

<http://www.oasiguardiaregiacampochiaro.it>