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A New Form Of Geotourism with Great Marketing Value: Mass Geotours in Hungary

Abstract

Geotours possess significant tourism potential. They enable geotourism even at places with no visitor centres or nature trails. They offer interesting programs which attract new visitors, as well establishing connections between geotourists and locals and have economic benefits. They focus public attention on local geoheritage and geotourism through their marketing. The author divides geotours into two categories: group geotours with few participants and mass geotours with hundreds of visitors. The latter allows a more significant nationwide marketing campaign. Due to the high participant number, mass geotours are organized in a different way than group geotours. There is a starting location where participants get an itinerary and instructions. They walk along an allotted, marked trail and only meet with the geotour guides at checkpoints where spectacular geological formations are presented. Participants get back to the starting point at the end of their walk where they receive a "Geotourist" badge, food and drink. Mass geotours (named "Talking Rocks") have been organized since 2012 in Hungary by the author. This year, the number of visitors reached 730 per day. Since 2015, information about the participants (age, address, hiking habits) has been collected at the registration. Visitors come from all over the country for these one-day events, and all age groups are represented. An on-site survey consisting of a self-administered questionnaire was also applied in 2016 to rate the event and to find out the visitors' motivation for participating. Based on 240 responders, mass geotours are more preferred than group geotours.



Hungary