



## SUSTAINABLE AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OF LITHUANIAN CURONIAN SPIT AND NERINGA MUNICIPALITY: PLANNING AND POLITICAL ASPECTS

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**Abstract.** There are some significant positive accents in the history of Curonian spit land use management as well as important negative factors, including political, professional and specific. The new Master plan for Neringa municipality was prepared trying to take a more modern path adopted to the unique territory, ensuring balance of social, economical and ecological development and preservation of its valuables. The general development strategy is formed harmonizing the following development trends basic for this kind of territory: 1) natural conservation, 2) cultural conservation and 3) recreation. Based on the existing or planned priorities, the following generalized sectors, reflecting the different structure of development strategy, were distinguished in the longitudinal profile of Curonian spit: strict natural and partly cultural conservation strategy, limited natural or natural–cultural conservation strategy, limited natural–cultural conservation and sustainable recreation and urban development strategy, limited cultural–natural conservation, sustainable recreation and limited urban development strategy, limited cultural–natural conservation, intensive recreation and limited urban development strategy. The ambitious political war between the State Service for Protected Areas and the Neringa Municipality cannot be regarded as the best way of finding solutions of ideological, legal or planning inconsistencies whereas the current countering to Master Plan and incorrect chicanery regarding its solutions is an expression of ambitions and “revenge” on the Neringa Municipality. Rational solution in the existing perverted situation is to go back to integrated planning of Curonian spit. This would offer a possibility to merge together in one planning document of the Curonian spit national park management plan and Master plans of Neringa and Klaipėda (Smiltynė zone) municipalities.

**Keywords:** sustainable and balanced development, master plan of municipality, landscape protection, Curonian spit national park, world heritage site.

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## 1. Introduction

The Curonian spit (CS) not only is a fairy tale for our nature, fishermen living in the coastal zone and the old culture of recreational use. Its socio-economic development has many times found itself in critical situations when the harmony of man and nature was violated and the spit was threatened by overall destructive elemental processes. Land use planning and preservation of Curonian spit landscape has always been a mirror reflecting its life, principles of communication of man and nature and future visions. A few years ago, after the expiration of the master plan of the Curonian spit national park (CSNP) there occurred a traditional question: What next? Which way will the “ship” of CS, as an especially valuable site of cultural landscape in 2000 included in the List of World Heritage, take? What are the prerequisites of sustainable and balanced development of Curonian spit’s landscape? How to optimize Neringa municipality’s economy and engineering technology in the nearest future?

Such context needs some additional information about after war development and planning history of Lithuanian CS with emphasize its beginning in 1958–1961 (Stulginskis 1960) and intensive development in 1964–1979 (Stauskas 1964, 1974). The first Master plan of Neringa (Neringos ... 1968), its revised version (Neringos ... 1979) and project of State forest park (Valstybinio ... 1978) were the results of these attempts. More detail review of this process was done by V. Stauskas (2001). It should be noted that most of the problems concerning with Lithuanian CS were under the hot discussions all this time (Gudelis 1963, 1977; Kavaliauskas 1979) and later (Karklienė 2001; Kavaliauskas 1993; Stauskas 2006). It is expedient to fix attention that some important investigations, especially in the sphere of its landscape structure (Fisher 2000; Gudelis 1998; Kavaliauskas, Kriauciūnienė 1986) and recreation use (Akevičiūtė *et al.* 2002; Jarmalavičius, Žilinskas 2004; Minkevičius, Žilinskas 1997; Portapaitė 2001; Turistų ... 2006; Žilinskas *et al.* 2003, 2004), were done and the newsworthy concepts concerning CS land use and zoning were proposed (Bučas 2008a, 2008b; Kavaliauskas 1989; Stauskas 1996; Tunkurkardes 2008). Between official planning documents of that time were such significant creations as Master plan (planning scheme) of CSNP (Kuršių ... 1994) and Programs of the development of infrastructure of Neringa municipality (Neringos ... 1999).

Now the new plan of the boundaries and functional zones (Kuršių ... 2008), as well as management plan of the CSNP (Kuršių ... 2007) and additional CS nature management plan (Kuršių nerijos gamtotvarkos ... 2008), represent attempts to answer the questions mentioned above. These questions became the crucial ones for the Neringa Municipality strategic development plan (Neringos ... 2007) and working at the new Master plan (NMP) at the end of 2008 (Neringos ... 2008).

## 2. Positive aspects of Curonian spit’s development history

The future of modern Europe cannot be imagined without the ideology of sustainable and balanced development (Baker 2005; Čiegis *et al.* 2009; Kavaliauskas 1992; Ministry ... 2003; Whitehead 2006) which in a few last decades has become commonly accepted and confirmed at the highest levels of the European Union and in the member-states of the old continent.

*Sustainable and balanced development aims to meet human social-economic needs while preserving the environment through harmony between man and nature so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also in the future by generations to come.* Social security, economic capacity, preservation of the quality and diversity of environment and neutralization of the long-term adverse effects on the environment and society are the main landmarks of sustainable and balanced development. The essence of the concept of sustainable and balanced development is clear enough, but the exact interpretation and definition of such kind development have caused strong discussions. These are concerned with difficulties related to the fact of its nature as a complex and multidimensional issue. Although it is significant, that the ideology of sustainable and balanced development had expressed evident progress transforming common principles into more particular models, plans, projects or investigations (Brauers, Ginevičius 2009; Burinskienė 2009; Burinskienė, Rudzkiene 2009; Čiegis, Gineitienė 2008; Čiegis *et al.* 2009; Grundey 2008, 2009; Jakaitis *et al.* 2009; Kaklauskas *et al.* 2009; Kavaliauskas 2007; Kurlavičius 2009; McDonald *et al.* 2009; Owens, Cowell 2002; Rutkauskas 2008).

The history of CS management before and after the last World war reveals rather strong positive landscape management trends, i.e. some kind of bridges to sustainable and balanced development. We can distinguish the following positive aspects in the past:

- a) development and preservation of ethno-cultural ancient Curonian tradition adopted to the specific spit environment,
- b) development of the system of sand stabilization preventing its movement into the Curonian Lagoon,
- c) planting the mountain pines for emphasizing the expressiveness of dune relief,
- d) development of recreational resort function and formation of environmentally friendly and harmonious architecture of holiday villas in a fancy and nice “Swiss Gothic” style.

Positive aspects after the war were:

- a) recreational planning in 1958–1979 which anchored the nodal (nested) model of recreational urban framework (historically typical of the spit) preventing from technocratic linear urbanization of the sea or lagoon coast,
- b) early protection and land use development – in 1960 CS was given the status of landscape reserve and in 1966 the status of landscape reserve with a special regime what allowed forming (in the master plans of 1968–1979) zone structure characteristic of national parks and developing the principles of harmonization of preservation and recreation interests,
- c) later protection and land use development – in 1991 establishment of official national park, formation of its administration and consolidation of the national land property and in 1994 approval of the master plan which created serious premises for realization of the principles of sustainable development in the spit,
- d) investigations carried out by geographers, biologists, architects, archaeologists and other specialists in order to find out the CS development patterns and to determine

the natural and cultural valuables worth preservation. These investigations created the basis for formation environmental policy,

- e) a strict and likely rational architectural control pursued by Neringa senior architect A. Zaviša contributed to preservation of architectural heritage of CS settlements and creation of neo-Curonian pseudo-ethnographic style of villas, though of debatable value in senses of changing the traditions of pre-war professional recreation architecture of CS,
- f) concern of municipality institutions about the welfare of the spit community, trade and recreational and engineering infrastructure which consolidated the social-economic component of CS development policy.

### **3. Negative aspects in the sphere of Curonian spit management**

Nevertheless, there have been a few negative trends from the point of view of sustainable development enforcing situation in CS. Their causes were different: common for Lithuania political and professional terms, as well as some endemic (specific local) prerequisites.

Among the negative political trends the following ones can be distinguished:

- a) vagueness of public interest and decline of its importance in the years of legalization of appropriated property promoting legal nihilism and forming egoistic ideology of the use of preserved territories. This encumbered the realization of the aims of sustainable development;
- b) rooting of the priority of populism and bureaucracy against professionalism in the administrative institutions and public agencies when solutions are made based not on scientific arguments but on the majority of votes of pseudo-scientists, omniscient officers, politicians or politicizing public characters.

The professional roots of evil in the management of preserved areas are grown by:

- a) some kind of fundamentalism of biological preservation looking at the world through the eyes of a bird or an insect, not hearing and repudiating other interests and priorities what became especially evident when forming the NATURA-2000 territorial system labouring to establish the exclusive priority of biological preservation for the entire territory of the country and actually creating a landscape management ersatz to be implemented by directives;
- b) controversial character of preservation of cultural heritage, which is formed on the ground of theoretical mystifications disregarding landscape realities, traditional ex-territorial thinking, generating incompetence in the conception of preserved cultural territories, and departmental disagreements manifesting in conflicting opinions of cultural heritage institutions on various issues and in typical recurrence of project dictate aggravating rational planning of preserved territories;
- c) professional cynicism in architecture manifesting through conscious neglect of specific architectural requirements of harmony with the environment and building cosmopolitan or simply venturesome constructions or complexes in places where it is necessary to preserve regional identity and local tradition cynically covering up all this with ostensible artistic aspirations;

- d) deviation of planning of preserved territories related with distortion of the essence of territorial planning and organization principles, establishment of administrative and public dictate when even the position of public organizations and population often bear categorical and egoistic character, defend petty interests and refuse to hear other motifs.

The roots of endemic landscape management trends lie in:

- a) politicization of the development of CS when every action in the territory is treated through a political prism, i.e. “switching on” the politicizing machine which is not distinguished by competence and logic up to the summit levels;
- b) exaggeration to a hyperbolic degree of the CS problems when even the smallest stir or action which is of tenuous importance in terms of landscape preservation are highlighted in mass media as a near catastrophic event and demolition of CS. This forms a distorted – “journalistic” – concept of existing problems;
- c) inconsistency of CS forest policy related with an over-intensive forestation of the territory in the post-war years, when natural complexes representing CS identity (e.g. capes of the coastal plain occupied by beach-grass meadows, forests-meadows, hilly plains, etc.) have been lost, and today’s necessity to restore these complexes eliminating hundreds of hectares of unreasonably planted forests;
- d) disordered territorial planning after breaking the optimal tradition, when the municipality Master plan tallied with the special management plan for the national park. For this reason, the current CS planning documentation is devoid of the necessary social and economic fundamentals and is based only on the environmental interests;
- e) undercurrent interests of some groups and persons which have always manifested in this small unique plot of land.

#### **4. Summary of the general principles of Neringa Municipality Master plan (NMP)**

There was no easy answer to the question what the attitude towards the NMP should be because its authors had to choose between the basically different versions of CS planning and development:

- 1) to take a modern path adapted to this unique territory ensuring harmony of social, economic and ecological development and conservation of its valuables,
- 2) to establish a politicized CS management and administration model answering the aspirations of natural and cultural fundamentalism and based on a mystified environmental dictate implicitly stopping its further development (even cancelling the statuses of local government and health resort or deportation of CS inhabitants sought by some nature or culture protectores).

The NMP has been based on the ideology of sustainable development which adhering to the general principle of balancing the interests orientates towards the harmony of ecological and social-economic interest groups and prevents from dominance of economic interests ruinous for preserved territories. On the other hand, it helps to resist the ever more active aggressive natural and cultural fundamentalism related with over-estimation of ecological

and cultural interests, misrepresentation and mystification of reality, and scoring political dividends through mass media.

The concept of CS development presented in the NMP (Neringos ... 2008) is based on the following basic principles meeting the ideology of sustainable and balanced development:

- 1) vouchsafing the requirements for the sites of World Heritage and preservation of the priorities of conservation interests of natural and cultural heritage;
- 2) continuity and further development of progressive ideas gained by territorial planning practice in the CSNP;
- 3) vouchsafing the Neringa status as a health resort and recreational health resort development interests;
- 4) preservation of the basic strategic direction towards the improvement of the quality and functionality of the living and recreational environment;
- 5) appreciation of the interests of local population and visitors related with the living and recreational environment and infrastructure;
- 6) basing the development of CS on rational scientific criteria relinquishing politicization and fundamental mystification of CS landscape value;
- 7) integrated well-balanced attitude towards the development interests of the territory of Neringa Municipality.

The territorial preservation of landscape of CS is based on its *ad hoc* morphological regionalization, i.e. distinguishing genetically related territorial complexes of landscape – landscape vicinities – and organization of the key conservation priority territories (strict reserves and landscape reserves) in the full cross geogenetic profile of the spit. The anxiety about seeming ignoring a longitudinal aspect of CS morphological structure actively expressed by J. Bučas (Bučas 2008a, 2008b) and foreign experts (Curonian ... 2009) has no serious background, because the second level of land use and regime differentiation (landscape management zoning) was done in coherent of this aspect. The author convinced that ignoring natural forces and their dynamic consistencies for the forming of CS landscape structure is the same vice as the ignoring the role of human factor. On the other hand, cross-sectoral dividing of the CS landscape now is determined by the features and relations of physical urban structure of Curonian settlements and its land use. Unfortunately, present Lithuanian legal system didn't take opportunities to formal establishing mixed (natural-cultural) strict reserves and these zones in CS yet is permanently named only as natural, so the ripe revising of the Law of protected areas in Lithuania is evident.

The principal spatial structure of the CS territory established in the NMP corresponds with the historical linear nested model of territorial use approved in the former planning documentation. According to this model, the discrete autonomic urban and intensive recreation “nests” situated in the longitudinal profile of CS (settlements on the lagoon coast and urban nodes) are separated by wide (from a few to several kilometres) environmental priority zones ensuring the general ecological stability of the spit landscape.

The strategy of use and protection of the territory of Neringa Municipality established in the NMP actually corresponds with the principles of the new project for planning the boundaries and functional zones of the CSNP approved by the Government of the Republic

of Lithuania on November 5, 2008 (Kuršių nerijos... 2008). Both these documents, taking into consideration the location of the preserved and worth being preserved territories, revise and harmonize the current concept of territorial use establishing an exclusively recreational priority by considerably expanding the territory of conservation priority, i.e. legalize two new landscape (Urbo and Raganos Kalnas dunes) reserves and one geomorphological (Angių kalnas dune) reserve and expand and optimize the territories of the existing Parnidis and Juodkrantė (Garnių Kalnas dune) landscape reserves. Moreover, the valuable from historical and ethno cultural points of view parts of Neringa settlements are given the status of urban reserves and the Amber Bay is given the status of historical reserve on the basis of recognising its value as associative cultural landscape. *The Master Plan, basing on the new discovered natural valuables and on the targeted topographic survey, complementarily gives recommendations on some boundaries of the CSNP and its reserves, included in the draft project of functional zones (firstly, geomorphologic reserve of Angių Kalnas dune) and on optimization of the network of the objects of natural heritage.*

Also NMP was enforced to keep and concretise the main measures for development of infrastructure marked in Neringa municipality strategic development plan (Neringos ... 2007) and adopted by Neringa municipality Council in 2007 with agreement by CSNP direction.

The general development strategy of the territory of Neringa Municipality is formed harmonizing the following development trends basic for this kind of territory: 1) natural-cultural or cultural-natural conservation, 2) cultural conservation, 3) natural conservation and 4) recreation. Based on the existing or planned priorities, the following generalized sectors, reflecting the different structure of development strategy, were distinguished in the longitudinal profile of CS (Neringos ... 2008):

- sectors of strict natural, partly cultural, conservation strategy (Grobštas and Nagliai),
- sectors of limited natural (Bulvikis–Vecekrugas and Birštynas) or natural-cultural (Karvaičiai, Eumas and Meškagalvė) conservation strategy,
- sector of limited natural–cultural conservation and sustainable recreation and urban development strategy (Alksnynė),
- sectors of limited cultural–natural conservation, sustainable recreation and limited urban development strategy (Preila and Pervalka),
- sectors of limited cultural–natural conservation, intensive recreation and limited urban development strategy (Nida and Juodkrantė).

Harmonization of the goals of the main groups of public interest was chosen as the *credo* by developers of the NMP:

- 1) environmental (conservation of the natural and cultural heritage; strengthening of the CS landscape identity in particular),
- 2) recreational (preservation and development of the historically established health-resort functions of CS as part of cultural heritage and development of educational tourism infrastructure which is necessary for the CSNP,



- 3) local community (creation and maintenance of fair quality of life and improvement of business conditions). Unfortunately, the last objective bearing no evil in itself appeared to somebody unaccountable and unacceptable.

One of the most significance features and development factors of Lithuanian CS is its recognising as a resort, what historic routes and heritage could be presented by such short summary (Bučas 2007; Lietuvos ... 1931; Strakauskaitė 1998, 2001):

*Juodkrantė*. The beginning: in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The establishment of the Resort Committee in 1881, operated 11 specialized resort enterprises (hotels, guest houses, and villas) and convalescent homes. The first in the territory of Lithuania forest park was started to be designed. *In the inter-war years*: official status of a resort in 1933, operated 24 specialized resort enterprises (kurhauz, hotels, guest homes, villas, and summer-houses) and convalescent homes. The formation of forest park is completed.

*Nida*. The beginning: in the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. *In the inter-war years*: 1933 – status of resort. Operated: 16 specialized resort establishments (guest houses, villas, summer-houses, and youth-houses). A forest park was formed at the western edge of the settlement; fisher-houses were rented to holiday-makers; a regional gliding school was established.

*Pervalka*. The transformation into a resort was started in the 30ties of the 20th century (after 1933 – official status of summer holidays site). *In the inter-war years*: operated 7 specialized resort enterprises (kurhauz, guest-house, villas, and summer-houses). Recreational infrastructure was started to be developed in the territory between the settlement and the sea, fisher-house was rented to holiday-makers. The site had a small gliding school.

*Preila*. The transformation into a resort was started in the 30ties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (after 1933 – official status of summer holidays site). *In the inter-war years*: fisher-houses were rented to holiday-makers or reconstructed into summer-houses.

*Smiltynė*. The beginning: in the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; developed as a resort zone of Klaipėda city. *In the inter-war years* operated 18 specialized resort enterprises (kurhauz, villas, and summer-houses).

## 5. Politicized depreciation and its validity

No sooner than the first edition of NMP was submitted for public consideration, its leaders and authors were blindsided by an aggressive total assault on this planning document started in mass media and by an official letter of 09 06 2008 to the Minister of Environment and the then highest officials by the former director of CSNP. Categorically, the NMP was “bawled out” as the greatest evil, attempt to urbanize CS and to demolish its values. The mentioned letters were based on precarious accusations, incompetent demands, often pure untruth, political demagoguery and abstract insinuations as well as pre-election shows in all televisions soon met with approval of some public organizations and individual persons what triggered agitation in mass media.

Unfortunately, in the avalanche of tendentious accusations supported by mass media the authors of the NMP were not enabled to answer or explain. Actually, the NMP has become a hostage in the network of complicated and often unfriendly relations between the State service of protected areas (SSPA) and Neringa Municipality. Even the approved solutions transferred



from the management plan of the CSNP organized by the SSPA into the new NMP organized by the Neringa Municipality became objects of assaults. The described situation served as the main reason even of inviting foreign experts.

Strange as it is, the NMP authors are represented by the same professional planners-scientists who have prepared not only the new master plan but also its all previous general plans, programs of CS infrastructure development, substantiation of entering CS in the World Heritage List and the new strategic plan whereas the leaders of the NMP even are the authors of the greater part of the new CSNP boundaries and zones and solutions of management plans. Thus the roots of disfavour and truth lies somewhere out there rather than in the plan itself...

The main accusation was that NMP totally urbanizes the spit and negates its values. Meanwhile, in comparison with the MP in force the new MP:

- 1) Increases the total area of natural conservation priority territories – strict reserves and reserves (concomitantly territories of *Natura 2000*) – by almost 10% (increases the area of Grobšto Ragas cape and Nagliai nature reserves; recommends 3 new geomorphological reserves: Raganos Kalnas mount, Urbo and Angių Kalnas mounts; revises the boundaries of Parnidis dune and Garnių Kalnas mount landscape reserves; describes 11 new valuable natural complexes candidates for the status of natural monuments or objects of natural heritage; revises the incorrect boundaries of some existing geomorphological natural monuments);
- 2) Strengthens the protection of cultural landscape (substantially expands the area of cultural reserves; specifies their management rules; points up the cultural value and importance of restoration of Historical Forest Park of Juodkrantė; for the first time evaluates the landscape of CS following the methodology for typifying cultural landscape adopted by the Centre of World Heritage);
- 3) Lends a solid scientific basis to the protection of CS landscape through presenting special schemes compiled on the ground of the data of morphological, visual-spatial and value system analysis of landscape. This makes the CSNP the first national park supplied with the necessary documentation for implementation of the European Landscape Convention in the country;
- 4) Reduces the total area of recreational priority territories in Neringa by more than 30% and its maximal recreational load even by 20%.

The functional structure of Neringa suggested in the NMP (Neringos ... 2008) vouchsafes the dominance of conservation priority zones (86%), increase of the area of ecological protective zones (2%), and reduces the portion of recreational priority territories (11%). The zones of technological priority account for less than 1% of the Neringa territory and all plots of land currently under buildings or planned to be built up for municipal and recreational purposes which are included in the recreational priority zone account only for 1.2% of the municipality territory. The recommended area for new recreational and municipal construction only is 3,4 ha. Meanwhile attempts have been made to give out all this as total urbanization...

It should be reminded that the recreational capacity (maximal permissible peak load per thousand visitors) of Neringa calculated using scientific methods is 25 thousand people per

project beach area (technological/psychological criteria) and 15 thousand per project forest parks (bioecological criterion). The project recreational load calculated for the MP validity period is up to 10 thousand people including 7 thousand people staying overnight (in the MP of 1994, the number was 10,5 thousand) and up to 2,5 thousand day visitors. The ecological spare of permissible load makes up to 5 thousand visitors.

The above given facts and figures demonstrate the falsity of principal accusations. There is no sense to speak about smaller accusations or mere untruth, disinformation and cartographic-geodetic incompetence. Apparently the deepest roots of assault consisted in the demands pointing at unambiguous political and administrative ambitions directly related with local government of Curonian spit, management of its territory and disestablishment of the status of resort.

## **6. Backgrounds for further development**

The author of this article as a scientific leader of NMP presents a serious background and allows maintaining in the new NMP, amended taking into account the constructive opinions and suggestions expressed during public considerations, that:

- CS has become a site of World Cultural Heritage for the specific features of coexistence of man and nature as a modified landscape, rather than its natural values – these ones didn't recognised for outstanding universal significance (Curonian ... 2009);
- Fundamental aspirations to suppress the natural transformations (successions) and each kind of social development (progress) cannot be regarded as rational;
- The recreational use of Curonian Spit and its tradition lasting for more than two hundred years is an inseparable part of cultural heritage to be developed. For this reason, the planned restoration of treatment in convalescent homes of Nida and Juodkrantė is in conformity with the long-term national strategy, providing for restoration and development of resort (convalescent) tourism in Neringa and creation of favourable conditions for public use of recreational resources of coastal zone, approved by Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania in 2002 and is not at variance with the concept of the site of cultural heritage;
- The recreational use of CS without an adequate infrastructure for winter season cannot be regarded as a normal and complete one for this territory. For this reason, building of water sports (not the Druskininkai-type water park fashion) and spa centre in place of the ruined Soviet merchandise pavilions is recommended in conformity with the National Tourism Program approved by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in 2007;
- CS should not become a resort affordable only to the social elite and the rich. For this reason, the NMP provides for development of lodging-houses and holiday camps, easily affordable to young and not very wealthy people, in Pervalka and Juodkrantė and building of children's summer camp in Pervalka;
- Improvement of home comforts for CS inhabitants also is a state interest. Therefore, the NMP consistently implements the principles of Neringa infrastructure development

approved by the Neringa Municipality in the strategic plan of 2008 after coordination with the Administration of the National Park of Curonian Spit;

- In the officially established recreation priority zones, the recreation interests should be regarded more important than all other ones. The NMP is an attempt to take a more daring look at the future use of the territory;
- From the scientific point of view (not from the point of view of phobias), the “green lines”, i.e. the territorial boundaries of development zones, have been realized only in some parts of coastal settlements, of Juodkrantė and Preila in particular, and not in the whole spit in general;
- Both Nida and Juodkrantė settlements have originally been located in the sea coast. Only some time later (Juodkrantė in the 18th century), they relocated to the relatively safer lagoon coast. For this reason, the conceptual principle “no construction works in the sea coast” from the point of view of historic urban development is incorrect. It was developed in the Soviet years meeting the interests of the then frontier zone (only military men had the right to stay overnight in this zone). To be fair, today this principle has no real basis: the function of lodging holiday-makers in the sea coasts of Juodkrantė and Nida was officially approved and put into practice long ago. It is continued in the draft plan of the NPCS providing for new territories for state reserve and compensation. Partial return of urban elements into the landscape background of Nida and Juodkrantė would not be a sin but only a restoration of historical urban truth;
- The famous Preila hotel has not been legalized by the NMP as is often claimed by mass media. It has been given blessing by the administration of SSPA and later legalized in the CSNP management plan. Incidentally, many construction works in Neringa regarded as illegal ones are actually illegal partially: they had been visaed by all coordinating institutions, even approved by the CSNP administration. Thus blaming the Neringa Municipality alone for departure from the Master Plan is incorrect legally;
- The provision of the MP concerning the service air field in Nida (the existing lane and dispatcher office) with a possibility (after an environmental study) to use it for educational air tourism is optimal and is in no way at variance with the valid Master Plan which in its certain paragraphs and schemes provided even for Nida airport with regular passenger flights. The actively promoted environmental phobias around the service air field have no ground and are politicized;
- The Master Plan of 1994 good as it was (unfortunately, it has turned out that it contained serious environmental mistakes – desecration of Griekinė sanctum site, parking area on the slope of Angių Kalnas dune, water reservoirs on the Main Dune Ridge, etc. – cannot serve as a “Bible” or legal mace used for choice and has to be replaced;
- The ambitious political war between the CSNP–SSPA–Ministry of Environment (the “good ones”) and the Neringa Municipality (the “bad ones”) cannot be regarded as the best way of finding solutions of ideological, legal or planning inconsistencies whereas the current countering NMP by the SSPA and the subordinate Administration of the

CSNP and incorrect chicanery regarding its solutions is an expression of ambitions and “revenge” on the Neringa Municipality.

Regrettably, the “consideration” of CS perspective or purposefully organized assault at the NMP was not based on scientific or professional reasons but bore a politicized character (before the elections to Seimas) and involved the Ministry of Environment, members of Seimas, the Government and even the President of the Republic of Lithuania. Authors of NMP have suggested many times, even to the President himself, to support a rational, in our opinion, solution in the existing perverted situation: to go back to integrated planning of CS. *This would offer a possibility to merge together in one planning document the CSNP management plan and general plans of Neringa and Klaipėda (Smiltynė) municipalities.* There seems to be no other way out of this longstanding history.

Concluding we would like to allude to the prime criterion of Curonian Spit as a site of cultural landscape pointed up in the case of nomination of Curonian Spit for the UNESCO List of World Heritage: “... it is a developing cultural landscape playing an active social role in the modern society, related with its way of life, in which evolutionary processes are still in progress. At the same time it is a reflection of intrinsic signs of evolution”. Thus the Curonian Spit is straightforwardly referred to as an evolving formation and the search for optimal ways of its further development (not stagnation and demolition) is our common concern.

## 7. Discussions

The Curonian Spit as a site of World Heritage has appeared and existed only as a whole with its part today existing within the territory of the Kaliningrad (Karaliaučius) Region. The discussions whether the project development of the Lithuanian part of the spit answers the UNESCO requirements are inadequate as they do not reflect the actual situation in general. Even in the Soviet years, the status of environment protection and formation of cultural landscape in the Lithuanian part of the spit traditionally was considerably better. Even the development plans for the National Park “Kurshskaja Kosa” were worked out following the Lithuanian standards and in close cooperation with the Lithuanian experts (Kavaliauskas, Kriauciūnienė 1986; Красовская, Мельченко 1990). Many faults and problems today associated with the Lithuanian part of the spit (e.g. tourism development, recreational architecture and preservation of cultural heritage) are overestimated and even hyperbolized without reason in comparison with the analogous problems in the southern part of the spit. The projects regarded as absolutely unacceptable, impermissible and harmful in the Lithuanian part of the spit are rather easily realized in the southern part without any fear to lose the status of the site of World Heritage: e.g. new recreational constructions on the sea shore (Šarkuva/Lesnoje), radical reconstruction of older building (Rasytė/Rybatchij), intensive construction of new recreational buildings (Pilkopa/Morskoje), etc.

Undoubtedly, the main environmental hazards are concentrated in the southern part of the spit what becomes obvious analysing the plan for development of recreational–tourism infrastructure in the southern part of the spit worked out in Moscow (Особая ... 2009). It includes four project zones for tourism infrastructure development in Rasytė (Rybatchij), Pilkopa (Morskoje) and Miško namas (Valdhausen). The total project area of these zones

amounts to 382 ha. These zones have been allotted for construction of hotel complexes (about 1,5 thousands of lodging places), facility centres, sports and culture complexes, swimming pools, ports, three-storey parking sites and the like. The implementation of the project is far from utopia because the necessary financial resources have been allocated, the territory as an exclusive economic zone has been included into the federal jurisdiction, preparation of the report on assessment of environmental impacts is in progress, and the beginning of construction works is scheduled for 2010. In this context, the polemic taking place in Lithuania is inadequate because the fate of the site of World Heritage is decided in the southern part of the spit rather than in its Lithuanian part.

The described circumstances require closer strategic cooperation between the administrative and control institutions of the both parts of Curonian Spit, coordination of actions and, perhaps, even development of general vision of Curonian Spit management. It is a pity that the invited foreign experts (restorer and biologist) failed to evaluate the arguments of the both parties and formulate new rational recommendations in their report (Curonian..., 2009). Exclusively representing the fundamental environmentalism (firstly nature protection), they at best repeated what already had been suggested by Lithuanian experts (e.g. comeback to one integrated CS plan) or recommended the factual CS reassessment into WHS according to the new Statement of Outstanding Universal Value (Operational ... 2008). The main causes of the uselessness of this initiative were: inability of the experts to perceive the request for integrated sustainable and balanced CS development, incompetence in the field of territorial planning and landscape science, as well as absence of comparative analysis of Curonian Spit as an entirety.

## **8. Conclusions**

1. The history of social-economic development of Curonian Spit and its landscape management always has been ambivalent, i.e. included positive and negative trends. Recently, politicization, exaggeration and mystification of the problems related with the CS management have been growing into a negative trend.
2. Sustainable and balanced development should be recognized as the only rational way of CS management because any attempts totally to stop the natural processes of social-economic development are of no good. Namely this way of stable development lies at the basis of the new Master plan worked out by the Neringa Municipality.
3. The key problem of CS development as a site of World Heritage is related with harmonization of the these main groups of interests: conservative cultural, environmental and recreational (tourism).
4. The concept of Neringa Municipality development must be based on the main principles of ideology of sustainable and balanced development and must safeguard the principle priority of environmental and cultural conservation interests. It necessarily must absorb the positive experience of National Park of Curonian Spit planning and progressive ideas and to ensure the interests of recreational development of Neringa as a municipality with the status of health-resort.

5. It is necessary to preserve the strategic trend towards the improvement of the quality of living and recreational environment and to take into account the environmental and recreational interests of CS residents and visitors. The project planning should be based on rational scientific criteria and avoid politicization of existing problems and exaggerated fundamental mystification of the value of CS landscape.
6. The political controversy between the National Environmental Protection Agency and Neringa Municipality is a serious obstacle in finding best land management solutions. In the current situation, it would be best to return to the integrated planning of Curonian Spit. This would mean joining the plan of NP of CS and general plans of Neringa and Klaipėda (Smiltynė) municipalities into one planning document. It is necessary to reach closer cooperation with the administrative institutions of the southern part of CS and to develop a common vision for the future of the whole Curonian Spit.
7. Due to inability to understand the request for integrated sustainable CS development, but not the fundamental conservation, incompetence in the field of territorial planning and absence of comparative analysis of CS, the invited foreign experts failed to formulate new rational recommendations, based on the arguments of both involved parties, and at best repeated what already had been well known in Lithuania.

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## TAUSOJAMASIS IR DARNUS LIETUVOS KURŠIŲ NERIJOS IR NERINGOS SAVIVALDYBĖS VYSTYMAS: PLANAVIMO IR POLITINIAI ASPEKTAI

P. Kavaliauskas

Santrauka

Kuršių nerijos raidoje išsiskiria tiek teigiami, tiek neigiami jos žemėnaudos ir planavimo aspektai, įskaitant politinius, profesinius bei specifinius vietinius. Naujasis Neringos savivaldybės bendrasis planas buvo parengtas bandant pasirinkti modernesnę planavimo būdą, pritaikytą šiai unikaliam teritorijai ir darninančią socialinę, ekonominę ir ekologinę jos vystymą bei vertybių išsaugojimą. Generalinė teritorijos naudojimo strategija buvo formuojama derinant tris svarbiausias jos vystymo kryptis: 1) gamtosaugą, 2) kultūros paveldo išsaugojimą, 3) rekreaciją. Pagal susiformavusius arba numatomus šių krypčių prioritetus Kuršių nerijos išilginiame profilyje buvo išskirti tokie apibendrinti skirtingą vystymo strategijos struktūrą išreiškiantys Neringos ruožai: griežtos gamtinės, iš dalies kultūrinės, konservacijos; ribotos gamtinės arba gamtinės-kultūrinės konservacijos; ribotos gamtinės-kultūrinės konservacijos ir tausojamosios rekreacijos be urbanistinio vystymo; ribotos kultūrinės-gamtinės konservacijos, tausojamosios rekreacijos ir riboto urbanistinio vystymo; ribotos kultūrinės-gamtinės konservacijos; intensyvios rekreacijos ir riboto urbanistinio vystymo. Politinė priešara tarp Valstybinės saugomų teritorijų tarnybos ir Neringos savivaldybės esmingai trukdo rasti geriausias ideologinius, teisinius bei kraštotvarkos sprendimus, sudaro prielaidas pasireikšti savotiškam „kerštui“ Bendorjo plano ir Neringos savivaldybės institucijų adresu. Todėl racionaliausias sprendimas dabartinėje beviltingai iškreiptoje situacijoje – grįžti prie integralaus Kuršių nerijos planavimo. Tai reikštų politinės valios pastangomis sujungti viename planavimo dokumente Kuršių nerijos nacionalinio parko planą bei Neringos ir Klaipėdos (Smiltynės zona) savivaldybių bendruosius planus. Antra vertus, būtina ieškoti glaudesnio bendradarbiavimo su pietinės Kuršių nerijos dalies valdymo institucijomis ir parengti bendrą visos nerijos plėtotės viziją.

**Reikšminiai žodžiai:** tausojamasis ir darnus vystymas, savivaldybės bendrasis planas, kraštovaizdžio apsauga, Kuršių nerijos nacionalinis parkas, pasaulio paveldo vietovė.

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