

The Valley of the Carp



21/01/2014

The 'Partnership for the Barycz Valley' is an association that implements strategies favouring local development in this region of Poland, notably in support of traditional farming of carp.



Traditional farming of carp fish, dating back to the Medieval Ages, is one of the main strengths of the Barycz river valley in south-western Poland. This centuries-long tradition of farming carp in the sizeable and numerous ponds, extended over the whole region, shaped the characteristic landscape and ecosystems. Today, the region's landscape, including ponds, meadows and wetlands, supports natural values of worldwide importance. Agri-tourism tourism is also a growing sector.

The partnership was started in 2008 by non governmental organisations and local individuals. It covers an area of more than 1600 square kilometres over eight communes (with a total population of almost 100000). The association currently has over 120 members representing the community, private and public sectors and is a Leader LAG (Local Action Group) and FLAG. (Fisheries Local Action Group).

Eco-friendly tourism

With private, EU and national funds [e.g. the total budget for 2009-2012 was 60 million zloties (15 million euros)] the association and its members and partners implements strategies and selects projects that contribute to the sustainable development of the region.

This includes supporting the traditional architecture of the Barycz Valley, developing environmentally friendly tourism and businesses based on traditional products and services, including in the fisheries sector.

The partnership also carries out activities to support local communities. One example is a competition for the 'most active village', whereby rural communities receive support for developing their village thematic offer through craft workshops, training, study tours, learning skills to promote their activities online etc.

Another popular initiative is the 'Barycz Valley Recommends', a project supporting small family-run businesses that produce or promote local products and services.

Carp Days

In addition, the partnership supports a comprehensive promotion programme for the whole region, which comprises the creation of new tourism trails and offers, and, since 2006, hosts 'Carp Days' – an annual series of events, held in September and October, (the traditional carp fish harvesting period) promoting the Barycz Valley cultural and culinary heritage (fish cuisine), products and services.

Finally, it is hoped – with their growing popularity, the involvement of the private, public and community groups, and increased numbers of tourists and of profits raised – these activities will continue to be supported. Importantly, with the necessary infrastructure now in place, together with lasting partnerships, it is also expected that some of the promising initiatives will increasingly be self-financing.

Partnership for the Barycz Valley

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