

ULUDAG NATIONAL PARK
A PLANNING ANALYSISWilliam J. Hart
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INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON NATIONAL PARKS

Introduction

The International Commission on National Parks accepted the gracious invitation of the Government of Turkey to use the Turkish situation as one sample area. Three weeks of study were to be spent in Turkey. As part of the study, I spent three days in and around Uludag Mountain in order to make suggestions which might be of value to the General Directorate of Forestry and the State Planning Organization in dealing with national park establishment at Uludag. This is a preliminary statement dealing with one specific area and, although it is indicative of many problems facing the national park organization as a whole, it will perforce be abbreviated. Other relevant guide lines may appear in the final country report.

The Secretary of the Commission (then Committee), Mr. Fred M. Packard, visited Uludag in 1958. His report outlined in admirable fashion some of the underlying principles of national park philosophy. He also tried to point out that an array of management alternatives are available to the General Directorate of Forestry in dealing with a growing multitude of resource problems. This report is intended to supplement Mr. Packard's comments. It should be emphasized that neither of the reports is based on adequate field work. Highly trained Turkish foresters spend more time

evaluating management of one timber compartment than has been available to both Mr. Packard and me to analyze management of land resources on a huge area. The remarks herein should be considered as suggestive only. A vast amount of research work will be needed before definitive planning by qualified park planning personnel can begin.

As in all things Mr. Naçat Gölğün did all things possible to make my time pleasant as well as profitable. He bears a very large burden as an administrator of Uludağ which made the time he spent with me an even more important contribution. Extreme courtesy, which I can never adequately repay, was extended by His Excellency Sayan Fahrettin Akdağlı, Governor of Bursa, Mr. Orhan Saatçioğlu, Regional Forester and his staff, Mr. Nedim Köker, Director of Uludağ Büyük Oteli and his staff, as well as assorted lodge operators, forest guards and drivers.

My first view was from the east. The majestic shape of the whole mountain range loomed like a supernatural thing above the clouds. The range was observed from the south, east, and finally from the north as we drove into Bursa. The next day was spent in driving to the developed area below Mt. Zirve and walking along a major ridge to an observation point overlooking all of Bursa Valley. The next day, during which I was slowed by illness, was spent walking to the head of the aerial tramway under construction and driving along the picturesque south west edge of the range to the Milifler Valley. Heavy fog on the third day prevented an adequate inspection of the full boundary problem above the city of Bursa although Mr. Gölğün and Guard Mustafa did show me comparable problems.

At each point we discussed many aspects -- physical, economic, and political -- with interested persons. They ranged from the Governor to expert skier. Each had something to contribute. These data were added

to information about tax structure and so on discussed in Ankara. Collectively, these experiences form a general impression of Uludag and its future which is set forth here.

PHYSICAL FRAMEWORK

Mr. Packard has already pointed out the unique array of life zones apparent on the slopes of Mt. Uludag. No one is certain of the exact order of flora and fauna in the area for any given point in history. It is worth noting that a key point in any national park program is to select the historic point which is considered "Natural" and then, unobtrusively, manipulate the biota to that end.¹ Such a choice is imperative to guide the scientist who is asked to determine which animals should or should not be in the park, which species of trees should be established or favored; to guide the planner in organizing facilities to take full advantage of the natural story to be told; to guide the technician and manager in his day - to - day discussions about permits and construction patterns.

Perhaps more important to this discussion is the location of the mountain above the beautiful and historic city of Bursa. More will be said later about the economic reasons for dealing with Bursa in a regional context. Suffice to say that the mountain is a major factor in making Bursa a preferred place. It is the backdrop which sets off the mosques, hot

¹English National Parks represent the rural village period of the fifteenth century; U. S. Parks have not clearly taken a position, but it is thought that the advent of the white man is the proper period. Turkey may select from a great number of points in time. For discussion I would propose the beginning of the Ottoman Turk period.

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springs, and other features. The alternative is a bleak barren backdrop which will presage an end comparable with other great cities of the Middle East and Asia, e. g., Mohenjodaro, and Babylon.

Not only does the city depend on the mountain for its setting, but for its water supply and safety from destructive flooding as well. It seems foolish to permit a number of illegally constructed buildings to remain on the steep slopes above the city as an encouragement to others to push progressively further up the slope. Each structure brings all the attendant evils of stripping the vegetative cover, human effluent, and animal grazing. Allowed to continue such practices will destroy all the benefits the city now receives from its mountain.

An abundant wildlife currently exists within the park area. Tracks indicated bear, rabbit, wolf, wild pig, jackals, and foxes. The streams and lakes support trout and other aquatic life. The large predator population indicates to me there once was a good population of roe and red deer. Mr. Gülgün indicates he has found no one who can assert the presence of mountain sheep any time. Which species were present at the beginning of the Ottoman period can only be determined by scientific inquiry. Qualified research findings should be the criteria for introduction of any species in the park area.

There are views of the valley from the shoulder of the mountain that are unmatched in my experience. Bakacak in particular, some 4515 feet above the valley, is the best I saw. Such points should be considered as part of the wealth of the nation to be carefully husbanded.

Skiing is presently concentrated in the area on the ridge leading to Mt. Zirve. In my view, there is no clear objective in mind to guide physical planning. For example, a good mountain hotel is a good mountain hotel and it is the quality of the management which determines how well it meets the objectives of the general directorate of Tourism. Its location affects the quality of the ski slopes (assuming that is an important aspect) as well as the location of connecting roads, parking areas for vehicles, water supply, sewage disposal, and utility lines. Some summer "homes" have been built.²

Some selective timber harvesting, heavy animal grazing, and even Juniper eradication continues on the mountain even though everyone is talking about national park status. I share Mr. Packard's view that grazing, in particular, will not be eliminated quickly. Nonetheless he pointed out the desirability of beginning an action program to be directed at eventual elimination of grazing. Nothing has been done. It seems to me that application of sound range management directed at fewer range animals, higher lamb crops, and higher quality wool -- including pasture work and feeding in the village -- will make the goal of lessening carrying pressure more palatable to the villager. In fifty years Turkey's modernization may make possible feed lot production of wool for the world market. Thus no grazing would be necessary in the national parks of a wealthy, affluent nation. What is essential, then, is realization of the long term desirability of grazing reduction and taking effective steps to control grazing pressure now.

²No one has decided which is the primary development objective -- skiing, hotel, seasonal residences -- and which should occupy complimentary positions.

The first step would be a fenced boundary. But the boundary is unknown -- which leads to a matter of most pressing importance. Someone has to decide what is worth preserving. Mr. Packard refers to the unity of the whole mountain as an ecological unit. To my mind, the unity involved is the whole mountain range complete with peaks, mountain lakes and meadows, glaciers, ice falls, water falls, and the highest land near Istanbul. To conceive of Uludag National Park without Uludag peak would be very strange. The western boundary could remain as now proposed, although I would make a major jog to eliminate the sanitarium.³

The south boundary might start on the road near the gendarmerie station and follow the road to the intersection with the road to Karasak and follow that road to Karakol and thence along the break between the sheer mountain and the more gradual lower alpes as far as the Kuru drainage. The east and north boundary might start from Kuru and include the high plateau (or even the long, non-productive slope), to the ridge east to Kalikava Creek where it would go north to the city boundary of Bursa and east along that boundary to the point of beginning.

³Such a service, no matter how worthy, and the location of tubercular patients in close proximity to visitors invited from all over the world, is hardly the function of a national park. In fact the road might be relocated and additional screening provided so that the average visitor will be unaware of the institution's presence, making it a fenced enclave within the park. This is an example of capital waste. A capital decision was made to build the sanitarium without thought of park projects. It now will take additional capital to make the situation tolerable. An alternate site, even if slightly higher in material costs would in the long run have been cheaper. A number of such investment decisions have been made which must now be built in to a physical development scheme as given which increases costs and lowers the efficiency of subsequent investments.

This, in my judgement, represents a unity. It is the whole thrust of the range that is impressive, that contains plant and animal associations so important to science, that has sufficient size to make a significant complimentary contribution to the tourist activity of Bursa.

The point must be made and always kept in mind: the natural features bring visitors to national parks and not the artificial facilities. The geysers and falls bring people to Yellowstone not the hotels; the charm of the English countryside cause people to bicycle on the lanes not the quality of the hostels; the Swiss village, the care of the landscape, and the quality of skiing are the prime attractions of the Swiss Alps, not the hotels. Every structure must be rigorously judged on the basis of its absolute need and its effect on the landscape before it is permitted. There is only one Uludag for the people of Turkey and the world. There are good hotel sites elsewhere.

ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

The Western Turkey Regional Planning Group conceives of Uludag within the Bursa part of the Northern Marmara sub-region. I am not sure where the geographic limits for regional and sub-regional analysis fall. I am sure that all the provinces facing on the sea of Marmara constitute a region and am thus assuming that Bursa is the hub of a sub-region. In any case, Bursa is a center of 2nd or 3rd magnitude in providing polarity of economic activity.

I gather that some judgements have been made to use Bursa and Uludag as a balance for sea oriented trade and recreation. This means to me that what has been described as the social benefits of investment are intended to be focused in Bursa. The community shows signs of major social stress arising from a transition to a service center from subsistence agriculture. Farm mechanization and the fertile plain will continue to deposit unskilled persons in the city who, with low job opportunity, will try to return to the soil on sub-marginal plots or take on all the aspects of the unemployed. By providing balance in the region as a whole, it is assumed that Bursa is to provide more jobs in service industries and serve as a higher paying market for cash crops raised on local farms.

The present unplanned investment pattern indicates that first things have not necessarily come first. I would have thought that the first thing would be to provide a high standard scenic type land link with Istanbul. The second thing that would occur to me would be extensive municipal improvements at the sites in Bursa which have heavy present visitor demand while establishing a national park on a firm footing for future complimentary use. Third, establish good quality overnight facilities to serve Bursa and minimum overnight facilities to serve the park users in winter and summer. Fourth, one might consider luxury investment in the national park. The only shift in this pattern might come if a major travel group wished to establish facilities as an adjunct to its major activity and accept an operating loss in order to receive the benefits of advertising and increased passenger traffic.

For reasons valid at the moment, another pattern of development has been followed in that investments in a luxury lodge (without parking) have been made and a massive line of credit has been made available to establish an aerial tramway to the sports area. This seems contradictory one to the other and from the view of maximizing job opportunity in Bursa. A very cursory investigation showed that the Uludag Hiljök Otel was operating at 50% of capacity through the year; that the majority of guests were Americans or other foreigners on assignment in Turkey. The privately operated lodge showed a much better ratio of full nights and the guests asserted that they were the bulk of the ski enthusiasts. No data were available from the lodge under the control of the General Directorate of Sports.⁴

It is in this context that various proposals will be judged.

a) To build a lodge at Shepherd Rock to service the terminal of the aerial tramway would be in direct competition with the established hotel, would be in competition with the facilities in downtown Bursa, and be out of touch with ski activities unless substantial additional investment is made in lifts which would have to interconnect with the present lodge-hotel complex. b) A lodge at the intermediate tramway station on the Yellow Plain. All the above objections apply plus the added difficulty of interconnecting lifts and utility lines as power, water, and roads.

⁴This is an often repeated pattern in the ski business. One plush center with low housing capacity but good food and a bar plus large quantities of low investment housing. Over investment is a hazard in skiing and two low snow years will cause a high rate of business failure. Seasonality is also a problem unless there is well established summer demand for the facilities.

c) A restaurant at Bahçek would occupy one of the great overlook sites which should be kept available for all the people not just those who can afford the luxury of a restaurant plus not being connected to any of the other facilities. d) A cable car to Zirve summit will require a huge investment and will serve absolutely no useful end for anyone. If all this were built, it would be only for the wealthy and ignore Turkey's rising middle class, would permanently scar the area, and be over capitalized in facilities which already suffer from seasonality.

One thing is clear: at the level of my inquiry no one is thinking about the nature of the market and projecting it. We ought to know, if the goals of the five year plan are reached, whether the level of affluence of the Istanbul population will be such that we can expect a wholesale shift and have a higher proportion of short term (2-3 days) urban visitors according to season. (Perhaps I will find more data in Istanbul offices.) Also to be considered, as I am sure the top level of the General Directorate of Tourism must be, is the competition in the foreign market posed by such supply novelties as East Africa. Certainly the socio-economic condition of the European community ought to be well known and used in the mix to evaluate investment priorities for the Bursa region before investment commitments which may do irretrievable harm are made. One would hope that the expanding Turkish economy, based on social capital advance made in cities like Bursa, will encourage investments in the private sector.

Some comments in the country report will touch briefly on some other aspects of recreation planning which take into consideration the town populations, charming waterfalls and lake oriented sites a short distance from the city.

ADMINISTRATIVE FRAMEWORK

To deal with the job of national park establishment is gigantic. There are the usual problems of apprehending charcoal cutters, sneak grazers, squatters, and others who violate the law. In addition, establishment of the boundary lines must be undertaken, decisions made about budget for facilities which are not yet planned. To expect one man to do all these things within an organization where he is a pioneer and the concepts not clearly understood is too much. The superintendent of Uludag must have adequate staff to patrol, to construct fence line, to translate plans into permits granted for park development, and to interpret natural history.

The budget should be from the general fund and not from the forestry revolving fund. The line of command must be more clearly defined. The aspects of the park in relation to interpreting natural history, public relations and so is difficult enough if the line of decision-making rests with the park division. In the case of Uludag, decisions are being made by the General Directorates of: Highways, Sports, Tourism, Forestry; Tusan, the Bankasi; the Red Crescent; and the municipality of Bursa. To make decisions in this situation is nearly impossible unless a man of Regional Forester Saatcioglu's stature spent full time on park problems.

A management committee has been formed consisting of every conceivable soul with an interest in Uludag. This is a good device to sell people on a program already clearly in mind, but not to shape a program.

There are excellent maps and aerial photography available which would be invaluable in preparing a plan for the mountain. Unfortunately, they seem to be classified documents for military use only. This imposes an additional handicap.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Uludag is of national park quality. Over interference with its natural attractions in too heavy investments for tourism can be as damaging as permitting wholesale resource exploitation.
2. The national park, properly developed and advertised, can play a material role in contributing to the tourist oriented service facilities in the Bursa region.
3. The advisory committee be disbanded and replaced by an interdisciplinary group, perhaps at the national level, which should immediately undertake the necessary investigations into detailed geology, flora and fauna inventories and so on. They should set the first guidelines of value for the design and location of facilities.
4. A boundary should be established forthwith and fenced.
5. Three professional staff men, five guards, and two clerical people should be speedily made available.
6. The park, its objectives and establishment of administrative responsibility ought to be set forth by law.
7. A start should be made on a sound range management plan directed at elimination of grazing, especially in the Alpine zones over time.
8. Funds should be appropriated and not come from the forestry revolving fund.
9. A zone of use plan and a physical development plan, designed to maximize returns on investments and schedule labor intensive works should receive high priority in 5 year plan funds.