



GÜZELDERE WATERFALL NATURE PARK IN TERMS OF RECREATION (DÜZCE-TURKEY)

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ПРИРОДЕН ПАРК ГЮЗЕЛДЕРЕ – ПРОБЛЕМИ И РЕШЕНИЯ

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ABSTRACT: *Güzeldere Waterfalls is 28 kms to Düzce city center which is situated roughly in between Istanbul and Ankara, the two biggest cities of Turkey. Güzeldere Nature Park hosting one of the highest uninterrupted cascades in Turkey with a height of 120 metres has become an important tourist attraction spots with its natural and human environmental features. He purpose of this study is to present the geographical properties of the nature part and to provide solutions to current problems. Observations were undertaken with this aim in the park and interviews were done with authorities, local public and the officials and workers of the Nature Park. Problems regarding inadequacies in transportation, environmental planning, personnel and service facilities have been identified as a result of field trips and interviews. Results section provides suggestions to solve the identified problems.*

Key Words: Waterfall, Recreation, Güzeldere Waterfall, Cascade, Düzce

Introduction

The needs for recreation and amenities created to meet recreational related needs are the results of industrialization and urbanization (Özgüç 1998, p.3). Pressure from industrialization and urbanization has increased interest in rural recreational activities in order to meet the need for mental and physical rest. Increased interest in that regard has caused diversification of recreational areas and created the basis for dense use of areas high in recreational potential.

Nature parks suitable for rest and recreation for public offering nice vistas complete with wild life and flora provide opportunities for various recreational activities. Many of these nature parks host waterfalls that are natural attractions (such as Kurşunlu Waterfall Nature Park-Antalya). If the waterfalls which are among the important wonders of nature known with the beauties of their landscape have suitable locations, accommodation and transportation potential, they can easily become tourist attractions. These natural beauties need to be studied and presented in a holistic manner.

Geographical features of some of the waterfalls in Turkey have been studied by geographer researchers (Doğanay 1991; Doğanay 1994; Ceylan 2000; Doğanay 2000; Doğanay and Zaman 2001; Arınç 2002; Özdemir et al. 2004; Bulut et

al. 2005; Uzun et al. 2005; Bulut 2010). However, there are still many waterfalls that are not studied yet. It is imperative to examine and present these waterfalls in order to ensure their contribution to the economy of the region and the country in time (Doğanay and Zaman, 2001). One of these waterfalls that needs to be investigated and promoted is Güzeldere Waterfall situated in the borders of a nature park.

Geographical observations were undertaken in the study area and interviews were held with the authorities, nature park staff and the public in order to identify the geographical features of Güzeldere Waterfall Nature Park (Düzce-Turkey). The problems in the nature park were identified and suggestions were provided.

Locational Properties

Güzeldere Nature Park is located in the borders of Güzeldere Village of Gölyaka District in Düzce in Western Black Sea. Güzeldere Waterfall Nature Park is 28 km to Düzce city center and 16 km to Gölyaka. The Nature Park is situated on Elmacık Mountain on the south of Düzce Plain and is fairly close to the highway and the Istanbul-Ankara state highway that roughly passes through the plain from the east to the west (Figure 1). The Nature Park is located roughly about 250 km away from the most important

metropolises of Turkey such as Istanbul and Ankara and can be reached after a 2-3 hours car ride. It is possible to reach the Nature Park form the route of Hacıyakup Village or by following the route of Gölormanı Village. The route from the Hacıyakup Village is asphalt and the route from the Gölormanı Village is a dirt road in the forest. Following the route that passes through

the Hacıyakup Village is more suitable in terms of road standards and the ease of access. Visitors to the Nature Park can reach the area with private or rental cars. On the other hand, some tourism companies have included the Nature Park in their tour routes.

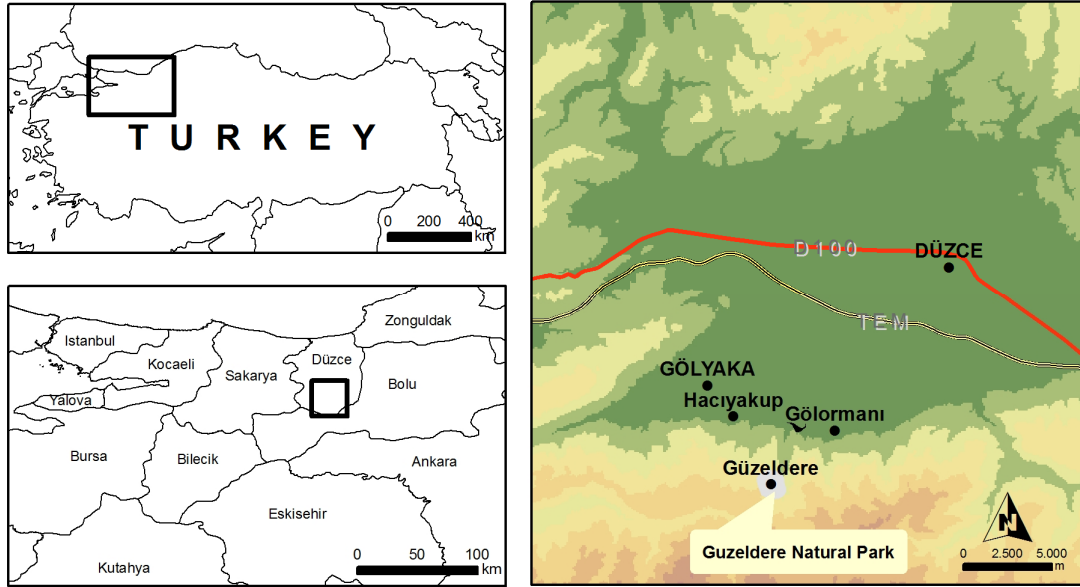


Fig. 1: Locational map of the study area

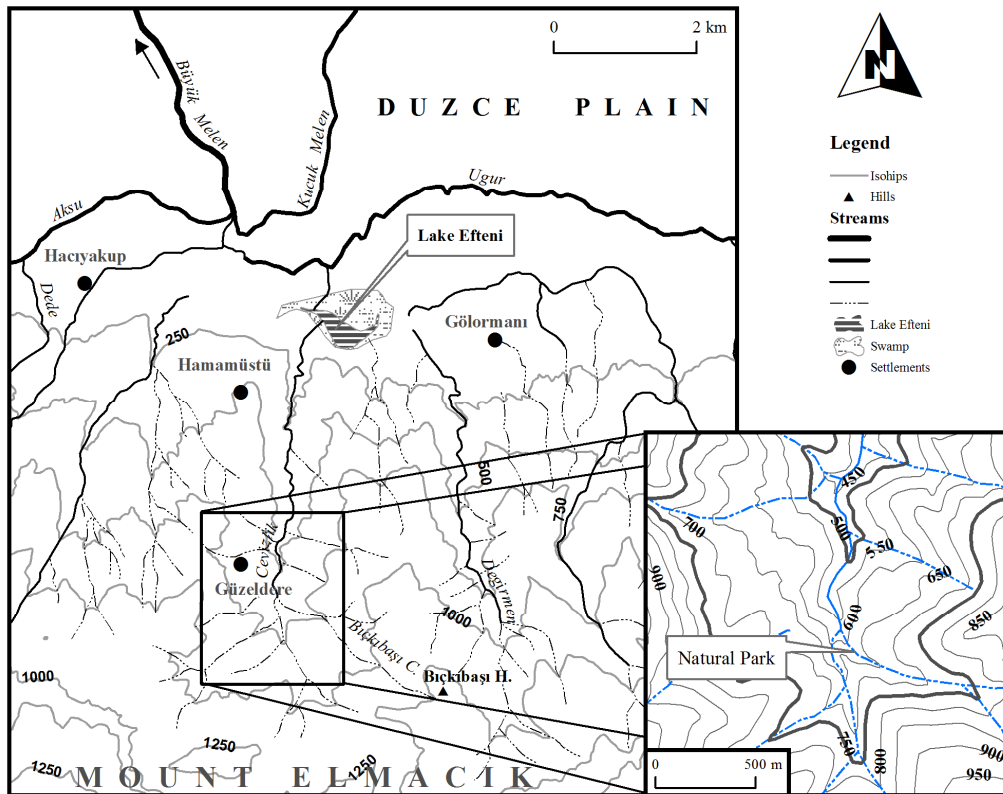


Fig. 2: The topographical map of study area and its close surrounding

The total population of Güzeldere Village located on the route from Hacıyakup Village to Nature Park is 363 as of 2010 (Uzun et al., 2011). The main means of livelihood in the village are hazelnut cultivation and forestry activities.

Natural Environment Features of the Nature Park

Black Sea climate is dominant in the study area and each season is rainy. When Düzce station data were interpolated to Nature Park area, the average temperature and the annual rainfall were found to be 10,4°C and 1100 mm respectively. The altitude of the Nature Park above sea level is about 600-650 m. the number of foggy days in the Düzce Plain on the north of the research field is 46, the number of snowy days is 20 and the number of days under snow is 27 (Uzun et al. 2011, p.54). Since the Nature Park is 500 m higher in elevation than the plain, the periods of foggy and snowy days will definitely be longer there. According to the information obtained from the interviews held with the locals and the authorities of the facility, the snow cover stays on the ground roughly about three months in the research field. Snow and fog sometimes hamper and interfere with the transportation to the Nature Park.

The research field is included in the Auxin Flora Area of the European-Siberian Phytogeographic Regions. Nature Park area is completely in the natural forest field. The dominant elements of the forest are broad-leaved trees. Güzeldere Nature Park and its immediate vicinity are covered by vibrant flora. The main tree types are beech, alder, chestnut, linden, boxwood, fir and forest poplar. The Nature Park and its vicinity is also rich in terms of wild life. Bears, boars, roes, deer, wild wolves, foxes and rabbits can be seen in the area.

The Nature Park is located on Elmacık Mountain on the south of Düzce Plain. The waterfall in the park is situated in the Bıçkı River Valley which is one of the important rivers of Elmacık Mountain (Figure 2). Bıçkı River originates in 1100 m elevation on the west of Bıçkıbaşı Hill and reaches the escarpment in which the waterfall is located by flowing from the south to the north. It falls from the location where the slope breaks off at about 120 m with a steep slope, pours into the pothole lake with a 1,5 m depth and then follows its course. The waterfall cannot be completely observed since it is situated in a deep and narrow valley and surrounded by a

dense forest cover. There is a step after the first 15 m at the upper section of the waterfall and the water falls down with a steep slope of 100 m (Photo 1). Bıçkı River which is the source of the waterfall pours into the pothole lake without any human meddling until it reaches the waterfall.



Photo 1. Güzeldere Waterfall

The distribution of rainfall to different seasons affects the flow values of Bıçkı River. Rainfall which is scarcer in the summer causes a decrease in the water quantity that the river carries. In winter months, rainfall increases and snow is also observed. Snow adds additional beauty to the landscape of the nature park however it hampers transportation to the area. According to the information obtained from the locals, flow rate increases in the spring as a result of melting of snow in the waterfall and the flow rate is the lowest at the end of summer and in September. Distribution of rainfall evenly to the whole year prevents the river that feeds the waterfall from drying up. The waterfall appears with its full splendor while one walks in the valley covered with beech and alder trees. It is necessary to walk a considerable distance that may be tiring in order to discover the waterfall.

Nature Park and its immediate vicinity is located on Yığılca Formation of Cenozoic Period. Cenozoic period formations are composed of andesite, basalt, tuff, agglomerate and diorite (Uzun et al. 2011).

Touristic Potential of the Nature Park

With its many natural and cultural attractions, the province of Düzce is one of the most important excursion spots in the Western Black Sea. One of the primary natural attractions in the area is the Güzeldere Waterfall Nature Park. There are major natural touristic attractions in the immediate vicinity of the Nature Park. Efteni Lake Bird Sanctuary 10 km north of the Nature Park, the thermal facilities by the lake and plateaus in higher ground on 10-20 km south can be mentioned in this regard. Plateaus and the landscape created by flora on plateau routes are worth seeing. It is possible to benefit from the thermal springs, make observations in the bird sanctuary, cool in the waterfall and visit the plateaus in a small area of roughly 30 km.

Villagers who migrated from Giresun in the 1950s and founded the Güzeldere Village took notice of the waterfall in a short time. Prior to the last two decades, the waterfall and its vicinity were used as a recreational area by the Düzce public in all seasons other than the winter. Güzeldere Waterfall was declared a “Forest Rest Area” in 1992 by the Ministry of Forestry, General Directorate of National Parks and Game Wildlife. A ticket window, market and restrooms were built in 1992 in this excursion spot. A restaurant and accommodation facilities were established in 2007. The research area was declared a nature park in 2011. The width of the nature park owned by the state is 21 hectare. Long term development plan for the park has been planned to be completed by 2012. The management of the Nature Park area was given to a private enterprise for 9 years in 2005 after a tender bidding. The number of staff working for the private enterprise is 2: one worker and one cook. Also 2 seasonal workers from Güzeldere Village were employed to work in general field cleanup and landscape planning by the Ministry of Forestry and Irrigation Düzce Branch Office after the area was given the status of Nature Park.

There are catering, recreation and accommodation facilities in the Nature Park provided by the private enterprise. The nature park hosts a ticket booth at the entrance, one restaurant, one market, parking area, shower and kitchen areas for camping groups, a football field sized green area for camping and various activities (skipping rope, tug of war, volleyball, wrestling etc), picnic tables and benches.

The nature park active in every season of the year has a visitor potential that can be qualified as high. According to the statements of the facil-

ity staff, summers are the high season for the park. Only 5% of the annual visitors visit the park in the winter. The number of visitors in the winter decrease as a result of difficulties in transportation due to snow. The highest interest to the park is observed at the weekends especially during the period between May and August. There are some days the park hosts 5000 visitors at the weekends in the summer. The nature park, one of the recreational areas for day trips in Düzce, is visited by people from major settlement areas such as Ankara and Istanbul and while some of these individuals stay for a day the others spend a few days in the park. There are people who phone for breakfast reservations form Istanbul and Ankara since the park can be reached in 2,5-3 hours by private cars. The number of people who prefer to visit the park with the help of tour operators has substantially increased in the recent years. Tourists who come with private tours or through school, scouts and youth camping opportunities provide an important resource for local tourism. Families mostly spend their time picnicking and go down to the waterfall to cool off or to watch the waterfall. According to staff, a minor proportion of the visitors is composed of foreigners (less than 5%).



Photo 2. View of the Social Facilities and Bungalows in the Nature Park

3,7 and 20 euro is charged form private cars, midi buses and buses respectively for entrance. It is possible to stay in bungalows (Photo 2, 3, 4) or in tents. The cost for staying in each of the 5 bungalows that can house 6 individuals is 30 Euros per person including breakfast. There is children’s room, bedroom and kitchen in each bungalow and they are heated with electrical heaters. The cost for staying in one of the 4 tents that can host five individuals is 4 Euros per person. In addition, youth and scout groups can put up their own tents in the platform in the nature park. Sometimes youth and scout groups stay in

tents in groups of 50-100. The cost for per tent is 3 Euros.



Photo 3. Views from Güzeldere Waterfall Nature Park

It is not possible to climb down to pothole Lake due to the steep slope however it is possible to get very close to the waterfall from an excursion spot 10 m above the pothole lake. In order to reach that spot, one needs to climb down steps towards the river valley. A 10 minute walk is necessary to reach the waterfall form the Nature Park entrance.



Photo 4. Views from Güzeldere Waterfall Nature Park

Main Problems and Suggestions for Solution

Güzeldere Waterfall Nature Park is an important touristic attraction hence it receives an influx of visitors. The number of visitors is expected to increase as a result of introduction/presentation activities. The points below should be noted in order to keep the natural properties of the Nature Park and to be able to benefit from it in the long term:

- ✓ The main problem that needs to be solved with urgency is transportation. Although the distance to the park from Hacıyakup Village is 11 km, the travel lasts longer than 20 minutes due to the twisty nature of the road. Landslides are experienced from time to time

- and the rocks that fall to the road hamper transportation and create hazards for vehicles. Enlarging the roads from Hamamüstü and Hacıyakup villages and increasing standards is a must in order to facilitate transportation to the park.
- ✓ A number of bulletin boards and leaflets for the visitors should be developed about the properties of the Nature Park, conservation of the park and the important points to consider in the environment. Signs to explain the flora and the wildlife in the area should be prepared and placed in the suitable spots in the park.
 - ✓ Signs to direct visitors to the park should be placed in suitable location on the Ankara-Istanbul highway, state roads and local roads.
 - ✓ The steps and banisters that lead to the waterfall should be replaced with new ones that will be used to take precautions against the risk of falling. Banks that lead to the valley where the waterfall is situated should be increased and kept under constant and regular maintenance. Observation terraces in the route to the waterfall should be expanded and renewed by ensuring safety. New terraces should be built in suitable locations. Iron steps and banisters should be used in the last 20 m in the route to the waterfall due to safety reasons.
 - ✓ The visitors should be warned against the risk of fire and staff should be trained about what to do in case of fire.
 - ✓ The total capacity for accommodation in the bungalows and the tents is for 50 persons. New accommodation facilities and social establishments should be founded in a manner that will be compatible with nature and camping areas should be organized. Some of the houses in Güzeldere Village which is inside the borders of the park should be transformed into pensions. If the accommodation capacity of the Nature Park is increased and a larger restaurant and better quality social facilities are built, the area can host national and international social, cultural, political and sports meetings.
 - ✓ The number of personnel should definitely be increased in order to meet the increasing demand for the park especially in the summer. Also the number of personnel working in landscape should be increased as well
 - ✓ There are no security guards in the Nature Park. The current personnel needs to call the gendarme and ask for help in case there are safety/security issues. It is required to employ security guards at least in periods when there is increased activity
 - ✓ The villagers of Güzeldere make use of Bıçkı River for drinking water and for use. This decreases the flow to a certain extent. Necessary research should be undertaken to provide water for the villagers from other resources. In order to increase the flow rate of the waterfall, some rivers in the upper courses of the waterfall may be directed to Bıçkı riverbed
 - ✓ The limits of nature park should be marked with wire fence and thus protected.
 - ✓ Rest rooms, picnic tables, fountains and trash containers prove to be insufficient in high activity periods. The numbers of the toilets should be increased to 20 from the current 10, number of barbecue grills to 30 from the current 10, number of wooden picnic tables to 250 from the current 80, the number of fountains to 20 from the current 10 and the number of trash containers should be increased to 10 from the current 5.
 - ✓ Visitors can go down to the waterfall with the current illumination system but it needs to be developed.
 - ✓ Booths should be opened that will be used to sell the products (especially wild strawberry, honey, nuts, corn, corn flour, apple and pears) of the villagers of Güzeldere and Hamamüstü Villages located inside the borders of the park and situated on the route to the park
 - ✓ Information and visuals about Güzeldere Waterfall are published in the websites of several public organizations in order to promote the waterfall. However, a separate website that can present the waterfall in its entirety should be developed.
- As a result, it is expected that the potential of Güzeldere Waterfall Nature Park will be appreciated and by solving the current problems, it will be possible for the park to contribute to the local and country tourism.

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