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Andriichuk Tamara Viacheslavivna, PhD Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine

e-mail: andriychuk2012@ukr.net

Khomiak Ivan Vladyslavovych, PhD, Associate Professor Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine

Demchuk Nataliia Stanislavivna,

PhD Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine

Vlasenko Ruslana Petrivna,

PhD, Associate Professor Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine

Kostiuk Vitalii Stepanovych,

PhD Zhytomyr Ivan Franko State University, Zhytomyr, Ukraine

ECOLOGICAL AND EDUCATIONAL ROUTE OF THE SACRED SPRINGS OF THE SLOVECHANSKO-OVRUCHSKY RIDGE

The aim. The aim of the study is to exploring the possibilities of using the development of networks of ecological routes and the involvement of communities in environmental activities, on the example of creating an ecological and educational route in the Slovenian-Ovruch ridge.

Research methods. We apply standard field and cameral geobotanical and cartographic methods. Our field research lasted from 2004 to 2019. We have created many standard geobotanical descriptions and created several ecological-coenotic profiles using expeditionary and stationary field methods. We created landscape maps and laid a holistic system of ecological trails through its most famous natural sources using cartographic modeling methods. We have studied archaeological, historical, ethnographic and bibliographic materials.

The results. We have developed an environmental education site about 100 km long, which combines 13 of the most famous natural springs. Each of these natural springs is a cult object, associated with a large number of myths and rituals that are still actively practiced. The Slovechansko-Ovruch ridge first of all impressed researchers with powerful natural springs that burst to the surface. Over the millennia of human history, a cult of worship has been formed in these places for natural spring. For the first time, we consider indigenous culture as a way to adapt to environmental conditions. Our activities aimed at studying, preserving and improving these sources will activate local communities to care for the environment, cultural and historical heritage. The ecological and educational route "Natural springs of the Slovechansko-Ovruch ridge" is a unique system that represents natural phenomena of world importance in combination with indigenous culture, which is the adaptation of communities to local natural conditions. Creation of NP "Slovechansko-Ovrutsky ridge" is the only comprehensive and systematic solution that will ensure sustainable development of communities while preserving the natural and historical and cultural identity. The local population, which has unique historical, cultural characteristics, is becoming increasingly vulnerable to global changes in the natural environment without these steps. The aboriginal population is economically and ideologically strongly integrated with natural complexes, so their loss will lead to the degradation and extinction of aboriginal culture.

Scientific innovation. For the first time, we consider indigenous culture as a way to adapt to environmental conditions.

Practical significance. The best way to promote caring for the environment is to involve local communities in the study, development and protection of natural resources. This is especially true in the area of design and creation of a national nature park.

Key words: national nature park, ecological trail, territorial communities.

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