



SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ACTION PLAN

Parco Regionale Alto Appennino Modenese

CEETO - D.T2.2.3

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1. Introduction

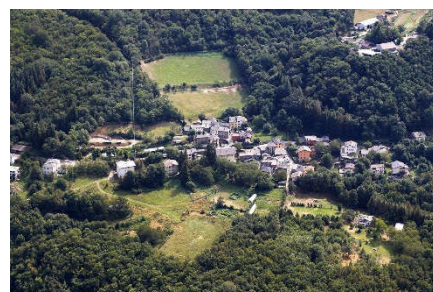


The Ente di Gestione per i Parchi e la Biodiversità “Emilia Centrale” is a Public Authority established by Emilia Romagna Region to manage protected areas of the Modena and Reggio Emilia provinces. Regional Park Alto Appennino Modenese belongs to Ente di Gestione per i Parchi e la Biodiversità “Emilia Centrale” with another Regional Park, Sassi di Roccamalatina, 5 Regional Reserves - Cassa di espansione del fiume Secchia, Salse di Nirano, Rupe di Campotrera, Sassoguidano, Fontanili di Corte Valle Re and a Natural and Semi-natural Protected

Landscape - Collina Reggiana-Terre di Matilde, in addition to the Natura 2000 Network Sites. The Ente di Gestione per i Parchi e la Biodiversità “Emilia Centrale” has its legal and administrative headquarters in Modena and other 3 decentralized offices in Pievepelago, Guiglia (Pieve di Trebbio) and Rubiera. These offices also perform information and surveillance functions on the territory. The priority purpose of the institution is to contribute, within the framework of the UNEP, EU and Italian Plans and Programs, to halting the loss of biodiversity and to maintain the functionality of ecosystem services while promoting the enhancement of the natural heritage and the improvement of living conditions of local communities. The general approach of the management of the Authority is aimed at making evident, in the first place to those who live in it, the protected areas as opportunities to unleash the potential offered by the natural, historical, landscape, cultural and human resources present.

2. Regional Park Alto Appennino Modenese

The Regional Park Alto Appennino Modenese spread over the Modenese High Apennines with over 15 thousand hectares of land and an area ranging from 500 meters above sea level to over 2,000 of the summit of Cimone, the highest mountain of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines. The Regional Park has a naturalistically rich and extremely varied environment.





Unique habitats, to preserve biodiversity, favor the growth and conservation of rare, plant and animal species. Glacial cirques cohabit with others transformed into peat bogs, forests of beech woods with large expanses of undergrowth, nival valleys settle on the slopes of the highest mountains, on which the golden eagle and other birds of prey flutter.

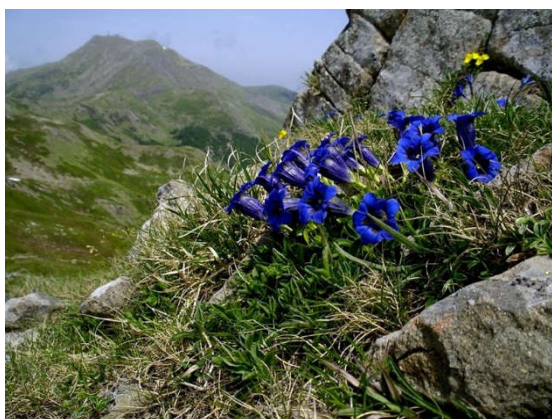
The Regional Park is rich and varied, with uncontaminated landscapes and luxuriant nature. Within the protected area there are two areas of particular interest: the area between Cimone Mount, the Open Book and Lake Pratignano and the area of the Giovo and Rondinaio mountains, both SCI (Sites of Community Importance) and ZPS (Special Protection Areas).

From a cultural point of view the park was an ancient area of human settlements, the high Apennines knew a consistent human presence with the Ligurian Friniati, remained in the territory up to the clash with the Romans, to whom we owe the first tracing (Via Bibulca) crossing the ridge towards Tuscany, then integrated in the Middle Ages by the streets linked to pilgrimages to Rome.

Historic streets that then, during the Este dominion, saw enlargements and new tracks (Via Ducale, Via Vandelli). In addition to these, in the Park there are many traces of human activity over the centuries, from the historical centers of towns to hamlets, from hospitals to parish churches, from peasant courts to the oldest "Celtic huts", from mills to metatars.

2.1 Flora and Fauna

The profound climatic and geological changes, which have affected the territory of the park, have allowed the development of a varied and very abundant vegetation, mostly diversified according to the altitudes. The predominant plant environment is the beech forest, which occupies the extensive mountain belt and establishes (around 1,700 meters of height) the upper limit of the arboreal vegetation.



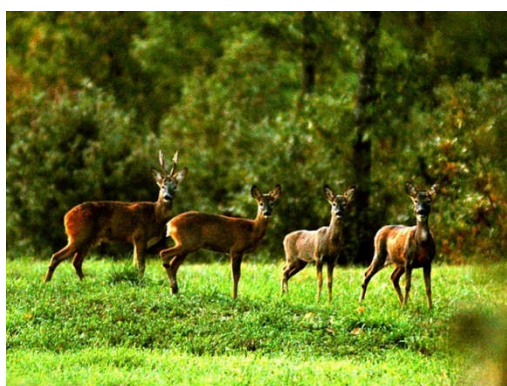
In the richest groups, beech trees are flanked by mountain maples, mountain beetles and rowan siblings.

At the bottom of the valley are easily found rows of maples, wild cherries, ash trees, oaks, downy oaks and hornbeams, sometimes with centuries-old specimens. The chestnut groves are widespread near the inhabited areas, having been for centuries the main source of livelihood of the locals. The undergrowth is composed mostly of knotty geranium, woodland lettuce, angelica minor, wood anemone, odorous starlet and sorrel, flanked by rare species such as aquilegia, dentarie, seal of salomon, grass crociana, martagon lily and variety of unusual orchids in Emilia-Romagna, as the listera cordata and the epipogium aphyllum. In the undergrowth there are also white and red

firs, larches, black pines and Scotch pines. Coniferous woods, like the one surrounding Lake Ninfa, are widespread on the slopes and help to consolidate the landslide and to recover abandoned pastures.

Around 1,700 meters, the woods give way to the vaccines, whose vegetation is composed of low shrubs of blueberry and false blueberry, alpine rose, juniper nano and sporadic specimens of heather baccifera and cranberry. On the moor it is also easy to meet plants usually rooted at higher altitudes, such as the ferruginous rhododendron. On the summits of the reliefs the vaccines are partially replaced by the grasslands, in which are found graminaceous plants among which the brachipodio and blooms of the gentian of Koch, of the genzianella campestre and of the violet with spur. In the most inaccessible places, where the signs of the glaciations remain, it is possible to admire some rare varieties, such as the silver geranium and the fern woodsia, the alpine columbine, the narcissus flowered anemones, the alpine pulsatilla, the alpine star, some survivors and saxifrages and the "vedovella delle Apuane", with its characteristic blue flowers.

The particular microclimatic conditions of the slopes of the highest mountains, such as Cimone and Giovo, finally allow the presence of limited nival valleys, very rare in Emilia-Romagna, where the vegetation is mainly composed of mosses and grasses including the glacial canapicchia, the plantain of the Alps and the rare soldanella pusilla.



The Regional Park is located in the middle of a vast region of protected areas - it borders to the south with the Orecchiella Park, to the west with the Parco del Gigante and to the east with the Parco del Corno alle Scale - in an ideal position to preserve and increase a rich and varied fauna. The territory is in fact populated by some rare species such as the wolf, until recently considered considered endangered, the goshawk, the marten, the golden eagle and the eagle owl. At high altitudes there are numerous marmot colonies, while deer are often seen in the meadows that intertwine the woods. In the areas bordering the Corno alle Scale Park it is possible to observe the agile movement of the mouflon, and recently the porcupine has also appeared. The roe deer, the fallow deer, the marten, the

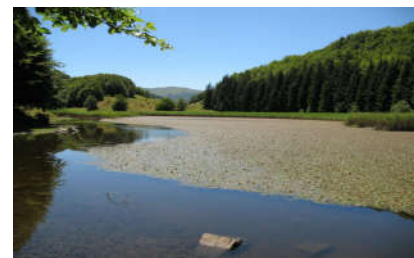
weasel, the wild boar, the badger, the fox, the squirrel, the dormouse and the tiny dormouse are the most common and widespread. In the highest grasslands it is easy to come across the snow vole, a thick-hued rodent that does not hibernate, and under the blanket of snow digs a dense network of tunnels that leap into the eyes with the thaw. There are also numerous birds of prey, among the most common the kestrel, the sparrow-hawk and the buzzard. Among the chestnut trees that stand out in the valley bottom the tawny

owl and the common owl. The environmental wealth of the park allows numerous species of birds to find their ideal habitat: from peaks to them, from merlons to siskins, from larks to finches. In the coniferous forests, the ruler, the flower-head, the bullfinch, and the cruise are common. Among the rocky walls it is easy to see the wallcreeper, with its wonderful pink livery. The nuthatch instead lives in the coppice woods together with a blue tit and a big tit. Fanelli and white-whites fly over the prairies of the ridge, while the solitary sparrow, easily recognizable by the dark blue color, nests between the rocks. In the arid areas near the rocks, instead, the codirossone lives. In the numerous streams it is possible to come across some examples of cinerone heron, predator of small fishes and amphibians, of yellow wagtail and dipper. In the same waters they also house the brown trout, which can reach considerable dimensions, the alpine newt, the frog and the salamandra spotted. Finally, in autumn, it is possible to watch the passage of storks that head to the south, while large flocks of wood pigeons, thrushes and chesens find shelter and refreshment in the wooded expanses.



2.2 Lago di Pratignano

Located between two parallel ridges, Lago Pratignano was born from the phenomenon of doubling of the ridges and is one of the most delicate biotopes of the park, which must be approached with the utmost respect. Next to the transformation into a peat bog, it hosts a marsh vegetation inside which large clusters of sedges can be recognized. Where the peaty mass rises in small isolated cushions appears the *Drosera rotundifolia*, a carnivorous plant, a wreck of the glaciations and very rare in the Apennines.



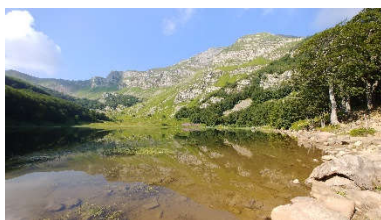
2.2.1. Pilot Area description and criticality

The Pilot Area of Lago di Pratignano consists in a fragile and exposed moorland, with one of the highest biodiversity value in the Northern Apennines, due to its habitats, fauna and flora. Even though the area is classified with the highest preservation rate by the PA authorities (A and A1), the absence of physical barriers exposes the Lago di Pratignano to different types of invasions and damages both from domestic and wild animals and from visitors. The size of the tourists presence is not so high in terms of numbers compared to other neighbourhood areas, but incorrect behaviours and attitudes over the moorlands endangers habitat and biodiversity.



There is a need to monitor and understand the main threats to the moorland habitats, and influence the visitors behaviours and access to the whole area, including the surrounding forests and pastures, preserving its traditional usage as mountain breeding site and its unique landscape.

2.3 Lago Santo



At the foot of the steep north-eastern slope of Monte Giovo, the Lago Santo, with a perimeter of 1,5 kilometers and a depth of about 20 meters, is the largest of the Frignano Park and has glacial origins, like many others in the area. Powered by very cold sub-ranean sources, it is surrounded on the eastern shore by a beech wood undergoing conversion to the high trunk, while on the other side there are a series of shelters near which fishing is allowed.

2.3.1. Pilot Area description and criticality

The Pilot Area of Lago Santo Modenese is subjected to high visitors' numbers, mainly during July and August. The place is seen by visitors mainly for its recreational use, less as a treasure of natural and landscape value, especially out of the main season.

The main problem is related to traffic jams, overcrowded parking spaces and lack of safety along the access roads (both for trekkers and drivers). Moreover the behaviour of visitors which is not always adequate (illegal camping), contributes to a general sense of chaos and disorder. There is a need to try to control these tourist flows and to distribute them a broader period of time (seasonal adjustment), especially during autumns and winters, and to develop some activities in order to enhance a more conscious use of the territory, sustainable and low carbon transportations, and promote the tradition and hospitality in the whole area of Tagliole valley.



3. Strategy

The Ente di Gestione per i Parchi e la Biodiversità "Emilia Centrale" is a Public Authority recently established by Emilia Romagna Region to manage protected areas of the Modena and Reggio Emilia provinces. Despite the institution's recent establishment, the strategy implemented in recent years has not been limited to the construction of the new body, but a broad environmental policy has been set that looks beyond just the safeguard and protection action, a *mission* as fundamental as granted.

In a more advanced vision of the function of the Protected Areas, a policy has been set up to overcome the only logic that has often characterized their perception. The qualitative leap that we tried to set up was to reverse this widespread perception by making protection and environmental protection an opportunity for development for the territory.

The richness and the quality of our natural environments are a factor of attraction for tourism and for all the activities connected to it and the same environmental quality is also synonymous with the quality of the agri-food products that the same territory expresses.

In order to develop these potentials, a work program has been launched focusing mainly on three areas: environment and tourism, environment and sport, environment and quality of typical and natural productions. An important work was then dedicated to improving the forest heritage, the landscape and the environmental infrastructure.

The strategy and the development project envisaged by the institution to be concrete in the next few years are: to make environmental quality, culture and traditions the driving force behind our tourist attraction and the credentials of our agri-food products and our companies.

The work of the next few years will therefore be priority oriented in the following directions:

- a) To consolidate the holistic and systemic vision of Parks and Protected Areas as systems of environmental excellence, heritage of a vast territory;
- b) to protect and safeguard the environment and biodiversity in relation to progressive climate changes;

- c) to take care of and enhance the environment as a fundamental resource for tourism development and attractiveness;
- d) to promote the environment of our Parks and Protected Areas as a gym for sports activities and activities;
- e) build and maintain infrastructure for green tourism and sport in the environment;
- f) to promote environmental quality as a synonym of quality and genuineness of our typical agro-food and gastronomic products;
- g) to enhance natural spaces, forest heritage and ecosystem services;
- h) to integrate the protected areas of the Institution with the MAB-UNESCO area of the Tuscan-Emilian Apennines and its expansion in the Modenese Apennines

With regard to point c), tourism now represents a sector in which the research of the relationship with nature and the environment is constantly growing. The leap in quality that must be accomplished is to build tourism proposals in an integrated way and shared with local operators.

The CEETO project has, in fact, contributed to establishing closer links between local stakeholders and the body by promoting a participatory system for the development of the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan through the implementation of Pilot Actions in the two identified areas of Lake Pratignano and Lake Santo. The main challenge faced by the Authority of the Regional Park Alto Appennino Modenese concerns the possibility that the Sustainable Tourism Action Plan can become the first step towards obtaining the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism promoted by Europarc / Federparchi.

3.1. Future Search for Lago di Pratignano

During On-the-Spot Workshop, in Fanano, held in 10.10.2018, the Future Search activity gathered 13 “visions” of the area, enlightening the positive and negative aspects of human activities in the area (not only linked to tourism).

The outcomes confirmed the main assumptions of the Park: to protect this fragile and unique area, its habitat and landscape, it is necessary to collect informations and objective data on the spot, and on the other side try to influence the behaviours of the visitors, guiding them in the correct approach to the site.

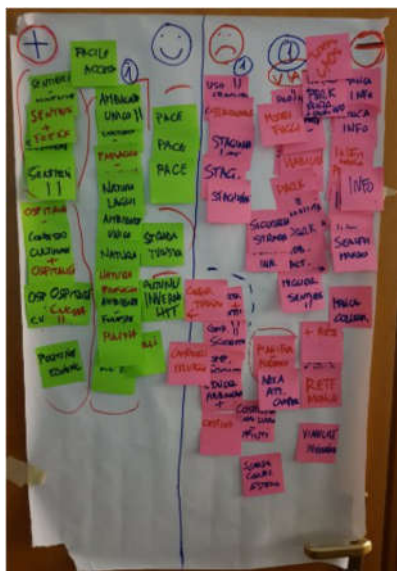
A particular attention has to be addressed on the mountain breeding and farming, a positive aspect - since it represents the local tradition and culture of the mountain populations - but also a problematic human activity for the sensitive habitat of Pratignano, if not well managed and monitored.

The analysis of the positive and negative aspects concerning the pilot area underline these two main aspects, among others like accessibility and strict nature conservation measures and produced a first draft of the strategic themes for the related Action Plan:

1. Conservation of biodiversity and landscape/contrast to habitat deterioration and abandonment of the territory (PRIORITY 1)
2. Information, education and control (PRIORITY 2)
3. Accessibility, fruition and services (PRIORITY 3)
4. Management and valorization of the traditional mountain farming (PRIORITY 4)



3.2. Future Search for Lago Santo



During On-the-Spot Workshop, in Pievepelago, held in 11.10.2018, the Future Search activity gathered 16 “visions” of the area, enlightening the positive and negative aspects of tourism impact on the area. The results of the workshop confirm these statements, in fact the participants have identified the environment - forest, bodies of water, landscape still intact - as the main attraction to be saved: Lago Santo Modenese as a hub, suitable as a point of arrival for those who want to stop and enjoy the landscape and nature and as a starting point towards paths that lead to surrounding mountains and other neighbourhood lakes (Baccio and Turchino). Moreover the traditional hosting and typical products (mainly coming from the

forests) has to be promoted and preserved, as many stakeholders stated. Among the negative aspects, accessibility by car and the related congestion of roads and parking is the most cited, followed by the safety problems for walkers and by the “disrespectful” use of the area by tourists.

The analysis of the positive and negative aspects, concerning the pilot area, with the participants, produced a first draft of the strategic themes for the related Action Plan:

1. Seasonal adjustment of the tourism offer (PRIORITY 1)
2. Information, education and control (PRIORITY 2)
3. Accessibility, mobility and trekking paths (PRIORITY 3)
4. Conservation, protection and monitoring of the environment and landscape (PRIORITY 4)
5. Hospitality, tradition and local typical productions (PRIORITY 5)



4. Action Plan

During the second part of the On-the_Spot Workshop the Park management presented the draft proposal of its pilot action related to the specific pilot area to be implemented within the CEETO project. After this presentation, the participants had been asked to give their contribution to integrate the proposal of the Park and/or drafting news ideas, taking inspiration by the drafted strategic themes emerged in the Future Search activity.

This part of the workshop (named Ideas Factory - Session 4 of the CBW), allowed the Park management to collect potential solutions, answers and proposals to common problems/opportunities in the management of the pilot area tourism pressure.

The combination of the most “financed” and strategic action proposals represents the CEETO pilot action for each pilot area.

The two Action Plan for each area, detailed below, are only the first of others that the protected area will do in the next few years to reach the objectives set out in the previously indicated strategy (par. 3 - Startegy).

4.1 Pilot Action “Pratignano ce n’è uno solo”

In the following table the synthesis of the Action Plan for the Lago di Pratignano named “Pratignano ce n’è uno”:

Title	PRATIGNANO CE NE’ UNO
Proponent	Ente per i Parchi e la Biodiversità Emilia Centrale
Partners	Comune di Fanano, ASBUC Frazioni di Serrazzone, Ospitale, Fellicarolo e Canevare, GGEV Modena, CAI Modena, gestori rifugi
Target	Valorize Lake Pratignano and the surrounding areas trying to check the state of health of the most precious peat bog in the Park, informing inhabitants and tourists of its great naturalistic importance.



<p>Short description</p>	<p>The actions to be implemented are possible through the collaboration of ASBUC, owner of the areas concerned and the competent body to authorize its execution, and the City Hall of Fanano:</p> <p>Installation of the monitoring system based on an VCA - Video Content Analysis software in zone "A" (integral protection zone coinciding with the water mirror), through at least a couple of cameras placed on trees and managed by a counting program able to identify animal shapes or human only in case of intrusion into the lake surface; in the case of wildanimals we would try to identify the species (wild boar, roe deer, horses, sheep, etc.) while in the case of human beings the individual persons would not be identified but only the outlines.</p> <p>The aim is to acquire the most data that document the main threat factors for the Lake, in support of possible defensive actions that currently would not be feasible (eg numerical limitation of boars in the protection zone).</p> <p>To guarantee the power supply and the data transmission of the equipment, a connection would be made to underground cables (small excavations immediately covered with grass turf recovery) up to the small technical room (3 sqm), initially located inside a temporary prefabricated structure, subsequently, on the basis of funds obtained from the Rural Development Program - RDP Mis. 8.5, obtained from the recovery of a former stable building located near the lake and currently in a state of neglect.</p> <p>At the same time, it's necessary that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the control activity by official supervisory bodies (park guards) and volunteers (GGEV) will have to be strengthened - the communication and education Program for a correct use of the area will be defined involving local stakeholders
<p>Timetable</p>	<p>January - April 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Installation of the monitoring system based on an VCA - Video Content Analysis software in zone "A" (integral protection zone) <p>April - September 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of access monitoring - Intensification security checks performed by security guards and volunteers <p>January - May 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of the communication and education Program for a correct use of the area involving local stakeholders
<p>Results</p>	<p>April - September 2019: Implementation of access monitoring with the aim of implementing an increase in responsible and aware use of the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No incursions by wildlife (wild boar, roe deer, horses, sheep, etc.) by the detection system - No. of minutes following the control activity by official monitoring bodies (park guard, forest carabinieri, municipal police officers) and volunteers (GGEV).



4.2 Pilot Action “Liberiamo il lago”

In the following table the synthesis of the Action Plan for the Lago Santo named “Liberiamo il lago”:

Title	LIBERIAMO IL LAGO SANTO
Proponent	Ente per i Parchi e la Biodiversità Emilia Centrale
Partners	Comune di Pievepelago, ASBUC Barga, gestori rifugi, GGEV Modena, CAI Modena...
Targets	To better manage the access of motor vehicles and tourists in the Lake Santo area and increase the rate of correct and aware use of the area.



Short description	<p>Within the strategic themes of information, education and control:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhancement of the Infopoint, especially with regard to historical, cultural and traditional issues - Creation of mushroom picking packages affiliated with the Park Authority and the shelters around the lake to activate services and tourist offers - Re-launch of the area through the implementation of innovative information and promotion tools (eg social, ..); - The creation of themed events to re-launch the tourist offer during all seasons; <p>Within the strategic themes of accessibility, mobility and trekking paths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organization of a shuttle service from Tagliole on weekends of maximum tourist influx (July and August) - Creation of a free e-bike rental point in Tagliole - Restoring and securing the path that connects Tagliole to the Santo Lake - Activation of a shuttle service to connect with the Val di Luce to allow the closure of a hiking ring - Construction of a helipad for helicopter assistance in collaboration with the local authorities and local authorities - Possibility to create an area equipped for camping in agreement with the facilities at the lake and in collaboration with the subjects and local administrations territorially competent - Issue of a speed limit ordinance during the summer months to facilitate safe access to the lake by alternative means to those powered by, for example. Bikes
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<p>Timetable</p>	<p>February - May 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of a shuttle service from Tagliole on weekends during the summertime, maximum tourist influx - definition of a shuttle service for the connection with the Val di Luce during the summertime, maximum tourist inflow - definition of an e-bike rental point during the summertime, maximum tourist inflow - restoration and tiling of a trail with CAI trail from Tagliole to Lago Santo <p>July - August 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of the shuttle service from the town of Tagliole and for the connection with the Val di Luce during the weekends of July and August - Implementation of e-bike rental service - Issuing a speed limit ordinance during the summer months to facilitate safe access to the lake with alternative means to those powered by, for example. Bikes <p>February - November 2019:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identification of the area and design of a helipad for strengthening and consolidating accessibility and safety in favor of refugees managers and users of the area - Identification of the area equipped for camping
<p>Results</p>	<p>July - August 2019 - : Implementation of access monitoring with the aim of reducing motor vehicles in the upper Tagliole valley and implementing an increase in responsible and aware use of the area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - n. tourists / days who use the Minibus service - n. motor vehicles inflow in the Lago car park (parking ticket August 2019 vs parking ticket August 2018/2017) - increase in receptivity in the Tagliole facilities (number of tourists in Tagliole through a questionnaire compilation or feedback from the on-site bar / reception facilities) - n. rented e-bike / day - n. tourists who have traveled on foot using ad hoc questionnaires - km of routes tracked and tabulated <p>July - September 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - construction of a helipad - construction of an area equipped for camping in agreement with the facilities at the lake

