

SLOVAK NATIONAL PARK ENDANGERED BY DEVELOPERS?



New zonation of the High Tatra Mountains should be implemented this summer. Conservationists are afraid it will harm the national park.

Slovak conservationists urge the Slovak Ministry of Environment to reconsider the intended change in the zonation in High Tatra Mountains. According to the conservationists, the project will result in the destruction of High Tatra.

According to the leader of the opponents, Juraj Lukac "almost two thousand hectares of forests in the Tatra National Park are planned for clear-cutting". A forester, Robert Oruzinsky, points out that the new zonation ignores newest scientific discoveries about High Tatra. He claims that **the protection of nature act is intentionally misinterpreted so that the park could be parceled out for the use of developers of ski slopes and related infrastructure**. The new construction would take place in an area that is currently still relatively untouched.

According to Czech daily Pravo, the new zonation should take effect in June 2010. Problems are expected to emerge during the first phase when the park should negotiate with private land owners who own some 55 per cent of the land in the disputed area. The whole park occupies an area of ca. 75 thousand hectares.

According to the proponents of the project the changes should have a positive impact on the tourism industry. The park should be divided into several zones defining where further development of tourism services is allowed or not. Thus the ministry of environment denies any accusation that the new zonation would allow developers to turn the park into a "concrete paradise".

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