

More and more foreigners visit the canyon

The Cijevna Canyon becomes more and more interesting for foreign visitors. Therefore, more and more visitors from France, Germany, Czech Republic and Russia are attracted by the beauties of the Cijevna River. It becomes more interesting for foreigners to take the kayak down the river and discover the hidden beaches of this river. The river is still a clean one, especially upstream from Trgaja. The lovers of rafting, canoeing, kayaking, alpinism and fishing find this canyon a place with a multitude of opportunities. Its banks and beaches are populated with people from Podgorica during July and August. During the last several summers, people from Podgorica have been camping along the riverbanks. When the town becomes scorching hot, the temperature on the river is much lower, sometimes even 10 degrees lower during the night.

Without the Cijevna River, there will be no life here

Written by: Boban Novović

For two whole days, the water from the Cijevna River did not reach Podgorica. The local people who water their agricultural land plots with the water from the river told us that their water hoses went dry while the engines pumping the water went silent. No one from the village of Dinoša likes when the river goes dry. Fortunately, after two days, the water started running again. Probably, because of the rainfall in the mountains. The people from Milješ and other neighbouring villages downstream from Dinoša water their agricultural land plots using the water from the river.

Everything depends on this river. It is the artery of this very area, and all of us who were born on the banks of this river are closely connected to it, says Adem Kajošaj, a local from the neighbouring village. There are 200 households in the village of Dinoša, which means that there are 1,000 potential voters because. This is very important because this is one of the most important figures in each of the populated areas in Montenegro. This means that there are 700 of those who regularly cast their votes during elections. The local elementary school "The 29th of November" has a student population of 200. People who originate from this village regularly return to their households. Those who work and live in Podgorica do that every day. They never forget about their origins. They all agree that the Cijevna River is making this village in the vicinity of Podgorica alive and thriving.

The news that the state of Albania will be building 14 hydroelectric power plants on this river was accepted with disbelief in this village. It is enough not to have the water from the river for two days to end up having a problem and headache for everyone in the village because they all water their gardens and agricultural plots using the water. Even their livestock depends on it.

- I have heard that Albania will be building hydroelectric power plants. I will have to go to Tamara and see about it tomorrow. I have to find out what is going on the very site. We all believe that a kind of agreement is possible because the Cijevna River means life for this valley. Everything depends on it, says Kajošaj.

When there is no water in the river, the locals use water wells, but in order to build one, it takes up to 7,000 euros. Locals fear that if the river goes dry, their wells may go dry as well.

Just several kilometres upstream, near the place called Dobrčin, there is plenty of water in the riverbed. The locals from this village have heard themselves that neighbouring Albania will be building mini-hydroelectric power plants, but they believe that making the river dry is impossible

Đeljoš Ljuljđuraj has 200 kiwi plants and picks up around 10 tons of this exotic fruit every year. He has been selling it to the very same person for the past 20 years. At least he used to, says this 80-year-old farmer.

- Like everyone in this area. I have water pipes and pump the water from the river to water my kiwi plantation. River means everything to us, to irrigate our plots, to fish. I strongly believe that the state of Montenegro must reach an agreement with neighbouring Albania in order to preserve this river. Not to turn it into an empty canyon. When several years ago, thanks to the state aid, locals built a new

bridge across this river, were helped by people from Tamara. The same issues and problems bother us all. The river connects us, says Đeljošaj.

The village of Dobrčin is known for the purest homemade honey and the apple fruits weighing half of kilogramme. People who live there are working hard living on the banks of the Cijevna River. Mr Đeljošaj's cousin, Tomo, sometimes goes fishing. He claims that fish is not plentiful as it used to be.

The problem does not lie in the activity of recreational sport fishermen. The problem are those who use electricity and kill the fish by using electric power generators. The village of Dobrčin has a population of only 36 who live in eight households. They all work in agriculture and fruit production.

While travelling from the village of Dinoša towards the military barracks close to the state border which are not used anymore, you go down the narrow asphalt road full with holes and curves. At the same time, you will come across a great deal of trucks filled with sand. The tons of freshly excavated sand can be found deposited next to this very road. There is only one registered entrepreneur working in this field and paying tax to the state at the village of Dinoša. The problem is that there are many more of those who excavate out the sand without permission, change the course of the river and destroy the fish fund.

A heaven for fly-fishing

Adem Ljuljanaj is one of the founders of the non-governmental organization Trofta which gathers fisherman and the Cijevna River. He is a passionate fisherman himself. Fly-fishing has been his long-standing passion. He says that this river is a heaven for this kind of fishing.

- Currently, there is a ban on fishing in the area starting from the old barracks all the way to the state border because this is a unique place where the fish fund is being renewed. There are many sport fishermen who love this river and who do everything to protect it. However, there are people who do the completely. You can see a number of cafes and restaurants offering the fish from this river... The sport fishermen did not sell that fish to them. Those who use electric power generators or dynamite sell that fish. The Cijevna River is known for inviting and gathering sport fishermen, especially during spring months, says Kajošaj.

Locals strengthen the dam using the sheep wool thread

The Cijevna River was known for an abundance of active water mills. Today, only dilapidated walls speak of their existence. Two temporary dams were built so that the mills could get the necessary water. One was built just below the village of Dobrčin, while the other one was built near the so-called Niagara waterfalls. The one below the village of Dobrčin is long gone, the one above the waterfall can be seen during these dry days when the lower stream of the Cijevna River goes dry. A legend says that this dam was built 150 years ago and was torn down by the force of the river two times. An old woman advised the locals to put a thread of thick sheep wool in it to bind the pebbles and rocks used to build the dam. Once the constructor took her advice, the dam managed to last for more than 150 years.