**9th international Conference on MMV in recreational and protected areas**

**Special session: “***Regional parks and territorial organizations for sustainable development (TOSD)”*

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Outdoor recreation and nature based tourism do not always take place in remote places, National Parks or Nature reserves. Recreational activities are also widespread in residential and productive (rural) areas. In many countries, specific organizations are in charge of the sustainable socio-economic development of such large multifunctional territories. We will refer to these collectively as “regional parks”. One of the greatest challenges in this field is to find a balance between potentially conflicting functions and activities, e.g. leisure practices and protection of natural and cultural heritage, ensuring optimum contribution of leisure and tourism to local development, and educating the public (both visitors and those practicing leisure activities).

One good example of this is the French system of “regional nature parks” (RNP). These parks are located in areas of special interest in terms of natural heritage and/or landscape value. RNPs are created through is a participative process at local. The remit of these parks covers a number of issues, including improving sustainable development. Their mode of action is not based on coercion, but on support. This method introduces and fosters social and environmental innovation. RNP’s are often also tourist destinations. The dedicated organization in charge of RNP has hybrid governance at both regional and local level, and a a team of technical professionals to implement its program of action. They are essentially engaged in what may be referred to as “territorial sustainable development” (Marsat 2015).

For this special session, we invite both researchers and practitioners to submit papers in line with the theme of regional parks and local organizations supporting sustainable development. Presentations should ideally include original research, case studies (monographs), thematic studies, or international/regional comparisons.

A wide range of questions may be addressed, such as: what are the specific characters of such territorial management? How do they act for collective action? How do they balance opposite objectives and interact with other land users? What type of public policies do they support? …

**Selected references**

Marsat, J.-B. (2015). Strategic management of tourism destinations within territories : key players and the example of Parcs Naturels Régionaux (Regional Natural Parks). Tourism, Recreation and Regional Development : Perspectives from France and Abroad. J.-C. Dissart, J. Dehez and J.-B. Marsat, Ashgate**:** pp. 77-92.