



Good Practice Story Title: "300 Anos de História: Fazendas que Moldaram os Campos da Serra Catarinense"

Destination: Bom Jardim da Serra - SC

Country:Brasil

Submitting Organization: Prefeitura de Bom Jardim da Serra

Category:

- Destination Management
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing



Destination description:

Bom Jardim da Serra is the gateway to Serra Catarinense for those who choose to travel through the spectacular Serra do Rio do Rastro, with its winding curves and unique landscape. The municipality is known as the Capital of Waters due to the large number of rivers, waterfalls, and streams that originate and flow throughout its territory. Its altitude relative to sea level gives Bom Jardim da Serra one of the most beautiful topographies in the state, reaching 1,827 meters at its highest points. Due to this spectacular geography, the municipality houses some of the most beautiful canyons in Brazil, offering visitors a breathtaking view. The cold climate provides not only snow but also spectacular landscapes in the preserved highlands and integration with São Joaquim National Park. It is a unique setting that invites tourists, amidst centuries-old farms, to forget the routine of the big city, reconnect with nature, and embark on a journey to the past with touches of modernity and comfort. Visitors can enjoy charming places to read a good book in the silence of the countryside, take a walk through apple orchards, or listen to the birds in the araucaria forest, which is the third largest and most preserved in the world, and even take a refreshing waterfall bath. In the harsh winter, there are special places to be with friends around a fireplace, share laughter, and delight in a good glass of altitude wine produced in the region.

Summary of Good Practice Story:

The centuries-old farms in Serra Catarinense preserve an unparalleled natural and cultural wealth. For over 300 years, dozens of farms have created conditions for preserving regional history, the highland grassland biome, and the araucaria forests. The gastronomy has also been preserved, including the traditions of churrasco (barbecue), entrevero de pinhão (a dish made with pine nuts), and the famous chimarrão (bitter mate), a tradition that brings families together around the fig trees on cold winter days.





Issues faced:

The farms in the region have faced various economic cycles, notably the extraction of araucarias in the 1940s. Despite preserving their forests, this resulted in a significant reduction in the population and the wealth of the territory. The geography presents logistical challenges, with inadequate infrastructure such as roads, communication, and electricity, hindering the organic development of the properties. This scenario led to rural exodus and decreased municipal revenue, as well as a reduction in natural attractions. The demarcation of the National Park brought significant challenges, including the acceptance of the park's establishment, which affected traditional communities like the 9 Santa Bárbara farms, which have existed for over 300 years. The need to adapt economic activities and develop sustainable tourism remains a major challenge, as does community acceptance of the park. The harsh winter, with negative temperatures, requires adaptability of productive crops and resilience of families. The growth of tourism in Serra Catarinense has led to real estate speculation, necessitating changes in legislation and special attention to traditional families, who are often marginalized in these processes. This increases vulnerabilities in the territory and heightens environmental crimes and irregular land use.

Solution:

The solution to the challenges faced by the farms in the region has been to focus on tourism as a new source of income, complementing other economic activities to ensure family succession. Environmental legislation helps preserve the regional fauna, flora, and history, especially by protecting the araucarias, which maintain the landscape, preserve water sources, and sustain food production like pinhão (pine nuts). The demarcation of the national park, revision of management plans, and initiatives to bring the community closer to the park have been crucial. The development of tourist activities offers economic sustainability, with the monitoring of livestock and soil management practices. Regional integration, the creation of tourist itineraries, trade training, and market access have been actions aimed at seeking sustainable solutions, balancing environmental preservation and the permanence of families in the region, with tourism as the main pillar.



Methods, Steps, and Tools applied:

Various tools have been applied for the development of responsible tourism, but perhaps the most important highlight is the dialogue between the public authorities and the community, which was crucial for the success of this development. Here are some initiatives:

- Development of environmental legislation: creation of specific norms and regulations to protect the local environment and the National Park Management Plan;
- Creation of integration routes and itineraries: points of interest were identified, and itineraries were developed to offer visitors an enriching experience, highlighting natural beauties, cultural and historical heritage, including ecological trails, guided tours, and visits to the local community. These itineraries were created through a preservation movement involving public authorities, the third sector, and the community;
- Support and integration of governance and tourism instances, which contributed to the formulation of public policies and the implementation of joint strategies for the sustainable development of tourism;
- Introduction of tourism as a school subject, promoting the appreciation and preservation of tourism resources from an early age;
- Project Serra Linda Serra Limpa: developed in a public-private partnership with the aim of raising awareness among municipal school students about the historical and natural importance of the Serra do Rio do Rastro. At the end of the lectures, each student received an ecological cup, promoting the reduction of disposable cup use, and were invited to become protectors of the Serra, an invaluable heritage of our city;
- Sustainable Serra Catarinense Seal Program: aims to promote sustainable practices among tourism companies in Serra Catarinense. In 2023, the program involved 83 companies that achieved the Green Seal, encouraging the implementation of sustainability actions, experience exchanges such as participation in business missions, among others.





Achievements and Results:

Over the past 20 years, tourism in Bom Jardim da Serra has been driven by nature and rural tourism. Local properties have adapted to attract environmentally conscious visitors interested in regional peculiarities. The region preserves native forests, including araucarias, numerous waterfalls, and extensive trails for hiking and horseback riding. Local guides and operators promote these attractions, generating income and employment. With the largest preserved Atlantic Forest reserve in the world and the third-largest araucaria forest, 18.4% of Bom Jardim da Serra's territory is within São Joaquim National Park. Within the park, more than 20 farms and families continue to live and preserve their areas, using them sustainably through management plans. Fazenda Rincão da Palha, a historic property that originated from the division of Fazenda do Socorro, is a significant example of preservation. In the family for almost 300 years, the farm is managed by sixth and seventh-generation descendants and operates in cattle farming, sheep farming, apple production, vegetable gardens for self-consumption, and rural tourism. These activities help preserve the fauna, flora, and landscapes of the Campos de Cima da Serra, promoting engagement in environmental preservation.

It is evident that younger generations are staying in the town. The visitor flow averages 250 to 400 visitors per month, which increases the credibility of farmers to continue investing in responsible and sustainable tourism.

Lessons Learned and Advice:

The community and farm owners should embrace sustainable tourism as an activity that not only generates income but also promotes environmental and cultural preservation. Integrating tourism with livestock and agriculture can ensure the new generations remain on the farms. It is crucial to value and share the local history and heritage, transforming them into tools for education and environmental preservation. Opening farm gates to visitors not only educates and raises awareness among tourists but also reinforces the community's role as guardians of local biodiversity and culture. By highlighting sustainable practices and historical productive cycles, the community can avoid repeating past mistakes and maximize benefits.



Reconhecimento e Referências Adicionais

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