

2.2.2. Rafting along “the Dunajec Ravine”⁶

In the immediate neighbourhood of the Pieniny National Park there is a one of the biggest tourist attractions not only in the voivodship, but also in Poland and Europe.

The rafting along the Dunajec ravine was available already in the first half of the 19th century. The year 1862 is assumed as the beginning of the tourist rafting, when Józef Szalay, the owner of Szczawnica, organized a big rafting. In 1935 there were more than 10 thousand participants in rafting and 20 thousand in 1920. Most often the rafting started in Czorsztyn or in Sromowce Niżne (near Czerwony Klasztor). The growing interest in rafting in recent years before the Second World War caused the regulation of rafting rules. In 1934 Polish Association of the Pieniny Rafts-men on the Dunajec River was created. It introduced 3-years obligatory professional trainings ending with rafts-man exam. The beginning of the rafting was set near the bridge beneath the castle in Niedzica or from Czerwony Klasztor to Szczawnica Niżna. In 1959 a new marina was built in Sromowce Niżne (it become an intermediate marina), and in 1960 a modern marina was built beneath the castle in Niedzica. Building of the dam in Niedzica has shortened the rafting route. In 1975 a new rafting marina was built in Sromowce Wyżne Kąty and the station near Czerwony Klasztor was closed.

Now, the rafting season lasts from 1 April till 31 October on route from Sromowce Wyżne Kąty to Szczawnica Niżna (app. 18 km, the time of the rafting route: app. 2 hours 15 min) or to Krościenko (app. 23 km, the time of the rafting route: app. 2 hours 45 min). Each raft is designated for 10 persons and served by two rafts-men. On the length of just 2.5 km in the straight line, the Dunajec river bends creating 7 sharp turns of the total length of 9 km.

TABLE VI. PARTICIPANTS OF RAFTING ALONG “THE DUNAJEC RAVINE”

Year	Participants of rafting	Year	Participants of rafting
1976	262619	1992	119307
1977	249130	1993	140819
1978	227229	1994	170890
1979	246824	1995	206385
1980	232638	1996	200143
1981	237606	1997	193938
1982	145855	1998	252548
1983	200433	1999	261075
1984	185366	2000	240492
1985	176473	2001	187545
1986	225526	2002	234617
1987	208201	2003	233203
1988	208807	2004	217255
1989	142899	2005	192307
1990	88786	2006	199314
1991	120821	2007	227646

S o u r c e: data of the Polish Association of Pieniny Rafts-men on the Dunajec river in Sromowce Niżne.

⁶ Compiled on the basis of: Kazimierz Zarzycki, Roman Marcinek, Sławomir Wróbel, “Pieniny National Park”, editorial series: Meetings with nature, “Multico” Press, Warsaw 2003; Józef Nyka, Pieniny. The Guidebook (edition IV), Trawers Press, Warsaw 1995; Polish Association of Pieniny Rafts-men official website <http://www.flisacy.com.pl/>