



Loïc Bidault
Director
Parc naturel régional Loire-Anjou-Touraine
Bureaux de Parc
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06 November 2014

Dear Mr Bidault,

**Parc naturel régional Loire-Anjou-Touraine
Award of European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas**

Following the official verification in your protected area of the work under the European Charter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas, I am pleased to inform you that the Evaluation Committee, at its recent meeting, examined carefully the thorough report which the appointed verifier prepared as a result of his visit to the area.

Decision and recommendations:

It was unanimously agreed to award the Charter certificate to Parc naturel régional Loire-Anjou-Touraine for a five-year period from 2014 to 2019.

The Evaluation Committee congratulates the Park on presenting high-quality application documents, demonstrating a strong synthesis of park and partners. The Committee especially noted the active and well-trained network of park partners who were fully involved in park activities. Their commitment to sign a five-year agreement, and act as representatives and ambassadors for the Park, passing on their knowledge of it to visitors was particularly impressive.

In order for the Park to reach their goals successfully over the next five years, the Committee stresses the need to strengthen the Forum, setting out its structure and frequency, defining more precisely its aims, and making them known to members.

While the Committee noted that public tourism authorities and decision-makers do participate, the work at forum level needs to continue, and more work needs to be done to promote the profile of the protected area beyond the immediate locality. Together, the forum members should strive to develop a distinct identity for the Charter area within a region already well known and competing for visitors.

The Evaluation Committee also felt that a European level of networking was lacking, and that most actions were quite localised. The Committee encourages the Park to align the strategy and action plan more clearly to the European Charter process, distinguishing that from the work of the *Charte du Parc*. The *Charter du Parc* focuses on the detailed specificities of protected area management, while the Charter network has wider implications and offers at an EU level.

The Committee also felt that addressing these issues could be better tackled through a centralised and co-ordinated full-time Charter post, rather than the various part-time roles assigned to the work



at present. That post could also help develop the anticipated work on Charter Part II, having first overseen establishment of the Charter basics.

We draw your attention to the other recommendations the verifier makes in his report which the Committee endorses.

The next five years

As you know, the award recognises an on-going process of sustainable tourism development in co-operation with a wide range of local partners and stakeholders. It is awarded for an initial period of five years.

Because the award is part of that on-going process, the Evaluation Committee particularly emphasises the need for networking with other protected areas over the next few years. This will be one of the aspects which verifiers evaluate at the time of the re-evaluation in 2019.

The Committee also strongly recommends the following:

- Please make sure that all the actions in the strategy and action plan are monitored on an annual basis.
- You need to ensure that the necessary funds for the re-evaluation in five years are included in your budget plans well before 2019, should you wish to continue as a Charter area.
- Towards the end of the current five-year period you will need to check that all the recommendations contained in the evaluation report have been considered and acted upon.

The Charter award ceremony when the Charter certificates will be handed over is scheduled to take place on 11th December 2014 in Brussels (BE). You are especially invited to be present to receive your award. The day will include a Charter networking event culminating in the awards.

Due to the security requirements of the Parliament, registration for the Charter awards will be essential.

For the moment - **Save the Date!** We will send you specific details of how to register very soon. We look forward to celebrate this achievement with you on 11th December in Brussels.

We should like to congratulate you once again on being awarded the Charter and hope that you will continue to work closely with other Charter areas.

With all good wishes for every success in your future activities,

Yours sincerely,

Ignace Schops
President
EUROPARC Federation