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Trails as a Mean of Empowerment of the Landscape in Developing Countries

RAFAEL ARTURO MUÑOZ-MÁRQUEZ TRUJILLO¹, ITZEL MENDOZA OLMOS²

¹*Postgraduate College in Agricultural Sciences, Córdoba Campus, Landscape Architecture Programme, Mexico*

²*Postgraduate College in Agricultural Sciences, Córdoba Campus, Landscape Architecture Programme, Mexico*

Abstract

A trail is a way to travel from one point to another in a territory. Trails can be planned or are just a result of customary use of movement needs. Within a planned strategy, there are several kinds of trails according to the way they are used: by foot, diving, air, via ferrata, each of which is used according to the potential of the site. As a result, trails are an adequate mean to educate society, especially urban population, about the environment and the importance of its preservation (natural and cultural values). This paper illustrates a methodology to design and construct trails in developing countries like Mexico, where there is a real need in educating society in these issues. Within the landscape, and especially the rural ones, for their appraisal and preservation, proper development of trails is a way to create advantages and more opportunities for rural people to additional ways of getting profits and at the same time protect the environment. Rural development can be helped by these opportunities, when linked to actions related to ecotourism and rural tourism. Trails and their proper implementation can help in such important aspects. There are several empirical approaches to build trails, but there are not many examples based on scientific and technical frameworks for developing countries. Mexico, similar to other countries, is experiencing landscape fragmentation and loss of natural ecosystems and environmental quality. This situation requires that rural people are adequately considered to get profits and to preserve their environment in the long term, by the proper use of trails. This paper presents the study case of the small town Coscomatepec in Veracruz State in the Gulf of Mexico.

Keywords: Developing countries, landscape, Mexico, rural development, tourism, trails