
Almatourism

Journal of Tourism, Culture and Territorial Development

A Practice of Active Citizenship: the Contribution of CAI Trekkers to the Knowledge of Architectural Heritage Along the Trails

Ruggeri, V.*
Club Alpino Italiano (Italy)

The CAI: Are we doing useless and dangerous mountains activities?

Maybe, but our social base has grown largely thanks to the development of hiking practices during the last 20 years, when urban inhabitants have started feeling the need of spending their free time in a healthy and more stimulating environment.

In Italy we are 320.000, in Emilia-Romagna 17.000.

Away from the usual driveways, there are many natural emergencies in our territory, and more interestingly a history that left us an invaluable heritage.

“Walking to know, knowing to preserve” has been the motto of our hikers for a long time.

And for a long time now our guides have been pointing out to their groups the environment surrounding them, signaling the natural emergencies and the marks left by men that, during the centuries, have lived in or have transited through the mountains. In this regard it is important to mention the group from national CAI that has worked on this subject: *“The signs of man on the high lands”*

Therefore, there were already present the bases for a committed involvement of our members in the area of awareness and preservation of historical and cultural heritage found on hiking trails.

When the Secretariat MiBACT, with great sensitivity, contacted the CAI to propose a collaboration on the subject our answer was enthusiastically positive.

Also, the experience of discovering the treasures well guarded in the mountain and inland areas stimulates the desire and the necessity to play an active role in the consciousness dissemination and in the protection of what is discovered.

First, we have gathered a small group of members particularly active and sensitive that, after a meeting with the Secretariat, have learned the method to enter the web

* E-mail address: presidente@caiemiliaromagna.org

gis and signal what they found.

Then, the members of this group became apostles and started a training process for other members that spread quickly, until we formed a coordination group for the activities of detection and reporting.

Meanwhile, on May 2017 CAI also formalized the collaboration with the Secretariat through a protocol agreement to define the respective roles.

Nowadays the CAI is working to cover uniformly the regional territory. This activity requires a basis of active and sensitive CAI members willing to undertake additional tasks. To this day, we have provided more than 2.600 reports and 4.500 pictures.

Our trails are never invented and made up ex novo but they always retrace pre-existing tracks. Through this activity we have also re-discovered nature and the origin of pre-existing tracks: the historical and architectural evidences that we report confirm that our hiking follows the steps of ancient paths and connection routes between valleys and villages of the mountains.

In other words, paths and mule tracks are real historical assets and are worth protecting.