

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVATION OF AMBIENT CONNECTED TO THE TOURISM PHENOMENON GENERATED BY THE EXPLORATION OF HOT WATERS: THE CASE OF THE CIA THERMAS OF THE RIO QUENTE

Caroline Tristão de Alencar Magalhães
Instituto de Geografia da Universidade Federal de Uberlândia
carol@geo.ufu.br

The tourist complex Pousada do Rio Quente located at Mountain range of Caldas at Rio Quente city at 17° 46'30'' south latitude e 48° 44'52'' west Greenwich, is composed of hydrothermal park called Hot Park and a net of hotels with hot water swimming pools known as: Tourist Hotel (1), Pousada Hotel (2), Pousada do Rio Quente Chalés (4), Recanto das Águas quentes (6), Rio Quente Suite & Flats(5)and Hot Park (3).



Illustrative map of the tourist complex. Adapted from: www.viverpousada.com.br

The thermal water sources that appear in the neighborhoods of the region of Rio Quente had been discovered in 1722 by Bartolomeu Bueno da Silva who initially explored the region searching for gold precious rocks. In 1916 Dr. Ciro Palmerston Guimarães resident in then the city of Caldas Novas acquires 49 alqueires of land where was the riverbed or Rio Quente in Caldas Velha located at 27 kilometers of Caldas Novas. In 1994 the Pousada do

Rio Quente Resorts acquires eighteen habitations units and a room of the Condominium Pousada do Rio Quente, organized under the form of Apart-Hotel. In 1996 due to demand of tourists the airport of Caldas Novas is created. In 1997 an aquatic park with 8.500m² was inaugurated being 4000 m² composed of swimming pools with natural hot water and the Lazy River. In 1999 the Largo da Ponte is inaugurated which offers new attractions for the tourists as old-time photos, cafeteria, ecological diving, kiosk for credits selling, consisting yet a division for the Parque das Fontes, whose access is allowed only for them houses of the tourist complex, and the Hot Park that is opened the public in general. In January of 2000 the procedures for implantation of the System of Ambient Management based on NBR ISO 14001 are determined, in this same time the dependences of the Hot Park are extended and in July of the same year the First Week of the Environment in the Pousada do Rio quente with the participation of about 3000 people was promoted. In July is inaugurated the Rio Quente Suíte and Flat, organized in the format of Apart-Hotel. In May of 2001 Second Week of the Environment was made and counted with the participation of more than 4000 people. In July of 2001 there was accomplished the initial auditorship for BVQI in agreement with NBR ISO 14001 and also another block of the Suite & Flat Hotels were inaugurated.



Turistic complex of the Pousada do Rio Quente vision of the enterprise

The phenomenon of hot waters per many years was explained as being consequence of the activities of a volcano. According to studios of the time, this would be the current of circular Mountains of Caldas due to form that the same one presents to if to more observe to air photographs and images of satellite of region.

A lack of deepened studies allied with the marketing interests made this mistaken information be widely divulged, and until the present time many people believe that the hot

waters are result of volcanic activities in a remote past. In the period of the construction of the hydroelectric plant of Furnas more rigorous studies of the region was made and they had demystified the existence of a volcano, attributing the circular form of the Mountain range of Caldas to a probable collision of a meteorite.

The hot waters in the reality are explained by the infiltration of waters of rains in breakings of the rocks that compose the subsoil of the region, as this infiltrates it suffers a process of gradual heating due to proper thermal conductivity of these rocks arriving at the temperature of 60°C and at 1200m of depth, after warm these climbs up until the surface joining the cold water sheets and appearing as thermal sources in the dependences of the Pousada do Rio Quente with an average temperature of 37.5°C. The hydric system of the Ribeirão Água Quente possess about 3.5 km of extension in the confluence of the Rio Bagre extending until 1km of the left edge of the Rio Piracanjuba that is one of the tributaries of the Rio Paranaíba. This is born in the plateau of the Mountain range of Caldas being the course of water intermittent in the hillsides of the Mountain range having contact with a small cold water spring for a stretch of 2km in a rocky stream bed with rapids and waterfalls.

The construction of this enterprise, that attracts each time a larger number of tourist, finished for transforming the region of its neighborhoods as, for example, the quarters next to it's dependences where we can find the Rio Quente Suite & Flat Hotels. This characterizes for being a practically commercial quarter being almost inexistent the presence of residences, on the other hand the number of on constructions the hotels has increased considerably in the last few years.

Aiming to increase the comfort and the quality of the offered lodging the Pousada do Rio Quente ends up assuming a series of costs of urban equipment maintenance that would have to be the position of the municipal public power as, for example, the fix of damaged pavement in the neighborhoods of its net of hotels with the purpose to prevent locomotion upheavals and to improve the landscape.



Pavement of a street being arranged by Pousasda do Rio Quente

The significant increase of tourists who visit the region and consequent magnifyings of the dependences of this tourist complex made with that the administration took measured actions in a preventive and corrective way to preserve the environment, being these clearly perceived in all the dependences of the Resorts, through the constant reminders of simple habits as of not urinate in the thermal swimming pools, as well as the construction of two Effluent Stations of Treatment of one for the area of the laundry of the Inn and another one for treatment of the effluent generated in the dependences of its hotels.



Acknowledgments placed for the Inn to acquire knowledge the tourists concerning the importance of the preservation of the environment

About ten years ago was constructed an emissary who directed the residues for the water course about five kilometers below of its dependences. After the increase of the flow of people in the region, the intense growth of activities that had also started to generate

significant amounts of dejections in neighborhoods of the enterprise was then necessary the construction of the Stations of Treatment of Effluent. The Station that was directed for treatment of the dejections of the hotels initially was projected to approximately hold the residues of 12,000 people and in this period the enterprise held only 4000 people. Had the station not only deal with the effluent of the hotels, but also all the occupations of the quarter Esplanada, this currently working with all its potential of treatment. The STE is passing for a process of magnifying funded by the Resorts that intends to transfer the management of the Station to the public power in a few years.



Partial vision of the Station of Treatment of Effluent



Partial vision of the Station of Treatment of Effluent of the laundry

The tourist complex still develops in its dependences a series of activities that not only

provide a contact with the natural beauties of the region, but also looks for in such a way to clarify for its visitors the importance of the preservation of the quality of the waters and also the environment in its neighborhood. Amongst these activities they are enclosed ecological walkings and divings that are taken under the responsibility of specialized guides.



Ecological walkings

With this work tried to show a brief description of the enterprise and some works that they are developing in intention to preserve the quality of waters and the environment in its neighborhood. These and other writs of prevention and corrective are essential for the continuity of the on activities connected to the tourism that develops in this region.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PLANO Basico Ambiental, Projeto Básico Ambiental do Complexo do Rio Quente Resorts. Acoverde Consultoria e Projetos. Goiânia, 2001.

LEINS, Viktor. Geologia Geral. Ed.Nacional, São Paulo 1995. 400p.

RIO Quente Resorts, Informações gerais. Disponível em: www.viverpousada.com.br. Acesso em 25/02/05.