

## Understanding the values of the Oblazy Site in Kvačianska Valley



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# CONTENT

Introduction.....	3
1. Description of the Oblazy site.....	8
1.1. Natural environment.....	8
1.2. Historical overview of the mills in Kvačianska valley: the end of the 19 <sup>th</sup> century – the first half of the 20 <sup>th</sup> century.....	8
1.3. Oblazy site elements.....	10
2. Values identified by the stakeholders.....	13
3. Value assessment of the Oblazy site.....	19
Conclusion.....	24
Annex .....	26
Literature.....	27
Illustrations.....	28

## INTRODUCTION

Values are a subject which evokes a lot of discussions in contemporary society. Values are crucial in conservation field. Assessment of values gives the answers to fundamental questions in conservation field: why and how an object or place is meaningful, to whom it is significant and for whom it is conserved. Identification and understanding of values illuminates conservation and management planning issues and make these activities more effective.

The theme of the work - Understanding values of Oblazy site in Kvačianska valley – refers to the object and the aim of the research. The object of the work includes two crucial items: the Oblazy site and the stakeholders, strictly speaking – their perception of the site. It is relevant to mark that Oblazy site, situated in Kvačianska valley, includes natural and cultural (two preserved wooden mills) features.

### Aims of the research

The main aim of the work is analysis of Oblazy site values and analysis of stakeholders. This aim consists of several goals:

- identification of stakeholders,
- identification of stakeholders' perception on values of the site,
- identification of values and values assessment,
- values typology, or synthesis of values.

Provided theoretical approach on values will be applied for values identification and assessment in this research. The designed value typology will reflect specific values of the site and will illustrate stakeholders' interests at site. Illumination of the relation between site values and stakeholders is the core of this paper work.

Definition of concepts is fundamental for proper use of heritage values theory. Special focus to this problem takes place in the introduction.

### Problem of the work

One of the most problematic questions in this research is the definition of the terms. Since several concepts appear in the literature intended to the topic of heritage values – for example, extrinsic and intrinsic values, held and assigned values, tangible and intangible values, the term of „value“ demands clarification. How the term of „value“ is defined in the research? The concept of „quality“ inevitably arises in the field. What is the relation between „value“ and „quality“?

Values of heritage is a contingent phenomenon, which varies according to the perception of the stakeholders. The stakeholders give a particular meaning to heritage. A specific interaction between subject (stakeholder, society) and object (natural or man made) creates a monument. The monument is an object with added external attribute – value for a specific subject. The common consensus about the value (or values) which are assigned to the monument creates a platform for monument protection and maintenance. The monument as a valuable object becomes a part of heritage which represents values shared by stakeholders. The monument as it was defined above is a process of interaction between object and subject. Here the expression of AINova lecturer Dug Myklebust is well – directed illustration of correlation between object and subject:

“Where is the monument?”

“The monument is in the head “(of the object – the stakeholder)

Therefore the question: “How stakeholders influence (shape) the values of the site?” is essential for our research.

### Context of the work

The research plan is based on ”gap“ which was identified during the preliminary preparation of the paper work. Values of the site were not elaborated adequately and thus it was not clear what kind of value profile is connected with the site. Understanding of the values is essential for management of the site and statement of significance. Therefore the research results may contribute to better understanding of the site and create platform for sustainable maintenance and development.

Background of the paper work is based on analysis of existing archival sources and field research. The sources can be divided in to following groups:

- Value theories and case studies
- Documents related to the site conservation history

The document analysis provides useful concepts tested during the field research and elaborated at paper work synthesis.

### Theory and terminology

The theoretical approach on values assessment provided by Getty Conservation Institute is a basic theoretical tool for this research.

#### I. Definitions.

*Value* is used in reference to qualities and characteristics attributed to heritage object and places by the stakeholders. These characteristics are what make a site significant and they are often a reason

why stakeholders and authorities are interested in a specific cultural site or object<sup>1</sup>. Values are closely related with the elements of heritage object which define its qualities. In turn, qualities are the source for values which are shaped by the stakeholders. This interrelationship could be illustrated by this scheme:

*Scheme N. 1. Evolution of values.[Designed for the purposes of the research]*



Values are able to represent the tangibility as well as the intangibility of cultural heritage; therefore they are tangible – based on a specific physical attributes of a good – and intangible – based on more nebulous qualities, such as the ability to inspire awe or the ability to symbolize revered spiritual or cultural properties<sup>2</sup>. Very often tangible and intangible aspects interlace between each other and create the oneness.

## II. Value typologies

There are many different kinds of values which corellate between each other, possess simmlar aspects, etc. Types of the values and their hierarchy is mainly caused by the voices of different stakeholders. Establishement a typology of heritage values is useful synthesis leading to more explicit understanding of valuing process.

Several general value typologies provided by Getty Conservation Institute serves as a particular guideline towards establishment a typology of values for this research.

S. Kellert distinguishes nine environmental values (**Table N. 1**), considered biological in origin. They signify basic structures of human relationship and adaptation to the natural world developed over the course of human evolution. These values are reflecting a range of physical, emotional, and intellectual expressions of the biophilic tendency to associate with nature. Here may be indicated that naturalistic, aesthetic, symbolic, humanistic values are important for all focus groups – stakeholders, and ecologicistic-scientific value is significant for all society (see the Table of Site Elements; Natural content, N. 6 , p. 12 ).

<sup>1</sup> Chaco Culture National Historical Park. U.S. National Park Service. A Case Study. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles. 2003, p. 2 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/chaco.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/chaco.pdf) [2008 05].  
 Masson Randall, Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices // Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage. Research Report. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2002, p. 7 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/assessing.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf) [2008 05].

<sup>2</sup> Satterfield Theresa. Numbness and Sensitivity in the Elicitation of Environmental Values // Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage. Research Report. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2002, p. 77 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/assessing.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf) [2008 05].

**Table N. 1. S. Kellert's value typology<sup>3</sup>. From: *The Value of Life: Biological Diversity and Human Society***

<b>VALUE</b>	<b>DEFINITION</b>	<b>FUNCTION</b>
Utilitarian	Practical and material exploitation of nature	Physical sustenance/security
Naturalistic	Direct experience and exploration of nature	Curiosity, discovery, recreation
Ecologistic-scientific	Systematic study of structure, function, and relationship in nature	Knowledge, understanding, observational skills
Aesthetic	Physical appeal and beauty of nature	Inspiration, harmony, security
Symbolic	Use of nature for language and thought	Communication, mental development
Humanistic	Strong emotional attachment and „love“ for aspects of nature	Bonding, sharing, cooperation, companionship
Moralistic	Spiritual reverence and ethical concern for nature	Order, meaning, kinship, altruism
Dominionistic	Mastery, physical control, dominance of nature	Mechanical skills, physical prowess, ability to subdue
Negativistic	Fear, aversion, alienation from nature	Security, protection, skills, awe.

Values could be divided also into two main groups – sociocultural and economic values (**Table N. 2**). These groups are most often associated with cultural heritage – economic and sociocultural are two most remarkable ways of understanding and assessing the values.

**Table N. 2. Provisional typology of values<sup>4</sup>**

<b>SOCIOCULTURAL VALUES</b>	<b>ECONOMIC VALUES</b>
Historical	Use (market) value
Cultural/Symbolic	Nonuse (non market) value
Social	Existence
Spiritual/religious	Option
Aesthetic	

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 82

<sup>4</sup> Masson Randall, *Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices // Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage*. Research Report. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2002, p. 10 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/assessing.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf) [2008 05].

It is relevant to mention the values types presented in Burra charter. This charter recognizes less tangible aspects of cultural significance including those embodied in the use of heritage places, association with a place and the meanings that places have for people<sup>5</sup>. Burra charter distinguishes these values:

- § Aesthetic,
- § Historic,
- § Scientific,
- § Social or spiritual values.

These values defines cultural significance of the object of cultural heritage.

It may be noticed that economic values are minimized in this charter because they are seen as derived from cultural and historical values.

According to the interviews with stakeholders and documents' analysis the Oblazy site values are distinguished into nine value groups: environmental, associative (symbolic), aesthetic, information, craftsmanship, social, economic, use (function), historical. Some qualities are developed to characterize multiple nature of some values. (Table N. 3)

**Table N. 3. Value Typology for the Oblazy site**

VALUES	EXPLANATION
1. Environmental: - visual (natural, cultural) quality; - quiet, peacefulness q.	Resides in the visual and quiet qualities of the environment. Represents both tangible and intangible aspects of the environment.
2. Associative (Symbolic)	Direct experience of a site physically and through senses. Satisfies curiosity, discovery and recreation.
3. Aesthetic	Derives from the symbiosis of natural and cultural contexts.
4. Information: - scientific q.; - educational q.	Fulfils scientific interest and includes educational aspect.
5. Craftsmanship	Includes use of traditional techniques and materials as well as transmission of knowledge and skills.
6. Social: - spiritual q.; - identity (place and community) q.; - homely atmosphere q.; -social cohesion q.	Includes the use of the site for social gatherings (workshops, guiding, guarding). Also includes "place attachment" aspects which refers to social cohesion, community or identity or other feelings that social group derive from the heritage and environment which specifies the "home" territory.
7. Economic: - market value - non market value	Includes direct price of the monument as well as the economic income. Expressed through use of quantitative methodology and measurable economic quantities.
8. Use (Function)	Derives from functional qualities of the site/monument and their relation to the subject (user).
9. Historical: - age q.; - educational q.	Rises from the heritage's material age, from its associations with people or events, from its rarity and/or uniqueness, from its technological qualities.

<sup>5</sup> The Burra Charter (The Australia ICOMOS charter for places of cultural significance), 1999 – On Internet: <http://www.nsw.nationaltrust.org.au/burracharter.html> [2008 06 15]

## 1.OBLAZY SITE DESCRIPTION

### 1.1. Natural environment

The Oblazy site with two wooden mills is situated in a picturesque and scenic rocky valley hidden in Chočské vrchy massive at the border territory of Liptov and Orava regions. Steep slopes are inaccessible and covered by forest therefore little disturbed by man and inhabited by bears, wolves and lynxes. Limestone cliffs exposed to sunshine rising above humid deep valley are creating good conditions for vivid flora mosaic. From 1967 the valley is protected like National Natural Reserve for its natural richness. The Kvačianska valley together with the Prosiecka valley creates an important tourist attraction easily accessible from Liptovská Mara area. The Chočské hills are in a National Environmental action plan II, approved by the resolution of Slovak Republic government (16<sup>th</sup> of December 1999, No. 1112) and proposed to National Park declaration.

*Picture 1. Oblazy site – natural and man made elements.*



The water of three smaller creeks - Borovianka, Ráztočianka and Hutianka - comes together and creates Kvačianka brook running through the Oblazy basin. The site is in a bigger distance from villages and it is caused by local geologic and hydrologic relations. Deforested meadows around



villages Huty, Malé and Veľké Borové are situated on non permeable flysch subsoil and are not able to hold water. Therefore creeks situated here have only a small flow during the year. The Kvačianska valley site for mills was selected by inhabitants due to these conditions where the flow and gradients are better for mill wheel drive.

The Kvačianska valley belongs to the valleys of West Carpathians which has a high geomorphologic value. The value is represented by canyons, ravines, thresholds, cascades, waterfalls, lost rivers and rises. The above-ground and subterranean karst phenomena are richly developed together with the distinctive flora and fauna.<sup>6</sup>

## **1.2. Historical overview of the mills in Kvačianska valley: the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

First mills of Kvačianska valley were situated on Hutianka tributary at the place now called Poľana. Three mills are recorded on cadastre map in end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Two mills on Poľana site and the third one was already on today place at Oblazy. The mills at Poľana site probably were older with a mill wheel on a gable wall. Unfavorable location close to Hutianka creak was fatal finally and after the flood in 1913 the mills disappeared from the Poľana site.

Big carrier inn was situated close to the Oblazy site as a rest place of important merchant road which went through the valley already since 16<sup>th</sup> century. The inn (called “Maťugova” according to the name of the owner) burned down during the National Slovak Uprising in 1944.

Two mills at the Oblazy site were preserved until nowadays.



*Picture 2. The Upper mill – water wheel .*

The upper mill (named “Gejdošovský” - after the last owner of the mill) has an inscribed date of 1896 on a ceiling beam – this is the year of the construction of the mill. The mill is equipped with

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<sup>6</sup> Tulis, Ján and Novotný, Ján: About the Nomination Project of the West Carpathian Mezozoik Valleys (O nominačom projekte Doliny mezozoika Západných Karpát). In – Enviromagazin, p. 16-17, 5/2007

simple technology from twenties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One wooden wheel is driven by the water falling from the upper side. The mill contained also a generator which was producing an electric light. It contained a special circular saw (šindliarka) for cutting shingles. The mill was inhabited by Mrs. Mária Gejdošová the wife of last chief miller until 1977. Some part of mill technology was functional to that time.

The lower mill was built by the family of František Brunčiak at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This mill was bigger than the upper one and probably from the very beginning was connected with the saw situated at the second wing of the object. Two mill's wheels which powered a transmission system were situated one after another. The transmission system powered several machines and old saw with only one saw blade.

The mill was extensively reconstructed in 1930 and modern saw (gáter) was installed. The saw originated from a vanished mill in Suchá dolina and was constructed in Vienna probably in 1896. This is one of the oldest preserved saw machines. The saw was active after the WW II and was closed in 1955<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> The text prepared according - Mokrň, Vlado: História mlynov na Oblazoch v Kvačianskej doline (The History of the Mills at Oblazy in Kvačianska Valley). SZOPK, ZO 6 internal document, 1996

### 1.3. Oblazy site elements

Oblazy site elements are illustrated by the analytical tables which are shortly clarified in the following text. Man made structures - the Upper and the Lower mills - analysis points on various elements which create a built environment of the site. The elements derive from the functional part of the mill and requires similar treatment. The process of maintenance and conservation influences the values attached to the particular element. Therefore material and mechanical properties shape the demands for maintenance and skills. Each element has its own specific function inside the system and therefore also a different meaning for the site's values. (Table N. 4, table N. 5)

<b>Tab. N. 4 Site Elements; Man Made content – Upper Mill</b>							
<b>Element</b>		<b>State</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Properties</b>	<b>Main material</b>	<b>Maintenance demands</b>	<b>Description of function</b>
Building Structure	Mill building	Good	Living, Production	Stable element, intensive use	Wood, stone	Medium, regular season maint., trained person is necessary	Main component of the site, Mill icon
	Stable	Very good	Storage, Animals	Stable element, common use	Wood, stone	Medium, regular season maint., trained person is necessary	Important complementary component of the site
Technology	Mill machine	Very bad,	Museum exposition, Production	Mechanical elem., intensive use	Iron, Cast iron, Wood, Leather	High, regular season maint., everyday maint. during operation, specialist is necessary	Main element of technology (vast reconstruction necessary)
Power Mechanism	Water wheel	Bad	Power production, exposition	Mechanical elem., intensive use in water	Wood, Iron	High, regular season maint., everyday maint. during operation, specialist or trained person is necessary	Main symbol of the mill exposition (reconstruction necessary)
	Transmission system	Very bad	Power distribution, exposition	Mechanical elem., intensive use	Wood, Iron, Cast iron	High, regular season maint., everyday maint. during operation, specialist or trained person is necessary	Key role in power use and transfer presentation (vast reconstruction necessary)
Water regulation devices	Upper water step	Good	Water level regulation	Stable element, pressure of water	Wood, Stones, Geotextile	Low, regular season maint., team work is appropriate	Important landscape component, important item of water management
	Upper water gate	Very bad	Water flow regulation	Mechanical elem., use in water	Wood	Low, regular season maint., team work is appropriate	Important item of water management
	Mill race	Bad	Water transfer	Stable element, use in water	Earth ditch, Wood	Low, regular season maint., instructed person is appropriate	Complement landscape component, important item of water management
	Lower water gate	Very bad	Water flow regulation	Mechanical elem., use in water	Wood	Medium, regular season maint., trained person is necessary	Important item of water management
	Drain ditch	Bad	Water transfer	Stable element, use in water	Earth ditch	Low, regular season maint., instructed person is appropriate	Water management component

**Tab. 5** Site Elements; Man Made content – **Lower Mill**

Element		State	Function	Properties	Main material	Maintenance demands	Description of function
Building Structure	Mill building Saw building	Good	Living, Production	Stabile element intensive use	Wood, stone	Medium, regular season maint., trained person is necessary	Main component of the site, main attraction
	Hovel	Good	Storage, Workshop	Stabile element common use	Wood, stone	Medium, regular season maint., trained person is necessary	Important complementary component of the site
Technology	Mill machine	Very bad	Museum exposition, Production	Mechanical elem., intensive use	Iron, Cast iron, Wood, Leather	High, regular season maint., everyday maint. during operation, specialist is necessary	Complementary element of technology (vast reconstruction necessary)
	Saw	Very good	Museum exposition, Production	Mechanical elem., intensive use	Iron, Cast iron, Wood, Leather	High, regular season maint., everyday maint. during operation, specialist is necessary	Most important element of the technology exposition
	Small machines	Very good	Museum exposition, Production	Mechanical elem., intensive use	Iron, Wood, Leather	High, everyday maint. during operation, specialist is necessary	Supporting elements of the technology exposition
Power Mechanism	Water wheel	Good	Power production, exposition	Mechanical elem., intensive use in water	Wood, Iron	High, regular season maint., everyday maint. during operation, specialist or trained person is necessary	Main symbol of the mill exposition
	Transmission system	Very Good	Power distribution, exposition	Mechanical elem., intensive use	Wood, Iron, Cast iron	High, regular season maint., everyday maint. during operation, specialist or trained person is necessary	Key role in power use and transfer presentation
Water regulation devices	Lower water step	Good	Water level regulation	Stabile element pressure of water	Wood, Stones, Geotextile	Low, regular season maint., team work is appropriate	Important landscape component, important item of water management
	Upper water gate	Very good	Water flow regulation	Mechanical elem., use in water	Wood, Iron, Cost Iron	Medium, regular season maint., team work is appropriate	Important item of water management
	Mill race	Good	Water transfer	Stabile element use in water	Earth ditch, Wood	Low, regular season maint., instructed person is appropriate	Complement landscape component, important item of water management
	Lover water gate	Very good	Water flow regulation	Mechanical elem., use in water	Wood	Medium, regular season maint., trained person is necessary	Important item of water management

The Oblazy site is created by the mixture of natural and man made environment.

The table N. 6 provides the elaboration of the most important features of the natural context of the site.

<b>Tab. 6 Site Elements; Natural content</b> (elaborated according to: Novotný, L., Tulis, J.: About the Nomination Project of the West Carpathian Meozoikas Valleys. Enviromagazín, 5/2007.)							
Element		Contents	Display	Features	Qualities	Originality and integrity of ecosystems	Area with high natural science values and landscape-aesthetic value
Animate nature	Fauna	Unique fauna of invertebrates and vertebrates	High amount of various species concentrate at small area	Presence of various endangered species Presence of various Carpathian and West Carpathians endemics and sub endemics	High biodiversity of flora and fauna Centre of Carpathian fauna and flora extension Unique from viewpoint of European important flora and fauna species representation Preservation of relic flora and fauna communities		
	Flora	Presence of relict Tertiary carbonate (borina), prealpin species, cryophilic communities with presence of dealpinas species,	Vivid and mixed flora ecotype at small area with high degree of variability				
Inanimate nature	Geology	Meozoic carbonates rocks (calk, dolomite)	Different resilience and weathering of rocks	Weathering according different resilience, distribution and tectonic disruptions	Variation of wide valley sections with narrow canyons and deep chasms		
	Geo - morphology	Canyons, thresholds, caves, rock faces, cascades	Rich surface and subsurface karst phenomenon	Inaccessibility, wild scenery, intactness	Vivid and extraordinary geomorphology items Scenic landscape		
	Waters	Autochthonous and allochthonous rivers	Subterranean rivers, water rises and immersions	Irregular water distribution in valley and creeks	Wide range of creek bed with extraordinary and vivid forms and situations		
Natural processes	Zones turning – thermal inversion	Various thermal zones creating different environmental conditions	Example of karst surface development and biota from the end of Glacial epoch till today	Constancy of living conditions similar to end of glacial epoch	Preservation of natural ecosystems High degree of ecologic stability Example of the temperature inversion exercise		

## 2. VALUES IDENTIFIED BY THE STAKEHOLDERS

Value assessment requires posing some essential questions: Who participates in heritage value assessment? Whose values are counted? What values are identified by those who participate in the process of value assessment? The question of stakeholders is an essential issue in value assessment. They do the valuing of cultural heritage therefore it is important to identify them and by employing certain methods to identify their perception of the values.

Here the main groups of stakeholders who are shaping the values of Oblazy site in Kvačianska valley are distinguished:

- Volunteers (guards, guides of the mills);
- Tourists;
- Local community;
- Activists (Mlynári, Dreveničari – people who were reconstructing and repairing the mills). [See the Annex 1 – Stakeholders’s analysis; p. 26].

In order to understand the perception of tourists towards the values of the Oblazy site the ethnographical methodology was applied - open interviews and participant observation.

Oblazy site values expressed by the stakeholders will be transformed into the scientific language, using typical terminology specific to the conservation field. For this purpose the schemes for each stakeholder group values’ identification will be provided in the following text. A short explanation of the main values is given in the **table N. 3** (p. 7). Concept of *value* is used here in reference to the qualities and characteristics (features) seen in the things<sup>8</sup>. Quality is an inherent feature of the object from which values are deriving.



*Picture 3. Live at the Oblazy site.*

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<sup>8</sup> Masson Randall, *Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices // Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage*. Research Report. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2002, p. 7 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/assessing.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf). [2008 05].

### **Volunteers:**

Volunteers are an important group of stakeholders. During the summer season they are taking care about the lower mill, they are guiding tourists, showing them functioning mill's technology. Also they are inhabitants of the mills thus creating a special and very lively atmosphere of the site which refers to so called ecomuseums<sup>9</sup>.

Oblazy site for volunteers is an extraordinary and unique place created by the peculiar symbiosis of nature and wooden architecture (mills). According to them, it is hardly possible to find another similar site. It is a place where one can rest in peaceful and quiet environment surrounded by picturesque rocks and forests. Voluntary work with tourists gives an opportunity to meet interesting people. Communications with them, giving the information about the site and sharing knowledge brings a sense of fulfillment. Also an economic benefit is present here – voluntary donations for the reconstructions of mills, selling of souvenirs.

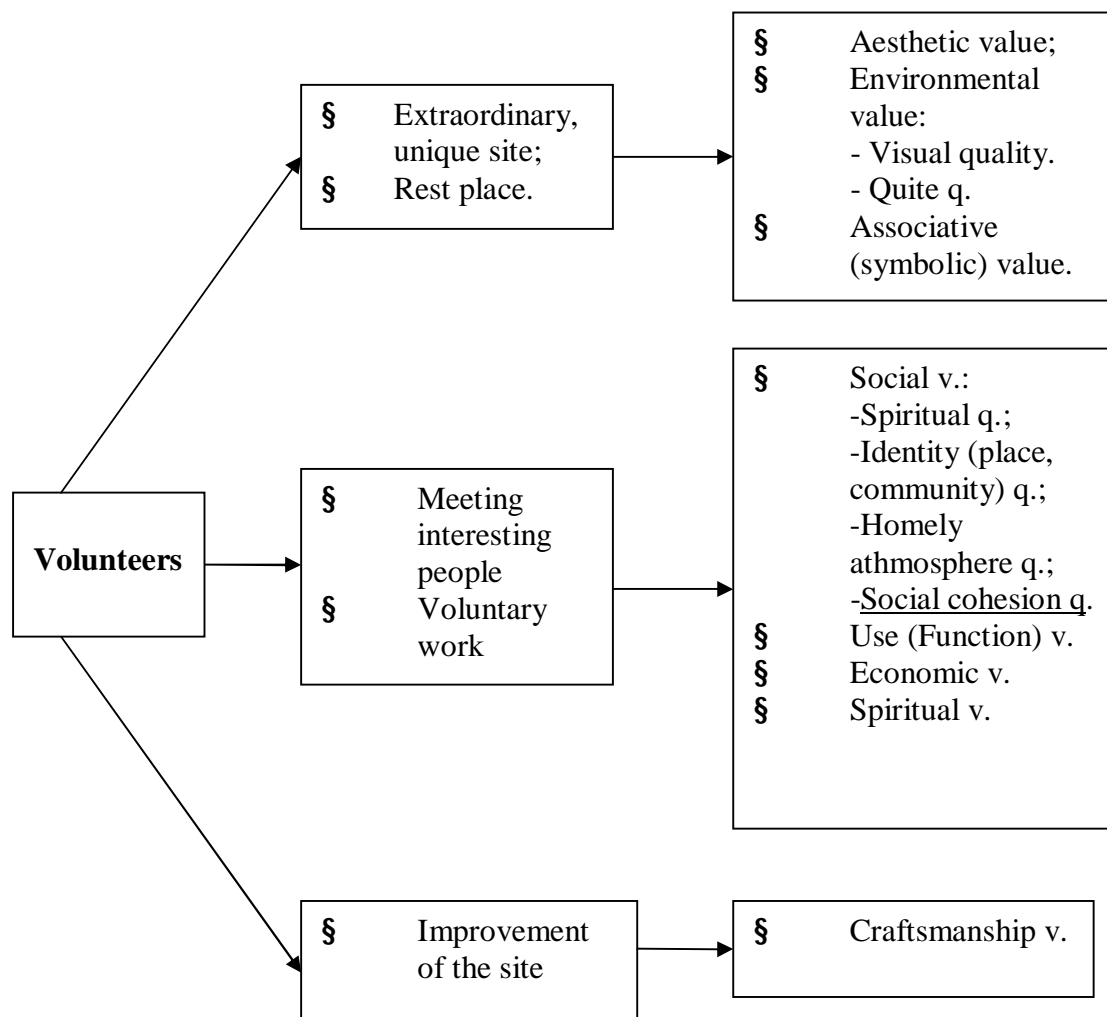
The improvement of the site was appreciated by the volunteers as well.



*Picture 4. Volunteers at the site.*

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<sup>9</sup> An ecomuseum is a museum focused on the identity of a place, largely based on local participation and aiming to enhance the welfare and development of local communities. An Ecomuseum is a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret, and manage their heritage for a sustainable development. – Ecomuseum. From Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia – On Internet:  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecomuseum> [2008 06 10].

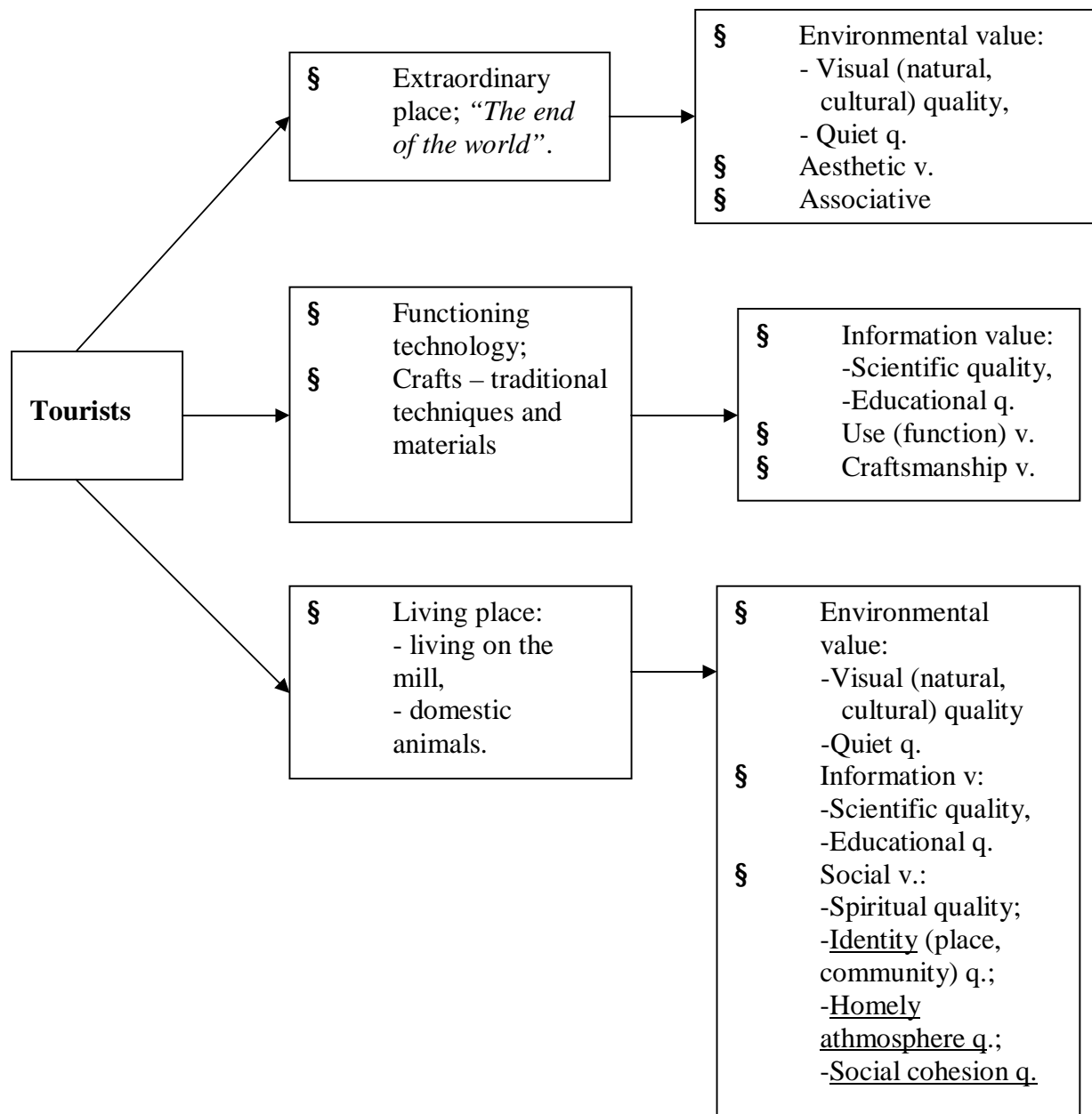


## Tourists

Tourists often were mentioning specialness of the Oblazy site. For them it is also an extraordinary and very beautiful place - *“the end of the world.”* Another strong interest for them is the functioning technology of the mill which catches their attention and amazes them. Crafts and work with traditional techniques and materials is a focus of tourists’ attention as well. Oblazy mills as a living place during the summer impresses the visitors. Viability of the site is created not only by human inhabitants, summer guards and guides, but also by domestic animals – there left just a cat now. There used to live some person during all the year therefore they had some goats. Here we also could refer to already mentioned ecomuseums when *“heritage perception includes history of inhabitants and things, what is visible and what it is not, tangibles and intangibles, memories and future.”*<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ecomuseum. From Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia – On Internet: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecomuseum> [2008 06 10]

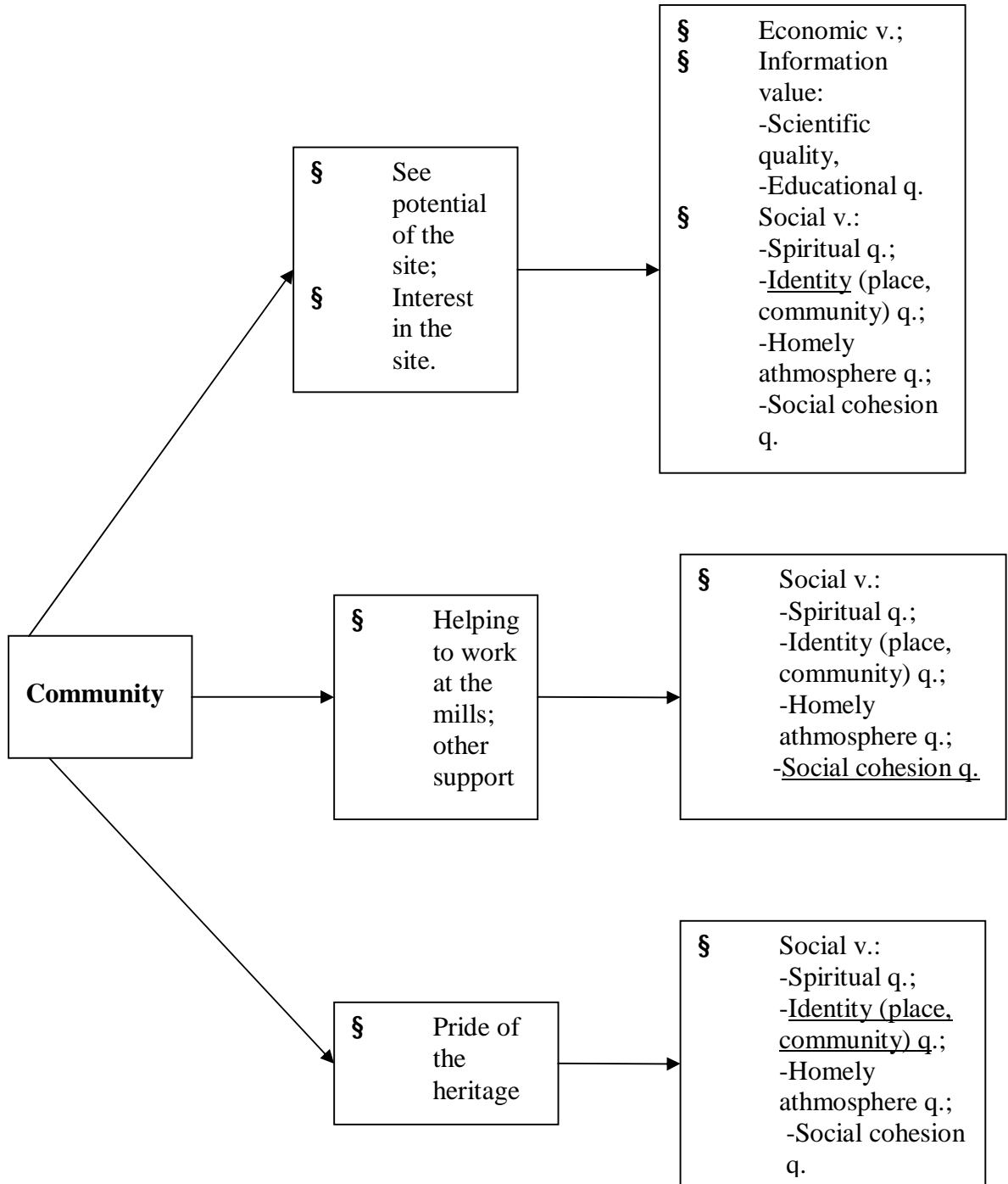




## Community

People from nearby villages are rather interested to the Oblazy site. They see the potential of this place which brings and could bring the economic benefit also to the village people. People of the communities of the villages are also proud to have this valley with wooden mills as they see that it is important also in broader context – visitors from different parts of Slovakia as well as from foreign countries are visiting it. This heritage is also a part of communities’ identity; it is a specific feature, characteristic of their “home” territory.

People from the close villages are willing and are able to help to work at the mills or to help by other means – for example, providing food (milk, cakes, etc.)



### **Activists (Mlynari, Dreveničari)**

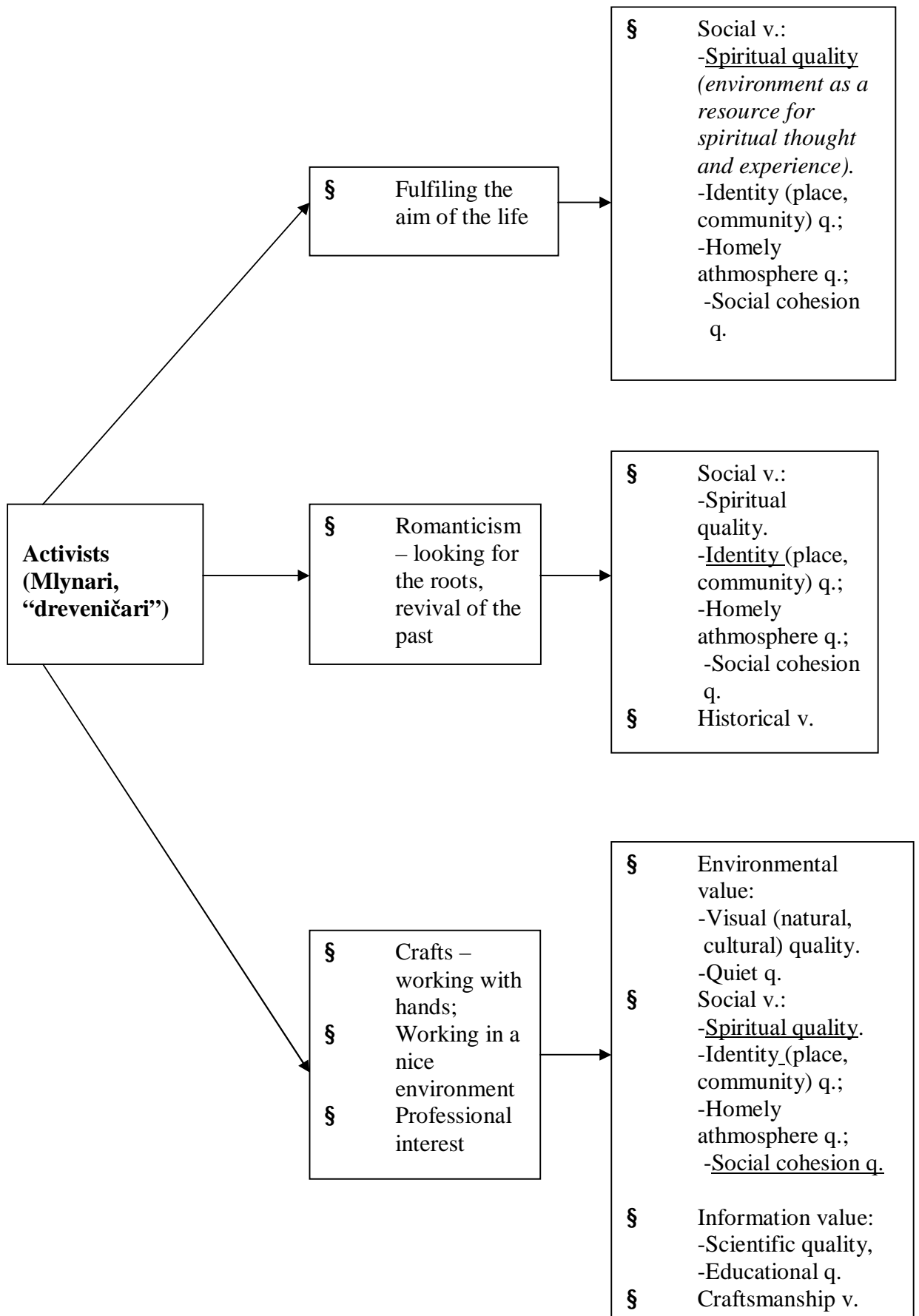
There could be distinguished two generations of activists: the first one which started in 1980-1981 and was concentrated to the saving of the buildings; the second generation was mostly working with the technology of the mills. Memorable is the expression of one respondent (he participated in the works from the beginning) who compared the work of these generations - the first generation was dealing with decimeters and the second - with millimeters.

The reconstruction work at the Oblazy mills for those people was some kind of “food” for soul and mind. Some of the respondents were mentioning that this occupation fulfilled their aim of the life; they felt that their work is necessary and needful. Also it was some challenge as it was not an easy job. It required knowledge about traditional crafts and some experience in this field. Therefore some experienced craftsmen were helping at the site and sharing their valuable skills.

Reviving of wooden architecture is closely related to the romantic idea to look for the roots and to revive the past, to save it and to keep the truthfulness of it. The actions of saving the folk architecture were mainly undertaken by enthusiasts from the bigger towns of the country.

The reconstructions works also fulfilled the professional interest of this active group - there used to work people of different professions: art historians, engineers, geographers, architects, etc...

This group of respondents appreciated beautiful and calm environment which creates a good working atmosphere.



### 3. VALUE ASSESSMENT OF THE OBLAZY SITE

Six main quality types are excluded here: form and design, material and substance, use and function, tradition and techniques, location and setting, spirit and feeling. They characterize the Oblazy site and are the origin of the values. (Table N. 8) Value hierarchy and composition derived from the research results and it is based on field research (stakeholders' analysis) and critical study of theory (values' typologies) and documents (published articles and internal documents). Therefore values can be seen composing four main value groups:

*Table N. 7 Main groups of the values of the Oblazy site.*

<p>1. <u>Environmental value</u>:          -visual (natural, cultural);          -quiet, silence;  <u>Aesthetic value</u></p>	<p>2. <u>Social value</u>:          - spiritual;          - identity (place and community);          - homely atmosphere;          -social cohesion.  <u>Craftsmanship value</u>  <u>Associative (Symbolic) value</u></p>
<p>3. <u>Historical value</u>:          - age;          - educational.  <u>Information value</u>:          - scientific;          - educational.</p>	<p>4. <u>Use, Function value</u>  <u>Economic value</u></p>

Here we present the elaboration of values evolution concept (see also the **scheme N. 1**, p. 5 ) for the site which is consisting of three main interdependent concepts: qualities, values and elements. The purpose of this synthesis is to stress the relation between object (site) and its values. This synthesis is influential for values-based site management<sup>11</sup> and is basic to maintenance and conservation of heritage.

<sup>11</sup> Values-based site management is the coordinated and structured operation of heritage site with the primary purpose of protecting the values and the significance of the place. – Chaco Culture National Historical Park. U.S. National Park Service. A Case Study. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles. 2003, p. 1 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/chaco.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/chaco.pdf) [2008 05]

**Table N. 8 Interdependence of Qualities and Values of Oblazy Site.**

QUALITIES	VALUES	WHERE THE VALUES ARE INHABITED?
1. Form and Design	§ Use and Function; § Information: -scientific; -educational. § Aesthetic; § Environmental: -visual; -quiet.	Man made elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Folk wooden architecture</li> <li>• Mill and saw technology</li> <li>• Infrastructure</li> </ul> Natural elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geomorphology</li> </ul>
2. Material and Substance	§ Environmental: -visual; -quiet. § Historical: -age; -educational.	Man made elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wooden constructions</li> <li>• Cast iron elements</li> <li>• Fabrics for technology</li> </ul> Natural elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rocks</li> </ul>
3. Use and Function	§ Information -scientific; -educational. § Economic; § Environmental: -visual; -quiet.	Man made elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology production capacity</li> <li>• Working procedures</li> <li>• Living and working places</li> </ul> Natural elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forest</li> <li>• Water</li> </ul>
4. Tradition and Techniques	§ Craftmanship; § Historical: -age; -educational. § Social: - spiritual; - identity (place and community); - homely atmosphere; -social cohesion.	Man made elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The use</li> <li>• Folk wooden architecture</li> <li>• Community life</li> <li>• Work with local craftsman</li> <li>• Conservation and maintenance process</li> </ul>
5. Location and Setting	§ Aesthetic; § Environmental: -visual; -quiet.	Man made elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buildings and infrastructure</li> </ul> Natural elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Geomorphology, water, flora</li> </ul>
6. Spirit and Feeling	§ Associative (Symbolic); § Environmental: -visual; -quiet.	Man made elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Traditional wooden architecture, water thresholds</li> </ul> Natural elements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood, water, rocks, clear sky</li> </ul>

**Environmental and Aesthetic values.**

Environmental qualities of the site can be seen to have two components. The first is composed of natural and cultural elements which create a visual quality. Natural component includes rocks and forests, fauna and unique flora. Cultural component includes human traces – wooden mills and water thresholds built in the small river, flowing through the valley. Water is an important element which is not only the “engine” of mill’s technology – its perpetual chattering creates a unique atmosphere of the place. The second important quality, having an intangible aspect, resides in quiet and silence of the place which seems to be “the end of the world”, forgotten place. Environmental qualities – visual and quiet - create a

peculiar feeling and spirit of the site - *Genius loci* [environmental value is the strongest but not the single feature which shapes *genius loci* of the Oblazy site].

The aesthetic value is closely related to the environmental one and is recognized by the most stakeholders. Oblazy site is an extraordinarily beautiful place for them. The beauty lies in wonderful nature as well as in wooden architecture which naturally merges with natural environment and creates a peculiar symbiosis of nature and culture. There are a number of intangible elements that contribute to the aesthetic quality of the site, such as quiet and silence, solitude, clean air, chattering of water.

The concept used by the Getty Conservation Institute - *quality of the visitor experience* could be applied here as well. *Quality of the visitor experience* is understood as a direct physical or sensual experience of the site<sup>12</sup> and it could be recognized as an origin for environmental and aesthetic values. *Quality of the visitor experience* is seen to depend on the elements that include:

- peacefulness and silence;
- no intrusion of man-made light or noise;
- clean air;
- unimpaired views;
- clean water;
- perpetual chattering of water;
- an uncrowded place;



*Picture 5. Salamander in the site.*

#### **Social, Craftsmanship and Associative (Symbolic) values**

Social value includes several aspects which are following the events, happenings, occupations in the site.

Spiritual aspect refers to the environment as a resource for spiritual thought and experience. The spiritual aspect is present in strong volunteers and activists' feeling of fulfillment the aim of their life.

The identity aspect is connected with local community and their relation to the site. The Oblazy site became a sort of logo to local communities.

Living and working at the mills creates vitality and

homely atmosphere in the site.

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<sup>12</sup> Chaco Culture National Historical Park. U.S. National Park Service. A Case Study. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles. 2003, p. 19 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/chaco.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/chaco.pdf) [2008 05]

The use of traditional crafts is essential for the conservation process and has big importance of keeping the tradition alive. Old masters from local communities were able to teach young generation which could transmit knowledge to the future generations. Working together at the site creates relations between local communities and activists. Voluntary work contributes to common vision of site's maintenance. Voluntary, guarding service is a great possibility to meet and talk with interesting people.

**Table N. 9 Inhabitation of Social value attributes**

<b>Social value attributes</b>	<b>Identification at the site</b>
Craftsmanship	Meeting of people, voluntary work, working together, social cohesion.
Crafts	Sharing and transmission knowledge, gathering people, information source.
Social cohesion	Help of local people.
Place attachment, identity	Proud, revival of the past, social cohesion, community identity.
Homely atmosphere	Living place – idea of ecomuseums, identity (place, community).

Associative or symbolic value<sup>13</sup> is closely related to already mentioned notion *quality of the visitor experience*. Associative value refers to the direct experiencing of a site physically and through the senses. This value is the strongest when visitors are able to experience the reality through tangible elements thus to grasp the intangibility as well as the tangibility of the site. This value closely depends on authenticity of the site which consists of wooden mills and their technology and nature. Guided tours provided by volunteers give the possibility towards direct experience of mill's technology and traditional folk architecture. Vistas composed by scenic nature (which is creating extraordinary and unique embrace of the site) and wooden architecture are important components of associative value.

### ***Historical, Information values***

Historical values are at the root of the very notion of heritage. The capacity of the site to convey, embody, or stimulate a relation or reaction to the past is part of the fundamental nature and meaning of heritage objects<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> The concept is introduced by the Getty Conservation Institute.

<sup>14</sup> Masson Randall, *Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices // Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage*. Research Report. The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2002, p. 11 - On Internet: [http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf\\_publications/assessing.pdf](http://www.getty.edu/conservation/publications/pdf_publications/assessing.pdf) [2008 05].



Historical value of Oblazy site accrues in several ways: from its singularity (specialness), from its unique technological qualities, traditional folk architecture, material's age, associations with people who lived here and who are alive in memories. It also includes the educational capacities. Historical value is closely related to the knowledge about the site which is still developing according to new information dependent on the research. This is the area (site history) which is not explored enough therefore we can expect the rise of this value.

Information value is related to the ability of site elements' interpretation and presentation. This value is essential for relation between object (monument) and subject (visitor). Scientific and educational aspects of information value are particularly important for specialists, researches, students and those who are creating interpretation and presentation of the site. Presentation of the Oblazy site is a hot topic at the moment and is the second most important task after conservation and maintenance of physical structure.

#### *Use and Function, Economic values*

Use value is connected with the authentic use of the site, i.e. the possibility of living and working at the mills. Function means mostly the presentation of the site to the visitors; it is not anymore only the place for enterprise connecting mill and saw. The reconstructed saw mill is fully functional and is providing supplementary production necessary for mills' reconstruction material. The vitality of the site is also created by domestic animals and basic food production (milk from goats, garden). The use of the site is limited due to the aim to preserve natural context and other qualities which could be harmed by intensive use. The original use of the mills today would cause values conflicts: cutting of the wood and continuous use of the technology would harm important environmental qualities of the site – silence and peacefulness.

Getty Conservation Institute developed concept of direct and indirect economic values. Direct economic value is connected with the price property and services on the market. The market value of the lower mill illustrates this value. At the end of 80-ies the "The Slovak Union of Nature and Countryside Protectors" bought the mill for 80.000 kronas from heir. During the last decades the price this good increased ten times. Another example of market value is the rent for the upper mill - it is 30.000 kronas per year. An important measure for the market values is also voluntary donations from tourists.

Indirect economic value is related to social value and could be expressed through the time which volunteers spend for the reconstruction work and the cost of this voluntary labor.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Value typology and value hierarchy

Value typology, hierarchy and composition derived from the research results and it is based on field research (stakeholders' analysis) and critical study of theory (values' typologies) and documents (published articles and internal documents). Therefore values can be seen composing four main value groups: 1. Environmental and Aesthetic values; 2. Social, Craftsmanship and Associative (Symbolic) values; 3. Historical and Information values; 4. Use, Function and Economic values.

### Where the values are inhabited?

Values are closely related with the elements of heritage object which define its qualities. In turn, qualities are the source for values which are shaped by the stakeholders. A link between elements of heritage object, subject (stakeholder) and values is an essential task of value - based management with its primary purpose to protect the values and the significance of the place. Value protection is possible only through maintenance of tangible and intangible elements of heritage.

### Value conflicts, risk for values

The Oblazy site in Kvačianska valley is an appropriate example of the unity of natural and cultural values. The appropriate scale of man made development, the materials used for construction and technology does not harm natural values. The history of the site indicates that natural elements, particularly climate and flora, can cause serious damage to the cultural values if the place is not properly maintained. The recover of wild nature may erase fragile wooden architecture. High humidity at the bottom of the valley causes faster decay process of the wood which is the main building material. Wooden shingles which cover roofs and protect buildings from the rain water are the most sensitive to humid climate. The biggest threat for wooden mills is a fire. Destruction caused by the fire is common problem for folk wooden architecture and raises a question of fire protection and prevention.

Stakeholders can be also a danger for the values especially if they are not able to equilibrate their interests with site potential. The insensitive use of the site as a film coulisse harmed authenticity and worsened physical state of buildings. Use of the Upper mill as an occasional weekend house without proper maintenance diminishes object's values and wastes conservation activity invested to this object in the past. The Upper mill is owned by the State Environment Agency which is not able to take proper care about the monument. This is a big threat towards the values of the object.

The stakeholders are essential for balanced values preservation but can be also a source of risk for values.

### *Recommendation for next research*

The paper work focuses on the Oblazy site values identification and provides interpretation of relation between stakeholders and values. The value elaboration is an important element for value - based site management. Therefore, future research of this issue will be possible and also necessary as a contribution to sustainable development of the site. Interpretation of the site values could also serve as a background to the statement of site's significance. Comparative analysis of similar sites would be an important asset to this problematic. The stakeholders' analysis proved that it is relevant to take care about subject as a main mediator of heritage values. Research of particular stakeholder group could bring more fine information about object – subject relation. The activist/volunteers and visitors groups seems to be essentially important for the site therefore more detailed research could be successful here as well. Last but not the least could be a future research in site history which could enrich scientific and informational value. Site value research is crucial and developing topic by itself. For that reason it is also possible to repeat the same case study with different investigation tools and methodologies.

## ANNEX 1

The stakeholders' analysis explores the most influential participants connected to the site. Basic description of four main features (mission, interests, motivation, habits) illustrates stakeholders' connection to the site. Each group of stakeholders possesses a different profile which finally shapes the values of the site.

<b>Tab. ? Stakeholders' analysis - Subjects related to the site</b>						
<b>Stakeholders analysis</b>		<b>Mission</b>	<b>Interests</b>	<b>Motivation</b>	<b>Habits</b>	
State and regional organizations	Monument board (regional office)	Protection guiding organization	Monument supervision, advisory	State care about monument fund	Occasional interest about the site	
	Protection of nature	Protection guiding organization	Nature supervision, advisory	State care about natural fund	Interest in natural context of the site	
	Slovak forests company	Protection and use of forests	Logging and renewal of wood	Company business	Supervision to the site wood	
	Regional museum in Liptovský Mikuláš	Cultural and enlightenment education	Presentation and maintenance of local monuments	Professional interest in research and interpretation	Monument operation and guiding services	
NGO	The Slovak Union of Nature and Countryside protectors	Associate and organize people interested in protection of nature and landscape	Base organization covering reconstruction and maintenance of the lower mill	Special focus to folk architecture protection in authentic landscape	Networking of people and sources, organizational patronage	
Groups of stakeholders	Conservation teams – two generations	“Dreveničiari” – first generation	Conservation of folk wooden architecture	Mills rescue and reanimation of the site	Fulfilling of live sense and romanticism, professional interest	Work on main substance conservation
		“Mlynári” – second generation	Conservation and use of the mills	Technology reconstruction and creation of living place	Fulfilling of live sense and romanticism, professional challenge	Technology reconstruction and periodical maintenance
	Mills friends, guarding services, voluntaries	Support of the site and conservation activities	Participation on conservation and maintenance process	Active fulfill of the life, sense of romanticism and search for peaceful place	Periodic or sporadic stay on the site, voluntary work and guide service	
	Visitors, hiking public	Fulfill meaning of the conservation	Cultural tourism, active relaxation	Enjoyment of the site, active rest, cognition	Site exploration and financial support	
	Local communities	Support and indirect use of the site	Presentation and preservation of the site	The site as a monument is source of identity and attractiveness	Use of the site as a publicity brand	
	Enterprisers connected with tourism and services	Use of the site as a touristy product	Development of tourist services in locality	Develop of enterprise and creation of economic values	Indirect use of the site as a magnet for tourist and visitors	
	The Slovak Mill-research society	Research and documentation of mills	Preservation of tangible and intangible aspects	Professional and spare-time activity interest in this science field	Site and archival research, publication and specialist meetings	
	Future generations	?	?	?	?	

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations are from the personal albums authors and Martin Petráš album.