

SECOND HOMES AS A FACTOR OF THE TRANSFORMATION OF RURAL AREAS IN THE POLISH CARPATHIANS

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Abstract: *Holiday making in second homes is at present one of major trends in the development of individual recreation in Poland. Since the late 1990s, high dynamics in the development of secondary residences in attractive tourist areas has been recorded. Owners of secondary residences in the Polish Carpathians are chiefly residents of big cities situated in the Carpathian foothills. The development of second homes is currently one of the most important urbanisation factors in Poland, which in the mountain areas of the Carpathians, causes conflicts stemming from environmental, spatial and functional issues.*

Key words: *second homes, Polish Carpathians, rural areas, tourist urbanisation*

INTRODUCTION

In the 1970s, an important trend in the tourist development of rural areas in Poland was initiated – the building of second homes by city residents (Górz 2007). Second homes are also known as secondary residences, recreational homes, recreational residences or individual holiday homes are considered to be tourist infrastructure facilities (Warszyńska, Jackowski 1978; Kowalczyk 1994, Kurek 2007). Holiday making in secondary residences is now ranked among the most popular and fastest developing forms of leisure for city residents in Poland. Unlike collective accommodation facilities, they serve as recreation facilities for their owners, mostly on weekends and for shorter or longer holiday stays. The spatial aspect of this phenomenon is the settlement development resulting from the building of secondary residences, i.e. individual recreational settlement, being part of widely understood urbanisation processes and contributing to functional change in rural areas (Dziegieć 1995, Kowalczyk 1994).

Presently the development of second homes is one of major tourist urbanisation factors in Poland's rural areas. Secondary residences are built in all areas which have landscape assets (on the seaside, in the mountains and in lake districts). Mostly, they are built in areas with highest recreational assets, in particular in mountain spring valleys, on mountain slopes, in the nearest vicinity of forests, lakes and on the seashore (Kowalczyk 1994, Kurek 2007). Secondary residences are often built in rural areas surrounding cities (suburban zones) (Gaś 1997, Faracik 2006, Matczak 1986, Mika 2004, Szkup 2003, Wiluś 1997, Włodarczyk 1999, Wojciechowska 1998). In this case, the travel to second homes takes no more than one hour and a half (Coppock 1977).

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The term “second homes” refers to privately owned residential houses, situated in localities which are not places of permanent residence for their owners. The term covers all-year residences built on permanent foundations, wooden summer houses, as well as permanent caravans.

According to A. Kowalczyk (1994), characteristic features of second homes are as follows:

- the facility may be used for recreational purposes,
- the owners' permanent place or residence is outside the locality in which the secondary home is situated,
- the facility is used seasonally,
- it is used by the owner and his/her family,
- it is situated outside urban centres.

The development of secondary residences as may be seen in all developed countries results from city residents' growing demand for country leisure. Often such facilities are regarded by their owners as a good investment or stand as a status symbol (Andriotis 2006).

THE TRADITION OF SECOND HOMES BUILDING IN POLAND

In Poland, the tradition of holiday making in a secondary residence dates back to the second half of the 19th c. The trend for having a house outside the city accompanied the development of tourism and tourist localities on the Baltic coast, in the Carpathians and around big cities, in particular Warsaw, in the inter-war period (1918-39). At that time this phenomenon was only associated with the elite and second homes often took the form of country residences of the wealthy aristocracy or businessmen.

Having a second home became popular in Poland no earlier than on the turn of the 1960s/1970s, in a period of intensive urbanisation and industrialisation. The Polish legislation on spatial planning and construction provides that special areas may be allocated for recreational purposes if they appear to be useless for agricultural production and offered opportunities for the building of summer houses. Under a communist economy system, local authorities used to have some regulatory powers to allocate special zones for recreational housing. This brought about the development of summer residence settlement, characterised by a high spatial concentration of structures on the small areas of building plots (usually a few hundredths of a hectare), impermanent housing structures and poor or non-existent water and sewage infrastructure. Apart from small, wooden houses, grand villas were also built. Another way to acquire one's own recreational residence under the past socio-political system was to adapt deserted or inherited farm buildings for recreational purposes.

The main group of owners or leaseholders of recreational plots in the 1960s and the 1970s were political and army officials, managers of industrial plants and individuals rewarded by the authorities for some reasons. In the 1980s, representatives of other social groups – physicians, academics, employees of prosperous enterprises or the privileged industries (e.g. miners) – joined the group of owners of second homes. One of the factors which contribute to the development of secondary residences in Poland in the 1970s was individual motorization, which in Poland occurred as a result of an increasing popularity of the Fiat 126p (Szkup 2003).

The 1990s have brought a complete change in the conditions of the development of recreational residences in Poland. With the market economy development, social privileges or a place on the social ladder have no longer been decisive for a possibility to acquire a private recreational house, as financial means available have become of main importance. The liberalisation of the regulations on land distribution after 1989 has had particularly beneficial results for secondary residences development.

THE PRESENT ISSUES OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF SECOND HOMES IN POLAND

It is difficult to assess precisely the extent of the secondary residence phenomenon in Poland. Though some studies provide data for individual localities, there are no precise data on the number of such facilities in the country as a whole. It is difficult to assess the scale of this phenomenon within a permanent settlement system. Secondary residences are recreation facilities showing great dynamics as they spread “discreetly”, so the estimation of the scale of the phenomenon requires intensive field studies. Often such residences cease to serve a recreational function as their owners move to live there, so the houses become permanent residences, particularly in suburban zones.

Recently published complete data are from 1980. They indicate that there were 44,000 recreational residences in Poland at that time. However, it may be assumed that currently their number is several times higher. Current studies of this phenomenon have revealed that, e.g. in the Beskid Śląski region there are around 3,600 second homes, in the Warsaw suburban zone over 11,000, in the Łódź suburban zone around 10,000, while in the Kraków suburban zone around 3,000 (Faracik 2006, Kowalczyk 1994, Mika 2004, Szkup 2003).

Recreational residences in Poland develop chiefly in the following two types of areas:

- a) areas surrounding towns and cities (suburban zones),
- b) tourist regions, attractive in terms of their natural assets.

The spatial distribution of this phenomenon is also influenced by the distribution of areas with high environmental assets in the vicinity of conurbations and good transport access. This type of settlement is developing rapidly on the Baltic coast, in the Mazurskie and Kaszubskie Lake Districts, in the Beskid Zachodni hills, in the Sudety (Sudeten) Foothills, the Jeleniogórska Valley, in northern Wielkopolska, in suburban zones of Warsaw, Kraków, Łódź and Poznań, as well around Lublin, Szczecin, Wrocław and Częstochowa.

The demand for one's own recreational home in Poland stems for the same reasons as in other developed countries; these include the worsening of the living conditions in conurbations, the development of individual motorisation, higher amounts of free time and a generally greater wealth of the society (Dziegieć 1995).

Following the data of 2007, 61.3% (23.4 million) residents of Poland live in towns, of which 11.01 million live in 39 cities with populations exceeding 100,000, accounting for 28.9% of the total population. Town residents usually build secondary residences to take a rest outside the urban environment in areas which are quite and close to nature.

An important factor influencing an increased demand for having one's own recreational house is a significant growth of people's revenues compared with the '1990s. According to the General Statistical Office data, in 2005 an average level of GDP per head in Poland was PLN 25,000, (in 2000 – PLN 9,400), i.e. 50,7% of the EU average. In the years 1995-2005 an average annual GDP growth rate was at the level of 11.3%. A growth of income

is recorded chiefly for residents of big cities, such as Warsaw, where an average income per is a triple of the country's average, along with Poznań (twice the country's average), Kraków and the Gdańsk – Sopot – Gdynia conurbation (1.5 of the country's average), as city residents are the largest beneficiaries of the socio-economic transformation.

Due to the amendments to planning regulations in the 1990s, the growing scope of competences of local authorities in land management and the application of market rules to land acquisition, three development models may be distinguished in the development of the secondary residence phenomenon in Poland:

- A) within recreation areas allocated for this specific purpose, as was previously the case;
- B) through adaptive reuse of abandoned farm buildings for recreational purposes;
- C) building of an all-year secondary residence within the system of the village permanent settlement.

The most popular model in Poland is the development of second residences in localities situated in areas allocated for permanent development. This way of development of second homes is characterised by a significant liberty in location of such residences. They are all-year houses, built on permanent foundations, but they are used by their owners for recreational purposes on days out of work. They are built on land purchased from private owners. They are not registered as recreational houses but as typical residential houses, so no separate register is kept for them and there are no special regulations involved.

The legislation presently in force provides that local authorities are free to allocate land in poor soil areas (bonitation classes V and VI) owned by the communes for non-agricultural uses for holiday housing. However, the development of holiday homes raises a lot of controversies regarding environmental and landscape protection, so planning documents do not envisage such development in localities in landscape parks and health resorts. On the other hand, in localities which make such areas available the practice to allocate and sell larger plots for this purpose is becoming widespread in order to avoid excessive concentration of buildings.

SECOND HOMES SETTLEMENT AS A FACTOR OF URBANISATION OF RURAL AREAS IN THE POLISH CARPATHIANS

Villages which are attractive for tourism purposes are generally characterised by a high demography dynamics which often results in a significant increase in the number of new houses built in addition to existing development (Górz 2003). This leads to significant transformations in the village spatial layout, and sometimes to new developed areas within a locality. Such processes have been recorded in many Polish Carpathian villages, but the localities in which large numbers of secondary residences have been built recently show the greatest physiognomic and spatial changes in rural architecture and settlement.

It may be assumed that around 12,000-15,000 individual houses performing the recreational role may be found in the Polish Carpathians. The largest numbers of secondary residences have been built in Silesian Beskid (mainly in Brenna, Wisła, Szczyrk and Ustroń), the Beskid Żywiecki, Beskid Sądecki and Beskid Wyspowy Mts, in the Podhale and in the Carpathian foothills (Fig. 1). Such facilities show a high concentration in river valleys and by artificial lakes (Rożnowskie and Żywieckie Lakes). An important area

of the concentration of secondary residences is the Raba river valley, where the largest numbers of such residences have been built within the boundaries of the Myślenice and Peim communes. In these regions secondary residences often constitute over a half of existing rural development areas. Outside these areas, many such facilities may be seen on the slopes of Mt Babia Góra and in the villages of Zawoja and Stryszawa. It is also present on the dam lakes on the Dunajec, Soła and San rivers. Recently, a growing interest in buying plots in the Bieszczady (in particular in the Solina commune) and in the Beskid Niski, as well as in other parts of the Carpathians, has been noted.

Owners of secondary residences in the Polish Carpathians are mostly residents of large conurbations situated near the Carpathin foothills, such as the Upper Silesian conurbation (2.8 million residents) with neighbouring Rybnik agglomeration (0.6 million), the Kraków metropolitan area with satellite towns (0.8 million), Bielsko-Biała (0.18 million), Rzeszów (0.17 million) and Tarnów (0.12 million). Considering the importance of the Carpathians as Poland's recreational area, residents of other regions of the country (in particular Warsaw) also have their own recreational houses there.

The highest investment pressures have been originated (and may still be seen) in the central part of the Śląskie Voivodeship, where an average population density reaches around 1,900 persons/km². Residents of the Upper Silesian conurbation own second homes in the western part of the Beskidy Mts – Beskid Śląski (Fig. 2.) and Beskid Żywiecki, Żywieckie Lake, as these areas are not far from this conurbation and fast access is available. Kraków residents build their recreational houses nearby in the foothill area and in the Raba and Dunajec river valleys. A good transport access is the basic factor determining the spatial distribution of the facilities discussed. However, as an area becomes densely built-up with secondary residences and land prices go up, city residents begin to seek new, attractive locations which may still be poorly developed.

In quest for quietness, serenity and close contact with nature, city residents build secondary residences outside high-density housing areas. Such facilities are often located in the areas where permanent residences would not be built – on the steep slopes, in the direct vicinity of water, or at a large distance from residential areas.

In the Polish Carpathian mountains second homes are usually built (see Fig. 3):

- A) on the slopes, far from permanent residence areas, near the woods (A1), on forest clearings (A2) or by mountain springs (A3),
- B) along the roads on the slopes,
- C) on the border with permanent residence areas,
- D) within a permanent residence (D1) area or in the hamlets (D2),
- E) in areas between villages or between a village and its hamlets (Mika 2004).

It may be seen that the features of secondary residence locations strictly follow Christaller's model for tourism and recreation location (theory of peripheral areas) (Kowalczyk 1994), which assumes that places distant from human settlements and urbanised areas are particularly attractive in meeting the demand for tourist and recreational opportunities.

A demand for private residences outside the city is so high that secondary homes often concentrate in characteristic clusters (estates). Usually it is a result of:

- the parcelling out and selling of several or more than ten neighboring plots by one owner;

- the purchase of neighboring plots by their prospective owners because of their landscape assets, being close to the forest or water or in order to reduce the costs of the technical infrastructure by joint investment in the building of water intakes and access roads;
- a concentration of secondary residences on a smaller area resulting from the fragmentation of plots available for holiday homes as a result of the growing land prices.
- the allocation of areas for such development in local plans (Faracik 2006; Mika 2004; Szkup 2003).

Among the reasons for the rapid growth in the number of secondary residences in the mountains are economic gains for village residents from the selling the land. In some Carpathian villages local people consider the selling of plots for recreational houses as an easy way to earn money rapidly. This situation occurs in high unemployment areas being attractive locations for holiday housing development. Often local residents pressure on the local authorities to make more agricultural land available for housing development in their planning documents. Land is also underpriced, which is an additional factor stimulating a demand for recreational areas (Mika 2001).

In some parts of Poland, in particular in the Polish Carpathians, the development of individual recreational housing settlements and the resulting changes in land uses have changed the natural landscapes into urbanised, and sometimes even highly urbanised landscapes. “Recreational conurbations” consisting of several dozen or even a few hundred facilities may be seen in some places. Sometimes an excessive concentration of buildings and the disordered, chaotic architecture involved spoil the easthetic appeal of mountain landscapes. Numerous examples of secondary residences which do not meet technical and sanitary requirements and are located outside the planned development area and constitute a land use violation, are particularly harmful to the environment. In many rural settlements the development of the local water and sewage system lags behind the rapid development of recreational settlements. As a result, the chaotic, poorly planned development of secondary residences often leads to a deterioration of tourist assets of the localities in question.

CONCLUSIONS

Holiday making in second homes has currently become a leading trend in individual recreation in Poland. Since the 1990s, a real secondary residence boom has been recorded in Poland and is likely to continue in the nearest future. It will be accompanied by an intensified process of residents moving away of the cities to live in the country, in particular as regards people reaching the retirement age. So this form of recreation may be considered a symptom of urban sprawl in metropolitan areas, and, in its social context, the suburbanisation of certain social groups in the cities.

Secondary recreational residences play an important role in the transformation of rural recreational areas in the Polish Carpathians. This is a permanent phenomenon, developing further as a result of urban sprawl and the increasing prosperity of residents. In terms of settlement patterns, this phenomenon contributes to permanent investment and urbanisation in rural areas of tourist interest. Sometimes, e.g. in areas surrounding national

parks (e.g. Babiogórski National Park) development is in conflict with the environmental protection function.

The following characteristics are important determinants of the development of second residences in the Polish Carpathians:

- a) the process dynamism and spontaneity,
- b) permanent development,
- c) spatial concentration,
- d) spatial isolation,
- e) development in areas which have natural and landscape assets,
- f) highly space-consuming development.

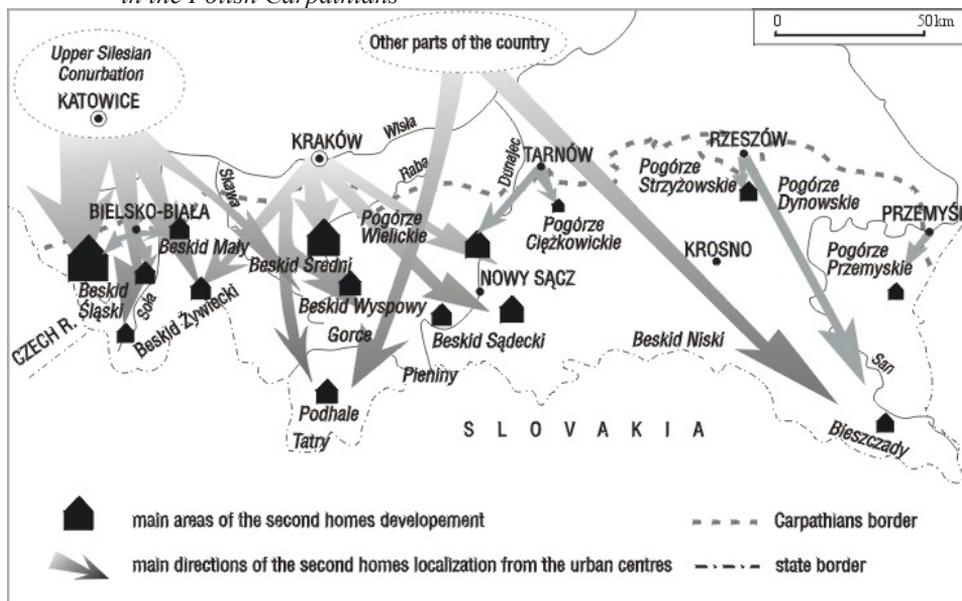
The rapid sprawl of secondary residences results in a shrinking space for recreation in the mountain regions. Development in upper parts of the mountains brings permanent change to their landscapes. While adjusting the area to tourist reception purposes, it reduces a tourist's opportunity to benefit the natural assets. All negative effects of tourist management, e.g. overcrowding the space with facilities, architectural pollution, disorderly development disregarding aesthetic values in managing the tourist space – all this may contribute to a subjective loss in the area's attractiveness and leads to reduced flows of incoming tourism, as the visitors' views on tourist localities and regions attractiveness are connected with a psychological process of how they perceive the environment in which they stay on holiday. Therefore the planning of new tourist infrastructure and modernisation of existing facilities, both collective tourist accommodation and secondary residences, is an issue of a great importance.

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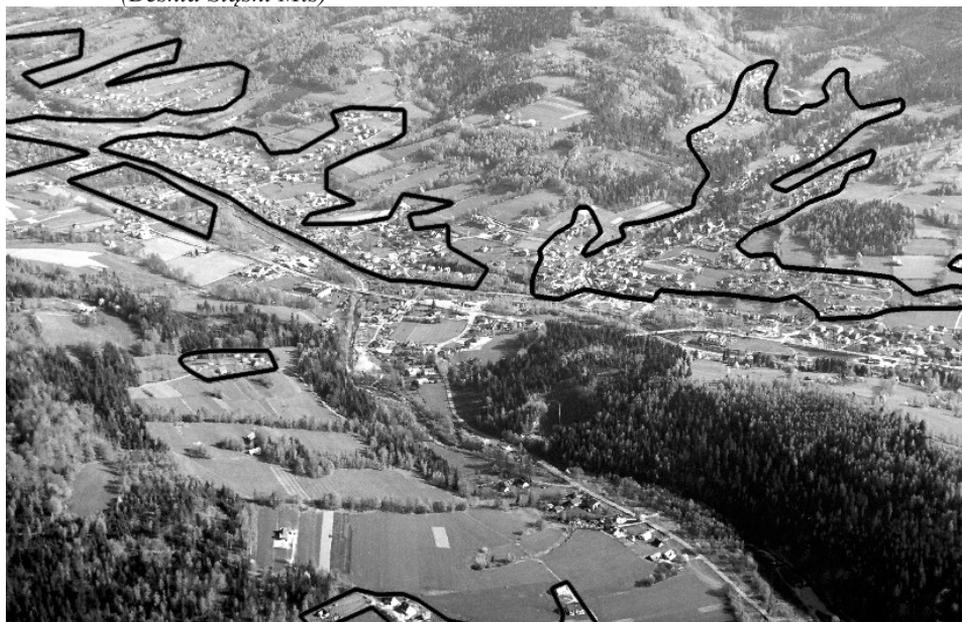
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Fig. 1: Main areas for the development of secondary residences in the Polish Carpathians



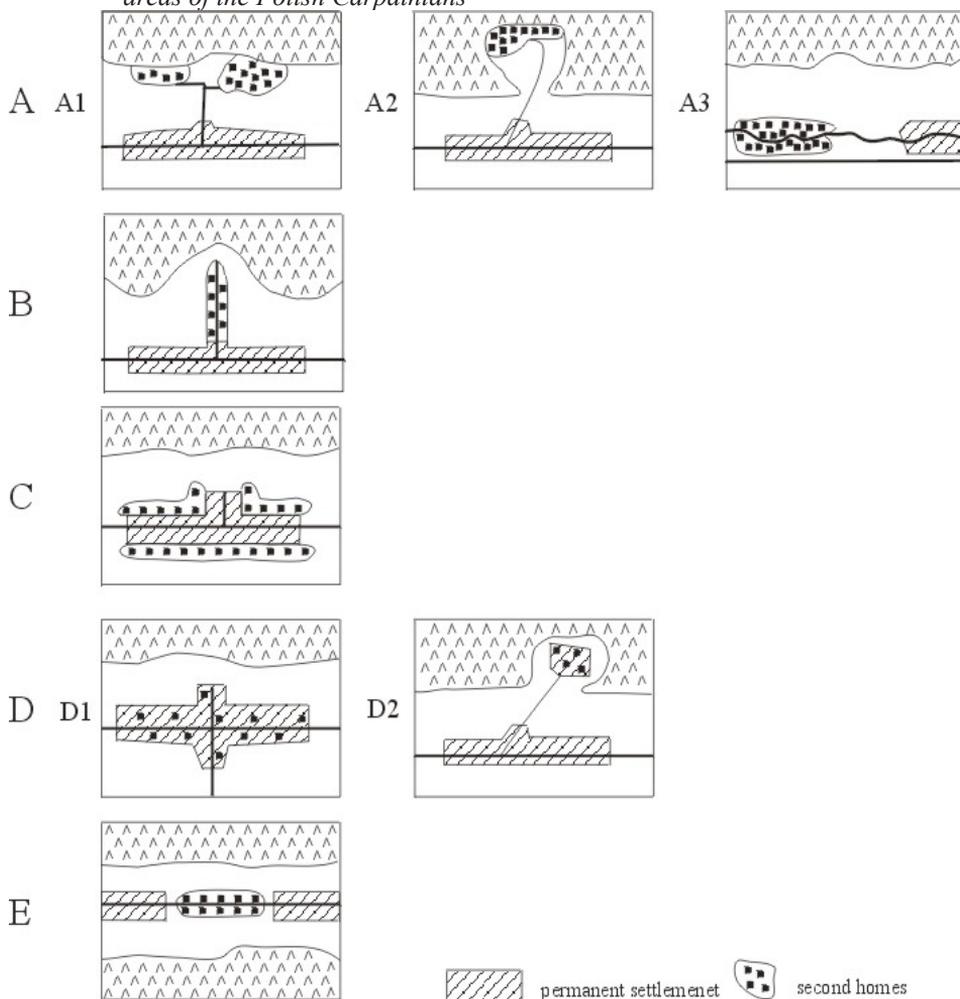
Source: Own study

Fig. 2: Areas of intensive second homes development in Brenna village (Beskid Śląski Mts)



Source: Mika (2004)

Fig. 3: *Characteristic features of secondary residence locations in the mountainous areas of the Polish Carpathians*



Source: Mika (2004)

DRUGIE DOMY JAKO CZYNNIK TRANSFORMACJI OBSZARÓW WIEJSKICH KARPAT POLSKICH

Summary

Wypoczynek w drugich domach jest współcześnie jednym z głównych kierunków rozwoju indywidualnej rekreacji w Polsce. Od lat 90. XX w. obserwuje się dużą dynamikę rozwoju drugich domów na obszarach atrakcyjnych turystycznie. Właścicielami drugich domów w Karpatach Polskich są przede wszystkim mieszkańcy dużych miast położonych u podnóża Karpat. Budownictwo drugich domów jest współcześnie jednym z najważniejszych czynników urbanizacji turystycznej terenów wiejskich w Polsce, co

na obszarach górskich Karpat prowadzi do powstawania konfliktów przyrodniczych, przestrzennych i funkcjonalnych. Wraz rozwojem gospodarki rynkowej od lat 90. XX w. elementem decydującym o możliwościach posiadania własnego domu rekreacyjnego nie są już przywileje społeczne czy miejsce w hierarchii społecznej lecz zasoby finansowe obywateli. Szczególnie sprzyjającym czynnikiem rozwoju drugich domów stała się liberalizacja przepisów w obrocie gruntami.

Na obszarze Polskich Karpat zlokalizowanych jest około 12-15 tys. indywidualnych domów pełniących funkcję rekreacyjną. Najwięcej drugich domów powstało w Beskidzie Śląskim, w Beskidzie Żywieckim, w Beskidzie Sądeckim, Beskidzie Wyspowym, na Podhalu oraz w części pogórskiej Karpat. Duża koncentracja tych obiektów występuje w dolinach rzecznych oraz nad sztucznymi zbiornikami (Jez. Rożnowskim, Jez. Żywieckim). Ważnym obszarem koncentracji drugich domów jest dolina Raby. Ponadto jest ono też obecne nad jeziorami zaporowymi istniejącymi na Dunajcu, Sole i Sanie. W ostatnich latach rośnie zainteresowanie wykupem działek w Bieszczadach (szczególnie na terenie gminy Solina) i Beskidzie Niskim, a także w innych obszarach Karpat i Pogórza Karpackiego. Właścicielami drugich domów w Karpatach Polskich są przede wszystkim mieszkańcy dużych zespołów miejskich położonych u podnóża Karpat, a więc: aglomeracja Górnego Śląska (2,8 mln mieszkańców), aglomeracja rybnicka (0,6 mln), aglomeracja Krakowa z miastami satelitarnymi (0,8 mln), Bielsko-Biała (0,18 mln), Rzeszów (0,17 mln) oraz Tarnów (0,12 mln). Z uwagi na ogólnopolską rangę Karpat jako regionu wypoczynkowego, własne domy rekreacyjne na tym obszarze posiadają także mieszkańcy innych części kraju, szczególnie Warszawy.

Drugie domy są współcześnie ważnym czynnikiem przekształceń wiejskiej przestrzeni rekreacyjnej w polskich Karpatach. Zjawisko to ma trwały charakter i stale się rozwija na skutek rozprzestrzeniania się miast i wzrostu zamożności społeczeństwa. Jako zjawisko osadnicze przyczynia się to trwałego zainwestowania i urbanizacji atrakcyjnych turystycznie terenów wiejskich. Charakterystycznymi cechami tego zjawiska są: dynamizm i żywiołowość, trwałość charakteru budownictwa, koncentracja przestrzenna, izolacja przestrzenna, zajmowanie obszarów cennych przyrodniczo i krajobrazowo oraz znaczna konsumpcja przestrzeni. Efektem szybkiego rozprzestrzeniania się drugich domów jest kurczenie się górskiej przestrzeni rekreacyjnej. Zagospodarowywanie wyższych partii gór zmienia na trwałe ich cechy krajobrazowe. Przystosowując przestrzeń do recepcji ruchu turystycznego, ogranicza się równocześnie turyście możliwość korzystania z naturalnych walorów przyrody, zaś wszelkie negatywne przejawy zagospodarowania drugimi domami, np. przeładowanie przestrzeni obiektami, zanieczyszczenie architektoniczne, brak ładu i estetyki w gospodarowaniu przestrzenią, mogą przyczynić się do obniżenia atrakcyjności turystycznej miejscowości i prowadzić do zmniejszenia wielkości przyjazdowego ruchu turystycznego.

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