



[www.abitarepaduli.com](http://www.abitarepaduli.com)  
[www.parcopaduli.it](http://www.parcopaduli.it)



## **Paduli Park**

Located in the eastern part of Italy, crossed by the ancient commercial route that connects the ports of Otranto and Gallipoli, Paduli Park is a wide centuries-old olive tree wood.

Reknowned since 17th century for production of lightining oil, listed at the London Stock Market and used for public lighting of main european capitals. Actually most of the olive groves are in a decayed state, caused both by an outmoded farming process and by the agricultural sector crisis.

Since 2003, there has been a long collective process involving local institutions, associations, local residents and foreign experts about a new possible idea of a “rural park”. This idea has evolved around new experimental ways to take care and manage the area, redesigning its economy, history, agriculture and hospitality, focusing each idea around the dual aspect of the rural landscape, which are both its productive and contemplative assets.

Parco Paduli is not a institutional project, the idea of the “rural park” comes from the bottom-up: awareness arising from local aknowledgment through the idea of commons. The results are local residents starting to share awareness of the landscape value, the surrounding municipalities directing their urban development strategies accordingly, younger generations introducing alternative new-rural awareness of this valuable land and ultimately, this approach has been taken in consideration as “ experimental project” to be added in the most recent Apulian Region’s Landscape Territorial Plan.

## **Management Project “Living the Paduli”**

In 2011 the work is included within the Regional Programme “Bollenti Spiriti”, which has the double aim to recover public properties and areas and assign them to activities and services (Urban Workshops), and to start, within them, experimental processes of good practices, involving youths in the valorisation of the territory. Therefore “Living the Paduli” is born, coordinated by the LUA and led by 30 youths coming from associations and informal groups, which become concrete in 5 different sub-workshop. Nowadays, thanks to the services and the activities that are developed within, “Living the Paduli” represents a little employment alternative, granting an income thanks to the thousands of visitors per year. The activities/services of the project go from the institution of a temporary and permanent diffuse hotel “Nest the Paduli” (Workshop 1 Diffuse Hospitality), to the organisation of alternative forms of mobility, with the identification of thematic

routes (Workshop 2 Slow Mobility), to innovative typologies of landscape, shared properties valorisation like “Creatures of the Paduli”, “Describing the Paduli”, “Choir of the Paduli” (Workshop 5 Route and Cultural heritage), to the spread of biological methods of rural production and new formula for the environmental care like Lampa! (Workshop 3 Taste – Workshop 4 Agriculture), until the welcome and the sociality, the research, the communication and the promotion of the territory.

The services of the management project “Living the Paduli” are developed in the following thematic workshops so-called and described:

- Workshop 1. **Diffuse Hospitality.**

Services: experimentation of innovative forms of diffuse hospitality: from the auto-building with rural end products to the shelters (biodegradable hotel of the Paduli “Nest the Paduli”) mainly used in mild seasons. The purpose is to host the visitors lovers of the Green Tourism and the management of the diffuse hotel, system of the second houses, used in the historical centres of the municipalities around the Park to revitalize the life of the little towns. The workshop 1 runs also the guest rooms of the workshop 2 “the Cycle-tourist’s House” and the “caseddhra” “Eco-tourist’s House”.

- Workshop 2. **Slow Mobility.**

Services: management of the bike-sharing, planning and management of a guide service of the Park through 5 thematic routes (by bike, on foot, by riding), indicated within the rural road network of interconnection at slow mobility among the urban centres:

- o “*Stone route*”. A path to rediscover the old traces of the Bronze Age among dolmen, menhir, historical rural building of Salento;
- o “*Old-centuries olive tree groves route, among vore and canals*”. A route among the olive tree groves old thousands years on the old rural paths, among canals, natural sinkhole, ponds and canebrakes;
- o “*The Manor farms route*”, an excursion to discover the old rural architectures, the places symbols of the farm life, ideal for the pit-stop, and important view points from which overlook the boundless landscape of the Park;
- o “*Duke route*”, the Sunday walk that a local aristocratic at the end of 800 made among the wonders of his properties, in the shade of the foliage of the old-centuries olive trees, among ponds and temporary lakes;
- o “*Among the Belvedere Wood route*”, among the dirt patch roads and paths that clamber on the Serre of Supersano, looking for the traces of the old Belvedere Wood, extension of oaks and holms that once cover the whole territory of the Paduli.

The activities have been recognized by the Regional Programme of touristic promotion (Discovering Puglia, Puglia Opendays 2013 - 2015).

- Workshop 3. **Taste.**

Services: The workshop 3 is an experimental school of cookery and territory, today it represents the place of the education of the future operator that will give birth to the “Rural Trattoria of the Paduli”. It has been started a census of the spontaneous edible plants, focusing on two aspects, one the importance of the uncultivated soils as places of the valorisation of the biodiversity, the other of the realization of a receipts book that collects the old knowledge of the territorial cookery.

- **Workshop 4. Agriculture and Environment.**

Services: nowadays the workshop 4 runs 600 olive tree groves in free loan for use, involving private owners, oil mills and expert in the oil production, in the experimentation of biological production model, showing how, in a territory known historically for the production of the lamp oil (of poor quality) it is possible to obtain high quality olive oil. For 5 years the oil “Lands of the Paduli” has been produced (rewarded by important reviews and indicated in the “La cucina italiana e ristoranti del Sole 24 ore” magazine), which is celebrated through the event Lampa! Other activities of valorisation of the natural assets are the seed bank, in collaboration with a network of local associations and with the arboretum of Lecce, the census of the temporary ponds and lakes that characterize the area of the Paduli, besides the projects of reforestation of abandoned areas.

- **Workshop 5. Routes and Cultural Heritage.**

Services: Projects of the valorisation of the landscape and shared properties, through the involvement of the inhabitants in the realization of audio walk, the artists and experts to the sensitization towards the landscape values. (Project Describing the Paduli, Creatures of the Paduli, Table of conviviality, Santu Donnu).

After 5 years of research and experimentation, the management project Living the Paduli has started services and activities of valorisation and sensitization of the Park, building the premises for an economic auto-sustainability coming from the sale of the oil “Lands of the Paduli”, from the services linked to the mobility (bike rental and guide), from the hospitality within the structures in management (Eco-tourist’s House and Cycle-tourist’s House), from the management of the diffuse hotel, from the publishing products such as “lamp Stories”, from the workshops, from the conferences and from the Regional Tourist Promotion Programme like Puglia Opendays and Puglia Discovering.

### **The never-never Park**

The Multifunctional Rural Park of the Paduli is not an established Park under the actual laws. The landscape of the Park of the Paduli is all contained in the collective awareness to have before the eyes a cultural and rural centre of 5,500 hectares of old-centuries olive tree groves. The activities managed with spontaneous initiatives, the organizational ability of the 5 associations of the project Living the Paduli, the happiness to work among the trees, the LUA and its participatory workshops, the extended area of the olive tree groves, the canals, the vore, the caseddhre of the diffuse hospitality, the biodegradable nests, the pedagogical games for children, take a walk through the paths of the slow mobility, and more, are all elements of the landscape.

The landscape of the Paduli is creativity, contemplation and rural production. The Park is, first of all, this kind of landscape, before being a place of the constituted authority. It is a word and an image that have deeply entered in the language and perception of its inhabitants. In all this resides its strength.

Ass. L.U.A Laboratorio Urbano Aperto

Ass. Abitare i Paduli

