

Strategic sustainable development and ecotourism in natural ecosystems with archaeological heritage resources: The case of “Korikion Andron” Trail at the Parnassos National Park

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Abstract

The mountain of Parnassos, crisscrossed by a dense network of trails, is one of the ten Mountainous National Parks of Greece (Parnassos National Park). Parnassos network of trails includes numerous hiking and mountaineering routes, with various thematic interests and degrees of difficulty, among which is the “Korikion Andron” trail, which is the subject of the present research. This trail, is of particular ecological, archaeological, geological and scientific research interest. The main purposes of the present research are: a. the promotion of natural environment, biodiversity, landscape, geology, geomorphology, archaeology and mythology, b. the management and protection of the ecosystems and archaeological heritage resources and c. the strategic of sustainable development and ecotourism, in the wider area of the cave “Korikion Andron” at the Parnassos National Park. The appropriate signage and maintenance of the “Korikion Andron” trail, are prerequisites for the promotion and the safe use of the trail.

Geographical location of the study area

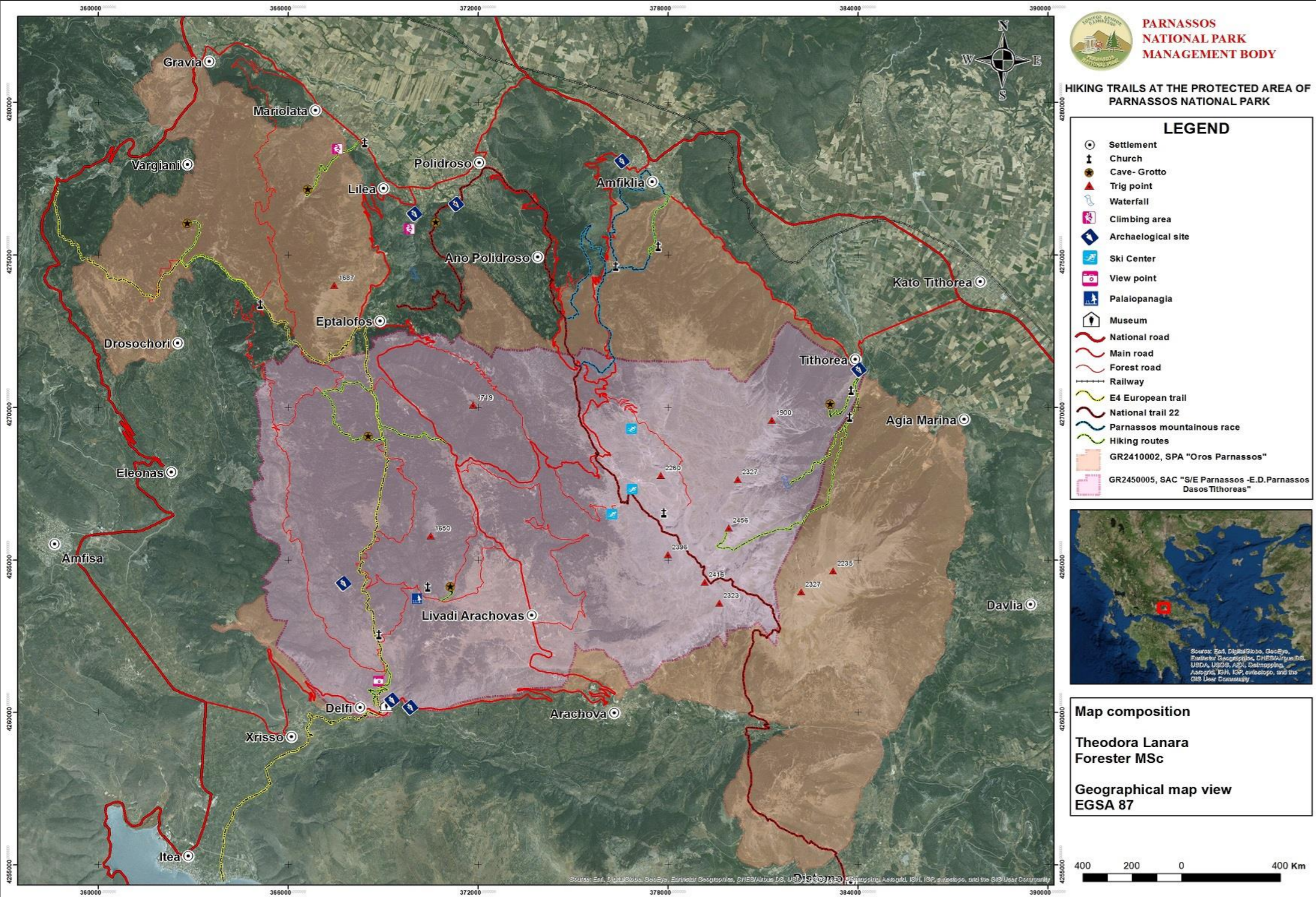


Figure 1: Map of hiking routes at the protected area of Parnassos National Park

A dense network of trails are can be found at Mt Parnassos (Figure 1). “Korikion Andron” trail, the subject of this present research, is located in the south- eastern side of Mt Parnassos in Central Greece, in the prefecture of Fokida. Mt Parnassos, with Liakoura (2,456 m), Kalogiros (2,397 m), and Gerontovrachos (2,396 m) being the highest peaks, is one of most impressive and steep mountains of Roumeli (Central Greece). The main nearby villages are Eptalofos, Arachova, Delfi and Chrissa.



Figure 2: Palaioyouna Mt. (1,650 m) where “Korikion Andron” cave is located and the polje at Livadi Arachovas

Results – Discussion

“Korikion Andron” trail management – promotion and sustainable development

The preservation plan and some moderate customizations that have been suggested, aim to the conservation and protection of the paths’ ecosystem, along with the cultural and archaeological heritage of the area. The plan is based on the fact that a well-structured path network will have minimal implications on the natural landscape, as well as on the path construction. Also, the technical specifications stated in the study aim to resource saving and in minimizing the future maintenance and management of the path.

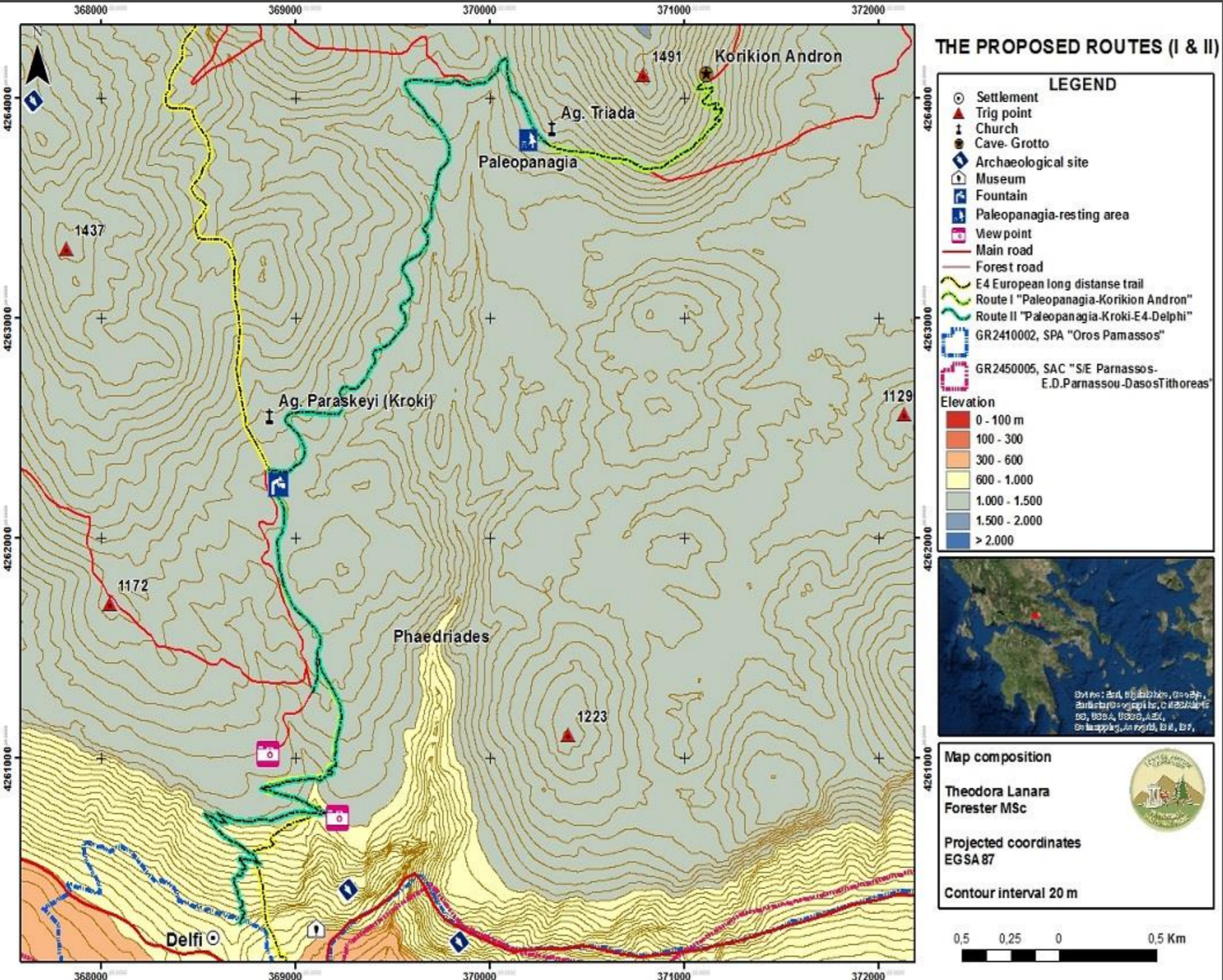


Figure 5 : Map of the proposed routes (Route I &II) points of interest and points of view

Conclusion

Parnassos network of trails includes numerous hiking and mountaineering routes, including thematic trails (nature trails, geological trails, trails, cultural heritage trails). The “Korikion Andron” trail is a combination of thematic trails (Figure 5), since it promotes the unique natural variability of the area, along with its geology, history and culture. The management and protection of the ecosystem and the archaeological heritage, the sustainable development and ecotourism in the area Parnassos Mt., is the main theme of the project. Any interference to the ancient trail that have been made in the past, is minimal and have been conducted by the Forest services. The future work that is proposed on project, based on sustainable development and promotion of the cultural/historical heritage is: a) Work aiming in the conservation and promotion of the paths’ unique characteristics, b) Trail-blazing, c) Improvement of the trail and d) Promotion of the unique identity of the place and its history (ecological awareness, cultural heritage, ecotourism, suggested future trails).

The thematic trails have turned into one of the basic forms of forest recreation serving ecological, educational, nature protection causes, while at the same time, someone can gain important information on the rich history of the area (Figures 3,4). A complete management system aims to the utilization of an areas’ specific characteristics: the views, natural and important historical sites, along with the development of forms of alternative recreation (ecotourism, geotourism, cultural-educational tourism) All the above will aid to the sustainable development of the area. Parnassos Mt is a living laboratory of nature and ecology with its important and sensitive ecosystems. The mountains’ broader area could be a model of alternative forms of mountainous areas. The natural and cultural heritage of the region, is able to act as a development keystone and the local community can become the guarantor of its protection.



Figure 3 : Stinking juniper (Juniperus foetidissima) at “Kroki” area



Figure 4 :The entrance of “Korikion Andron” cave

