JU "Centar za zaštitu, razvoj i promociju turizma" Banovići
About Banovići

Banovići is a mining area in the northeastern Bosnia. The municipality is on the area of 185 km² and at the moment it has a population of about 30.000. The town of Banovići is located in the northwestern slopes of the mountain Konjuh, on the main road connecting two major industrial centers Tuzla and Zenica, and two large cantons of Tuzla and Zenica-Doboj. Banovići bordering municipalities are: Lukavac, Živinice, Kladanj, Olovo and Zavidovići. The town is 36 km from Tuzla, and 110 km from Sarajevo. From Banovići there is a railway leading in the direction of Brčko, and thus is in the
railway network of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The economy of Banovići region is based on mining, and the coal exploitation. Banovići has 19 villages and 74 hamlets. The image of Banovići area has two sides. The first is the natural relief, disturbed by the many years of coal exploitation. The other side of Banovići municipality is the pristine natural slopes of the mountain Konjuh, clean air, beautiful water cascades, natural and artificial lakes, flora and fauna, and benefits for fishing. These are some of the reasons why the excursion sites around Banovići are always gladly visited.
A legend about a place or a town always exists. A true legend about Banovići began on the 7th November, 1946. This is the day when the first convoy of black gold passed along the legendary railway. On that day, the first train loaded with Banovići brown coal left from Banovići to Belgrade. But, if we start from the beginning and take a peek at the yellowed documents stating about the prehistoric, Roman period, the Middle Age, the Turkish era, the 19th century, the period between the two world wars and what has been happening from 7th November, 1946 to the present day, it is inevitable to mention the following.

Prehistory
The immediate area of Banovići municipality until now is archeologically unexplored, which does not mean that this area was not inhabited in the Neolithic period and that there are no remains of mankind from that ancient history. The area of Banovići is expecting archeologists, researchers who will pass their final judgment. The oldest known settlement on the territory of Banovići municipality is “Gradina” in the village of Tulovići. It is a hill 510 m above the sea level with a large flat clearing on the top which was surrounded by a stone wall. The foundations of this wall, about 2 meters thick, can be seen. The mortar or any other bonding material was not used when constructing. Simply, the large stone blocks were selected from the nature and laid in the walls. From “Gradina” extends the view of few tens of kilometers. It was a living space and shelter in case of the enemy surprise attack. The houses were located within the wall and its vicinity. They were built of wattle above the excavated pit and glued with mud (dugouts). The main occupation of these prehistoric men was the livestock farming and their social reputation depended on the number of livestock. Their dead were buried under a pile of stones, as the Messengers. According to the found remains of pottery, the method and technique of the wall construction, it is certain that this place was inhabited during the Iron Age. An Illyrian tribe had lived there, probably at the beginning of the first millennium BCE. In the battles with the Celts, Illyrians began to create larger tribal communities that will be especially secured in the later battles with the Romans.

The Roman period
The last territory conquered by the Romans on the Balkan Peninsula was the central Bosnia which probably included the area of Banovići. Union of the Illyrian tribes Desidiate, that inhabited this area, offered fierce resistance to the Roman legions for three years in order to preserve their freedom. Several Roman coins were found in Litva and Banovići Selo. The coins date from the period of the Emperor Caracalla and Gordian (3rd century). This place might have been sparsely populated in Roman period or even uninhabited, and the money found probably arrived due to commercial and military communications through this area.

Middle Ages
According to the sources and deposits of salt in the salt area, the whole area in which they occurred and Banovići was called Soli in the Middle Age. As a border area of Bosnia it often changed masters. In the beginning for the long period it was under the rule of Byzantium. In the 10th and 11th century it was a part of Serbia of Dukes Caslav and Bodin. After the Croatian State had joined Hungary, the Soli county comes in the direct neighbourhood of this powerful state (1102) of Hungarians. It was fateful for this region, for it stayed through the entire Middle Ages, with brief interruptions, in the interest sphere of Hungarian kings. At the time of Kulín Ban (1180 – 1204) this county, with the area of Banovići, enters within the Bosnian state for the first time. At that time new religious teachings were spreading throughout Bosnia and this region, which were brought by the Bogomils banished from Serbia and Dalmatia. In the 13th century the Hungarians allocate the area of Usora and Soli in a separate “banovina” (an autonomous province) under the immediate rule of the Hungarian kings. Probably from this period originates the ancestor of Božičko Banović who had a title of a “ban” for this area. The area of Banovići municipality, as well as the entire northeastern Bosnia, has been very little investigated. However, to this day, a significant number of medieval necropolises have been known. Among them is the “stećak” (tombstone) of Božičko Banović in the village of Banovići Selo, about which will be discussed in the following pages of this brochure.

The Ottoman period
Following the fall of Bosnia under the Turkish rule in 1463, the Hungarians were able to occupy and retain the northern part of the Soli county (later the Tuzla “nahija” (Turkish administrative district)) to the Spreča River, so that Banovići remained in the Turkish hands. During the military and territorial division of Bosnia this area along with area of Banovići constituted Tuzla Captancy. A part of the Banovići municipality inhabitants as well as of other settlements in the area of Tuzla, probably are descendants of the medieval Bosnian population that embraced Islam during the Turkish rule. This is evidenced by the fact that the Muslims from the village Banovići buried their dead for a long time around the “stećak” of the Christian Božičko Banović. The Dramešin county was located in the “nahija” Koraj, sanjak Zvornik, “ejalet” (province) Bosnia, as stated in a list of Turkish sipahi from 1711. In the Dramešin county there were some villages mentioned which were land properties (“spahiluk”, “timar”) of more Turkish aghas and beys such as Predražići, Banovići, Podgorje, Grivice, Gornja Vihća, Lučići, Turija and Tatanzica. The Dramešin county as a geographical and administrative term was lost during the 18th century.

Occupation
The occupation of BiH started on 29th July, and was completed on 20th October 1878. Frequent wars, rebellions and riots had left serious consequences on the area of Banovići. Many people died, and the population impoverished. According to a description of the occupation, Banovići is a small place, remote and hard to access, covered in dense forest. At Konjuh, the forest was so thick that in the middle of a sunny day up to the crown of the centuries-old trees dominated almost complete darkness. There was a “han” (inn) then in Öskova, and in Mačkovac there was the Forest Administration. At that time the exploitation of mineral and forest resources began. The right to exploit was given to private capitalists on lease by the Austrian government. But it had little effect on Banovići, because the mines were not opened even though in many towns in the region the deposits of coal were discovered. Only during the old Yugoslavia, the first mines were opened in the area of Banovići and since then this area has begun to prosper again.

Between the two wars
At the same time along with the opening of the mines, in the Banovići basin there was the establishment of the first labor organizations. The proximity of one fairly developed industrial center – Tuzla contributed to it. For activating Banovići miners the highest merits go to Ivo Marjanović, Đemal Goletić, Fehim Hodžić and others. In 1938 they were able to launch several successful strikes one after the other. These frequent strikes happened due to the wage reduction. Ivo Marjanović, an experienced union worker and convinced and organized communist with more years of service who was convicted due to his revolutionary activities, was responsible for class guidance of the Banovići miners. It caused a great disapproval among the miners, so a large group of them went to Sremska Mitrovica where Marjanović served
his sentence and they managed to obtain his release.

1941 – 1945
The situation in the Eastern Bosnia was very complex in military and political terms, so the preparations for the armed uprising began at the beginning of June 1941, and chroniclers noted that a dozen of people from Banovići joined the Partisans in the same year. First insurgent action in Banovići region happened on 7th December 1941. Stopping exploitation of Banovići mines for the purpose of enemy are also actions in this area. In July 1943 the Second Proletarian and Seventh Banija Division reached the Spreča valley and the Banovići area. They immediately started the destruction and disabling the mining plants. The pits were submerged, and mine buildings were burned. Thus, the exploitation and therefore the supply were disabled for a long time. The plants were destroyed in Musići, Banovići, Begov Potok, Đurđevik and Radina. Fights were lead here at the beginning of 1945 during the operation for the defense of Tuzla. In April of that year Banovići finally became free.

The railway – the creation of today’s Banovići
The idea of constructing a railway, which would connect the rich coal deposits of the Banovići basin with the main roads, and through them to distant consumption centers, existed before the Second World War. After the war, even in the period of reconstruction of the country from the war destruction, before the start of the planned construction of socialist economy, this was one of the first large-scale investment projects. For the future five-year plan in free Yugoslavia it was necessary to provide a solid raw material base. Rich deposits of Banovići coal, relatively high-calorie for our standards, with very favourable exploitation conditions, encouraged the highest leading economy entities to decide at the beginning of 1946 to start the construction of this railway. It was anticipated and planned that the railway is to be completed in seven months. That task was completed in a record short time. In mid-March 1946, the construction department of the then Ministry of Transportation received an order to access the performance of the preparatory work. The study on the construction was finished in less than a month. On 1st April, the preparations started and that date was the Day of the beginning of youth work actions. On 1st May, the first youth brigades started work on the 92 km long railway Brčko-Banovići. During the railway construction, 1,361,680 (cubic meters) of dirt and 134,460 (cubic meters) of stone was excavated. Two tunnels were built in the length of 667 m and 22 bridges with a total length of 455 m.
The economy of Banovići municipality leans on the energy sector, specifically on the mining sector on the basis of which the town was founded. Apart from coal, which is a basic ore, there is a stone mine and several companies in the metal industry. One of the main economic resources available in Banovići municipality is the high-quality high-calorie coal which has been and remains a fundamental assumption for economic and social development of the municipality. Brown Coal Mines “Banovići” in Banovići, joint-stock company, started operating back in 1946 when the war-torn country needed coal as an energy source in industry, and the purpose of which the railway Brčko – Banovići was constructed in 1946.

History

Mines in Banovići were established in November 1946, as Brown Coal Mines “Tito” Banovići, upon completion of the Youth Railway Brčko – Banovići. In the first year the mines had less than 696 employees and the production of 97,412 tons of coal. A year later the number of employees was reduced to 462 and the annual production reached 491,42 tons of coal. In 1982, after the new excavators had arrived and intensive surface mining had started, the number of employees increased to 3,635, and the annual production reached 2,392,705 tons of coal, and that was the largest production in the history of the mine in 1990. By 1991 the production stagnated, and the number of employees increased to 3,835 workers. At the beginning of the aggression on BiH, the number of employees began to decrease dramatically, and in the first war year the annual production fell down to 938,670 tons, with a downward trend so that in the post-war years it ended with 317,089 tons. During the war period the mines in Banovići operated within the Coal Mines “Tuzla”, by the so-called “Thermal Power System” (TPS). Epilogue of the four-year war production of 1,742,248 tons was fatal, devastated production capacities, depleted deposits, and outstanding debts on behalf of the undelivered amounts of coal exceeded 12 million BAM. After the war production increased, but it was obvious that working together under the umbrella of the Coal Mines “Tuzla” is a serious impediment to the consolidation and development. At the end of 1998, the Mines separated and continued to do business as Brown Coal Mines “Banovići”. Soon, with the help of the then Government of FBiH, five most modern dumper trucks were bought. The production increases first to a million in 2001, and then to 1,2 million in 2002 and just under 1,3 million a year later. A new page of the Mines history was opened in 2004. At the end of May the first shareholder’s assembly was held at which the decision was made on the organizational transformation into a joint-stock company, in which the state becomes the owner of 69,3 % of the company’s capital, and the workers 30,7 % of the capital. The Supervisory Board, the Audit Committee and a new Management Board were appointed. Financial year of Brown Coal Mines “Banovići” ended in the record production of 1,328,169 tons of separated coal and overburden of 7,791,529 cubic meters of solid mass. The final account shows a record profit of 4,7 million BAM. The results achieved in production, overburden, economic and financial operation, regular salaries to employees and 2,5 million allocated for equipment procurement classify the Company among the most successful in the BiH economy.

The Mine in Banovići exploits at three open-pit mines and one underground pit.

The company employs about 2,700 workers and annually produces about 1,5 million tons of black “gold”. Apart from the domestic market, it exports in the neighbouring countries. Since 2005 it has become a member of EUROCOAL, the European Mine Association and therefore become the first mine in BiH which managed to stand side-by-side with other authoritative mines from Europe.

Long-term development of the Mine and the economy of Banovići is based on the construction of the Thermal Power Plant of 300 MW /350 MWA power, with the support of the Banovići Municipality and the FBiH Government, which should provide secure placement of coal, production of electricity and thermal energy, creating new jobs and raising the standards of employees. Encouraging the construction of other commercial facilities such as the Cement Plant and other service and production facilities are also part of long-term plans of this very successful giant in Banovići. The goal of building the Cement Plant is the cement production from by-products of the Thermal Power Plant and deposits of marl.
The town of Banovići as not many other towns in Bosnia and Herzegovina can commend with its medieval past, clearly proven and confirmed. In the area of today’s municipality of Banovići are the remains of the past dating from the Middle Age, and earlier. As the most significant buildings of the medieval period, there were the remains of the fortress on the hill Gradina in the village Tulo- vići and “stećak” of Božićko Banović in Banovići Selo. Present name Banovići owes to the local aristocratic family. It originates from the Middle Ages, before the arrival of the Ottoman Turks into this area. It was found in Stokavian ground in the 14th century, and geographically is placed in Banovići Selo, local community of Banovići municipality.

Regarding its form, the “stećak” belongs to the group of gabled tombstones with
The plinth measures are 2,20 x 1,00 x 0,20 m, and gabled tombstone 1,81 x 0,75 x 0,67 m. It is well processed and oriented in the direction west-east. It is decorated and has inscription, decorative motifs are of woven rope along the edge and a double spiral with a rosette on the east front side. On the side there is the inscription in five lines. This inscription has been declared a national monument of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The inscription in Bosnian language is: “Here lies Božićko Banović, on their noble land in Dramešina, and it is set (stećak) by Hlapac and I Bogdan and I Rajko with brothers.” (M. Vego, 1970, 61).

The inscription of Božićko Banović was written in constitutional “bosančica”, native Bosnian script.
**Gradina and the Turkish graveyard**

The area of the present Banovići municipality in the medieval Bosnia was part of the Dramešin county whose center was in the fortress Gradina (Figure 1). By the end of the 18th century, there was an imposing fortified stone town on this site. At the end of the 18th century the walls of this town were partially demolished for the purpose of constructing a new fortress in Tuzla, and the stone was transported to Tuzla. By the mid-twentieth century there were traces of 1 m high stone walls at this location, while today only foundations of this once imposing stone construction can be noticed. Today village Tulovići is one of the local communities within the Banovići municipality.

Within the Turkish conquests in medieval Bosnia in 1463 this area came under Turkish rule. Dead Turkish soldiers were buried near the fortress on the nearby hill during the conquest of the town on the hill Gradina, according to some sources led by the Sultan Fatih.

Around Gradina in Tulovići there are several old graveyards, and on one of them (between Gradina and Draganja) Ottoman soldiers killed in the conquest of the town are believed to be buried (Figure 2). This is indicated by the beautiful
tombstones decorated with numerous decorative motifs. Particularly outstanding is the grave with the distance of the head tomb and the tomb below the feet of three and a half meters (Figure 3). It is believed that an officer of the Turkish army, originally from Egypt (Mislimli), was buried under this tomb. Due to its size and location (high place by the road) it is concluded that it was an important person, in military or in religious hierarchy. 

Apart from this tomb, many other are very interesting due to their shape and the symbols carved on them (swords, various ornaments symbols, etc.). The total area where these graves are is larger than 0.4 ha, and there are dozens of tombstones in this area which stand out due to their shape, beauty, symbols.
Tourist narrow-gauge railway track with the Museum of Mining and Railways

The project of the tourist narrow-gauge railway Banovići-Mačkovac-Zlača, with the Museum of Mining and Railways and the station building, the realization of which is ongoing, represents one of the most important projects for the development of tourism, but also of Banovići economy. The fact taken into account is that the project implementation shall open up possibilities for new employment and for making use of the social standards capacities, especially the hotel “Zlača”, the tourist and catering complex which is considered to be one of the most popular destinations in the Tuzla Canton and BiH.

There is a range of comparative advantages such as the availability of complete railway infrastructure of the narrow gauge, with steam engines which are the world's rarities and unique items and what needs to be emphasized, they still operate.

Banovići Mine is the only one in the world where the steam engines for the narrow-gauge railways still transport coal from the mines to the separation. It also should be noted that in the postwar period around 10,000 steam engines and railway rarities fans from all over the world have visited the mine, and that the Brown Coal Mine has become recognizable by the fact that one of its steam engines entered the catalogues of railway rarities around the world as the world's unique item and it has found its place even in the catalogue of railway rarities printed by the Japanese.

The Museum of Mining and Railways will be constructed across the administrative building of the Brown Coal Mines “Banovići”, joint-stock company Banovići and it would be the first museum of this kind in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the museum part, there are an open-type museum and a closed-type museum. The closed museum is a facility made of solid materials, basically resembles a form of a mining lamp. The museum in the closed area gradually becomes the open part. The whole area around the facility is treated as a museum in open and with a good selection of exhibits and heavy machinery there is an impression of being on one of the open-pit mines.
ZOBIK

The most beautiful resort Zobik nested in the area of the mountain Konjuh, with the mountain house “Varda” with the accommodation capacity of 20 beds, beautifully decorated “šadrvani”, fireplaces, tables and benches, and arranged grounds for football, basketball and volleyball, and the parking space. Hiking trails are popular for mountain climbing and they are the path to the heart of the mountain Konjuh. Zobik is 17 km away from Banovići. The Mountaineering Society “Varda” Banovići operates and manages the mountain house Zobik. There are three mountaineering actions every year.
1. Excursion to Zelemboj, performed on 2nd January;
2. Mass excursion for citizenship to Zobik called “Greetings to Spring”;
3. PPK (MTK – the Mountain Trail on Konjuh). This spring excursion for the hikers and other nature lovers has become the excursion of the CANTON and sometimes there are over 3000 participants. In the last 15 years an excursion called “Veljača” is regularly carried out in February.

The Mountain Trail on Konjuh was previously performed last weekend in June, and now it is performed in September as part of the Day of our municipality.
MAČKOVAC

In the beautiful pine forest, close to the River Oskova, and 7 km away from the town, there is an excursion site Mačkovac. Throughout the year, especially during the summer, this site is the major destination for rest, relaxation, sports activities, barbequing for local people and the people from other municipalities in Tuzla Canton, and beyond.

The excursion site is on the road to the hotel Zlaca, in the village Mačkovac. It is equipped with 21 tables with benches, 5 fireplaces for barbequing and 3 water taps. In addition to the meadows with the mentioned facilities, the site has a dam, which is used for swimming and fishing in summer. The River Oskova, decorating this resort, is rich in fish, especially trout and huchen. The resort Mačkovac also has a polygon for small sports with stands where football, basketball and volleyball can be played. There is also a restaurant called “Brana” offering all types of dishes as well as overnight stay for those nature lovers for whom one day here is not enough.

Every year, 1st May is traditionally celebrated at the resort Mačkovac where people come from around Tuzla Canton, especially from municipalities of Banovici, Živinice, Tuzla, Lukavac and Srebrenik. They come to celebrate the Labour Day and at least a bit break away from everyday life and enjoy what this resort offers.
Ramći Lake is 10 km away from Banovići and it is one of the most beautiful and cleanest lakes in Banovići municipality. It has a well-maintained beach and access to the lake is approachable and arranged. It is suitable for fishing for it is rich in carp, pike and roach. A lot has been done in recent years on the arrangement of this place and there are projects of great importance which will contribute to even greater attendance at this lake. In addition to this lake there are also Brištica Lake and Bešin Lake in Banovići municipality.
Hotel “Zlača” is about 40 km away from Tuzla, and 12 km away from the center of Banovići and the Worker’s House. It is located deep in the mountain Konjuh and surrounded by unspoiled nature. Exceptionally beautiful mountain environment allows rest, recreation, jogging, walking and entertainment. Close to the hotel flows a very clean and clear river Oskova providing pleasure of swimming and fishing. For passionate hunters the wider area around the hotel is suitable for big and small game hunting. The hotel includes the parking space and grounds for basketball, football, handball, volleyball and tennis, which provides tremendous possibilities for quality preparation and recreation for athletes. The facility has 29 rooms (58 beds) and one apartment. The conference hall is very convenient for business meetings and seminars, gala dinners, cocktail parties and banquets. In the Relaxation Hall one can relax and have fun with chess, cards, film shows, table tennis, etc. The hotel kitchen offers a wide selection of dishes to order, as well as specialties of Bosnian cuisine served in three dining areas and on the hotel terrace, and the bar offers a wide selection of local and imported drinks.
Restaurant „Brana“ Mačkovac

Restaurant „Brana“ is located 4 km from the city center, in the wonderful resorts Mačkovac. The restaurant is equipped with a hall for guests, billiard room, as well as a summer garden in the beautiful surroundings of pine and cypress. It is suitable for parties, weddings, gala lunches and the like. In addition to restaurant menus, the restaurant has at its disposal 10 double rooms with TV, wireless internet and bathroom. Also, in the immediate vicinity of the restaurant is a small sports ground for basketball, football and so on. And because of it, it’s the perfect place for sports activities.
Mountain Konjuh is located immediately above Banovići and it is one of the most beautiful and most picturesque mountains in BiH. Konjuh is not contaminated with mines from the previous war, and therefore it is convenient for all types of tourism.

Along the path to the heart of Konjuh stretches 12 km of asphalt and walk paths leading through the dense coniferous and deciduous forests, clear streams and clearings which offer excellent conditions for excursions, hunting, fishing and hiking. Every year, hikers from all over Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond go to Zelenboj on every 2nd January, and in September they gather at the manifestation called “Mountain Trail on Konjuh”. In 2009, the Government of Tuzla Canton adopted the Law on the Proclamation of the Mountain Konjuh Protected Landscape “Konjuh”, by which this area was placed on the list of cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The area of the protected landscape is 8,016.61 ha, as planned by the Spatial Plan of Tuzla Canton and it extends to the territory of three municipalities. Protected zones which must remain fully preserved, zones where the protection of original state of nature is achieved and zones intended for tourism,
sport and recreation are determined within the protected landscape. The average height of the mountain Konjuh is 1000 meters. Above this altitude ascend the following peaks: Šuplji Javor (1157 m), Vina Kruška (1088 m), Zelemboj (1060 m), Suho Drvlje (1206 m), Zidine (1180 m), Konjuh peak (1328 m) and Javorje peak (1261 m). Regarding flora and fauna, the mountain Konjuh is extremely rich in medicinal herbs, trees, as well as various species of wild animals and birds.
Banovići - map