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### The Historical Town Tesanj

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#### Abstract

Tesanj is a town and the center of the municipality. It is located about 23 km southwest of Doboj and about 127 km northwest of Sarajevo (Geographical coordinates: 44°36'52.68"N, 17°59'15.93"E, elevation: 239). Tesanj was first mentioned under its current name in 1461 in the Charter by which King Stjepan Tomasevic (1438-1463) presented the city to his uncle Radivoj. The wider area of the town of Tesanj is known for its abundant deposits of mineral waters that are bottled and marketed there (under the commercial names 'Celvik', 'Oaza', 'Princess', 'Tesanjska vrela-Tesanjski

diamant', 'Zema-Tesanjski kiseljak') in Bosnia and Herzegovina and around the world. Other natural resources include forests, arable land and pastures. The rich cultural and historical heritage of Tesanj consists of: the medieval Old Town-fortress, Gazi Ferhad-beg's mosque (Charsijska or Sukija mosque) mosque, the Clock tower and the old Eminagica house ('konak'). Today's Tesanj city is known for its strong entrepreneurship in various economic branches. The aim of this paper is a 'study on sustainability' on the concrete example of a city in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**Keywords:** Tesanj, The Tesanj Old Town-Fortress, Water, Sustainability

#### 1. Introduction

Tesanj is a town with about 5257 inhabitants <sup>[1]</sup> located on the border of central and northeastern Bosnia and Herzegovina (Geographical coordinates: 44°36'52.68"N, 17°59'15.93"E, elevation: 239), (Fig 1). It lies on the banks of the Tesanjka river, the right tributary of the Usora river.



**Source:** [https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia\\_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija](https://visitmycountry.net/bosnia_herzegovina/bh/index.php/turizam/27-vmc/geografija), Accessed: 7.25.2022., left Google Earth: Accessed: 7.29.2022., right

**Fig 1:** The historical town Tesanj. Location

In this paper, the author deals with the topic of 'sustainability'. In this sense, he visited the entire area of Bosnia and Herzegovina and collected rich material, which he incorporated for the most part into his books <sup>[2,3,4]</sup> and scientific works.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is an extremely complex area in terms of the natural and social environment and its population. The three most numerous ethnic groups (Bosniaks, Serbs and Croats) live here, and thanks to its rich history, numerous people of different origins: Jews, Germans, Poles, Czechs, Italians, Hungarians...

The composition of the population changed over time, but the material and spiritual traces of their life on the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina remained. The complexity of Bosnia and Herzegovina is also visible in its architecture. Hence, for elaborating on the topic of sustainability (in this work using the example of the Tesnja historical town), the most suitable scientific methodology <sup>[5]</sup> was the most suitable, which is covered in his book: Hadrovic, A. (2007). *Defining Architectural Space on the Model of the Oriental Style City House in Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo and Macedonia, Booksurge, LLC, North Charleston, SC, USA.

## 2. Environment

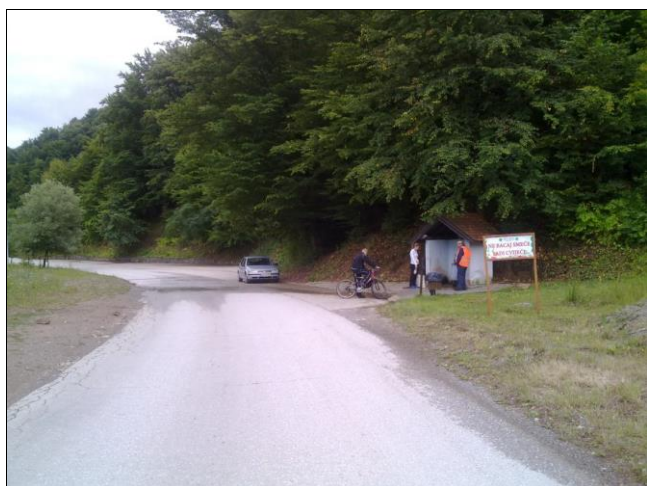
By 'environment' we mean every possibility in the space in which man can realize his existence <sup>[5]</sup>.

### 2.1 Natural environment

By 'natural environment', we mean all those features that nature gave, and on which man (mostly) did not exert his influence: geographical position, geomorphology, watercourses and reservoirs, plant and animal life, available soil, climate <sup>[5]</sup> ...

The most important natural resources of Tešnja are land, forests, water and mineral resources. "Thus, the area of the municipality of Tešanj belongs to the ecosystem of mesophilic forests of hornbeam and common hornbeam. Beech forests are widespread in the altitude zone and occupy cooler areas, and descend to 150 m above sea level in the lowland areas. Willow and poplar forests are located right next to the watercourses, and most of them have been destroyed, and now there is swampy land next to the rivers. On the territory of the municipality, medicinal plants of various kinds grow in the fields, such as chubric (thyme), wild mint, kunica (honey grass), čelinac (bee grass), nettle (nettle), white and black mallow, St. John's wort, dandelion, buckthorn, resistant, thistle, horsetail, horsetail and the like. Given that recently (and in the time of our ancestors) medicinal plants have been used in the pharmaceutical industry, the possibility of using certain species should be investigated, as well as the possibility of growing medicinal plants in our municipality" <sup>[6]</sup>.

The waters of the Tesanj municipality are represented by the following watercourses: a part of the Bosna River (which flows along the eastern edge of the municipality) in a length of about 4 km, the Usora river in a length of about 14 km, with a length of about 5 km shared by the municipality of Tešanj with the municipality of Usora. The longest and largest tributaries of the Usora River are the Tesanjka river, Trebacka river, Radusica, Talin Stream, Grgin Stream, Golubovac and Luzanjka Stream. Significant sources of mineral water are located in the area of Crni vrh, Dolac, Gornja Radusa and Orasje Planja. Currently, five concessionaires deal with water processing in Tesanj: Celvik, Oaza, Princess, Tesanjska vrela – Tesanjski dijamant, Zema - Tesanjski kiseljak <sup>[2,4,6]</sup> (Fig 2, 3, 4).

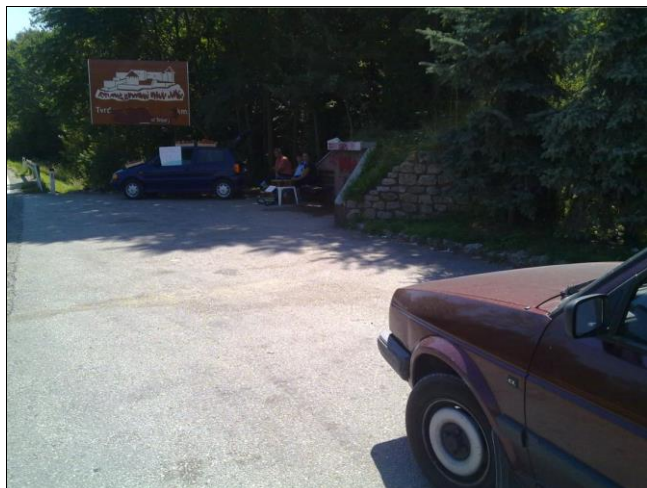


Source: Author (7.25.2011.)



Fig 2: Public fountain 'Oaza' in Tesanj





Source: Author (7.25.2011.)



**Fig 3:** Hair-fountain in Putesici (by the Jelah-Teslic Road)



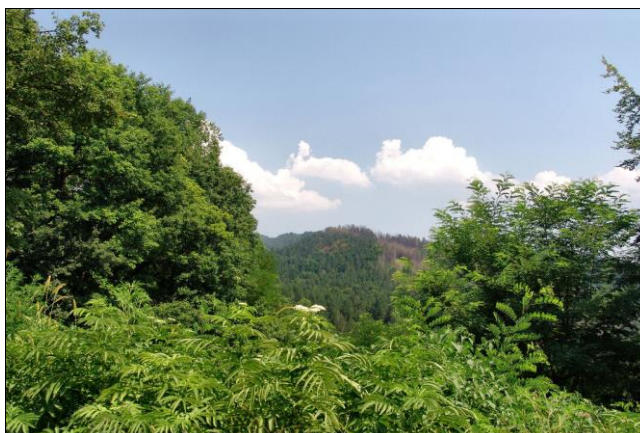
Source: Author (7.27.2016.)



**Fig 4:** Two fountains on the estate of the Korajlic family in Hrvatinovici near Tesanj

Forests and forest land occupy 30.30% of the total area of the current territory of the municipality of Tešanj [6]. PJ „Sumarija Tesanj“ manages an area of 7,324.00 ha within the ŠGP „Natron-Usorsko-Ukrinsko“ and on two economic units, „Tesanjka“ and „Donja Velika Usora II“. Tesanj Forestry manages an area that includes four municipalities: Tesanj, Doboj-jug, Usora and Zenica. Deciduous forests of beech, oak, noble and other deciduous trees dominate there.

High forests occupy an area of 5,455 ha, while the remaining area of 1,869 ha is made up of forest cultures, coppice forests, non-productive forests and bare forests. More significant river courses located in this area are Jasenica, Jezeracka rijeka, Blatnica, Usora and Tesanjka, and well-known springs of mineral waters ('Tesanjski kiseljak', 'Oaza', 'Princess', 'Celvik') are located here (Fig 5).



<https://opcina-tesanj.ba/obavjesenje-o-izvodjenju-radova-obnove-sumskog-prosjeka/>, Accessed: (7.29.2022.)  
<https://www.dinarskogorje.com/crni-vrh-kod-tescaronnja.html>, Accessed: (7.29.2022.)

**Fig 5:** Forests are a significant wealth of Tesanj



Deposits of mineral raw materials are quite modest and limited. According to the geological research carried out so far, there are deposits of lignite and brown coal, then certain quantities of quartz sand, concrete... However, the quantities of all these raw materials are almost insignificant and their exploitation is not profitable, except for the possibility of exploiting stone (Trebacko brodo) and different types quartz sand and gravel <sup>[6]</sup> (Fig 6).



<https://ramblebosniaandherzegovina.wordpress.com/2017/05/04/ramdom-ramble-trebacko-brdo/>, Accessed: (7.29.2022.)

**Fig 6:** Exploitation of slab stone (Trebacko brdo near Tesanj)

## 2.2 Social environment

By Social environment we mean everything that man has created and that separates him from the world of other living beings <sup>[5]</sup>. It includes both physical structures (various material, more or less ordered products of their activity) and the immaterial world that we know with the intellect (science, philosophy, religion, law, morality) through an ordered system of abstract symbols (letters, signs) <sup>[5]</sup>.

**History of Tesanj:** The present name Tesanj was mentioned for the first time in 1461 in the Charter by which King Stjepan Tomasevic (1438-1463) gave his uncle Radivoj, among other things, the town of Tesanj on Usora <sup>[7,8]</sup>. Between the second half of the 15th century and the first half of the 16th century, the history of Tešnja was quite chaotic. Since the Ottomans considered Bosnia a buffer state, it often changed rulers, alternating between Ottoman and Hungarian occupation. In the period (1463-1476), Tesanj was the capital of the Kingdom of Bosnia and the seat of Duke Radivoje Kotromanac (around 1410-1463), a member of the Bosnian royal line. Year In 1512, Tesanj was conquered by the Ottomans. In the period 1512-1521, Tešanj was under the continuous rule of the Ottoman Empire. The most influential Ottoman ruler of Tesanj was the Bosnian sandjak-beg Gazi Ferhad-beg (?-1568). Under his rule, the city developed rapidly. His most significant contribution was the Ferhadija mosque (1563), which is still in the old town and dates from the 16th century. Gazi Ferhad-beg died in 1568 and was buried in the courtyard of the mosque. The inscription on his nišan was in Arabic and is the oldest Islamic inscription in Tesanj.

During the rule of the Ottomans, it was the seat of the nahija, and then of the kadiluk, as well as a cultural and commercial center in the composition of the Bosnian pashaluka. On the slopes of the Dubrava and Borja mountains, on the left bank of Usora, Gazi Husrev-beg's vaqf was founded (1531) with the villages of Omanjska and Kuzmadanje, and the head of that vaqf was Ferhad-beg, the cousin of Sultan Selim the Magnificent. During the Great

(Vienna) War for Liberation (1683-1699) it was besieged by the troops of Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663-1736). It remained under Ottoman rule until 1878, when it was occupied (September 4, 1878) by Austro-Hungarian troops. During the Austro-Hungarian administration, Tesanj developed rapidly, in everything according to the patterns of the Western European administrative and structural organization of cities of that time: roads were built, buildings for the public life of citizens (today's municipality building), hospitals, schools, banks, pharmacies... In addition to the narrow urban structure of Tesanj, during this time, agriculture based on scientific and professional foundations also developed, when Tesanj exported its agricultural products to Western Europe, especially prunes. In 1918, it became part of the Kingdom of SHS, and then the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, as part of the Tuzla Region (1922-1929) and the Drina Banovina (1929-1941). During World War II, it was under German occupation and part of the NDH as part of the large parish of Usora-Soli (1941-1944).

## Architectural cultural and historical heritage of the Tesanj city:

The old town of Tesanj is one of the most significant components of the cultural and historical heritage of the city of Tešanj <sup>[9]</sup>. There are no reliable sources that tell who built the fortress in Tešnje and when. Archaeological excavations in the fortress found prehistoric ceramics and Roman bricks, which indicates the fact that the Illyrians lived here, and then the ancient Romans <sup>[9]</sup>. There is not much information about the medieval city (the time of the arrival and then the life of the Slavs), possibly because the area of Tesanj at that time was not located on the main travel corridors of medieval Bosnia. In written sources, Tešanj is mentioned for the first time in 1461 in the charter by which Stjepan Tomasevic (1438-1463) presented Tesanj to his uncle Radivoj Krstic. Until the arrival of the Ottomans, the authority over the Old Town of Tesanj often changed, mainly between the Bosnian and Hungarian rulers. The Ottomans occupied (1520) the Old Town of Tesanj and held it until 1840, when the town was abandoned. The total area of the fort is 5600 m<sup>2</sup>, while its greatest length is 120 m, greatest width 80 m and circumference 390 m <sup>[4]</sup>.

The fortress consists of two spatial units: the upper town (medieval walled fortress) and the lower town (fortress from the era of Ottoman administration).

The old town is dominated by the well-preserved Gradina fortress, which offers a view of the entire town. The upper city center extends around the castle, that is, at the bottom of this castle. Very early on, this castle became the center of the economic and cultural life of Tesanj. This developed alongside retail and trade in Tesanj. The city center developed rapidly in the 17th and 18th centuries, when about 40 shops and crafts operated there (Fig 7, 9-12).

The clock tower was built in the 17th century. Out of a total of 21 clock towers that were built throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina, this tower is one of the four that are still working properly. It is 18.5 meters tall. This tower showed the Alaturk time until 1890, but in the same year Fehim-beg Smilbegovic brought a new clock that showed the European time. This clock is still working (Fig 11).

The old Eminagić house is the oldest house in Tesanj, it still stands the test of time, and was built at the end of the 17th century (Fig 14).



Extremely valuable cultural and historical monuments of the city of Tesanj are the (Catholic) Church of St. Peter and

Paul (Fig 15) and (Orthodox church) the Temple of the Shroud of the Holy Virgin in Tesanj (Fig 16).



Source: Google Earth: Accessed: 7.29.2022. (Mapped by Author)

**Fig 7:** The Tešanj city. Map of cultural and historical monuments: 1. The Old Tešanj town, 2. Gazi Ferhad-bey's mosque (Carsijska or Sukija mosque), 3. Clock tower, 4. Eminagic house

### 3. Man

Space acquires meaning only if it stands in some relation to man. This relationship ranges from the relations of the already known dimensions of space, through those that can be sensed, to those that are currently beyond the reach of human imagination. In other words, man is a being on the way, a being who continuously learns, a being of open possibilities. The term 'man' is a huge question, the essence of which he himself tries to decipher within his own limits, within the limits of the Earth and the limits of the Universe<sup>[5]</sup>. Together with the rest of the living world, it participates

in the process of circulation of matter and energy in nature, sharing the same fate with it, being born and dying against its will. Endowed with reason, will and feelings, he is the only one in the living world who can discover the given laws of the organization of nature.

One of the most famous inhabitants of Tešanj from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century was the great poet from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Musa Cazim Catic (1880-1915), who devoted his entire life and work to the Tešanj town, where he died in 1915 (Fig 8).



<https://www.preporod.info/bs/article/18671/sedamnaest-zena-dragulja-musine-poezije-u-citanju-ismet-ef-dautovica>, Accessed: 7.29.2022.

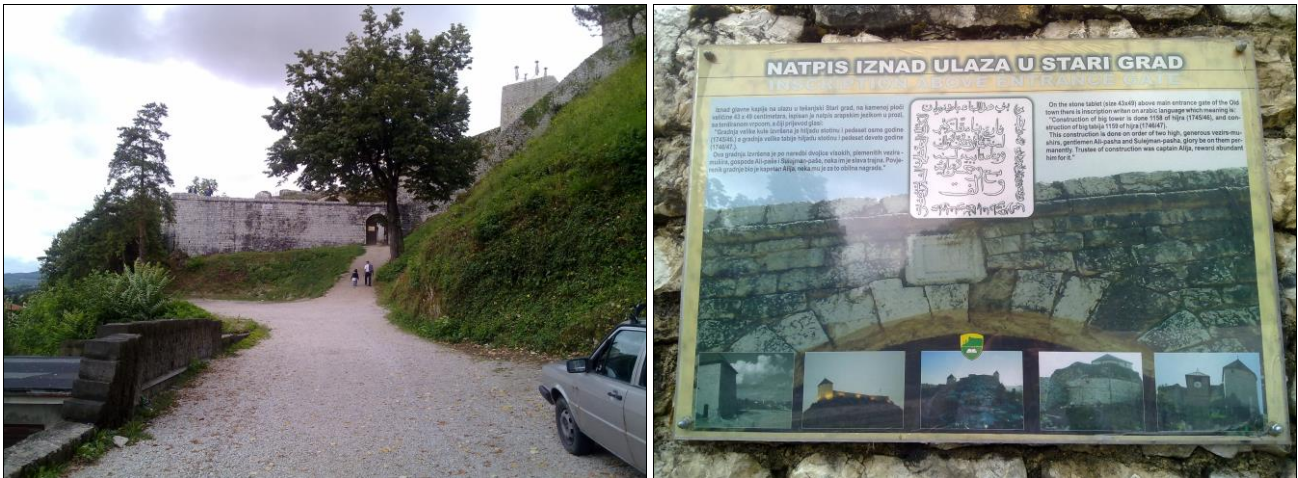
**Fig 8:** The grave of the poet Musa Cazim Catic at the 'Objesenica' cemetery in the center of Tešanj



#### 4. Boundaries: architecture as a framework of life

Boundaries are those places in the environment where the situations encountered are controlled according to very specific human needs. Conditions are all those discovered and undiscovered phenomena in space that have a

stimulating or degrading effect on humans. Borders, therefore, have the task of enabling the selection of influences. In the architectural sense, they enclose, but also include a person in the conditions of a certain environment [5] (Fig 11-15).



Source: Author (7.25.2011.)

**Fig 9:** Access to the Tesanj Old Town (left) and the Inscription above the entrance to the Tešanj Old Town (right)



Source: Author (7.25.2011.)

**Fig 10:** The interior of the Tesanj Old Town



Source: Author (7.25.2011.)

**Fig 11:** View from the upper walls of the Tesanj Old Town and the Tesanj bazaar ('charsiya')





Source: Author (7.25.2011.)



**Fig 12:** The Tesanj Old Town. Views of the surroundings from the Tesanj Old Town

Gazi Ferhad-beg's mosque (Charsijska or Sukija mosque). The mosque was built (1564) by Gazi Ferhad-beg as his endowment. The mosque has been destroyed several times

throughout history, and during the Eugene of Savoy campaign (1697) it was burned (Fig 13).



Source: Author (7.25.2011.)



**Fig 13:** Charsia in Tesanj with a view of the Tesanj Old Town (left) and Gazi Ferhad-bey's mosque (Charsia or Sukija mosque), (right)

The Eminagic inn ('konak') in Tesanj <sup>[9]</sup> is located in the center of Tesanj Old Town, in the immediate vicinity of the Tešanj bazaar ('charsija'). The exact time of its construction is not known, but judging by the disposition, construction

and materialization, it can be concluded that the construction of the building dates back to the first half of the 19th century <sup>[9]</sup> (Fig 14).



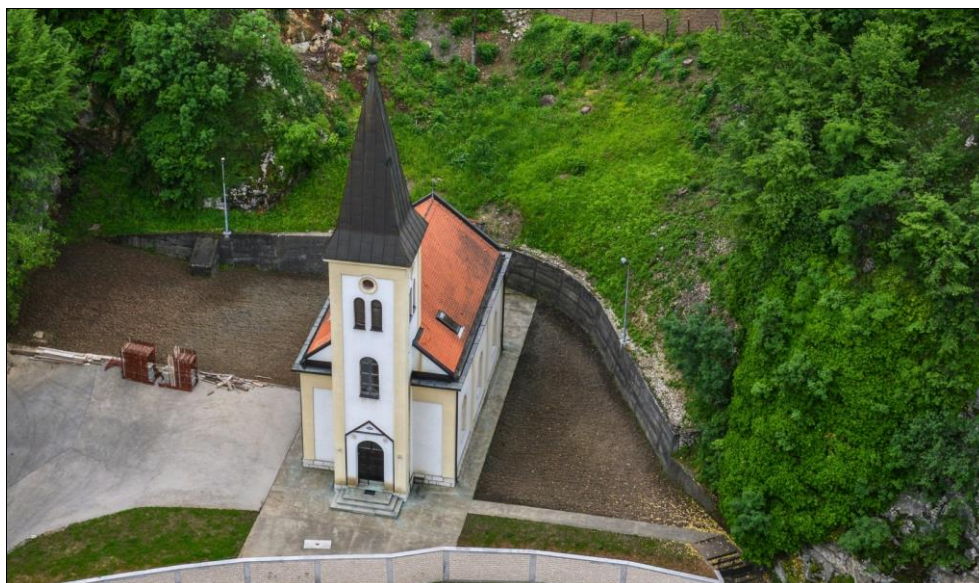
<http://tesanj.net/2016/04/02/poziv-za-posjetugradu-i-muzeju-tesanj/>, Accessed: 14.06.2018.  
<https://www.pinterest.com/pin/432486370461741513/>, Accessed: 14.06.2018.

**Fig 14:** The Eminagic inn ('konak')



Church of St. Peter and Paul was built (1910) during the Austro-Hungarian administration in Bosnia and Herzegovina, according to the project of the architect Josip pl. Vancas. The building is located in the suburb of Zvecanj, at the foot of the Tesanj Old Town. The church is a one-

nave construction made in the eclectic style, with a combination of neo-Romanesque and neo-Gothic styles. The dimensions of the base of the church are 20.60 x 8.60 m (Fig 15).



<https://twitter.com/fototesanj/status/855130925641990144>, Accessed: 14.06.2018.

**Fig 15:** Church of St. Peter and Paul in Tesanj

The Temple of the Intercession of the Holy Virgin is located on the Gric hill in Tesanj. The construction of the church began in 1934, but due to the war circumstances of the

Second World War, it was interrupted and continued after the war to be completed in 1971 (Fig 16).



<https://twitter.com/fototesanj/status/855130925641990144>, Accessed: 14.06.2018.

<http://www.eparhijazt.com/sr/323.tesajska.html/>, Accessed: 14.06.2018.

**Fig 16:** Temple of the Covering of the Holy Virgin in Tesanj

## 5. Conclusion (Perspectives)

By the term Perspective (within the framework of the theory of Architecturally Defined Space), we mean „that dynamic relationship that connects now - future, existing - possible, achieved – desired“ [5]. The emergence of a settlement (hamlet, village) or architectural-engineering structure is never accidental, but is the result of a synergy between the natural and social environment-man [5].

This paper aimed to discover and document these relations. The duration of that settlement, from its creation until today, confirms the strength of these relations. The future of a settlement can be predicted, more or less precisely, based on its past and present.

The municipality of Tesanj realized (2019) the construction

project 'Rastoke Lake Eco Oasis'. This is a project that the Tešanj Municipality wants to arrange in the area around Lake Rastoke for the purpose of better promotion of sports, recreation and tourism [6]. The total area of land at this location is about 60,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and it is located 200 m from the urban center of Jelah. The central part of the Eco Oasis is a lake with an area of approx. 15,000 m<sup>2</sup>, and around the lake there are hiking and biking trails (Fig 17).

With the responsible preservation of natural resources, based on science, morality and awareness of nature 'as a common home of all inhabitants of the planet Earth', with cultural and historical heritage, the life perspectives of the city of Tešnja are open to a meaningful future.





**Source:** Google Earth: Accessed: 7.29.2022. (Mapped by Author) [https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipNi-VVhEctDqAQeWwSJQMAuxE1tunVG\\_sjrn9oI=w1280-h720-pd](https://lh5.googleusercontent.com/p/AF1QipNi-VVhEctDqAQeWwSJQMAuxE1tunVG_sjrn9oI=w1280-h720-pd), Accessed: 7/29/2022.

**Fig 17:** Rastoke Lake Eco Oasis

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