

FORMER NARROW GAUGE RAILWAYS IN NORTHERN VIDZEME



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INSPECTED NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINES (I)

- Smiltene – Ainaži (1912 – 1979)
 - section between Smiltene and Valmiera (35 km)
 - inspection period: 2012-2013
- Valka – Pärnu(Estonia) (1897 – 1944)
 - section between Valka and Rūjiena (44 km)
 - inspection period: 2013-2014

INSPECTED NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINES (II)



Smiltene-Ainaži and Valka-Pärnu railway lines in map (2014).

SITUATION IN NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINE «SMILTENE – AINAŽI» SECTION BETWEEN SMILTENE AND VALMIERA



**Station street and former railway warehouse
in Smiltene.**

Source: Author's photo 2012.

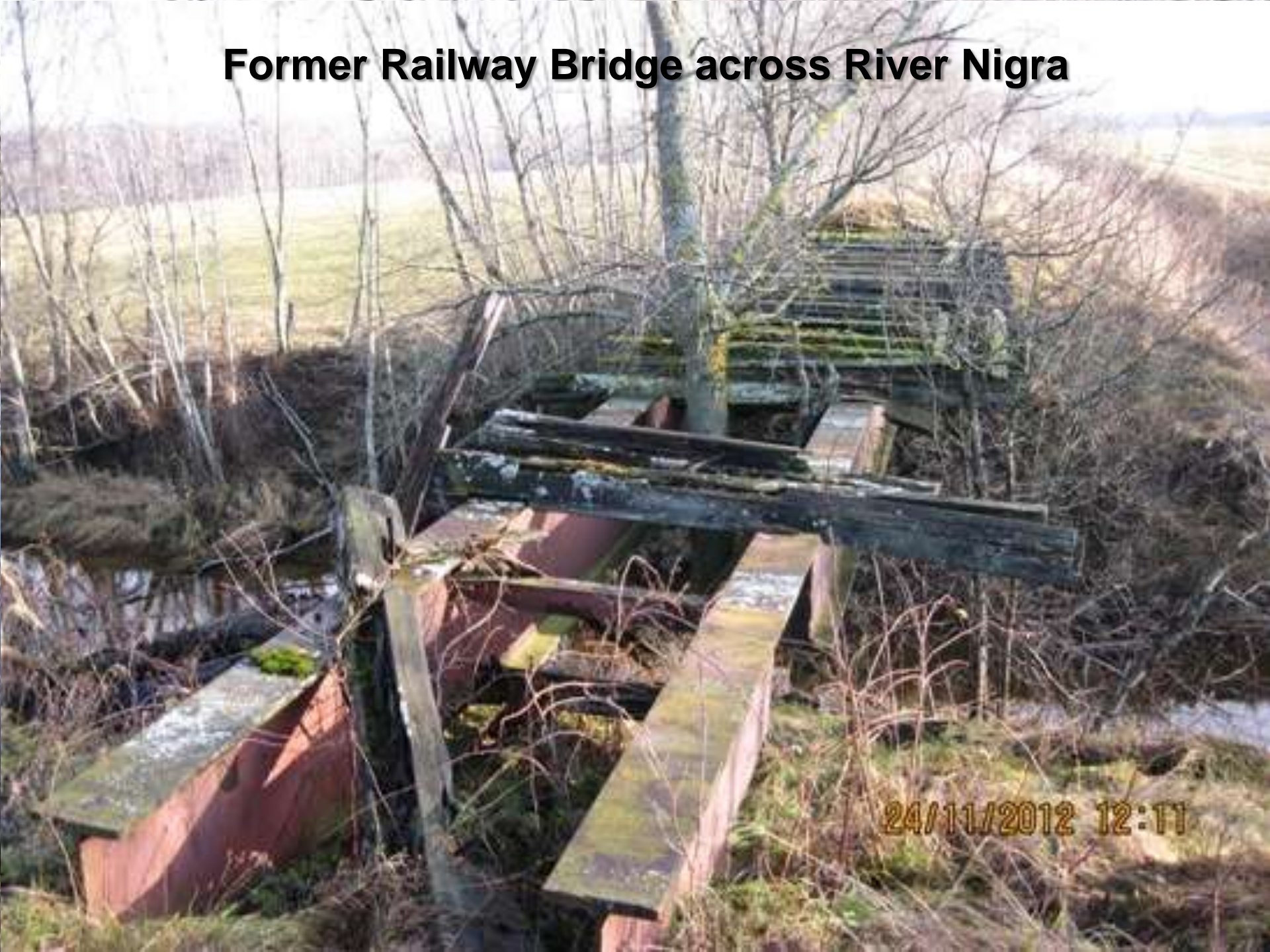


Railway track near Smiltene.

Source: Author's photo 2012.



Former Railway Bridge across River Nigra



24/11/2012 12:11







Former railway station building in Valmiera.
Source: Author's photo 2013.

AUTHOR'S EVALUATION OF «SMILTENE – VALMIERA» SECTION



SITUATION IN NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINE «VALKA – PÄRNU» SECTION BETWEEN VALKA AND RŪJIENA



Narrow gauge station area in Valka.

Source: Author's photo 2013.





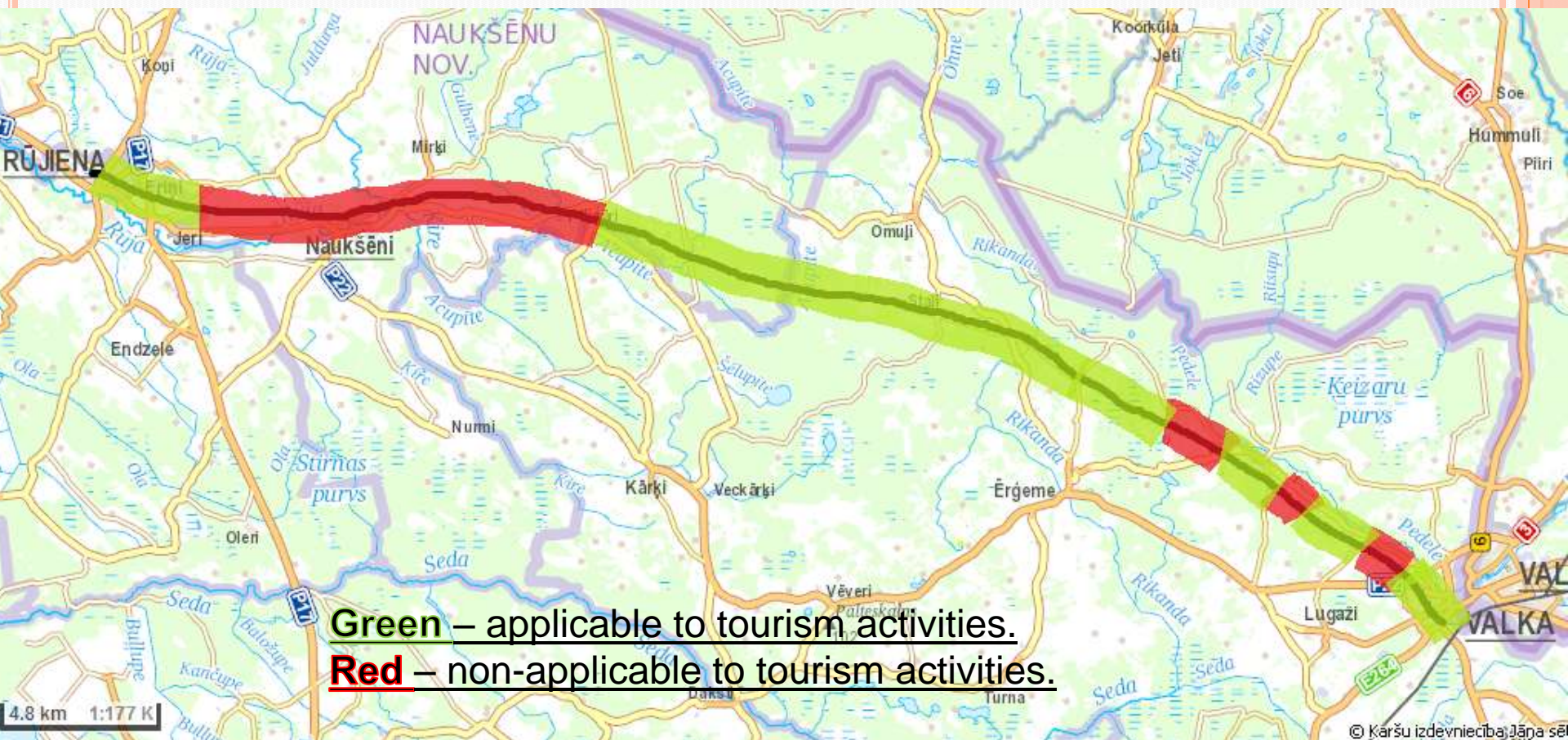






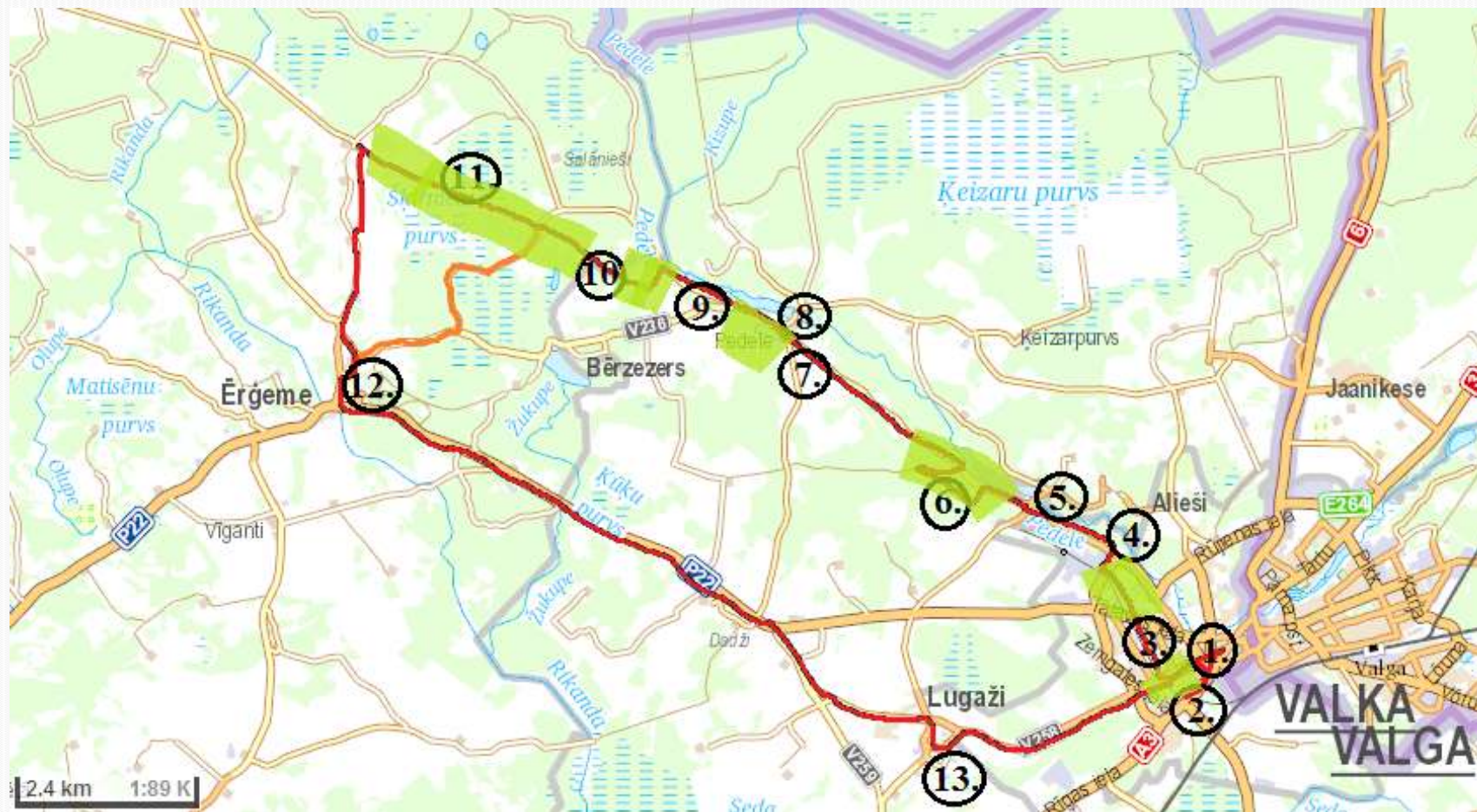
Location of destroyed Rujiena narrow gauge railway station.
Source: Author's photo 2014.

AUTHOR'S EVALUATION OF «VALKA - RŪJIENA» SECTION



- Good possibility to create cyclist route between Valka and Rūjiena for more experienced cyclists, while using both former railway line and roads.

CYCLIST ROUTE IN VALKA AREA



CONCLUSIONS (I)



- 1) Some parts of former narrow gauge railway line between Smiltene and Valmiera are usable for tourism, but there are not enough tourism attractions;
- 2) Many parts of former narrow gauge railway line between Valka and Rūjiena are usable for tourism;
- 3) The best possibilities to create cyclist (or hiking) routes are near most populated areas;
- 4) It could be possible to improve greenway-creating chances if narrow gauge railway tracks could be managed as part of tourism infrastructure;

CONCLUSIONS (II)



- 5) Major problems are: bad infrastructure, lack of financial resources and local inhabitants' indisposition to cooperate;
- 6) Many parts of railway line sections Nowadays are managed by local inhabitants, who own that land; they don't like visitors too much;
- 7) There are necessities to:
 - Create positive cooperation with locals;
 - Attract financial resources from investors and EU projects.

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Narrow gauge railway depot in Valka 1920s.