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STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND
MANAGEMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HABITATS (CDPE)

Committee of Experts on Protected Areas

APPLICATION FOR THE BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK
(Federal Republic of Germany)

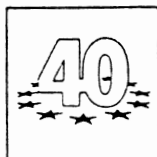
On-the-spot appraisal

by

P HUNKELER (Switzerland), expert

with Secretariat comments

19.345
09.3



Forty years
Council of Europe
Quarante ans
Conseil de l'Europe

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BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK
(Federal Republic of Germany)
ON-THE-SPOT APPRAISAL

by

P HUNKELER
(Switzerland)

1. Introduction

The Federal Republic of Germany submitted an application for the European Diploma for the Berchtesgaden National Park at the meeting of the Committee of Experts on Protected Areas on 29 and 30 April 1982. The committee acknowledged that the park was an asset and decided to arrange an on-the-spot appraisal.

In the light of the report on the visit to the park, the Committee of Experts on Protected Areas decided, at its sitting on 9 and 10 May 1983, to defer consideration of the application for the Berchtesgaden National Park until the authorities had taken a series of steps to improve the protection and management of the site. This decision was ratified by the European Committee for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources at its 9th session, in March 1984.

At the meeting of the committee of experts on 1 and 2 June 1988, the Federal Republic of Germany presented an information note (PE-ZP (88) 32) stating that the conditions laid down in connection with the application for the Berchtesgaden National Park had been fulfilled and requested that the application be reconsidered.

The committee decided to comply with this request and to arrange another on-the-spot appraisal.

The appraisal was carried out by the author on 13 and 14 September 1988. For reasons beyond his control, Mr Jean-Pierre Ribaut of the Council of Europe Secretariat was not able to take part as planned.

During the two-day visit the author was accompanied by Mr Zierl, Park Manager, Mr Lang, representative of the Bayerisches Staatsministerium für Landesentwicklung und Umweltfragen and Mr Henke, representative of the Bundes Umweltministerium.

The author is most grateful to these three people for greatly facilitating his task.

2. Berchtesgaden National Park

This protected area was described in great detail in previous reports. See, in particular, documents SN-ZP (82) 25, SN-ZP (83) 29 and SN-ZP (83) 32.

Only the major features of the park will therefore be mentioned here.

The park is recognised as a European asset, particularly because of the exceptional quality of the landscape, the wealth of flora and fauna and the diversity of natural habitats at various altitudes between 603 and 2,713 metres.

A protected flora area, followed by a nature reserve, existed long before the park, which was set up relatively recently, in 1978, at a time when some of its forest had already been radically transformed and farming rights were firmly established.

Management of the park therefore involves both protecting the areas that have remained natural and taking active steps to revitalise the environment (transforming spruce forests at medium and low altitude into mixed forests suited to the site, reducing forest grazing and controlling the deer population). To some extent, therefore, the park is an ecosystem that will continue to be controlled partly by Man, and it will be necessary to manage the fauna (deer) largely through human intervention.

3. Appraisal

The action taken in response to the conditions laid down when consideration of the application was deferred is described in Appendix I.

In a nutshell, the situation as regards the main areas in which action was necessary is now as follows:

A. Forests

A very elaborate data base is available for managing forests. Measures are being taken to transform the forests that have become artificial. The transformation may be either active (forestry treatment, measures to encourage fir trees and broad-leaved trees to grow) or passive (leaving trees that have fallen because of gusts of wind or for other natural reasons to lie).

These measures are in under way but a great deal of effort and patience will be needed before major changes take place. In view of the area concerned and the existence of relatively recent spruce plantations, it will take decades or even longer before mixed forests suited to the site replace the single-species plantations.

B. Farming

Mountain pastures used to cover about 4,500 hectares - roughly 15% of the park. They currently cover about 2,800 hectares, or 9% of the park, in accordance with grazing rights that already existed. The park authorities are actively negotiating a reduction in the area of grazing land, particularly in forest areas, by all sorts of means, such as the provision of grazing land outside the park and financial compensation for those who forfeit certain forest grazing rights. The ultimate aim is to strike a better balance between farming and environmental protection, rather than to abolish all traditional farming in the park.

Agreements of this kind can be negotiated only on a voluntary basis. The park's management must continue with a systematic policy of promoting less intensive farming and prevent farming from becoming any more intensive (for this reason, artificial fertilisers and herbicides should be completely prohibited).

C. Tourism and other uses

The park attracts a considerable number of visitors. For instance, some of the 10 huts are visited by over 50,000 people a year. Fortunately, the visitors stick, by and large, to the 160 km of tended footpaths in the park and relatively rarely stray from the beaten track, even though they are allowed to do so. The army and the frontier protection forces use the park for certain exercises, but under clearly defined conditions.

The number of visitors is increasing steadily. It is essential that the people in charge of the park continue to monitor this trend and that they be prepared to take all the preventive measures needed if it seems that the capacity limit of the park is being attained. The information centres being set up for visitors with programmes designed to increase awareness of the value and fragility of the environment are an initial positive response. At the same time, greater use of the area surrounding the park could help take the pressure off the park.

4. Conclusions

The implementation of the protective measures called for by the Council of Europe early in 1984 is well under way. Some results are already visible, but it is in the nature of things that others should take longer to become apparent.

In view of the current situation and the activities and projects being carried out with a view to further improving the protection and management of the Berchtesgaden National Park, it is suggested that the European Committee award the European Diploma to the park.

In doing so, the committee would be acknowledging the great value of the site and the measures taken to protect it. It would be supporting the efforts made to restore certain radically transformed forests to their natural state (this experience could be very useful in other, similar situations) and to strike a balance between environmental protection and farming and tourism.

The conditions under which the diploma should be granted should be as follows:

- Continuation of the systematic policy of transforming what have become artificial forests of conifers into mixed forests, with a combination of species suited to the site. This change should be backed up by appropriate measures, in particular measures to keep communities of hoofed animals at a tolerable level and to reduce forest grazing.
- Continuation of the policy of reducing the pressure of farming on the environment; promotion of less intensive farming and steps to prevent farming from becoming any more intensive, particularly by prohibiting the use of artificial fertilisers and herbicides.

- Active supervision of the other uses of the park (tourism, military exercises) and adoption of any restrictive or supervisory measures needed before the capacity limit of the park is reached.

- Placing of the national park under the supreme state authority, either direct or by means of any other satisfactory arrangement (eg appointment of a board responsible for the park at a very high level in the hierarchy, with decision-making powers), in accordance with the relevant rules.

Most of these measures will be spread over a long period or will raise problems that are tricky to solve. No deadline is therefore laid down for their completion, but developments and progress in the situation should be examined in detail each time a decision is taken to renew the European Diploma.

Secretariat comments

The Secretariat Representative, Mr Jean-Pierre Ribaut, was unexpectedly prevented from taking part in the on-the-spot appraisal. He arrived on the spot in the evening of the 12th but had to leave on the 13th in the late morning.

Having studied the Berchtesgaden file, the Secretariat is able, in the light of the discussions the expert had with the people in charge of the park before his trip and on the morning of 13 September, to endorse his conclusions.

The European Diploma could be awarded, provided the efforts taken in the various areas where the situation leaves something to be desired continue with the same intensity as at present. In other words, when the diploma is renewed in five years' time, improvements on the present situation should be apparent in all the areas which still raise problems.

The expert and the Secretariat are therefore submitting to the SN-ZP the draft resolution set out in Appendix I.

A P P E N D I X IDRAFT RESOLUTION AWARDING THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA TO THE
BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK (FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY)

The Committee of Ministers, under Article 15 (a) of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma,

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE),

Having recorded the agreement of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany,

After deliberation,

Solemnly awards the European Diploma, category A, to the Berchtesgaden National Park, in accordance with the regulations governing the European Diploma,

Places the aforesaid park under the patronage of the Council of Europe until ...,

Awards the diploma under the following conditions:

- The systematic policy of transforming artificial forests of conifers into mixed forests with a combination of species suited to the site is continued, if not strengthened. This change should be backed up by appropriate measures, in particular the maintenance of communities of hooved animals at a tolerable level and the reduction of forest grazing.
- The policy of reducing the environmental impact of farming is pursued, if not strengthened. Measures to promote less intensive farming and prevent farming from becoming any more intensive, including the prohibition of the use of artificial fertilisers and herbicides, are taken.
- The other uses of the park (tourism, military exercises) are actively monitored and any restrictive or supervisory measures needed are taken before the environment's capacity limit is attained.
- The national park is attached to the supreme state authority either direct or by other satisfactory arrangements (eg the appointment of a high-level park board with decision-making powers), in accordance with the relevant rules.

A P P E N D I X II

STATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MEASURES REQUIRED FOR THE AWARD OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA TO THE BERCHTESGADEN NATIONAL PARK

(against each figure there is a summary of the measure requested and against R. the response provided)

See also the information note submitted by the Federal Republic of Germany on 15 April 1988 (Document PE-ZP (88) 32)

A. Forests

1. Make an accurate inventory of the forest.

R. A very detailed data base with numerous elements drawn from a network of survey points exists. As it is digitised, the data can be actively used.

A larger scale map is being prepared.

2. Protect the last remains of the natural or nearly natural forest.

R. All the forests that have not been transformed much, or at all, are being left to evolve naturally.

3. and 4. Transform single-species forests into mixed forests, taking all the measures needed to this end.

R. A wide strip of forest has been marked out in the northern part of the park. Active steps have been taken to manage this area (Waldpflegezone), where the single-species plantations are concentrated (thinning, felling, spot-planting of broad-leaved trees, fencing off of plots, various measures to encourage the growth of broad-leaved trees and fir trees). Outside this area the existing single-species plantations have been left as they are.

5. Allow the (controlled) use of insecticides only in cases of severe cork beetle infestation.

R. Steps have been taken to control cork beetles only when necessary (pressure has been put on private landowners around the park), and only at the edge of the park. Moreover, there are statistics that show that at present cork beetle is no more prevalent in the park than in other Bavarian forests - quite the contrary.

6. Forbid the building of new forest roads and the widening of existing roads.

R. There are no plans for building new roads or widening existing roads.

B. Hunting (and fishing)

7. Reduce the deer population substantially (to 300 in 3-5 years, and then to 150 if necessary).

R. The deer population has now been reduced to 260 head, by professional hunters.

8. Put fencing round the nearly natural forests and the ecologically important areas in the deer's biotopes.

R. Only limited steps of this kind have been taken, since the best way of dealing with the problem is to reduce the number of head. Furthermore, the number of winter feeding grounds is being reduced from 11 to 4, and fencing is being put round the grounds to keep the deer within a clearly defined area during the winter (there are hardly any wintering grounds outside the park still available for the animals).

NB: In addition, fishing is now prohibited in the park, though an exception is made for a professional fisherman who works on the Königsee.

C. Mountain pastures

9. Encourage traditional forms of grazing in the mountains and do not increase the number of animals.

R. There has been little change in farming practices. The number and species of animals and the grazing period are fixed by contract. There are few sheep and no goats. The traditional breed of cow, the Pinzgauer, is encouraged on a voluntary basis. Damage to the plant cover, observed in places, is probably caused by heavier breeds.

10. Restrict, as far as possible, the use of artificial fertilisers and herbicides.

R. The existing park regulations permit the use of fertilisers and herbicides provided they do not cause damage outside the grazing land.

It seems that very limited use is made of these substances, Nevertheless, it is not right that they should be used in a national park, particularly since it seems that changes in the combinations of plants on the grazing land are not yet being monitored, since it can be very difficult to prove that there is damage outside these areas and since it is debatable whether the use of such products is warranted even in terms of good farming practice, given the existing conditions. Moreover, labour is now more readily available because there is a state subsidy for shepherds.

11. Encourage the restoration of Alpine cabins and other traditional constructions.

R. This policy is actively pursued by those in charge of the park, and the results are already clearly visible.

12. Find a satisfactory solution to the problem of forest grazing.

R. The park currently contains some 800 hectares of open grazing land and 3,500 hectares of forest grazing land, of which about 2,000 hectares are actually used. There are established grazing rights which were recognised when the park was set up and which are negotiable only on a voluntary basis. Those in charge of the park were able to arrange for about 1,000 hectares of forest grazing land to be abandoned and are endeavouring to reduce grazing land further by various means: the provision of open grazing land bought outside the park, financial incentives for those who renounce forest grazing, and a limited scheme for clearing a plantation of spruce trees in the park, planted on what was probably once grazing land.

D. Tourism

13. Prohibit all (new) summer or winter touristic development.

R. No new installations have been authorised and the existing railway network will not be enlarged. Moreover, hang gliding and para-gliding have been prohibited in the park. The only exceptions concern the Jenner Massif, where a cable car comes to the edge of the park. Hang gliders can glide over this part of the park and para-gliders can take off and continue part of their flight in the park. It is strictly forbidden to land in the park itself.

14. Prohibit long overnight stops in the park.

R. No special measures have been taken. As a rule, visitors do not stay long.

E. Military activities

15. Restrict helicopter flights

R. The problem has not yet been completely solved. Other military exercises, on the other hand, normally take place only with the authorisation of those in charge of the park, who lay down conditions.

16. Restrict cross-country skiing

R. Cross-country skiing is practised only in a limited area around the frontier protection squad building.

17. Forbid the preparation of cross-country ski routes by special vehicles.

R. The tracks in the area mentioned in point 16 are no longer prepared with machines.

F. Information

18. Increase the number of guided tours in the park and pursue an information and training policy that reflects the park's importance.

R. The number of guided tours has been increased. A large information centre is to open in October 1988 in a restored historic building in the middle of the town of Berchtesgaden. Two other centres are planned, right next to highly frequented access routes to the park. The information has been carefully prepared.

G. Research

19. Pursue research programmes which will have direct implications for the park and its management.

R. It is now easier to manage the park because background data have been compiled as a result of more basic research. The consolidation stage has not yet been completed, but the data are digitised and it is possible to devise models. Research is being extended where the fauna is concerned (potential and existing distribution of birds, for instance). Most of the studies cover both the national park and the adjacent outlying area, which ought to act as a buffer area.

H. Management

20. Establish a management plan

R. A regional site-development plan dated 15.3.86 was drawn up by the Bavarian Minister for Regional Development and the Environment. This plan is already binding as far as the national park authorities are concerned. It has still to be officially adopted for the outlying area.

21. Put the necessary personnel and funds at the disposal of the park administration.

R. The current situation can be considered satisfactory. The large forestry staff is now directly responsible to the park authorities.

- Simplification of the institutional structure

R. A big step in the right direction was taken when the Forestry Board was attached to the National Park Authority for the purpose of all matters connected with activities in the park, with the exception of lake management.

Nevertheless, the park still comes under the Berchtesgaden Landratsamt (District Office) and not under a higher authority, as it should do in order to comply with international requirements.

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Strasbourg, le 12 février 1989
[PEZP89.26F]

PE-ZP (89) 26

COMITE DIRECTEUR POUR LA PROTECTION ET LA GESTION
DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT ET DU MILIEU NATUREL

Comité d'experts - zones protégées

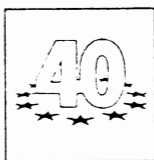
PARC NATIONAL BAYERISCHER WALD
(République Fédérale d'Allemagne)

Catégorie A

Rapport annuel pour 1988

Nationalparkverwaltung
Bayerischer Wald
Freyunger Str. 2
D - 8352 GRAFENAU

20.391
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Forty years
Council of Europe
Quarant'ans
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Rapport annuel 1988

1. Situation du point de vue de la conservation1.1. Environnement

La pollution de l'air par l'ozone et le dioxyde de soufre est encore très préoccupante de même que l'acidification des lacs, des cours d'eau et des sources.

1.2. Flore et végétation

Le dépérissement de la végétation à cause de la pollution atmosphérique reste le problème le plus important du parc. Seul l'Abies Alba commence à récupérer doucement.

Diminution de l'abattage des arbres de 20.000 m³ à 17.000 m³. Quelques dommages ont été causés par broutage aux espèces Abies Alba, Acer spec, Fraxinus excelsior et Ulmus montana.

1.3. Faune

Les populations de Ips typographus (bostyche typographe) continuent d'augmenter en raison du bois chablis et du dépérissement de la forêt dû à la pollution.

2. Statut juridique et foncier

2.1. Le règlement du Parc national est encore en cours d'élaboration.

2.2. La superficie du Parc national s'est agrandie d'environ 10 ha de tourbières et de forêts. La superficie totale du Parc est maintenant de 13 300 ha.

2.3. Pas de modification.

3. Gestion

3.1. Acquisition d'un ordinateur de type SICARD de la Société Siemens pour élaborer un système d'information géographique. Nouvelle organisation du service de recherche en fonction de ce nouvel objectif.

3.2. Rajeunissement progressif du personnel à mesure du départ à la retraite des gardes forestiers. Nouveau règlement pour le service de gardiennage.

3.3. Nouveaux dépliants pour les expositions, meilleure protection des réserves u.s.o. Publication d'une nouvelle édition du guide officiel du Parc.

3.4. Pas de changement.

4. Améliorations

4.1. Nouvelle réglementation de la gestion du chevreuil et du cerf d'après les résultats du programme de recherche.

- Création d'une pépinière pour les espèces d'arbres et d'arbustes menacées.
 - Poursuite des activités de développement du tourisme vert dans le Parc National.
 - Nouvelle conception des services offerts aux visiteurs
 - Poursuite des efforts de renforcement de la population de grands tetras (tetrao urogallus), réintroduction du grand corbeau (corvus corax), de la chouette de l'Oural (strix uralensis) et de la mulette (margaritifera margaritifera). Ce coquillage est introduit par les ouïes des truites. La réintroduction du Strix uralensis est surveillée par télémétrie.
- 4.2. Pas de protection contre les éléments parce que l'objectif principal du parc est de respecter les processus naturels.
- 4.3. Rénovation progressive des équipements vieux de 20 ans environ selon un plan harmonisé.
- 4.4. Reconstruction du Jugendwaldheim (auberge de jeunesse) selon la nouvelle conception des services personnels.
- 4.5. Quatre expositions au centre des visiteurs.
5. Accès du public
- 5.1. Pas de changement depuis 1988.
Les visites en hiver continuent d'augmenter légèrement.
- 5.2. Boursiers de la République populaire de Chine, de Chypre, de Yougoslavie. Autres visiteurs de 20 pays étrangers.
Excursion du "Deutsche Forstverein"
- 5.3. Pas d'infraction aux règlements ni de dommages.
6. Recherche scientifique
- Deux publications importantes sur
- la couverture neigeuse
 - l'attitude de la population locale vis-à-vis du parc.
- La liste des programmes de recherche nouveaux ou en cours peut être obtenue auprès du Secrétariat.
7. Influence de l'octroi du diplôme européen
- L'obtention du diplôme européen dans la catégorie A n'a pas eu d'effet particulier.
- Des nouveaux guides et dépliants sont disponibles au Secrétariat.