



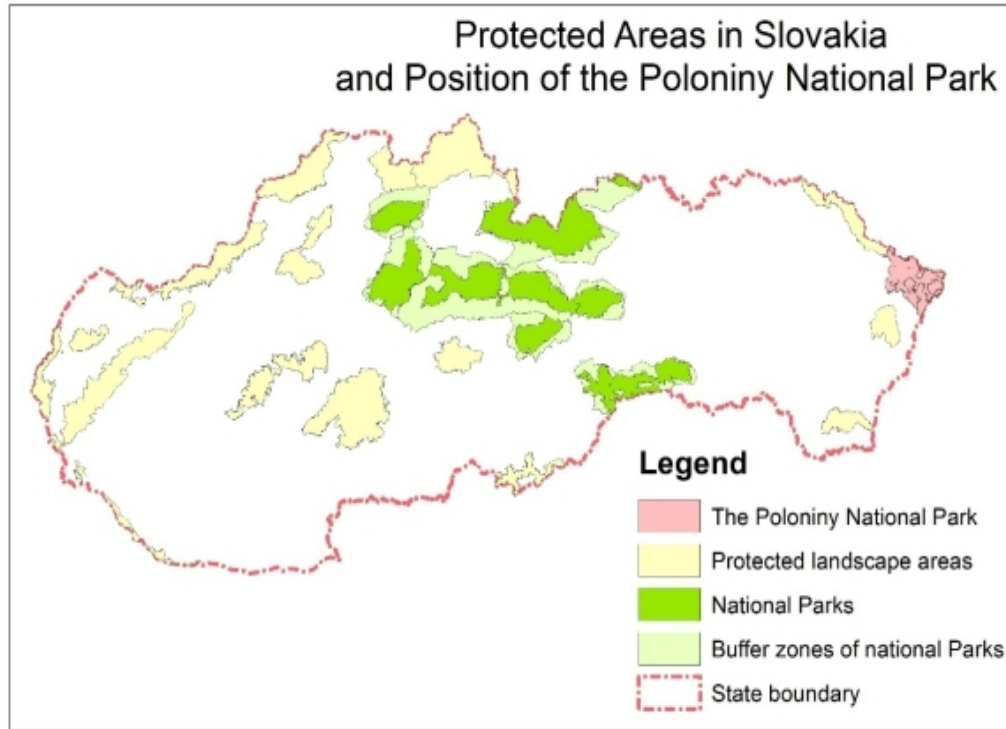
European Diploma in the Poloniny National Park

Progress Report

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Conservation status of Poloniny



- NP was designated in 1997 (by reclassification from PLA) – IUCN category „V“
- European Diploma originally awarded to the NP Poloniny by resolution No (1998)26
- since 1992 bilateral (PL,SK) and since 1997 trilateral Biosphere reserve Eastern Carpathian (UA,PL,SK)
- since 2004 part of Natura 2000 sites
- since 2007 (resp. 2011) part of UNESCO World Heritage Site (trilateral UA, SK, DE)

Management plan for NP Poloniny

Process of preparation

- “*Poloniny National park Management Plan for 2017–2026*” was approved by the Government Resolution of the Slovak Republic N°293 of July 7th, 2016
- International and national commitments and “rules” were taken into consideration when preparing the management plan
- The management plan was consulted with local stakeholders (landowners, municipalities, local societies..) and its objectives and activities were jointly defined.

Available in Slovak at the [Materiál programu rokovania](http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=25732)
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Management plan for NP Poloniny


Structure of management plan

- Management plan is official documentation of nature and landscape protection according to the §54 of the Act No 543/2002 Coll on Nature and Landscape Protection as amended (Act No 543/2002 Coll)
- The precise structure is given in the Annex 18 of the Order of the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic No 24/2003 Coll
- It has 25 Annexes – Annex no 6.6.19 – International Commitments Stemming from the European Diploma of Protected Areas awarded by the Council of Europe to Poloniny NP

Specification of problems, challenges and ambitions

- The European Diploma is highly appreciated not only by SNC SR but also by local stakeholders and it is mentioned in the introduction (page 1 of the “*Poloniny National Park Management Plan for 2017–2026*”) as well as in its *chapters 1.2, 1.4 and 2.2.1 and in its Annex No 6.6.19*
- Current situation, needed measures, expected financial resources and effects of measures proposed are part of Poloniny NP Action Plan
- Issue of the invasive alien species is address in Annex no 6.6.13 measures No. P.1.3. Elimination of non–native species expansion, removal of invasive plant species and the prevention of their spreading
- Aspects of the climate change are tackled in the measures of the Poloniny NP Action Plan

Forestry and game management

- To manage the forest in order to grow healthy and stable forest stands, with native tree species composition and multi-layer structure in order for the forest to fulfil all the required functions.
 - To preserve, to a maximum possible extent, the integral parts of the native (natural) stands.
 - To strongly prefer the small-scale shelter wood management with the use of natural regeneration.
 - To implement artificial afforestation only exceptionally and to use native and genetically suitable young plants of high quality instead.
 - To ensure monitoring of forest ecosystems condition and the natural processes.
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Financing

- Chapter 4 of the “*Poloniny National Park Management Plan for 2017–2026*” contains this information in the form of an overall table. In fact, this is not the obligatory part of the document, but it was logically included.
- The detail calculation of financial, social, environmental and other impacts of measures are always elaborated as part of each material submitted to the Government. This document is publically available (in Slovak language only).

http://www.rokovania.sk/File.aspx/ViewDocumentHtml/Mater-Dokum-201639?prefixFile=m_


Progress since March 2016

The project “Development of Nature Conservation and Protected Areas in the Slovak Carpathians” has the following results:

- Proposal of Forest Management Measures for the Buffer Zone of the UNESCO site „Carpathian Beech Forests" in the Poloniny;
- Manual on nature-friendly management practices in Natura 2000 sites for non-state owners in the Poloniny NP
- Recategorization of commercial forests to forests of special purpose in Borsukov vrch National Nature Reserve;
- Educational activities such as production of a film on Carpathian beech forests, renovation of educational paths, renovation of Nová Sedlica Information Centre, publication of the book Carpathians Hidden Treasures and other brochures, maps and leaflets on Poloniny NP;

- Management plans of degraded sites in Poloniny NP developed and implemented;
- Delineation and marking of protected areas in the field;
- Construction of gene pool for amphibians and other water depending animal species;
- Meetings with local stakeholders focused on explanation of requirements of European Diploma of PA, UNESCO site and on the management plan for Poloniny NP;
- Building of infrastructure for soft tourism (information boards, benches and tables, wooden bridges);
- Activities focused on preservation of cultural and natural landscape such as reparation of the Orthodox church in the Dara village, renovation of traditional folk architecture in Kadub, renovation of the mineral source in the Osadné village, information system for the unique charnel house in Dara, Porta Rusica – reconstruction of dewatering system, renovation of a unique folk dress typical for the Poloniny region, Poloniny European Day organization;

SNC SR is implemented a project co-financed by Norway grants “**Nature Conservation as an Opportunity for Regional Development**”:

- Proposal of sustainable financial strategy of protected areas in transboundary region of Slovakia– Ukraine; Educational training for the nature guards;
 - Elaboration of the sustainable tourism strategy development in the Poloniny NP;
 - Transboundary region local communities meetings in the Poloniny NP and signing of the co-operation agreement between Slovak Association of Local Communities and Velky Bereznyj Region in Ukraine;
 - Educational activities such as publication of brochures, leaflets, information boards installation;
 - Activities focused on sustainable tourism in the Poloniny NP such as restoration of cycle routes and nature trails, construction of soft tourism infrastructure;
 - Management measures focused on improvement of favourable conservation status of the habitats;
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The State Nature Conservancy of the Slovak Republic is finalizing a new project to be submitted under the EU funding – on the **implementation of the NP Poloniny Management Plan and Východné Karpaty Biosphere Reserve**. Potential activities are as follows:

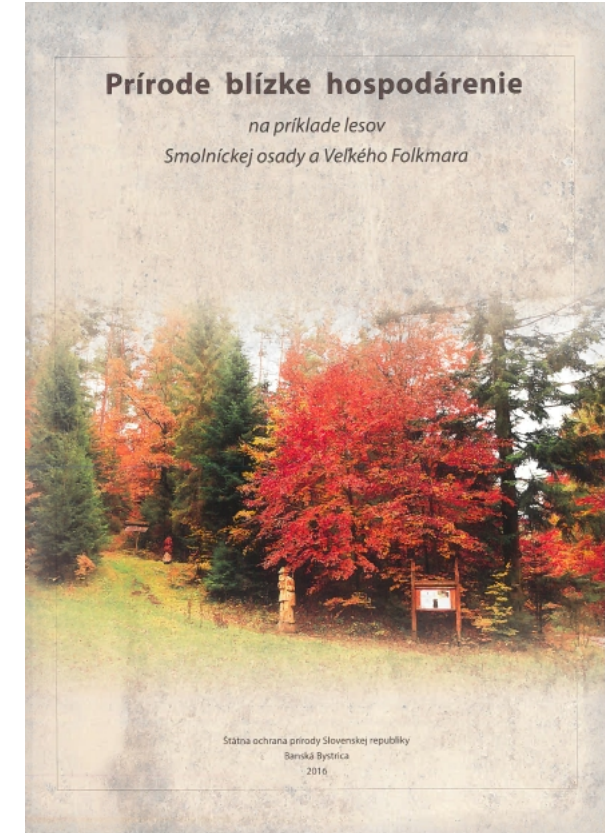
- Nature–close management practices realised in the buffer zone of UNESCO site in the Poloniny NP (about 2,500 ha)
- Management measures implemented in order to improve favourable status of meadow habitats and species of the Community and national interests
- Measures implemented for *Bison bonasus*; Large carnivores monitoring
- Improvements of the Východné Karpaty International Biosphere Reserve structure;
- Support of the traditional farm animals of Poloniny region;
- Beekeeping, support of the traditional varieties of fruit trees;
- Purchase of an Nová Sedlica Information Centre equipment; Reconstruction of educational trails;
- Increase the employment in the region through the establishment of hay, straw and wooden pellets production;
- Capacity building for Poloniny NP (new staff, material support and the car).

Progress in forestry and game management

- Inter-ministerial agreement between the MoE and the MoA signed in February 2015, a meeting is planned in mid-March, where representatives of MoE and MoLaRD will continue to deal with all requirements regarding to ED and UNESCO.
- Decision of inter-ministerial group – forest management in NP Poloniny will be changed to ProSilva system (agreed on 6th October 2015).
- Proposal of alternative forest management plans drafted by SNC SR.
- Required changes in forest management reflected in MP for NP Poloniny.
- The local hunters and hunting organizations were involved in negotiations during preparation and approval process of management plan.
- Strengthening a cooperation between the SNC SR – Administration of the Poloniny NP and the District Hunting Chamber in Humenne is yet needed. (Education of hunters and their involvement in the implementation of the *Poloniny National Park Management Plan for 2017–2026*.)

SNC SR developed 2 guidelines:

- Guideline for close-to-nature forestry in NATURA2000 areas“ (only in Slovak language), downloadable from the webpage:
<http://www.sopsr.sk/web/?cl=21>
- Guideline „Close-to-nature management by example of forests management in Smolnícka osada and Veľký Folkmár“ (only in Slovak language)



Progress in inventorying and monitoring of the large carnivore populations programme

SNC SR has completed, in close cooperation with all the relevant experts in Slovakia, the three documents for large carnivores:

- **Wolf Management Plan (*Canis lupus*) in Slovakia**, approved by the stakeholders and by Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic on May 26th, 2016;
- **Brown Bear Management Plan (*Ursus arctos*) in Slovakia**, approved by the stakeholders and by Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic on February 2nd, 2017 and
- **Lynx Management Plan (*Lynx lynx*) in Slovakia**, approved by the stakeholders and by Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic on February 2nd, 2017.

Mentioned Management plans are available in Slovak only on <http://www.minzp.sk/sekcie/temy-oblasti/ochrana-prirody-krajiny/druhova-ochrana-prirody/programy-starostlivosti/>.

These documents were elaborated according to the §54 of the Act No 543/2002 Z. z. Coll,

- for setting strategic objectives of a species and measures (law, public involvement, practical management)
- for modification/introduction of new forms of monitoring and mapping of large carnivores;
- unification of database on these populations and database of damages caused by large carnivores, database of preventive measures to eliminate current damages on crops, human health, etc.;

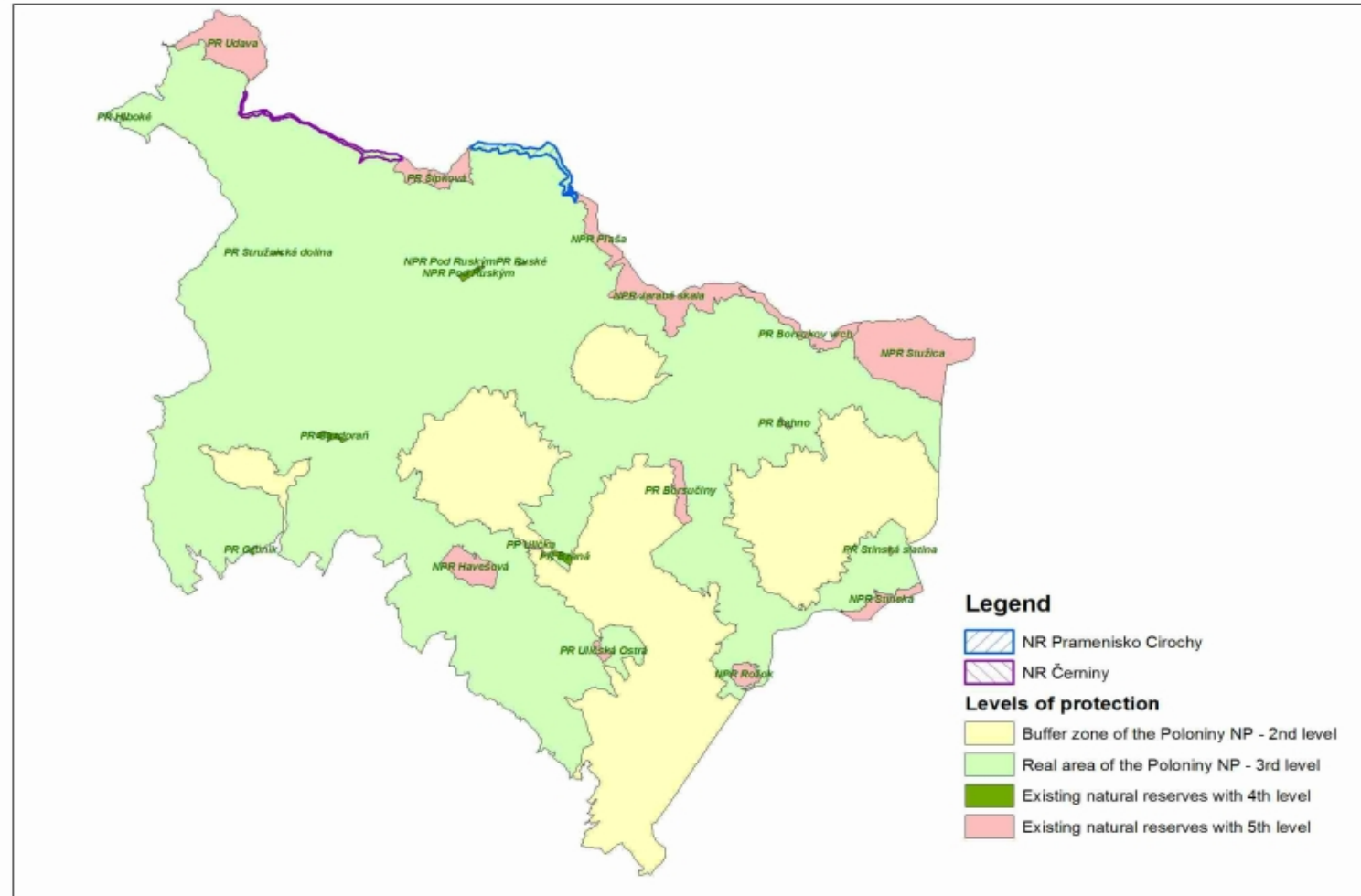


Creation of a functional network of protected areas meeting the international standards

Enlarging the strictly protected areas:

- Nature Reserve Borsukov vrch designated by the government – surface of 146,79 ha – primeval beech forests – since 1.1.2016 recategorization of forests from economic to forests of special purpose is finalized (Although the process of recategorization is not finished yet, forests in new Nature Reserve Borsukov vrch are strictly protected since the date of designation.)
- Another 2 proposals for creation of NRs Pramenisko Cirochy (108,8020 ha) and Černiny (73,6620 ha) are in the process of negotiations with landowners. Process of negotiations is still continuing.

Creation of a functional network of protected areas meeting the international standards



Conclusions

- The Slovak Republic considers the European Diploma a prestigious award and high priority.
- SNC SR and the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic would like to thank the Council of Europe, the Group of Specialists on the European Diploma for Protected Areas as well as the independent experts for their strong involvement in the issue of the Poloniny NP and for their support.
- The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Land and Rural Development undertook several steps to make significant progress.
- There is a significant improvement in cooperation between stakeholders at the national and regional level that resulted in the approval of the *“Poloniny National Park Management Plan for 2017–2026”*.

Conclusions

- This was an important milestone that is followed by other activities – submitting project to further strengthen cooperation and implement activities in favour of nature, landscape and local people.
- In 2013 the Council of Europe received the petition against the European Diploma, in 2015 there was a letter signed by the local stakeholders to keep the European Diploma, if needed, after the appraisal mission in 2017.
- **SNC SR and the Ministry fully supports this proposal and asks, if possible, to undertake the mission in 2017 that might consider the situation and decide about options provided for in the Article 9.2 of the Resolution of the Council of Ministers (2008)1.**

Thank you for your attention!

