

EUROPEAN DIPLOMA HOLDING AREA

**The volcanic phenomena of the
Tihany Peninsula**

HUNGARY

ANNUAL REPORT



2013

NOVEMBER 1, 2012 - OKTOBER 31, 2013

State: H U N G A R Y

Name of the area: The volcanic phenomena of the Tihany Peninsula

Central authority concerned:

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I. General information

1. Natural heritage (general abiotic description: geomorphology, geology and hydrogeology, habitats, flora, fauna, landscape) – State of conservation

- 1.1. Environment: changes or deterioration in the environment, of natural or anthropic origin, accidental or permanent, actual or anticipated
 - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
- 1.2. Flora and vegetation: changes in the plant population and in the vegetational cover; presumed causes
 - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
- 1.3. Fauna: changes in the sedentary or migratory populations; congregating, egg-laying and breeding grounds
 - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

2. Cultural heritage and socio-economic context

- 2.1. Cultural heritage
 - 2.1.1. Changes concerning cultural heritage
 - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.
- 2.2. Socio-economic context
 - 2.2.1. Changes concerning the socio-economic context
 - No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

3. Education and scientific interest

- 3.1. Visitors – Information policy
 - 3.1.1. Arrangements for receiving and informing the public (building, booklets, maps, cards, etc.)
 - The 9th Lavender Festival was organised on 22 June. The event was set up in cooperation with the community centre of Tihany. Experts of the National Park lead guided tours to the Geyser Field and to the Old Lavender Field with more than 500 participants. The event was attended by many people, the national and local media and press were also present.
 - The interest in guided tours lead by our professional guides has increased significantly, during this period 172 groups participated in those programs on different routes of the peninsula. Special "geo-tours" were guided twice last year by the geologist of the National Park on the peninsula to show most of the geological values.
 - The interest in open-air school activities increased during this period, special programmes were organized regularly by an expert of our National Park Directorate for groups of children going to nursery school, too.
 - The Lavender House Visitor Centre is open all year, the interactive exhibition created in the building – called "On the land of calmed down volcanoes" – has been seen by more than 32 000 visitors since the beginning of 2013.
 - Experts of the National Park have permanently organized special activities for children and families in the activity room of the Lavender House Visitor Centre.

Arrangements for informing the public (printed and electronic media):

- The Hungarian Television and several national radio stations covered the Lavender Festival.

- The interest in the Lavender House Visitor Centre is still very big in national and local television. Many articles have been published in the national printed media and on the Internet, too.

- Reports are made regularly about other events in the area in the local printed media, local television and radio stations.

- The open air school programme in Tihany was shown and explained to the invited teachers once. This was also an event organised together with local entrepreneurs and the directorate.

3.1.2. Frequentation by visitors and behaviour (number, distribution in time and space)

- We have seen a visible increase in the number of tourists on our nature trails. The exact number of visitors is not possible to record, the estimated number is between 10 000 – 100 000 persons. The number of guided groups has significantly increased and the interest in our open air school has increased, too.

3.1.3. Special visits (distinguished persons, groups, etc.)

- A group from the Central European University was guided in the European Diploma area.

- The European Diploma area and the Lavender House Visitor Centre was visited by a Balaton Group Association, and by a group of the Hungarian Forestry Association.

- During Bakony–Balaton Geopark Week in May, the Papuk Geopark was introduced in the Lavender House Visitor Centre with an exhibition and a film on the abiotic and biotic natural assets and the cultural heritage of the geopark.

3.2. Scientific research

3.2.1. Current or completed research (observation, experimentation, etc.; identification or inventory of the species listed in the appendices to the Bern Convention, etc.)

- Researches and monitoring started in the previous years are being continued, no significant changes have occurred since the last report.

- Hydrogeology Research has been continued on the European Diploma area by the experts of the Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. The research programme is planning to throw light on the connection between the lakes and groundwater flows of the peninsula.

3.2.2. Scientific publications

- None.

4. Site description (vulnerability, protection status, ownership, documentation)

4.1. Changes in legislation or regulations

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

4.2. Changes in ownership title (conversion to public property, rentals, etc.)

- As a result of our request the management rights of Lake Belső was ~~approved submitted~~ to Balaton Uplands National Park by the state in 2013.

4.3. Extension or transfer, new uses (for example, conversion into total reserve)

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

5. Site management (management plans, budget and personnel)

5.1. Improvements made

5.1.1. Ecological action affecting the flora and biotopes; controls of fauna

- Grasslands at the Geyser Field were managed further on by mechanical stem crashing, but during this period we could begin grazing with sheep again. The National Park has organised team building trainings for several companies to clear the geyser cones of vegetation.

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- Efforts have been made again to stop and control the spread of introduced invasive weed species, primarily the ailanthus (*Ailanthus altissima* (Mill.) Swingle) and the *Eleagnus angustifolia* L.. The National Park Directorate won subsidies on a state-tender (Environment and Energy Operational Programme) to finance the forcing back invasive weed species. The work began in autumn this year.

5.1.2. Protection against the elements (fire, water regime)

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

5.1.3. Approaches and thoroughfares (paths, roads, car parks, signposting, fencing, etc.)

- Several information boards and direction-boards along the Lóczy-Geyser Nature Trail have been replaced or repaired. Trimming of bushes, removing of fallen trees and mending stairs have been carried out at the nature trail to ensure clear and safe walkways for the visitors.

5.1.4. Field equipment (hides and study facilities)

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

5.1.5. Waste management

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

5.1.6. Use of renewable energy systems

- The heating and the cooling system, furthermore the production of domestic hot water of the Lavender House Visitor Centre is operating only with renewable energy from ground source heat pump and solar collectors.

5.2. Management

5.2.1. Administrative department: changes made

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

5.2.2. Wardens' department: changes made

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

5.2.3. Internal policing measures

- No significant changes have occurred since the last report.

5.2.4. Infringement of regulations and damage; legal action

- None.

II. Influence of the award of the European Diploma of Protected Areas

III. Conditions and/or recommendations for award or renewal

Progress with measures taken in order to meet the conditions and/or recommendations defined during the award or renewal of the European Diploma of Protected Areas.

« 1. translate the management plan into more detailed and practical measures; »

- The development of the management plan has begun, and it will be supplemented with special regulations in terms of Natura 2000. Furthermore, detailed proposals for good agricultural practices will be included.

« 2. strongly enforce the ban on new buildings on the site; »

- The National Park Directorate could reinforce the ban on new buildings on the site with the help of the municipality and other state authorities.

« 3. pursue the planning and construction of the visitor centre near Lake Belső; »

- The Lavender House Visitor Centre, the visitor centre of the European Diploma area, was opened on the 1st June 2011. The number of visitors has been over 85 000 so far.
- « 4. continue to manage and control visitor pressure; »
 - We have tried to reduce damages caused by numerous visitors on the site by mapping out routes, by developing nature trails and small areas with many sights near the village. Several new routing boards have been placed on the European Diploma area in cooperation with the mayor's office and the tourism association of Tihany.
- « 5. keep the balance between closed forested areas and open areas (meadows with hedges and bushes); »
 - Significant work has begun on the site as part of the project forcing back invasive weed species, subsidized by a state-tender (Environment and Energy Operational Programme). About 60 hectare special pasture land with oak-trees and wild fruit trees will be reconstructed.
- « 6. encourage farming and wine-growing practices consistent with the conservation of natural and landscape assets; »
 - From the point of view of nature values good practises in farming and wine-growing have been encouraged by law and recommendation, too.
- « 7. encourage the transfer of management rights on fishing in Lake Belső to the Balaton Uplands National Park; »
 - The management rights of Lake Belső was ~~submitted~~ approved to the Balaton Uplands National Park by the state in 2013. Since then the National Park had a bigger opportunity to influence the fishing management, and to improve the ecological condition of the lake. The next opportunity to obtain the fishing rights will be in 2017, when the current contract expires.
- « 8. encourage the transfer of state properties to the Balaton Upland National Park and pursue the acquisition of private land; »
 - Because of the very high land prices on the Tihany peninsula the National Park Directorate has not been able to buy new ground here.
- « 9. continue to control invasive species such as the *Ailanthus*; »
 - The National Park Directorate won subsidies on a state-tender (Environment and Energy Operational Programme) to finance the forcing back of invasive weed species, such as the *Ailanthus altissima* (Mill.) Swingle and *Eleagnus angustifolia* L. The work began in autumn 2013.
- « 10. develop co-ordinated management with nearby protected areas such as the reed beds on the shore of Lake Balaton and the Külső and Felső marshes. »
 - The National Park has managed the reed beds on the shore of Lake Balaton and Lake Külső and Felső marches with the same method like other parts of the protected area. The project forcing back invasive weed species involves this area, too.