

**Resolution CM/ResDip(2008)1
on the revised regulations for the European Diploma for Protected Areas**

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 20 February 2008
at the 1018th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)¹*

Appendix 5: Model plan for annual reports

Annual report for the year 2018

Annual reports should describe the changes that have taken place since the previous year in dynamic terms of management and function and not be limited to basic data. Any new text or map introducing a change in the situation of the area should be attached to the annual report.

State: Republic of Belarus

Name of the area: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park

Year and number of years since the award or renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas:
Three month since renewal in 2018

Central authority concerned:

Name: Belovezhskaya Pushcha National park
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Tel: +375 16 31 56396
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Authority responsible for its management:

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¹ As amended by Resolution CM/ResDip(2014)2 on 2 July 2014 at the 1204th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies.
Internet : <http://www.coe.int/cm>

1. Conditions: List here all conditions which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the conditions have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the conditions. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. The implementation of the new conservation law in the National Park, including the implementation on site of the relevant conservation management plan attached to the new zonation, is completed within a period of three years:

A new park regulation was adopted in 2012. This regulation has been implemented since that time. Conservation management plan (Management plan) of the National park was revised in 2015 for the period of 2016-2020 with broad participation of stakeholders and is currently implemented. The development and approval of the new management plan of the National Park is planned to be carried out in 2019-2020.

2. Any development with possible negative effects on the National Park and its integrity, including the buffer zones, should be subject to an environmental impact assessment and the National Park authorities should be duly consulted:

Under the current environmental legislation, conducting any types of infrastructure works inside a national park and its buffer zone, except for construction in the settlements are possible only after the EIA (Environmental impact assessment) with the participation of the national park administration.

2. Recommendations: List here all recommendations which were attached to the award or the renewal of the European Diploma. Explain either how the recommendations have been totally complied with or detail the progress in complying with the recommendations. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

1. Continue the move from economically driven to ecologically driven management by reducing the forestry activities in the regulated zones and special habitats in other parts of the National Park, by excluding parcels with old trees in all zones (including the buffer zones) from logging, and by presenting data on harvested wood volumes in the annual reports:

Removing the timber not conducted in strictly protected areas (58 th.ha) and the especially protected areas outside the strict protection (5 th.ha). The obtaining of timber is prohibited at 90% of the old-age stands (over 100 years old). The annual volume of timber harvested in 2018 amounted to 160 thousand cubic meters, mainly in the artificial forests and secondary or artificial forests less the 100 years old.

2. Working with the Government of Belarus, ensure that the National Park authorities have the responsibility for the management of a. the zones of special significance for specific habitats outside the strictly protected areas, b. the buffer zones and c. the game zones within the boundaries of the National Park

There is an interaction and constant monitoring on the management of resources of the National Park by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment.

The National Park has responsibility for the management of these zones according to the relevant legislation - Law on the protection of the environment and the Provision on the National park "Belovezhskaja pushcha"

3. Discussions between the National Park authorities and the Ministry of Agriculture to compensate an agricultural area of 2 000 ha recently excluded from the National Park, by including abandoned agricultural areas elsewhere – also in the buffer zones – and by promoting a gradual intensification of agricultural activities leading to semi-natural habitats (hayfields and low-intensity, grazed meadows with only moderate or no use of fertilizers)

In 2018, former agricultural lands of the buffer zone directly adjacent to the National Park's territory were transferred under the management of the national Park for further work on the restoration of the hydrological regime. The area of the transferred area is 301 hectares.

4. Working with the Government of Belarus, increase budgets for both applied ecological research and nature conservation activities in view of the principles of sustainable management either currently present in, or to be included in, the management plan; special attention is needed both within the National Park and its buffer zones for a. hydrological restoration of all wetland (bog and marsh) ecosystems surrounding the forest, b. water and soil quality in river valleys and c. semi-natural traditionally managed or abandoned farmland

In the framework of government program for the development of nature protected areas for 2015 – 2019 and joint programs of the National Park, "APB-BirdLife Belarus" and the Frankfurt Zoological society (Germany) activities for ecological research and nature conservation in 2018 were funded in the amount of 60.000 euro. Funding of the research program from the state budget in 2018 is amounted to 68 000 euro. Also, within the framework of the state program for the development of protected areas for 2015-2019 works on the restoration of the hydrological regime were funded in the amount of 21 000 euro.

5. Reconsider the management of large herbivores with a view to reducing the winter food supply so as to prevent abnormally large population densities (overpopulation), rather than reducing excess numbers by

continued or increased hunting practices; this is motivated by aiming to alleviate possible damage to both forestry and agriculture.

Since 2012 winter feeding of ungulates is being reduced. 54 winter feeding places have been dismantled after they became part of the strictly protected area. Currently, the winter feeding of ungulates is conducted only at peripheral area of national park, mainly in the economic activity zone and Shereshevo game forestry. On the area of 65 thousand hectares, mainly in the old-growth forest, current legislation forbids feeding of wild animals and regulation of their numbers. The number of red deer at the beginning of 2018 was 2120 individuals, which approximately corresponds to the established perennial quantity

6. Continue research on the genetic aspects of the bison populations, applying the results to further investigate the restoration of a transboundary migration corridor with Poland

Research on bison has been conducted continuously since the last renewal; this research has led to find the presence of Caucasian subspecies gene pool in the Diploma holding area. The process of creation such corridors is suspended until decision on expediency of genetic exchange between two populations.

7. Carry out an environmental impact assessment (EIA) concerning mass tourism in the heart of the National Park, including a reappraisal of the boundaries, location and zoning of "Father Frost's Manor", and the effects of traffic and pollution, taking into account the increased accessibility of the National Park; in the annual reports state how any concerns demonstrated by the EIA are being addressed in practice.

It's conducted constant monitoring of the number of visitors to the "Father Frost's Manor", in order to determine it's impact on the environment and to avoid exceeding the limit of visitor's number. The number of visitors of the "Father Frost's Manor" in 2018 is 74 thousand.

8. Monitor and evaluate the ecological side effects of a. the new bypass road, b. the use of fauna tunnels (eco-tunnels) by various species (such as herpetofauna, badgers and large herbivores), c. the expected regional economic investments, d. the increasing agrotourism developments and e. the additional recreation initiatives around the outskirts of the National Park; and report annually on the results of the monitoring and evaluation

In 2018 (from January to October), the total number of visitors amounted to 312 thousand, which is slightly higher than last year. Most of the tourists visited the excursion enclosures (138 thousand), the Museum of nature (81 thousand), the "Father Frost's Manor" (74 thousand). The number of tourists visited Bicycle routes in the National Park amounted to 24 thousand.

There are 24 objects of agro-tourism which are located in the buffer zone of the National Park in 2017 (5 objects less than last year).

9. Intensify the monitoring, evaluation and reporting of actual activities such as agriculture (drainage, water quality, use of chemicals), forestry (logging, removal of dead wood, bark beetle effects) and hunting (introduced species, hunting bag statistics), including neighbouring zones outside the National Park in order to adjust the management plan or to substantiate environmental impact assessments

Monitoring of natural resources is shared between the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park units and other State agencies:

- *water quality (physico-chemical composition, oxygen, minerals, ...) in water bodies is conducted by the District inspection of the Ministry of natural resources and environmental protection;*
- *forest monitoring (logging, impact of bark beetle, ...) is led by the forest department of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park administration;*
- *wildlife monitoring (hunting, invasive species) is led by the protection department;*
- *ecological monitoring including natural forest processes is done by the research department.*
- *laid the basis of the monitoring network at sites with restored hydrological regime.*

10. Consider a specific adaptation of the prohibition of all activities in the strictly protected zones so as to control the invasive alien species, thus enabling the control of deer (*Dama dama*) escaped from hunting enclosures and the felling of old red oak (*Quercus rubra*) trees and seedlings that disturb the natural forest ecosystems

*An inventory of the distribution of alien invasive plant species in the territory of the National Park was carried out in 2018. The area in which these species are distributed (the Sosnowsky's hogweed (*Heracleum sosnowskyi*)) and the Canadian goldenrod (*Solidago canadensis*)) amounted to 237 ha. Measures have been taken to eliminate these species - first of all, manual and mechanical mowing, as well as disking of soil on former agricultural land.*

11. Prepare a new detailed topographic map (1/50 000) of the National Park and surroundings, indicating the functional zoning (with the buffer zones, game areas, checkpoints, educational trails, etc., all marked) and including the location of the bypass road (with legends in different languages)

A new Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park tourist map has been published at the scale of 1:100 000, and providing new and updated information to the public; however, national legislation does not allow to publish maps in scale 1:50000.

3. Site Management: List here any changes to the European Diploma holding site management, in relation to both terrestrial and aquatic environments (as appropriate), and in relation to staff and finances, since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

4. Boundaries: Give details of any changes to the boundaries of the European Diploma holding site since the last annual report was submitted to the Council of Europe. If there are any changes, please attach an appropriate map to this report. Please also indicate any unresolved difficulties that you have encountered.

No changes

5. Other information: List here any other information about the European Diploma holding site which you consider should be provided to the Council of Europe.
